Country Profiles: Sweden

The nations of Northernmost Europe – Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Denmark, and Norway – known collectively as the Scandinavian nations, are known throughout the world for their rich and ancient history, their cold weather climate and peculiar geography, and its contemporary, progressive stance towards many ongoing problems. Together, they are one of the most prosperous regions in Europe and in the world; together, with a shared history, these countries compromise a stable group of allies. Alone, each one of these nations has their own unique characteristics that separate it from its close neighbors. In this article, Sweden, one of the largest members of the Scandinavian group, will be explored. Though the nation has a rather unique landscape, when it comes to both geography and politics, it is not really well represented in popular culture. The details of the nations’ history, structure or culture rarely receive attention, despite their unique complexities. As a result, many individuals – like myself – fail to know this information at depth. To counter this personal gap, this paper will provide some basic information about the Scandinavian nation, including its geography, political system and government structure.

Sweden is located in the Northernmost part of Europe, lying between Finland and Norway. At 450, 295 km2 of territorial size, it is one of the largest nations in the area (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). It also takes up the largest part of the peninsula that it shares with Norway. It has access to two oceans, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. On the Baltic Sea, Sweden bears a long shoreline that hosts multiple cities (“Sweden”, 2018). Despite the nation’s northern location, its expanse is mostly flat, though there is a mountainous region on the Western side (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). Its flat lands allow the country to grow a share number of crops, with 11% of its territory dedicated to agriculture (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). Its climate is subarctic in the North, but it is more temperate in the South – though, lower temperatures are still predominant throughout the nation, even in the summer (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). Because of the harsh climatic conditions of the North, most of the population is settled in the South side of the nation (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). A southern location also ensures that the cities are closer to continental Europe. It should not be a surprise, then, that Stockholm is located in this strategic area, as well.

When it comes to government, Sweden can be categorized in various manners, depending on the area that is being focused on. For instance, it could be said that Sweden is a modern welfare state (“Sweden”, 2018), as it allows its citizens to have access to their necessities. Healthcare, for example, is a guaranteed right in Sweden. It is part of the nation’s policy that every locality must provide its citizens with good quality and accessible health care, as well as to promote initiatives to increase the overall health of the region (“Health Care in Sweden”, 2018). Likewise, other essential guarantees, like education and retirement, are secured by the Swedish government. When it comes to its structural organization, it could be said that Sweden is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy – it still recognizes its Royal Family, but the power of the state is no longer limited to them (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). Currently, the Chief of State is King Carl XVI, and the Head of Government, or Prime Minister, is Stefan Lofven. Swedish citizens who are over the age of 18 are allowed to vote in elections for a representative of a political party (“Sweden”, 2018). The different parties seek to gain seats in parliament, and other offices. Earlier this year, Swedish politics became part of the international news media due to a complex political situation, wherein a minority government, “run by a collation that had to make concessions to some of its more conservative opponents” (Anderson, 2019). Sweden, with its very liberal politics, has not seen an internal struggle of such dimensions in decades (Anderson, 2019). Still, it is likely that Swedish society will not see any significant alterations, as the nation has been politically stable for a developmeny.

References

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