‘Too much salt’: Czech Swedes, Journalism and (Anti)Xenophobic Discourse

Srdan M. Jovanović, Media and Communication Studies, Department of Communication and Media, Lund University, Sweden, srdjan.jovanovic@kom.lu.se

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Abstract
According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), Sweden is at the top of world ranking when it comes to successful integration of immigrants and refugees. However, during the last few years, there have been xenophobic discursive attacks on Sweden, in which it is commonly claimed that Sweden is ‘failing’ when it comes to immigrant integration. Such was the case of Kateřina Janouchová, a Czech-born journalist from Sweden, who was recently in the media spotlight after producing xenophobic rhetoric. Her discourse was countered by Hynek Pallas, another Czech-born Swedish journalist, as the debate (and surrounding textual and video production) spread from Sweden to the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. This article approaches both the xenophobic and anti-xenophobic discourse of Janouchová and Pallas from a discourse analytical perspective. Even though it can be said with certainty that accepting large amounts of immigrants and refugees (such as Sweden have done) can be somewhat problematic on the political, societal and economic levels, the xenophobic discourse about Sweden tends to be exaggerated, which will be shown in Janouchova’s rhetoric. On the other hand, the liberal media has a tendency to ‘soften’ the debate, which was seen in the rhetoric of Pallas. Tackling the issue through the theoretical and methodological lens of discourse analysis, we have engaged the diverging discourses of xenophobia and its opposition, and found that the rhetoric of ‘concern’ and ‘fear’ was used to promote an anti-refugee sentiment. Conversely, a more sombre, fact-checking approach was used to alleviate alleged fears. The discourse-oriented perspective is used due to the fact that political viewpoints are primarily promoted via text and talk, and the concentration on the spoken production of the two journalists (based on several hours of their video recordings), as well as their textual production (and consequently, textual production about them) has the potential to be politicized. From a discursive perspective, there is relevance in going beneath the first layers of text and talk in order to show the connotative elements of a particular type of rhetoric.

We have thus tackled the topic via the use of a discourse analytical perspective, wherein the rhetoric of the two journalists was analysed through taking a closer look into the type of discourse they produced. From such a perspective, it is of relevance to identify the common ways of framing an issue, i.e. how it is presented, and via what type of wording. This is why Janouch’s rhetoric is described as essentially declarative, whilst Pallas’ is followed by more corroboration. The topic was chosen for several reasons. First is the fact that Sweden increasingly serves as a hub of mostly Right-wing discursive attacks as a country with a ‘failed’ immigration system. Having in mind the recent upsurge in xenophobia in Europe, choosing Sweden as a case study is currently of high relevance to the issue. Second, the two journalists figure as a central node in this research due to their difference in opinion and the way they presented the same issue. While most research tends to be conducted in a more global fashion (macro-studies), we have chosen to engage what is essentially a micro-level study, as an increase in quantity of micro-level studies can contribute to macro perspectives. Third, the debate between Janouch and Pallas resonated at an international level, and could be seen in Sweden, the Czech Republic, and the UK. Both Pallas and Janouchová have appeared on Swedish and Czech Television, and were reported by the UK media. The resonance of the debate could arguably be put down to the salience of the issue of immigration on a Europe-wide level, especially when the discussion is about Sweden.

In summary, Janouch’s rhetoric focused on two instances: one was worded as ‘concern’ for the future of Swedish society, through which refugees were presented as a danger to Sweden; the other concentrated on ‘potential’ danger, when real troublesome issues were not found. Allegations of an increase of no-go zones in Sweden were
stressed, even though it is a common instance in urban development – however despondent it may be – that larger cities will contain zones with more criminal activity. Through the use of broad generalizations such as claiming that immigrants are ‘terrorizing’ Sweden, Janouch paints a much grimmer picture than the one corresponding to reality, which gets further distorted in nationally-oriented UK outlets that reported on the controversy, and where it was claimed that ‘streets were no longer safe’ in Sweden, which is a verifiable falsehood.

Pallas’ discourse drew directly on the spoken and textual production of Janouch. Nevertheless, his rhetoric was different, wherein he drew upon ideologies such as cosmopolitanism, through which a humane approach is not reserved for a single people/nation, but for anyone. He debunked the rhetoric on immigration as seen in Janouch’s production as ‘shameful’, and maintained that even though problems do exist, they are far from being that widespread and not connected to refugees exclusively.

