



# Between Mobility and Inclusion: The Position of Mother Tongue Instruction in Sweden and Denmark

Inga BROERSE

Undergraduate Student, University of Amsterdam,  
Faculty of Humanities  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
e-mail: info@ingabroerse.com

**Abstract.** Migration to Scandinavia has taken place quite similarly in Sweden and Denmark since the Second World War. However, from the 1980s onwards, Sweden and Denmark have become increasingly dissimilar in terms of migration policy, which went hand in hand with education policy for newcomers. Mother tongue instruction for newcomers may improve the process of integration and social cohesion; nevertheless, this is provided for differently in Sweden and Denmark. This study takes into account different social dynamics in order to research what the position of mother tongue instruction is in policy documents and media discourse in both Sweden and Denmark, to determine what the effects of mother tongue instruction are, and subsequently to figure out what is necessary to find the balance between mobility and inclusion – all these for creating further social cohesion and avoiding segregation.

**Keywords:** mother tongue instruction, mobility, inclusion, Sweden, Denmark

## Introduction

During the past decade, Scandinavia became a territory where many people emigrated or fled. The growing presence of languages brought in by them causes major challenges within the society: e.g. questions about (not) belonging to a state, diversity, and complications of the political and economic situation in a country.<sup>1</sup> The current cultural and linguistic diversity in Sweden and Denmark is complex

1 *Migration and Inclusion in a Multicultural Europe (MIME)*, Amsterdam School for Regional, Transnational and European Studies (ARTES); accessed on 18 September 2019. Available at: <https://artes.uva.nl/content/research-groups/migration-and-inclusion/migration-and-inclusion.html>.

due to international mobility, migration, and globalization.<sup>2</sup> The tension between the *mobility* of citizens and the *inclusion* of citizens in today's Europe needs to be resolved.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, innovative policy responses are needed which take into account the national social dynamics and a multilingual society.<sup>4</sup> The present research distinguishes between EU citizens emigrating to Sweden and Denmark and third-country nationals (hereafter TCNs) emigrating to Sweden and Denmark. TCNs may emigrate for purposes of finding work but may also be political refugees or refugees due to the recent climate crisis. The distinction between EU citizens and TCNs is an important one to be made in relation to the EU policy that will be discussed later on.

Mother tongue instruction (hereafter MTI) for newcomers in their host country is the 'teaching in or of the language of their country of origin' (Houtkamp 2018: 98). This is an interesting concept to investigate with the aim of becoming aware of the tension between mobility and inclusion. When discussing MTI for newcomers in this paper, 'newcomers' refers to TCNs integrating into a host country to become a citizen of the state. Furthermore, the concept of MTI and its possible implications helps shed light on 'how governments might improve on increasing intra-EU mobility of citizens, while at the same time preventing it from fostering possible segregation' (Id. 98–99). This matter is approached from the *MIME Vademecum*, the knowledge framework of this paper. From the examination of the concept of MTI, this paper argues that the provision of MTI seems to differ in the national educational policies of Sweden and Denmark, 'and over time, became closely linked' to migration matters such as integration (Salö et al. 2018: 603).

Hence, the research question of this paper is what position MTI has in the national educational policy of both Sweden and Denmark and, consequently, what this means for the integration of newcomers in both countries. Within the matter of integration, the concepts of mobility and inclusion are central in this paper, just as broader questions about whether states must provide mother tongue education to newcomers and whether 'English is sufficient to reach out to newcomers before they learn the local languages' (Dunbar-McKelvey 2018: 90, Mamadouh-el Ayadi 2019: 92).

The further methodology of this paper is to first examine the concepts of mobility and inclusion, followed by an explanation of MTI and its possible complications. Subsequently, minority language education in both Sweden and Denmark is examined to describe and substantiate the context for this research. Within the concept of minority language education, MTI is instrumental and is a means for providing for the teaching in or of the language of origin of a newcomer. In the third part of the paper, the position of MTI will be analysed by comparing

---

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

the educational policies of Sweden and Denmark through a media analysis and a policy document analysis. This is relevant, while the political and media discourse influences the manner in which policy makers think about migration and integration more generally, and hence it influences the position of MTI in the educational policies of Sweden and Denmark. Political documents in this analysis are therefore also examined through the literature on the subject and refer to MTI for newcomers specifically. For the media analysis, the arguments about MTI that the media observes are located. Moreover, a brief in-depth case study of two minority groups who receive MTI in Sweden and Denmark is included. For this in-depth case study, the Somali and Turkish minority groups are selected to examine – they make up a similar number within the demographics of Sweden and Denmark, respectively, and they initially emigrated to Scandinavia in the same post-war period. This analysis is concluded in the last part of this paper. The research is supported by sources which encourage making education inclusive for all citizens regardless of their descent and language background. In this way, this research complements existing views on the subject while focusing essentially on the position MTI occupies in the discourse on integration in both Sweden and Denmark.

