Article

# Constructing the "Good Citizen": Discourses of Social Inclusion in Swedish Civic Orientation

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## Abstract

Sweden has long been described as a beacon of multiculturalism and generous access to citizenship, with integration policies that seek to offer free and equal access to the welfare state. In this article, we use the policy of Civic Orientation for Newly Arrived Migrants as a case with which to understand how migrants' inclusion is discursively articulated and constructed by the different constituencies involved in interpreting the policy and organising and teaching the course. We do this by employing Foucault's closely interrelated concepts of technology of self, political technology of individuals, and governmentality. With the help of critical discourse analysis, we illustrate how migrants' inclusion is framed around an opposition between an idealised "good citizen" and a "target population" (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). In our analysis, we draw on individual interviews with 14 people involved in organising civic orientation and on classroom observations of six civic orientation courses. Firstly, we show how migrants are constructed as unknowing and in need of being fostered by the state. Secondly, we illustrate how social inclusion is presented as being dependent upon labour market participation, both in terms of finding work and in terms of behaving correctly in the workplace. Lastly, we show how migrant women are constructed as being problematically chained to the home and therefore needing to subject themselves to a specific political technology of self to be included.

## Keywords

citizenship; civic orientation; critical discourse analysis; Foucault; migration

## 1. Introduction

Recent decades have seen an increasing number of countries in the Global North introducing so-called civic integration programmes; this trend is often referred to as the "civic turn" (Joppke, 2017). These initiatives aim to integrate migrants into what is presented as the country of arrival's "culture," "values," and laws (Jensen et al., 2017). As such, it is expected that those who take part in these courses will internalise a loyalty towards "democratic and liberal values" (Mouritsen et al., 2019). While the programmes vary in form, there has been little empiri-

cal research on whether they actually have a direct effect on economic or social integration. An exception is a large comparative study by Goodman and Wright (2015) that clearly demonstrated that such programmes do not have a substantial impact on migrants' integration. At this juncture, we want to state upfront that we take some critical distance from the notion of "integration," which is something of a floating signifier that carries very different meanings. That being said, "integration" is what states use rhetorically in order to deal with a variety of issues related to migrants. It is then an empirical matter to understand what integration means in practice. This

can be done, inter alia, by studying how state initiatives that aim at enhancing "integration" such as civic orientation programmes are implemented.

In Sweden, these initiatives, called Civic Orientation for Newly Arrived Migrants (henceforth CO), have been held since 2010 (SFS, 2010) and comprise 100 hours of teaching. CO is part of the so-called Establishment Programme, which requires those defined as "newly arrived" to participate in a number of activities in order to receive benefits and social support. It is offered by the Swedish Employment Agency, and while there are economic incentives to participate, it is the migrants' responsibility to register, albeit with the help of the municipality of residence. Not registering leads to not receiving benefits. and registering and not attending when registered may lead to having to repay the financial aid. Although the programme is not mandatory, almost all newly arrived migrants end up registering due to financial support (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022, pp. 22–23). It should be noted that this does not include everyone who migrates to Sweden, just asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as their relatives. Thus, CO is an initiative aimed at *some* migrants. However, a migrant in Sweden can choose to take part in the CO course but not sign up for the Establishment Programme. CO classes are offered in the migrants' "mother tongues" and, according to policy documents, should be based on dialogue and respect (SFS, 2010). As in other countries (cf. Blankvoort et al., 2021), one can only be part of the Establishment Programme for three years, but in the Swedish case, there are no additional penalties, such as fines, for not meeting certain requirements or not attending the courses. Whilst CO is not legally tied to obtaining citizenship (at the time of writing), there are discussions about introducing a citizenship test that will assess both language (Swedish) and civics (SOU, 2021; Tidö Agreement, 2022).

Because of this focus on dialogue, CO organisers are reluctant to view the courses as a form of education. Furthermore, throughout our extensive fieldwork and interviews, it was consistently claimed that CO was not formally an educational provision but rather a "study circle." In study circles, which are popular in Swedish adult education, the "focus is on the individual, and the teacher does not have a central position as is the case in much formal education" (P. Åberg, 2016, p. 413). They are "characterized by equality and learning is understood to be a collective effort where the experiences of the participants hold a central position" (P. Åberg, 2016, p. 413).