The larger ramifications and implications of the micro-level study we have presented here on the topic of immigration and opposition to it are multi-faceted. On one hand, xenophobia has become an issue of high salience on a wide European level. Sweden is often used as a go-to country for alleged examples of how integration policies are failing, commonly reported by xenophobic outlets in Central Europe, from the Czech Republic, via Slovakia, to Poland. Due to the large number of refugees arriving who are fleeing the conflicts in the Middle East, refugee integration, together with other immigration-related issues, has come into the spotlight, and has been widely used by the Right for the promotion of their own agendas, discourses and policies. From a media perspective, most vitriol against refugees stems directly from the media, via which xenophobic political players tend to promote their agendas, including journalists and editors who assist them. Future studies should not cast aside micro-level studies, not only in Sweden, but in any European country that tackles the same or similar issues. As the arrival of refugees does not seem to be nearing an end in the near future, there is ample material for scholarship to tackle.

Key words:

‘Ninety-nine percent of them are refugees from hell, and we are a rich country … we can take more’ (Pallas, in: Uhlová, 2015)

‘Politicians are weak, they do not have the power to control it immigration]’ (Janouchová, in: Zahrádka, 2017)

From 2015 to early 2017, two journalists, Hynek Pallas and Kateřina Janouchová (often undersigned as ‘Janouch’ in Sweden), came into the spotlight in the traditional and online media in Sweden, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom. Both are Czech by birth, and both are naturalized Swedes, having lived in Sweden since early childhood. Both are fluent in Czech, Swedish and English. The topic they debated was both highly relevant as well as incendiary – immigration and refugees. Yet their views were diametrically opposite. Whilst Janouchová spoke about ‘huge immigration problems’ in Sweden, mentioning she needed to ‘arm herself’, Pallas staunchly negated the issue, claiming that Sweden might not be ‘heaven on earth’, but that it is tackling the refugee issue with much more competence than Janouchová claimed.

Their views were reported by the Swedish, Czech and UK media, spiking a larger debate that has subsequently engaged a broader media. Being that their views reached an international audience, and having in mind that they tackled a contemporary, important issue, in addition to being an excellent example in how anti-xenophobes discursively combat xenophobes, we judged the issue to be worthy of research, and so we approached this micro-level study from a political discourse analytical perspective.
Xenophobia, discourse and the media

As elaborated by Said, the media play a crucial role in shaping stereotypes, i.e. ‘how we see the rest of the world’ (Said, 2008). When it comes to discriminatory issues, discourses and practices such as xenophobia, having in mind that it is commonly seen through a ‘national’ lens, meaning that xenophobic discourses tend to stress the ‘attack’ or ‘danger’ to their own nation, state, or nation-state, it would be wise to notice how Anderson already explained the connection between journalism and the birth of the ‘nation state’ (Anderson, 2006). Journalism is thus a key factor in promoting or stifling xenophobia, as ‘in support of the national community, journalism constantly and overtly builds on the idea that there is a common “we”, a common frame of reference, to which the news items implicitly refer’ (Blaagaard, 2010, p. 3), closely related to Billig’s ineluctable phrase, ‘banal nationalism’ (Billig, 1995).

Xenophobia can be seen as a discursive practice of ‘othering’, by which rhetorical means are used in order to polarize the distinction between the ‘local’ and the ‘foreigner’, be they migrants, guests or refugees. In other words, ‘xenophobia can be defined as a complex, multifaceted system of exclusion that produces social inequality between different ethnic groups’ (Montali, Colombo, Camussi, Maglietta, & Riva, 2007, p. 1) by forming the discursive Other. In today’s world, ‘the media is central to this process of “other-ing”’ (Al-Rodhan, 2006, p. 37). By discursively stressing or creating differences between the local and the Other, the media can contribute vastly to the creation and promotion of xenophobic sentiments and policies. Scholarly research on the topic has already come to the conclusion that ‘in terms of policy activity on immigration, policy-makers are not responding to growing concerns among the public with reforms. Actually, if there is a relation at all, it appears that public concern follows policy activity’ (Morales, Pilet, & Ruedin, 2015, p. 1502), including that public concern is, essentially, often created by the media. This is due to the reason that ‘the press responds to news and reports on incidents as they occur, thereby reflecting issues pertinent to the broader societal context ... the press also shapes and influences social issues in the ways in which news is chosen, highlighted and covered’ (Fine & Bird, 2006). Furthermore, as Van Dijk wrote,

> whereas many, if not most, native citizens in most countries have little or no daily interaction with immigrants, information about immigration as well as about ethnic groups, events, and relations is largely based on information from the mass media (or from informal everyday conversations that are in turn based on information from the media) (Teun A Van Dijk, 2000, p. 311).