## **Mobility and Inclusion**

*The MIME Vademecum*, the knowledge framework of this research, stands for ‘Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe’. This project addresses the challenge of how Europeans can ‘balance the requirements of mobility in a modern, integrated, technologically advanced society’ while maintaining Europe’s cultural and linguistic diversity (Grin 2018: 15). Innovative policies concerning cultural and linguistic diversity are needed to resolve the tension between mobility and inclusion in present-day Europe. The European integrating society pursues the objectives of both mobility and inclusion; nevertheless, they diverge in practice. In effect, more mobility often means less inclusion and vice versa. Mobility, on the one hand, stands for the notion of free movement across and free settlement in the EU Member States. ‘Mobility requires efficient communication among people with different language backgrounds’, and hence it also takes place in the dimension of the digital world and social media (Ibid.). Inclusion, on the other hand, refers to ‘a sense of belonging to and connection with one’s place of residence’ (Id. 19). Hence, it implies acquaintance with the local language. For newcomers, adaptation to the local environment should nevertheless not mean that they abandon their own linguistic and cultural features. It has become apparent that the tension between mobility and inclusion is especially critical in the case of language (Ibid.).

At the same time, however, by approaching this tension from a linguistic perspective, there may be solutions to how these two objectives may partly converge. *The MIME Vademecum* opts for the ‘intelligent use of social dynamics in civil society and regarding language and multilingualism’.<sup>5</sup> Mobility and inclusion taken together create social cohesion on the European level ‘also in the terms of language usage’ (Ibid: 20). Social cohesion is thus the outcome of the balance of mobility and inclusion in society, and subsequently it makes integration possible. Hence, ‘linguistic diversity must be handled as a social issue’ (Ibid: 27).

The tension between mobility and inclusion is reflected in the case of MTI for newcomers. MTI, ‘the teaching of minority languages within national systems of education’, is often a politicized object and raises the question what social worth multilingualism has in society (Salö et al. 2018: 592). The provision of MTI differs among states. It may be implemented on ‘a private or community basis or through the national curriculum of a state or a state-sponsored educational structure’ (Ibid.). An essential question in the discussion about MTI is whether states must provide MTI to newcomers.

It is a fact that providing education in the host language to newcomers would ‘make their inclusion into the host society more efficient and provides for a better position on the labour market’ (Houtkamp–Marácz 2018: 40). However, this should not lead to the full assimilation of the newcomers’ languages. According to Houtkamp and Marácz, the ‘full assimilation of migrant languages would violate the linguistic rights of migrants to speak and cultivate one’s own heritage language and violate the EU’s linguistic diversity policy’ (Ibid.). Hence, the provision of MTI is in a broader sense backed up by the following legal implications. In the first place, Article 3, paragraph 3 of the *Treaty on European Union* states that the EU ‘shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced’.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, Article 22 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* states that the EU ‘shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity’.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Article 165, paragraph 1 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* states that the EU ‘shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education

5 Amsterdam School for Regional, Transnational and European Studies (ARTES), *Migration and Inclusion in a Multicultural Europe (MIME)*.

6 Treaty on European Union, Article 3. *Official Journal* C 326, 26/10/2012 P. 0001 - 0390.

7 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 22. 26 October 2012, 2012/C 326/02.

systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity’.<sup>8</sup> Besides the former primary EU law, the secondary legal act Council Directive 77/486/EEC likewise observed more specifically that ‘language education of children of EU newcomers was of importance in advancing the mobility of persons throughout the EU’ (Dunbar 2018: 54).

