IMMIGRATION AND ORGANIZED CRIME IN SWEDEN

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Abstract

Immigration and crime have long been intertwined topics of scholarly study, political discussion, and public controversy. The prison systems of a significant number of Western countries show a disproportionate representation of immigrants. In Europe, a higher representation of immigrants in prisons has been documented. Sweden, one of the Nordic countries seen as a potential safe haven for immigrants, while not completely closing its doors, is tightening its immigration rules and investing heavily in expanding the Swedish Police Authority. To address escalating challenges, the government has established an organized crime council that brings together key stakeholders and coordinates actions to curb the trend. Its purpose is to implement stronger, more effective measures in combating organized crime. Immigrants are strongly affected by these measures. Research findings reveal that foreign-born residents are 2.5 times more frequently considered official suspects of a given crime than citizens with two native-born parents. The Police Authority has identified several "vulnerable areas", geographically defined areas characterised by disadvantaged social and economic status, where the local community is influenced by criminals via coercion and other methods, within Swedish borders. Many of these vulnerable areas are inhabited by immigrants. Sweden is intensifying efforts to repatriate individuals not eligible to stay, implementing return initiatives and revoking residence permits were justified. The issue of immigration and its pressure on Swedish society, as well as integration issues and failures, are still relevant today. Most research does not establish a causal link between immigration and overall crime rates under typical conditions. However, in the last 15 years, first-generation immigrants have made up 53% of individuals serving long-term imprisonment, while those born in non-European countries comprise 44.5% of the population suffering from unemployment.

Keywords: Sweden; immigration; immigration policy; organized crime; discrimination

Introduction

Immigration and crime have long been intertwined topics of scholarly study, political discussion, and public controversy. Most contemporary research across the US and Europe finds no general causal link between higher immigration and increased crime; many studies even show immigrants have lower offending rates[3] than native-born populations[4]. However,

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[3] Ran Abramitzky, Leah Platt Boustan, Elisa Jácome, Santiago Pérez, Juan David Torres, *Law-Abiding Immigrants: The Incarceration Gap Between Immigrants and the US-born, 1870–2020*, "National Bureau of Economic Research", 2023 https://doi.org/10.3386/w31440

lack of causal relation does not equal a lack of correlation, and too many uncertainties lie between the facts, which must be acknowledged. The relationship is complex, varies by context, and is shaped by socioeconomic conditions, local policy design, and selection effects in migration flows. The prevailing research consensus is that immigration does not inherently increase crime and, in many contexts, is associated with equal or lower offending rates compared to native-born populations. Apparent spikes are more likely tied to local socioeconomic stressors and policy environments than to immigration itself. Nevertheless, the prison systems of a significant number of Western countries show a disproportionate representation of immigrants[1]. In Europe and other regions, studies have documented a disproportionately high prison representation among immigrant groups[2], particularly within Muslim populations[3]. Analyzing documents such as books, articles, official documents, press releases, political speeches, statistics, this article aims to explore the relationship between immigration (both legal and illegal) and organized crime within Sweden, to describe the demographic of immigrants joining gangs and other organized crime structures and to identify measures taken by the Swedish government to combat the phenomenon. In this article, "immigrants" will be used to refer to people who have immigrated to Sweden who are economically defined as "working class".

These patterns are contributed to by factors including incarceration for offenses relating to immigration, deeply rooted (and possibly systemic) biases within the policing apparatus and the judicial system, and inequalities of socioeconomic nature. Together, these elements can exaggerate the statistics pertaining to crime for populations comprised of immigrants compared to their actual crime rates[4]. Studies indicate that the perception of the greater public frequently overstates the interconnectedness of crime and immigration, shaped by narratives pushed by the media and sensational discourse of political nature[5]. Such perceptions can be the driving force behind stricter control pertaining to immigration and policies that are harsher in nature, including the separation of family, while also contributing to a rise in hate crimes targeting immigrant communities[6].