Notwithstanding what CO organisers say, previous research has demonstrated the educational aspect of CO and its role in contributing to changing the participants' views and behaviours (Abdulla & Risenfors, 2013; L. Åberg & Mäkitalo, 2017; Milani et al., 2021). Such discipline characterises all adult education in Sweden, which is "a site for the normalization of students, aiming at adapting individuals into what is deemed desirable in terms of how a citizen should be and act" (Fejes et al.,

2018, p. 37). However, in the specific case of CO, the fostering of migrants is in direct tension with one of the expressed aims of CO: to give participants the "ability to shape not only their own lives, but to also take part in the shaping of Swedish society" (SOU, 2010, p. 14).

In this article, we take CO as an empirical case in point through which to engage with the focus of this thematic issue on language and inclusion in CO. By language, we mean "ways of representing aspects of the world" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124). Analytically, this means that we view language as a set of resources through which people make sense of and create social reality. These representations are what we refer to as discursive constructions; that is, patterns of language use that are observable through their repetition across time by multiple people. To analyse inclusion and integration in CO, the discourses reveal how migrants are imagined and what it means to be included or integrated.

One key discursive construction that appears, both explicitly and implicitly, in our data in relation to inclusion is that of the "good citizen." Within migration research, the term "good citizen" is often used to describe the construction of an idealised individual that participates in society. Crucially, the word "citizen" here does not imply simply legal status but also ways of being and acting (cf. Milani et al., 2021), including "repertoires of possible acts and social roles that are deemed to be 'good'" (Pykett et al., 2010, p. 524). These acts and social roles are built on imaginations of "social beings shaped by national culture, national obligations, and national history" (Anderson, 2013, p. 178), but they also demarcate non-desirable and non-national acts and roles (Schinkel, 2010, p. 165). Therefore, the idealized "good citizen" is imagined as someone who acts in and has "loyalty towards society" (Schinkel, 2008, p. 19). Against this backdrop, the main research questions that frame this article are:

1. How is an ideal "good citizen" discursively articulated and constructed in CO by those who organise this educational provision and by those who teach it?
2. In opposition to whom is the "good citizen" constructed?

Before answering these questions with the help of a detailed analysis of relevant data, we first want to present the theoretical concepts that inform this article.

## 1.1. The Technology of Self and the Political Technology of Individuals

Foucault's work on governmentality is particularly relevant to understanding how the Swedish state seeks to influence migrants' views and behaviours, not so much through overt punishment, but through a more subtle overhauling *from within*. Foucault argued that, in modern times, power and governance have very specific

characteristics. When authorities like the church lost much of their influence, the exercise of power and governance became more individualised through what Foucault (1988a, p. 19; see also Rabinow, 1984) called "governmentality." This is a specific rationality of government that operates through indirect techniques of self-management, which become internalised and influence individuals' actions without them being conscious of it. However, whilst the state focuses on exercising power at the level of the individual, it also strives to construct, maintain, and uphold a governable collective. In practice, the state strives towards an "integration of the individuals in a community or in a totality [that] results from a constant correlation between an increasing individualization and the reinforcement of this totality" (Foucault, 1988b, pp. 161–162). The process of doing this is what Foucault called the "political technology of individuals" (Foucault, 1988b, pp. 161–162). In the context of our study, this process can be understood as discourses that work to promote, reinforce, and encourage a specific way of being a good Swedish citizen. In practice, the individual achieves this through technologies of the *self*, which can be described as how:

> Individuals…effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1988a, p. 18)

Importantly, in using these terms, neither Foucault nor we imply a normative stance on whether these are, in and of themselves, good or bad. Instead, we see them as examples of the productive nature of power in creating "domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Rabinow, 1984, p. 205). In the analysis below, we follow how such "domains of objects and rituals of truth" are discursively constructed within the context of CO in Sweden.