The directive provided that Member States must take appropriate measures ‘to ensure the teaching of the official language or one of the official languages of the host state as well as the teaching of the child’s mother tongue and the culture of the state of origin’ (Ibid.). It is a complication for the efficient provision of MTI that this secondary legal act is a directive as directives are binding as to the result to be achieved. For the Member State, there is – within a certain time period – some room for manoeuvre as to how to implement the directive. Council Directive 77/486/EEC hence does not have a direct effect and causes an unequal provision of MTI among the EU Member States also due to the fact that education is merely an ancillary competence of the EU. The latter means that the EU can only ‘carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States’.<sup>9</sup>

MTI as a concept thus has gained legitimacy on the European level, and it is clear to policymakers that solely English is not ‘sufficient to reach out to newcomers before they learn the local languages’ (Mamadouh-el Ayadi 2018: 92). Migration agencies will accomplish their tasks most effectively by communicating with the arriving migrants in a language they understand. It would be most efficient if information about societal aspects (e.g. access to the labour market, administrative procedures, health, and education) were translated into the mother tongue of the newcomer; additionally, language in general represents ‘a means to the identification’ of the newcomer (Houtkamp 2014: 17). For example, in Göteborg, Sweden, Romanian is most commonly used by migration organizations. In a framework of multilevel governance (MLG), the complications arising from newcomers’ language competencies and their implications for the tension between mobility and inclusion may be resolved (Houtkamp–Marác 2018).

## MTI in Sweden and Denmark

In order to explain the educational policies of Sweden and Denmark in relation to migration, this paper first elaborates on the migration policy of both Sweden and Denmark. This is essential since over the years Sweden and Denmark ‘have become increasingly dissimilar in terms of migration policy’ (Myrberg 2017: 323). The first specific policy focussing on newcomers, ‘their rights and responsibilities

8 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 165. *Official Journal* C 326, 26/10/2012 P. 0001 - 0390.

9 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 6.

and their way to inclusion in the Scandinavian welfare state was created in Sweden in 1975' (Brännström et al. 2018: 26). In general, post-Second World War 'migration to Scandinavia has followed a similar pattern' in both Sweden and Denmark, even though there are some differences (Brochmann–Hagelund 2012: 8). Migration to Sweden started earlier and had a greater capacity than Denmark. In integration policy, 'the controversy between different aims for justice and welfare' has become more evident over the years (Ibid. 14). Brännström et al. explain how in Sweden integration and migration became a policy area of their own in 1998. Moreover, there was an establishment reform in 2010, which made it possible for newcomers to establish themselves in society more quickly and easily. Sweden became a 'state of hope' for refugees, among others. Various activities and measures, such as Swedish-language education, proved to be effective in helping newcomers to become more employable (Brännström et al. 2018). However, since 2015, Swedish migration policies have been both restrictive and welcoming in their nature. Denmark reacted differently to migration than Sweden around 1975. Jønsson and Petersen note that the Danish society – characterized by a homogeneous nature – was confronted with stagnation in economy and rising unemployment, which led to a more restrictive attitude towards migration and integration (Jønsson–Petersen 2012). What is subsequently interesting to note is that, unlike in Sweden, it was characteristic of the Danish discussion about migration that there was no actual (public) discussion of the conflicts arising such as assimilation and multiculturalism. This follows from the cultural differences between Sweden and Denmark that the Swedish discourse is more open and transparent, while the Danish discourse is more closed and private. Since 2001, the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) has been on the rise and demanded even more restrictive policies. Østergaard-Nielsen is a researcher of the rise of the Far Right in Europe and wrote that: 'The electoral success of the Danish People's Party has been interpreted as a Danish outcry of racism and anti-foreigner sentiment. The reality is, however, a little more complex than that' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 448). She argues that the success of the Danish People's Party is a result of the discontent of the population. How to integrate already residing refugees in Denmark remains the main theme of Danish debates about migration. Thus, in order to understand the educational policies of Sweden and Denmark, it is important to have in mind how migration policies have evolved in Sweden and Denmark and what political shifts were driving changes.

## Sweden

Before examining minority language education in Sweden, this paper will first consider the various languages spoken in Sweden. The multilingual landscape broadly consists of migrant minority languages, national minority languages, Swedish, and English. In this paper, minority language education is perceived as any language

education provided for ‘others’ (i.e. not Swedish or Danish). In practice, this takes form in language education for migrant minorities on the one hand and national minorities on the other. National minority languages have long been ignored ‘since linguistic and cultural diversity was seen as a threat to national unity in Sweden’ (Cabau 2014: 410). Notwithstanding, with Sweden’s entry into the EU in 1995 in mind, Sweden did accept Saami, Meänkieli, Finnish, Yiddish, and Romani as minority languages in 1998/1999 and subsequently ratified the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. What is interesting to note is that only in 2009 did the so-called *Language Act* established Swedish as the main language in Sweden and also reasserted the five above-listed minority languages as national minority languages. Subsequently, the act stated that ‘persons belonging to a national minority are to be given the opportunity to learn, develop and use the minority language’.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the – perhaps symbolic – recognition of national minority languages is essential to subsequently enhance the development and provision of MTI in educational policy also for migrant minority languages, which is of relevance today.