Academic discourse surrounding immigration and crime frequently emphasizes the absence of a clear causal relationship. Although some studies have reported varied or context-specific results, the dominant conclusion across the literature is that immigration does not generally lead to higher crime rates. Instead, most research suggests that crime trends are shaped by a combination of economic opportunities, social cohesion, and institutional frameworks, rather than by immigration itself. These findings highlight the need for nuanced

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[4] Ariel G., Ruiz Soto, *Immigrants and Crime in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, 2024, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-explainer-immigration-crime-2024_final.pdf (02.11.2025)

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[2] John R. Lott, James Varney, *Europe Shows a Clear Link between Immigration and Crime -- like the One the U.S. Seriously Downplays*, https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2022/12/01/europe_shows_a_clear_link_between_immigration_and_crime_-_like_the_one_the_us_seriously_downplays_867625.html (03.11.2025)

[3] Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan, *Let Me Take a Wild Guess as to Why Muslims Are Overrepresented in Prison*, https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/lammy-review-prisons-bame-islamophobia-rehabilitation-discrimination-a7937746.html (03.11.2025)

[4] Olivier Marie, Paol Pinotti, *Op. cit.*, pp. 181–200

[5] Nicolas Ajzenman, *Migrants Don't Cause Crime Rates to Increase - but False Perceptions Endure Anyway*, https://theconversation.com/migrants-dont-cause-crime-rates-to-increase-but-false-perceptions-endure-anyway-198054 (05.11.2025)

[6] *Idem*

interpretations and caution against simplistic assumptions that equate immigration with criminality. Other studies have named poor job prospects and employment restrictions as potential precursors for immigration-related crime increase[1]. To understand this phenomenon better, we must first define what immigration is. According to sources such as the Oxford Dictionary, immigration is "the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country[2]", different from seasonal workers and tourists[3]. Migration can be driven by a variety of motivations, which can generally be grouped into two broad categories: the pursuit of improved financial well-being and the need for survival. Economic migrants often leave their countries of origin in search of better employment opportunities, higher wages, and more stable living conditions. Their decision to move is frequently influenced by disparities in income levels, limited career prospects, or the desire to achieve upward social mobility in societies with stronger economies. For these individuals, migration represents a strategic choice aimed at enhancing their quality of life and securing a more prosperous future for themselves and their families.

In contrast, refugees migrate under circumstances of necessity rather than choice. Their movement is typically compelled by urgent survival needs, such as escaping armed conflict, political persecution, natural disasters, or other life-threatening conditions. Unlike economic migrants, refugees are often forced to leave behind their homes, communities, and livelihoods abruptly, seeking safety and protection in host countries that can guarantee basic human rights and security. For them, migration is not primarily about economic advancement but about preserving life and dignity in the face of existential threats.

Beyond these two primary categories, migration can also be motivated by additional factors such as family reunification, educational opportunities, or cultural aspirations. These overlapping motivations demonstrate that migration is rarely driven by a single cause[4]. Regardless of what pushed the immigrants to leave their home countries, they all face similar challenges, from workplace discrimination to hate crimes and even becoming victims of slavery and human trafficking. De Haas observed that some particular groups of immigrants appear disproportionately in statistics depicting crime, attributing this to ethnicity-based profiling and the marginalization of immigrants of the second generation lacking future opportunities[5].

A 2024 study reported that in 30 countries (excluding the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand), migrants account for a larger share of the prison population than native-born citizens[6]. Within immigrant groups, younger men with lower levels of education and those lacking legal documentation are more likely to engage in criminal activity compared to documented migrants. Olivier Roy, writing in 2017, noted that in France over the past two decades, the typical jihadist has been either an immigrant of the second generation or a religious convert who, after a record of minor offenses, has turned to extremism while inside prison[7].

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Immigration in Sweden

Immigration to Sweden can be defined as the complex process through which individuals relocate to Sweden with the intention of establishing residence and, in some cases, pursuing eventual citizenship. While many migrants ultimately acquire Swedish citizenship, a significant proportion remain permanent residents or hold temporary permits. The phenomenon of immigration has generated extensive debate within Swedish society, not only because of its demographic and cultural implications, but also due to its economic, social, and political dimensions. Scholars and policymakers alike have examined how immigration influences labour market dynamics, particularly in relation to job competition between immigrants and native-born workers, as well as the broader question of whether migration contributes to or detracts from national economic growth.