## 1.2. Contextualising Integration in Sweden

The integration and migration literature has long heralded Sweden as a beacon of multiculturalism, with generous access to citizenship and voluntary integration policies organised through free and equal access to the welfare state (cf. Borevi, 2012). However, the accuracy of that characterisation is debatable (see, for example, Ålund & Schierup, 1991; Lundström & Hübinette, 2020). Moreover, the Swedish state has tightened its migration and integration policies over the last few decades (see, for example, Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2019; Milani et al., 2021; Schierup & Scarpa, 2017; Vesterberg, 2017). Crucially, an ongoing weakening of the welfare state and support systems has disproportionately affected people with migration backgrounds due to racialised segregation (cf. Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2019; Lundström & Hübinette, 2020; Schierup & Scarpa, 2017; Vesterberg,

2017). In addition to economic segregation, the construction of the migrant "other" has become increasingly salient in public and political discourse (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2019, p. 122) as has the assertion of "duties overriding rights" (p. 125). In terms of inclusion, this has meant that integration has come to be primarily "evaluated and discussed in terms of measurable successes and failures, such as labour market participation rates, migrant access to housing, problems related to segregation, language acquisition, or use of social benefits" (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019, p. 8). The response to this has been for migrants to "demonstrate that they are active citizens, who are in the process of becoming 'productive' citizens" (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019, p. 19). In reading Foucault, one could argue that the political technology of individuals initially constructs migrants as not participating in or as being outside of society; the expected response is then for the migrants themselves to change and work their technologies of self to improve themselves and become integrated.

Understood in this way, integration is a zero-sum game that works to eliminate anomalies (Favell, 2022). In other words, the state articulates a political technology of individuals to construct a governable population in which these anomalies do not exist. This is not something completely new; as Foucault (1988b, p. 146) pointed out, modern societies have tended to constitute themselves "through the exclusion of some others: criminals, mad people, and," as we argue in this article, migrants. Hence, these "target populations" are not pre-existing givens but are the result of politically motivated projects of social imagination (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Within this discursive process, migrants from places understood to be "dangerous, poor, and otherwise undesirable" (Rosenberg, 2022, p. 68) come to represent the "absolute other" (cf. de Beauvoir, 1949/1953) and therefore require a complete internal overhaul, which will optimise them (Foucault, 1988a).

Notably, this form of categorisation does not apply to all migrants but singles out some on the basis of colonial legacies and classifications (Favell, 2022; Rosenberg, 2022) and racial and classed positionalities within the international economic system (cf. Ahmed, 2012, p. 78; Bhabha, 1994, p. xiv; Manser-Egli, 2023, p. 10). Herein, it is important to note that while our analysis is generally about the construction of groups, these processes of governmentality occur at the level of the individual, and whether or not someone is classified as "integrated" by the state or others is presented as an "individual-level trait" (Schinkel, 2018, p. 3), which is achievable through internal processes of "self-improvement." Thus, the discursive construction of such target populations and the implementation of policies to generate inclusion are more about how migrants are believed to fail to fit the mould for "being included" than whether the policy goal is achievable in the first place (Ahmed, 2012). In other words, the policy "reveals more about those who articulate ideas about it and decide on integration

measures than it does about those who are the target of integration" (Manser-Egli, 2023, p. 2).

While these dynamics have been illustrated in previous studies (cf. Blankvoort et al., 2021, 2023), they have been based primarily on the analysis of policy documents and teaching materials. Such analyses are rich and have also provided important insights about Sweden (Milani et al., 2022; Silow Kallenberg & Sigvardsdotter 2019). However, textual analysis can only offer a partial view that does not account for what *happens* in the classrooms. For example, in our ethnographic fieldwork, the "official" textbook *Boken om Sverige* (*The Book About Sweden*) was only used in some of the courses, and the people leading and organising the courses had a larger influence on what was actually discussed (cf. Lipsky, 2010).

The remainder of this article presents how those organising CO discuss their role, the broader aims of CO, and the target population, in addition to ethnographic classroom observations that illustrate how these discourses are relayed to participating migrants. We start by outlining our research methodology and the data used in the analysis and then analyse the findings. We show how migrants are constructed as "unknowing" and in need of support in order to become "good citizens." We then illustrate how fitting into the labour market is intimately tied up with what it means to be a "good citizen" and show that CO is itself a disciplining agent that familiarises the participants with the welfare state and offers an embodied experience of what it means to take part in Swedish society. We also illustrate how "the migrant woman" plays a key role in the labour market discourse of social inclusion: She is constructed as someone who must submit herself to the state's political technology of individuals and leave the home in order to become a "good citizen.''