Cabau’s work clarifies that in Sweden policymakers have already responded for a long time to the needs and issues in relation to multilingualism in education as a consequence of migration. For instance, ‘the concept of MTI has a long tradition in Sweden compared to other European countries’ (Id. 409). Sweden is commonly regarded as a model country in the field of language and integration. However, there are shortcomings and complications in this field in Sweden too. The initial concept of MTI collapsed in the early 1990s along with the progressive national education policy for newcomers of that time. This caused the emergence of independent bilingual schools: MTI used to take place as part of a regular school day but was now ‘offered almost exclusively outside the regular curriculum’, in evening classes (Lindberg 2007: 77). Cabau notes about MTI in Sweden that: ‘The fact that there are shortcomings in the implementation of MTI in Sweden may come as a surprise to external observers, given the country’s good reputation in the field of minority language education policy and planning’ (Cabau 2014: 412). It seems that ‘Swedish remains central in shaping what it means to be Swedish, particularly in the case of education’ (Lundberg 2018: 48). How MTI currently plays a role within this educational culture is to be elaborated on in the analysis.

## Denmark

In Denmark, the multilingual landscape broadly consists out of migrant minority languages, Danish, and English. Denmark does not quite acknowledge national minority languages except for Faroese spoken mainly on the Faroe Islands (part of the Kingdom of Denmark) and a small German area within the Danish territory

10 Ministry of Culture, *Language Act (2009):600*. Retrieved from: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/13/81/33/c424146c.pdf>.3.

(Salö et al. 2018). Thus, while Danish is not particularly threatened, Denmark represents the type of language policy in the context of which the government has not yet ratified the status of the official language as the main language of the state or national minority languages (Siiner 2014).

The changes in power constellations in 2001 led to considerable changes in the political agenda, leading to a general negative attitude towards newcomers and bilingualism in the official discourse and the media (Ibid.). Amendments made to citizenship legislation at the time included a demand of knowledge of the Danish language as a requirement for the granting of Danish citizenship (Ibid.). Additional amendments made to the *Folkeskoleloven* (the Basic Schools Act) enacted that it was no longer obligatory for municipalities to offer free classes in the mother tongue to bilingual children from outside the EU/EEA. The latter shows a strong decentralization tendency: traditionally, the Danish education system has been characterized by local involvement according to national target subjects and guidelines. However, since 2001, the local municipalities have been the main agents responsible for the language screening of bilingual children and for providing extra classes in Danish as a second language, if necessary (Ibid.). The decentralization of minority language education has both its benefits and difficulties. Local municipalities have the necessary substantive allocative resources to solve challenges to minority language education and are closer to the people, which may lead to the most efficient problem solving in this case. However, the economic capacities of local municipalities need to be sufficient to meet their high-level responsibilities, and, as Lex and Mouritsen argue in their report on the topic: in the Danish political context, there is a lack of ‘political will to any significant degree of diversity politics’ (Lex–Mouritsen 2009: 2). Moreover, they mention the relative absence of policies in the field of minority language education. How MTI for newcomers plays a role within this educational culture is to be elaborated on in the analysis.

## Comparison

From this descriptive case study, it becomes clear that Sweden and Denmark are great cases to compare. They both are relatively ‘small and open welfare states, built around the same welfare ideology and system’ (Borevi et al. 2017: 5–6). However, Sweden and Denmark are dissimilar in their minority language education. One could characterize Sweden’s approach as ‘permissive’, while Denmark’s approach is typified as more ‘restrictive’ (Ibid: 6).

Moreover, as elaborated on in a previous research:

In Denmark’s approach towards migration and integration, the ‘society-centered’ and ‘bottom-up’ perspective is dominant. The existing cultural homogeneity in Denmark is seen as necessary for the welfare state. In Sweden, a



more ‘state-centred’ and ‘top-down’ perspective dominates, through which the modernizing welfare state advances social inclusion and equal treatment in society. (Ibid: 7)

While Sweden and Denmark thus resemble one another in essential ways, they are different with regard to organization and in the case of recognition of MTI (Salö et al. 2018: 592). For instance, unlike as in Sweden, Denmark did not adopt an official state policy with regard to multiculturalism (Ibid: 597). In line with this, the motivation to provide MTI for newcomers was not a way of meeting the demands of the society but rather an aspect of labour politics (Heglund 2002).