At the social level, immigration has reshaped settlement patterns, with certain urban areas experiencing high levels of ethnic concentration, raising questions about integration, segregation, and the long-term prospects for upward social mobility among migrant communities. These dynamics have also intersected with issues of violence and public safety, where perceptions, sometimes supported by empirical evidence, but often amplified by political discourse, have linked immigration to crime and social unrest. Politically, immigration has become a highly contested topic, influencing voting behaviour and party competition, particularly as debates over ethnicity, cultural identity, and national belonging have intensified. From an academic perspective, the Swedish case illustrates the nature of immigration as both a driver of societal transformation and a source of controversy, requiring careful analysis across disciplines such as sociology, economics, political science, and criminology. In the year 2010, 14.3% of the population of Sweden (approximately 1.33 million people) were born to non-native parents. Among this group, 64.6% (approximately 859,000 people) were born outside the European Union, while 35.4% (circa 477,000 people) originated from other states that are members of the European Union. Sweden has changed its nature from that of a net emigration state that ended after World War I to a net immigration nation since World War II. By 2020, residents of foreign origin made up 25.9% of Sweden's population. That year, population growth was overwhelmingly driven by individuals with foreign origins, who accounted for 98.8% (51,073 people), while those of Swedish origin represented just 1.2% (633 people) of the increase[1]. In 2025, according to the Swedish stats office and registration authority Statistics Sweden (SCB), 2.1 million people (cca. 20% of population) are immigrants[2]. Despite the slight decrease in 2025, a steady growth of the immigrant population is visible, which right-wing politicians can use as part of fear-mongering tactics.

Immigration to Sweden is not a new trend. Several waves of migration can be identified over the decades: Migration waves to Sweden have included workers from Finland after the Second World War, political refugees from Chile following the 1973 coup, Bosnian and former Yugoslav arrivals after the Yugoslav wars and the Breakup of Yugoslavia, and, more recently, asylum seekers from the Middle East beginning in the year 2015 with the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War. Crime statistics were not recorded until 1950 in Sweden, meaning the effects of Finnish immigrants cannot be accurately observed. The Chilean immigrants of the 70s brought protests and unrest along, but no crime statistic singles them

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[2] Swedish Citizenship, *How Many Immigrants Live in Sweden?*, https://www.swedishcitizenship.se/blog/how-many-immigrants-live-in-sweden (06.11.2025)

out. The large number of immigrants in the 1990s led to the temporary limit of immigration allowance into the country only to refugees as defined by the United Nations. In 1996, Sweden's National Council for Crime Prevention reported on crime among immigrants and their children, finding that serious crimes were more often committed by people born outside Sweden. However, this study was criticised for usage of socioeconomic factor controls that were deemed insufficient.

Public insistence for investigations into possible immigration applications misuse with the goal of obtaining social benefits in the country has increased[1]. Calls have emerged to confront persisting social segregation uninfluenced by integration efforts, perceived welfare misuse in Sweden, the role of the Swedish Migration Agency in this matter, issues surrounding Folkhemmet ("the Swedish Middle Way"), the growth of right-wing political attitudes and their popularity, and the influence of Danish-Swedish extremism[2]. In the year 2020, the Swedish Migration Agency launched an investigation in an attempt to determine the likelihood and frequency of students with study residence permits using them to find work in the country instead. In its 2022 report, "Misuse of Residence Permits for Study", the agency found numerous cases of residency permits for students being misused, describing it as an extensive problem. The analysis focused on a sample of three hundred and sixty students admitted to two-year master's programs. Of this group, slightly more than one-third sought to extend their permits to continue their studies for a second year, whereas barely under 30% instead applied for work permits[3]. The use and misuse of study permit to gain employment have been used as a talking point to reduce the number of international seats in higher learning institutions.

People who immigrated to Sweden are disproportionately settled in the country's primary urban zones, particularly Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö, where close to 30% of the population is foreign-born: nearly one in three residents. This demographic distribution reflects broader patterns of migration settlement, in which metropolitan areas tend to attract newcomers due to greater access to employment opportunities, educational institutions, social networks, and public services. By contrast, rural inland municipalities often exhibit much lower proportions of immigrant residents, frequently below 10 percent, with some communities reporting figures closer to 5 percent.

The variation across municipalities is as follows: Botkyrka and Södertälje both report immigrant populations of 44.2 percent, Haparanda records 40.2 percent, Sigtuna 38.9 percent, and Järfälla 36.5 percent. These figures illustrate the extent to which certain localities have become hubs of multiculturalism, with immigrant communities forming substantial portions of the population and contributing to the social and cultural fabric of these areas. At the same time, such concentrations have raised questions about integration, segregation, and the capacity of local institutions to manage diversity effectively.

