The London School of Economics and Political Science

Trygghet in a New Time?

Swedish Social Democracy and the aggravated socio-cultural politics of immigration

Carl Gustaf Richard Truedsson

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis examines and exposes how the heightened socio-cultural salience of immigration in contemporary Sweden affects the traditional party of power, the Social Democrats (SAP), and its understanding and response to the nationalist 'populist' party the Sweden Democrats (SD). Through extended ethnographic, survey and archival research in the year leading up to the September 2018 general election, I dissect how these dynamics manifested in Norrköping, a traditional SAP stronghold with a long history of immigration where support for SD has grown considerably.

Based on my findings, I argue that the untranslatable Swedish concept of 'trygghet' functions as a powerful heuristic device for understanding the 2018 election campaign. Denoting an enveloping sense of safety and comfort, trygghet, and its antipode otrygghet, were increasingly mobilised by both the SAP and SD in the wake of the 2015 European refugee crisis. Among SD supporters and party members I illustrate the resentful power of a mythological nostalgia for a trygghet that is intimately tied to an imagined social democratic Sweden of yesteryear. Within the SAP, however, the aggravated socio-cultural politics of immigration exposed a different register of evocative nostalgias for what the fundamental precepts of social democracy are. Due to the heightened salience of immigration, these competing visions of trygghet came to a forceful head during the election campaign and ultimately proved contentious for the SAP.

This thesis contributes original findings to the burgeoning literature on how immigration is reshaping traditional socio-political conflict dimensions. Adopting both ethnographic and geographic sensitivities, it adds to the growing scholarship which takes seriously the everyday contexts in which people make sense and meaning out of socio-politics. By doing so, it exposes the glaringly normative limitations common to both dominant academic and social democratic explanations for the rise of nationalist 'populism'.

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_	Alternative for Germany	
BRÅ	Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention	
CDU	Christian Democratic Party (Germany)	
EU	European Union	
FPÖ	Freedom Party of Austria	
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
LO	Confederation of Blue-Collar Trade Unions (Sweden)	
NLC	Norrköping's Labourer Commune	
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	
PM	Prime Minister	
SAF	Swedish Employers Confederation	
SAP	Social Democratic Party (Sweden)	

SD Sweden Democrats

SOM Society, Opinion, Media Institute (Sweden)

SPD Social Democratic Party (Germany)

SSU Social Democratic Youth League (Sweden)

SVT Swedish State Television

TCO Confederation of Professional Employees (Sweden)

UK United Kingdom

UKIP United Kingdom Independence Party

UN United Nations

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

US United States of America

WWII World War Two

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The rupturing of exceptionalism

Until very recently, Sweden was considered an exception to the 'populist zeitgeist' (Mudde, 2004) rapidly argued to be gaining ascendancy across Europe; having only had one party (*Ny Demokrati* - 'New Democracy') enter parliament in 1991 only to implode and dissolve three years later (Rydgren, 2006). At the beginning of the millennium, Rydgren (2002) therefore speculated what conditions would enable a 'Radical-Right Populist' party to break into Sweden's party system. Among factors impeding this were sustained working-class voting loyalties, a 'low salience of the socio-cultural cleavage dimension [...] a relatively low salience of the immigration issues; and finally, a low degree of convergence between the established parties in political space' (2002: 27). Despite these impeding factors, Rydgren argued that the ground was still fertile. Though the immigration issue at the time was not a topic of considerable debate, Swedish society was far from devoid of a 'public xenophobia' and this could therefore serve as a catalyst in the future (ibid: 27).

The 2010 general election proved to be the tipping point when the 'populist' party Sverigedemokraterna ('Sweden Democrats' – SD) gained 5.7 percent (and thereby comfortably passed the 4 percent threshold). The Swedish party system was no longer the 'populist exception' among its Nordic neighbours. After SD's entry to parliament (the *riksdag*), the Swedish mainstream media and the other parliamentary parties pursued an 'informal *cordon sanitaire*' (a figurative barrier); with SD seen as a 'pariah party' and therefore largely ignored or denounced (Jungar, 2016: 193). In the 2014 election, the party more than doubled its previous result and gained 12.9 percent, making the party the third largest (of now eight) in parliament (Pierre, 2016: 7).

Based on a pre-2014 election survey by the venerable Society, Opinion and Media (SOM) institute at Göteborg University, Sannerstedt found that a sizeable segment of SD voters had the pedigree of a traditional core segment of voters of Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti ('Sweden's Social Democratic Labourers' Party' – SAP): predominantly male; more likely to self-identify as working class; belong to one

of the blue-collar trade unions that form the confederation *Landsorganisationen* (LO, which is inextricably tied to the SAP); and have a considerably lower level of trust towards politicians; and overwhelmingly believe that Sweden was going in the wrong direction (Sannerstedt, 2014: 447-448; 455). When the sympathizers were asked to place themselves on the Left-Right economic scale, the average position was slightly to the right-of-centre, but less so than sympathizers of the four centre-right 'Alliance' parties (led by the Moderates) (ibid: 452). Moreover, in a post-2014 election analysis by the same institute, the most significant identifying features of SD voters were that they were, 'people with a negative attitude towards refugee policies' (Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2016: 252, own translation).

Indeed, SD had been particularly adept at nurturing an increasing segment of the electorate's resentment towards Sweden's contemporary levels of non-European immigration. The salience of the socio-cultural cleavage that Rydgren had previously only postulated, was arguably increasingly palpable. In stark contrast to SD, the seven other parliamentary parties remained steadfastly committed to Sweden's liberalised migration regime. Ahead of the September 2014 election, then-Moderate party (conservative) Prime Minister (PM) Fredrik Reinfeldt drew parallels with the increasing volume of refugees fleeing the brutal Civil War in Syria and Sweden's reception of refugees from the Balkan wars during the 1990s. Reinfeldt asked that "the Swedish people have patience and open their hearts" to this forecasted surge of refugees; adding that "when many flee in a short time span tensions are created in Sweden's society" (quoted in Rosén, 2014, own translation). Though official forecasts at the time did indeed predict an increase in asylum applications (Rosén, 2015), Reinfeldt could not have known just how prescient his appeal would soon become.

The 2015 Refugee Crisis

The news cycle during the summer of 2015 was saturated with a tragic collage of images of desperate migrants and asylum seekers from North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia huddled on over-crowded vessels on the Mediterranean, clinging onto fences in crammed camps, or walking in endless procession with as many belongings as they could possibly carry. Though playing out against the backdrop of a much larger and extended geopolitical crisis precipitated by the Syrian Civil War, the summer months of 2015 saw an unprecedented increase in irregular migrants reaching northern

Europe. This increasing move north was largely a consequence of the break-down of the EU's Dublin Regulation, whereby the first country of entry must process the asylum applicant. Though gradually increasing since the late spring of 2015 and eluding official prognoses, Sweden saw a sharp rise in the number of asylum seekers in August when 11,700 people entered the country (State Public Reports, 2017: 66).¹

In early September, almost exactly one year after the election which saw his party returned to power in a minority government in coalition with Miljöpartiet (Greens), SAP PM Stefan Löfven paid homage to Alan Kurdi, the drowned 3-year old Syrian boy whose lifeless washed-up body had dominated the news cycle only days before. Speaking during a manifestation in Stockholm under the banner 'Refugees Welcome', Löfven clarified that "Sweden will continue to take responsibility. But it is not enough. All of Europe must do more" (Löfven, 2015, own translation). Echoing the sentiments of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's assertion from only days before that that "we can do it" (wir schaffen das), Löfven insisted, "my Europe does not build walls" (Merkel quoted in Delcker, 2016; Löfven, 2015, own translation). However, as was quickly becoming apparent across Europe, this was precisely what was happening as more EU member states sought to prevent asylum seekers from either entering or seeking asylum. This resulted in a growing volume of irregular migrants moving further north through continental Europe towards Scandinavia. In September alone, 24,300 asylum seekers entered Sweden. This monthly volume reached its apex in October with 39,200 persons and then decreased slightly in November to 36,700 (State Public Reports, 2017: 66; 69).

In total, 162,877 asylum seekers would enter Sweden in 2015, of which 35,369 were unaccompanied minors predominantly from Afghanistan (ibid: 69). With more than 70 percent (approximately 114,000) of these asylum seekers coming during the late summer/early autumn, depictions of a 'system collapse' were increasingly voiced by municipal politicians and authorities. Due to this, with reference to analyses by the Migration Agency and Police, Löfven's government prevailed upon existing legislation for extraordinary circumstances and instituted border controls on 12 November 2015 (ibid: 298-299). Two weeks later, due to a multitude of reports from various authorities and municipalities that they could no longer deliver the legally mandated services nor guarantee the safety of the unprecedented inflow of asylum seekers, the

¹ As defined by the UN, an individual remains an Asylum Seeker until their application is processed and they are granted Refugee Status (UNHCR, 2020).

government – citing the necessity for 'breathing room' (andrum) – announced further control measures. In addition to bringing Sweden's commitments for accepting asylum seekers to the legally required minimum (per EU law and international conventions), the government also implemented identification-controls at ports as well as medical age-tests for unaccompanied minors (ibid: 302-303). The volume of asylum seekers that entered Sweden in 2015 was the highest per capita ever registered in any OECD member state.² According to OECD estimates, in comparison to Germany (another country often singled out during the crisis) that spent 0.5 percent GDP on registering and processing asylum seekers, Sweden spent 1.35 percent of GDP in 2015 (2017: 2).

The aggravated socio-politics of immigration

The lasting consequences of this unprecedented volume of non-European migration to Sweden in such a short span of time are still, of course, unclear. In the years since, however, a rhetorical shift has taken place whereby what would have been politically impossible to say in 2014 for representatives of the seven 'traditional' political parties, is now increasingly a commonplace message: Sweden's previous migration policy regime was not sustainable and it was a mistake for Sweden to have had such generous asylum policies. Not a new topic by any means, a renewed and strongly reinvigorated political debate has focused on the challenges of social, cultural and labour market integration. Though the Swedish economy has boomed in recent years, the OECD warns that the country has the greatest disparity in unemployment between native-and foreign-born working age adults among OECD member states (OECD, 2018).

The Swedish immigration debate drew increased international attention when US president Donald Trump infamously proclaimed at a rally for his supporters in February 2017: "We've got to keep our country safe. You look at what's happening in Germany, you look at what's happening last night in Sweden. Sweden, who would believe this?! Sweden! They took in large numbers, they're having problems" (quoted in Chan, 2017). As nothing particularly sensational had happened that Friday before

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² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States (OECD, 2020).

Trump's Saturday rally speech, his pronouncement was met with widespread ridicule by the majority of commentators in Sweden. Tragically, however, four months later on a Friday in early April 2017, an asylum seeker whose claim had been denied months before, swore allegiance to the Islamic State and purposefully drove a hijacked truck into a busy pedestrianized shopping street in central Stockholm, killing five people and injuring 14 others (Furusjö et al., 2017). Concurrently, a rapid escalation of shootings and explosions in Sweden's larger urban centers (particularly suburbs with a high proportion of first and second generation immigrants) increased in the years leading up to the 2018 election (By, 2017; Goarant and Sennero, 2016; Linné, 2016; Sydsvenskan, 2016). In a recent peer-reviewed study, criminologists found that Sweden had, by a considerable margin, the highest rate of gun violence in 13 Western Europe countries 'among males 15 to 29 years' (Sturup et al., 2019: 13). This development, which is often linked to escalating gang conflicts, further exacerbated an increasingly hardened political tone, with parties across the spectrum seeking to profile themselves as demanding law and order (while still distancing themselves from SD) (Ygeman and Lööf, 2016).

In particular, the words *trygghet* and its antipode *otrygghet* were increasingly mobilized with an added urgency. Denoting a sense of enveloping safety and comfort, parties vied for attention by claiming to have the best prescriptions for ensuring the Swedish population's *trygghet*. During Almedalen 2016, Sweden's annual political festival on the island of Gotland in which the country's entire political and media establishment partake, multiple party leader's speeches focused overwhelmingly on who best could ensure *trygghet* and manage the Social Democratically inflected 'Swedish Model' and what constituted the 'correct' Swedish norms, values, and culture (Johansson, 2016). As one veteran political commentator observed, 'the parties are marinating Almedalen in Nationalism' (Silberstein, 2016, own translation). Indeed, in his own speech at Almedalen, SAP prime minister Stefan Löfven proclaimed that,

No person is an island. But is it not islands of inequality and otrygghet that have surfaced in Sweden? If Sweden is to move forward, then we need to do so together. Then we have to get rid of all these shootings, vehicle fire attacks, and drug trafficking [...] Sweden needs a people's movement for the Swedish Model. Imagine if all of us who love the knowledge-hungry, hard-working, equal Sweden

asked ourselves: Where is my place in all of this? What is my role? What is my duty (Löfven, 2016, own translation)?

In addition to *trygghet*, this explicit mention of both the 'people' (*folket*) and the 'Swedish Model' occupy powerful positions in Sweden's collective socio-political consciousness. Since the SAP's inception in 1889, the concept of *folket* has been indispensable. In contrast to continental socialist parties, the party abandoned the call for class struggle early on as a driving precept and refrained from rhetorically limiting its constituency to the working class, seeking instead to frame itself as a party for *folket* (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1985, 1978; Korpi, 1983; Przeworski, 1985). This mobilization of *folket* became popularly associated with SAP leader Per Albin Hansson's the 'people's home' (*folkhem*) analogy and policy which began in earnest when the party assumed its long reign of power in 1932. This continued through the post-war period, when the SAP played a pivotal role in constructing and delivering the so-called 'Swedish Model' — what Stephens rated as 'one of the most well-developed and perhaps the most progressively welfare states in the world' (1979: 138).

It is perhaps no wonder, then, that SD has also used the political trope of the traditional welfare state imagery of the *folkhem* (Hellstrom and Nilsson, 2010; Norocel, 2013). The following excerpt from an editorial exchange between SD's then-migration spokesperson Markus Wiechel and veteran SAP European parliamentarian (MEP) Göran Färm exemplifies this attempted encroachment:

The SAP have successfully built Sweden's welfare and worked for better labour market conditions, but now the same party is in the process of demolishing this success. I understand the bitterness [referring to Färm's firm dismissal of SD]. Today, it is SD and not the SAP that are the rightful heirs to the traditional folkhem [...] (Wiechel, 2016, own translation).

SD's recent parliamentary ascendancy, it is argued, has partially been due to the parties' ability to distance itself from its unfavourable origins (Jungar, 2016). From when the party first was formed in 1988 (through the coalescence of various existing neo-Nazi and nationalist parties and movements) until 2005 when its current leader Jimmie Åkesson took over, SD had successively sought to dilute its more extreme profile and positions such as the wearing of uniforms (either 'skinhead' garb or 'brown

shirts') at rallies and its opposition to (amongst other radical positions) 'non-European adoptions' (Norocel, 2013: 5). Åkesson's ascension was premised on professionalizing the party's image and 'purifying' the party to gain entry to parliament. More importantly, SD's recent success has also been attributed to its 'appeals to an idealised and sanitized version of the Swedish welfare model' (Norocel, 2016: 372). SD are stridently opposed to Sweden's contemporary immigration policies that they claim are unanimously supported by the 'political elite' and are 'designed to create a 'multicultural society' (Nordensvard and Ketola, 2015: 367).

During autumn 2015, support for SD grew in the polls to the (then) highest figures ever recorded, reaching just shy of 20 percent between October and December. Though negative public opinion towards accepting more asylum-seekers was on a downward trend (40 percent) when measured in early 2015 (before the autumn surge), this shifted drastically in 2016 when the same question was asked; increasing to 52 percent of respondents agreeing that it was a good proposal for Sweden to accept less, and decreasing from 37 to 24 percent who thought it was a bad proposal to accept fewer asylum-seekers (Demker, 2017: 476). In polling conducted in November 2015, 7 of 10 respondents indicated that they supported the government's restrictive measures. When respondents to a SOM survey (see Figure 1) were asked to openly rank the most important societal problems in Sweden, 'Integration/immigration' came out on top in both 2015 and 2016, far outranking the usual contenders of 'Schooling/education'; 'Healthcare' and 'Labour-market' (SOM Institutet, 2018: 41). Clearly, the residual consequences of the 2015 crisis presented a novel set of challenges for the SAP. Long seen as the most successful realization of Social Democracy, commentators have used developments in Sweden and the SAP as a litmus test for the trajectory of Social Democracy writ large.

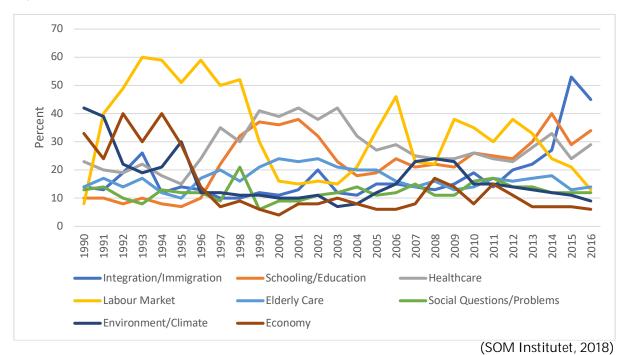


Figure 1. Self-Described Most Important Societal Problems (1990 – 2016)

The SAP's mounting challenge

Ever since first being singled out and celebrated by the American diplomat-cumjournalist Marquis Childs in the 1930s (Childs, 1936), the 'Swedish model' of Social Democratically inflected universalistic welfare combined with an active labour-market policy focused on achieving full employment and equality has captured unparalleled interest. Though no longer enjoying its post-war election results of well-above 40 percent of the popular vote, Social Democracy, both in its political party manifestation and as an economic and social model for society, is still an incredibly successful and powerful driving force in Sweden. Following its ousting from power after 44 consecutive years in 1976, the SAP has still held office more than half of the time since. Its shadow looms colossal on politics in Sweden; contending parties must position themselves vis-à-vis the Social Democratic axis to remain competitive. The party is therefore beset with an unabated desire to demarcate itself as modern Sweden's gestalt; the progenitor and emblem of all that modern Sweden takes for granted (Andersson, 2009). It unequivocally sees itself as the party that took an impoverished and estranged nation of people and ushered them into the light of modernity, equality, and prosperity. Explicit invocations of folkhemmet have ebbed and flowed in SAP rhetoric following its oft-cited 'official' epoch during its uninterrupted time in

government from 1932-1976 (Hedenborg and Kvarnström, 2015: 17), with the latest invocation as the ecologically inflected *gröna folkhemmet* ('the green people's home') during the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s (Andersson, 2010: 145).

Though the SAP currently does not make mention of *folkhemmet* per se, the cognate 'Swedish Model' is frequently invoked; the present catchphrase being *Svenska Modellen Ska Utvecklas Inte* Avecklas ('The Swedish Model Must Be Upgraded Not Downgraded') (SAP, 2018) — seemingly in reference to the centre-right Alliance government's reforms between 2006-2014, which the SAP allege began to dismantle the foundations of the model they had created and nurtured. A 2017 OECD report was celebrated by the party as indicative of their current stewardship (and apparent reinvigoration) of the 'Swedish Model' (Åkerman, 2017). The report concluded that while the Swedish economy is 'resilient and growing strongly', the country faces the strong (and growing) challenge of combatting growing inequality (the fastest increase in the OECD, albeit from a low position) in part due to the obstacles of integrating newly arrived non-European immigrants (many during the 2015 crisis) into the labour market (Gurría, 2017). Indeed, the growing salience surrounding immigration and the fear of losing more voters to SD presented an increasingly complex fusion of issues for the SAP ahead of the September 2018 general election.

Research Question, Project Motivation and Thesis Outline

In this thesis, I examine how these above-described national dynamics were understood and experienced in Norrköping, a historic SAP stronghold where the conditions ahead of the 2018 election presented a particularly amplified example of the burgeoning immigration-centred socio-political settlement.

Formerly known as 'Sweden's Manchester' with its once-thriving textile industry, following the closure of all textile plants and many other large employers, Norrköping suffered from prolonged stagnation during the 1980s and 1990s. In comparison to other similarly sized large municipalities, Norrköping had both historically and during the 2015 crisis accepted a higher proportion of refugees and asylum seekers. Although still an SAP stronghold, the municipality also saw SD gain significantly higher support in the 2014 election than in comparably sized municipalities (16.3 percent in contrast to the average of 11.9 percent), with an even higher percent in historically strong SAP electoral districts (between 21-25 percent).

Guiding my analysis was the following research question:

How did the socio-politics of immigration manifest within Norrköping's SAP organisation in the year leading up to the September 2018 general election?

In order to answer this question, I conducted twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork in Norrköping from September 2017 until the September 2018 election. The exploratory nature of ethnographic fieldwork allowed me to be flexible in what data I gathered. Therefore, as the focus on SD became increasingly pronounced in the SAP's electoral strategy, I expanded my research focus to include SD sympathisers and party members in Norrköping. Based on my findings both during, and after fieldwork, I argue that trygghet is a particularly powerful heuristic device for understanding how and why the debate surrounding immigration has become so aggravated in contemporary Sweden. Interestingly, I discovered that members and supporters of both SD and the SAP are fuelled by nostalgic visions of an epoch when trygghet, in their minds, reigned supreme. However, it is precisely the dissonance between these visions that helps to elucidate how SD have been able to amplify and aggravate the importance of, and resistance towards, Sweden's contemporary immigration regime. Although trygghet is an untranslatable concept that taps into distinctively Swedish socio-historical phenomena, the emphasis on the relationship between immigration and socio-cultural grievances resonates and makes original contributions to an emerging body of international scholarship. This research emphasises the notion of a 'cultural backlash' (Norris and Inglehart, 2019) as an essential feature and driving force behind contemporary manifestations of 'populism' in both Europe and the United States. Foregrounding this literature is Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) highly influential political sociological 'cleavage' theory that a country's party-political lines of scrimmage are determined by historic societal divisions (owner/worker, church/state centre/periphery, and urban/rural). These traditional cleavages have increasingly realigned due to new lines of socio-cultural division sparked by, among other factors, multicultural policies and immigration.

For Social Democratic parties, the increased salience of socio-cultural issues has been particularly problematic. The importance of economic centre-left issues has diminished and the parties' traditional working-class voters have increasingly become mobilized by nationalist populists' socio-cultural arguments (Bornschier, 2010).

While Sweden was long considered an exception to this trend, as argued above, this no longer holds. Indeed, as I argue in this thesis, Sweden's contemporary immigration regime that culminated during the 2015 refugee crisis has stimulated a powerful socio-cultural 'backlash'. Although this top-down scholarship convincingly demonstrates the occurrence and identifies the motivations behind these broad electoral shifts, the national level of data leaves much to be desired. In particular, it begs the question how these dynamics manifest in specific places and in people's everyday local realities. Adopting political geographic sensitivities on the importance of place (Agnew and Shin, 2017), this thesis therefore contributes original findings on how the realignment of national socio-cultural cleavages are understood and experienced locally, far from the central seats of power.

Although other qualitative and/or quantitative methods such as large-scale surveys are an invaluable complementary resource to understanding the broad contours of voter preferences, it is the unique ability of an ethnographic 'sensibility' (Schatz, 2009a: 5, original emphasis) to develop a much richer understanding of the latent emotive registers undergirding political party supporters and members' worldviews. The particular strength of ethnographically 'being there' (Borneman and Hammoudi, 2009), provides me with a better vantage point for uncovering and understanding how both SD and SAP members and supporters' 'attribute [meaning] to their social and political reality' (Schatz, 2009a: 5). Specifically, it allows me to nuance and take seriously the motivations of SD party members and supporters that does not start from the common-place premise among commentators and scholars that support for 'populist' parties is necessarily something negative, a 'social pathology' (Arguelles, 2019: 419). For the SAP, the employment of ethnographic methods lets me uncover how the particular legacies of Norrköping's political culture intersect both with central party messaging, and how the party seeks to appeal to former core voters who are now feared to support SD. In doing so, this thesis contributes to the growing political ethnographic literature that seeks to understand and take seriously the everyday contexts in which people make sense and meaning out of socio-politics (e.g. Abélès, 1991; Arquelles, 2019; Ciccariello-Maher, 2013; Cramer, 2016; Curato, 2017; Hochschild, 2016; Samet, 2019; Schatz, 2009b; Walker, 2008).

Researching the socio-cultural politics of *trygghet* in Sweden's 'Manchester': Thesis Structure

Following this introduction, the thesis is divided into seven subsequent chapters. Chapter Two reviews the literature on the genesis of the relationship between political parties and society. Moving from the early party literature to more contemporary debates on the continued relevancy of parties, I argue that the growing support for right-wing 'populist' parties is fuelled by a toxic cocktail of socio-cultural anxieties and resentment towards immigration and multiculturalism that has ruptured the traditional cleavages undergirding political conflicts and party support. In order to understand the specificities of this new cleavage in Sweden, I develop the argument why trygghet is a powerful heuristic device for understanding this aggravated settlement. Building on this, I then show how the sensitivities of political geography and ethnography form an essential toolkit for dissecting the everyday and local motivations behind this burgeoning socio-cultural cleavage.

Chapter Three clarifies the methods I employ to answer my research question. The chapter begins by situating the importance of municipalities in Sweden. Following an overview of Norrköping, the labour movement's – and, in particular, the SAP's – local configurations are described. Thereafter, I account for my ethical considerations and positionality and how I gained initial access to Norrköping's SAP and then expanded my participant observation within the local party organisation considerably. To gain as rich an understanding as possible, I supplemented my semi-structured interviews with party members with both surveys and archival research. This interpretive, ongoing form of analysis is what led me to expand my focus to also include SD sympathisers and party members later on during my fieldwork. Following a detailed reflection on the particularities of engaging with these supporters and party members, I detail the recursive analytical process I employed both during and after my fieldwork in Norrköping.

Chapter Four complicates the oft-lauded imagery of Sweden as a progressive sanctuary for immigrants by tracing the powerful nationalism and notions of racial homogeneity that undergirds the SAP's *folkhem* vision. I show that Sweden and the labour movement stood for restrictive immigration policies for a significant part of the twentieth century. During the early 1990s, following a significant increase in asylum immigration to Sweden, underlying resentment towards irregular immigration was

brought to a head. Norrköping served as a microcosm for these events — witnessing protests and arson attacks on refugee accommodation centres, experiencing a particularly tough economic decade during the 1990s and also accepting a comparatively high level of refugees due to the availability of public housing there. Fast forwarding to autumn 2015, I show how, once again, times of increased irregular immigration exposes starkly contrasting reactions in Norrköping. In the years leading up to 2015, Norrköping accepted a comparatively higher number of asylum seekers and refugees. Though still facing a higher rate of unemployment than national levels, the municipality was, however, in much stronger economic shape than during the 1990s. Yet the increased support for SD in the 2014 election was notably greater than in other large municipalities.

Chapter Five uses ethnographic interactions with SD supporters and party members to unpack why they support SD and how they make sense of contemporary Swedish politics. I use a vignette with a young SD supporting couple during the summer of 2018 to uncover a powerful mythological nostalgia for a Sweden of yesteryear that they feel is lost. This is further dissected in additional interactions with supporters. Though articulated differently, there is tangible nostalgic homesickness for a trygghet that is associated with the memory of the height of the SAP's command of the Swedish folk's worldview described in Chapter Four; a Sweden before non-European refugee immigration. Turning to interactions with local senior and youth SD party members, I show that, despite differing positions on issues related to political economy, they are united and mobilised by a cultural nationalism. This form of nationalism complicates the still-common scholastic classification of SD as 'ethno-nationalists'. Rather, I argue that the contemporary party is more precisely defined by an Islamophobic cultural nationalism. In Norrköping, this has seen SD increasingly gain a more ethnically diverse membership who are united in resisting Muslim immigration and restoring a trygghet that the traditional parties (spearheaded in their minds by the SAP) have forsaken with Sweden's contemporary immigration regime. Turning to members of SD's youth party, I explore how the parties broadening nationalism has manifested in an aesthetically-tinged cultural conservatism. Despite these differences, I argue that SD supporters and party members are united in a stark aversion to Sweden's contemporary migration regime and a nostalgic longing for a mythical, trygg Sweden.

Chapter Six explores how the post-2015 politics of immigration have been understood by members of Norrköping's labourer commune. The SAP, I argue, is a party whose members hold a dizzying array of seemingly incompatible perspectives that the aggravated socio-politics of immigration helped expose. To illustrate this, I use an episode that unfolded during the autumn of 2017. Encouraged by a national campaign among certain SAP members, a vocal minority of members of Norrköping's SAP demanded that their organisation join others in pressuring the government to grant amnesty to 9,000 unaccompanied Afghani asylum seekers that had entered Sweden during 2015. Although only receiving limited support, the episode helps to expose a significant schism within the party. Party members hold a complex set of diverging perspectives on what position the SAP, both locally in Norrköping and nationally, should have towards immigration. In contrast to those SD supporters and party members I encountered in Chapter Five, through the prism of the 2015 crisis, both elected and unelected grassroots party members articulate competing nostalgias of who their party should extend *trygghet* to.

Chapter Seven shows how this complex tapestry of competing visions of trygghet came to a head during the SAP's 2018 election campaign. Through the framework of trygghet in a new time, the SAP sought to naturalize its U-turn on migration in 2015 as a 'return' to traditional SAP politics. Indeed, the party tried to subtly tap into certain legacies that it had previously sought to downplay. By framing itself as the party of trygghet, it could attract both 'flexible' middle class voters and those voters thought to be deliberating between the SAP and SD. Although these voters held opposing positions towards SD, they were united in their otrygghet. For the deliberating SD supporters, the SAP had to convince them that it was SD as a right-wing party that is the real threat to their trygghet. Given Norrköping's legacy, local party members found this explanation particularly relevant. Drawing on recent historical scholarship, I show how this framing of trygghet traces a long history in the SAP. Focusing in on the SAP stronghold neighbourhood of Vilbergen where SD also made significant gains in the 2014 election, I then explore how the SAP's strategy was put to the ultimate test in interactions between party members and deliberating potential SD voters. Using a number of party members who were critical of the SAP's election strategy, I argue that, ultimately, the SAP faced a perplexing stalemate that was exposed by discordant visions of trygghet.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by situating its main arguments and contributions against the broader backdrop of what consequences the aggravated socio-politics of immigration are having on Europe's Social Democratic parties specifically, and democracy more generally. Here, I argue that there is a normative barrier that both scholars and Social Democratic parties must seek to break if a deeper understanding is to be gained of what is fuelling these developments. Finally, I conclude by reflecting on what has unfolded since the 2018 election in Sweden and what the current debates on *trygghet* might mean for the SAP.

Chapter 2 – The evolving relationship between parties and society

This chapter traces the genesis of research on political parties and their changing relationship to society. Moving from the macro to the micro, I ultimately make the case for why language and ethnographic methods are needed to better understand the geographical specificities of the aggravated socio-politics of immigration and the support for populist parties.

With the introduction of universal suffrage in many European polities, scholars increasingly identified distinctive party typologies that aligned with distinctive societal cleavages. However, as the increasingly affluent post-war period took hold and voter preferences changed, parties sought to capture broader swathes of the electorate. One important consequence of this shift was an increased professionalisation of parties. Parties began to function as 'cartels' and became increasingly integrated into the state apparatus while becoming further isolated from the public. In parallel, this growing affluence spawned new issues that transcended traditional material concerns to become increasingly salient for segments of the electorate. One important consequence of this complex interplay of factors was that the social cleavages that had undergirded the support bases for traditional political parties began to unravel.

Increasingly, this saw 'populist' parties disrupt traditional voting patterns by exploiting a growing resentment in many Western polities towards the traditional parties' positions on immigration. While scholars have been adept at identifying the macro level trends fuelling this increasingly salient socio-cultural issue, too little attention has been paid to the variegated particularities of how this interacts with language, place-specific contexts and configurations. Here, I develop the argument that the Swedish concept of *trygghet* is a powerful territorialised heuristic to unpack the aggravated socio-politics of immigration in Sweden. A small body of scholarship in political science and political geography has identified this gap, and have advocated

for the use of ethnographic methods as a way to deepen our understanding of the contradictions and complexities of a growing public resentment towards immigration. Heeding this call, my project contributes to this scholarship by exploring how this increasingly salient issue in Sweden interacts with the local particularities in Norrköping's municipality.

The Birth of Party-Centric Literature

The early literature on political parties developed in tandem with mass suffrage, the institutionalization of modern Western party systems, as well as the social sciences. From the mid 19th century, early social theorists first devoted attention to the rising importance of Socialist parties – arguing that this was due to the entrenchment of industrial capitalism (Marx and Engels, 1848; Weber, 1922; Gramsci, 1929; Lenin, 1902;). The traditions (Marxian and Weberian) were grounded in fundamentally different assumptions concerning what role a political party played vis-à-vis society and the state. Marxian's argued normatively that the (socialist) party should act as a medium through which society can articulate their interests in order to realize progressive change (e.g. Gramsci, 1929; Lukács, 1923). Weber on the other hand, saw modern parties (especially socialist 'ideological parties') as bureaucracies whose raison d'état was to become – and remain – powerful 'in order to attain ideal or material advantages for its active members', with the 'inactive masses of electors or voters [...] merely objects whose votes are sought at election time' (1922: 284; 285). Paralleling Weber's arguments, his younger colleague Michels defined the 'modern political party' as the 'methodical organization of the electoral masses' (1911: 334) in his study of the imperial German parliamentary system. Disaffected with the direction taken by the German Social Democrat party (SPD), Michels famously asserted the 'iron law of oligarchy': 'It is organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegates. Who says organization, says oligarchy' (ibid: 342; 365). That is, even though the SPD were strong (and early) proponents of democracy (in contrast to German conservative forces), the very nature of the political party as a complex bureaucratic organisation – per automatic – means that it is destined to a 'concentration of power at the top and lessening of influence by rank and file members' (Lipset, 1962: 16).

Weber and Michel's (cf. Ostrogorski, 1902) work laid the foundation for the earliest party-centric studies of political parties. What links the main thrust of the early scholarship is the emphasis on the role that the political party played rather than the individual voter; these were party centric conceptualizations.³ Early studies in both political sociology and political science – often termed 'functionalist' – were united in that they, 'select[ed] a single function or goal as the delimiting trait of a political party' (Schonfeld, 1983: 478, original emphasis). However, the early scholarship diverged markedly on whether parties were understood as a positive or negative force for the democratic relationship between state and society. Michel's work (cf. Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1921) on the oligarchic, anti-democratic essence of political parties inspired American sociologists Mills and Hunter, who (albeit with different emphases and foci) argued 'that party is merely a vehicle of the rich and well-placed to consolidate their power' (de Leon, 2014: 87, original emphasis).⁴ In contrast to these rather dismissive accounts of the potential for parties, early American political scientists celebrated the important and variegated role parties played in American democratic praxis (e.g. Key, 1942; Schattschneider, 1942). As Schattschneider famously asserted, 'political parties created democracy, and [...] modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties' (1942: 1). Though other 'functionalists' accepted the pivotal importance of parties (Duverger, 1954; Lipset, 1960; Schumpeter, 1950), thus furthering Michels' thesis that parties were elitist in nature, they insisted that 'competition' between parties was essential for democracy (de Leon, 2014: 103, original emphasis).⁵

This interest in exploring the vital components of democratic praxis saw scholars increasingly seek to compare different Western countries' parties – thereby spawning the branch of comparative politics appropriately referred to as 'comparative party

³ In parallel – and in stark contrast – to these party-centric studies, Columbia and Michigan Universities' sociologists (anticipating the rational-choice revolution) focused instead on the behaviour and political preferences of individual voters; for overview, see de Leon, 2014: 19-56.