In other words, without the media, global xenophobia would arguably be much weaker. As Blaagaard elaborated, journalists ‘routinely reproduce social imaginaries through repetition of cultural constructions and memories that may result in the exclusion of minority groups and/or gloss over unrecognised multiculturalism’ (Blaagaard, 2010, p. 3). Scholarly production has already come to the conclusion that ‘the media are an inherent part of the problem of racism’ (Teun A Van Dijk, 2000, p. 309), a conclusion put forth by many a researcher (Campbell, 1995; Hartmann & Husband, 1974). We need to keep in mind that in some scholarly work, ‘racism’ tends to be discursively equated with xenophobia, as is the case with Van Dijk. He further elaborates that

> ‘research has repeatedly shown that the conservative and popular press especially (although not exclusively) indulges in sometimes blatant “foreigner bashing” and the reproduction and affirmation of racist prejudices. Popular resentment against refugees and other immigrants and minorities is thus both legitimated and at the same time exacerbated’ (Teun A Van Dijk, 2000, p. 309).
Having said the above-mentioned, the research question posed here is the following: What are the most prominent xenophobic and anti-xenophobic discursive properties of the rhetoric of Kateřina Janouchová and Hynek Pallas?

**Methodology**

Having in mind that Critical Discourse Analysis is ‘a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’ (T. A. van Dijk, 2015, p. 352), it serves as a natural starting point for tackling discriminatory rhetoric such as xenophobia, since the system of exclusion and inequality is primarily produced discursively (Moskovici, 1984). As van Dijk wrote, ‘CDA is not so much a direction, school, or specialization next to the many other “approaches” in discourse studies. Rather, it aims to offer a different “mode” or “perspective” of theorizing, analysis, and application throughout the whole field’ (T. A. van Dijk, 2015, p. 352). This particular perspective concentrates on the rhetoric of the xenophobe, asking in what manner was xenophobia expounded in spoken and written communication.

As van Dijk noticed, there is a ‘continuity of this sociocultural tradition of negative images about the Other that also partly explains the persistence of dominant patterns of representation in contemporary discourse, media, and film’ (T. A. van Dijk, 2015, p. 361). When it comes to media discourse in particular,

the discourse of the news media encapsulates two key components: the news story, or spoken or written text; and the process involved in producing the texts. The first dimension, that of the text, has been the primary focus of most media researchers to date, particularly as the text encodes values and ideologies that impact on and reflect the larger world ( Cotter, 2015, p. 801), and it shall be the focus of this article as well. Furthermore, ‘the main approaches to the study of media discourse can be characterized broadly as (1) discourse analytic, (2) sociolinguistic, and (3) “non-linguistic”’, where ‘the “non-linguistic” research involves work in political science, media studies, cultural studies, history, or communication studies paradigms’ ( Cotter, 2015, p. 798), the latter being primarily used in this article.

The articles used in the analysis come from the debate by Janouch and Pallas, mostly during 2017, but in 2015 and 2016 as well. We concentrate on the articles and videos that have had direct relation to the debate about xenophobia in Sweden and the Czech republic, as due to the constrains of a standardized research article, it is not possible to conduct research on the totality of the discourse(s) of the two journalists at hand. That is why the selection has been made in order to present the most relevant instances in the discursive production, be it textual or in video form. Additionally, concentrating on the 2017 debate, the reverberations of it, such as within the articles published by the *Daily Mail* and *SVT*, are also included in the analysis. Thus, we are concentrating on the discursive production put forth via *SVT, Denník Referendum, Parlamentní Listy, the Spectator, the Daily Mail* and *Noviny Chrudim*.

The analysis is divided into two parts, corresponding to the xenophobia vs the opposition to xenophobia division we have already mentioned. The first tackles Janouch’s rhetoric in which she propagates what was dubbed within the topoi of ‘concern’ and ‘fear’ for the well-being of society ‘under attack’ by immigration, and concentrates on the discursive features of her rhetoric that promulgate such a view. The other tackles Pallas’ opposition to the very xenophobic discourse itself, and the strategies he used to counter xenophobic rhetorics.
The social context