In terms of heritage, the most numerous populations in Sweden which are of foreign descent are originally from Finland, Poland, the ex-Yugoslav countries, Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

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[3] Migrationsverket, *Slutsats: Uppehållstillstånd För Studier Missbrukas*, https://web.archive.org/web/20221204091226/https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Pressrum/Nyhetsarkiv/Nyhetsarkiv-2022/2022-09-14-Slutsats-uppehallstillstand-for-studier-missbrukas.html (06.11.2025)

This composition reflects both historical and contemporary migration flows: Finland has long been a source of labor migration to Sweden, while more recent arrivals from Iraq, Syria, and Iran are closely tied to political instability and conflict in the Middle East. Migrants from the former Yugoslavia represent another significant group, shaped by the wars of the 1990s, while Polish migration reflects broader European labor mobility. Numerous studies have examined the net contribution of immigrants to the public sector. When immigrant unemployment was low and their share of the overall population was smaller, findings suggested that their contribution was unremarkable, mediocre, or slightly constructive up until around the 1970s. However, by 1999, rising unemployment and a larger immigrant population meant this was no longer the case[1]. Recent studies indicate that in 2007, refugees accounted for 1% of the nation's GDP[2]. This contribution is not ignorable, it is actually rather substantial. In the year 2015, 163,000 asylum seekers were admitted by Sweden, for whom €6 billion were allocated toward migrant-related expenditures, equivalent to 1.35% of its GDP[3]. The economic gain brought by immigrant workers had not yet "paid off its debt".

The Swedish National Audit Office has noted that shifts in the number and composition of residence permit applicants and recipients have major implications for the finances and operations of state and municipal public institutions. When the amount of applications increases, almost simultaneously there are volume effects on spending in the government budget's migration section. The spending mainly relates to the Swedish Migration Agency's and the courts' expanded administration of residence applications and the reimbursement of municipalities for the asylum seekers' accommodation and social benefits[4]. However, the effects of immigration extend beyond the migration portion of the budget. For example, first-generation immigrants accounted for 53% of those condemned to long-term prison sentences[5], and a percentage of 44.5% of those not employed is made up of people born outside of the continent of Europe[6]. Gradually from 2015 onwards, public opinion has been growing more negative on the topic of immigrants[7], which led to a tightening of laws regarding immigration and the gaining of citizenship. Much of the negativity was increased by perception linking immigrants to crime[8].

Organised Crime in Sweeden

Swedish crime statistics indicate that a disproportionately high amount of crime is accounted for by individuals with an immigrant background, especially relative to their

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[3] *OECD*, *„Who Bears the Cost of Integrating Refugees?"*, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/who-bears-the-cost-of-integrating-refugees-s_746b49ef-en.html (04.11.2025)

[4] Riksrevisionen, *Migration*, https://www.riksrevisionen.se/sv/vardeforrad/amnesomraden/Migration/ (03.11.2025)

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[7] Michał Krzyżanowski, Hugo Ekström, *"No Longer the Haven of Tolerance"? The Press and Discursive Shifts on Immigration in Sweden 2010–2022*, "Social Semiotics, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2024, pp. 472–494, https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2024.2352656

[8] *Idem*

representation within the population.[1]. Studies indicate that socio-economic and cultural factors account for much of the disparity in the rates of crime between native and non-native populations[2]. Mats Lofving, Deputy National Commissioner of the Swedish Police Authority, reported on 5 September 2020, Monica Saarinen on Ekot stated that police intelligence had identified around 40 criminal clans that migrated to Sweden with the sole intent of engaging in organized crime. Allegedly, these groups are primarily concentrated in Stockholm, Landskrona, Södertälje, Malmö, Gothenburg, and Jönköping, reported Lofving. Lofving further explained that within such clans, extended families raise children to inherit criminal operations, with little interest in integrating into Swedish society[3]. Former Swedish Prime Minister and former Leader of the Social Democratic Party Stefan Löfven had, for many years, maintained the position that criminal gang activity in Sweden was not directly connected to immigration. This stance reflected a broader political narrative that sought to separate issues of crime from questions of migration and integration, emphasizing instead socioeconomic factors such as inequality, unemployment, and social exclusion. However, in September 2020, Löfven publicly shifted his position during an interview with the Swedish broadcaster SVT. In this interview, he acknowledged that high levels of immigration had contributed to significant integration challenges, which in turn had created conditions that increased the risk of criminal activity.