## Position of MTI and Its Effects

In order to evaluate what the position of MTI is in the national educational policy of both Sweden and Denmark and what this consequently means for the integration of newcomers in both countries, this comparative analysis will take two variables into account. For determining what the position of MTI is in Sweden and Denmark, this paper will analyse and compare policy documents and the media discourse of both countries. Subsequently, in order to determine what the position of MTI means for the integration of newcomers in both countries, this paper will focus on the effect of MTI through an in-depth case study of two minority groups who receive MTI in Sweden and Denmark.

### *MTI: Position*

**Table 1.** *Analysis: policy documents and media discourse on MTI in Sweden and Denmark*

Sweden	Denmark
<i>Policy Documents</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction</b> of MTI in 1976 along with an introduced multicultural policy and active recognition of minority cultures (Fernández-Jensen 2017: 7–8).</li> <li>• 1991: connection of bilingualism and interculturalism to the specific challenges and opportunities of internationalization (Ibid.).</li> <li>• 1994: <b>MTI, a subject in its own right</b> with a syllabus (Prop. 1992/92:220).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction</b> of MTI in 1976, with the primary reason of repatriation of minority cultures. Pedagogical guidelines were not set up (Fernández-Jensen 2017: 8).</li> <li>• 2002: <b>abolition of MTI</b> for non-EU citizens, which had already been a point of discussion since 1995 (Ibid.).</li> <li>• The right to MTI has not been pursued in any parliamentary motions or law proposals since 2002 (Ibid: 9).</li> </ul>

Sweden	Denmark
Policy Documents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2010: the schools' obligation to offer MTI was upgraded from regulation to law and simultaneously reinforced in pre- and secondary education (Prop. 2009/10:165).</li> <li>• The Swedish school law allows schools to offer newcomers' children in grades 1–6 half of the teaching time in the mother tongue (Fernández-Jensen 2017: 9).</li> <li>• It is <b>the objective of MTI</b> to provide students with the opportunity to develop knowledge in and about their mother tongues. At the same time, the objective makes students aware about the importance of MTI in their studying the different school subjects.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The objective of MTI</b> is for students to 'acquire competences and skills in order to become capable of understanding the spoken and written language and of expressing themselves in speaking and writing'. 'The instruction will give the students insight into culture and society and the country of origin, among other things, in order to ease the students' possible return to this country'.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
Media Discourse	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Swedish media discourse, MTI is <b>rarely discussed</b>. TCNs are welcome in the Swedish schools, and this message is also represented in the media.</li> <li>• The media does write about how Sweden and different actors consider expanding mother tongue education. 'Roughly 280,000 students are eligible for this education, but only approximately 170,000 are actively participating in the courses.' Small reforms in the organization of MTI could improve the latter. Once MTI becomes more integrated as part of the school day, rather than treated as a separate subject at the end of the day, students will be more motivated to participate in MTI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Danish media discourse, it becomes predominant that there is a discussion between the political sphere and the educational sphere about whether MTI should be abolished for TCNs. This discussion follows from the fact that there is <b>an uneven offer of MTI in Denmark</b>.</li> <li>• The municipality of Copenhagen provides MTI from their budget of 23 million Danish kroner. MTI is therefore free for TCNs. Other municipalities in Denmark do not have this financial capacity to offer MTI, which leads to an unequal situation in Denmark for TCNs and for the further integration of TCNs.</li> </ul> <p>Due to this, Pia Allerslev of the <i>Venstre</i> party wants to remove the concept of MTI as a whole. She calls MTI unnecessary and a waste of money. This caused a new debate between academics, schools, and politicians.</p>

- 11 Prop. (Bill) 1992/92:220, *En ny läroplan för grundskolan och ett nytt betygssystem för grundskolan, sameskolan, specialskolan och den obligatoriska särskolan*.  
 Prop. (Bill) 2009/10:165, *Den nya skollagen – för kunskap, valfrihet och trygghet*.  
 Swedish National Agency for Education, *Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Preschool Class and the Recreation Centre 2011*. Stockholm: Skolverket, 2011.
- 12 Danish Ministry of Education, *Modersmålsundervisning*, Fælles Mål 2009:46. Copenhagen: Undervisningsministeriet, 2009.