As already mentioned, Sweden has indeed accepted a staggering number of refugees during the last several years. To compare, the Czech Republic received only 1,157 asylum applications in 2016, and mostly from people from Ukraine, Iraq and Cuba (WorldData.info). There is a significant amount of both statistical data (Statistics Sweden, 2016), as well as a growing scholarly production, concentrating on numerous issues and coming from a variety of disciplines (Barslund, Busse, Lenaerts, Ludolph, & Renman, 2017; Holmes et al., 2017; Kelly & Hedman, 2016; Manhica, Berg, Almquist, Rostila, & Hjern, 2017). Since the increase in the number of refugees, a xenophobic sentiment has been developing, leading to the stronger electoral success of Right-wing parties within the country, connected to the disappearance of class voting and the growing distrust of party politics within Swedish society (Rydgren & van der Meiden, 2016, p. 3). In their 2015/6 analysis of electoral support for the Sverigedemokraterna, Strömblad and Malmberg have came to the conclusion that ‘increased exposure of visible minorities tends to increase xenophobic voting’, as well as that ‘increasing rates of unemployment may trigger a rapid expansion of xenophobic voting in residential areas that previously have been characterized by a high share of visible minorities but, nevertheless, low levels of xenophobia among representatives of the majority population’ (Strömblad & Malmberg, 2016, p. 12). Goldschmidt and Rydgren have noticed that Sweden has seen an increase in anti-solidarity (Goldschmidt & Rydgren, 2017) based on in-group favoritism, that has led to the rise of xenophobia, purported mostly by Sverigedemokraterna, but Moderaterna (The Moderate Party) as well.

The visibility of the increase in the xenophobic sentiment is arguably best seen in the production of Right-wing online sources, primarily the former Avpixlat, nowadays Samhällsnytt, a website that could be said to host xenophobic content in its greatest intensity (see: Kaati, Shrestha, Cohen, & Lindquist, 2016; Urniaz, 2016). Avpixlat has in the meantime featured as a research topic for a number of M.A. and Ph.D. students across Sweden. Though xenophobic hard-liners commonly do not have access to the majority of the media outlets, occasional instances (such as Janouch’s entering the public discourse) of it do happen, and tend to get high visibility in the ‘incendiary’ nature of the discourse, at least from the perspective of the average citizen. The Janouch-Pallas conflict is one of them.

‘Concern’ and fear

Janouchová’s rhetoric cannot be classified as ‘hard-line’ xenophobia, such as propounded by Right wing groups Europe-wide. As the discursive elements will show, it is skilfully packed into alleged ‘care’ for ‘failing integration’ and ‘security’. She claims that, as a security issue/potential threat, among the incoming refugees, ‘a large part comprises illegals; men who pretend to be children even if they are over twenty. They end up in homes with real children and they drain the benefits’ (Janouchová, in: Horáková, 2017). The Swedish STV responded in a detailed fact-checking expose, saying it was wrong (SVT, 2017b). Pallas simply stated that ‘Janouchová made up the lie that 75% of the males that arrive in Sweden are under-age’ (Parlamentní listy, 2017). We can thus classify some elements of her discourse as avidly counterfactual.

Janouchová’s ‘facts’ have quickly spread overseas, readily accepted by the Daily Express, who claimed, based on her rhetoric, that ‘Sweden is being pushed to the brink by the migrant crisis and the country’s streets are no longer safe, an author based in the Scandinavian nation has dramatically claimed’ (Stromme, 2017). Note that Janouchová was undersigned as an author based in the Scandinavian ‘nation’, a rhetorical move which indirectly emphasizes the ‘nation’,
as the refugees are not members of it. The stress on the ‘national’ is common for the Daily Express, which often published articles from a ‘national’ viewpoint (Brookes, 1999), as well as being known for its anti-EU sentiment for decades (Haeussler, 2012). Unlike the SVT, the Daily Express conducted no fact-checking, accepting everything at face-value, including the mentioned ‘concern’ for the future of Sweden, where the author of the article, Lizzie Stromme, wrote that ‘speaking to Czech TV channel DVTV, Kateřina Janouch expressed concern over Sweden’s future’ (Stromme, 2017). Stromme took over parts of Janouchová’s discourse directly, quoting her:

I’m not saying it’s the refugees’ fault but we are facing a crisis in migration issues. I want to have a debate about what our society should look like. About how we allocate resources in our own country, how we distribute taxpayers’ money and which political decisions should be made. I’m talking about what I have seen and it worries me (Stromme, 2017).