⁴ For reactions against these assertions by 'pluralist' political scientists, see Dahl, 1967; Polsby, 1963.

⁵ These early party-centric studies in political sociology and political science were soon overshadowed in the 1960s in mainstream American scholarship by the increased dominance of the individual-centric and economistic Downsian rational-choice framework (Downs, 1957). This new reductionist scholarship effectively removed the complexity of the political party and its relationship vis-à-vis society and the state from focus; distilling the messiness of politics into a simple market-like model in which politicians (and by extension, parties) – seen as rational actors – competed to win elections (Montero and Gunther, 2002: 11). It was in this turn that the 'sociological intuitions' that had largely blurred the analytical distinctions between political sociology and political science faded from mainstream American political science (Mudge and Chen, 2014: 310).

studies' (Mair, 1997: 3). To do so, scholars constructed typologies of the so-called party systems in which a country's parties operated and competed for government. These typologies developed contemporaneously with scholars seeking to distil the cross-national characteristics of the parties competing within different party systems.⁶ Duverger's ([1951 in French] 1954) classic work 'Political Parties' played a pivotal role in both respects. With party typologies, Duverger traced the development of what he called 'cadre parties' in Britain, the United States and France's Third Republic. The structure of these pre-universal suffrage era parties – partially echoing Weber and Michels' dour observations – were highly elitist, informal and loosely organized, with party leaders mobilizing the franchised few only for elective purposes. With universal suffrage, parties took on an entirely different structure, transforming into well organized 'mass parties', with active members comprising 'the very substance of the party' (Duverger, 1954: 63). As opposed to the cadre parties who were financed by large capitalist interests, the new mass parties (e.g. Europe's Socialist/Social Democratic parties), relied upon fees from a multitude of party members. Moreover, Duverger also articulated the first systemic definition of party systems that set the tone as the common denominator for the plethora of typologies that would follow:

With the exception of the single-party states, several parties coexist in each country: the forms and modes of their coexistence define the 'party system' of the particular country being considered (Duverger, 1954: 203).

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⁶ The early party system scholarship was founded upon the simple premise of counting the number of parties competing for government (e.g. Duverger, 1954). The two-party systems of the United States and the United Kingdom were treated favourably as more stable (e.g. Almond, 1956) – with continental Europe's multiparty systems (e.g. in Germany and Spain) strongly associated with the authoritarian interwar period which 'had seen the collapse of liberal democracy' (Wolinetz, 2006: 52). This preferential treatment was soon reversed and scholars shifted their analytic gaze once again towards Europe's multiparty systems. As Wolinetz highlights, this post-war scholarship 'focused on continuity and change' (Wolinetz, 2006: 52). Interestingly, the party system typologies devised in the 1960s and 1970s are - with some caveats and amendments - still used to this day in Western European comparative studies (Mair, 2006). Indeed, Sartori's (1976) definition is still cited as the benchmark: 'Parties make for a "system," then, only when they are parts (in the plural); and a party system is precisely the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition. That is, the system in question bears on the relatedness of parties to each other, on how each party is a function (in the mathematical sense) of the other parties and reacts, competitively or otherwise, to the other parties' (Sartori, 1976: 44, original emphasis). It is important to emphasize that the scholarship on party typologies and party systems should not be conflated, as they 'offer two quite distinct foci of analysis' (Mair, 1997: 6).

During the decades following Duverger's formative publication, comparative party system scholars focused tremendous attention on conceptualizing the dynamics at play in countries' party systems as well developing a profusion of typologies that sought to illustrate the parties competing within those systems.⁷

Party Typologies

Although the literature has been expansive and in no way systematic, Krouwel has usefully identified and categorized the main party typologies that have been the most prevalent in seeking to conceptualize the dominant parties in Western European party systems:⁸

Figure 2. Main party typologies

Elite, caucus and cadre parties	Mass-parties	Catch-all, electoralist parties	Cartel parties
Patronage and charismatic parties (Weber), parties of personage (Neumann), caucus (Ostrogorski), parties of parliamentary origin [Duverger), parties of individual representation [Neumann, Kirchheimer), party of notables (Weber, Neumann, Seiler), elite parties (Beyme), clientelistic parties (Rueschemeyer et al.), modern cadre party (Koole), local cadre party (Epstein); governing caucus (Pomper)	Mass party (Michels, Duverger, Beer), class-mass and denominational mass parties (Kirchheimer), Weltanschauung and Glaubens party (Weber), parties of external origin, branchbased mass parties, cell-based devotee parties (Duverger), parties of democratic or total integration, party of principle (Neumann), amateur and party democracy model (Wright), militants party (Seiler), mass-bureaucratic party (Panebianco), programmatic party (Neumann, Wolinetz), fundamentalist parties (Gunther and Diamond); cause advocate party (Pomper)	Catch-all parties (Kirchheimer), professional- electoral parties (Panebianco), stratarchy (Eldersveld), rational- efficient, professional machine model (Wright, Schumpeter, Downs, Pomper), party machine (Seiler), multi-policy party (Downs, Mintzel)	Party-cartel (Kirchheimer), cartel- party (Katz and Mair)

(Adapted from Krouwel, 2006: 251)

⁷ Though the early American scholarship on political parties was comparative in the sense that the U.S. has a two-party system, it was, and continues to be, European multi-party systems that have received the locus of empirical attention (Wolinetz, 2006: 51). Moreover, political parties have largely receded as a specific focus in American Comparative Politics. In a 2002 review of the 'state of the art' of the subfield, parties are glaringly absent as a research interest; with the scholarship focused instead upon issues such as democratization, sectarian strife and political economy (Laitin, 2002).

⁸ Far from comprehensive, this overview seeks to outline the broad contours of the typological development of the West European literature on political parties. It should be emphasized that this development has not been linear, with typologies 'based on a wide variety of criteria, and little or no effort has been invested in an attempt to make them more consistent and compatible with one another' (Gunther and Diamond, 2003: 169). Party scholars often lament that for all the plethora of party typologies that have been developed as ideal types, they 'have not accumulated into a more general theory on the genesis, development and transformation of political parties' (Krouwel, 2006: 249, cf. Montero and Gunther, 2002; Mair, 1997).

Temporally and evolutionarily, Krouwel's categorization moves from left to right, capturing the broad scope of 20th century work on party typologies. The first and second categories ('Elite, caucus and cadre parties' and 'Mass-parties') reflect the earliest party models first popularized by Ostrogorski, Weber, Michels and Duverger.

Writing shortly after Duverger and in stark contrast to his focus on parties' 'organizational features' which sought to 'relate differences in party organization to party origins, class bases and organizational needs', Neumann (1956) developed a highly influential functionalist typology of parties (Wolinetz, 2002: 140). He outlined how, with the realization of universal suffrage in Western polities, 'parties have steadily enlarged their scope and power within the political community and have consequently changed their own functions and character' (1956: 403-404). The traditional elite party, or as he termed it, 'party of individual representation' was overtaken by a 'party of integration' [...] [that was] much more clearly circumscribed by its permanent membership, the definite class alignment of its voting population, and its far-flung participation in over-all social affairs' (ibid: 404; 405, original emphasis). These new parties of mass membership, Neumann maintained, were the 'natural consequence of the extension of the public domain and the constantly increasing governmental functions in a reintegrated twentieth-century society' (ibid: 405). This emphasis on ideological mass parties, however, was soon argued to be steadily evolving and changing. The functionalist emphasis of his approach, however, sustained in two of the most frequently cited typologies that subsequently emerged: Kirchheimer's (1966) 'catch-all' thesis, and thereafter Katz and Mair's (1995) exposition of 'cartel parties'.

Catch-All parties

From the mid-1950s, focusing first on West Germany (Kirchheimer, 1954) and subsequently on Austria, France, Italy and Great Britain (Kirchheimer, 1957), Kirchheimer began to highlight what he saw as a shift away from mass parties towards what he called 'catch-all' parties (Krouwel, 2003: 26). He argued that, due to voter preferences and its governing alliance partners, the German SPD had seen it expedient to 'moderate its ideological position' in the effort to capture the middle class votes away from the Christian Democrats (CDU) (ibid: 26). The mid-1960s saw the posthumous publication of his most fully articulated 'catch-all' party thesis. In this oft-

cited essay, Kirchheimer catalogued how, in the post-war period, the European archetypal 'mass integration party' (e.g. German SPD, British Labour Party and the Italian Christian Democrats), the 'product of an age with harder class lines and more sharply protruding denominational structures, [was] transforming itself into a catchall "people's" party' (Kirchheimer, 1966: 184).

The entrenchment of universalistic welfare systems and the rising material prosperity and security for the blue-collar segments of society had severely weakened the ideological (class-based) appeal of the traditional mass-parties. Therefore, to 'secure electoral support via interest-group intercession', the new catch-all parties began the process of shedding their 'ideological baggage' [...] strengthening of top leadership groups [...] [[coupled with the] Downgrading of the role of the individual party members [...] in favour of recruiting voters among the population at large' (ibid: 191; 190). Kirchheimer argued that this drive towards a lack of ideologically infused opposition had instilled an increased 'cartel agreement' in the major parties in continental Europe's party systems, whereby the 'right to participate jointly in government and administration [was] of greater social and political consequence than the traditional opposition function, and ha[d] preference over it' (1957: 141; 142). In turn, this 'desiccation' of 'special ideological and material offerings' led to a hubristic drive for the increasingly technocratic political parties to remain in power, distanced from the electorate and civil society (ibid: 147; 153). Kirchheimer's oft-cited thesis soon became a 'metaphor' and an 'effective device' in comparative party studies 'for describing changes in political parties and the ways in which they approach the electorate' (Wolinetz, 2002: 146). Moreover, his assertion of the increased cartelization of Western European catch-all parties during the 1950s and 1960s proved incredibly prescient in anticipating the general trajectory of parties that Katz and Mair (1995) would greatly expand upon into a fully-fledged typology, three decades later.

Cartel Parties

While drawing both terminologically and empirically from Kirchheimer that parties in Western Europe had increasingly colluded in 'cartel agreements' — especially since the 1970s — what differentiates Katz and Mair's 'cartel party' typology from the aforementioned 'mass' and 'catch-all' models' is the relationship the party is argued to have with the state. In the classic party models (Duverger's 'mass party', Neumann's

'party of integration' and even Kirchheimer's 'catch-all party'), the state was assumed to be a 'neutral, party-free arena' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 8). Citing evidence from the (then) past two decades, Katz and Mair asserted that, due to the acceleration of the trajectory of parties that Kirchheimer had first described, parties had in a perceived necessity for survival and authority distanced themselves from civil society to increasingly 'become part of the state apparatus itself' (ibid: 14). European civil society had undergone such tremendous change during the post-war era that the traditional 'social cleavages' that had underpinned the success of the archetypical mass parties were gradually subsiding. This 'thawing' trend as Katz and Mair termed it, was fuelled in part by the, 'increased and more meritocratic higher education and the homogenization of culture through mass media and mass consumption' as well as 'the relative decline of social solidarity as the glue of the [traditional mass party] membership organization (2002: 132). This reference to sublimation originates from Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) aforementioned 'freezing' hypothesis that, the party systems of the 1960's reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s' (1967: 50, original emphasis). The four 'critical cleavages' that structured the lines of conflict were, Church vs. Government; Centre vs. Periphery; Urban vs. Rural; Workers vs. Employers (ibid: 14). As a result of this 'thawing', party membership and activity declined, with the citizenry increasingly interested in engaging with 'single-issue groups', focusing on issues in the 'local arena' rather than 'the remote and inertial national arena' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 15). Therefore, parties felt 'obliged to look elsewhere for their resources' (ibid: 15). As 'governors and law makers', parties turned to the state and pushed through legislation that markedly increased 'state subventions to political parties' (ibid: 15). In doing so, parties ensured their own survival, even when in opposition, thereby constituting a 'cartel'. The state has become 'invaded by parties' and is now 'an institutionalized structure of support' for parties (ibid: 16).

Although the process began during the 'catch-all' phase, contemporary 'cartel parties' are characterized by their 'capital-intensive, professional and centralized' campaigns that are increasingly funded by their guaranteed state subsidies (ibid: 20). As party membership has steadily declined, so too has the rigidity of who can take part in 'party activities and decisions' (ibid: 21). Moreover, an 'atomized membership' dynamic has developed whereby the hierarchy of parties has loosened and the strength of local chapters has diminished, in favour of individual members engaging with the

centralized party headquarters (ibid: 21). The aggregate consequences of these changes, Katz and Mair argued, have been profound for the 'normative model of democracy' (ibid: 21). In contrast to the previous party typologies whereby voters ultimately decided the fate of a major party, thereby providing 'the major incentive for politicians to be responsive to the citizenry', contemporary major 'cartel parties' no longer face this indisputable arbitration (ibid: 22, emphasis added). An increased dilution of stark policy differences between major parties' election manifestos has hollowed out 'the degree to which electoral outcomes can determine government actions' (ibid: 22). A 'hollowing out' (Mair, 2013) of democratic praxis has steadily transpired, whereby democracy is less a 'process by which limitations or controls are imposed on the state by civil society', and 'instead a service provided by the state for civil society' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 22). Contested elections are a 'peaceful ritual' in which major parties – devoid of fundamental differences – get 'feedback' (ibid: 22). Central to all of this is the state, which in turn is composed of the major parties that are in power. In effect, cartel parties ensure their own existence, at the expense of the electorate's ability to either partake meaningfully in party politics or spur fundamental political change. Katz and Mair concluded (echoing Kirchheimer) that, due to this 'cartelization', politicians have become careerists who 'regard their political opponents as fellow professionals' and choose 'stability' over 'triumph; politics becomes a job rather than [contrary to Weber's famed normative depiction of the ideal politician] a vocation' (ibid: 23, emphasis added).

The decline of traditional parties?

Katz and Mair were far from the only scholars propounding the austere trajectory of an increasing disconnect between political parties and civil society. From the 1970s onwards, a considerable amount of literature emerged arguing — with different emphases and foci — that due to an array of economic and societal factors, 'the principal agencies of political life — party, interest group, bureaucracy, legislature' were becoming less able to 'translate new aspirations into political projects' (Berger, 1979: 27; cf. Epstein, [1967] 1980; Wright, 1971). In what has since been described as the 'decline of party hypothesis' (Montero and Gunther, 2002: 3), scholars increasingly questioned whether or not 'the institution of party is gradually disappearing [and is] slowly being replaced by new political structures more suitable

for the economic and technological realities of twenty-first century politics' (Merkl and Lawson, 1988: 3).

Fuelling these pronouncements of party decline and relevance were the numerous macroeconomic 'shocks' of the 1970s (the collapse of the Bretton Woods trans-Atlantic economic system, oil crises, stagflation, high unemployment, failing industries and 'rising social conflicts') that were argued to have seen 'the fundamental assumptions on which Western industrial societies had lived for twenty-five years [...] suddenly called into question' (Berger, 1981: 1). These crises erupted at a time when, as Koole (1996) describes, 'individuals began to loosen their ties to parties [...] that were originally set up to defend specific religious or class interests' (Koole, 1996: 512). With the hard fought battle for welfare entrenchment largely defunct and the 'increasing affluence and expanding middle classes' (Montero and Gunther, 2002: 4) diminishing working class mobilization, a gradual loosening of party identification did seem underway. Because of the post-war boom and significantly improved social services, West European citizens were both more affluent and better educated. Indeed, as Inglehart famously argued in (1977), the encompassing safety net provided by the expanding welfare state and the booming post war economy helped to instigate what he termed a so-called 'silent revolution'. This revolution manifested in a shift from 'materialist' to 'post-materialist' values among the younger, better educated segments of populations, those who had not experienced the tremendous insecurities of the Great Depression and World War II. Inglehart argued that this revolution occurred on the Left, manifesting strongly in the massive student-led protests of 1968 and continued into the 1970s.

This increased the adoption of 'post-material' values [such] as gender identity, democratic rights and environmental safety' that contributed to 'the relative displacement of political parties as an important focus of political consensus-building' (Keane, 1984; cf. Offe, 1984). These 'values conflicted with the traditional ideologies of many parties', particularly Social Democratic ones, and thereby helped engender a more independent-thinking, less party loyal, citizenry with expanded 'participatory expectations better suited to new social movements, single-issue interest groups, and unconventional forms of political involvement' (Montero and Gunther, 2002: 4).9

⁹ For an overview of the literature on Social Movements, see (Rabrenovic, 2009).

Among other things, this saw Green parties break into numerous European party systems during the 1980s (Kaelberer, 1993).

The perceived inability of traditional parties to acclimatize to these new developments led scholars to look increasingly towards social movements as the future bridge between civil society and the state (cf. Dalton and Kuechler, 1990). However, the '[d]oom-and-gloom treatises on political parties' (Strøm and Svåsand, 1997: 4) proved too fatalistic in their pronouncements of the erosion of parties' pivotal position in democratic polities. As Montero and Gunther observe, 'in no instance have they [social movements] led to the disappearance of parties and/or their replacement by other types of organizations [...] or institutionalized practices (such as direct democracy)' (Montero and Gunther, 2002: 6). Daalder notes that the 'speculative statements' about the decline of parties 'frequently contain highly a priori assumptions' (2002: 55). To put it succinctly, Mair insists, 'Parties continue to matter. Parties continue to survive' (1997: 90; cf. Muirhead, 2014; Rosenblum, 2008). He observes that, 'despite the challenges from new parties and new social movements, most of them [old European parties] still remain in powerful, dominant positions' (ibid: 90). Yet these authors agree that the internal dynamics of parties have changed, particularly surrounding the importance and presence of party members.

Dealignment and the decline of party activism?

The literature on intra-party dynamics has long questioned the necessity (and usefulness) of active party members vis-à-vis the party's ability to appeal to the electorate. Michels' pioneering 'law of oligarchy' posited that ordinary party activists' influence was necessarily stifled due to the very nature of the party as an organization. The party leaders held the reigns, controlled communications and were therefore able to 'manipulate the support of the uniformed and unprofessional membership' (Heidar, 2006: 309). That is, the bigger and more complicated the party became the less able ordinary activists could control it. This benefited those with special skill sets (the party leaders). As Weber (Michels' contemporary and mentor) famously observed, there is a distinction between those 'who live "from" politics as a profession [and] seek to make it their permanent source of *income* [...] [and] those who live "for" politics [as] those for whom this is not the case' (Weber, [1918] 2004: 40, original emphasis). What

Michels (and arguably also Weber) pointed to — in other words — was the inevitable conflict between ordinary members and party elites.

Indeed, as Farrell et al. observe, the assumption that ordinary party activists' motivations differ from those of the party's leadership and that this has posed problems for the leadership's ability to appeal to the electorate, 'informs the main models of post-war party transformation' (2000: 131).10 One oft-cited attempt to codify these tensions was May's 'Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity' (1973). This 'law' posited that the middle echelons of a party – those party activists May called 'subleaders' – hold the most ideologically extreme positions due to the nature of their socialization into the party. In contrast, the top ranks of the party experience a different socialization that is built upon 'tangible' and 'intangible' incentives (e.g. salaries and power) that makes them moderate their positions towards the centre for fear of losing their position (May, 1973: 148-149). Though empirical tests of May's 'law' have been far from conclusive (cf. Kitschelt, 1989; Norris, 1995), and the aforementioned assertions of parties' declining importance were arguably exaggerated - parties are still at the epicentre of politics - the fact remains that a widespread trend throughout western democracies has been a declining membership and activism within parties (Kölln, 2015; Whiteley, 2011).

As Scarrow summated in a volume exploring the changing nature of parties, 'the erosion of traditional social milieux, the associated weakening of political loyalties, and the shift towards expensive mass media campaigning [...] are said to reduce the supply of potential party members, and at the same time to make parties less interested in formally enrolling their supporters' (Scarrow, 2000: 82). More recently, following an extensive survey of the existing membership data on European party membership compiled since the early 1980s, Van Biezen et al. (2012) concluded that parties, 'have all but abandoned any pretensions to being mass organisations' (2012: 42). These large parties' success was founded upon their ability to 'cement the loyalties of their voters by building strong organizational networks on the basis of shared social experiences' (Mair, 2013: 80); and, it is argued, this affinity and ability has since splintered (Manin, 1997).

Coupled with the fragmentation of European party systems, this decline in activism is believed to have spawned new cleavages. With parties' increased

¹⁰ (e.g. Kirchheimer, 1966, Epstein [1967] 1980, Wright 1971, and Neumann 1956).

professionalization; centralization; declining membership and overall presence in society; the reversal of representation away from citizens demands and towards the state; a growing 'mediatisation of politics' (Kriesi, 2014: 367); and a convergence around policy issues brought about by increasing supranational governance (Europeanization) and internationalization of capital and financial markets; a vacuum spawned. Filling this, in part, was an increasingly 'partyless and hence depoliticized democracy' (Mair, 2000: 1; cf. Mair, 2005). The disconnect between party and voters in a political environment in which mainstream parties have 'converged' on policy issues, and party members of different hues have intermeshed and 'integrated' with governing elites (Katz and Mair, 2008: 6; 9), contricuted 'to the alienation of the voters from the traditional political process' (Kriesi, 2014: 367). As Mény and Surel outlined in their edited volume (2002) on the challenge that 'populism' increasingly poses, European polities are increasingly characterized by:

common features such as the decline of electoral support for political incumbents, a marked increase in electoral abstentionism, the volatility of the electorate, the growing fragmentation of the party system, the emergence of ad hoc social movements unrepresented by traditional political organizations, and the emergence of single-issue and/or radical parties (Mény and Surel, 2002: 1).

From the 1980s onwards, scholars began to identify that these changes were tantamount to an effective 'dealignment' of the political party manifestations of the social cleavages identified by Stein and Rokkan (1967) (Dalton et al., 1984). For Europe's Social Democratic parties, Meret and Siim contend, this manifested in an increasingly visible 'dual strategy' of parties simultaneously seeking to grow

their potential electoral support (mainly appealing to highly educated, public employed and professionals), and developing left-libertarian and egalitarian positions on multiculturalism, gender equality, environmentalism (2013: 127, emphasis added).

Increasingly, working class voters who historically had voted for Social Democratic parties have shifted their support to parties that opposed this development (Kitschelt, 1994; Swank and Betz, 2003). As Ignazi observed more then 25 years ago, Inglehart's (1977) thesis (cf. Inglehart, 1988, 1984) focused solely on the ideational developments

on the political left (Ignazi, 1992). This built on Flanagan's assertion that Inglehart's rather optimistic view that the growing prosperity that was effectively encouraging 'post-materialist' concerns could not explain the contrasting growing working-class support of the so-called 'New Right' (1987: 1305). What united these 'New Politics' Flanagan argued, 'is that New Right [e.g. France's *Front National*] is as much nonmaterialist as the New Left' (ibid: 1308). Indeed, the dynamics behind this were identified long ago by Lipset:

when liberalism is defined in noneconomic terms — as support of civil liberties, internationalism, etc. — the correlation is reversed. The more well-to-do are more liberal, the poorer are more intolerant (Lipset, [1959] 1971: 102-103).

Engaging with what was then referred to as the 'New Populism' (in part to differentiate from older Latin and North American variants, cf. Conniff, 1999; Kazin, 1998), Taggart asserted that the (then) rise of these parties on the Right since the 1980s in Western Europe were defined by their 'anti-politics', or 'anti-system' positions (Taggart, 1996: 32). They therefore saw themselves as 'of the people but not of the system' (ibid: 32, added emphasis). Expanding on this, Canovan described populism as the 'redemptive' side of democracy, objecting to democracy's other 'face' of pragmatism (1999: 10). That is, democracies' redemptive stance is as 'vox populi' (the voice of the people), whereas its pragmatic perspective 'embodies political ideals (notably peace, stability, moderation)' (ibid: 14: 10, original emphasis). Indeed the pragmatic face of politics, characterized famously by Weber as the 'slow, powerful drilling through hard boards' ([1918] 2004: 93), is what populism – as a redemptive style, 'for the 'silent majority' of 'ordinary, decent people' – reacts against (Canovan, 1999: 5). Populist rhetoric (broadly speaking, though varying significantly in degrees across contexts) opposes and denounces 'elite political culture [...] strongly imbued individualism, internationalism, multiculturalism, with liberal permissiveness and belief in progress' (ibid: 4).

¹¹ In Britain, the rise of the 'New Right' that culminated in 'Thatcherism' traced a long precedent that was argued to be quite prismatic (Levitas, 1986). Stuart Hall, in a Gramscian dissection, traced this mutation of the overtly fascist and racist positions of the National Front into the 'legitimate' terrain of Thatcher's moralizing 'authoritarian populism' in opposition to a disconnected Social Democratic state (Hall, 1980: 181; 177).

Indeed, in recent decades, European (Western, Central and Eastern) countries have experienced a marked increase in both the number and electoral support for populist social movements and parties (Betz, 1993; Gherghina et al., 2013; Kriesi, 2014; Moffitt, 2017; Mudde, 2016; Müller, 2016; Panizza, 2005; Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2019). Krastev observes that this 'spectre' — 'the populist moment' — is symptomatic of 'a conflict between elites that are becoming increasingly suspicious of democracy and angry publics that are becoming increasingly illiberal' (2007: 1). Though a 'notoriously vague term' (Canovan, 1999: 3) and engaged with using different designations — Populist, Radical-Right, National-Populist or Extreme-Right, these parties have increasingly broken into and established themselves in many European party systems (Betz, 1994; Eatwell and Goodwin, 2018; Ignazi, 2003; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Mair and Mudde, 1998; Mammone et al., 2011; Rydgren, 2018).

However, as Bonikowski and others have recently argued, there has been a tendency in this rapidly expanding literature to automatically conflate right-wing populism and nationalism (Bonikowski, 2017; Golder, 2016; Rydgren, 2017). Although differences abound within these critiques on the extent to which the two designations are coterminous, there is relative consensus that 'Nationalism is a common ideological feature on the far right' (Golder, 2016: 480). Nationalism is, of course, a highly variegated concept that traces a much broader history (Brubaker, 1996; Gellner, 1983; Özkırımlı, 2010). Yet, even early dissections of populism suggested that nationalism was an intrinsic component to populism:

populism is a kind of nationalism, the distinguishing feature of populistic nationalism being its equation of 'the nation' and 'the people' (Stewart, 1969: 183)

For a growing number of scholars, the growing success of these 'populist' parties on the right is inseparably linked to their ability to mobilize a 'nativism' (Mudde, 2007: 17) and/or an, 'ethnic nationalism' by 'invok[ing] a 'heartland' consisting of an idealized past of ethnically homogenous nation states' (Rydgren, 2017: 488; 489).

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¹² Broadly, in the populism scholarship there are three competing theoretical conceptualizations: Populism as an as an ideology (Mudde, 2007; Pankowski, 2010), as a mode of political strategy (Weyland, 2001), and as a discourse (Laclau, 2007).

A growing socio-cultural political cleavage

Although many of these 'populist' parties' economic policies have changed significantly since the 1980s – from explicitly low-taxation 'neoliberal' to more economically centrist and pro-welfare state (Mudde, 2007) – they have increasingly been fuelled by their position towards an underlying cultural conflict between universalistic, cosmopolitan, libertarian, and traditionalist, communitarian worldview(s) (Bornschier, 2010: 420-423). Indeed, in certain national contexts such as the Netherlands and Denmark, 'characterizing "anti-immigrant populists" as rightwing might be a misnomer, as they have adopted classically left-wing positions on the questions of, for example, state pensions and public health care' (Krouwel, 2012: 277-278). What drives these parties' success above anything else, Krouwel asserts, is their effectiveness at 'emphasizing the perceived effects of mass immigration on national culture and society' (ibid: 278). Kriesi et al. found that amongst six European electorates, 'the differences [between globalizations' 'winners' and 'losers'] are more pronounced on the cultural dimension, and [that] this once again highlights the dominance of the cultural logic in contemporary politics' (2012: 73). This increasingly prominent conflict dimension has been argued to have added a new vertical axis to the traditional left-right spectrum and has, for instance, been designated as 'TAN-GAL' ('Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalist – Green, Alternative, Libertarian') (Hooghe et al., 2002).

The 'cultural logic' argument is further reinforced in recent scholarship by Inglehart and Norris, who argue that this conflict has 'stimulated a cultural backlash' that has become increasingly salient in recent years and is an important contributing factor to phenomena such as the Brexit vote, the election of Donald Trump as US president in 2016, and the substantial increased electoral support for various populist parties across European polities (Inglehart and Norris, 2016: 29). The unifying 'theme' of these developments 'on both sides of the Atlantic', they argue, 'is a reaction against immigration and cultural change' (Inglehart and Norris, 2017: 446). Indeed, as this attests to, Inglehart has considerably revised the teleological optimism of his original (1977) thesis (cf. Inglehart, 1997). As Inglehart now observes (with Norris), '[p]ostmaterialism eventually became its own gravedigger' (Inglehart and Norris, 2017: 444). Inglehart and Norris maintain that Inglehart's initial thesis has

increasingly been affirmed among 'younger birth cohorts and the better educated strata of society' who do indeed exemplify increased levels of 'post-materialist and self-expression values' (2016: 29). This has contributed to a broader acceptance and indeed, political emphasis on, 'social tolerance of diverse lifestyles, religions, and cultures, multiculturalism, international cooperation, democratic governance, and the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights' (ibid: 29). Equally, however, these 'progressive values' have increasingly seen passionate counter-reactions. Acknowledging that this 'backlash' against postmaterialist values is not new, they argue,

Traditional moral beliefs, social norms, and behaviors that were conventional and mainstream during the mid-twentieth century, reflecting fixed social identities founded on faith, family, and nation state, are currently endorsed by a still substantial but shrinking minority of the population (Inglehart and Norris, 2019: 33-34).

The segments of publics that feel 'threatened' by this development' are those 'who were once the privileged majority culture in Western societies [and who therefore] resent being told that traditional values are 'politically incorrect' if they have come to feel that they are being marginalized within their own countries' (Inglehart and Norris, 2016: 29). Drawing on data from the European Social Survey they argue that, although context dependent, undergirding this 'backlash' is a 'declining economic and physical security' that manifests in an increased 'anxiety that pervasive cultural changes and an influx of foreigners are eroding the cultural norms one knew since childhood' (2017: 446). Indeed, this anxiety has been further reinforced by rapidly changing demographics, whereby,

A sudden influx of immigrants from diverse cultures into relatively homogeneous societies can lead to a situation in which some people (especially the older ones) feel that they have become strangers in their own land: the world they live in is no longer the one in which they grew up. This can produce genuine anxiety and intense disorientation (Norris and Inglehart, 2019: 191).

Anxiety, anger, nostalgia and the politics of immigration

Inglehart and Norris's reference to anxiety and disorientation connects to a broader sociological story concerning the 'risk society' that increasingly took root in the postwar period (Beck, 1992). Although Beck's influential thesis concerned primarily how a range of new technologies spawned unforeseen transnational environmental risks (e.g. the Chernobyl incident in 1986) and thus led to an individualised 'reflexive' questioning of the very processes that precipitated these technological achievements (ibid: 10, original emphasis), it has since expanded to embrace a wide range of phenomena, including cultural understandings of migration following the terror attacks of September 11th 2001 (Beck, 2008; Beck et al., 1994; Mythen and Walklate, 2006). Indeed, as Beck asserted in 2008, although an ambivalent concept, the post-'9/11 generation' has been made especially 'conscious of the negative effects of terrorism on life-chances' (Beck, 2008: 204). Adopting an array of theoretical perspectives, scholars have argued that European states have increasingly 'securitized' (Buzan et al., 1998) migration in response to the perceived heightened threat of terror attacks (Balzacq, 2008; Boer and Monar, 2002; Guild, 2003; Karyotis, 2007; Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015; Luedtke, 2009). Equally, though certainly present before 9/11, Islamophobia in Europe is argued to have become increasingly pronounced in recent years (Morey et al., 2011; Taras, 2012). However, the relationship between public and political insecurity and cultural and national identity are far from recent phenomena.

In his classic work that traced the genesis and escalation of anti-foreigner sentiments in the pre- and post-bellum United States, Higham (1955) defined the core feature of nativism in America as the certitude 'that some influence originating abroad threatened the very life of the nation from within' (1988 [1955]: 4). He argued that the various manifestations of nativism (anti-Catholicism and the anti-radical distrust of European immigrants) amidst points of 'crisis' in early America (during the 1790s and 1850s), were part of a complex preamble in the maturation towards the 'racial nativism' of the late 19th and early 20th century, which he defined as 'the most important nativist ideology' (ibid: 5-11; 131-132). Though taking many forms, this 'racial nationalism' was in part stoked by the growing perception that the 'specific ethnic types' found in the changing streams of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe were racially and culturally 'impervious to the whole of American civilization' (ibid: 140). As Lucassen has shown with great detail, similar sentiments

towards 'non-Western immigrants' existed in Britain, Germany and France from the 1940s onwards, as colonial citizens and guest workers arrived with growing frequency (2006: 1). In France, for instance, the *Front National* became increasingly adept from the early 1980s onwards at framing North African immigrants as a threat to the 'secular Republican ideal' (ibid: 180).

Though the literature on emotion and politics traces a much longer history (e.g. Lasswell, 1930), the empirical linkage between emotion and populism is far more recent. As populist parties have increasingly framed outsiders — particularly Muslims and non-European immigrants — as a growing threat to the cultural purity of 'the people', recent scholarship has started to focus on the negative emotional registers that this rhetoric taps into (Berning, 2016; Ford and Goodwin, 2010; Hameleers et al., 2017). Studies in political communication have found that populist parties' in Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland's negative framing in social media of immigrants as a threat has been particularly effective (Engesser et al., 2017; Hameleers and Schmuck, 2017). More broadly, campaign studies by political psychologists have argued that, in contrast to enthusiasm, anger has been an especially powerful emotional register in mobilizing electoral participation (Valentino et al., 2011).

As Magni found, anger played a pivotal role in mobilising growing support for the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) in both the 2005 and 2010 UK general elections (Magni, 2017). Similarly, Rico et al. argue that supporters of the left-wing populist party *Podemos* in Spain were mobilised primarily by their anger towards the political establishment's handling of Spain's deepening economic crisis (Rico et al., 2017). As they describe, '[a]nger is linked to the perception that a frustrating event is certain, externally caused, and unfair' (Rico et al., 2017: 445). This 'blame attribution' (ibid: 448) to the 'external' finds particular resonance with how right-wing populist parties mobilize anger and 'resentment toward elites, as well as ethnic, racial and religious out-groups' (Bonikowski, 2017: 201). An integral aspect of this anger and resentment, as several scholars have begun to identify, is the nostalgia that these parties conjure: promising to restore their respective countries' to a golden age (Duyvendak, 2011; Vries and Hoffmann, 2018).

In her study of how nostalgia dominates — even 'entraps' — visions of the 'good' American family life, Coontz deftly describes these recurring mythologies as 'the way

we never were' (Coontz, 2000). In a landmark exploration of nostalgia in post-Soviet Russia, Boym explicates that,

Nostalgia (from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy (2001: xiii, original emphasis).