## 2. Methodology and Data

Our analysis takes inspiration from critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) to trace and analyse the discursive construction of both the "good citizen" and the "target population" in CO. In practice, this means analysing multiple statements to uncover the logic, assumptions, and conditions for social inclusion in Sweden. We draw on two data sets: interviews and ethnographic classroom observations. In the winter of 2019–2020 we conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with civil servants involved in organising and implementing CO in three large Swedish municipalities, some of whom had responsibilities for entire regions. These organisers all held official positions in which they had to operationalise the national policy about CO and implement it after its ratification in 2010 (SFS, 2010). The interviews were coded thematically using NVivo to identify patterns of discourse about how these social actors understood CO, its purpose, and its strengths and weaknesses. We focused on public servants because, as recently argued in *Social Inclusion*, those working in welfare institutions play a key role in the lived experiences

of migrants: "They set up boundaries concerning who belongs, how much they belong, and under which conditions" (Menke & Rumpel, 2022, p. 225). In other words, they are the long arm of the state enacting political technologies of individuals. In the analysis below, we refer to these public servants as "CO organisers."

To trace whether (and if so, how) these discourses were also present in the actual interactions between CO participants and communicators, we draw on ethnographic data from six different CO courses—three in English and four in Arabic—from three large Swedish municipalities. These courses took place over four months in the spring of 2020, around the time of the onset of Covid-19. Therefore, about a third of the data was generated in person and the rest online through Zoom and Skype. No interpreters were needed because the research team had members who were fluent in English and Arabic. We took the position of participant observers, meaning that whilst we did not interrupt the class, we spoke when asked to and actively participated in break times. The fieldnotes were taken by hand, we did not store any personal information, and the participants' names were immediately pseudonymised. In this article, we focus on the "communicators," who themselves have migration backgrounds and good knowledge of both the migrants' countries of origin and Sweden.

## 3. Data Analysis

Sweden has a long history of "interven[ing] in the social body" (Fejes et al., 2018, p. 11) through social engineering (Larsson et al., 2012). In other words, the political technology of individuals has historically affected everyone, not just migrants. Lately, the Swedish welfare state has moved away from macro-based social engineering through broad programmes and support networks towards individualised governance and test-based measures (cf. Larsson et al., 2012, pp. 8–9). We outlined above how the policy documents governing CO emphasises participation, dialogue, and reflection, but as Ahmed (2009, p. 29) convincingly argued, "commitment is not given by the document, but depends upon the work generated around the document." As one CO organiser put it: "We actually do not have any expected outcomes [laughing]. We only have the policy directives to conform to." So, if there are no expected outcomes, how do organisers articulate the purpose of CO? As we will see in the next section, it is possible to answer this question by understanding how the target population is constructed as unknowing and in need of fostering and disciplining. Against this backdrop, inclusion is defined through labour market participation, and migrant women are constructed as being most in need of the political technology of the individual.

### 3.1. Fostering and Disciplining the Unknowing Migrant

In our interviews, the organisers often expressed how those partaking in CO needed to be fostered into citizens

because they were believed to be completely unaware of how to function in society. As one organiser put it: "Well, for an…for a person who comes…who is new in a, in a society knows nothing, by definition…what are your rights and duties?" Here, they justify the need for CO as a political technology of self through the claim that those who take part in the course do not know anything. This statement constructs the migrant as some kind of tabula rasa that needs to be helped. Tabula rasa discourses have previously been identified in Spain and other contexts and function to construct migrants "as lacking in many aspects (training, health habits, nourishment, etc.) and thus, not as possible possessors of valuable (upper)middle-class capitals" (Garrido & Codó, 2017, pp. 45–46). As such, it is a technique that fails to account for migrants' previous experiences and routines. Because of its treatment of migrants as lacking knowledge, tabula rasa is a handy metaphor through which a state can manage migration, viewing migrants in need of internalizing new values in accordance with the desires of the state, and making such values their own (cf. Garrido & Codó, 2017). The expression "knowing nothing" is interesting and is certainly problematic because migrant adults have lived in other societies before and therefore have at least *some* prior knowledge of what it means to be part of a social context. The statement also reinforces the power relationship between those organising CO and the target population. Through CO, migrants can learn what their rights and duties are. Crucially, the rights and duties that migrants must learn are discursively defined through the teaching material used in CO classes (on how the material in CO is developed see L. Åberg, 2020). Later in the interview, the same organiser went on to say:

> If you are born or educated in a country, you get it [knowledge] through living and through education because it's part of the educational mission to foster [laughing] citizens….If you haven't gone through this education, who is going to foster you? Who will help you be a citizen, with all that comes with that?