Several discursive instances are of interest in the quote above. First of all, there is a connotative denial of xenophobia in the utterance ‘not the refugees’ fault’, i.e. ‘the writer of this text is not a xenophobe’ In discriminatory discourse, the denial of discrimination (be it racism, xenophobia, homophobia) is extremely typical (Teun A van Dijk, 1992). By claiming she wants a ‘debate’ and that she is concerned by a ‘crisis’ and ‘resource allocation’, she presents herself in a positive light, as the negative presentation of the Other is often accompanied by the positive presentation of the Self (Teun A van Dijk, 1992). Some authors have further stressed this instance, writing how ‘positive self-presentation is fundamental to the denial of our bad side and their good side’ (Simai & Baeninger, 2011, p. 9), which can be achieved by a row of semantic structures that ‘contribute to the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation. We have seen that precisely such structures may derive from and be geared towards the construction of similar mental structures, that is, negative attitudes and ideologies on minorities and immigration’ (T A Van Dijk, 2004).

Most of Janouchová’s rhetoric concentrate on the abovementioned discursive instances: alleged concern and counterfactual proclamations of problems: ‘I want to be able to have food source if Sweden is hit by a crisis. These are not safe times. People are being cut down on the street’ (Stromme, 2017). Why there would be an undefined ‘crisis’ is not elucidated, while the claim that ‘these are not safe times’ is declaratively corroborated by the claim that people are getting ‘cut down’ on the street, which is, again, served without proof. Even if proof was to be found, however, how it would be connected to refugees is entirely left to the reader to work out. This type of ‘open-ended’ discourse is structured in such a way in order for the reader to ‘read in’ the rest of the unsaid, yet the reader, according to Wodak, might commonly not be in possession of enough knowledge to be able to properly challenge such discourses (Wodak, 1987). This is due to the reason that ‘comprehension of news texts is dependent on the text itself with respect to form and content on the one hand, and on the cognitive and emotional predisposition of the listener on the other’ (Wodak, 1987, p. 382). Janouchová is speaking to the xenophobe in the audience. She furthermore claimed the following:

In order for integration to be possible, the number of arrivals cannot be higher than the population of the country. That definitely does not happen, but the immigrant flow is too massive, and they will not be able to integrate. It seems that integration is now failing. When you have a little town where a couple of thousands of residents, and then maybe add a thousand people from a different culture, then the balance of the small town changes towards something that nobody is prepared for (Janouchová, according to: Horáková, 2017).

The lexical choice given in the word ‘flow’ connotes a force that cannot be controlled, something ‘out of our hands’, which is yet another typical formation in discriminatory discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005, p. 26). Furthermore, ‘the political functions of such a
largely discursive trick are obvious, as was the widespread use, both in politics and the media, of threatening metaphors, such as invasion, and especially flow metaphors, such as floods, waves or tides of refugees’ (Teun A van Dijk, 1997, p. 39). The picture of the number of arrivals that ‘cannot be higher than the population of the country’ is of interest as well, having in mind that she admits that it has not happened. But the discursive implication is that it could, and it serves as strengthening of the potential threat. As Van Dijk elaborated, ‘immigration is generally defined as a serious problem, as a threat or an invasion, and never as a welcome contribution to ethnic and cultural diversity, the economy, and the demography of Western Europe’ (Teun A Van Dijk, 2000, p. 309), thus even if it is not a threat, it is commonly presented as a threat, or a potential threat.

In order to strengthen her rhetoric, Janouchová resorts to a colourful, yet simplistic metaphor, saying that ‘when you perhaps put too much salt in the meal, it is not good’ (Janouchevá, in: Horáková, 2017), thus ‘too many’ refugees should accordingly be a negative instance. The importance of metaphorical rhetoric has already been stressed in Critical Discourse Analysis scholarship, as Van Dijk explains how ‘metaphors in politics will function in a political context, for instance in the attack on political opponents, the presentation of policies or the legitimating of political power’ (Teun A van Dijk, 1997, p. 24). In this case, the metaphor of ‘too much salt’ serves to discursively position refugees in a negative light. As Van Dijk noticed, ‘perhaps [the] most subtle and pervasive are the semantic operations that seem to obey a principle of substitution’, where they ‘use and express a concept different from the one would expect in the present context, as is the case for irony, metonymy and metaphor’ (Teun A van Dijk, 1997, p. 35); metaphors can figure as a powerful discursive element.

Another discursive moment is seen when Janouchová said that ‘Swedes are very irresponsible to me when they take to their country those men of whom they know nothing about. They can have military training, you know nothing about their motives’ (Janouchevá, in: Horáková, 2017). Similar to the quotes already mentioned, this utterance serves to instil fear via faux concern for society. She additionally claimed that ‘Sweden is no longer handling immigration, criminality is on the rise, as well as fear among local residents’ (Janouchova, in: Zahrádka, 2017).