Fritzsche argues, in reference to various manifestations of nostalgia for Communist East Germany (Ostalgie), that the expression of nostalgia 'stalks modernity as an unwelcome double, a familiar symptom of unease in the face of political and economic transformation' (Fritzsche, 2002: 62, cf. Bouma, 2019). Yet, as Pickering and Keightley caution, though nostalgia has often been treated as a necessarily negative sentiment, it is neither 'singular or absolute' (Pickering and Keightley, 2006: 919). Rather, they contend that nostalgia's 'contrarieties' are exemplified because it can manifest as 'progressive, even utopian impulses as well as regressive stances and melancholic attitudes' (ibid: 919). Indeed, Nadkarni and Shevchenko's comparative ethnographic analysis of the multiplicity of 'nostalgic practices' taking place in post-Soviet Russia and Hungary serves as an incisive example of how nostalgia is a multifaceted phenomenon (2014: 664). They observe that 'the power of nostalgia is precisely its susceptibility to being co-opted into various agendas, which nostalgia then cloaks with an aura of inevitability' (ibid: 63). Moreover, as Angé and Berliner highlight in a volume on the anthropology of nostalgia, the 'multiplicity of meanings to nostalgia [...] depend on who mobilizes the desire to renew a relationship to the past' (Angé and Berliner, 2014: 7). Gest et al. arque that this was particularly apparent in both Donald Trump's campaign ("Make America Great Again") and the UK's 'Vote Leave Campaign' ("Take Back Control") (Gest et al., 2017: 1712). An important contributing factor to the success of both of these campaigns, they argue, was the ability to exploit a 'nostalgic deprivation' which manifests in 'the discrepancy between individuals' understandings of their current status and their perceptions about their past [status in society]' (ibid: 1695).

As Ivarsflaten asserted already in 2005, the ground for this type of nostalgic resentment was fertile. Based on survey data from 18 Western European countries from 2003 she found that,

The main driving force behind western Europeans' support for restrictive immigration and asylum policies is their concern about the unity of their national community. A large majority sees great value in maintaining or creating the dominance of one language, one religion, and one set of traditions (Ivarsflatten, 2005: 42).

Moreover, the results of a 2009 Eurobarometer survey across 27-member states found that 48 percent of respondents 'thought that other ethnic groups are a 'cause of insecurity' (Hampshire, 2013: 21). Increasingly, anti-immigrant populist parties' throughout the EU (e.g. Poland's Law and Justice party, Hungary's Fidesz, Alternative for Germany (AFD), Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ), and Italy's Northern League (Lega Nord), have been able to capitalise on this resentment by conjuring a nostalgia for a golden age before non-European immigration (Grimm, 2015; Pirro, 2014; Reynié, 2016). This became particularly evident in 2015 when Europe experienced the largest humanitarian crisis since WWII, as more than one million people from predominantly Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq sought entry into EU member states (UNHCR, 2015). Here, the classic literature on national cleavages finds difficulty accommodating the impact of exogenous geopolitical 'shocks' such as immigration. Although in reference to the consequences that the relationship between changing class voting behaviour and the ideological changes in the UK of both Labour and the Conservatives during the 1980s had on the cleavage model, Johnston rightfully asserted that, 'the basic problem with the cleavage model is that it does not contain a clear mechanism for change' (Johnston, 1990: 139).

Refugee-Crisis-as-cleavage

In an article from 2018, Hooghe and Marks convincingly argue that the 2015 refugee crisis is an especially stark example of a 'critical juncture' in what they argue to be the broader 'transnational cleavage' that has, and continues to, reshape European political parties and party systems (2018: 110, original emphasis). The globalising phenomena that accelerated in the 1990s (geopolitical shifts spawned by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and, more broadly, the liberalization of the movement of goods, capital and people) has gradually intensified the importance of this

extranational cleavage (ibid: 113). In particular, this cleavage 'has as its focal point the defence of national political, social and economic ways of life against external actors who penetrate the state by migrating, exchanging goods or exerting rule' (ibid: 110). Although broad consensus (even fervency) towards this intensified 'transnationalism' existed among both centre-right and Social Democratic parties, this harmony has evoked equally – if not more – passionate counter-reactions. With the 'critical juncture' spawned by the 2015 refugee crisis, due to their above-described pronounced positions towards non-EU immigration, Europe's populist parties were well-positioned to act, in contrast to traditional centre-right and Social Democratic parties who had to (often erratically) react. As Hooghe and Marks assert:

Change has come not because mainstream parties have shifted in response to voter preferences, but because voters have turned to parties with distinctive profiles on the new cleavage (ibid: 126).

As argued in the Introduction, this is what happened in Sweden during autumn 2015. Right up until the situation was deemed untenable and border controls were instituted, the leaders of both the Moderates and the SAP were explicit in their overtures that Sweden would remain a safe haven for asylum seekers. As Hooghe and Marks argue, 'the modal response of mainstream political parties was to stay put on these issues. Voters changed, but mainstream parties did not' (ibid: 110-111). Only when the refugee crisis reached a critical juncture did these parties' representatives react and start to (or, try to) 'compete on issues that lie far from their programmatic core' (ibid: 111).

In the literature on how mainstream parties have 'reacted' to the growing support for populist parties, analyses have shown a plethora of differing responses by centre-right and centre-left parties (Akkerman et al., 2016; Bale et al., 2010; Meguid, 2005; Spanje, 2010). As Heinze clarifies, 'mainstream parties can select from reactions such as ignore, legal restrictions, cordon sanitaire, demonise, defuse, hold and collaborate' (Heinze, 2018: 287, original emphasis). Initially, mainstream parties in, for example Belgium, adopted a 'cordon sanitaire' towards these parties and effectively excluded them from formal parliamentary cooperation (Downs, 2002). However, in Austria, Norway, Denmark and Finland, right-wing populist parties have more recently helped to form governments. One particularly effective 'winning strategy' helping to fuel the

electoral success of these parties has been their explicit 'welfare chauvinism', whereby welfare is argued to only be for the 'deserving' native population — 'the people' (Lange, 2007). In a study of the so-called 'accommodation strategy' by mainstream parties of moving their own positions towards welfare and immigration closer to those of nationalist populist parties, Schumacher and Kersbergen (2014) found that Social Democratic parties were less willing to shift their positions than centre-right parties. In contrast, Rooduijn et al. argue that in France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and the UK, 'mainstream parties are copycats that – pressured by their own electoral failure or the success of populist parties – adopt an accommodative strategy and cut and paste from the manifestos of their rivals' (2012: 571). While this might have changed in the years since (particularly in Denmark and Germany, cf. Spoon and Klüver, 2020), the lack of consensus in the literature attests to the vast array of variation in how different European mainstream parties seek to engage with populist parties. These parties continue to disrupt traditional socio-economic voting patterns, as 'all mainstream parties across the two sides of the Atlantic appear guite distant from their own voters on immigration issues' (Brady et al., 2020: 12).

Until very recently, the Swedish electorate has been described as eluding trends apparent in many other EU member states, and voting to a significantly higher degree along class lines (Oskarson, 2015). Class voting (both self-identified and socioeconomic position in labour market metrics) is still argued to be considerably more pronounced in Sweden than other advanced welfare states (Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2016). Indeed, in comparison to its sister parties in Norway and Denmark, the SAP saw a far more robust support from the 1970s through to the early 2000s. As Blomqvist and Green-Pedersen assert, in both Norway and Denmark, the Social Democrat parties increasingly lost their ability to 'guard' their 'ownership' of issues concerning the welfare state and thereby saw the encroachment of both 'populist' and centre-right economically liberal parties (2004: 608). In Sweden, on the other hand, the SAP in their post-war 'hegemonic' position had created such a 'power legacy' that they were able to much more effectively constrain the political conflict dimensions, so that they remained along the 'traditional left/right divide' (ibid: 609, cf. Therborn, 1991). If the party lost voters, it was 'to the Left Party and the Green Party rather than to parties on the right wing of the political spectrum' (Blomqvist and Green-Pedersen, 2004: 609). Although membership to the SAP has certainly decreased significantly since reaching its apex of 1.3 million members in the early 1980s, with around 90,000 members in

the lead-up to the 2018 election, the party is still by far the largest in Sweden (the second largest party, the Moderates, had 45,000 and SD had approximately 30,000 members) (Lindholm, 2018; SD, 2018).¹³

When the centre-right Alliance won power in 2006, it was because it was able to successfully frame itself as more competent in managing the economy and delivering welfare than the SAP (Milner, 2013: 118). As long-time Swedish public opinion surveyor Stefan Svallfors recently accounts, 'there are virtually no signs of any decreasing public support for welfare policies' in Sweden (2016: 29). Rather, he argues that the centre-right's 'market-emulating reforms of the welfare state' seem to have, paradoxically, 'completed the full ideological integration of the middle class into the welfare state, effectively eroding resistance against a high-tax, high-spending, collective welfare state' (ibid: 31). Moreover, public support for Sweden's EU membership remains comparatively high. An EU wide poll by Kantar Sifo in April 2018 found that 68 percent of Swedes supported EU membership, with the highest support found in Luxembourg, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands (between 79 to 85 percent) and the lowest in Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece and Italy (between 34 to 45 percent) (Fredriksson, 2018).14 While public opinion polling showed a rise in distrust towards politicians following an economic downturn in the early 1990s (the so-called 'Crown crisis'), results in 2010 were found to be just as high as they were forty years prior (Esaiasson and Wångnerud, 2016: 201).

However, the sociocultural salience of the cleavage surrounding non-European immigration has accelerated the unravelling of voting patterns among segments of the electorate which historically formed the key base of the SAP's voters: 'lower technical workers' holding 'occupations within transport, inventories and workshops' (Oskarson and Demker, 2013: 177). In turn, SD's ability to frame a cohesive cultural narrative of what the 'established' parliamentary parties' supposed positions are surrounding

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¹³ Stoked in part because of the so-called 'wage-earner fund debacle' between LO and the SAP and by criticism levelled by centre-right parties, in 1990 (amidst the so-called 'war of the roses' in the labour movement) the SAP severed its 'collective affiliation' with LO, instantaneously losing 500,000 members (from having been over 1.3 million members in the early 1980s) (Tsarouhas, 2013: 353).

¹⁴ Although no parties advocate for Sweden to leave the EU, SD voters are by far the least supportive of EU membership. Survey data from the governmental agency Statistics Sweden found in May 2018 that only 20 percent of SD voters were for membership (with 51.8 percent opposed and 27.9 percent unsure). This can be contrasted with 52.8 of SAP voters who were for membership (with 14.5 percent opposed and 32.7 percent unsure) and 67.6 percent of Moderate voters who were pro membership (with 10.5 percent opposed and 21.9 percent unsure) (Statistics Sweden, 2018a).

multiculturalism, gender, and law and order based upon these parties' positions on immigration, has proven incredibly effective at emboldening the support of a growing segment of the electorate. The realignment that has gradually developed in Sweden has seen the following developments. Firstly, the traditional, 15 economic 'left-right distinction' between the Moderates and the SAP has dissipated, as the two parties have moved closer towards one another on market and welfare related issues (Karreth et al., 2013). Both parties (and indeed all of Sweden's 'traditional' parties) have increasingly converged on their embrace of 'libertarian values and a clear support for multiculturalism' (Oskarson and Demker, 2013: 181).

Due to this convergence and the continued 'cordon sanitaire' towards the party, SD has been able to articulate a socio-culturally nationalist cleavage that has proven increasingly salient in Sweden. That is, as opposed to the historically dominant economic left-right conflict dimension, it has been the party's ability to exploit this cleavage by making 'nostalgic appeals to an idealised and sanitized version of the Swedish welfare model' (Norocel, 2016: 372, cf. Elgenius and Rydgren, 2019). 16 In particular, SD has increasingly sought to encroach upon socio-political imagery that has historically been fiercely guarded by the SAP: trygghet and the defence against its anxiety-inducing antipode, otrygghet. As outlined in the Introduction, in Sweden during the years leading up to the 2018 election there was a sense of a growing otrygghet in Sweden. In the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention's (BRÅ) annual trygghets-survey of 74,000 people, feelings of otrygghet were reported to have increased by six percentage points in the years following the 2015 refugee crisis (from 22 percent in 2015 to 28 percent in 2016) to the highest percentages recorded since the survey began in 2006 (BRÅ, 2019: 101). Reacting to the increased crime rates, SD party leader Jimmie Åkesson contended in an op-ed for one of Sweden's largest tabloids in March 2018:

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¹⁵ Lipset and Rokkan referred to this as 'the conflict between owners and employers on the one side and tenants, laborers, and workers'; one of the two main 'critical' cleavages developing as a consequence of the industrial revolution (1967: 14, original emphasis).

¹⁶ However, as Erlingsson et al. (2014) assert, the notion that SD's appeal is only due to their 'protest party' appeal in their pronounced resistance towards immigration, and therefore is strictly only a 'single-issue party', is too simplistic. In a case study of policy positions of SD parliamentary candidates and exit polling of SD voters from the 2010 election (when SD first gained entry to parliament), they found that, apart from immigration, both candidates and voters' hold culturally conservative positions on 'non-economic issues, whereas they take a centrist position on the economy' (Erlingsson et al., 2014: 209).

We know that a large part of this criminality is imported. This is a consequence of the irresponsible migration policy that the other parties have pursued for many years. Mass immigration has made Sweden *otryggt* (Åkesson, 2018, own translation).

The embodied intersubjectivity of trygghet

From the adjective *trygg*, *trygghet* derives from the Old Swedish word for 'true' (*trogen*) and is primarily defined as, 'to be free from worry or threatening element' (Ernby, 2008: 719, own translation).¹⁷ This is in contrast to *säkerhet*, which shares the same Latin derivation as 'security' ('securos'), and is defined primarily as a circumstance or something that 'does not amount to danger' (ibid: 680, own translation). *Säkerhet* is commonly used in reference to a narrower register of phenomena – all of which denote a more definitive, hardened form of risk that can be empirically measured and responded to, for instance: security check (*säkerhetskontroll*); national security (*rikets säkerhet*); the Swedish security service (*säkerhetspolisen*); juridical security (*rättssäkerhet*). *Trygghet*, on the other hand, finds no comparable term in English and conjures an embodied and enveloping sense of safety and comfort.

One useful example that helps to highlight the subtle, yet important, difference in meaning between *säkerhet* and *trygghet* is in reference to alarm devices. A *säkerhetslarm* is a device that detects physical intrusion into a property and notifies the company operating the service who in turn contact the police. A *trygghetslarm* is a device most often worn by the elderly still living at home that, when activated, links to a speaker system service that connects the person with an assistant nurse. The elderly person can of course trigger the device for a variety of reasons, if they fall or feel unwell. It is provided so that they can have a sense of *trygghet* – to know that they are not alone and can access the voice of someone who cares at the click of a button.

In contrast to the overwhelming majority of scholarship on Swedish politics and political economy that per automatic converts *trygghet* to 'security' (e.g. Andersson's book 'Between Growth and Security' (Andersson, 2006), my decision *not* to translate *trygghet* in this manner is encouraged by a growing consensus in the humanities that

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¹⁷ Variations of the word also exist in the other North Germanic Languages: Icelandic (*tryggr*); Norwegian (*trygghet*) and Danish (*tryg*) (Hellquist, 1922).

argues that keeping a specific term in its original language means to take seriously 'the interest of differences – the only way of really facilitating communication between languages and cultures' (Cassin, 2014: xvii). As one of the editors of a new 'Dictionary of Untranslatables' argues, to render a term 'untranslatable' is to argue for, 'what one keeps on (not) translating [...] is a sign of the way in which, from one language to another, neither the words nor the conceptual frameworks can simply be superimposed' (ibid: xvii). In other words, this means to be attentive to the broader historical, cultural and emotional registers that the usage of the term signifies. Indeed, a recent intervention by Medby argues that political geography should do more to take seriously the context-specific particularities of how '[I]anguage and language practices do more than describe any external reality; they are an inherent part of making it' (Medby, 2020). 18 Echoing the above assertions, Medby rightly argues that 'language itself – including jargon or Anglophone status – can singularise truth and understanding' (ibid: 150). Therefore, this greater engagement with the particularities of language is an essential component of the recent push for 'decolonising geographical knowledge' (Noxolo, 2017). Medby closes her article by suggesting potential avenues for political geography's analysis of language, beyond reinvigorating the sub-discipline of critical geopolitics' engagement with the trope of the 'new Cold War' and cybersecurity. Here, the growing support in Europe for nationalist populist parties receives cursory mention. Because language practices 'powerfully conjure emotions, imaginaries, and indeed tangible actions', political geographers should explore 'how [the] use of vernacular feed into sense[s] of belonging and non/anti-elite empowerment' (Medby, 2020).

Drawing from anthropological applications of phenomenology – particularly the notions of embodiment and intersubjectivity – feeling *trygg* or having *trygghet* can be understood as constituting an elemental sense of being in Sweden: how Swedes experience the world. Devoid of its political-discursive manipulations, *trygghet* is an experiential knowledge that is intersubjectively¹⁹ constituted among Swedes. It is both

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¹⁸ Engagement with language practices traces a rich trajectory within the humanities, social sciences and philosophy (Bachtin, 1981; Derrida, 1976; Foucault, 1973; Wittgenstein, 1953).

¹⁹ As Kaufman et al. (2006) describe, intersubjectivity is, 'the inextricable joining of self-knowledge, interpersonal relations, and social-ethical participation that constitutes, in large part today, the making of subjects. Together, embodiment and social emplacement shape people's experiences of self and other, the parameters of identity and subjectivity, and the nature of relationships' (Kaufman et al., 2006: 83).

an individual and a shared understanding of well-being and calmness; a warm and comforting sense of place. An illustration of this is found in one of Sweden's most recognized hymns, *Tryggare kan ingen vara* ('No one can be *tryggare*').²⁰ Written around 1850 during immense industrial change and revolutionary currents sweeping across continental Europe, the author Lina Sandell apparently found inspiration from her favourite perch in an ash tree at the vicarage, while looking on as a family of birds found shelter in their nest as storm clouds neared. Watching as the birds nestled in, Sandell was overcome by the power of the divine and the endless serenity that comes with knowing that one is cared for and thus penned the first line, 'No one can be *tryggare* than god's faithful little brood' (Brügge, 2010; Harling, 2007). To utter in Swedish that something *känns tryggt* (feels *tryggt*) is to tap into the Swedish 'lifeworld' in that *trygghet* is a shared socio-cultural notion that the listener will understand the meaning of.

Politically, ensuring *trygghet* is the source from which all other policy emanates. The SAP's *folkhem* project was premised on providing a certain vision of *trygghet* for broad segments of Sweden's population that fused *trygghet* with Sweden as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983). As the party chair Per Albin Hansson declared in the so-called 'people's home speech' (*folkhemstalet*) in 1928, the SAP's nation-building project was premised on,

That feeling of existential *trygghet*, such as the assurance of aid during unemployment, sickness or an accident as well as during old age, [which] makes the individual more aware of their citizenship (Hansson, 1928, own translation).

This framing proved incredibly successful, and the SAP discursively mobilized trygghet along the traditional lines of left-right political scrimmage on economic and social issues, and the protection of the 'Swedish Model'. This conception of trygghet has served as a metaphor for the entire Social Democratically inflected Swedish nation state.

The 1932 election saw the SAP sweep to victory and, for the first time, form its own government following coalition governments in the 1920s with the Liberals. This was the result of the party promising large-scale comprehensive unemployment

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²⁰ In English, 'Children of the heav'nly Father'.

programs amidst the prevailing Great Depression that had intensified unemployment and a severe downturn in agricultural prices. After a number of decisive deals with the then-still very powerful Agrarian party (colloquially referred to as kohandeln – 'cow trade' – synonymous with 'horse trading' in English), this resulted into a coalition government following the 1936 election. The SAP was in turn able to implement an array of transformative reforms that, in combination with favourable international trends, solidified a prosperous developmental trajectory for Sweden (Berman, 1998: 166-174). During the period leading up to WWII, the SAP was therefore able to conjure 'a general belief in the responsibilities and potential of the state in economic and social life' (Molin, 1992: xxiv). Indeed, in contrast to other European Social Democratic parties, the SAP's aforementioned early abandonment of 'class struggle' as a driving precept enabled the party to reach compromises 'which did not alienate the substantial class of peasant proprietors' (Castles, 1978: 26). This ability for the SAP to compromise with the Agrarians during a time of agricultural tumult helped to weaken the threat of fascism that was in other parts of Europe (also undergoing agricultural crises) 'driving the peasantry into the arms of fascism' (ibid: 26).

For the far less electorally successful conservative Moderates, *trygghet* has also historically been mobilized as an existential dictum. The party's manifesto ahead of the 1944 election for the then second chamber of the parliament, stated that they wanted to:

Continue to build upon what we in our current societal order value the most: national independence, a free citizenry, a Christian worldview and cultural tradition and the ambition to commonly create affluence and *trygghet* for everyone (Högerpartiet, 1944, own translation).

In their corresponding manifesto, the SAP countered that, 'trygghet for everyone cannot solely be achieved through a good organisation of the private sector'; emphasising the state as the ultimate guarantor of both economic and social trygghet (SAP, 1944, own translation). Here, the SAP proved largely victorious.

The outbreak of WWII (during which Sweden remained 'neutral') had led to a rupturing of trade (which export-oriented Sweden was increasingly dependent upon) and thus disrupted the SAPs ability to continue pursuing its pre-war policies. Therefore, the state (governed by an emergency wartime national coalition of the four

largest parliamentary parties including the SAP) focused on a 'drastic economic reorganisation' that resulted in an unprecedented level of governmental bureaucratization, labour-market organization, regulation and intervention into the private sector (Higgins and Dow, 2013: 174). This impressive 'war-time apparatus', Higgins and Dow contend, 'gave the Swedish labour movement its first taste of full employment and an economy operating at 'full bore', and thus galvanized the SAP (in collaboration LO) to develop a comprehensive post-war party programme (ibid: 175).

Under the stewardship of the Minister of Social Affairs Gustav Möller, this highly ambitious new programme pivoted around the achievement of full-employment in order to secure 'trygghet for Sweden's people' (Möller in Tilton, 1990: 123). Central long-term aims therefore included the achievement of social insurance for – amongst other conditions – unemployment, old age, illness; solidaristic wage policies; housing support; comprehensive public healthcare; the levelling of class inequalities; comprehensive public schooling and vocational training (SAP, 1944).²¹ The intellectual underpinning of the programme was a strong 'societal vision that was a consequence of the establishment of science as an ideology and contributing factor in the social life' (Qvarsell, 1986: 15, own translation). Internationally, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal are the most well-known SAP intellectuals that exemplify this vision (cf. Myrdal and Myrdal, 1935). As Larsson describes, the Myrdal's 'embod[ied] the modern project's ideal of progress that combines science and politics with a rational conviction for social techniques' (1994: 133, own translation). Apart from economic policies, this manifested in a plethora of social reforms (e.g. in public health and housing) that were all centred around the aforementioned push towards achieving full-employment. To realise many of these ambitious policies, the central state needed to assume a much more active role unprecedented in Swedish history. As Larsson summates, from the 1930s onwards,

The Swedish *folkhem* was mentally anchored in a collective, stationary and homogenous lifeworld. [...] It was nourished by the conception of a well-planned and rational production with the effective allocation of resources for growth,

²¹ As Bergström observes, reading this programme: 'now, forty years later, it seems like a document that to a large extent stakes out Social Democratic policies. Not everything succeeded, and some areas remained untouched for a long time, but the program reads as remarkably modern and farsighted' (1992: 150).

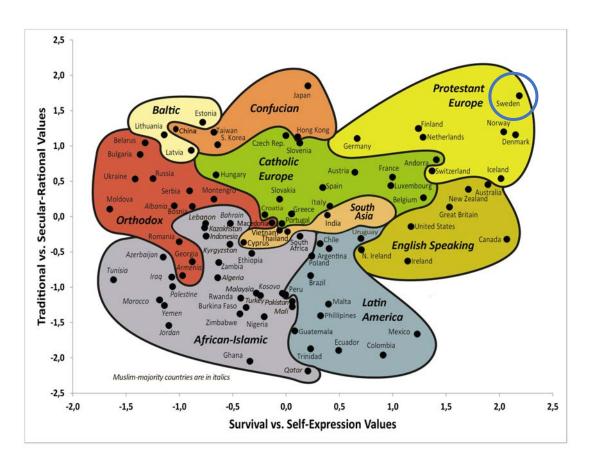
development and a forward-looking trajectory and at the same time a well-planned distribution of welfare. Via municipalities the State functioned as a patriarch. This meant an abrupt cessation with the picturesque disorder. Romanticism and anarchy were obviated by the supremacy of rationalization (Larsson, 1994: 141, own translation; emphasis added).

Despite the Moderates and the other centre-right parties' consternations, in its long reign of power, the SAP were able to realize the significant features of their desired national-political trygghets model. As Stråth and others argue, ²² it is therefore possible to delineate a 'Scandianvian Sonderweg', or 'Separate Path' of modernity (Stråth, 2004: 5, original emphasis). Far from teleological, this distinctive developmental trajectory became especially visible in the early 1930s, with the SAP's aforementioned mobilization of the folk and folkhemmet that was able to successfully incorporate the powerful imagery of the freedom-loving peasant (synonymous with the folk). Indeed, historians insist that the Scandinavian peasant is the essential key to understanding Scandinavia's or Nordens ('The North's' – or, the 'Nordic's') unique development. In Sweden, this development was especially clear. The welfare state was able to develop in the manner it did due to 'the Swedish notion of the folk as solidaristic yet individual, shaped by secular Lutheranism, peace-loving and trusting of government' (Andersson and Hilson, 2009: 220, original emphasis). This unique egalitarian development that centred on strong notions of community, they contend, has a far 'deeper historical past, namely in the development of peasant democracies that were able to reconcile the fundamental post-Enlightenment tension between freedom and equality' (ibid: 221). This arguably helps us to understand how and why the intersubjectively constituted notion of trygghet has been such a powerful trope to mobilize politically. Indeed, as Toren argues, 'our biology and psychology are embedded in a long history of specific intersubjectivities' (2009: 141). According to Inglehart and Welzel's analysis of the World Values Survey (see Figure 3), contemporary Sweden stands out as one of the most — if not the most — secular societies in the world, punctuated with extraordinarily high levels of trust for the state and strong notions of individualism.

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²² cf. (Andersson and Hilson, 2009; Berggren and Trägårdh, 2015; Sørensen and Stråth, 1997a; Witoszek and Trägårdh, 2002).

Figure 3. Socio-cultural map of the world



(Inglehart and Welzel, 2017)

Indeed, public opinion towards the fundamental features of the welfare state remains overwhelmingly positive (Svallfors, 2016). Though instituting some reforms at the fringes, the Moderate-led Alliance government (2006-2014) was arguably so successful precisely because they did not seek to fundamentally alter Sweden's Social Democratically inflected sense of *trygghet*. Yet, the increasingly liberalised position towards immigration held by both the Alliance and the SAP, had exposed a sociocultural void in Swedish politics. SD became increasingly adept at exploiting and filling this void, by arguing that the growing non-European refugee migration to Sweden was destroying the country. In autumn 2015, the refugee crisis forced the entire political establishment to significantly alter its position towards asylum migration.

The power of *trygghet* and its linkage to immigration has been previously briefly alluded to by the Norwegian anthropologist Marrianne Gullestad, in reference to how 'deep-seated values influence how people in Norway react to extra-European

immigration' (Gullestad, 2006: 75). Although only providing a passing mention of the concept in a broader essay on kinship and Norwegian ethno-nationalism, and not relying on empirical evidence, Gullestad rightly asserts that 'stability provides the basis for *trygghet*' in Norway (the Norwegian meaning is comparable to the Swedish usage of the concept) (ibid: 75, original emphasis). The rise of support for Norway's 'populist right-wing Progress Party', she argues, has been in part due to the party's ability to emphasise the threat that immigration has on Norwegians' sense of stability and *trygghet* (ibid: 76).²³

Although trygghet constitutes an intersubjectively embodied notion that is collectively shared, the mobilisation of the concept in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis has helped to catalyse the aggravated socio-cultural cleavage surrounding immigration in Sweden. While the specificities of how trygghet has been mobilized in Sweden is indeed untranslatable, the sociocultural grievances that the concept lays bare makes original contributions to the broader scholarship on how these grievances are re-shaping political conflicts. In this thesis, I therefore use trygghet as a prism to unpack how this cleavage manifested locally in Norrköping. Here, I take encouragement from both long-held sensitivities and more recent theoretical and methodological appeals from political geography.

Electoral Geography on Place and Parties

In political geography's subfield of electoral geography, Lipset and Rokkan's theory spawned a large body of scholarship situating how these cleavages correlated with the spatial distribution of voting preferences (e.g. Johnston, 1979, 1987, 1990; Pattie et al., 1991; Taylor and Johnston, 1979). However, in a commentary about the state of electoral geography in 1990, Johnston et al. observed that much of the scholarship was plagued by a 'rampant empiricism' (Johnston et al., 1990: 1). 'Many electoral geography studies' they argued, 'have consisted of mere descriptions of the spatial pattern of the vote in a particular election with little or no concern for wider issues' (ibid: 1). Part of this, Agnew asserted, was the result of the cleavage model's explicit focus on how 'political alignments have crystalized around *national* social cleavages to produce *national* patterns of political mobilization and partisanship' (Agnew, 1987:

²³ Gullestad echoes my assertion that *trygghet* is an untranslatable concept, describing it as a 'mixture of safety, security and control over one's life' (Gullestad, 2006: 76).

80, original emphasis). Increasingly, therefore, he insisted that the importance of 'place-related political identities' should become a more central concern in order to understand how political 'structures are reconstituted and take on meaning in place through ongoing social and political practices' (Agnew, 1984: 191; 1987: 44). Rather than accepting the 'political methodology' of political science and political sociology, he argued that political geographers should conceptualize

political activity as socially constructed in places as a result of the interaction between people's everyday routines, on the one hand, and social and economic influences from other, more distant 'seats of power' on the other hand (Agnew, 1990: 18).

In his own work on local and regional party politics in Italy, Agnew drew from an eclectic mixture of social and political theory to argue for the importance of understanding 'politics as organized in terms of the places where most people live their lives' (Agnew, 2002a: 2). This was encouraged by, among others, the work of Massey (1999) who argued that the local contexts and configurations that constitute an individual's 'sense of place' are a result of a kaleidoscopic 'mixture of [local and global] influences found together there' (Massey, 1999: 22). Taking a 'sociohistorical view of politics' sensitive to the potential for local political change, while also acknowledging the 'existing cultural templates that often show amazing resilience as well as adaptation' (Shin and Agnew 2008: 31; 30), Shin and Agnew therefore explored the conditions in Italy that catapulted Silvio Berlusconi's party Forza Italia to power from the mid-1990s and onwards. Though the designation 'populism' was only used once to describe this ascendancy, Shin and Agnew have recently re-engaged with the concept in light of the myriad ways that it has recently been deployed (2017). A particularly interesting shortcoming endemic to this ever-growing populism literature, they argue, is the aspatial engagement with the notion of 'the people' as an antagonistic category (2017: 918). Employing quantitative regression analyses, they therefore explore the 'spatial distribution' of populism in Italy since the 1990s and find that the often 'singular' territorial narratives of 'national populism' need to be tempered by the everpersistent importance of local context and configurations (ibid: 931).

Indeed, political geographers have increasingly begun to take seriously the need to dissect the growing intensity of the manifestations broadly categorized as 'populist'

(Gordon, 2018; Rossi, 2018). In the years leading up to the June 2016 Brexit referendum, Clarke et al. engaged with Mair's above-described (2013) assertion of a 'growing void' of political engagement between the cartelized mainstream politicians and parties, and segments of the citizenry who were increasingly disinterested and/or aggravated with the formal version of politics as usual (Clarke, 2015; Clarke et al., 2016, 2017). This trend of a growing 'anti-politics' they identified seems to have served (in hindsight) as a powerful harbinger to the success of the 'Vote Leave' campaign. As identified by both Wills (2015) and Clarke et al. (2016), the growing public distaste for the geographically 'concentrated' and distant elites clustered in Westminster and Brussels should not be conflated with a disinterest in politics. Seemingly not entirely oblivious to this growing 'void', cross-party calls for more 'localism' were identified and researched (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013; Wills, 2015). Moreover, Labour's 'community organising' initiatives during Ed Miliband's tenure as party leader (Scott, 2015; Scott and Wills, 2017) were analysed.

However, these initiatives clearly did not placate the complex and geographically variegated swell of resentment that manifested in the anti-establishment outcome of the 2016 referendum. Echoing Wills' call in 2015 for political geographers to engage with 'the present conjuncture to understand the populism of the people', Lizotte has recently urged the subfield

to continue to work towards a geographically-grounded approach to populism that accounts for how populist politics mobilizes material and symbolic grievances through narratives about place (2019: 140).

In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, there has been encouraging work by Gordon who draws on census data to complicate the 'economistic story' of the 'geography of populist support' simply being a matter of 'economic vulnerability or working class status' (2018: 100; 110, cf. Bachmann and Sidaway, 2016). Using qualitative data from interviews with leave voters in the North-East of England, Anderson et al. engage with the still-unfolding 'affective' uncertainties surrounding, 'what it feels like to live in the midst of the contemporary condition(s) that Brexit, the election of Donald Trump, and other events at once express and enact' (2019: 12). Indeed, it is precisely this attention to 'nuance, ambiguity, and internal dissent' which Lizotte argues that Geographers can contribute to 'understanding the specifically territorial dimensions of populist cultural

politics on their own terms' (2019: 140). Political sociologists have made equally important demands for the scholarship on populism writ large to go beyond political science's 'static operationalization' of rigid definitions for comparative purposes, and engage with 'the ideational systems that connect [populist] party mobilization strategies with the cultural and cognitive orientations of their supporters (Bonikowski 2017: 183). Here, a key contributing factor to these limitations is methodological.

For ethnography in the study of parties and populism

There is a growing acknowledgment that 'the formal parties literature is paradoxically ill-equipped to grasp the complexity and dynamism of their subject' (de Leon, 2014: 2). Political sociologists have recently argued that this disconnect is in large part due to the supremacy of political science as the de facto scholastic authority on parties (de Leon et al., 2015; Mudge and Chen, 2014). Methodologically, this supremacy has instilled various quantitative top-down comparative approaches to studying parties, which have proved adept at 'measuring the occurrence of change' rather than 'the mechanisms of change' (Kubik, 2009: 33, original emphasis). Therefore political sociologists and political scientists have begun to jointly advocate for the employment of ethnographic methods as a way out of this empirical and theoretical quandary (Aronoff and Kubik, 2015; Gidlund, 2010; Joseph et al., 2007; Schatz, 2009). Indeed, the employment of ethnographic methods in studying social movements is well acknowledged. However, with regards to politics, there is a 'double absence: of politics in ethnographic literature and of ethnography in studies of politics' (Auyero and Joseph, 2007: 2, original emphasis). As Wacquant argues, the core of ethnography is to engage in,

social research based on the close-up, on-the-ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do (2003: 5).

Indeed, it 'is a method that enables researchers to understand what is going on 'upstream'; at the grassroots, in often hidden, 'latent' [...] social conditions' (Plow 2008: 1524). This process of 'being on the ground to accurately capture fluid, shifting

conditions' (ibid: 1524) is arguably equally as fruitful when it comes to the study of both mainstream and populist parties that the methodologies employed in top-down comparative approaches are ill-suited at capturing (Pied, 2019).