Again, the target population is discursively constructed as unknowing and CO is presented explicitly as a form of fostering. Importantly, education as fostering is something that runs throughout Swedish education in general (cf. Fejes et al., 2018; Nuottaniemi, 2023), and part of the declared purpose of the educational system is to foster citizens (Skolverket, 2019, p. 7). However, it is clear in our material that fostering takes a particular form in CO, with adult migrants represented as blank slates that need to be filled (cf. Milani et al., 2021). In these examples, we see how CO is a political technology of individuals, which constructs the target population as ignorant and in need of help and helps discipline migrants to undergo an internal revision. Furthermore, the organiser positions themself and, by extension, CO as a whole, as responsible for the fostering of "good citizens." Whilst the notion of the

"good citizen" is only implicitly assumed in this example, it was more overtly thematised in other interviews.

On one occasion, another organiser reflected on when a migrant could be considered integrated, stating: "If one comes…like this, comes in at the one end and then you are supposed to go down this assembly line, and what comes out? You know, what is the finished product?" They then critically reflected on the metaphor of the "assembly line," concluding that it was a "complicated issue." This quote illustrates how CO is portrayed as a machine into which participants must insert themselves. The migrants are dehumanised and imagined as docile bodies moving down an assembly line to become finished products, who may then be fitted into Swedish society. Here, taking part in CO means subjecting oneself to the technology of individuals and performing technologies of self to make oneself included, thus becoming a "good citizen." Significantly, it also illuminates how the tabula rasa metaphor (cf. Garrido & Codó, 2017) is operationalised and the participating migrants are expected to become "good citizens" through partaking in the course.

So, what does the assembly line look like in the classroom? When concluding a session on the importance of health, which covered such diverse topics as dental care, the importance of mental health, cancer screenings, and vaccinations, a communicator stated that: "It's important to write down everything….For you this is new!" (fieldnotes, April 2020). Here, the communicator positions themself as the authority and the participants as in need of help. The boundary between the two is drawn in terms of the knowledge that dental health is important, that cancer is dangerous, and that vaccinations are necessary. These assumptions are congruous with other observations in CO in which participants are disciplined and socialised into eating specific food such as rye bread (Milani et al., 2021). Importantly, however, the example above also highlights how CO works as an institutional agent. By participating in writing down information, the participants are disciplined into a social context that places a high value on literacy (Franker, 2004) and even has some of the highest demands on literacy in the world (Myrberg, 2001). In practice, these demands mean that people in physical and manual vocations are also required to textually document their labour and that the workers are required to interact with and interpret a large amount of text on a daily basis in order to function in the workplace (cf. Nikolaidou, 2014). However, these demands are also present in citizen/state communication and, from the moment they arrive, migrants are expected to digest and understand letters and texts from state agencies.

### 3.2. Social Inclusion or Labour Market Inclusion?

In addition to knowing *how to act* in order to be included, inclusion itself comes with an articulated duty to work. In Sweden, social inclusion for migrants has become increasingly synonymous with entry into the labour

market (Vesterberg, 2017, p. 141; see also Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019) and "an uncompromising duty to work at any price" (Schierup & Scarpa, 2017, p. 74). We can see an example of such an obsession when the "good citizen" is explicitly defined by another CO organiser as "citizens who are compliant, who are not a burden for the system…who contribute to development, and who contribute economically to strengthen the system." The organiser then reflected on how the "good citizen" is not something that is explicitly discussed within their organisation nor a guiding principle for how they plan and organise CO, yet the articulated "good citizen" still has a specific form that revolves around work and not being a burden to the state. Bearing this in mind, a discourse of the "uncompromising duty to work" keeps appearing in our interviews and classroom interactions. To give an example from our fieldnotes:

> [A participant] commented: "It is not the work that is difficult, finding the work is." [The communicator] then said that opportunities to work are available, and it is not difficult to find them. What is difficult is knowing what you, yourselves, really want. (Fieldnotes, March 2020)

Here, the communicator refutes the argument that there are no jobs and instead puts the responsibility on the participants. Again, it is argued that the difficulty lies in (not) knowing, and the migrants are encouraged to operate on and transform themselves (Foucault, 1988a, p. 17). This form of responsibilisation is repeated on a different occasion by the same communicator when responding to a statement regarding how some Swedish people have a negative perception of migrants: "It is the responsibility of newcomers to change this idea, if it is there. They should prove the opposite of this image through hard work and study" (fieldnotes, March 2020). Strikingly, the communicator here places the responsibility for changing people's views and racist assumptions on the migrants themselves. In this way, the communicator voices a discourse that "reinforces a neoliberal form of racialization that casts immigrants as responsible for overcoming their markedness through soft skills accumulation" (Allan, 2016, pp. 618–619). It also cements the boundary between those who are integrated or included—the "good citizen"—and those who are not.