Janouchová’s claims were, nonetheless, methodically ‘fact checked’ by the Swedish SVT. Fact-checking is yet another new and contemporary genre that is only starting to see its day in scholarship. In Graves’ words,

fact-checkers are also active participants in an emerging news ecosystem in which stories develop, and authority is constructed, in patterns of citation and annotation across discursive networks of media and political actors ... In seeking to redefine objective practice for a changed media environment, the new genre of fact-checking underscores the essentially defensive nature of what has been called the “strategic ritual” of journalistic objectivity (Graves, 2013).

SVT reported on Janouchová, stating the ‘incendiary comments made by Swedish author Kateřina Janouch to Czech TV about migration, including false claims that the country had more than 50 “no-go” zones police were afraid to enter’ (Jackson, 2017). Responding positively when she was asked for an opinion on statements such as ‘Sweden is a nest of Jihadism’, ‘Sweden is not managing immigration’ and ‘Immigrants are terrorizing Sweden’, Janouchová answered: ‘Yes, everything is, sadly, true ... and even worse’ (SVT, 2017a). The same source, after fact-checking, judged five out of six of her statements to have been false, such as the claim that 75% of the young people posing as children, that there is 55 “no-go” zones in Sweden, that Sweden cannot afford to give food to pensioners due to immigration, that Swedes suffering from cancer die as a consequence of immigration, that 150,000 Swedes have emigrated to the USA due to the immigrant situation in Sweden, and that more and more
Swedes are buying weapons to protect themselves. All of these have been categorized as untruths (‘stämmer inte’) by SVT (SVT, 2017b). Janouch’s counterfactual discourse serves to reinforce what Van Dijk wrote at the beginning of the century, that ‘refugees and other new immigrants are increasingly defined, also in the press, as impostors, scroungers, or otherwise represented as negative, and increasing limitations of their rights are welcomed or hardly criticized’ (Teun A Van Dijk, 2000, p. 309).

**Opposition to Xenophobia: Hynek Pallas**

Xenophobia has, since the outbreak of the refugee crisis and the creation of the Islamic State, become more and more salient, both in discourse and policy, on a global level, and has thus been studied aplenty, though commonly not from the point of view of discourse analysis. The opposition to xenophobia, on the other hand, seldom becomes a point of interest in scholarly work.

Concentrating on Janouchová’s discourse, Hynek Pallas has replied profusely, both on online media, as well as Czech television. Pallas retorted that she paints a very dark picture of what Sweden looks like. Then she crams numbers, statistics and opinions into it, some are not truthful. Those she made up, some are truthful, but have nothing to do with it. Why Swedes emigrate, why they learn to shoot and so on. I think that this is not fair (Pallas, in: Parlamentní listy, 2017), concentrating on the falsehoods and counterfactuals in her rhetoric. According to Cotter, ‘discourse features we may not consciously consider can influence our reading of the news. This includes quantification and numbers’ (Cotter, 2015, p. 804), as ‘inevitably the figures [and other style factors] blur, becoming impressions rather than facts’ (Fowler, 1994, p. 98).

The problem does not lie in having a lot of immigrants, problems are immured into the structure of the Swedish society, the majority society. There are 16% immigrants, which is in absolute numbers approximately a million and a half in 2013. These are people born outside of Sweden, me among them. It takes a generation or two before immigrants start entering society, but we see, for instance, when it comes to Iranians and Bosnians, that it can function quickly and well. The second generation of Iranians is better represented at universities and good callings (medical doctors, dentists) than ethnic Swedes. Their parents have often been intellectuals, they were prepared for this change and integration (Pallas, in: Uhlová, 2015).

Both Janouchová and Pallas are immigrants themselves, yet empathy can be seen to figure only in Pallas’ texts. Sweden ranks first in the last MIPEX report (MIPEX, 2015) on successful integration of immigrants, counter to what Janouchová tried to present, and in accordance with Pallas’ rhetoric. Pallas believe this to be because...

the self-image of the Swedes is that we are solidary, that we are a feminist, non-racist society, which, after all, had Olof Palme, we have fought for South Africa, we have always helped others, as well as being neutral. Our concept of the self, that in reality, we are a ‘racist’ society, does not sit well with Swedes (Pallas, in: Uhlová, 2015).