In political geography, the consequence of political science's primacy on studying parties has been especially paralyzing. Although seeking to spatially conceptualize everyday manifestations of political life (Jones et al., 2004), the subfield has, save for a few exceptions, (Agnew, 2002b; Page, 2018; Scott, 2015; Scott and Wills, 2017; Shin, 2001) largely discounted theoretically and empirically engaging political parties in contemporary polities (Low, 2007). As Dittmer and Page argue, this neglect is baffling given that, 'political parties are crucial sites for the performance, maintenance and transformation of society, government and the state' (2015: 252). Moreover, this disregard has paralleled political geography's and electoral geography's respective methodological fixations with discourse analysis and quantitative methods, respectively. Megoran argues that political geography's heavy reliance upon textual analysis has 'been poor at incorporating an appreciation of everyday human experience' (Megoran, 2006: 623). Therefore, he contends, political geographers should 'correct this imbalance' by employing ethnographic methods to gain a richer understanding and appreciation of everyday political life (ibid: 623). Moreover, as Medby asserts, 'a reappraisal of language in political geography allows – or requires – a diversification of practices as well as research' (Medby, 2020).

In recent years, scholarship on various manifestations of how local identity intersects with the socio-cultural feelings of anger and resentment has resulted in a number of formidable ethnographic works. For instance, in by far one of the most extreme examples, Nitzan Shoshan concealed his Israeli nationality (even adopting the name 'Nate') for his ethnographic study of supporters of the explicitly neo-Nazi 'National Democratic Party of Germany' in the former Berlin borough of Treptow (Shoshan, 2016: xii). In *The Politics of Resentment* (2016), Cramer conducted considerable fieldwork in order to gain a richer understanding of the *lifeworlds* – the 'group consciousness' – of rural residents in various communities throughout her home state of Wisconsin (2016: 12). What she found was that a particular 'rural consciousness [...] rooted in place and class' pervaded her informants' understandings of state and national politics and the 'distributive injustices' they felt towards the state's urban centres (ibid: 209). Equally motivated by 'the emotional draw of rightwing politics', in *Strangers in Their Own Land*, Hochschild sought to ethnographically

understand how and why Louisiana's Bayou country constitutes 'an extreme example' of the so-called 'great paradox' — whereby a significant portion of the electorate in poorer states tend to vote for a politics that are considered detrimental to their own material interests (2016: 247; 8-9). Through extensive participant observation and interviews with her informants, many of whom were active Tea Party-turned-Donald Trump supporters, Hochschild found a complex intersection of local histories of industry, religion, class and race that helped to fuel an emotive aversion towards political correctness and state intervention.

While Inglehart and Norris and others rightly identify the power of socio-cultural resentment towards immigration as a key contributing factor to the growing support for various populist parties, their macro cross-national analyses founded upon survey data negates the ability for a rich consideration of the specificities of local contexts, histories and configurations fuelling this support in different places. By employing ethnographic methods, this project therefore contributes to the very limited understanding of the latent conditions in which individual voters and party members orient themselves towards these issues. Against the backdrop of the 2015 refugee crisis, understood against the backdrop of trygghet, I provide a richer understanding of the particularities of how the growing salience of non-European immigration in Sweden was experienced and understood in Norrköping.

Chapter 3 – Researching politics in Sweden's 'Manchester'

This chapter begins by introducing why municipalities are a particularly powerful scale for researching politics in Sweden. From a pivotal seat of industry to a stagnating economy, Norrköping is then introduced. This helps to situate the historic importance of the labour movement — and the SAP in particular — in the municipality. The chapter then describes the contemporary political developments in Norrköping that has seen support for the traditionally dominant SAP decline, and support for SD increase significantly.

With this foundation, the methods I utilised to research Norrköping's SAP are described. I start by detailing how my access to the party was negotiated via two 'gatekeepers'. Once in Norrköping, I expanded my interaction in the party considerably through observant participation in a wide range of meetings and activities. By adopting an interpretive analytical mindset during my sustained interaction with members of Norrköping's SAP, I identified interview subjects. In total I conducted 55 semi-structured interviews with elected and un-elected SAP members in Norrköping, senior partisans and advisors in Stockholm and various actors in Norrköping who had particular insights into the municipality's reception of asylum seekers and refugees in 2015. Further in line with my interpretive mode of inquiry, I also conducted three online surveys of members of Norrköping's SAP. The questions asked in these surveys were informed by both broader political developments as well as issues I identified during my interviews and participant observation. In addition, I spent approximately eighty hours in Norrköping's various archives gathering a mixture of data that helped historically situate social and political developments in Norrköping. I then justify and reflect on my engagement with local SD party members and supporters before finally overviewing my post-fieldwork data analysis.

Figure 4. Map of Sweden



(Created with GmapGIS, 2020)

Sweden's municipalities

In the comparative literature on regional government, Sweden (pop. 10.1 million) is classified as a highly 'decentralized, unitary state' (Loughlin, 2000: 25). Gradually, between the 17th and 19th centuries, Sweden's parish assemblies transitioned from being 'the bulwark of the church and morality to filling various municipal and social functions' (Österberg quoted in Von Essen, 2003: 34, own translation). This culminated in 1862 with the expansive *kommunalreformen* (municipal reform) when the 2,400 existing parishes were transformed into 2,396 municipalities (Von Essen, 2003: 36). Following this, municipalities gradually assumed more responsibilities;

began its expansive *folkhem* project from the 1930s onwards, it became increasingly apparent that a significant number of municipalities were not able to meet the growing demands of welfare state services. This resulted in a reform in 1952 whereby the existing 2,500 municipalities were consolidated into 1,037. Yet this soon also proved inadequate. After forming its only-ever majority government in 1968 (gaining 50.1 percent of the vote), the SAP were able to push through a forced merger of municipalities. As a consequence, by 1974, Sweden had only 277 municipalities. This sparked resistance from a number of former small municipalities that had been subsumed into larger ones. Throughout the 1970s and 1990s a total of 24 referendums were held. Though not all successful, this resulted in the reversal of a number of municipal mergers. Since the end of the 1990s, Sweden has 290 municipalities which are in turn subsumed within their respective regional county council (21 in total) (Erlingsson and Wänström, 2015).

Politically, municipalities are governed by 'party-based representative democracy', with the various assemblies and committees composed of politically elected representatives of different parties (Montin, 2016: 370). While the county council's main responsibilities are the county-wide coordination and delivery of healthcare and public transport, municipalities' tasks are far more diverse and farreaching, ranging from social services (e.g. primary and secondary schooling and elderly care) to cultural activities (Bäck et al., 2015: 206). Indeed, as Bretzer emphasizes, municipalities are the citizen's 'local state', and for all intents and purposes, function as 'mini-versions of the national state' (2014: 197). Therefore, focusing on the municipal level is the most effective scale for ethnographically understanding how the local contexts and configurations interact with the socio politics of immigration.

Norrköping's Municipality

Coastally situated in Östergötland county 160 kilometres to the southwest of the capital of Stockholm, Norrköping (pop. 141 676) is Sweden's ninth most populated municipality. Chartered in 1384, the combination of the powerful Motala river which empties into Bråviken, a deep-water bay on the Baltic sea, made Norrköping a particularly formidable site for industry. This was greatly accelerated when the Dutch

entrepreneur Louis De Geer chose to establish his expansive workshop conglomerate there in the first decades of the 1600s (Horgby, 1989).

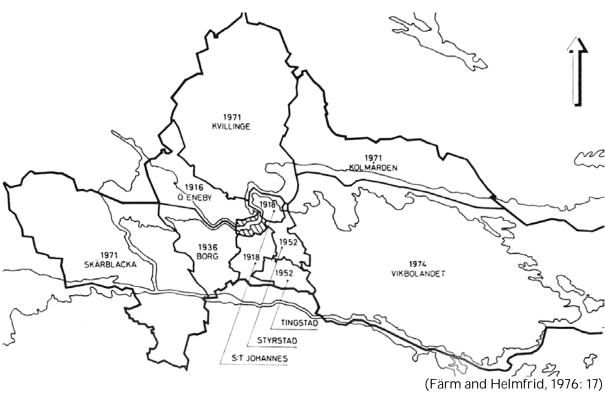
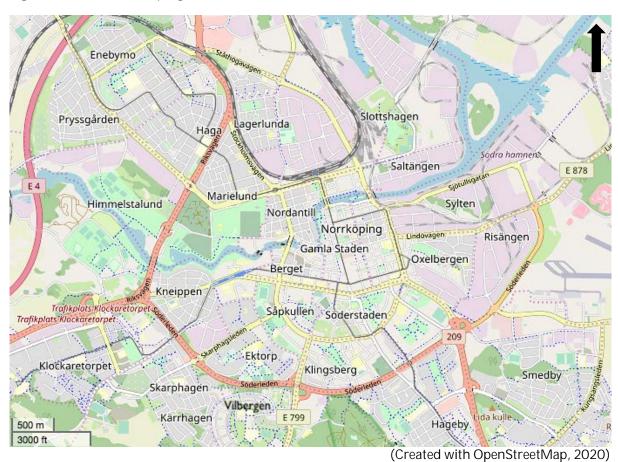


Figure 5. The municipal mergers that formed contemporary Norrköping

Figure 6. Norrköping's Municipality (since 1974)



Figure 7. Central Norrköping



By the mid-1860s, as Sweden's third largest municipality, with a booming textile industry, Norrköping had the second highest industrial output (after Stockholm) (Hjorth and Nordström, 1989). This earned the municipality the nickname 'Sweden's Manchester'. The importance of textiles continued until the closure of the last remaining manufacturing plant, *Yfa* (*Förenade Yllefabrikerna* — United Wool factories), in April 1970 (Thideskog, 1996). At this time, Norrköping was Sweden's fourth most populous municipality (Svensson et al., 2012).

In many ways, Norrköping's experience during this period serves as a powerful example of the strains facing traditional industrial strongholds as old economic realities gradually expired and new ones turbulently took shape. In addition to the closure of the textile industry, other large employers such as Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company that at its height employed 1,400 in 1970, shut down in the early 1980s (Hagberg, 2015).



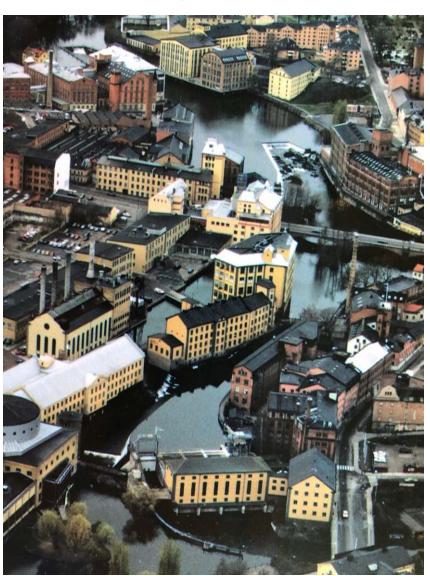
Figure 8. Goodyear's manufacturing plant in 1962

(Ryman, 1962)

For the next 15 years, the old textile industrial riverside locales stood mostly empty, in disrepair, devoid of purpose (Andersson et al., 1986). In choosing whether to preserve

or destroy this landscape (see Figures 9, 10 and 11), the decision was taken by the SAP-led municipal council to renew the industrial locales and make them attractive for the future knowledge economy (Svensson et al., 2012). During the 1990s the area was redeveloped and the buildings retrofitted to accommodate a new concert hall, conference centre, a Linköping university campus and an array of office spaces to attract budding IT-companies (Peterson, 2000).





(Helmfrid and Kraft, 1976)

Figure 10. Campus Norrköping (red brick buildings) in the distance



(Photo by Author, July 2018)

Figure 11. Norrköping Science Park (left of trees) and other office spaces



(Photo by Author, July 2018)

In parallel with this redevelopment, the 1990s proved a tough decade for Norrköping. The austerity regime pursued by the SAP government to restore 'order' to Sweden's public finances following the crisis in the early 1990s, proved especially painful in a place like Norrköping that was already experiencing a prolonged period of strained transition from labour intensive mass-industry towards the future-oriented knowledge and specialised service economy.

To add fuel to an already raging fire of high unemployment and municipal budgetary austerity, in 1997 Ericsson telecommunications (by far the largest private employer) announced that it was shutting its plant in Norrköping – resulting in 2,300 people losing their jobs (Horgby, 2000). The situation has certainly improved since. Coupled with a vast public sector found in all large Swedish municipalities (by far the largest employer, totalling approximately 12,000), Norrköping has a number of national government agency headquarters (the Migration Board, the Prison and Probation Service and the Meteorological and Hydrological Institute), three large process industries (including the paper mill Holmen AB that employs over 600), a University campus with 5,000 students and 500 staff and faculty, an array of distribution warehouses, specialised industrial, professional and IT services (Norrköping Municipality, 2015). However, unemployment rates have stubbornly hovered a few percentage points about the national average (approximately 12 percent versus 6.8 percent nationally ahead of the election in 2018) (Norrköping Municipality, 2020). Politically, the prominence of industry solidified the municipality as an SAP stronghold, which it remains to this day.

Norrköping's Labour Movement

Apart from a short-lived labour organisation in the 1860s, it was first during the 1880s, when a rapidly growing number of trade unions were formed, that the labour movement became more formally institutionalised in Norrköping. On 5 March, 1899, ten years after the SAP's founding, the party's so-called *Arbetarekommun* (Labourer Commune) was established in Norrköping (Hjorth and Nordström, 1989). Following the adoption of universal suffrage in Sweden in 1918 to the then-bicameral parliament (the *riksdag*), the SAP quickly also became the dominant party in Norrköping's municipal council (Färm and Helmfrid, 1976). Indeed, from 1921 until 1991, the SAP governed the municipal council continuously. Though in opposition from 1991-1994

when the Moderates governed the council, the party has in the time since been the main governing party (albeit in coalitions). During the mandate 2014-2018 period, for the first time ever, the SAP governed with three centre-right parties (the Liberals, Centre Party and the Christian Democrats) in the sO-called *Kvartet* (Quartet).

Though the SAP is still the largest party (with greatest votes in municipal, council and parliamentary lists), they were visibly challenged in the 2006 and 2010 elections by the successful centre-right 'Alliance' parties. However, in the 2014 election the Moderates saw its results dip back down to similar levels it had in the 1980s and 1990s, while SD made a marked surge upwards of 10.16 percentage points; from 6.12 percent in 2010 to 16.28 percent in 2014 (an increase of 9,045 votes). At both the municipal and county council level (see Figures 13 and 14), the challenge from SD has not been as pronounced (though the party received far more votes than the 'traditional' parties), with the electorate still putting greater trust in traditional parties to preside over municipal-level issues. As Holmberg and Oscarsson (2016) clarify, the sympathy for SD had a pronounced geography in the 2014 election; with the party performing the strongest in Sweden's southernmost province of Scania. Here, however, Norrköping stands out. In relation to other comparably populated municipalities, electoral support for SD in the 2014 election was only greater in Scania's second most populous municipality Helsingborg (with Malmö being the largest). Nationally, the 2014 election saw the Moderates lose approximately 26 percent to SD, with the SAP losing an estimated 12.5 percent of its voters (Oscarsson, 2016: 15). As described in the Introduction, in combination with the municipality's history of immigration, the particularly elevated level of support for SD in a historic SAP stronghold was a central motivating reason for choosing Norrköping as my field site.

70 60 50 40 30 20 10 1979 Moderates Centre Liberals **Christian Democrats** SAP Left SD Greens Prior to the 1970 election, the *riksdag* functioned under a bicameral system whereby mandates in the First Chamber were decided by elected municipal and regional councillors and mandates for the Second Chamber were voted upon by universal suffrage (Hedenborg and Kvarnström, 2014:309).

Figure 12. Norrköping Parliamentary List Results (1932 - 2014)

(Norrköping Municipality, 1937, 1946, 1948, 1972, 1995, 1995; Valmyndigheten, 2018a)

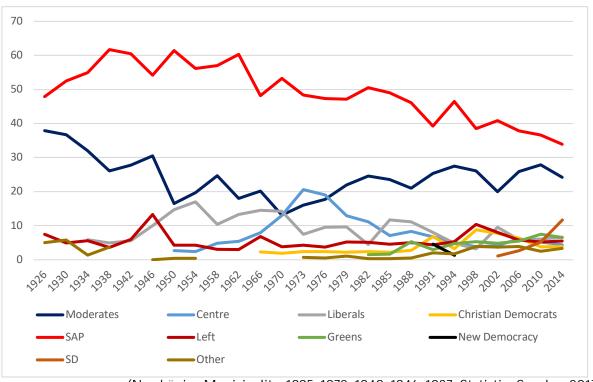


Figure 13. Norrköping Municipal List Results (1926 - 2014)

(Norrköping Municipality, 1995, 1972, 1948, 1946, 1937; Statistics Sweden, 2017)

60 50 40 30 20 10 1973 1979 1985 1988 1994 1998 2002 2010 Moderates Centre Liberals Christian Democrats SAP Left Greens •SD Other The significant surge in support for 'Other' parties in the 2006 and 2010 Council list was due to the so-called Vrinnevilista (Vrinnevi List) party. Comprised of Medical Doctors and Nurses who worked at Norrköping's Vrinnevi hospital, this short-lived party that was formed to put pressure on the County Council on issues related to healthcare

Figure 14. Norrköping Regional Council List Results (1973 - 2014)

(Valmyndigheten, 2018b)

Mirroring trends nationally, membership to the SAP have decreased substantially from its apex in 1980 when the labourer commune had 32,437 registered members (Norrkoping's SAP, 2007). Following the severing of 'collective affiliation' between LO and the SAP (whereby membership in an LO union meant automatic membership to the SAP) in 1990, the number went from 19,902 down to 3,933 (ibid, 2007). The number has gradually declined ever since. Nationally, at its height, the SAP had 1.3 million registered members in the early 1980s. However, the ending of automatic affiliation saw the party instantaneously lose 500,000 members. At the start of my fieldwork in September 2017, the party reported nationally to have 100,000 members (SAP, 2017) and Norrköping's Labourer Commune (NLC), I was told, had approximately 1000 members in total. However, the number of active members was far smaller, totalling no more than 100 members (Fieldnotes, 11 September, 2017). The Labourer Commune's members are subsumed into smaller S-Föreningar (S-Associations) – the most grass-roots level of the SAP organizational hierarchy. Membership to these S-Associations are often determined either by place of residence or trade-union affiliation. However, there are a number of associations that are interest or faith-based, such as S-Kvinnor (S-Women) and Tro och Solidaritet (Faith

and Solidarity). The proactivity in arranging study-groups, meetings, town-square manifestations, canvassing and other activities varies greatly. During my time in Norrköping, in addition to the Social Democratic Youth League (SSU) there were six active S-Associations: Jura, City, S-Women, Old Guard, Generation S and the LO S-Association.

Research Design

Negotiating Access

As organizational ethnographer Brian Moeran describes, when seeking to study organizations (such as political parties) that are potentially hesitant to grant total access to researchers, it is essential for the researcher to: a.) Make and/or use one's connections; b.) Have the 'right' connection to the targeted organization, and; c.) Effectively target the organizations 'decision-maker' in order to negotiate access (2009: 141-142, original emphasis). It is important to both acknowledge and emphasize the uniqueness of my personal relationship to senior level officials and advisors within the SAP party organization as well as within the Swedish central government. Through family connections, I initially gained contact with Teresa Carvalho, the chairperson of NLC (who is also a Member of Parliament - MP), and arranged for us to meet at the April 2017 SAP party congress in Göteborg. Over coffee, I described my proposed fieldwork. When she approved my access to NLC, she then introduced me to the second 'gatekeeper', an SAP ombudsman, who also gave me the go-ahead following a brief description of my project. It should be clarified that my access to NLC was not premised on any form of reciprocity in the form of me producing an official report for the SAP. Both Carvalho and the ombudsman understood that my research was strictly academic. I did however state that, if so asked, I would be more than happy to discuss and/or present my research findings to NLC.

My yearlong fieldwork began on 11 September, 2017 when I attended the first bimonthly NLC meeting (representantsskapsmöte – 'representative meeting', or, for short, repskap). Towards the end of the meeting that was held on the sixth floor of the building near the city centre that housed the SAP (as well as a number of LO unions), under the agenda item 'any remaining business', I was introduced to the approximately 40 attendees. I gave a short speech in which I briefly described myself

and my project. Ahead of the meeting, an email had been sent to all members of NLC with an attached letter I had provided detailing my interest in ethnographically exploring local SAP politics in the year leading up to the election and my interest in getting to know and interviewing as many members of NLC as possible. I then spent the immediate days after the meeting at the NLC headquarters getting to know the SAP staff. During this time, we finalised precisely which activities I was allowed access to. In effect, I was granted access to all NLC activities and meetings except for a number of leadership meetings in which inter-personally sensitive issues such as the formalising of municipal and county council lists for the forthcoming election. Moreover, I was provided with a comprehensive overview of all the forthcoming party activities for autumn 2017. I subsequently attended a multitude of meetings and activities held both centrally via the NLC and across the different S-Associations. Although my personal connections might certainly have helped me gain initial access to the gatekeepers of NLC, the remainder of my fieldwork with NLC was largely detached from these persons.

Research Methods

Observant Participation in Norrköping's SAP

My training in ethnographic methods came from two experiential methodological courses: 'Ethnography: Theory and Practice' (course code: SCAN08005) during my undergraduate studies at Edinburgh University, and more recently, 'Doing Ethnography' (course code: MY426) at the LSE. Based on these past experiences with research, I developed the following two-fold strategy for developing as complete and accurate fieldnotes as possible. I would first jot down notes (general impressions, descriptions of surroundings and people and direct quotes/close approximations of what informants were saying) in real time during activities in the field. Thereafter, I would find a café, park bench or my car as soon as I could in order to use these notes as a basis for my more detailed field notes which I would then write-up at the end of the work day. Ethical approval for my fieldwork was attained via the Research Division at LSE (which was also logged by my department, Geography and Environment). Following a briefing on Data Security from LSE's Information Management and Technology division, I acquired Boxcryptor (macOS version) and subsequently

encrypted all the data I collected during fieldwork and backed this data up on an external hard drive.

Ethnographic motivations, reflexivity and ethics

My overt participant observation within NLC took encouragement from the 'realist approach' towards ethnography (Allina-Pisano, 2009). That is, I as the researcher both acknowledged my role in 'constituting' the reality I was studying in NLC but equally did not presume that my 'presence always meaningfully alter[ed] the causal mechanisms being observed' (ibid: 57). As Allina-Pisano further clarifies,

'Ethnographers cannot control for the effects of their presence on their interlocutors, but ethnography is better suited than other varieties of social science to identify the specific ways in which the researcher's presence shapes evidence. In other words, unlike many of their counterparts engaged in other types of social research, ethnographers are, with their contextual knowledge, in a position to know which types of biases their presence is likely to introduce' (Allina-Pisano, 2009: 57).

In contrast to undercover or 'covert' ethnographies such as Scheper-Hughes (2004, 2001) multi-sited ethnography of human organ trafficking or Shoshan's (2016) study of right-wing extremists in Berlin, my fieldwork was entirely 'overt'. There was never a moment during which I tried to conceal my role as a researcher. While I did not grow up in Sweden, my political leanings are broadly sympathetic with the Social Democratic project. However, my research with NLC was not undertaken with an 'auto-ethnographic' intention to use my personal experiential journey within the party as the basis for answering my research question (Sparkes, 2000).

Throughout my time in the field, I constantly sought to employ a heightened 'reflexivity' in relation to my position as an acquaintance of senior members within the SAP; my 'outsiderness' as an American-Swede to Norrköping and its politics; my level of education and my family's socio-economic position that differentiates itself from many grassroot activists in the labour movement; and my position as a researcher gathering data about local party praxis and how members' experience political life. I

constantly had to reflect on these tensions as I made 'sense during fieldwork, deskwork and textwork' (Ybema et al., 2009: 9, original emphasis).

The choices and strategies I adopted to position myself within NLC had implications for the type of data I was be able to collect. Although my initial introduction into the party was via the abovementioned gatekeepers, I then expanded my contact network within NLC considerably. Here, the idea of the 'lucky break' is often described as important, whereby a random chance event shifts the 'perceptions of the fieldworker on the part of those working in the organization studied' (Moeran, 2009: 146-147). My break was far more gradual than any singular event. By attending as many party activities as possible, within a few months I became a known presence among active party members. Although there was far from any untowardness directed at me, it did take certain members longer to warm up to my presence at events. I was, after all, a complete outsider to them and the idea that someone wanted to study Norrköping and the NLC seemed odd to a number of party members they later told me. However, by sheer persistence of attending all meetings and events, within a few months, when they would arrive at a meeting and see me sitting there, more reserved members would jokingly start to ask me, "don't you have anything better to do than listen to us babble!?" (Fieldnotes, 16 November, 2017). Increasingly, I became known as "the researcher" (forskaren) among active party members and their initial hesitancy faded. This became particularly evident during the spring and summer campaign ahead of the September 2018 election. The countless moments of Iull during campaign activities allowed for plenty of conversation about everything from Donald Trump to Norrköping's local zoo. Although I was of course still an outsider to active members of Norrköping's SAP, I increasingly felt like I was their outsider.

During my time within NLC, I was attentive towards NLC members' (elite and ordinary) 'meaning-making' of political life in Norrköping. I recorded in my field notes what categories emerged from my personal interaction with members as well as how I witnessed their interpersonal interactions with one another. As Ybema et al. describe, these categories may comprise:

narratives, discourses, stories, metaphors, myths, slogans, jargon, jokes, gossip, rumours and anecdotes found in everyday talk and text (symbolic language); rites and rituals, practices, customs, routines (symbolic acts) (Ybema et al., 2009: 8).

Moreover, I actively reflected on how members presented themselves to me, what has famously been conceptualized as individuals' 'front' and 'back stage' performances (Goffman, 1956). Due to the overtly political nature of my research topic and potentially because of my personal connection with certain SAP party elites, I was mindful of how party members might manage what impression they put across in their conservations and actions around me. My ability to distinguish from these front stage impressions and to gain access to the more 'real' back stage was indeed aided by my prolonged participant observation within the organization and upon my personal ability to develop rapport with members of NLC. The more time I spent amidst NLC members, the less I felt that members altered their behaviour or language due to my presence. Moreover, the longer the time I spent with members of NLC, the better I felt that I could 'separate fact from fiction and gossip from information, while strategically using both to gain further data' (Moeran, 2009: 148).

My many informants also played the essential role of 'teaching and guiding' me through the everyday life of SAP participation (Murchison, 2010: 91). This experiential process was essential to me as I entered NLC with very little prior formal engagement with political party life and praxis. Through learning 'how to behave or respond in a particular situation', I was able to partake in party activities and rituals in a more customary manner that did not draw unnecessary attention to myself (ibid: 91). This strategy, it seemed, was condoned and even encouraged by the majority of SAP members as I was never asked to contribute during meetings or activities. Moreover, during campaign activities such as canvassing, I always made the active decision (and informed the party members I was with) that I would remain silent and stand behind the party members during interactions with voters. During those few instances when I joined only one NLC member in canvassing, I made sure to explicitly clarify my intent to remain silent during any interactions with members of the public. To the best of my knowledge, my behaviour during canvassing never caused any unease or discomfort among NLC members.

Semi-structured interviews

Through my observant participation in NLC, I was be able to identify my key informants for interviews (both locally in NLC with ordinary and elected current and

former 'elite' party members and nationally in Stockholm with salaried party professionals). In addition to interviewing the elected SAP members in Norrköping's municipal council (three in total), as well as the majority of the municipal council commissioners and the ombudsmen and political secretaries and support staff, I requested interviews with every active member in NLC that I encountered. In total, I conducted 43 interviews with both former and currently active 'ordinary' and professional 'elite' members of NLC (including administrative staff and Labour Movement ombudsmen), 5 interviews with senior SAP officials and MPs in Stockholm and 6 interviews with municipal employees and civil society actors who were highly involved with Norrköping's reception of asylum seekers and refugees during the 2015 migration crisis. On average, the interviews took approximately one hour to administer.

Before I began each interview, I explicitly asked the interviewee if they had any questions about my research. I would then inform them that, if they so requested, I would gladly provide them with a transcript of our interview for their approval prior to my eventual usage of the data. This offer was never requested during my time in the field. With the exception of all sitting full-time SAP politicians, I informed every interviewee that their identity would be anonymised. My active decision not to anonymise the recorded interviews or ethnographic interactions with incumbent fulltime SAP municipal counsellors, MPs, senior Party Officials, SD municipal council member Darko Mamkovic and Norrköping Newspaper (Folkbladet) editor Widar Andersson were informed by the notion of 'studying up' (Nader, 1969) towards elite public figures. I defined these individuals as elite public figures in that they occupied (at the time of fieldwork) positions of explicitly public 'authority' that is 'a peculiarly distinctive act which works through recognition' (Allen, 2003: 6). As Hammersley and Atkinson highlight, the interview process is not entirely distinct from observant participation (2007: 109). During my interviews, the same sensitivities and tactics described in the previous section applied. I therefore needed to reflect on which 'stage' my informants chose to respond to my questions. Indeed, I had to actively reflect on the rapport I had established with the full-time 'elite' public figures their familiarity and experience with interviews (in contrast to many 'ordinary' members of NLC).

The interviews I conducted were semi-structured in format (see Table 2 in Appendix for interview schedule). I used an interview programme with a scripted introduction; a list of topics (with potential questions and prompts) and a scripted

conclusion (adapted from Robson, 2011: 285, see Figure 59 in Appendix for template). For instance, I began the interviews with a structured section in which I gathered biographical information about my respondents (e.g. why and when they joined SAP and what potential responsibilities they held or had held within the municipal council and/or NLC). Having a list of topics and questions but also the flexibility in choosing the order and tone was helpful in allowing me to tailor the 'flow' of dialogue to better suit the mood of the interview (Robson, 2011: 280). My choice of interview topics was guided by my ongoing interpretive analysis during my fieldwork as well as based upon insight (e.g. unsolicited conversations with members, events or actions that I found interesting or confusing) that I gleaned from my time with members of NLC that I sought further insight into. An additional strategy I employed to this end was to conduct two separate online surveys.

Surveying NLC's members

Conducted in March and June 2018, the two anonymized surveys were administered electronically (using online survey host SurveyMonkey) via an email that was sent on my behalf to all the approximately 600 email addresses linked to members of NLC. The response rate to the surveys ranged from 15 to 20 percent. Respondents to the online questionnaire were asked to respond to a mixture of fixed response questions and open-ended questions (see Figure 60 and Figure 61 for copies of both questionnaires). In addition to providing information such as age, years of party membership and what (if any) positions held within the party and/or in the municipality/county council, respondents were asked to select one of five ratings that reflected their level of agreement to a series of statements (McLafferty, 2012). For the open-ended questions, the topics chosen reflected my ongoing interpretation of topics and issues that I had observed during my observant participation that I found interesting and/or confusing. As will become apparent in the limited reference to the survey data in the thesis, the main purpose of the surveys functioned largely as an exploratory supplement to the ethnographic data that I was gathering from both my observant participation of NLC and the in-depth semi-structured interviews I was conducting. Indeed, as O'Learly highlights, by formulating the questions as simple and straight-forward as possible in order to avoid any misunderstanding, they 'may be inadequate to capture complex situations or processes' (2011: 302). However, the

survey data that I do cite in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven was useful in illustrating the range of attitudes that a large number of NLC members held towards immigration-related issues.

Archival Research

An essential strategy towards gaining a richer understanding of how trygghet has historically been discursively mobilized was through the collection and exploration of pre-existing materials. The site for this research was Norrköping's Labour Movement archive. Although the archive had rather infrequent opening hours (due to a shortage of staff for most of the year that I was there), the archive was able to graciously arrange for four weeks of continuous access from mid-June to mid-July 2018. After first scoping the immense catalogue of material (ranging from a plethora of artefacts and memorabilia to minutes from early NLC meetings), I subsequently narrowed my focus to reflect my interest in the discursive mobilization of trygghet in SAP election manifestos and posters and party literature. Indeed, as Kapiszewski et al. (2015) argue, archival research is often most fruitfully undertaken once the researcher has 'information collected using more interactive techniques' (2015: 158). Combined with the 'interactive' data I gathered from observant participation and interviews, this specific interest in trygghet was informed by my ongoing interpretive analysis of the SAP's then-ongoing election campaign material that increasingly centred around the mobilization of trygghet.

In order to gain a richer understanding of Norrköping as a place, I mobilised the immense resources and material available at Norrköping's City Archives. Located in the basement of Norrköpings impressive court house (*Norrköpings Rådhus*), the highly competent and helpful archivists Rolf Jansson and Pernilla Matsson assisted me during the spring and summer of 2018 in locating a multitude of historical statistics and photographs on Norrköping and specific information (statistics, maps and photographs) on the neighbourhood of Vilbergen. Furthermore, the archivists directed me to the microfilm archives for Norrköping's two main newspapers *Norrköping's Tidning* and *Folkbladet*, held at Norrköping's City Library and Linköping University's Norrköping campus. These archives were invaluable in helping me to develop a much richer understanding of Norrköping's reported experience during two moments of elevated asylum migration, in the early 1990s and once again

in 2015. During my engagement with these newspapers, I was extra mindful of the sensitivities from Critical Discourse Analysis — that the researcher should be attentive to the 'relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations' (Wodak, 1996: 20). Therefore, in my analytic engagement with this material in Chapter Four, I foreground my usage of this material with a wide variety of critical socio-historical scholarship in order to lay bare Sweden's, and the Labour Movements, complicated history of race and immigration.

Engaging with SD party members and supporters

As aforementioned, my fieldwork was informed by an ongoing interpretive and flexible mode of enquiry. Therefore, due to the ways in which the SAP increasingly focused its electoral strategy explicitly on both retaining and/or regaining voters who were perceived as supporting SD, from the late spring of 2018 onwards, I extended my focus to also include SD party members and supporters in Norrköping. Although I had followed a more formalised process of gaining access to NLC, gaining access to SD party members and supporters proved considerably more challenging.

Despite their size as Sweden's third largest party, in the lead up to the 2018 election, SD were still widely treated as a 'pariah party' (Jungar, 2016: 193) by the commentariat and members of the traditional parties. Indeed, the epithet 'populist' was constantly attached derogatorily in reference to the party. This label, along with 'far/extreme right' was something that the party continuously rejected. As party leader Jimmie Åkesson stated in an interview in April, 2018,

I would argue that we are one of the least populist parties in the parliament today. [...] Call me what you [the media, academics and other political parties] want, call me a populist. I don't care. I am quite *trygg* in what I think (Interview with Huitfeldt, 2018).

However, the constant framing of SD in this manner seemed to inculcate a degree of scepticism towards anyone who fits into Åkesson's "you". As a PhD researcher, I was faced with this hurdle on more than one occasion. Indeed, Blee flags this particular issue in what she describes as the difficulty of conducting '[c]lose-up or "internalist" studies of far-right movements" (2007: 121). This tendency to view academics as

'untrustworthy' has therefore limited the ethnographic scholarship 'of the workings of far-right groups and the beliefs and motivations of their activists and supporters' (ibid: 121). Equally, however, Blee highlights that the normative hesitancy among academics to personally engage with 'those they regard as inexplicable and repugnant' (ibid: 121). This echoes Banks and Gingrich's assertion that this hesitancy has more to do with the researcher's 'moral hygiene' than it does with 'avoid[ing] bodily endangerment' (Gingrich and Banks, 2006: 7). As Berezin found during her encounters with supporters of the *Front National* in the mid-2000s, it felt 'uncomfortable to interact directly with groups whose views one not only does not share but for whom one feels a certain distance — and distaste' (Berezin, 2007: 132). Since then, there has been increased scholastic engagement with political party supporters that one explicitly finds 'detestable' (e.g. Cramer, 2016; Feischmidt and Szombati, 2017; Hochschild, 2016; Shoshan, 2016).