Later in the course, the participants were also asked to include as much as possible in their CVs to prove that "you are sociable, hard-working, and not isolated, distracted, or a burden on the country" (fieldnotes, April 2020). Once again, we can see a dichotomy between the assumed "good" and "bad" citizens, and the participants were given the option to present themselves with the help of certain skills and actions. This is in line with research on similar courses in Europe. In one such course in Spain, "migrants learn to adapt themselves as an object of commodification to the needs and expectations of a potential buyer and to eventually raise the desirability of their labour power on specific economic markets" (Del Percio, 2018, p. 256). By the same token, CO in Sweden constructs and presents how the "good citizen" is not only meant to be performed but also, and perhaps more importantly, should be *achieved* by the migrants themselves.

However, inclusion is not just a matter of finding work and "contributing to society," but also of *how to behave* in the workplace. In the classroom, a communicator emphasised that "it is good also to ensure that the meals we take to the workplace are not very smelly because there are people who don't like or feel comfortable with smells, especially because Swedes don't open windows and doors a lot" (fieldnotes, May 2020). The association between migrants and foods that smell has been described before in the context of adult education in Sweden (Eriksson, 2010, p. 135), as has the disciplining of migrants into eating specific foods (Milani et al., 2021). This is an example of how assimilationist discourses about how to behave like Swedes are disguised as "workplace culture" (cf. Allan, 2016, p. 639), and how belonging is "contingent upon whether they are perceived to fit within arbitrary, pre-determined parameters" (Haw, 2021, p. 3175). Therefore, migrants are told not only to conform to certain behaviours connected with the job itself, but also to abstain from eating certain foods that might disturb Swedish olfactory norms.

One specific group is consistently constructed both as the furthest from the labour market and as the most in need of help: *the migrant woman*. It is to this discursive construction that we now turn.

### 3.3. "The Migrant Woman"

Throughout all the courses we followed, the topic of gender equality was approached by talking about women as a group. In this discourse, women—and especially migrant women—are tied closely to the home (see Mulinari, 2021), which paradoxically constructs them as both uniquely preconditioned for care and as representing repressive and patriarchal structures and thus as threats to society (Mulinari & Lundqvist, 2017, p. 129). Why "migrant women" are located in the home and not in education or at work was argued by one of the organisers as follows:

> You know, the reasons for women mostly may be, is the waiting time for childcare. It is being on parental leave. You are pregnant, and then you end up delaying the entire establishment process. That is to say, they do not attend SFI [language classes].

Another organiser reflected that, in the "Swedish context," for "people who come from a very rich background, it may be the case that the woman is at home a lot more in relation to the man, who is the breadwinner"; yet this is not seen as a problem. In these statements, migrant women are viewed as a problem because they

have children and therefore do not participate in the Establishment Programme laid out by the state. They do not subject themselves to the political technology of individuals and thus represent an anomaly, which is inherently a problem to the system. In contrast, if "Swedish" women are in the home, it is presented as being due to their social class position and not necessarily problematic. The intersection of class, gender, and ethnicity in discourses surrounding women is illustrative of how Swedish family policy is highly individualised, which is in contrast to other contexts where the family as a bounded unit is the target of such discourses and policies (cf. Bonjour & de Hart, 2013).

Returning to the positioning of the migrant woman in the home, which is discussed at length in the classrooms, a communicator argued that "problems [in patriarchal migrant relationships] may happen because the system in [Sweden] forces women to work and be active" (fieldnotes, April 2020). In some ways, this mirrors what Bonjour and Duyvendak (2018, p. 895) presented as the dual construction of "the lazy, parasitic and oppressive migrant man on the one hand, and the vulnerable, un-emancipated migrant woman secluded at home on the other hand" in European migration discourse and policy. However, a crucial difference that emerges in our data is that the migrant man is not constructed as lazy and parasitic, but as oppressive (cf. Bauer et al., 2023). When one of the participants suggested that some women may want to remain at home, the same communicator responded that "it is illegal to force women to be at home in Sweden" (fieldnotes, March 2020). The juxtaposition of these two examples highlights the political technology of individuals on both a conceptual and practical level. Whilst it is illegal for anyone to force someone to *remain* in the home, in Sweden, it is the role of the "system" to push migrant women *out* of the home and into work. As such, it mirrors a logic previously described by Mulinari (2021) in which it is the duty of the state to "save" migrant women from their homes. Importantly, however, in these examples, we see how these discursive constructions are articulated in direct dialogue with the target population and in their mother tongues. Even as the migrants resist the idea that women are only at home because they are forced to be, the communicators repeat that "it is illegal" and reaffirm the position of the Swedish state as the one exercising power (cf. Vesterberg, 2017, p. 151).