Pallas’ rhetoric sits in accordance with a cosmopolitan Weltanschaung, for which it can be said that is much more common in Sweden than in the rest of the world. The difference between Janouchová’s and Pallas’ rhetoric can be said to stem from the division of ‘cosmopolitanism versus identity politics (including xenophobia and religious fundamentalism) – a main dimension of politics almost everywhere in the world now, frequently supplanting the left/right divide’ (Eriksen, 2012, p. 19). In other words, the cosmopolitan individual embodies, in his or her person, a doubling of identity and identification; the cosmopolitan, as an ethic, embodies a commitment, indeed an obligation, to recognise not just the stranger as other, but the other in oneself.
Cosmopolitanism implies and requires, therefore, both reflexivity and toleration. In political terms it demands liberty and justice. In social terms: hospitality (Roger, 2007, p. 14).

This hospitality cannot be seen in Pallas’ home country, the Czech Republic, which has so far taken slightly over 3,000 refugees in total, with a severely disproportionate amount of xenophobia within society, media, education and amongst political players (Německý, 2016; Strnadelová, 2017), even before the refugee crisis commenced (Burjanek, 2001; Havlík, 2007), of which he is highly critical:

I am incredibly irritated by the inhuman approach of countries such as the Czech Republic, out of which a million of people ran away during the twentieth century and received help somewhere else. Today, they are bickering about fifteen children, refusing European quotas, when thousands and thousands are dying at sea. It is shameful (Pallas, in: Uhlová, 2015).

These issues, however, need to be put into context for a proper understanding. Going back to Sweden, recently, there has been an increase in criticism of Sweden’s immigration and integration policies (onto which Janouchová has ‘latched’), prompted mostly by the Right wing media, on websites such as the Trump-supporting Breitbart (Tomlinson, 2017) or the tabloid Spectator, which reported the following:

For a British boy to be killed by a grenade attack anywhere is appalling, but for it to happen in a suburb of Gothenburg should shatter a few illusions about Sweden. Last week’s murder of eight-year-old Yuusuf Warsame fits a pattern that Swedes have come slowly to recognise over the years. He was from Birmingham, visiting relatives, and was caught up in what Swedish police believe is a gang war within the Somali community. Last year, a four-year-old girl was killed by a car bomb outside Gothenburg, another apparent victim of gang violence ... The problems relating to immigration have been building up for years, but the country’s left and right were united in maintaining employment regulations and rent controls that kept immigrants unemployed in ghetto-like suburbs (Lifvendahl, 2016).

What is noticeable is the connection made between older immigrant communities and refugees fleeing the ISIS warzones. It is not even elaborated on within the discourse, it is taken for granted, with the goal of presenting Sweden as a state that is failing in regulating immigration. The discursive attack on Sweden, it can be presumed, is of importance for xenophobes on a global level, as, having in mind that Sweden is officially the country that handles immigration best on a worldwide scale, as the MIPEX report stated, so if Sweden should fail, an immediate conclusion would be that immigration cannot be handled at all. Pallas countered such rhetoric, saying that

anti-European forces in Europe are using Sweden as a bad example. Thus a row of opinion gets ripped out of the context or given untruthfully. There are problems within the country, yet their majority, according to him, has nothing to do with migration (Parlamentní listy, 2017).

That Janouchová found an outlet in the UK and the Czech Republic seems of small wonder, being that within Sweden, such rhetoric is kept to a minimum, and mostly found on extremist websites such as Avpixlat. To claims that the Swedish Democrats ‘are surging to first place in polls’ given on Breitbart (Montgomery, 2017), Pallas replies sombrely:

Though it is true that the ‘racist side’ is growing, on the other hand, research has shown that Swedes have fewer racist tendencies than before. I am not able to envisage that in Sweden, somebody would make lists of adult Syrian refugees as potential danger if fifteen sick Syrian children were to be accepted. Something like that would not be done by any politician except a member of the extreme Right wing. With some exaggeration,
It can be said that the ‘Swedish Democrats’ have similar views regarding people and refugees to Czech social democracy (Pallas, according to: Uhlová, 2015).

When it comes to questions of immigration, refugees and xenophobia, the Sverigedemokraterna are generally ineluctable. Described as a ‘Right wing populist party’ in scholarship (Loxbo, 2008, p. 8), though sometimes even called outright fascist by the press (an exaggeration), such as the 2012 Dagens Nyheter instance by Henrik Arnstad (Arnstad, 2012), the Swedish Democrats have already seen their day in scholarship (Gill, 2012; Sannerstedt, 2015; Stieg & Mikael, 2001) as the strongest voice of xenophobia within the state. According to Pallas,

They [the Swedish Democrats] are using these feelings and fear in a populist fashion. As the party grows, so do the attacks. Last year, extremists attacked an antiracist demonstration in Stockholm, where there were children and strollers. It was in broad daylight and very rough. And, for instance, all of us who write about them, as well as about racism, receive threats by mail, mostly women, but not only them, all profiled journalists get them (Pallas, according to: Uhlová, 2015).