My own initial (multiple) efforts to contact Norrköping's local SD party organisation and chairperson via email were unanswered. I therefore changed tact and began turning up to various SD events that I found out about via the local party chapter's Facebook page. This strategy proved much more successful than seeking any formal avenues of communication with the party and its supporters. Yet I still faced a quite high frequency of rejections when seeking to gain meaningful interaction with certain party members and members of the public who attended and/or hovered by the tents that SD set up for various events during summer 2018. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes illustrates one instance of these attempts:

Loitering by SD's tent

I hover around SD's tent, drinking a few cups of unsatisfyingly lukewarm pear cider (served by the female activist who looks to be in her late 40s and speaks with a rather thick accent) and collecting all of the pamphlets they have for different policy areas. I chat with one of their activists (I do not think he is a member of the municipal council). A man in maybe his mid-50s, he has a weathered face that looks as though he had bad acne in his youth, but might just have lived hard for a while judging from how much he smells of cigarettes and his hardened, sullen, look. I have on more than one occasion chatted with him during different political events during the summer when he has moved away from the SD tent to have a cigarette. I ask him if he is optimistic ahead of the

election (support for SD is on an upward trend at the moment). "Yea, yea of course, but we'll just have to wait and see" he tells me in a disinterested tone. I think he remembers me from the previous time I hovered around SD's tent on Sweden's National Day (6 June) the month before.

He gives off the strong vibe that he does not seem to want to chat, and the other activists chatting amongst themselves (I notice this with all the parties that have tents here at the fair, 1 or 2 stand up front facing the crowds and serving condiments while the rest sit behind and chat), so I disengage. After using the porta potty that is conveniently located 10-15 metres behind SD's tent, I make my way back towards the tent. The tent stands last in the long procession of tents that are situated on a walkway that begins by the local library and ends adjacent to a row of terraced houses that look to have been built during the early 1970s prior to Vikbolandet being incorporated into Norrköping's municipality.

Not satisfied with my lack of interaction with any SD sympathizers (or just people curious enough to brave the taboo perhaps associated with being seen near the party's tent), I decide to give it one more shot. My efforts so far to talk with the last five people who have stopped by the tent has proven difficult. The previous attempt with a middle-aged couple was quite representative of many of my attempts to speak with members of the public who have interacted with SD party members. Although friendly enough, the couple grew visibly hesitant when I asked them if they supported SD (judging by the fact that they had just stood at the SD tent and engaged with a party member). They quickly told me that that was private. Of course, this is not isolated to only potential SD voters. The notion of not having to divulge who one votes for (*valhemlighet* – 'election secrecy') is a commonly asserted position in Sweden (and is also protected by the constitution).

Walking back towards the tent, I notice a man and woman who look to be in their mid-twenties standing and chatting with the weathered-looking SD member. Their body language seems to indicate that they agree about something (the man seems much keener to talk to them,), though I can't hear what they are saying and I don't want to get to near. Per usual, I take my phone out and sift through my emails, pretending to look engaged. Putting my phone away, I walk past the tent and the conversation up a few tents and turn around. The pair soon end their chat with the SD man and approach me; with the man carrying some

SD pamphlets in one hand. As they walk past me, I turn towards them, excusing myself and wondering if I might ask them some questions about politics. I tell them that I'm doing research about the local politics here in Norrköping. To my surprise the man says, 'Yea, absolutely!' with an upbeat and inviting tone. (Fieldnotes, 14 July, 2018).

Although I do not share SD's political worldview, in contrast to the above-cited researchers, I did not find engaging with either their party members or supporters particularly off-putting nor threatening. On more than one occasion, I felt as though both party members and supporters would try to 'test' my political sensitivities by using particularly inflammatory language that is certainly not 'politically correct'. Once they realised that I was not susceptible to provocation, they would adopt a seemingly more relaxed and less contrived style of conversation. I do wonder, however, what my experience would have been like in these interactions if I were not a tall, white, Swedish speaking male.

Data Analysis

As described above, my evolving experiences in the field constantly underwent a reflective process. This immersive process of routinely reviewing my field note data (observations from my engagement in NLC, interview transcripts, survey responses, documents from archival research) guided me in clarifying and directing my research towards the themes and the questions that emerged throughout my fieldwork process. LeCompte and Schensul describe this 'recursive' strategy as an ongoing process during ethnographic fieldwork whereby the data are explored both deductively and inductively in a spiralling manner in order to match the data with what is observed and experienced in the field (LeCompte and Schensul, 2013: 83).

Once deskbound at LSE, this recursive strategy also informed my thematic analysis. I undertook several deductive readings of my data (interview transcripts using the programme InqScribe, field notes, and notes from document coding using the programme NVivo) and I coded predefined categories (e.g. concepts and/or behaviours) that helped me to refine my research question. This was followed by several inductive readings whereby I did not apply pre-defined categories and instead identified and coded new categories. Following this process of breaking down the data

into codes, I then grouped the codes into larger themes. Through this continual process of analysis and recognizing thematic patterns, I began to both interpret the more abstracted ideas that emerged from the data and also engaged with the pre-existing literature in order to answer my (refined) research questions (Madden, 2010). It was through this process that the pivotal importance of *trygghet* developed into a central theme of my research. As Swedish is not my native language, I engaged with researchers (in particular with PhD Candidate in Nordic Languages, Anja Allwood) at the Department of Swedish at Göteborg University. Through these very helpful exchanges, I was able to more clearly understand (and hopefully) articulate how and why *trygghet* is an untranslatable concept that taps into important socio-political registers in Sweden. During my entire analytic process, I constantly sought to challenge and actively reflect upon my interpretations. This process of 'negative case analysis' helped to improve the analytic process by allowing me to reflect upon my how my position in Norrköping's SAP influenced my informants' actions and responses (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2009: 61-62).

Chapter 4 – Party, Nation and Immigration in Sweden and Norrköping

Ever since SD gained entry to parliament in 2010, the question has been asked with an increasingly desperate urgency: how can such a party espousing such detestable, 'un-Swedish' views towards ethnicity and immigrants continue to grow in popularity? One rather common reaction to this development among pundits and political activists across the political spectrum has been to comfort themselves with the mantra that the rise of SD is an anomaly; a momentary blip of protest by a stratum of the electorate that simply does not know better and whose dissension and relevance will soon fade. In this chapter, using socio-historical scholarship, I argue that resistance towards refugee immigration has a much longer precedent in Sweden that complicates these consolatory attempts to quarantine these beliefs, particularly in Norrköping. Drawing on reports from Norrköping's largest newspaper, I trace the long trajectory of how migration has interacted with the social and political contexts and configurations of Norrköping. I zoom in and out on Norrköping during two moments of crisis, the early 1990s and in 2015, in order to complicate the commonplace singular imagery of Sweden as a boundless, progressive sanctuary for asylum seekers. What I show is that there is a deep-seated reluctance towards immigration in Sweden that cannot be ignored if one is to understand the growing support for SD.

I begin by showing how notions of race and nation are intricately bound with the genesis of the SAP. Building on this, I develop the argument that the SAP's understanding of the nation helps us to understand Sweden's history of immigration. With this historical context as a foundation, I show how violent events locally in Norrköping in 1990 were among the more extreme manifestations of a growing social and political debate about what effects migration were having on Sweden. I then zoom out and situate this debate nationally, showing that since the mid-1980s, the SAP government had discursively promoted a hardened position on immigration. This

restrictive position loosened for a brief moment following SAP's defeat to a centre-right coalition in 1991. However, the simultaneous recession and unfolding humanitarian crisis sparked by the civil and ethnic conflict in former Yugoslavia soon saw the centre-right adopt measures to once again restrict the volume of asylum seekers coming to Sweden. Finally, I fast-forward to the latest period during which forced-migration has greatly impacted Sweden, the 2015 refugee crisis precipitated by the Syrian Civil War. After detailing how the crisis touched down in Norrköping, I show how, despite the widespread depiction of Sweden as a sanctuary, the crisis unleashed a new wave of resistance to Sweden's reception of asylum seekers.

Race, Nation and Party: the origins of the SAP

In Sweden, the biologically informed idea of taxonomically dividing humans into categories (e.g. racial, cultural, geographical, and physical) had been popular ever since the mid-eighteenth-century publication of Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus's opus 'Systema Naturae'. In addition to Sweden's overseas colonial endeavours in the Caribbean and involvement in the slave trade (via East and West Indian, and African companies) between the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, the prolonged domestic colonial repression of the Saami people and Sápmi culture (the Saami designation for their land in Fennoscandia) was firmly grounded in ideas of racial and cultural superiority (McEachrane, 2018: 475 - 477). This repression of the northernmost areas of Scandinavia began in earnest in the seventeenth century with the installation of mines in parts of modern-day Swedish Lapland following the discovery of ore. As Lindmark (2013) describes, in addition to natural resource extraction, the Swedish Crown's purpose for 'colonising' Sápmi was also to 'establish visible presence by populating an area, to which several different nations still laid claim (i.e. the Norwegian border would not be permanently established until 1751) (2013: 131). Schools run by Lutheran missionaries were soon established in the jurisdictionally designated 'Swedish Lapland' with the aim of 'domesticating' and 'civilising' Saami youth with Christian values; 'values deemed necessary to controlling the colonised' (ibid: 133). By the end of the nineteenth century, the perception that the racial and culturally inferior reindeer herding 'Lapps' (a derogatory term) should make room for the agriculturally advanced, white ethnic Swedes, was widespread in Sweden (Lundmark, 2008).

Sweden, at the turn of the century, was undergoing profound changes. Demographically, it had suffered a great loss of population through the waves of mass emigration to America. Territorially, the dissolution of the union with Norway in 1905 had dealt a blow to patriotic confidence. Politically, the various progressive movements that were gaining momentum (labour, suffrage and temperance), put increased strain on the country's then still-powerful conservative forces. During this period, the country was still to a large extent an industrial backwater, with a largely agrarian economy and a patchwork of small communities that centred on small-scale crafts and/or exploiting local natural resources that lay nearby (Higgins and Dow, 2013). It was in this era both before and after World War I (which Sweden had avoided entering) that a collective sense of 'degeneration' among the Swedish political, cultural and intellectual elite that hopes were increasingly placed on 'hygiene' as the solution. Influenced by developments in Eugenics in both America and Continental Europe as well as already existing preconceptions about racial and cultural superiority, in 1922 Sweden established the 'first state institute for race biology in the world' (Broberg and Tydén, 2005: 87, original emphasis).

Political support for the bill enabling the institute was widespread among both conservatives and members of SAP. Future SAP minister Arthur Engberg was quoted as declaring in parliament, 'We are lucky to have a race which is as yet fairly unspoiled [...] a race which is the bearer of very good qualities' (Engberg quoted in Broberg and Tydén, 2005: 87, own translation). Though hosting well-attended public lectures and conferences as well as producing well-received studies such as the extensive volume 'The Racial Character of the Swedish Nation' (1926), by the mid-1930s the economic downturn, utilization of racial biology in Germany and the institute's search for a new director (the founding director Herman Lundborg had deep ties with Nazi Germany), spelled a change of trajectory for the institute. Following the intervention of prominent academic and public intellectual (and later SAP minister) Gunnar Myrdal, the directorship was given to Gunnar Dahlberg (whose leftist political sympathies and anti-Nazism were closely aligned).

Under Dahlberg's leadership, the institute changed emphasis away from racial biology towards genetics (ibid: 91 - 95). This shift occurred in tandem with the publication of Gunnar and Alva Myrdal's influential book 'Crisis in the population question' (1934). Written in response to a growing concern over Sweden's declining birth-rate (in 1934 the lowest globally recorded), this publication helped to legitimize

sterilization procedures (Tydén, 2012). Against the backdrop of SAP's newly acquired political dominance, through two acts of parliament in 1934 and 1941, sterilization was seen as one of the many measures employed in the rationalistic social engineering of the burgeoning, expansive and efficient welfare state - folkhemmet. Indeed, as Sigurdson argues, the Myrdal's saw social engineering as an essential feature in the realization of folkhemmet (Sigurdson, 2014: 38-39). While the sterilization procedures (in total 65,000 between 1935-1975) were primarily performed on those deemed socially or genetically 'deficient' (the mentally handicapped and women deemed too sexually promiscuous), there were also documented cases of Swedish Roma 'travellers' (commonly described as a dark-skinned, deviant minority in folklore) being targeted as their apparent 'irregular' behaviour did not accord with Sweden's societal and cultural norms (Broberg and Tydén, 2005: 124-126). Although the Myrdal's were actively opposed to the earlier racialized modes of social engineering, the broader background to their (and more importantly SAP's) policies of 'rational' social engineering were intimately bound to a distinctive understanding of who the Swedish people (folk) were and what the composition of the Swedish nation was.

Rather than Sweden's labour movement mobilizing and aiming to create one of Europe's 'empires of workers' welfare societies', as was the desire among many socialist parties at the time, the SAP was from the very beginning focused on 'national solutions and was therefore drawn to the parliamentary strategy' (Esping-Andersen, 1992: 40). As Sejersted describes, Sweden's population at this time was 'largely composed of lower-middle class tradespeople and small farmers [or, more specifically, peasants]', people that would not necessarily have been 'comfortable with a description of society based on the two Marxist categories – capitalist and proletarian' (2011: 132). Moreover, this 'revisionist position', Berman argues, can also be attributed to the party's long-time leader Hjalmar Branting's (from 1889 to 1925) lasting liberal sympathies, who therefore brokered a high degree of parliamentary cooperation between the SAP and the Liberals in the 1910s and 1920s (including the legislative push for general suffrage which was achieved in 1921) (Berman, 2006: 152-153). Following Branting's death in 1925, this ambition was emboldened in his successor Per Albin Hansson's mobilization of the folkhem analogy and policy. In a 1928 parliamentary debate, he prosaically outlined his principled vision for a Swedish Social

Democratic society founded upon the aforementioned 'feeling of existential *trygghet*', a *folkhem* for every citizen:

The basis for the home is community and togetherness. The good home does not recognize any privileged or neglected members, nor any favourite or stepchildren. There, no one looks down upon anyone else, there no one tries to gain at someone else's expense, the strong do not push down or plunder the weaker. In the good home equality, consideration, cooperation, and helpfulness prevail. Applied to the great people's and citizen's home this would mean the breaking down of all the social and economic barriers that now divide citizens into the privileged and the unfortunate, into rulers and subjects, into rich and poor, the propertied and the impoverished, the plunderers and the plundered (Hansson, 1928, own translation).

As Linderborg has shown in her historiographical analysis of the SAP's early propaganda: the authors' articulated a strong teleological message that 'the goal of history is Social Democracy' (2001: 351, own translation).

Interestingly, Hansson's appeal to the *folkhem* was already a commonplace metaphor in Sweden at the time. Indeed, it had first entered the Swedish lexicon around 1900 from the German concept of *Volksheim* ('People's Home') which described 'a wide-spread German institution that was a part of social liberal reform programs [in Imperial Germany at the time]' (Björck, 2008: 343, own translation).²⁴ Prior to Hansson's usurpation, the conservative and overtly nationalist parliamentarian and academic Rudolf Kjellén (who is also credited with coining the term 'geopolitics'), had taken the metaphorical *folkhem* from the already existing literary imagery used by prominent Swedish authors such as suffragist Ellen Key and Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf. In their writings, the concept was used as a 'metaphor for a national society that existed at the time as the quintessential imagery for community and cooperation' (Larsson, 1994: 64, own translation). Kjellén was deeply sceptical of both liberalism's and the labour movement's forward march in Sweden, arguing that this influence had 'diminished the people's happiness' (Kjellén, 1915: 17, own translation). 'Freedom is like a wine' he wrote in 1915, 'and it must therefore be

²⁴ For more on Imperial Germany's social reform programs, see (Lees, 2002).

consumed moderately' (Kjellén, 1915: 18, own translation). His nationalistic (geo)political mobilisation of the *folkhem* was therefore to argue that the 'home' was synonymous with the Swedish 'nation', a place where every member of the nation played their pre-ordained (by birth and social status) role in society. Kjellén asserted that this 'grandiose Sweden' was to be 'built upon the people's and parties understanding of one another, united through the classes' subjection to the impersonal whole, content with the earth that has fostered us and contains our forbearer's ashes' (ibid, 1915: 56, own translation).

Though all existing five parliamentary parties eventually argued in the 1930s to be the rightful forbearers and representatives of the folk and the folkhem, due to their growing parliamentary success, it was SAP that successfully usurped the term (Linderborg, 2001).²⁵ With Hansson's mobilization of folkhemmet, Trägårdh argues, 'the historically rooted identification of the national with the democratic came together with singular power, ethnos and demos merging in what came to be the central metaphor of the national socialist Swedish welfare state' (2002: 141, original emphasis). Increasingly, references to the folk effectively replaced arbetaren (the worker) as it was indeterminate and conjured a much more coherent and historically powerful imagery (Trägårdh, 1990: 32). The SAP was able to dispel conservative criticisms and tap into a deeply nationalistic folklore (e.g. Engelbrekt who led a peasant revolt against the Danes in the 15th century and helped organize the first Swedish parliament) that glorified 'patriotic and freedom loving peasants' in their struggle against a repressive nobility (ibid: 140). In the party's amended version, however, 'the peasants are joined by the workers as the true representatives of the folk and the nation' (ibid: 140: original emphasis). Rather than class conflict, the line of scrimmage was re-drawn to pit this true and righteous folk, bound by an eternal gemenskap ('community'/'togetherness'), against a modern industrial aristocracy (ibid: 140). The labour movement, therefore, could become synonymous with folkrörelsen ('the people's movement'); becoming a self-describing trope for SAP; which it remains to this day. What is referred to as the 'Swedish Model' by

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²⁵ Similarities do exist between the Swedish (particularly the SAP's) usage of *folk* and that of the German Nazi party's mobilization of the concept 'Volk' during the interwar years (Berman, 1998, 2006). However, as Andersson describes, though both usages referred to a specific nation-bound 'people' (with either explicit or implicit claims of racial superiority and homogeneity), in Sweden, the SAP's 'people's home became the symbol for democratic citizenship, for a democratic breakthrough and not for [in Germany's case] a totalitarian dictatorship' (Andersson, 2009: 55).

international observers is often simply designated as *folkhemmet* domestically in Sweden (Trägårdh, 2007: 2). Indeed, the ideal (or, myth) of the *bonde* ('peasant') being synonymous with the *folk* is argued to have played a pivotal role in the development of Scandinavia's (particularly Sweden's) unique political culture.²⁶ Cultural historians argue that there is a unique interplay between the state, individual and community that is pivotal to understanding how and why both the unique social contract and welfare state was able to take the eventual form that it did during the SAP's long political reign. Trägårdh has designated this as 'statist individualism':

[T]he central [...] organizing principle of the Nordic welfare state (especially the Swedish variant) is the *alliance* between the state and the individual. To a degree unheard of elsewhere, benefits are provided by the state and received by individuals, in effect bypassing mediating institutions within civil society, be they private insurance companies at the giving end, or the family at the receiving one (Trägårdh, 1997: 253-254, original emphasis).

During the Reformation (which was, in contrast to continental European countries like Germany, largely 'state-driven' in Sweden), due to reforms carried out by King Gustav I (Vasa), the Lutheran church increasingly became an 'integrated part of the governing of the state' (Thorkildsen, 1997: 138). As Berggren and Trägårdh describe, the stark connection between Church and State in Sweden was also formed because concurrently with this state-led integration, Gustav Vasa also led the successful liberation of Sweden from the so-called 'Kalmar Union' (an aristocratic union between Norway, Sweden and Denmark) (Berggren and Trägårdh, 2015: 381).²⁷ Moreover, it was during Gustav Vasa's reign when an increased dialogue between land-owning peasants and local nobility and bailiffs (who both represented the crown) developed. During these *häradsting* ('judicial district councils'), issues surrounding taxation and vassals were discussed and negotiated. It is often argued that it was

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²⁶ In contrast to Denmark, peasants in Sweden were afforded their own estate within the Diet (Trägårdh, 1997).

²⁷ For Swedish nationalists, this helped transform 'Martin Luther from a theological innovator of Christianity to a Moses-like figure that led the hard-tested Swedish people out of Danish bondage and papal dimness towards the light' (Berggren and Trägårdh, 2015: 381, own translation). This nationalism was successfully usurped by the SAP in the 1930s when they 'elevated Gustav Vasa and Engelbrekt as historical predecessors' (ibid: 382, own translation).

through these meetings that the importance of agreement and compromise left a lasting mark on Sweden's political culture (Larsson and Marklund, 2012: 50-51; cf. Heclo and Madsen, 1987). As Sørensen and Stråth assert, the combined 'parish meeting and its compromise culture [...] were moved to the national level' (Sørensen and Stråth, 1997b: 20).

Indeed, the Lutheran shadow looms large over Swedish political praxis. Particularly, as Stenius describes,

The Lutheran tradition consists in the ideas of stability of continuance, in the assurance that deep in ourselves is a core of authenticity that gives us faith in a unitary, indivisible social organization with a unified set of moral norms. These teach us that the good life is one lived in conformity' (Stenius, 1997: 167).

For instance, the emphasis on the importance of work (irrespective of class – '[p]hysical work was never alien to the upper-class lifestyle in the Nordic countries') has been pivotal as it 'strengthens the pattern of conformity' (ibid: 165). In his study of the labour movement's genesis in a northern Swedish mill town during the first decades of the 20th century, Ambjörnsson describes how the notion of skötsamhet (diligence) was pivotal,

To say that a person was diligent was to set a grade, a sort of ticket to that category of people that my parents belonged to, the moderate, thoughtful workers [...] This culture comprised a dimension of the everyday, expressed in behavior, ideas, attitudes, in that which we can collectively call a mentality (Ambjörnsson, [1988] 2017: 23; 24, own translation; cf. Horgby, 1993).

As will be argued below, it was this nexus between the *folkhem* and 'diligence' that played a key role in how the SAP (and labour movement more broadly) understood and responded to immigration in the first half of the twentieth century.

Immigration and the Labour Movement

Compared to continental European nation states, the industrial revolution came very late to Sweden. By the mid 19th century, outside of certain industrial centres such as

Norrköping, the country was still largely an agrarian economy with a growing rural population that struggled with routine food shortages. At the same time, advancements in transport and communication opened the possibility for Swedes to emigrate. Which they did in great numbers. The mid-1800s through to the 1930s are characterized in Sweden as the 'great migration epoch', when approximately one-third of all Swedes emigrated, the majority to America (Svanberg and Tydén, 2005: 216). Simultaneously, the late 1800s was also characterized by a growing sentiment of Nationalism in Sweden (as it was across Europe). As Kvist Geverts describes, it was during this time that, 'the 'Swede' became 'Swedish' and the immigrant became an alien' (Kvist Geverts, 2013: 54-55). One particularly strong focus for xenophobia, whereby the State wanted to prohibit 'unwanted elements' from entering, was directed towards Eastern European Jews (ibid: 55). Pherefore (amongst other reasons), following the outbreak of the first World War — similarly to many other European countries — legislation was passed that limited the ability for foreigners to remain in Sweden.

Until then, there had been no systematic border control, with people able to emigrate to Sweden and seasonal migrants able to enter and exit the country more or less at will. A legislative distinction was, however, made if there was a high risk of the individual being politically persecuted were they returned to their home country — thereby, de facto, enacting the right to asylum in Sweden (Svanberg and Tydén, 2005: 254). At the same time, in 1927, parliament passed its first 'Aliens Act', 'with the aim of maintaining 'the purity of the Swedish race' and protecting the Swedish labour market'; refugees were therefore not permitted to hold employment (Kvist Geverts, 2013: 55). Indeed, the number of refugees that actually entered Sweden in the 1930s was very limited. While some of the refugees were actually 'political refugees' from Nazi Germany (most of whom were Social Democrats but there were some

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²⁸ Sweden in 1930 had a population of approximately 6 million and was still a highly homogenous country, with around 1 percent classified as foreign-born (including Swede's that had returned to Sweden after emigrating) (Byström and Frohnert, 2013: 9).

²⁹ Historically, Jews in Sweden have faced grave discrimination and persecution. Though few in number, in the mid-17th century, Jews were forbidden from emigrating into Sweden (and the existing Jews in the country were often effectively coerced to convert to Christianity). The first Jewish congregation in Sweden was established in Stockholm 1776. However, at that time, Jews lived a very segregated life in Sweden, with strict regulations on how much capital they were required to possess, what businesses they could have, and their movement within the country was greatly restricted (Jews had to seek permission to leave the three cities where they were allowed to live, Stockholm, Göteborg and Norrköping) (Svanberg and Tydén, 2005: 132-134; 180-189).

communists as well), the majority of the refugees in Sweden were Jews (3000 out of a total of about 5000 in 1939 when World War 2 erupted) (Byström and Frohnert, 2013: 33). Though still restrictive, the 'Aliens Act' was amended in 1937 with the major revisions that political refugees were given more opportunity to attain permanent residency and that they could no longer be deported back to Germany (Åmark, 2013: 45).

Sweden's restrictive refugee policy during the 1930s must be considered against the wider socio-political context in the country. SAP (in power since 1932) had begun the legislative construction of the *folkhem* in part as a response to the economic downturn sparked by the Great Depression. Sweden was at this time still largely ethnically homogenous and xenophobia was widespread (e.g. the overtly anti-Semitic restrictions). According to Frohnert, this factored heavily into the SAP government adopting restrictive refugee policies in the 1930s (Frohnert, 2013: 103).³⁰ This restrictiveness arguably helps to explain the Swedish embassy's unwillingness to (unlike other countries' embassies) assist Polish refugees (both Jews and Christians) in getting to Sweden in 1939 when Germany invaded (Åmark, 2013: 46). However, from the early 1940s onwards, Sweden's refugee policies took a different turn. The growing severity of the Nazi occupation of Norway resulted in an increased number of Norwegians crossing the border into Sweden. These 'Nordic brothers and sisters' were viewed in a very different (and a much more favourable) light than the other refugees (particularly Jews) from, for example, Germany (Åmark, 2013: 50).

The number of refugees in Sweden increased exponentially during WWII — with official statistics indicating 18,000 refugees and other migrants in the country in 1939 and around 200,000 in April 1945.³¹ Understood monetarily, in 1939 the Swedish State spent approximately 500,000 Swedish kronor on refugee reception and in 1944-1945 the State spent 80 million kronor (Åmark, 2013: 42). Kvist Geverts argues that although this transition has often been characterized as a sea change, it was more 'a slow process rather than an abrupt shift' (2013:60). Until 1942, there was a noticeable hesitation from Swedish authorities toward Jewish refugees. For instance, in addition

³⁰ During the 1930s (until outbreak of WWII), the Swedish State diverted all responsibility for the financial security of refugees onto civil society (Åmark, 2013: 41).

³¹ In addition to the refugees and other aliens that Sweden accepted during the war, the country also took in around 72,000 Finnish children. Åmark notes that as they were children, they are usually not registered as either refugees nor migrants (2013: 40).

to the racial element of tagging refugee's documentation to show that they were Jewish, early on in the war, authorities used the fact that Jews were restricted from leaving Germany to reject granting them permits to Sweden (ibid: 60). However, from 1942 onwards when Sweden's neutrality was loosened following major German defeats at El Alamein and shortly thereafter Stalingrad, the Swedish State changed course to actively help European Jews into Sweden. This saw the rescue of approximately 7,000 Danish Jews in the fall of 1943, following Hitler's orders for their extermination (Åmark, 2013: 50; 40).

Scholars often single out the arrival of approximately 30,000 'Balts' (Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians) in 1944 as further signalling a shift in refugee policy. The absolute majority of refugees that had come to Sweden during the war were expected to return to their home countries once the war ended (Byström, 2012: 250).). Indeed, many of the countries occupied by Germany had legations stationed in Sweden (due to its neutrality), that provided considerable support for their citizens (Byström, 2013: 117-118). The Balts, however, were different. They were expected to remain indefinitely in Sweden and their respective countries had no legations stationed in Sweden which meant that the Swedish State — for the first time — had to assume full fiscal and social responsibility for these refugees (Byström, 2012: 250). Therefore, those who were able-bodied were required to seek employment. In order to understand how the labour movement positioned itself towards these refugee-cum-labour migrants, an incident that took place in Norrköping in September 1945 is especially illuminating.

According to one of the lead protagonists, textile ombudsman Georg Lindgren, by September 1945 there were approximately 300 'Balts' employed across three of Norrköping's largest textile plants (Horgby, 1996: 9-10). Members of Norrköping's division of the textile union workers union had increasingly questioned this growing presence. This culminated when, during a union meeting on 2 September 1945, following a vote the decision was taken to request that the union's central leadership advocate for the Swedish authorities to deport all 'Balts' in Sweden. (ibid: 9). The overarching reason for this drastic demand was that the vast majority of 'Balts' were not willing to organize. It was also argued that certain 'Balts' were Nazi sympathizers and that many had difficulty understanding Swedish, and relatedly, were unwilling to culturally integrate; that is, adopt Swedish norms such as organizing. The local ombudsman Lindgren argued that this phenomenon was not isolated to Norrköping,

but was indeed 'typical behaviour by the Baltic workforce in Sweden' (ibid: 10).³² Despite this, the central leadership of the textile workers union adopted a much more cautious approach (never acting on the local chapter's demands). Horgby argues that, although the demands eventually faded in Norrköping, the resentment that had been mobilized did not entirely vanish. What the September 1945 incident had exposed was an undercurrent of anti-foreigner resentment among Norrköping's workers. Usually only articulated by a self-willed 'obstinate minority' of workers, when the 'Balts' were understood to threaten the entire 'honor system' centred on 'diligence' (skötsamhet) of the labour movement, the obstinate minority were able to rally the majority of union members in Norrköping to adopt these views (ibid: 162-167).

Indeed, at the outset of the so-called golden post-war period, Sweden was a relatively homogenous society which had had a far less aggressive transition (the power of the monarchy had since the mid-19th century been limited due to influence of the agrarian class in parliament) into democracy than the U.K. or Western European countries (Stråth, 2004). With the comprehensive welfare state on the path towards full realization (and broad acceptance among the working and middle classes), there was in post-war Sweden a need for labour-force migration. This was found with war refugees from the Baltic countries and labour-migrants from Austria, Hungary and Italy. This model differed from the 'quest-worker' variant pursued in Germany, with residency permits introduced in 1954 for the workers in order to 'offer greater security to foreigners who chose to settle permanently (Borevi, 2013). However, from the mid-1960's onwards, the labour movement (particularly the blue-collar unions in LO) began to protest this in part due to an influx of Yugoslavian labour migrants in 1965 who were unable to find employment and due to 'concerns that immigration would lead to a socially stratified society in which foreign labourers suffered from socioeconomic marginalization' (ibid: 148). Moreover, assimilatory policies became hotly debated in the 1960s and what came to replace them were policies of integration and the acceptance (and encouragement) of a multicultural society (Wickström, 2013).

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³² As Horgby describes, there had indeed been discussions within the labour movement in a number of places (e.g. Göteborg, Borås and in Småland) regarding the rights of both Baltic and Polish workers; with some worrying that these foreign workers would be willing to accept lower wages (1996: 12).

Even in contemporary Sweden?

As the American geographer-cum-adopted son of Sweden Alan Pred powerfully elucidated at the twilight of the last century,

In hidden or less apparent forms, as well as in blatantly open forms, racisms are currently flourishing even in Sweden, a country long stereotyped as a paradise of social enlightenment, as an international champion of justice, solidarity and equality (Pred, 1997: 385, original emphasis).

In Sweden, as anywhere else, it is through a lived geography — through participation in particular *locally situated practices* — that individuals and groups become racialized that migrants, refugees, and minorities have their racialization again and again reinforced (Pred, 2000: 18-19, original emphasis and structure).

To illustrate, Pred contrasted the widespread medial, social and political condemnation against the residents of Sjöbo, the small rural municipality in the southern-most province of Scania that's governing council held a referendum in 1988 on whether or not to accept any refugees, with the lack of attention when the far more affluent municipality of Vellinge outside of Malmö did the same almost simultaneously.³³ Following this dissection, Pred was left wondering,

in the popular geographical imagination, in the popular geography of those elsewhere where racism "truly" exists [...] Why this camouflaged social map?

³³ The resistance was spearheaded by local Centre Party politician Sven-Olle Olsson following attempts by both the Migration Board and the SAP government to include Sjöbo in the 'Whole of Sweden Strategy', whereby municipalities were allocated a certain number of refugees in order to de-concentrate the flow to only the largest urban centres. Following successive attempts by authorities, and with 240 of Sweden's then 284 municipalities agreeing to accept refugees, under the direction of Olsson (and local Moderate politicians), Sjöbo's municipal council added a referendum on the issue onto the ordinary ballot for the general election on 18, September 1988. With a participation rate of 82.8%, the result was a resounding 'victory' for the naysayers, with 64.2% of Sjöbo's voters opposed to accepting refugees, and only 31% in favour (Pred, 2000: 189-191).

Why this locational obfuscation? Why this cartography of selective innocence and denial (1997: 411)?

Indeed, just two days after the Sjöbo referendum, Leo Kanto, a political scientist and the vice-president of the 'National Interest Group for Immigrants' (Immigranternas Riksförbund), had told one of country's largest daily newspapers, Svenska Dagbladet,

Sjöbo is a local occurrence. Only one municipality in the entire country has declined to accept refugees. The resistance to racism and xenophobia is solidified in Sweden (quoted in Thorsson, 1988, own translation).

As the events in Norrköping two years later will show, Kanto's hope that the sentiments expressed in Sjöbo were isolated, proved ill-founded. Rather, Sjöbo served as a harbinger for a growing reluctance towards asylum seekers and refugees that proved widespread.

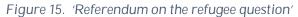
Sjöbo's reverberations

In the largest daily newspaper, *Norrköpings Tidning* (NT),³⁴ readers were told in mid-May 1990 that the relationship between locals and the 200 asylum seekers who had been allocated temporary housing at Bodaviken's camping, had been distant but 'fairly frictionless' (Persson, 1990). A few local residents of the coastal community located 20 kilometres northeast of central Norrköping, had told the NT reporter that their main grievances toward the asylum seekers had been their lack of understanding 'Swedish' social codes. Residents complained that they did not know how to queue at the local grocery store or that paper waste should not be disposed of on the ground (ibid: 1990). With the summer season fast approaching, the asylum seekers living in Bodaviken were being relocated in order for the camping ground to accommodate its scheduled clientele of holiday makers. One such relocation area was in the nearby small industrial commuter hamlet of Kimstad, population 1,474 (Statistics Sweden, 1990). Located 16 kilometres to the south-west of central Norrköping (see Figure 3 in the methodology chapter), the issue of the opening of an asylum seeker accommodation

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³⁴ Founded in 1758, NT is Sweden's oldest surviving Newspaper. Its editorial page is designated 'Politically Independent, Conservative'

centre in the form of a complex of sixteen barracks near the banks of the Motala River intended to house up to 175 refugees was reported to deeply divide the residents of Kimstad. In an NT article dated only days after the piece on Bodaviken, readers learned of a series of concerts arranged for the 20th of May. The organizers of the 'Festival against Racism', were quoted as adamant to clarify that they 'do not behold the residents of Kimstad as racists' (Ekfeldt, 1990). Readers were also told that the organizers behind the newly started group, 'Kimstad residents against the refugee accommodation centre' had informed the mass media that if they wished to attend their next meeting they were asked to remain silent following the negative national media attention their meeting the month prior had received (ibid: 1990).





Kimstad, Thursday 18 May, 1990 (Photo by Hallberg, 1990)

Ahead of the meeting that took place a few days later, over 300 people (see Figure 15 above) paraded through central Kimstad with placards demanding a new referendum and for Sweden to 'wake up!' (Schenholm, 1990). Simultaneously on the other side of the community, church bells rang out and prayers of intercession for refugees were given at a reportedly well-attended Kimstad assembly (Hassler, 1990).