Sweden	Denmark
<i>Media Discourse</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most used languages in mother tongue education in Sweden are Arabic, Somali, English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Persian, Kurdish, Spanish, Finnish, Albanian, and Polish.</li> <li>• Politicians from the Radical Party argue that MTI should remain because mastering one language completely will make it easier for the student to learn other subjects to their full effect. Schools contend that MTI improves the quality of society and social cohesion. TCNs get the feeling that their culture is accepted in the host country, which contributes to a better integrated society.</li> <li>• Regardless of what the outcome of this debate will be, municipalities will continue to offer MTI to EU/EEA citizens as well as citizens from the Faroe Islands and Greenland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politicians from the Radical Party argue that MTI should remain because mastering one language completely will make it easier for the student to learn other subjects to their full effect. Schools contend that MTI improves the quality of society and social cohesion. TCNs get the feeling that their culture is accepted in the host country, which contributes to a better integrated society.</li> <li>• Regardless of what the outcome of this debate will be, municipalities will continue to offer MTI to EU/EEA citizens as well as citizens from the Faroe Islands and Greenland.</li> </ul>

In its essence, the Danish and Swedish school systems are quite similar. According to Telhaug, Mediås, and Aasen, “they combine state centralization in the choice and prioritization of subjects and in the formulation of binding learning goals for the individual subjects with a high degree of teacher/school autonomy in deciding how to achieve these goals through teaching style and curriculum selection” (Fernández-Jensen 2017: 6). Swedish and Danish school systems hence share a commitment to comprehensive public schooling in order to reduce socioeconomic inequality (Fernández-Jensen 2017: 6).

However, from the policy document analysis (see *Table 1*), it becomes clear that Sweden and Denmark diverge in their policy on MTI. The conclusions stemming from this analysis are based on the relevant literature taking likewise into account the political dynamics behind the provision of MTI in Sweden and Denmark. In Sweden, most of the political parties understand that MTI is ‘vital to the intellectual and personal development of newcomers, and particularly children, which is in turn favourable to their integration into the host country’ (Ibid: 9). The latter is not the case in Denmark. Following from this understanding, in Sweden, MTI has a relatively strong legal and institutional support, while in Denmark MTI is anchored more liberally in legal and institutional frameworks, and ‘thus it occupies a vague and unstable position in the national curriculum as well as in the local context’ (Salö et al. 2018: 593). This observation is recognized in the fact that the Danish Conservative Party and the Liberal Party both argued in 2002 that no scientific evidence supported the instrumental value of MTI for

learning Danish and, moreover, that cultural identity belonged to the private sphere and not to the school. The main motivation in Denmark for MTI was to sustain children's language skills in order to facilitate a future repatriation to their countries of origin (Ibid: 598).

From the media discourse analysis (see *Table 1*), it becomes clear that MTI in Denmark is first and foremost a political matter and has become an issue in the MLG organization of MTI. Several actors cooperate in this matter at the national level and the local level as well. A similar MLG organization of MTI is enacted in Sweden, where transitions and the overall process, however, seem more stable and hence do not cause conflicting political debates in the media. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Swedish discussion on MTI may be defined as having been academically founded, while the Danish discussion on MTI remained a matter and 'balancing act for political ends' (Ibid: 592). This remark, suggested by Salö et al., could thus explain the difference in the position of MTI in the media discourse of both countries and has consequences for the further implementation of MTI in Sweden and Denmark. In Sweden, MTI is a right within the multicultural scheme, while in Denmark MTI has become predominantly an instrument for enhancing the acquisition of Danish and the future repatriation of TCNs to their country of origin (Id. 603). Danish politicians debate about the question whether MTI is an investment or an obligation in order to solve integration issues in society.

## **MTI: Effect**

It is in the interest of this research to study a case of a minority group receiving MTI in the countries concerned in this paper. In the light of two studies, this paper will examine the effect of MTI for the Somali diaspora in Sweden and a Turkish minority in Denmark. As conclusion, it is possible to determine what MTI means for the integration of newcomers in Sweden and Denmark.

### *Sweden*

In Sweden, the Somali diaspora is a major group that deserves an in-depth study. Migration to Sweden from Somalia (the Horn of Africa) began in the late 1980s as a consequence of the downfall of the Somali state and following civil wars (Palm–Ganuza–Hedman 2019: 65). Until now, this migration flow from Somalia is still an ongoing process. Thus, a relatively large Somali diaspora has emerged in Sweden. Most of the Somali students in Sweden are entitled to MTI in the Swedish curriculum, and many Somali-speaking parents choose to enrol their children for MTI. Palm, Ganuza, and Hedman illustrate that it is difficult to maintain and develop a minoritized language in a majority language context. Moreover, they argue that the use of language by (young) people will also depend on the 'wider

society's attitude and reaction to the use of the language and to multilingual practices in general' (Id. 64). From the article by Palm et al., it becomes, however, clear that MTI has the effect that the Somali language is not solely used in the private sphere at home anymore but also in the daily lives of the Somali diaspora and at school (Id. 72). MTI thus achieves and contributes to further integration, also in combination with the increased linguistic independence of the Somali diaspora. In a sense, MTI hence prevents the segregation of Somali-speaking minorities in multicultural Sweden.