Pallas’ characterization of the Swedish Democrats’ policies and discourses of emotion and fear is in line with much scholarship on the topics of populism and xenophobia on a broader level (Lederer, Plasser, Scheucher, Lilleker, & Lees-Marshment, 2005; Rydgren, 2003; Wodak, 2015). Unsurprisingly, fear is what Janouchová based her discourse on. She further expressed her ‘fears’ about the ‘ghettoisation’ of Sweden, a trope that is currently heavily used worldwide in attempts to paint a picture of Sweden as a state with failing immigration policies. Pallas’ direct reply is yet again down-to-earth, explanatory: ‘There is a row of reasons why in the suburban areas of large cities such as Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo, ghettos pop up. But I want to emphasize that these are not ghettos in a Czech sense, these are rather poorer suburbs’ (Pallas, according to: Uhlová, 2015). The main difference between Janouchová’s and Pallas’ discursive production is the explanatory, non-emotional rhetoric of Pallas, counter to Janouchová’s emotion and fear-driven discourse, non-corroborated and declarative.

Elaborating on those refugees and immigrants for whom integration is a more difficult process, Pallas wrote:

It is something different when Somalis arrive, who have lived their whole lives in camps, some of them cannot read. That society is socially, culturally and economically in an entirely different place, so we have to take into consideration that it will take longer time and need a different approach in working with them. Their view of women is entirely different from the views of the majority of the Swedish society, and that needs to be changed, but it takes a longer time (Pallas, according to: Uhlová, 2015).

As another instance of the already mentioned cosmopolitan hospitality, Pallas’ notions agree with a body of research that claims that

a standard for an ‘ideal’ integration process of immigrants ... is simply impossible, given the wide variety of factors influencing immigration and integration, the immense diversity of migrants and the huge differences in approach of these matters across the EU, also among policy makers (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003), and that there are differences between particular subgroups. From a xenophobic perspective, the Other is One, so Somalis, Pakistani, Yemeni, Bosnian, Ukrainian – all are identical to the xenophobe.
Conclusion

Xenophobia is a powerful force at the beginning of the 21st century, and in need of continual analysis on micro, meso, and macro levels. This article explored the former, pitting two immigrant journalists in Sweden ‘against’ each other, concentrating on the discursive features they accessed in order to present a xenophobic, that is, counter-xenophobic image. The two opposing sides demonstrated a significant divergence in discursive features.

Janouchová’s rhetoric promoted worry and fear about immigration. Her discourse was counterfactual, non-corroborating and declarative. Several tropes have been repeated and emphasized, most of them carrying a heavy negative connotation, such as ‘fear’, ‘concern’, ‘crisis’, or alleged immigrant ‘criminality’. Rhetorical strategies such as referring to vis major such as the ‘immigrant flow’ were also found, including ‘concern’ that the immigrants would ‘drain benefits’, as well as repeated mentioning of their ‘illegality’, in a creation of a homo sacer pathos.

Pallas, on the other hand, did not engage in fear-mongering, keeping a ‘down to earth’ approach, promoting a cosmopolitan view of hospitality, one that can be said to characterize Sweden – at least on paper. His rhetoric concentrates often on direct opposition to Janouchová’s via emphasis on the misuse of statistics and the fact that Janouchová attempted to paint a ‘grim picture’ of Swedish reality. In Pallas’ rhetoric, explanation took precedence over accusation and assertiveness.

Though it was not the immediate ambit of the research, the analysis has also shown that there is a striking difference in how the Czech Republic and Sweden, on a broad level, chose to tackle immigration as a topic. Whilst the Czech Republic – surprisingly, some might say – failed to take a more humane, empathic approach to the incoming refugees, Sweden seems to have confirmed its leading position on the MIPEX list. This, however, is a topic on its own.

Having in mind that both Janouchová and Pallas are immigrants themselves, it seems that Janouchová – who promoted fear and xenophobia – integrated poorly into the receptive Swedish society herself, as she was promoting views that nowadays come from the Swedish extreme Right, which, though vocal, is still a minor voice of exclusion and trepidation. Having in mind that Sweden has recently been put into the spotlight as an alleged country of ‘failed integration’ by right-leaning politicians and journalists alike on a global level, it is safe to say that we have not seen the last of such rhetoric, and that it needs to be followed carefully.
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