However, the main attraction in Kimstad that evening in May was in the auditorium at the local school. The packed meeting opened with the chairperson of the group opposing the accommodation centre saying, 'Well now we've taken the lid off'; implying that, finally, people's real opinions could be 'aired' freely (Schenholm, 1990). The NT journalist who was at the meeting described that when the official from the migration agency responsible for sourcing the property clarified, 'my opinion is that Sweden is a wealthy country', he was met with sustained booing, with the audience demanding that Kimstad take after 'Sjöbo' and hold a referendum (ibid: 1990). When asked afterwards if he was worried about what potential consequences the vivid resistance to the centre in Kimstad might have, the official replied,

Undoubtedly, resistance to a centre has never been as pronounced as it is in Kimstad. But I believe in the residents of Kimstad and that the whole thing will calm down when the centre has got up and running (Schenholm, 1990b, own translation).

The official's belief proved premature. Around five am on Thursday, 24th May, firefighters responded to a call that two of the centre's sixteen barracks were ablaze (Stenehall, 1990a). Police immediately treated the fire, that completely destroyed the two barracks, as arson. The following day, the migration authorities resolutely declared that the fire would not prevent the centre from opening that summer (Stenehall, 1990a). As NT reported the day after, the charred barracks had quickly become a point of excursion for Kimstad's residents. As one local man, Jonny Jönsson, told the reporter,

The authorities have provoked this [...] TV did a study that showed that 60 percent of the population were opposed to the centre. Don't we have a democratic society? (quoted in Stenehall, 1990b, own translation).

In the immediate weeks following the fire, the barracks remained under surveillance and police searched for leads on who might have been involved, but no suspects could be apprehended. A few Kimstad residents whose vocal opposition in the media to the accommodation centre in the months leading up to the fire were adamant that the culprit was not a resident of Kimstad, or a 'Kimstadbo' (Lundgren,

1990, emphasis added). Senior SAP municipal commissioner Kaj Krantz told NT, "I get scared when I see that someone or some people completely disregards democratic decisions and democracy's ground rules" (quoted in Lundgren, 1990, own translation). In the apparent effort to create some friction with the local and national SAP governments, the Moderate municipal opposition commissioner, Stefan Hagfeldt was quoted as saying that part of the responsibility for the fire lay with the politicians responsible who had "forced" the decision onto the residents of Kimstad. Krantz, on the other hand, clarified that he "stood behind Swedish migration policies as legislated by parliament" and added that "what has happened in Kimstad can happen anywhere. There are more places than just Kimstad where xenophobia has surfaced" (ibid: 1990, own translation). In a statement published in NT days later, Krantz and Sten Engstrand, the chairperson of Norrköping's SAP Labourer Commune, affirmed that 'We Social Democrats will always stand on the side of the oppressed, imploring 'everyone to protest against the acts of violence in Kimstad' (Krantz and Engstrand, 1990, original emphasis, own translation).

The pleas from Norrköping's senior SAP elected representatives did little to assuage the catalytic effects that Kimstad generated. Just two days after the fire, 60 kilometres to the west in Motala, a military-grade smoke grenade thrown into the foyer of a refugee accommodation centre resulted in the hospitalization of eleven people, including three children. The following day to the south in Laholm, Scania, an elaborately rigged system of fuses incinerated all fifteen barracks of a planned accommodation centre that was set to shortly open (Holm, 1990a). In total, nearly twenty accommodation centres were targeted in the month following Kimstad (Nordin, 2005: 40). Reacting to the uptick of violence, echoing similar sentiments to Norrköping's Kaj Krantz, SAP Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson despaired,

This has to do with criminal actions, but it also represents views that are incompatible with our democratic values (quoted in Holm, 1990b, own translation).

Though these violent acts of destruction were perpetrated by a small handful of individuals guided by extraordinarily extreme views with a willingness to act on them, Swedish public opinion at the time did suggest that the critical residents of Kimstads' views were in fact widespread. A 1990 national survey by the SOM institute found that

61 percent of respondents thought that Sweden should accept fewer refugees (Demker and Andersson, [1997] 2013: 186). Two years later, it had risen to 65 percent of respondents (ibid: 186). This growing negative public opinion should be considered against the political backdrop of a growing political concern surrounding the volume of asylum seekers coming to Sweden, particularly among SAP who were in power since 1982.

In the early to mid-1980s, the number of approved asylum claims per year totalled between 10-13,000, with more than half of the successful claims allocated to family reunification (Figure 19 below) (Migration Board, 2019a). However, from 1984 onwards, there was a noticeable increase in both the volume of applications, and the number of successful grants (Hammar, 1999). As Hammar describes, this significant increase in volume also saw, for the first time, the number of non-European asylum seekers fleeing conflicts exceed the net-migration (to over 50 percent) from neighbouring Nordic countries and continental Europe (ibid: 176). Moreover, the destabilizing situation in the Soviet Union sparked concerns that the volumes would only increase further. Domestically, the aforementioned economic slowdown, growing unemployment and overloading of the integration services required for refugees, increasingly led to a questioning of just how 'generous' Sweden could remain (ibid: 177). These concerns played out against the backdrop of a sustained debate surrounding labour migration that had existed in the labour movement since the early 1960s. Articulated most strongly by the blue-collar unions within LO, this culminated in 1972 when the unions successfully persuaded authorities to stop granting work permits to non-Nordic migrants (Borevi, 2012: 38-39).

In 1984, a government bill was introduced by SAP PM Olof Palme and Anita Gradin, the minister responsible for migration and equality. The bill was based on the findings of the migration-political committee's 1983 report that was tasked with suggesting updates to the 1968 guidelines for migration. Though reiterating Sweden's longstanding commitment (since 1954) to the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention and emphasizing the 'positive roll that immigration has had on our country's development', the bill also highlighted that '[o]ur economic resources are limited' (Gradin, 1984: 13; 27, own translation). Moreover, the bill clarified that Sweden's immigration policies are '[s]ubordinate to the overarching societal goals such as democracy, economic growth, full employment, economic, social and cultural equality, equality between men and women and also participation in employment' (ibid: 15, own

translation). The bill furthermore specified that Sweden should continue to provide targeted assistance internationally in order to, 'counteract the occurrence of refugee situations and prioritize refugee assistance in third countries' (ibid: 21, own translation). As Johansson observes, the bill also, for the first time, highlighted the potential issues surrounding ethnicity and the potential difficulties persons from different cultures might have to integrate into Swedish society (Johansson, 2013: 276). Johansson adds that the bill was criticized from various development and religious organisations in Sweden who found the hardened tone towards immigrants problematic (ibid: 276).

In many ways, the growing political concerns towards immigration culminated in the so-called 'Lucia Decision' (a Swedish Christmas celebration) of 13 December 1989. Due to the unexpected surge of Turkish-Bulgarian asylum seekers (28,000 in the previous six months), the then SAP government with immigration minister Maj-Lis Lööw at the helm announced that this volume was not sustainable. Sweden would therefore only accept asylum seekers that met the requirements stipulated by the UN Refugee Convention; which only encompassed around 10 percent of the newly arrived asylum seekers (Johansson, 2013: 277).35 Instead of accepting 'de facto' asylum seekers fleeing conflict which had theretofore been the praxis, the government adopted a strict interpretation of Sweden's Aliens Act (Borevi, 2012: 49, original emphasis). In an interview less than a week later, Lööw clarified that, along with the Turkish-Bulgarians who had fled Bulgaria, there were many other minorities facing discrimination in "Europe and the world, but there is no possibility that this can be solved with Swedish refugee policies" (quoted in Knutsson, 1989, own translation). Lööw added that Sweden already spent as much on the "reception of refugees as the UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] does for all refugees in the entire world" (ibid, 1989, own translation). The interviewer pushed the minister on what the actual difference was between what local politician Sven-Olle Olsson in Sjöbo had advocated for and what the SAP government was now doing, to which she responded,

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³⁵ The decision by the SAP government was supported by the Moderates and the Centre Party, but was heavily criticized by the liberal People's Party, the Communists (now the Left party) and the Greens (Fryklund and Peterson, 1992: 55).

The parallel with Sjöbo is absurd. It wasn't because he [Olson] suggested a reduced reception of refugees that he was called a racist. The difference is that, while Sjöbo didn't lift a finger for refugees, Sweden invests as much on refugee reception as all of the UN (ibid, 1989, own translation).

Whilst Lööw was perhaps justified in rejecting the comparison with Sjöbo, from the late 1980s onwards, the overall trajectory of Swedish migration policies became considerably more restrictive.

The early 1990s crises

The 1991 general election had seen the SAP ousted from power nationally and in Norrköping, with the centre-right parties forming a coalition government with the Moderate Carl Bildt as the premier. The election also saw the emergence of the unorthodox party, New Democracy (Ny Demokrati). Gaining 6.7 percent of the vote nationally (and 7.2 percent in Norrköping), the party had formed only one year prior when the brash entrepreneur Bert Karlsson and the industrialist aristocrat Ian Wachtmeister had united in their desire to disrupt Sweden's political settlement. Though initially having profiled itself primarily as an anti-tax party and thereby attracting mainly voters who otherwise vote for the Moderates, New Democracy increasingly also sought to tap into the growing public weariness towards Sweden's migration policies (Taggart, 1996b). Through countless public events and opinion pieces, Karlsson and Wachtmeister were able to effectively frame Sweden's acceptance of refugees as an affront to ordinary Swedes who were struggling in times of growing economic uncertainty. At the time, Sweden's economy was in the doldrums following the bursting of a real estate bubble in the late 1980s. This culminated in 1992 when there was a run on the krona and the Swedish State was forced to bail out the failing banks. When the dust settled, many households were left saddled with exceptionally high levels of debt and, for the first time in the post-war period, Sweden's unemployment rate increasingly rose from nearly non-existent up towards the European average at the time of nearly 10 percent (Andersson and Östberg, 2013: 357-367).

Even prior to the added strain precipitated by the banking crisis, the early 1990s were especially painful for Norrköping. The austerity regime pursued since the early-

1980s forced already struggling municipalities to cut even deeper. With its declining industry and growing unemployment, Norrköping vividly exemplified one of those municipalities struggling the most. Residents could read in NT on 3 January, 1992 that the municipality's debt had exceeded one billion Swedish Krona, and that, therefore, 'each resident [effectively] owes over 8,000 [Swedish crowns]!' (Laurin, 1992a, own translation). Later that year in the spring, residents were informed that due to the ever-increasing unemployment in Norrköping (then at one percent over the national rate of four percent), the municipality was being forced to borrow more in order to finance short-term employment schemes for 1000 people (Laurin, 1992b). Commenting on the necessity of the loan, Moderate municipal counsellor Stefan Hagfeldt described, "this is to my knowledge, the largest employment stimulus package ever proposed in Norrköping", adding that "1993 will also be a tough year" (quoted in Laurin, 1992c, own translation). To add further to this already bleak outlook, less than a week later, Norrköping's long-held parallels with Manchester were further confirmed as it followed in Cottonopolis's footsteps during the 1980s (Swettenham, 2013). Strömma Sweden AB, the last remnants of the city's once thriving textile industry, announced it was closing and its 192 employees were being made redundant (Tjäder and Hansson, 1992). Simultaneously as both Norrköping's and Sweden's economic crisis deepened, the humanitarian crisis in the Balkans intensified.

By early 1992, the mounting civil and ethnic conflict in former Yugoslavia had precipitated the worst refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. In mid-May 1992, NT reported that over 700,000 residents of Bosnia-Hercegovina had been left homeless due to the escalating sectarian conflict between Orthodox Christian Serbs, Catholic Croats and Muslim Bosniaks (Larsson, 1992). Two weeks later, readers were informed that, in total, the conflict had already displaced 1.3 million people and that the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimated that this number would soon grow to 2 million (Long, 1992). A month later, in an opinion piece re-published in NT, referencing the ever-intensifying crisis in the region, New Democracy's leaders acknowledged the unprecedented scale of the crisis in former Yugoslavia, describing the more than twofold increase in asylum seekers to Sweden that year in comparison to the year before. The leaders argued that the centre-right coalition government's reversal of the, in their words 'smart' 1989 Lucia Decision (in order to appease their

liberal coalition partners the Liberal People's Party), effectively gave the 'go ahead' for everyone to come to Sweden (Karlsson and Wachtmeister, 1992).

Where is it written that European cooperation has ended? [...] Who is to say that other European countries can't help? Sweden has actually done what it can and it is costing the Swedish people an incredible amount (Karlsson and Wachtmeister, 1992, own translation).

Wachtmeister and Karlsson concluded their article rhetorically asking,

Does the government believe that the current refugee policies are supported by the Swedish people? Do you think that the people think the same way as the [liberal] People's Party (ibid, own translation)?

At the beginning of July, NT readers could learn that 40 empty apartment units in the neighbourhood of Navestad and an additional 20 in nearby Hageby would soon start to house upwards of 400 refugees from former Yugoslavia. This would help to fulfil the migration board's directive that refugees should be transitioned into circumstances in which they could lead more independent lives, as many of the refugees already in Norrköping were at the time housed in a hotel at the outskirts of the city (Sedelius, 1992). A few days later, NT reported that polling from June found that six of ten Swedes (of a national sample size of 1,001) were disappointed with the country's migration policies (TT, 1992). Among the more common motivations for why respondents were critical of the country's policies were that they were seen as too costly, crime rates were increasing and that the 'wrong people were coming' (ibid, 1992). The same month, writing in the letters to the editor section, a Norrköping resident with the signature 'AS' argued that 'foreign citizens' who worked in Sweden took more than three times as many sick days per year (AS, 1992). 'AS' further claimed that those citizens that 'have the greatest difficulty getting accustomed to modern Swedish society are Sunni Muslims from Turkey and Shia Muslims from Iran' because 'their culture and religion differ so greatly from what we have in Sweden' (ibid, 1992, own translation). 'Fact remains', the worried resident deliberated, 'can Sweden as a country afford this and what do the taxpayers think' (ibid, 1992, own translation)? Though migration from Turkey and Iran was comparatively limited in both

Norrköping and nationally, the cultural and economic sentiments expressed by 'AS' were widespread and could therefore not be entirely ignored by the governing centre-right coalition.

Though the centre-right government had reverted the 1989 Lucia Decision in order to appease coalition partners the Liberal People's Party, the ensuing mass forced migration from the Balkans placed an unprecedented pressure on Sweden. The economic downturn at the time certainly did not help the situation and, as described above, public opinion towards accepting more asylum seekers was growing increasingly negative in the early 1990s. As the chart below shows, 1992 alone saw 84,018 asylum applications, 69,396 of which were made by asylum seekers fleeing the conflict in former Yugoslavia (Migration Board, 2019b, 2019c). Among other implications, this considerable increase in the number of applications led to the centre-right coalition government making a series of decisions from late 1992 onwards in the effort to greatly reduce the volume. The most drastic and effective of these efforts was in June 1993 when, following Sweden's diplomatic recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the government simultaneously imposed visas on citizens of the country seeking entry to Sweden while granting the majority of Bosnians already in Sweden permanent residency status (Abiri, 2000: 20). As seen in the chart below (Figure 16), this move had the immediate desired effect as it significantly decreased the volume of migrants able to seek asylum in Sweden.

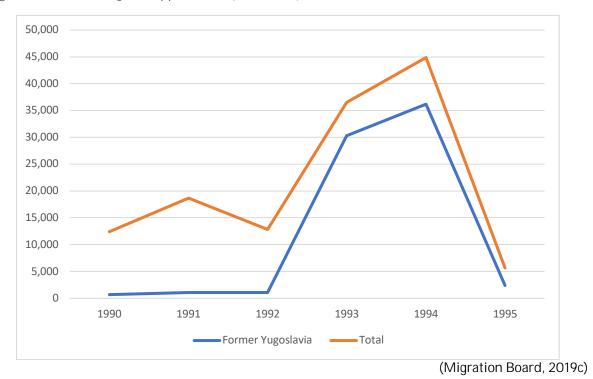


Figure 16. Granted Asylum Applications (1990-1995)

In total, approximately 50,000 Bosnians would receive permanent residency. When asked retrospectively whether the SAP would have pursued the same course of action, Leif Blomberg, SAP minister for migration following the centre-right coalition losing power in the 1994 election, replied,

According to my knowledge the consensus of Social Democratic opinion at that time was that the Bosnians should be granted temporary residence (Blomberg quoted in Appelqvist, 2000: 99, original translation).

At the time, this inflow of asylum seekers was the greatest since WWII. As a result of this and the aforementioned debate concerning the legitimacy of Kosovar's asylum claims, the government introduced a series of visa requirements as well as appointed a new commission to consider revisions to Sweden's migration policies (the original one having been launched by the previous SAP government). With parallels to the current situation in Europe following the 2015 refugee 'crisis', these requirements were meant, along with the substantive desired effects, to signal that, along with Germany, Sweden had taken a far greater responsibility than all other European countries in accepting asylum-seekers (ibid: 22). Regaining power in 1994, the SAP appointed yet another commission (the third in less than 5 years) to consider and

propose amendments to Sweden's migration policies. This commission's recommendations were reworked into a Government Bill put to parliament in 1996. Among other changes, the Bill effectively sought to limit which family members were encompassed in family reunification policies, emphasized voluntary returns, as well as stretch the definition of who qualified for temporary protection rather than permanent asylum (ibid: 24). Though widely debated (and criticized by proimmigration advocates) publicly, the SAP Bill passed with the strong support of both the Moderates and the Centre party.

Despite the succession of commissions and politicking, there was in fact very little substantial disagreement between the Moderates and SAP on what migration policies were necessary for Sweden to adopt. Ideologically however, Abiri argues, a tension existed between the Moderates internationalist/cosmopolitan free-market emphasis and the SAP's nationalist/communitarian welfarist strong-state — folkhem (Abiri, 2000: 25). As described earlier in the chapter, the Swedish Labour Movement has historically been critical of what detrimental consequences labour immigration might have for the 'Swedish Model'; from LO's sustained post-war opposition to labour immigration (C. Johansson, 2005; Yalcin, 2013), to SAP PM Göran Persson in 2003 warning of "social tourism" from citizens of the new Eastern European EU memberstates (quoted in Larsson, 2003, own translation). Indeed, as Hinnfors et al. (2012) argue, though the Labour Movement emphasizes international solidarity (vocally advocating the necessity for a humanitarian position towards Sweden's responsibilities to refugees), its raison d'être has always been to ensure the survival of what it perceives as the ever-threatened, 'institutional expression of the Social Democratic project: a heavily regulated labour market and generous welfare state' (Hinnfors et al., 2012: 592).

Having failed to reach a compromise concerning a potential limit/probationary period to citizens of the new EU member-states while still in government, the SAP's position (in opposition since 2006) towards labour migration was further weakened when the new centre-right Alliance government³⁶ with support by the Greens passed legislation approving open labour immigration in 2008 (Widfeldt, 2015: 405-406). Three years later, in March 2011, seeking to obstruct any influence from the now parliamentary party SD, the Alliance and Greens announced a new agreement that,

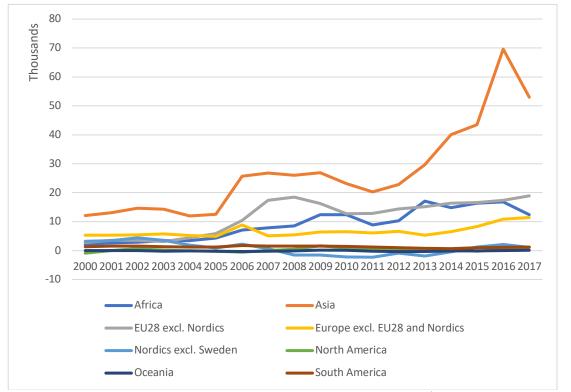
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³⁶ Comprised of the Moderates, Centre Party, Liberals and Christian Democrats

according to PM Fredrik Reinfeldt, "is a choice that closes the door for those xenophobic powers in Sweden and in parliament [...] [that] "lays the long-term foundation for a humane, legally secure and ordered migration policy" (quoted in Magnusson and Larsson, 2011; Ridderstolpe and Dunér, 2011, own translation). Reacting to the agreement, SD's leader Jimmie Åkesson said, "it is obvious that one wants to see an increased immigration that, compared to other countries in our part of the world, is extreme and irresponsible" (quoted in Lindén, 2011, own translation).

Apart from emphasizing the importance of cross-border movement for labour and the safeguard of the right-to-asylum, the agreement (following an investigation by the Social Department that published findings in May 2011) called for both asylumseekers and so-called 'paper-less' refugees to have the right to access healthcare and schooling (State Public Report, 2011). The SAPs then-migration spokesperson responded that the SAP was generally positive to the agreement especially the emphasis on the right to schooling for paper-less refugee children though reserved that it is important for labour-migration to be 'orderly' (Lundh Sammeli, 2011, own translation). However, they were especially critical that there was no mention of how the reception of asylum-seekers would be absorbed in a 'common' and 'responsible' manner across municipalities in Sweden so as not to unevenly impact the 'housing and welfare' in those municipalities that were already burdened with over-stretched budgets and lower-than-average wages (ibid, 2011, own translation). Moreover, they contended that what was 'astounding' was the failure to acknowledge the 'enormous refugee surge from North Africa'; contending that the government and the Greens 'remained woefully silent about the situation and was averting its eyes for the reality unfolding' (ibid, 2011, own translation).

Figure 17. Net Migration (2000-2017)



(Statistics Sweden, 2018b)

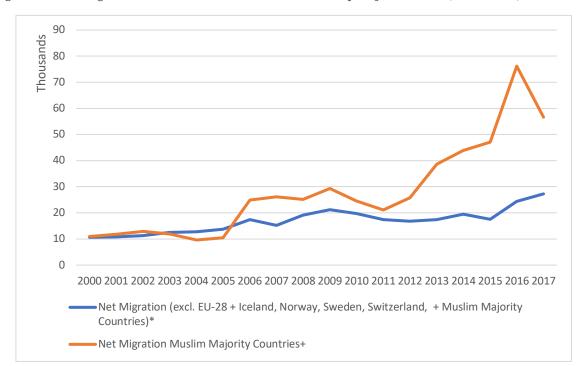
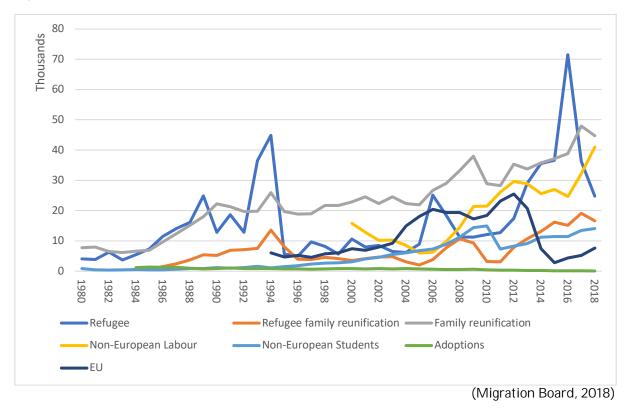


Figure 18. Net Migration from Muslim and non-Muslim Majority Countries (2000-2017)

*(excl. EU-28 + Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland + Muslim Majority Countries): Andorra; Angola; Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Australia; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Benin; Bermuda; Bhutan; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Brazil; British Virgin Islands; Burundi; Central African Republic; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Equatorial Guinea; El Salvador; Côte d'Ivoire; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Fiji; Philippines; Gabon; Georgia; Ghana; Gibraltar; Guatemala; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Hong Kong; India; Israel; Jamaica; Japan; Yugoslavia; Cambodia; Cameroon; Canada; Cape Verde; Kenya; China; Kiribati; Congo; Democratic Republic of Congo; Cuba; Laos; Lesotho; Liberia; Madagascar; Macedonia; Malawi; Marshall Islands; Mauritius; Mexico; Micronesia; Mozambique; Moldova; Monaco; Mongolia; Montenegro; Myanmar; Namibia; Nauru; Nepal; Nicaragua; North Korea; New Zealand; Palau; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Rwanda; Russia; Salomon Islands; Samoa; San Marino; Sao Tomé and Principe; Serbia; Serbia and Montenegro; Seychelles; Singapore; Soviet Union; Sri Lanka; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Lucia; Surinam; Swaziland; South Africa; South Korea; Taiwan; Tanzania; Thailand; Former Czech Republic; Togo; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; Tuvalu; Uganda; Ukraine; Uruguay; USA; Vanuatu; Vatican State; Venezuela; Vietnam; Belarus; Zambia; Zimbabwe; East Timor; Unknown Country of Birth (Statistics Sweden, 2018)

+Muslim Majority Countries: Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; Azerbaijan; Bahrain; Bangladesh; Brunei; Burkina Faso; Chad; Comoros; Djibouti; Egypt; Guinea; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kosovo; Kuwait; Kyrgyzstan; Lebanon; Libya; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Mauritania; Mayotte; Morocco; Niger; Nigeria; Oman; Pakistan; Palestine; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Sudan; Syria; Tajikistan; The Gambia; Turkey; Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; Turkmenistan; United Arab Emirates; Uzbekistan; Western Sahara; Yemen (CEW, 2018)





Considered against the discursive backdrop of the political tone following the 2015 crisis, it is striking how different the tone surrounding migration was ahead of the 2014 general election. Under the rubric, 'an open Sweden', the Alliance's joint manifesto pronounced that, as the world experienced the largest movement of refugees since the second World War, 'Sweden has shown that it is possible to put humanity first and open the door to those who seek protection [...] Sweden can be a humanitarian superpower by offering people sanctuary from violence and persecution' (Alliansen, 2014: 50, own translation). In its manifesto, the SAP pronounced that 'A Just World is Possible', and in chorus with the Alliance stated that, 'Those in need of protection will receive sanctuary in our land' (SAP, 2014: 44, own translation). Though both the Alliance and the SAP emphasized that other EU member states must take a far greater responsibility in accepting asylum-seekers, the message from both was that Sweden's traditional political parties were united in recognizing Sweden's role in providing generous assistance to asylum-seekers as a country for refuge.

Norrköping's experience of the 2015 crisis

A phrase I often heard in conversations with SAP party members was that, along with being a classic 'working city' (*arbetarstad*), Norrköping had long been an 'immigrant city' (*invandrarstad*). In addition to accepting a few hundred Baltic refugees during WWII, who then stayed on becoming labourers, and even more Finns following the end of the war, Norrköping experienced labour-migration from southern Europe during the 1960s and early 1970s. The mid 1970s saw a few hundred Chilean and Assyrian refugees come to Norrköping. In addition to refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, approximately 2,500 Bosnian refugees (far above the projected volume of 500) came to Norrköping during the early to mid 1990s (Horgby, 2000).

During the 2015 migration crisis Norrköping once again accepted a disproportionately large number of asylum seekers; to the extent that, along with Stockholm, Malmö and Flen, the municipality would later be singled out in the government's extensive report (2017) about the crisis (State Public Reports, 2017: 68). For instance, compared to rival municipality Linköping (pop. 153,000), since asylum migration has grown exponentially to Sweden during the last 5 years, Norrköping (pop. 140,000) has consistently accepted more than or close to double the amount of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. In 2015, Norrköping accepted 2,437 and Linköping 1,097. In 2016, 1,339 persons came to Norrköping and 703 to Linköping (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2019).

In contrast to the early 1990s, Sweden's economy in 2015 was booming. As the OECD in its March 2015 economic outlook for the country described, Sweden had emerged from the financial crisis relatively unscathed and was 'proving resilient' in a 'current environment of sluggish growth' (2015: 4). Expressing concern with growing inequalities in Sweden, the authors of the report qualified that these were 'still low compared to the OECD average, reflecting high employment, low wage dispersion and strong social safety nets' (ibid: 8). The unemployment rate had hovered around 8 percent nationally for a few years. Though Sweden had better prospects than during the dire 1990s, Norrköping's unemployment rate in 2015 hovered stubbornly at 12.3 percent, up from 8.5 percent in 2008 (Swedish Public Employment Service, 2019). However, the overall national economic outlook coupled with, for instance, the proliferation of cranes dotted across the city centre, many informants would tell me, generated a far different mood than the turbulent 1990s.

Figure 20. 'Little Obaida'



(Photo by Andersson in Ramstedt, 2015)

Towards the end of the summer, approximately 114,000 asylum seekers, the absolute majority from war-torn Syria, had already entered Sweden. By early September, as the appalling imagery of the young Syrian child Alan Kurdi's lifeless body dominated the media, civil society ramped up support efforts.

Together with the city's professional sports teams, Norrköping's Assyrian society organized fundraising drives for the Syrian refugees (Willner, 2015). Demonstrations in support of Sweden's open borders at public squares throughout the country had become commonplace. In front of the town hall at the 'German square' (*Tyska torget*), upwards of 1,000 people were reported to have gathered on Wednesday, 16th September to partake in emotive accounts of refugees' harrowing journeys across the Mediterranean (Ramstedt, 2015b). Organized by the local chapter of the pan-European non-profit organization 'Refugees Welcome', the manifestation made the cover of NT, with the above photo (Figure 20) of 'little Obaida', who, along with his parents had made the long journey north from Syria only two months earlier (Ramstedt, 2015a). Only days before at the same square, 'One Norrköping for Alla') had mobilised a much smaller manifestation of 40 people demanding that the EU's Dublin Protocol be scrapped (Österström, 2015).

Less than a week after the mass mobilization at the German square in Norrköping, the Migration Board reported that the previous seven days had seen over 6,000 people apply for asylum. Speaking to Sweden's public broadcaster, the director of the Board described that, "[t]he only comparable situation is Balkan 1992, but even that was less than what we are now seeing. This has never happened before" (quoted in Jönsson, 2015). One of the biggest challenges was finding accommodation for all the asylum seekers. "It's going to get tighter, but necessity has no law", the director clarified (quoted in ibid, 2015, own translation). As the weeks progressed, authorities reported increased difficulties in providing the legally mandated services to asylum seekers. In Norrköping, NT reported at the end of September that, although asylum seekers were meant to be offered health examination within two months, the waiting was continuously increasing, particularly in Norrköping, with people often having to wait more upwards of six months (Hesser, 2015). In mid-October, 7,980 persons were reported to have applied for asylum in the previous week. This continued surge prompted the Migration Board to appeal to municipalities to re-double their efforts to find any facilities that could be made into 'emergency accommodations' (TT, 2015, own translation).

Addressing SAP municipal council leader Lars Stjernkvist specifically, and the municipal governing coalition³⁷ more generally, in a letter to editor days later, 'Eliza' took issue with the mismanagement of Norrköping's economy and the coalition's raising of the municipal tax by 0.5 percent (Eliza, 2015). As Stjernkvist had clarified at a press conference weeks earlier, the municipality was forced to raise taxes, for the first time in 35 years, in order to handle the growing population, housing shortage and to stimulate the labour market (Lundström, 2015). These justifications, Eliza contended, obscured one of the essential challenges facing Norrköping - 'where will all the refugees live?' (Eliza, 2015, own translation). 'You say that Norrköping's population has increased dramatically' the author deliberated, 'but you forget to mention that that is largely the result of the stream of refugees and unaccompanied minors'. This influx of new residents to Norrköping was in tandem with Norrköping's younger generations 'moving because they have neither housing nor jobs' (ibid, 2015, own translation).³⁸ Alluding to Stjernkvist's previous life as the general party secretary

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³⁷ SAP, Liberal People's Party, Christian Democrats, and Centre Party

³⁸ With unemployment rates for ages 18-24 at 20.4 percent (Swedish Public Employment Service, 2019), 'Eliza' was not entirely inaccurate in referring to this sizeable cha

for SAP (1999-2004), Eliza implored him to use his connections into 'channels upwards' to help sort out Norrköping's problems. The author ended by clarifying that they were not a Sweden Democrat, 'nor will I ever be. But I can think and, in a democracy, it is the case that elections and voters must be respected' (Eliza, 2015, own translation).

As the autumnal days grew shorter and the nights colder, the inability to handle the volume of asylum seekers entering Sweden intensified. On 6 November, NT's frontpage main story was that, within the span of just two days 250 asylum seekers were reported to have come to Norrköping (Stenehall, 2015a). In a tragic twist of irony, as Migration Board officials continued to request municipalities mobilize any and every possible sleeping space, the situation in Norrköping seemed to reach a critical juncture. At the national headquarters for the Migration Board in Norrköping, asylum seekers were being allocated mattresses in the reception (see Figure 21.) (Stubbfält, 2015).



Figure 21. Migration Board Headquarters, Norrköping

(Photo by Svensson in Stubbfält, 2015)

In the same edition of NT, SAP municipal council chair Lars Stjernkvist agreed with SAP migration minister Morgan Johansson who had just declared that 'Sweden could no longer guarantee asylum seekers a roof over their heads' (Stenehall, 2015b, own translation). When questioned on Norrköping's ability and responsibility during the crisis, particularly in the reception of 200 unaccompanied minors, with 300 projected in the following year, Stjernkvist clarified that Norrköping's social services 'have a greater capacity than a lot of others [municipalities]' (quoted in Stenehall, 2015b, own translation). However, the political veteran and also former director (1998-2000) of the defunct 'Integration Board' also acknowledged the potential tensions that the large influx of asylum seekers could have on Norrköping.

The reception of refugees of course creates a worry that vulnerable groups are pitted against each other, that the road to employment becomes even longer, that segregation will increase even further (quoted in Stenehall, 2015b, own translation).

Conjuring scenes of the early 1990s, from July through to December 2015, the Swedish police had investigated 43 incidents of suspected arson attacks on asylum accommodation centres (Kihlström, 2015). Commenting the attacks, SAP PM Stefan Löfven said, "this isn't the Sweden we are proud of", adding that he was, "worried about the rhetoric" surrounding migration which he feared "could lead to increased tensions in our society" (quoted in Magnusson, 2015, own translation). Although the SAP-led coalition government's decision to effectively shut Sweden's border from mid-November 2015 onwards had seen a decrease in asylum seekers entering Sweden, attacks on accommodation centres would intensify during the next year. In total, there were 92 arson attacks on accommodation centres throughout 2016 (Håkansson and Björk, 2017).

Invariably, these acts of violence were perpetrated by an extreme minority of people and were forcefully condemned by the absolute majority of Swedish society. Yet the overall national conversation surrounding immigration grew increasingly unsympathetic. Indeed, as the horrific imagery of asylum seekers clamouring on overcrowded vessels on the Mediterranean faded in the collective memory and the news cycle moved on to cover other topics, the years following the crisis saw Sweden increasingly confronted with the mounting challenges resulting from the

unprecedented intake of asylum seekers. In mid-April 2016 the main cover story in NT was a newly released report by a conglomeration of Östergötland county's regional authorities and municipalities in which the 'refugee situation' was described as increasingly pressurized (Lundberg et al., 2016). Particularly problematic for Norrköping, the authors of the report specified, was that the municipality had a 'high share [of people] who choose their own accommodation when they have applied for asylum and even after they have been granted the right to stay' (Lundberg et al., 2016: 11, own translation). As the diagram found in the report (see Figure 22) indicates, Norrköping's experience with this form of accommodation choice doubled that of Linköping and based on prognoses from the Migration Board, was set to remain much higher than Linköping.