This change in rhetoric marked a notable turning point in Swedish political discourse, as it suggested a willingness to link immigration policy more explicitly with concerns about public safety and social cohesion. From an academic perspective, Löfven's statement can be interpreted as part of a broader recalibration of political narratives in response to growing public anxiety over gang violence and organized crime[4].

A study by Göran Adamson and Tino Sanandaji is the first purely descriptive scientific investigation on this topic in fifteen years. The survey (from 2002 to 2017) shows that 58 percent of those suspected of all crimes on reasonable grounds are migrants. For murder, murder and attempted murder, the figures are 73 percent, while the proportion of robberies is 70 percent. Unregistered migrants are linked to about 13 percent of all crime. Given that this group is small, the trend in crime among unregistered migrants is significant[5]. Since 2018, Swedish authorities have recorded about 500 bomb attacks, while what they describe as gang shootings have become increasingly common. The country reported a record 124 homicides in 2020, and many residents were shocked in April when violent riots injured more than 100 police officers.

In recent years, Sweden has seen an unprecedented increase in crime. In the past year, there were 148 bomb attacks and 348 shootings nationwide, a record[6]. According to a report published by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, out of a pool of 22 European countries with comparable data, Sweden has had, for four consecutive years, the

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[2] Martin Hallsten, Ryszard Szulkin, Jerzy Sarnecki, *Crime as a Price of Inequality? The Gap in Registered Crime between Childhood Immigrants, Children of Immigrants and Children of Native Swedes*, "British Journal of Criminology", Vol. 53, No. 3, 2013, pp. 456–481, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azt005

[3] Eric Emanuelsson, *Finns 40 Släktbaserade Kriminella Nätverk Här*, https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/polischefen-40-slaktbaserade-kriminella-natverk-i-sverige/ (04.11.2025)

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[5] *Idem*

[6] Miranda Chen, *Gangs, Immigration, and Contentious Policies in Sweden*, https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1651c94292764 62cb7b9ea7c07ccffed (02.11.2025)

second-highest number of gun deaths per person, second only to Croatia, and the highest number of drug-related deaths. Organized crime has become one of the biggest threats to the country[1]. As a result of this increase in crime, in the 2022 elections for the Swedish national parliament, the far-right party became the second largest party in parliament. In recent years, the party has raised the issue of immigration and crime, and its clear anti-immigration message has won over Swedes who believe that the left has not done enough to address immigration issues, but who may be afraid to speak out against the dominant culture of political correctness. Meanwhile, left-wing parties argue that the problem is not the immigrants themselves, but the lack of resources and jobs for immigrants.

In the decade between 2012 and 2021, approximately 41 million people immigrated to the European Union, with an estimated 3.8 million (over 9%) doing so illegally. In Sweden, the legal inflow of newcomers averaged nearly 130,000 annually from 2012 to 2019, before immigration levels began to decline in 2020[2]. Within the span of a decade, Sweden has shifted from recording among the lowest rates of fatal shootings in Europe to ranking among the highest. Established criminal networks, often dominated by second-generation immigrants, have expanded their violence beyond internal rivalries to target relatives and unsuspecting bystanders. Alarmingly, many of the assailants are children as young as 14, recruited and groomed by gangs to execute these attacks[3].

Criminal gangs across Sweden are increasingly moving beyond the drug trade. Emerging evidence indicates that these networks have penetrated certain public services, political organizations, and even elements of the justice system. With police forces stretched thin and facing a surge in cases following the deadliest month on record, the government has turned to the military to help cover gaps in capacity. According to the official 2005 report, covering data from 1997 to 2001, and the Adamson and Sanandaji report, which covers data from 2015 to 2018, the ethnic/national groups that were the most frequently convicted as criminals are almost the same, and the results are the same. There has been no tangible improvement, no subsequent "integration". The latest press release from the Swedish government reports that an increasing number of individuals originally from Iraq, Somalia, and Syria are now departing the country. It remains unclear how many of these voluntary returnees' figure in the latest migration statistics. The current figures are due to more restrictive policies over the past eight years[4].