### *Denmark*

In Denmark, the Turkish minority is a major social factor and thus is worth studying more closely. Turkish migration to Denmark went hand in hand with the general migration flow from Turkey to Europe from the 1960s onwards. In comparison to the Somali-speaking parents in Sweden, Turkish parents have a strong disinterest towards school due to problematic school administration–parent relations and the lack of MTI (especially in Odense, Denmark.) The issues originate from the fact that students only know limited Turkish and limited Danish and not one language very well. The concept of MTI is built on the fact that 'having systematic mother tongue knowledge facilitates development of the secondary language structure' (Deveci–Gunduz 2012: 5809). Hence, effective implementation of MTI would improve both Turkish and Danish and would therefore subsequently create a new social cohesion, as explained in the Somali/Swedish case. However, the Danish municipalities, with the exception of Copenhagen, stopped providing MTI due to economic reasons, as recognized in the media discourse analysis as well (Ibid.).

## **Conclusions**

To sum up, this study has shown that, indeed, the national educational policies of Sweden and Denmark are dissimilar in terms of the position of MTI for newcomers. What this means for the integration of newcomers in both countries has been clarified via the concepts of mobility and inclusion. These concepts are often in tension with each other. However, in the case of language policy, mobility and inclusion can also exist in a certain balance, which would subsequently enhance integration and social cohesion according to *the MIME Vademecum*, the knowledge framework of this research. This is withal true in the case of MTI provision for newcomers in their host country.

In conclusion, MTI has a strong position in the national educational policy of Sweden; it is of importance in academic debates and in the media discourse on migration and integration. Despite small implementation problems in the organization

of MTI and the emergence of independent bilingual schools, MTI has a major influence on preventing segregation, as visible in the case of the Somali participants in MTI. In Denmark, MTI has rather become a balancing act for political ends. From the comparative analysis, it can be concluded that the position of MTI is weak in the national educational policy of Denmark; MTI has been abolished for TCNs since 2002, but municipalities continue to have the right to provide MTI for them. However, this is problematic for the municipalities in financial terms and causes the unequal provision of MTI throughout Denmark. Danish politicians use this situation to do away with the concept of MTI as a whole. As in Sweden, there is no possibility for a TCN in Denmark to take up school subjects in their own mother tongue during the regular school days. The case of the Turkish students demonstrates that there is a need for an effective implementation of MTI in Denmark. Nevertheless, the main objective of MTI in Denmark seems to be facilitating future repatriation of TCNs to their country of origin, which is problematic for the process of integration as such. In comparison to Denmark, the further integration of newcomers as a consequence of MTI is hence more successful in Sweden.

All in all, the weak position of MTI in Denmark requires international attention among academics and European policy makers. By taking into account the social value of language and the concepts of mobility and inclusion in a specific context, this research has complemented existing research on the subject of MTI from a new perspective. In future research, it would be valuable to be able to interview actors providing and receiving MTI, to take into account again the position of MTI in policy documents and the actual effect of this in practice. This research method could be used to integrate new observations in order to provide a comprehensive awareness of the importance of MTI for newcomers and the consequences thereof for European integration in general.

## References

- BOREVI, Karin–JENSEN, Kristian Kriegbaum–MOURITSEN, Per. 2017. The Civic Turn of Immigrant Integration Policies in the Scandinavian Welfare States. *Comparative Migration Studies* 15(9): 1–14. <https://doi-org.proxy.uba.uva.nl:2443/10.1186/s40878-017-0052-4>.
- BRÄNNSTRÖM, Lotta–GIRITLY-NYGREN, Katarina–LIDÉN, Gustav–NYHLÉN, Jon. 2018. Lived Experiences of Changing Integration Policies: Immigrant Narratives of Institutional Support and Labour Market Inclusion/Exclusion in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 8(1): 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.1515/njmr-2018-0009>.