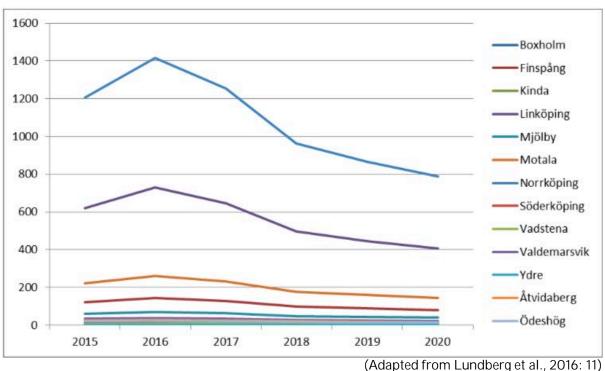
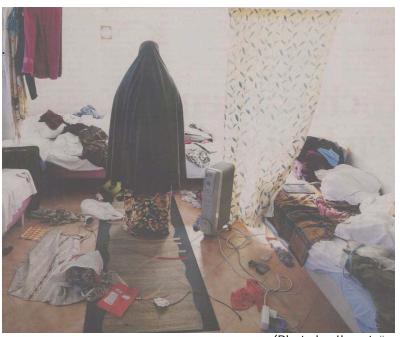


Figure 22. Asylum seekers choosing 'own accommodation' (EBO), Östergötland County (2015-2020)

According to Lars Stjernkvist, this situation that the report detailed was far from sustainable. In an interview with NT in March 2016, in reference to the so-called 1994 'law on own accommodation' which permits asylum seekers the right to find their own accommodation, he stated that, "it leads to housing-social problems" (quoted in Stenehall, 2016, own translation). Expanding on this, Stjernkvist described how "[t]here are those who abuse the system and earn money at the expense of people's

ignorance", as people were increasingly tricked into moving to over-crowded apartments in the peripheries of Norrköping (ibid, 2016, own translation). Bisecting the text in the extensive article was the photo of 'Sofia' (see below), who lived with her six children in one of these illegitimate apartments. Echoing Stjernkvist's concerns, Kenneth Edström, a housing coordinator for the municipality described to the NT journalist how the black market for housing was growing apace, with "families [...] forced to live like nomads" and that the building boom of luxury housing in Norrköping doing nothing to placate the ever-increasing need for affordable housing (quoted in Sievers, 2016, own translation). In parallel with the housing shortage in Norrköping, the officials responsible at the Migration Board declared that free spaces at asylum accommodation centres throughout Sweden were growing increasingly limited. With the summer fast approaching, one issue was that many accommodation centres were actually summer resorts and therefore wanted to return to their ordinary functions (Klinga, 2016). At the same time, the appetite among Norrköping's residents towards housing for asylum seekers and refugees seemed tepid. For instance, the application to expand an already existing accommodation centre with 14 additional apartments in central Norrköping had been met with more than 60 people writing letters in protest and even some hiring an attorney to help thwart the plans (Grentzelius, 2016a, 2016b).

Figure 23. Norrköping's over-crowded public housing



(Photo by Jigerström in Sievers, 2016)

In September, on the one-year anniversary of the well-attended 'Refugees Welcome' manifestation, Rosanna Nordrup, one of the organisers of the manifestation described to NT how the "political U-turn came as a shock to me" (Rosanna Nordrup quoted in Granberg, 2016, own translation).

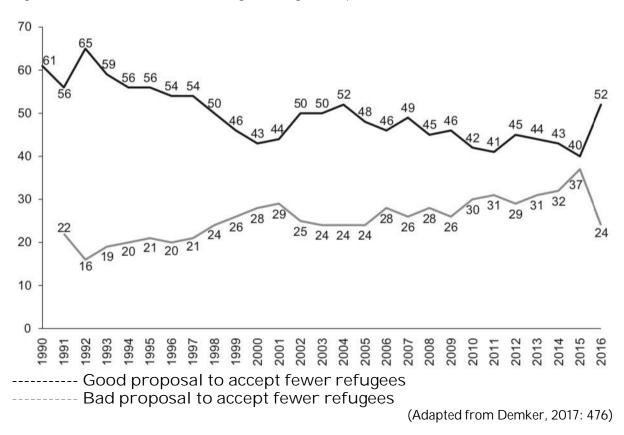
We are [now] back to where we were before the positive wave. But in actuality the situation is now worse for people fleeing because of the changes that have been made to the laws. But I believe and I hope that things can turn again. People are more worried now than they were a year ago (Nordrup quoted in Granberg, 2016, own translation).

Nordup's co-organiser Mathilda Bengtsson added that while their original manifestation had received widespread support, a manifestation that they had organised for spring 2016 surrounding the support for the right to asylum had "been very weak" (quoted in Granberg, 2016, own translation). This reluctance had seen an increasing number of municipalities across Sweden refuse to accept their quota of asylum seekers. 53 (out of 290) had, in turn, been forced to accept more than they were allocated, including Norrköping (Lindström, 2016). Simultaneously, NT reported that 2015 had been an incredibly lucrative year for those sub-contractors that operated accommodation centres. One of these enterprises with a large presence in Östergötland was, ironically, Bert Karlsson's 'Jokaro AB'. Just days before, NT had reported that the bumptious ex-New Democracy party leader had signalled that he was exploring the possibility of re-entering politics; preferring 'populist' to describe his imagined new party rather than 'protest' (TT, 2016). SD, an actually existing party often designated with the same labels who Karlsson had expressed reverence for, continued to perform far better in the polls than its 2014 electoral result of 12.9 percent (see Table 1. below). Moreover, survey results (see Figure 24. below) from the SOM institute indicated a significant increase in the Swedish public's resistance to the country's experience with forced migration in 2015. As Demker, veteran observer of Swedish public opinion on immigration, notes, public opinion towards accepting asylum seekers and refugees shifts in accordance with how political parties and other actors, such as the media, frame the issue (Demker, 2017: 485).

Table 1. Public Polling November 2016

	\mathbf{M}	L	\mathbf{c}	\mathbf{CD}	SAP	\mathbf{L}	\mathbf{G}	SD	Others
Ipsos	23	6	8	3	27	7	4	17	5
Novus	23	6	8	3	27	7.5	5	18	3.3
Sentio Research	21	5	8	3	21	9.1	3	25	5.3
Sifo	23	7	9	4	28	7.5	4	16	2.9
YouGov	22	6	8	2	22	8	3	25	3.9
Aftonbladet	22	4	9	4	26	8	4	22	2.5
Demoskop	24	5	8	3	28	8.4	5	18	2.9
								(N	lovus, 2016)

Figure 24. SOM Institute Public Polling on Refugee Reception (1990-2016)

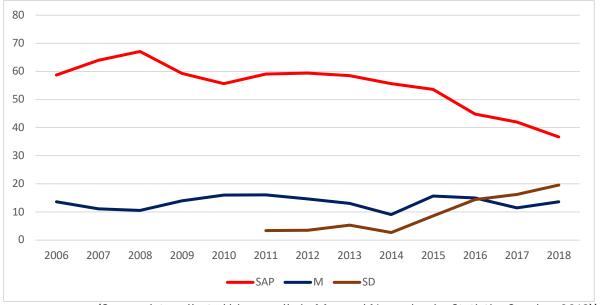


In a 2015 article, Oskarson and Demker pointed out that the rise of SD could not be described as primarily associated with 'increasing levels of immigration and negative attitudes among the Swedish electorate' (2015: 638), as negative public opinion toward immigration had actually been decreasing since 1990 (Demker, 2012). Here, however, the devil is in the statistical details. Although decreasing, there was

still (and always has been) a sizeable segment of those surveyed who held negative views towards refugee immigration. As the above sections of this chapter have argued, there is a long and deep-seated precedent for this in Sweden that complicates the attimes singular imagery of the country as somehow devoid of — or indeed beyond — xenophobia.

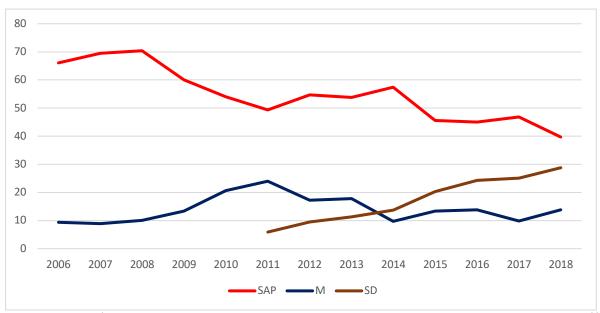
Drawing on data from the surveys conducted annually by the SOM institute since 1986, as well as a specifically designed mail survey from 2008, Oskarson and Demker's analysis found significant effects of the mobilization of socio-cultural cleavage among 'more qualified positions' in working class occupations as well among those in 'intermediate occupations' (supervisors, lower-level white-collar workers') (2015: 645). This, as they observed, meant that it is in fact, 'the quite well-established working class' rather than 'the most socially marginalized groups that support SD' (ibid: 645). Moreover, since 2003, survey data indicates a clear discrepancy in political trust between 'lower technical workers' and 'higher professionals, where the workers are far less trusting' (ibid: 640). As their analysis was written in the years before the 2015 crisis (first published online on 28 January 2015), Oskarson and Demker conclude that there was an as-yet latent 'window of opportunity' for SD to further 'mobilize significant parts of the Swedish working class' (ibid: 646). Their analysis found that SD mobilises along the sociocultural and 'authoritarian-libertarian dimensions' rather than the 'left-right [economic] dimension' (ibid: 645). Though obviously impossible for them to foresee the unprecedented levels of migration during the 2015 refugee crisis, the crisis proved to be the instigator for further reinforcing the salience of the socio-cultural cleavage surrounding immigration. While the traditional parties were slow to react, SD was able to further tap into and heighten anxieties among a sizeable segment of Swedes' reluctance to increased non-European immigration. This ability was vividly illustrated among LO members (see Figures 25 and 26 below) who historically have formed support base for the SAP. Sympathy for SD among LO members (particularly among men) has grown considerably in recent years, while support for the SAP has shown a steady decline.

Figure 25. Female LO members' Party Sympathy (2006-2018)



(Survey data collected bi-annually in May and November by Statistics Sweden, 2019))

Figure 26. Male LO members' Party Sympathy (2006-2018)



(Survey data collected bi-annually in May and November by Statistics Sweden, 2019)

Figure 27. LO membership by age-group (1990-2018)

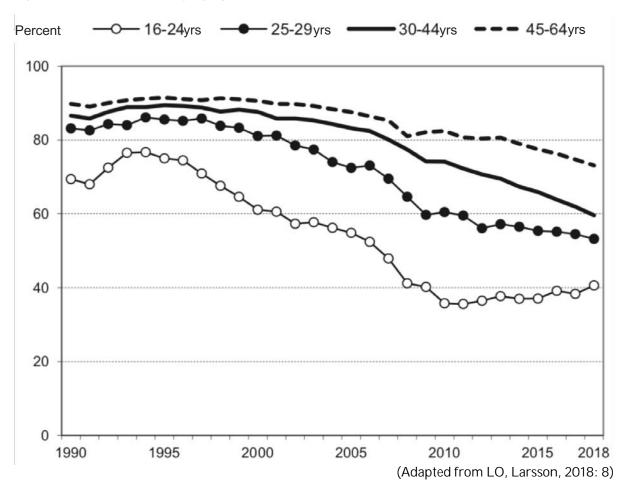
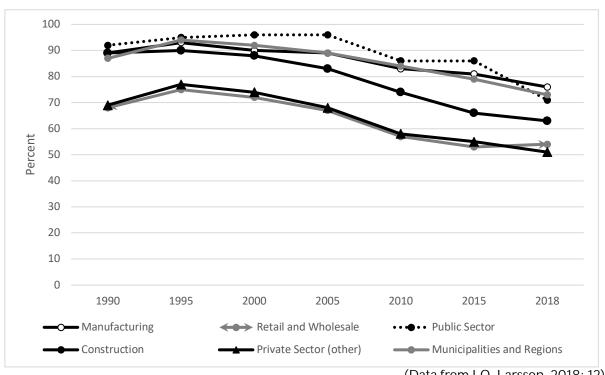


Figure 28. LO membership by sector (1990-2018)



(Data from LO, Larsson, 2018: 12)

Figure 29. Total LO Membership (1932-2017)

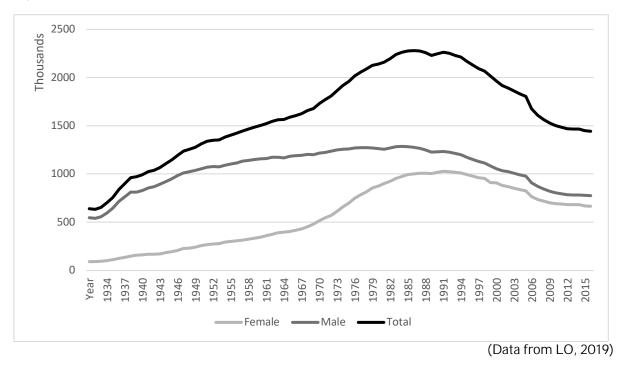
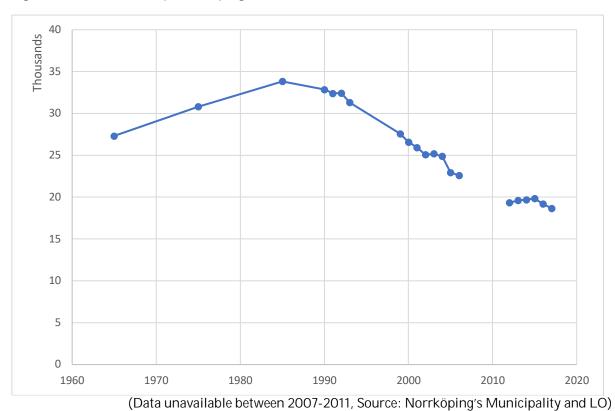


Figure 30. LO membership Norrköping 1965 – 2017



As shown in the above Figures, since collective organization levels (both nationally and in Norrköping) reached their zenith in the mid-1980s – among the highest in the world of around 85 percent (Kjellberg, 2011) – LO has experienced an overall decline in membership; particularly among younger cohorts. Though Sweden still has a high level of organization, the rapid downward trend of support among LO members for the SAP presents a significant challenge for a party that continues to discursively portray itself as the working movement (arbetarrörelsen). The SAP is beset with an unabated desire to demarcate itself as modern Sweden's gestalt; the progenitor and emblem of all that modern Sweden takes for granted (Andersson, 2009a). It unequivocally sees itself as the party that took an impoverished and estranged nation of people and ushered them into the light of modernity, equality and prosperity. Furthermore, the importance of the SAP's link to LO cannot be understated. The chairperson of LO automatically always holds a permanent seat in the SAP's executive committee (Verkställande utskott) that steers the overall direction of the party. Among other responsibilities, it is responsible for the proposal of party leaders (SAP, 2020). Indeed, the current (as of 2012) party leader and PM, Stefan Löfven, is a former chairperson of the LO-affiliated Metal Workers Union (IF Metall).

Concluding Summary

The SAP's early utilization of the spell-binding imagery of Sweden as a nation of exclusive 'folk' and their determination to socially engineer the ideal society foregrounds the party's (and, indeed, Sweden's) more contemporary perception (both domestically and internationally) as a moralistic, humanitarian, and tolerant multicultural superpower. This chapter has shown that these seemingly contradictory legacies need to be considered simultaneously. Amid this cognitive dissonance, it is possible to trace a lineage that avoids the teleological depictions of Sweden as the humane nation that dominate the widespread reactions to the growing support for SD. Resistance to immigration in Sweden is far from a contemporary phenomenon.

Combining archival and secondary material, the chapter then traced the long trajectory of how migration has interacted with the social and political contexts and configurations on the national stage as well as in Norrköping. Though the economy was understood to be in a much stronger state than in the early 1990s, the volume of

asylum seekers in 2015 reached unprecedented levels that were deemed unmanageable by authorities; particularly in Norrköping. Recognizing both the inability for Sweden to continue to accept the volume of asylum seekers then entering the country, and arguably also the growing support for SD in the polls, the SAP forced its coalition partners the Greens to agree to the effective closing of Sweden's borders in November 2015. These restrictive measures, however, for many, were seen as far too little too late. As the next chapter shows, the aforementioned systematic isolation and denigration of SD since 2010 (the aforementioned *cordon sanitaire*) has had the opposite effect. For SD supporters, punctuated by the 2015 refugee crisis, the pretext of an extended period of accelerating non-European refugee-migration, particularly from Muslim-Majority countries, has conjured a sense of longing for a Sweden of yesteryear. A longing for a *trygghet* that the SAP blueprinted in its once exclusionary *folkhem*.

Chapter 5 – SD's nostalgic mythologies for the *trygghet* of the *folkhem*

In this chapter, I use my interaction with a young couple at a country fair in a small community outside of central Norrköping as a prism through which I then unpack further interactions with both SD sympathizers and party members in Norrköping who were willing to speak to me during the summer of 2018. The over presence of refugees, I argue, has ruptured their sense of trust for the social contract and, thereby, conjured powerful mythologised nostalgic visions of a *trygghet* they feel has dissipated in contemporary Sweden. Although articulated in various ways, the sympathizer's nostalgia expresses itself most prominently with a longing for an imagined Sweden that was *before* the increased refugee immigration and the – in their minds – associated re-prioritization of political interest away from the deserving Swedes and towards the undeserving immigrants. This homesickness for a particular mythological interpretation of the golden age of social democracy, I then argue, has been explicitly and ceaselessly promoted by SD.

Turning to active SD members, I show that despite a breadth of left-right positions, what unites party members is this mythological nostalgia for *trygghet*. Building on this, I complicate the argument that the party remains strictly ethnonationalist; arguing that the party is more accurately understood as guided by a culturally Islamophobic nationalism which has helped to massively broaden their appeal. Focusing in on three younger members who are also active in the youth wing of the party, I explore their culturally nationalist visions. Taken together, I argue that this phantomic longing for a mythical golden age of *trygghet* found among SD sympathizers and party members has an immensely powerful energy that continues to fuel the party's growth.

The couple at the fair

Approaching them as they walk away from SD's tent, I ask a young couple if I can ask them a few questions about politics? "Yea, absolutely" the man says with an upbeat and inviting tone. In their mid-to-late 20s, the couple seem eager to talk. I say that I saw them standing by SD's tent and wonder if that's a party that they support? The man tells me that it's not a party that he stands behind 100% but it's a party that makes the most "noise".

Is there anything in particular that he likes? He pauses, "Ehh". The woman who is much shorter than her partner, with dyed black hair tied tight in tight ponytail, wearing large Kurt Cobainesque sunglasses, interjects before I finish my question, "Their migration politics." The guy nods in agreement, adding,

yea, integration, immigration and not as much foul play. They are straightalking. Not as much bull shit and populism. A lot of people claim that Åkesson [SD's party leader] is the most populist of them all, but that's not true. And then it's also a bit of a blow towards the other parties and the Swedish media who have all become so goddamn silly and politically correct.

The woman cuts in again, "Yea, it's completely sick". To which the man adds, "And completely unacceptable. You can't say what you think any longer cause then you're racist. And that might not disappear if SD gain more influence, but it might help a bit."

Based on his appearance (his black work shorts look well-worn in from, well, work), I ask if he is a member of a union. He tells me he's an electrician and therefore could be a member of the electricians' union, but he isn't because they are "flappy." Not entirely sure what he means by that but also not so sure he wants to dwell on this, I ask if they live locally. The woman tells me that they've just bought a house a way's out, pointing in the direction of the coast. The guy adds that they have "escaped the city." He tells me that they've lived very centrally in Norrköping. The woman tells me that their new place is near a small coastal town at the tip of Vikbolandet's peninsula. "We'll have to see how the winter is though" the guy says laughing. He then pauses, "But it's good. It's quiet out there. That's another thing I like about SD is that they want to fight to keep the countryside going", looking towards the woman and then back at me adding, "So that's kind of where we stand."

Based on what he's just said about other parties' apparent political correctness, I wonder what this actually means for SD supporters — do they want less state or more state as surely it would require the authorities to intervene to deal with the alleged 'problems' that the other parties don't see. I ask what their political vision is — "Is it for the State to have less influence"? The guy say's no repeatedly, clarifying that everything needs to be seen over *more*. He sees this in his job as an electrician — all the money that the municipality spends on renovations during which a lot of money is wasted. At this point the woman, who has been looking around as if she wants to move on, adds that she also sees this profligacy in her job as a midwife. She qualifies that, "though she might be being a bit harsh", this waste is most apparent with,

Those others. Those that come to Sweden and are first asylum-seekers who have to pay for their visits and then suddenly next time they come to us as undocumented migrants and then they pay nothing. They tell us, 'now that we are undocumented we don't have to pay anything' and they know it. This happens a lot.

I then, rather clumsily, ask, "So you mean that there are many that abuse the system?" Obvious to the fact that this is precisely what she means. She nods. The guy interjects, "But there are many that abuse the system." Turning her head from looking at him, the woman exclaims.

And it's such a shame! It's such a shame that they aren't included and really become a part of society but instead are just undocumented and say they don't pay or do anything. This is all we hear at my job unfortunately. If there were just a few then it wouldn't be so bad, but this is more like a system. There are so many. It's really unfortunate.

The guy adds, "you can say that that's a problem for all of Sweden." To this the woman cynically cackles, as if surprised — but also, delighted.

It seems that we have hit a sweet-spot of conversational topic, as this sort of exchange seems to energize them both. "You can't assume that people are going to be honest" he continues. "Socialism is a nice idea but doesn't work in practice. But it's a fun thought!" Up until now in our conversation, I've only really been clear about the

guy supporting SD. I therefore ask the woman if she also leaning towards SD. Here, she seems a bit more hesitant, telling me she's still not sure and that for a while she's been avoiding the topic all together. But she clarifies that they (looking towards her partner), "definitely aren't red. Nowhere near. But then I'm not entirely sure who I'll vote for in that direction", gesturing rightwards with her index finger.





(Photo by author, 14 July, 2018)

I nod, taking it all in and writing in my notebook as the sun beams down. The air is still muggy even after the massive rain shower that accompanied my lunch. My clothes and shoes are still soaked. Even though the weather has now cleared way for blue skies and cotton white puffy clouds, there seem to be far fewer people than before the rainfall. In the background, a young girl sings some upbeat pop song from the stage

that bisects the succession of food stands that seems to have attracted the bulk of visitors to Vikbolandet that day. The couple and I are standing 10 metres from SD's tent near last in the long procession of stands at Wikbolandsmarken. This line of stands is composed of a mixture of food stands selling all sorts of carnival-esque sweet snacks, flea-marketeers, political parties (missing are the Left Party and the Liberals) and also the typical fairground merchants selling boot-legged (with colour schemes often looking slightly off and cheap) versions of t-shirts with artists like Bob Marley, Tu-Pac, and Iron Maiden. They are situated on a walkway that begins by the local library and ends adjacent to a row of terraced houses that look to have been built during the 1970s prior to Vikbolandet being incorporated into Norrköping's municipality. The patrons of this year's fair offer a seemingly representative snapshot of how — as the Swedish colloquialism goes — 'most Swedes are'. They are tall, short, fat and thin. Some with tattoos. In holiday mood, wearing shorts (or jean capris), and sandals. Sunglasses on.

Patiently waiting for me to jot down all that has just been said, but then taking his cue when I look up again, the guy tells me (or us as he seems to be talking to his partner as well),

But, if you look at the Left party, sossarna [colloquialism for the SAP] and the Greens, they also have a bunch of crazies. But yea of course it's true that SD have a dirty history, but you have to understand that parties can improve, and I think it's ridiculous that stuff that happened 20 or 30 years ago is brought up.

I reply, "So you don't think that all the accusations of neo-Nazism towards SD works?" in reference to a trope pushed by both the media and the other parties (especially the SAP) as part of the *cordon sanitaire* strategy, that SDs' neo-Nazi roots still cannot be separated from the party. Immediately both reply in unison, "no, no." "What some specific individual in a party does has nothing to do with the entire party", the woman tells us, shifting her glance from her partner to me. "There are individuals in all parties and workplaces that are very strange, you'll always have that and there's nothing that can be done about it." They both seem quite comfortable talking with me about all this. Speaking in support of his partner's reasoning, the guy adds, seemingly in justification of the fact that sometimes people with intolerant views slip through the cracks in all parties, "SD have tons of positions that needed filling and therefore weren't able to do

thorough background controls in comparison with other parties. This is obvious! SD doesn't want people that can't behave. They kick those out! They want a party..." - "that everyone can vote for" the woman says, finishing his sentence. "Yea exactly" the man says. I then ask what the "chew" is like at their workplaces. The woman goes first,

At my job the last time we all talked we were all in agreement that no one voted red. I was actually surprised because I don't think it used to be this way. But there seemed to be general agreement from everyone that it's not working.

The guy then describes, "There probably used to be many that voted sosse and were red but now I think that is starting to loosen." The woman chimes in simultaneously "that's changing now. In part because the others [other parties] are acting so damn bad. It's cause' nothing is happening. It just stands still and doesn't get any better." "Yea" the guy says nodding, "They think it's a shame that all these people come here and build mosques and wear burkas. And all that about how they think they can dress the same way in public as they do at home." (Fieldnotes, 14 July, 2018).

Between mythophilia and nostalgia

In his essay 'Toward a Phenomenology of Nostalgia', Hart observed that, 'common to both the nostalgic world and the mythic world [...] there is an intentionality of golden times, rich in possibilities which comprehend the present future' (1973: 411). Nostalgia has an uneasy, intertwined relationship with what Malpas designates as, 'mythophilia – a longing not for what is remembered, but for what is known only through its retelling, through story and myth' (2011: 95, original emphasis). Indeed, as Midgley reminds us,

Myths are not lies. Nor are they detached stories. They are imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. They shape its meaning (Midgley, 2014: 1).

Seen through the imagined prism of a mythical golden era, the material and affective constitution of Sweden had fundamentally mutated for the young couple. This change was never tied to a specific time. Rather, they expressed a frustrated yearning for an

alternate Sweden that was unspoilt by the infuriating sense and presence of too many dependent and culturally incompatible immigrants. A Sweden that conjured a sense of *trygghet* that they felt had withered; replaced by a relativized multiculturalist quagmire. It was this feeling of helplessness that stimulated the most visceral reactions from the sympathisers that I spoke with.

'You can't glide in on a shrimp sandwich'

Getting increasingly aggravated during our short conversation a few weeks after my interaction with the young couple, clutching a guitar case, a long-haired man in a faded Metallica t-shirt and camouflaged shorts finally snarls with his eyes clenched shut,

Those that just surf in on a shrimp sandwich³⁹ – they should goddam well adapt themselves! You can't get everything you want! (Recorded interview, 15 August, 2018, own translation).

Speaking on a quiet street just to the south of Norrköping's city centre on a breezy midafternoon day in mid-August, the hard rocker in his early 40s who is an LO member and works in a warehouse, tells me that the election in September would be the second time he voted for SD, (having voted for the SAP before that) as things had only worsened since the last election in 2014.

To begin with, the immigration politics are completely disastrous. That is my absolute first [reason]. Then there's a lot else. Then at the same time it's a bit of a protest vote too. As it is now, they [other political parties] won't listen to Sweden's third largest [party]. They won't even discuss anything with them. And that, I think that is completely sick in a democratic country; it's really gone to hell. (ibid, own translation).

There are people in Sweden who need help first, he says, continuing,

 39 Swedish idiom most commonly associated with the Stockholm region — English equivalent, to be 'served on a silver platter'.

We can't accept endless amounts of people. We still have homeless who are Swedish that don't stand a chance. And that's the biggest... as I see it, focus on those we already have. (ibid, own translation).

I ask him what he would like to see change with regards to immigration specifically. After a brief pause he replies quickly in the same breath,

To begin with, they can stop [granting] all the residency permits in which endless amounts of people can come and they all get residency. Like those 9,000 [unaccompanied Afghani asylum seekers] for example. It's completely bizarre. If they can't take care of those we already have, how in the hell are we going to take care of them as well?! Then of course, I have friends at work who are both Muslims and Arabs and Yugoslavians that I don't have any problem with. They have adapted. (ibid, own translation).

About a week later closer to the city centre, I strike up a conversation with an older woman sitting on a park bench with her jet-black Labrador assistance dog. A retired burn care nurse and lifelong conservative Moderate voter, she is one of the few people I speak to that day who is more than eager to tell me about her decision to vote for SD for the second time,

95 percent [of the reason] is to protest. But at the same time, I like their promises about law and order [...] So with those five percent I support them. But 95 percent [of it] is just because I've had enough of the seven other parties. They don't govern the country anymore. And this government is undoubtedly a catastrophe. There has been scandal after scandal with Löfven [SAP PM]. [...] I mean, these old established parties aren't an asset anymore. And especially for us handicapped. Sossarna have even removed the possibility for us to have these talking watches [for the visually impaired]. They cost too much and they need to take care of all the immigrants that have come. So, they save wherever they can and it's always the handicapped and the sick that they save on first. (Recorded interview, 24 August, 2018, own translation).

Though she concedes that Swedish society used to be, "unfair during the 1960s", and that some of what SD had achieved then might have been necessary, she makes sure that I understand that she is not for the "collective" and therefore "have never liked the SAP and their ideology." (ibid, own translation)

A feeling of injustice towards SD is something that the older woman came back to repeatedly. This seeming maltreatment of the party elicits her most aggrieved responses during which traces of her Stockholm accent really come through,

But then it's also that these seven parties bully the Sweden Democrats all the time. So, it feels like one is also just taking the victims side. No person likes a bully. And I hear this often among people I know, and they all say the same thing. No one likes a bully and that's why they vote for SD and now they are so angry at sossarna because they've spread lies and false information and all that. They take in a whole mass of Muslims and then spread lies [...] The SAP are the last ones that should throw stones in a glass house. They have been a real Nazi party [...] And we shouldn't even talk about the Communists – with 60 million murders on their conscience! So, I think it's an injustice towards Jimmie Åkesson because when he was elected as party leader that's when they removed all this with the Nazis — that's the reason why he won. He has cleaned up entirely. [...] There doesn't go a day when there isn't something in the newspaper with a bunch of lies and shit about SD. Look at all the lies that the SAP have made up and look at how the Left [party] has glossed over all of them, there's barely been a word about all that. But poor Jimmie was on the radio⁴⁰ and said that it was a shit channel and THEN HE WANTS TO CRASH ALL OF SOCIETY! THEN HE WANTS TO TAKE OVER AND THAT'S TYPICAL NAZISM! (ibid, own translation).

She is convinced that "the other seven" remaining parliamentary parties, were purposefully attacking "poor" Jimmie Åkesson and his party's voters out of desperation, "because they are scared shitless of SD. I'm not an SD supporter

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⁴⁰ Less than a week prior to our conversation, the Sweden Democrat party leader had taken part in a series on the national publicly funded radio station P3 in which each parliamentary party leader was questioned and roasted. When asked what he thought of the format on air afterwards, Åkesson called P3 (whose demographic focus is towards young people and on contemporary music and culture) a "shit channel" that spews "leftist-liberal trash" (P3, 2018, own translation). His comments elicited strong responses from, among others 'Utgivarna' ('The Publishers'), the interest group representing public media, whose director Patrik Hadenius said that it constituted "an attack against the media" (quoted in Westin, 2018, own translation).

ideologically but this witch-hunt after them has to end!" I ask her if she knows of others who feel the same as her. "All of my friends. All of them" she quickly responds. "Are any of them sossar"? I ask. "There are many sossar there too. But they're thinking, 'yea well sossarna just take care of the refugees and all their lies and remuneration and pensions'" (ibid, own translation)

Swedish politics, according to SD sympathizers, were fundamentally corrupted. In their minds this was spawned by an irresponsible immigration regime that had granted too many refugees access to Sweden's encompassing welfare state. In the fog of political correctness, the mindset towards the refugees had metastasised; infecting the entire political body. The only one to speak truth against this was SD's leader Jimmie Åkesson, who was in turn castigated as a Nazi and left in the cold. His party's sympathisers were also shunned.

Not too far away from where I've spoken with the old lady and petted her guide dog, I meet an older man who is walking towards his apartment nearby. Asking him if he has a few moments to chat with me about politics and the upcoming election, he tells me he is more than happy to. Proudly recounting unprompted that he is educated at Sweden's prestigious Lund University, he too thinks that Swedish politics are in "chaos",

I think the that the fundamental question, or theme, is that I don't like this about not speaking to the Sweden Democrats. To be so categorical about it. And their background. Okay, those roots, but that's not what it's about today. What does Jonas Sjöstedt [leader of formerly-Communist Left Party] have on his hands if one say's Stalinism? Sossarna also have... they're not impeccable but one never focuses on their roots. [...] But the other party? So, one can't talk to them — is that democracy? They've received nearly one-fifth of the votes. Should one really ignore all those voters? I think it's a bit licentious of the others and it really irritates many [people]. (Recorded interview, 24 August, 2018, own translation).

Encouraged by my questions, the old man becomes more and more enraptured. Increasingly, he draws from his own biography in order to articulate his political visions. As Trigg describes, '[t]he movement of nostalgia is one of a seeping orientation' (2012: 185, original emphasis). When nostalgia takes hold and one glides into, 'the aeonic time of a past world', one is 'absorbed by the cocooning environment,

which in its singular detail, pushes at the threshold of memory and experience' (2012: 185). Asked who he was going to vote for in the upcoming elections, the old man gleefully chuckles,

Yea well during... when my father was alive then one was more or less forced to vote for *sossarna*! It was part of the chemistry at that time. And they were brilliant at that time. When the 1 May demonstrations took place, what a mass mobilization it was! And then they really had something to fight for. I used to work for the Civil Aviation administration [headquartered in Norrköping] and during election campaigns all the volunteers stood by the main entrance distributing [pamphlets]. And how they shined! They were really spirited — one was more or less forced [to vote for the SAP]! One couldn't really say no. (ibid, own translation).

Looking down, he continues, "That's how it used to be. Now the climate is completely different — I just can't. There were no weathervanes back then as there are today. Löfven, which way is the wind blowing today? He changes his mind like the wind." (ibid, own translation)

After a moment's pause, before I can ask exactly what he meant by this, his tone of voice develops a matter of factness as he starts to chuckle, "No, as I said, I'm not a racist".

There was a time when one couldn't say anything — racist, racist, racist! But as Jimmie [Åkesson] says, one has to be able to critically discern. One has to be critical. That does not make you a racist. But many interpreted it that way. All one had to do was open one's mouth... racist, racist, racist! That strikes the wrong tone. That's not the right etiquette. Racist, xenophobe — just because one wants smart immigration policies. (ibid, own translation).

Closing his eyes, his tone becomes almost desperate as he implores,

We can't continue to accept [immigrants] in the same way that we have. There are still those who say that we can. But [chuckling] what are they going to do??? Like I said, housing, schools... (ibid, own translation).

At this point we are interrupted when another man of around the same age approaches on a bicycle calling out, "Hey you old geezer"! Turning and recognizing his friend, the man shouts "Hey you, it's getting heated, we're talking politics"! "Oh, dammit really?! That's never really interested me!" his friend replies. "Not in the current climate at least" the man adds. "It was different with Sträng", the friend counters. Lighting up, the man looks at me and exclaims "Yes precisely"! "This guy reads everything" his friend says looking at him grinning, perhaps feeding into the man's need to tell of his educational achievements. "I don't" his friend says laughing, "I suppose I just do the old usual thing and just vote for those that mother and father used to." "Yea these things used to be passed down" the man responds. Nodding his friend tells us, "I'm also old enough to remember that". "Pressure from the family, you know" the man adds. "Yup they were sossar, the whole lot!" (ibid, own translation)

Seeped in nostalgia, through the legacies of their parents' steadfast loyalty and expectation that they too vote for the SAP, the two older men drew a strong distinction between the visionary strength of the SAP of yesteryear and the current political climate; rife with venality. As the old man recounted to his friend and me,

I just get so uneasy of the behaviour. That's how it is. I mean in politics, look at America, Trump's nosing around for the next scandal. It comes in like a low front. What's all this with Putin, you see how they acted during the World Cup with all the bribery. That's how society is. And then the Panama letters. The rich dodge taxes and the amounts of money just disappear. I sometimes watch the debates. Last time it was Jonas Sjöstedt who was saying that sossarna aren't willing to wage war against the billionaires and the banks. What should one believe? It was much better during Erlander's time! And Gunnar Sträng! [Finance Minister under Prime Minister Tage Erlander] They were completely different profiles! It was a different society. Promises, as it were, cannot betray — Lewi Pethrus! (ibid, own translation).