Conclusions

Immigrants are 2.5 times more likely to be registered as suspects in a crime than people born in Sweden[5]. The issue of immigration and the growing pressure it places on Swedish society has become one of the most debated topics in recent years. Rising concerns about social cohesion, economic sustainability, and cultural integration have highlighted the shortcomings of existing integration programs, many of which have struggled to provide

[1] *Idem*

[2] Reuters, *Swedish PM Says Integration of Immigrants Has Failed, Fueled Gang Crime*, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/swedish-pm-says-integration-immigrants-has-failed-fueled-gang-crime-2022-04-28/ (05.11.2025)

[3] Richard Milne, *The Violent Gang Crisis Shaking Sweden*, https://www.ft.com/content/79f0d181-bdae-4c81-a971-861ccd8d512c (05.11.2025)

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effective pathways for newcomers to fully participate in Swedish life. These challenges include difficulties in accessing the labor market, barriers in education, and tensions in certain urban communities where segregation has deepened. As a result, policymakers and the public alike have increasingly questioned whether the traditional model of openness and generosity can continue without significant reform. This ongoing debate, coupled with the perception that integration efforts have failed to meet their intended goals, has ultimately led to a radical transformation in Swedish immigration policy, shifting the focus from broad acceptance toward stricter regulations, enhanced requirements for residency, and a stronger emphasis on assimilation into Swedish norms and values.

An organised crime council was established by the Swedish Government as part of a broader strategy to confront the growing challenges posed by criminal networks and gang-related violence. This council was designed to coordinate efforts across multiple agencies, ensuring that intelligence, resources, and policy measures were aligned to effectively dismantle organised crime structures. At the same time, major investments were directed toward expanding the Swedish Police Authority, not only by increasing personnel and strengthening investigative capacity, but also by enhancing technological tools, surveillance systems, and community policing initiatives. These measures reflected a recognition that traditional approaches were insufficient to address the complexity of modern criminal organisations, which often operate transnationally and exploit weaknesses in social integration. Together, the creation of the crime council and the expansion of police resources marked a significant shift in Sweden's internal security policy, signalling a more proactive and comprehensive stance against organised crime while aiming to restore public trust in the state's ability to safeguard its citizens.[1]. Sweden is intensifying its efforts to repatriate individuals who are not legally eligible to remain in the country, reflecting a broader shift toward stricter enforcement of immigration rules.

These measures include the implementation of structured return initiatives designed to streamline the process of deportation and ensure that those without valid grounds for residency are returned to their countries of origin in a timely and orderly manner. At the same time, authorities have increased their scrutiny of residence permits, revoking them in cases where legal justification is lacking or where individuals have failed to meet the conditions attached to their stay. This approach underscores the government's determination to uphold the integrity of the immigration system, reduce irregular migration, and reinforce public confidence in the rule of law. By combining administrative reforms with stronger enforcement mechanisms, Sweden aims to balance humanitarian obligations with the need to maintain social stability and ensure that immigration policies are both fair and sustainable. Sweden's immigration policy transitioned from being among the most open to asylum seekers to aligning its legislation with only the minimum standards mandated by the EU[2]. Taken collectively, these interrelated factors construct a complex and somewhat unexpected portrait of contemporary Swedish society, one that challenges long-standing assumptions about the nation's identity as a bastion of stability and security.

The interconnectedness between immigration pressures, integration challenges, rising concerns about organized crime, and evolving state responses underlines the complex nature

[1] Government Offices of Sweden, *Facts about Migration, Integration and Crime in Sweden*, https://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/ministry-of-justice/facts-about-migration-integration-and-crime-in-sweden/ (06.11.2025)

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of the current sociopolitical environment. Whether the measures now being implemented, ranging from stricter immigration controls and repatriation initiatives to expanded policing and institutional reforms, will ultimately succeed in re-establishing Sweden's reputation as a safe haven remains uncertain. The outcome will depend not only on the effectiveness of these interventions in reducing crime and reinforcing social cohesion, but also on their capacity to balance humanitarian obligations with the preservation of national security. In this sense, the trajectory of Sweden's future will be determined by the delicate negotiation between inclusivity and protectionism, and only the passage of time will reveal whether these strategies can restore the country's former status as a sanctuary of safety, even if that status is increasingly framed in terms of safeguarding its native-born population rather than extending the same assurances universally.

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