## 4. Conclusion

From the interviews with the CO organisers and the ethnographic data, we have developed a granular analysis of how discourse, as "ways of representing the world," characterizes the conditions of inclusion in CO in Sweden. Drawing on Foucault's conceptualisations of the political technology of individuals, the technology of self, and governmentality, we have shown how specific technologies of individuals are discursively articulated by the organ-

isers and rearticulated within the classroom. By tracing these discourses, we have shown how the state constructs the target population and formulates its political technology of individuals. Using the metaphor of an assembly line, one of the organisers illustrated how CO works as an agent of governmentality. By shaping and changing the migrants, who are imagined as tabulae rasae, the programme can create "good citizens." Moreover, since the participants in CO are imagined as unknowing and in need of help, it is their duty to submit to the Swedish state's political technology of individuals in order to make themselves includable. This discursive construction was also visible vis-à-vis labour market participation; our analysis showed how migrants are disciplined in the classroom to take responsibility for changing the perception that migrants fail to contribute and are a burden on society. Beyond just finding work and being productive, they are also told (for example) not to bring "smelly food" to work because it will make their (Swedish) co-workers uncomfortable. In these subtle ways, the participants are continuously encouraged to undergo internal review and to adjust their behaviours to fit in.

We have also illuminated how, by directly intervening and locating the problem within the home, the meaning of belonging and inclusion mirrors what Ahmed (2013, p. 134) described in the context of the United Kingdom: "Migrants must become British even at home." However, in the discourse of the "migrant woman" presented in this article, she may become Swedish in the home *by the very act leaving it* and entering the labour market. It thereby mirrors similar trends in Canada wherein migrant women must "be at home at work. One's value in the economy of immaterial labour is thus intimately tied to effectively and affectively indexing and embodying Canadian core values" (Allan, 2016, p. 639). Thus, performing a "Swedish gender-equal woman" is presented as a privilege. Here, migrant women are "given the chance to display agency and pursue employment in the public sphere" (Clark et al., 2023, p. 10). This is not to say that migrants shall not and cannot find emancipation through labour market participation. The problem is that it is presented as a gift from the state and something that they would have never thought of themselves.

In this discourse, as we argued above, it is subjugation to the political technology of individuals that is the condition for inclusion; one that is explicitly directed towards migrants and not those perceived as "Swedish" or "good citizens." In the name of being a welcoming and gender-equal state, "migrant women" are singled out and subjected to special measures to *save them from themselves*. Over time, the effect of such discursive moves "is that one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one's own hospitality" (Derrida, 2000, p. 53). In an initiative like CO, with a stated purpose of inclusion through dialogue and reflection, the result is still a discourse that promotes one specific way of being a "good citizen." By assuming that migrants know nothing, by training them how to behave

to find and keep a job, and by seeking to intervene in the home to subjugate them to the political technology of individuals, CO is an agent of governmentality that encourage migrants—even tells them it is their duty—to undergo an internal review and "transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 1988a, p. 18). Interestingly, a major difference from the Dutch case, which is the most widely researched, is that in the Netherlands the courses are taught firmly from the perspective of the Dutch state to the participating migrants (cf. Blankvoort et al., 2021) In the Swedish case, however, as the communicators themselves are migrants, state power is exercised from migrant to migrant. The communicators simultaneously represent the "good refugee citizen" and the Swedish state. Thus, the communicators embody an ideal example after which the participants can mould themselves. Here, the assumption by the state is that "immigrants and ethnic minorities should be able to become modern, civilised, fulfilled, and successful individuals, entirely equipped to live in highly diverse, ever-changing societies. And why on Earth should they not want to?" (Favell, 2022, p. 47).

## Acknowledgments

## Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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