- BROCHMANN, Grete–HAGELUND, Anniken. 2012. Welfare State, Nation and Immigration. In: Brochmann, Grete–Hagelund, Anniken (eds.), *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945–2010*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 1–24.
- CABAU, Béatrice. 2014. Minority Language Education Policy and Planning in Sweden. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 15(4): 409–425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2014.927086>.
- DEVECI, Asli–GUNDUZ, Hasan Basri. 2012. Educational and Administrative Problems Encountered at Schools by Turkish Students in Denmark. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences* 46: 5805–5810.
- DUNBAR, Robert. 2018. What Are the General Legal Implications of MIME Research? In: Grin, François et al. (eds.), *The MIME Vademecum: Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe*. Grandson: Artgraphic Cavin SA. 54–55.
- DUNBAR, Robert–McKELVEY, Róisín. 2018. Must States Provide Mother-Tongue Education to Migrants? In: Grin, François et al. (eds.), *The MIME Vademecum: Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe*. Grandson: Artgraphic Cavin SA. 90–91.
- FERNÁNDEZ, Christian–JENSEN, Kristian Kriegbaum. 2017. The Civic Integrationist Turn in Danish and Swedish School Politics. *Comparative Migration Studies* 5(1): 1–20.
- FRANÇOIS, Grin. 2018. The MIME Vademecum: An Introduction. In: Grin, François et al. (eds.), *The MIME Vademecum: Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe*. Grandson: Artgraphic Cavin SA. 14–25.
- FRANÇOIS, Grin et al. (eds.). 2018. Key Results. In: Grin, François et al. (eds.), *The MIME Vademecum: Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe*. Grandson: Artgraphic Cavin SA. 26–27.
- HEGELUND, Lene. 2002. *A Comparative Language Policy Analysis of Minority Mother Tongue Education in Denmark and Sweden*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.
- HOUTKAMP, Christopher. 2014. Integrating Language in Theories on Long-Distance Movement: Migration vs Mobility & the Concept of Motility. *Amsterdam Working Papers in Multilingualism* 1(1): 16–26.
2018. How Can Language Policy Improve Migrants’ “Motility”? In: Grin, François et al. (eds.), *The MIME Vademecum: Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe*. Grandson: Artgraphic Cavin SA. 98–99.
- HOUTKAMP, Christopher–MARÁČZ, László. 2018. Are Traditional Minority Languages a Bench Marking for the Rights of Migrant Languages in the European Union? *Belvedere Meridionale* 30(4): 40–60. <https://doi.org/10.14232/belv.2018.4.3>.
- JØNSSON, Vad Heidi–PETERSEN, Klaus. 2012. Denmark: A National Welfare State Meets the World. In: Brochmann, Grete–Hagelund, Anniken (eds.), *Immigration*

- Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945–2010*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 97–148.
- LEX, Sine–MOURITSEN, Per. 2009. Approaches to Cultural Diversity in the Danish Education System: The Case of Public Schools. PhD dissertation. University of Aarhus.
- LINDBERG, Inger. 2007. Multilingual Education: A Swedish Perspective. In: Carlson, Marie–Rabo, Annika–Gök, Fatma (eds.), *Education in ‘Multicultural’ Societies – Turkish and Swedish Perspectives*. Stockholm: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. 71–90.
- LUNDBERG, Adrian. 2018. Multilingual Educational Language Policies in Switzerland and Sweden: A Meta-Analysis. *Language Problems and Language Planning* 42(1): 45–69. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lplp.00005.lun>.
- MAMADOUH, Virginie–EL AYADI, Nesrin. 2018. Is English Sufficient to Reach Out to Newcomers before They Learn The Local Language(s)? In: Grin, François et al. (eds.), *The MIME Vademecum: Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe*. Grandson: Artgraphic Cavin SA. 92–93.
- MYRBERG, Gunnar. 2017. Local Challenges and National Concerns: Municipal Level Responses to National Refugee Settlement Policies in Denmark and Sweden. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 83(2): 322–339. <https://doi-org.proxy.uba.uva.nl:2443/10.1177/0020852315586309>.
- ØSTERGAARD-NIELSEN, Eva. 2003. Counting the Cost: Denmark’s Changing Migration Policies. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27(2): 448–454. <https://doi-org.proxy.uba.uva.nl:2443/10.1111/1468-2427.00457>.
- PALM, Clara–GANUZA, Natalia–HEDMAN, Christina. 2019. Language Use and Investment among Children and Adolescents of Somali Heritage in Sweden. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 40(1): 64–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2018.1467426>.
- SALÖ, Linus et al. 2018. Mother Tongue Instruction in Sweden and Denmark: Language Policy, Cross-Field Effects, and Linguistic Exchange Rates. *Language Policy* 17(4): 591–610. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-018-9472-8>.
- SIINER, Maarja. 2014. Decentralisation and Language Policy: Local Municipalities’ Role in Language Education Policies. Insights from Denmark and Estonia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 35(6): 603–617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.889143>.