The referral to the Swedish Pentecostalist Lewi Pethrus' famed 1913 hymn 'Promises cannot betray' (*Löftena kunna ej* svika) is helpful in further clarifying the powerful fusion of nostalgia and *trygghet*. Echoing Sandell's '*Tryggare* can no one be', the chorus in Pethrus' (1913) piece articulates a similar exposition of the power of faithful comfort,

Heaven and earth may burn, heights and mountains disappear, But those who have faith will find, that the promises remain (Pethrus, [1913] 1986: 277, own translation).

In the official psalm book, Pethrus' 'Promises cannot betray' accompanies Sandell's hymn in the section titled, 'Consolation – *trygghet*' (Werkström, 1986). The association of promise and *trygghet* cannot be understated. Together they constitute the essence of Sweden's historical socio-political contract undergirded by what Østergård and other historians refer to as a 'secularized Lutheranism' whereby, 'loyalty and obedience to the authorities became a part of service to God' (Østergård, 1997: 69; Thorkildsen, 1997: 160).

The two older men expressed frustration and disappointment at the current generation of the SAP's seeming inability to uphold this social contract; longing for a return to the halcyon 1950s and 1960s during which the 'father of the nation' (Landsfader) SAP leader Tage Erlander's promise and vision of the so-called 'Strong Society' (Starka Samhället) reigned supreme. ⁴¹ The SAP's ability to frame itself as the guarantor for the Swedish people's trygghet was therefore of the utmost importance (see election posters below). Indeed, it allowed the party to expand its political vision of folkhemmet and merge it with the Swedish people's essential need for trygghet.

Among other reforms, this saw the continued active encouragement of full employment, a new comprehensive pensions system, and a rapid expansion of the social insurance system. In his oft-cited study of Erlander, Ruin rightfully asserts that trygghet was the bedrock of Erlander's 'Strong Society' (Ruin, 1986: 225-228). As Erlander himself wrote in 1962,

The pursuit towards *trygghet* has always been at the centre of the SAP's political work — *trygghet* against unemployment, *trygghet* against destitution and economic hardship. There is no antagonism between this pursuit towards *trygghet* and the will towards freedom. In actuality, the feeling of *trygghet* is enormously liberating and important for the individual human (Erlander, 1962: 77, own translation).

⁴¹ The 1968 parliamentary election (Erlander's last as party leader) produced a landslide victory for the SAP, and the only election to date in which the party has secured a majority of the vote (50.1 percent).

This was in essence a political-economic expansion and intensification of the *folkhem* vision and it was, of course, far from uncontested by the political Right at the time (Esping-Andersen, 1999). As the Moderates (then-*Högerpartiet*) clarified in their 1964 manifesto:

There are alternatives to the current socialist development of society [...] We cannot offer any miracle shortcuts to riches. However, we can point directly to what has to be done in order for everyone to have a greater economic mobility, greater economic freedom and, in turn, increased *trygghet* (Högerpartiet, 1964, own translation).

However, persistent disagreement between parties on the Right and the power of the Labour Movement at the time meant that the welfare state was blueprinted and realized by the SAP's socio-political vision. Indeed, it was this period that many scholars argue solidified the hegemony of the 'Social Democratic Image of Society' (Castles, 1978; cf. Esping-Andersen, 1985; Korpi, 1983; Tilton, 1990).

TRYGGHET

IEN FÖRÄNDERLIG VÄRLD

SOCIALDE MOKRATIN

Figure 32. SAP Electoral Posters promoting 'The Strong Society'

(Election Posters – From left to right: Photograph of Landfader Tage Erlander, 'Trygghet in a Changing World' (1964); 'When the child comes – trygghet' (1960); 'Grandfather, what does trygghet mean...' (date unknown) Norrköping's Labour Movement Archive

Figure 33. SAP Electoral Posters promoting the folkhem



(Election Posters from the *folkhem* era, Left to Right: 'Freedom, *Trygghet*, Human Dignity, Labour Party Social Democrats (1948); 'after industrious work, *tryggad* old age' (Precise year unknown); Image of the *folkhem*'s architect Per Albin Hansson, 'A firm course with the people's confidence' (1940) - Source: Norrköping's Labour Movement Archive)

Homesick for a folkhem

It is no wonder then, that SD have pushed ad nauseum the notion that they are the new and rightful advocates of the 'Strong Society'; but even more so, the *folkhem*. No other trope in Sweden conjure as strong a socio-political imagery. Here, the metaphor of home is particularly powerful in understanding why it elicits such powerful longing. Indeed, nostalgia in its original form derives from the 'combination of the Greek words nostos and *algos* to describe the pain resulting from the desire to return to one's home' (Natali, 2004: 10). As Malpas brilliantly describes, this homesickness means that 'as home is neither a space nor a time, but a place that holds a space and time within it — [...] nostalgia is that particular form of longing for home that arises in circumstances in which the return home is somehow made impossible' (Malpas, 2011: 88).

Using the slogan, 'trygghet and tradition' (see Figure 34), SD seeks to tap into this vestige and conjure a positive sensation that everything is certainly not lost. The party frames itself as the champion of Sweden (Figure 35) and explicitly taps into historically Social Democratic language (compare Figure 36 with top left-hand image in Figure 33); and under the pretext of being the only 'real' opposition party in Sweden,

takes responsibility for the country by demanding 'less immigration here' (Figure 37). For the party, the *folkhem* conjures the imagery of a homogenous population guided by the precepts of all-encompassing social compact founded upon egalitarian cohesion; when Sweden was the apparent envy of the world. Indeed, in a parliamentary speech in 1965, Tage Erlander contrasted the United States' complex intersection of racial and socio-economic inequalities with Sweden's booming economy. As Erlander described,

We Swedes live in a much more fortunate situation. Our country's population is homogenous, not only racially but also in many other regards. Therefore, we can attack the issue of unemployment in a completely different way, fully aware that what we are doing is not influenced by differences in skin colour or religion [...] (1965, own translation).

SD's modern version of social conservatism and nationalism, the party contends, means that their, 'foremost objective is to guarantee the people in Sweden good living conditions, trygghet and welfare' (SD, 2014: 3, own translation). "We aim to reestablish the folkhem", Jimmie Åkesson proclaimed in a 2017 speech (quoted in Ohlin, 2017, own translation). In his party's envisioned, "modern folkhem" Åkesson describes, "everyone is welcome to live, no matter where in the world their background is from [...] but one has to have the will and the ambition to become one of us" (ibid, 2017, own translation).

However, as the above interactions with SD sympathizers show, there is an endemic feeling of up-rootedness. The supporters feel vagabonded by the contemporary state of Sweden. Indeed, Åkesson consistently paints this picture. In his so-called 'Speech to the nation', a short-televised speech for Swedish state television (SVT) that all parliamentary party leaders gave in the spring of 2018, Åkesson describes how,

decades of irresponsible politics [...] has split and segregated our country. It has created more or less parallel societal structures in exposed areas around our cities. It has created violence and *otrygghet* [that is, the absence of *trygghet*]. Organised crime, terror, religious extremism thrives and now dominates entire neighbourhoods. Rapes, shootings. This is not the whole picture of Sweden. Not

everything is bad. [...] But for many people in our country this is actually the dominant feature of their understanding of Sweden. A dominating feature of their everyday (SD, 2018, own translation).

Åkesson's usage of 'exposed areas' is in reference to the official police designation for geographically defined areas with above-average crime rates and lower-than-average socio-economic statuses. Of the 32 'areas' identified in the 2017 report, Norrköping had 3: Hageby, Klockaretorpet and Navestad (Nationella operativa avdelningen, 2017). The long-haired rocker told me that he had grown up in one of these areas, Navestad, "where there are lots of foreigners". He pointed out that many "of these people want to integrate" and that he had plenty friends at work who are "Muslims and Arabs and Yugoslavians" because "they have adapted." But for him, the current situation in Sweden was very different; highly unstable, otrygg.

Although the lady with the guide dog had never voted, in contrast to the two older men, for the SAP, they were all three equally seeped in a longing for a halcyon yesteryear when the Swedish home was pure. This, in their minds, all noble pursuit by SD of restoring Sweden to its former glory was of the utmost importance. As Inglehart and Norris rightly assert, populist party supporters' anxieties are fuelled by immigration and 'pervasive cultural changes' which they believe, 'are eroding the cultural norms one knew since childhood' (Inglehart and Norris, 2017). Indeed, both the old man and the lady with the guide dog were mortified that a party with the level of support that SD had could be treated with such incredible disdain. For them this went against fundamental Swedish norms of decency. Rather than referring to the party in general, they associated the party directly with Jimmie Åkesson and the uphill battle he was waging on their behalf to restore dignity and order to Sweden. Åkesson's charisma inspires a direct linkage to supporters of SD. As the above passage from his speech to 'the nation' displays, for the rightful Swedes (folket), their 'everyday' experience of a growing sensation of otrygghet is the result of 'decades of irresponsible politics' which, as an outsider, SD had nothing to do with.

Although they had supported differing parties in the past, the lady with the guide dog the Moderates and the old man the SAP, they were equally seeped in a nostalgia for the post-war era during which 'political parties were the glue that linked popular sovereignty and civil society with the state and constitutional democracy' (Zaslove, 2008). Feeling abandoned by these traditional parties, they now feel a 'direct [...]

unmediated' connection' with Åkesson (ibid: 324). The younger supporters could only fantasise about these norms in the old *folkhem*, a legacy necessarily without a temporal rooting. That SD was ostracized just simply for telling the 'truth' about immigration and the associated state of Sweden ignited a powerful indignancy among the young supporters and the much older supporters; otherwise rather disparate members of Norrköping's electorate. Indeed, in an extensive 2018 survey, only 6 percent of SD voters indicated that they had 'high' or 'very high' trust towards the state; in contrast to 27 percent of Moderate voters and 60 percent of SAP voters (Jylhä et al., 2018: 52).

Figure 34. Trygghet and Tradition



'Sweden Democrats: Trygghet and Tradition' party logo and slogan (SD, 2018b)

Figure 35. Go Sweden!



'Go Sweden! Sweden Democrats, *Trygghet* and Tradition' Image of Sweden Democrat Party Leader Jimmie Åkesson (2014) (Adapted from Westin, 2014)

Figure 36. Darko's trygghet



('Trygghet – A precondition for freedom', Defaced Image (tagged as a 'Nazi' with a phallus drawn on his face) of Norrköping's SD chairperson, Darko Mamkovic, Photo by author, Downtown Norrköping, August, 2018)

Figure 37. Help the refuges there



'Less immigration here, more help for refugees there! Sweden Democrats, *Trygghet* and Tradition. Small text at bottom of poster: 'We are Sweden's only opposition party — a vote for us is a vote for change' (Adapted from Westin, 2014)

The shifting conservatism of SD Party Members

Turning now towards encounters with local SD party members in Norrköping, I show that the party's articulation of *trygghet* is a particular socio-culturally conservative vision that has gone from explicitly referencing ethnicity to a more diffuse cultural nationalism. I show that this indignancy and longing for *trygghet* is equally, if not more, prominent.

"I'm more of a sosse-SDer"

The breadth of SD's attractiveness is something that the chairperson of Norrköping's party chapter has given much thought. Standing near SD's three tents in Strömparken, central Norrköping, the mid-afternoon sun beat down on us during an unusually warm National Day (6, June). SD is the only party to host an event on this Wednesday in Norrköping, which only became a public holiday in 2005; having been the official national day since 1983 and prior to that had been known as 'Flag Day' since 1916 (Rodell, 2009). "Lasse [Norrköping's SAP municipal commissioner] would be very surprised over how many sossar — his sossar — that have come to me" the chairperson, Darko Mamkovic, eagerly tells me. "Is that so?" I ask somewhat sceptically. Nodding his head slowly Mamkovic continues,

Yes, yes and I think that's great because I was a bit worried because SD has two dimensions. On the one dimension we find ourselves in agreement very quickly – this is the Sweden friendly⁴² dimension. But then in politics there is the left-right scale. Market economy or more planned economy – alright it doesn't have to be so rigid. But a bit like that. And there we have, he [pointing at a man in a yellow sweater] is more Moderate economically and he [pointing at a middle-aged man in an SD t-shirt] is more Sosse. But both are SDers. And that's why I was a bit worried when we started to attract a lot of Moderates; that our welfare would go in that direction [pointing rightwards].

⁴² 'Sverigevänlig' - An oft-repeated phrase among SD members. Party members are often addressed as 'friends of Sweden' at party rallies by leader Jimmie Åkesson. Indeed, Åkesson's (2018) book published ahead of the election is titled, 'The Modern *Folkhem*: a Sweden friendly vision' (own translation).

Indeed, due to the strength of the Social Democratic axis in Sweden, Mamkovic's concern is warranted. Moreover, as Erlingsson et al. argue, based on exit polling from the 2010 election when SD first gained entry to parliament, while SD voters 'take [the] most conservative position of all parties on all non-economic issues, [..] they take a centrist position on the economy' (Erlingsson et al., 2014).

As our conversation lulls for a second more than what feels natural, Mamkovic reflects, "mmmmm, so you're doing your PhD" he observes, rather than asks, simultaneously eyeing me as if he was deciding whether or not I can be trusted. Before I can respond, he eagerly shifts tone to tell me how he too has studied politics at Linköping University, but due to the intensity of municipal politics, he has been forced to pause his studies. In his mid-40s wearing a rather tight V-neck sweater, he speaks with a noticeably pronounced accent. "I'm more of a Sosse SDer", he chuckles. "I want the welfare state. I don't want — not that it's necessarily bad — a more insurance-based system. My grandmother is American." This lineage has resulted in Darko having a number of cousins on both coasts. With this came a mixture of political beliefs as well, he says smiling; telling me of a Republican cousin living in Los Angeles who always disparages what he sees as the stifling Swedish state and the inability to opt-out of insurance schemes,

He thinks he can take care of himself, but perhaps he needs his neighbour. Something happens and then its good if there is a *trygghets* system that is there for you. So, I was a bit worried when we got all these Moderates that we would go in the opposite direction. So, because I'm a bit sossig, I hope that I've managed to reign this in Norrköping a bit.

Yet, Mamkovic has very little faith in Norrköping's SAP. "Lasse has sadly become lost" he says, quickly qualifying, "I like Lasse a lot. As a career politician. He is sharp, he is rhetorically sharp." He does seem to genuinely like Lars Stjernkvist, recalling fondly how "Lasse" helped him numerous times when he was new to municipal politics; even once arranging for keys to open a meeting hall for SD on a Saturday after Darko called him out of desperation. "But I think he has forgotten what sossarna are and has become some sort of quasi left-liberal multicultural blah blah blah blah", his voice trails off. This was why, even in Norrköping where, he tells me, "we are traditionally a bit more red", his party continues to attract more and more ex-SAP supporters.

Pointing towards three women standing with a couple of collies, he tells me, "they were all sossar — one of them was even Left [voted for the Left Party] and has come over". He sees this as an incredibly positive development, taking it as a sign that he has been, "able to stop the Moderate's invasion a bit." With the attractiveness broadened to both former Moderates and SAP solidified, the rest he tells me has been pretty smooth sailing; "it wasn't too difficult to unite around much more important goals — in that way we can drop the economic aspects. I can relax a bit. It's not our primary focus". "What is your primary focus?" I counter. Grinning mischievously, he exclaims, "Well, first we need to... save the country! Then we can talk about redistribution and if we are going to build roundabouts and all that. For me that's not as important."

Darko is now looking past me. His face lights up as he walks past me, "Well, hello!" Turning, I see Darko enthusiastically shaking the hand of Dolph Lundgren's doppelganger. At least a foot and half taller than Darko, the beefy, chiselled man says, "thought I'd bring my boy with me" smiling at a slightly shorter and not-yet as muscular offspring. "Welcome, welcome!" Darko proclaims. Turning around towards me once again, he tells me that locally in Norrköping, the nature of municipal politics being far less ideological than national politics means that all parties basically agree on the principles of municipal administration and that, "the elderly deserve to be cared for - but the problem is money."

But there is no money. 8,700 unemployed. Over 5,500 born abroad. No education. They are draining money. And we will help. Help them there, don't bring them here. I just recently found out that a family, we have no housing, that a family costs 15,000 [Swedish Crowns, approximately 1,200 GBP] a day. So that's 15,000 times 30 is like 450,000 a month. Imagine if we had sent 450,000 down there. Then we could help an entire village.

I ask if he thinks that the other parties in Norrköping have changed their perspective at all in recent years? "Yea but I think there is something else behind that. That's what I can't figure out, because they aren't dumb. As I said, Lasse is a smart guy. He has understood that it's not working", seemingly referring to the multitude of times that Lars Stjernkvist has told national and local media that Norrköping has taken too large a share of the burden of asylum seekers since the refugee crisis in 2015. "But they continue to stubbornly insist, and I just can't understand." "You meant they

stubbornly..." Interrupting me, Mamkovic continues, "they keep doing the same. But what does research say? He asks. Before I can answer, he excitedly adds, "If we drain all the smart people down there then it can only get worse and worse and then everyone else will want to come too."

By this point I've understood that Mamkovic doesn't really want to have a conversation with me; preferring his sermonic method. Sensing that perhaps I've finally accepted the format due to my refrain from speaking, he continues,

Sweden has a strong bureaucracy. We have the knowledge. Send 3 fucking political scientists to the largest cities in Iraq, Iran and Syria, sell it. I know, I'm from Serbia, Belgrade. With my knowledge, which isn't complete... if I had gone down there, I'm sure that I could improve their systems by at least 15 percent. And then they'll be better, then it'll work better for them.

Switching focus back to the other parties in Norrköping, he continues,

of course, it's possible to argue that that's wrong if you don't start with such stupid arguments like 'yea well you don't have any empathy' like they do to me in the municipal council. Shit, come on. I don't lack empathy. Don't you have any better arguments? (Fieldnotes, 6 June, 2018)

"We are cultural nationalists, for us ethnicity is whatever"

"I see us as more like the Tea Party", 'David' tells me a few months after my conversation with Darko, when I run into him at tyska torget (German Square) in front of Norrköping's City Hall; the very same square where the manifestation for refugees was held in 2015 (see Chapter Four). We are both there for Jimmie Åkesson's visit to the city as one of the stops during his national Election Tour which is set to have over 50 stops throughout Sweden ahead of the 9 September elections. Though we met briefly before near an SD valtält (election tent) a few weeks prior, this time he seems more eager to speak with me. As Åkesson's amplified voice booms through one ear and the protestations from cordoned-off protesters' megaphones blare through the other, David situates SD with reference to American politics, "We're far from the Republicans in the US — they are a very right-wing party. Both the Democrats and the

Republicans he tells me, "would be far more to the right than our entire scale. In Sweden, all parties are like sossar with different variations. No one campaigns on getting rid of the welfare state".

David's parallel with the Tea Party but not the Republicans is interesting. Yet it is rather spurious. Indeed, the Tea Party, whose loose-based coalition of supporters and conservative politicians were enraged by what they saw as the federal government's profligacy that emerged in the aftermath of the 2007-2008 financial crisis during Barack Obama's presidency, is widely argued to have helped shift the Republican party rightwards during the 2010 midterm elections (Williamson et al., 2011). As Williamson et al. argue, '[m]ore broadly, Tea Party concerns exist within the context of anxieties about racial, ethnic, and generational changes in American society' (Williamson et al., 2011). Indeed, recent scholarship has found a clear lineage between former Tea Party activists and Donald Trump supporters (Rohlinger and Bunnage, 2017). As Hochschild describes during a Donald Trump rally that she attended with former Tea Party-turned-Donald Trump supporters, the attendees,

have been in mourning for a lost way of life. Many have become discouraged, others depressed. They yearn to feel pride but instead feel shame. Their land no longer feels their own. Joined together with others like themselves, they now feel hopeful, joyous, elated (Hochschild, 2016).

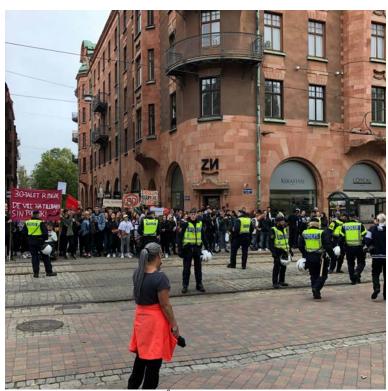
Although Åkesson's rhetorical style differs greatly from Trump's stream-of-consciousness diatribes, the energy at Åkesson's rally is greatly different from any high-profile SAP event I have attended. The air is charged with an uneasy anticipation that something *might* happen. Adding to this is, of course, the large presence of police; far larger than during SAP Minister of Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll's speech during the first of May (International Worker's Day). During that speech which Strandhäll explicitly referred to SD as a 'brown party' (due to the brown shirts worn in Nazi Germany) and a threat to Sweden's *trygghet*, the crowd consisted largely of SAP members and pensioners sat in arranged chairs and ate waffles provided by LO and SAP volunteers (Fieldnotes, 1 May, 2018). Despite these and other incendiary remarks by Strandhäll, the atmosphere was muted in comparison to the sustained acclamation Åkesson received.

Figure 38. The 'German Square' waits for Åkesson



(Photo by author, 7 September, 2018)

Figure 39. Keeping the peace



Protestors and police across the square during Åkesson's speech as an SD party member looks on (Photo by author, 7 September, 2018)

Figure 40. Anti-SD placards



(Photo by author, 7 September, 2018)

Figure 41. Parallels to Breivik



'Multiculturalism is an important explanation for why Breivik murdered people' – Richard Jomshof, Member of Parliament' (Photo by author, 7 September, 2018)

As the protesters' shouts reach crescendo, David looks at them, smiles and shakes his head. Around 100 in total, those resisting Åkesson's visit to Norrköping are predominantly younger; potentially students at the local university. The majority of them have been pushed back by a group of police from the square to a space between two buildings across from the tram tracks. Many wave pride flags and a couple hold up a large red banner disparagingly claiming that, 'The 1930s called, it wants its politics back' (see Figure 39). Indeed, here there are parallels with the Donald Trump rally that Hochschild attended, where cordoned-off protestors chanted, among other things, 'NO TRUMP, NO KKK, NO FASCIST USA' (Hochschild, 2016). A group of 10 or so other demonstrators have managed find a spot near where David and I are standing. Looking also predominantly like students, they are holding up placards with controversial quotes allegedly from prominent SD representatives (see Figures 40 and 41). "It's all nonsense" David says, reading the placards (Fieldnotes, 7 September, 2018).

David's own political journey began in the Liberal Party, a party that explicitly celebrates the multiculturalism that his new party deplores. But then he "woke up" he tells me grinning. "They are the least liberal party — they want to ruin, decide and are for a federalist EU — that's not liberal at all". He thinks of himself as classically liberal, telling me that, rather than raising taxes on products, which would "just make the poor poorer", he thinks that people with tobacco-use related health issues should pay for their own medical care. Wearing a white SD baseball cap on and a 'Stoppa Sosseriet' t-shirt (pictured below)⁴³, he comes across as highly articulate, energetic and ambitious, having worked centrally for SD for a couple of years and serving as an alternate member of Norrköping's municipal council. His aim in the forthcoming election is to secure a fixed position in the regional council.

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⁴³ 'Stop the Social Democratic way of doing things' (SD, 2019, own translation).

Figure 42. Stoppa Sosseriet!



David's t-shirt, 'Stop Sosseriet, #SD2018' (Photo by author, 7 September 2018)

Does he share Darko's worry about the party being stretched too broadly ideologically? "We are sossar and Moderates in one party. Over time we might lose some but at the same time we'll get new people". "Like to Alternative for Sweden", I ask, referring to a recently (2017) formed political party whose founder, whose cofounders Gustav Kasselstrand and William Hahne had both previously held prominent positions in SD and their youth wing, respectively. "Yea precisely" David replies. "They really do differentiate when it comes to skin colour and say that what is called Swedishness has to do with ethnicity. We are cultural nationalists, for us ethnicity is whatever". "Just look at our local leader who grew up in Sarajevo" he adds. "He's Swedish and that's all that matters". I ask him why then does his party keep on having scandals surrounding members expressing racist views? "They have no place in our party" he says firmly. Insisting, I counter, "but why do you think such people are constantly drawn to SD?" David sighs,

It's almost like, I don't mean any offence, but for me the answer to that question is crystal clear — we are their greatest chance of having an influence even if they

don't have a voice. I suppose that we have a lot of voters who think like that. But that [people with openly racist views] sometimes are discovered is that perhaps we haven't asked the right questions or that they haven't given any impression of holding those sorts of attitudes (Fieldnotes, 7 September, 2018).

The literature on SD has often argued that the party's anti-immigration stance is guided by an 'ethno-nationalism' (e.g. Elgenius and Rydgren, 2019, 2017; Rydgren, 2006). This specifically 'ethnic' element of SD's nationalism, prominent Swedish scholars argue, comes from the party's glorification of the 'goldenness' of the 'folkhem when Sweden was ethnically homogenous (Elgenius and Rydgren, 2019: 9). Indeed, these assertions certainly hold for the party's programmes for the first twenty years.

In their first programme after their founding in 1988, the party asserted that, 'an ethnic and culturally homogenous nation has stronger prerequisites for a peaceful and democratic development than a multicultural heterogenous state formation' (SD, 1989:3, own translation). During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the party celebrated the folkhem, but deplored the trajectory of Sweden since the 1960s when the 'nation had been in the hands of politicians [predominantly the SAP; specifically SAP PM Olof Palme] who did not put the nation's interests first' (SD, 1999: 1, own translation). This trajectory was argued to have led to a moral decline of society which resulted in, 'high crime rates, divorces, broken homes, abortions and a low Swedish birth rate' (ibid: 1, own translation). As the collective Swedish nation continued to fracture, 'mass immigration' rose to such an extent that it now 'threatened the national identity' (ibid: 2). It spawned 'large areas' with people 'who will never consider themselves Swedes nor partake in our culture and our history' (ibid: 14, own translation). In contrast to the forces in power that had conjured this development, 'the overarching goal for SD's politics is to create a prosperous society – a folkhem– characterised by trygghet, harmony and solidarity' (SD, 2003: 1). At the time, the party felt it necessary to qualify that while they despised the 'Marxist thinking that had saturated societal debate for more than sixty years', they held the same disdain for 'Nazism, that's leitmotif is the führer principle, racial superiority, and war of aggression, and can be seen as the mirror image of, and reaction to, Marxism' (1999: 4, own translation).

The party's principle program that emerged from the party's 2005 congress, which also saw the election of current leader Jimmie Åkesson, had noticeable

differences. With their current logo of a blue anemone flower⁴⁴ and the text, 'Trygghet and Tradition', the party still maintained that 'a high degree of ethnic and cultural affinity' are essential factors in creating a society — a folkhem — that feels, 'tryggt, harmonious and [has] solidarity' (SD, 2005: 5, own translation). However, they qualified that 'crucial to us is the UN declaration on Human Rights', and they therefore 'take great distance from discrimination of humans on the basis of gender, religion and political association or ethnic background' (ibid: 4, own translation). In the succeeding years under Åkesson's stewardship, the party adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards, "extremism and racism and dogmatists", as he described in 2012 (quoted in Schreiber, 2012). This was in response to the so-called järnrörsskandalen ('Iron pipe scandal') involving three senior SD representatives that had recently been uncovered. ⁴⁵ In the years since, despite Åkesson's efforts to prune the party of bigotry, other both national and local Sweden Democrat politicians have also been embroiled in an array of instances of making racist remarks (cf. Filip Johansson, 2016; Nilsson, 2015; Skeri, 2018; Sommerstein, 2018).

In the most recent principle program from 2011, the party drops all reference to ethnicity. Rather, they argue that their 'nationalism is open and anti-racist' because they 'define the nation in terms of culture, language, identity and loyalty, and not in terms of historical national belonging or genetic affiliation' (SD, 2011: 13, own translation). Because of this, their 'national community is open even for people with backgrounds in other nations' (ibid: 13, own translation). They still emphasise the folkhem however; clarifying that their politics aim to, 'combine freedom and trygghet, individualism and fellowship [in order to] recreate a folkhem that is, to as high degree as possible, based on trygghet, prosperity, democracy and a strong inner solidarity' (SD, 2011: 3, own translation). Defining the 'Swedish nation in terms of loyalty, common identity, common language, and common culture', they clarify that you are 'either born into this' nation or 'later in life actively choose to take part in it' (ibid, 14,

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⁴⁴ Save for the Moderates, all other parliamentary parties in Sweden have, or have had, until recently (Liberals and Christian Democrats), a flower as their logo.

⁴⁵ In video footage dated from a few months before SD entered parliament for the first time in September 2010, three senior soon-to-be parliamentarians racially slurred a well-known Swedish comedian with Kurdish roots and verbally abused others outside of a McDonalds in the early-morning hours in central Stockholm. After the initial verbal altercation, footage (filmed by one of the SD representatives, Kent Ekeroth) showed how the trio then joked about using iron pipes they had picked up from a nearby construction site in order to 'defend themselves' (Expressen TV, 2012). All three parliamentarians were subsequently either demoted or forced to resign.

own translation). In order to achieve this 'home', Sweden must pursue assimilationist policies so that 'those with non-Swedish backgrounds [...] perceive themselves as Swedish, live in agreement with Swedish culture, see Swedish history as their own, and feel stronger loyalty with the Swedish nation than any other nation' (ibid: 14, own translation).

SD's persistent aversion to Islam

Indeed, as David had clarified, he sees his party as cultural nationalists, not ethnonationalists (cf. Airas, forthcoming). The party's ability to articulate a socio-political conservatism devoid of the same rigidly exclusionary ethnic pronouncements seems to have borne fruit. When the party 'sanitized' its ethnic framing of Sweden's loss of trygghet and instead articulated a longing for a return to a culturally supreme Sweden when the social contract was understood as binding, they could attract from a far broader electoral pool. However, although the party actively signals a broader understanding towards belonging to the Swedish nation than for its first twenty years, the ability for Muslims to integrate remains a central issue. Less than a year before the 2010 election, Jimmie Åkesson argued in an editorial in one of Sweden's largest tabloid newspapers that, 'as a Sweden Democrat, he saw the Islamization of Sweden, 'as the greatest foreign threat since the second World War' (Åkesson, 2009, own translation). This threat did not seem to have abated in the intervening period, as Åkesson thundered at the German Square in early September 2018:

If you want boys and girls to be separated, if you don't want them to eat pork in school, if you come here and build a mosque with a massive minaret; if you have such demands, then you should go live in another country (Audio Recording, September, 2018).

SD were instrumental in mobilizing resistance towards the proposed construction of a mosque in a neighbourhood to the south of the city centre (Ektorp) for Norrköping's Bosnian diaspora. In addition to negatively impacting the "cityscape", Darko Mamkovic argued, the proposed mosque has a, "political, symbolic and ideological value that perhaps does not belong in Norrköping and Sweden" (quoted in Norin, 2017). Apart from Darko, another member of Norrköping's SD leadership is also not

born in Sweden, but in Syria. As Naima Bahnam Johansson herself describes in a recent interview with a local newspaper, she came to Sweden in 1990 due to the persecution of Christians in Syria - including her brother who she claims was drowned because of his religion. Her reason for joining SD in 2015 was that she, 'wants to have back the Sweden as it was when she came' and that she is worried that Sweden 'is becoming like Syria' due to the growing number of Muslims in the country (quoted in Nilsson, 2019).

'Taking pride' as an SD Youth

Another testament to the fact that the party seems to have been able to expand their appeal was an interaction that I had with the local chair of the party's youth wing. Following my conversation with Darko on 6 June, I had moved over to 'Ungsvenskarnas' (Young Swedes') tent adjacent to the main party tents. A young woman in a white baseball cap with SD in large blue text and a white t-shirt with 'SD 2018' in large bright orange text asks in a thick Östgötska if I have any questions? "We are one of the few youth wings what actually agrees with the mother party, a couple of small differences but..." "Like what?" I ask. "When it comes to homosexuals' right to adopt, that's something that the youth wing thinks should be allowed", 'Sarah' tells me. Soon, 'Axel', another member of the youth wing joins us. I ask how things feel ahead of the forthcoming election. "It feels really good" Axel says as Sarah turns to welcome a man and a woman who have just come up to the podium with all the material. "I mean the thing is that it's not too hard as the others are doing our job for us". "You mean the other parties?" "Yea exactly – with the amnesty for refugees and god knows what else, it's just a matter of sitting calm - people will vote for us". Wearing the same SD baseball cap as Sarah, Axel exudes a very put-togetherness about him. Underneath a black cardigan, a pink dress shirt and tie set him sartorially apart from the other party members. Moreover, one cannot help but notice something else that further differentiates him from his fellow Sverigevänner, ('Sweden Friends') – his dark complexion.

While Sarah attends to other visitors, Axel tells me how he used to be involved in the old *Sverigedemokratisk Ungdom* (Sweden Democratic Youth) but left due to the extreme trajectory that the youth wing had taken, which eventually led to their leaders being kicked out of the party and, in turn, founding the Alternative for Sweden party.

The new youth wing that he and Sarah represent, *Ungsvenskarna* (Young Swedes) was actually borrowed from the conservative Moderate's old youth wing before they changed to *Moderata Ungdomsförbundet*, or MUF as they are known in Sweden. Laughing, Axel tells me, "they [MUF] didn't like this, but they got over it!" As a representative for a parliamentary party's youth wing, Axel tells me that he has been making the rounds at Norrköping's high schools ahead of the election.

It's been going quite well. In town there are a few schools that are easy and a few that are difficult. For example, schools with a lot of technical courses and vocational programs are easy, but the schools with creative programs are not as easy. Because then you have to stand and explain to someone that wants to paint stones the rest of their life why nationalism is good and that becomes difficult.

As he's finishing his sentence, I notice a group of young people jumping into a nearby fountain only meters away from the tent. "What's going on here?" I ask in a mild and curious tone. "Those are our future academics" Axel replies cynically looking on as the university students drunkenly partake in some sort of hazing ritual. "It is things like this that made me get involved from the start. One is so conservative as a Sweden Democrat that one doesn't understand stuff like this". Being 'so conservative' seems to function as a badge of pride that Axel wears simultaneously like a chip on his shoulder. His seemingly incessant need to reiterate just how conservative he is, comes across as a bit contrived. "Cultural politics" are his main political priority because, as he puts it, "culture is that which builds up society". Sensing that he is dying for me to ask, I humour him and guery what he thinks about Sweden's current cultural politics?

We're in the process of burying our own civilization in a whole mess of nonsense if you ask me. 100 years ago, art was when one painted a nice landscape, today we have menstrual art in the subway. It's like, what happened?! Now people say that it's art to put a dead horse on a plank with some plastic on it. People used to get institutionalized for that kind of thing. It's gone way too far.

When Sarah joins us once again, I ask them both how they feel about the ideological differences in the party that Darko had described. Like Axel, Sarah says that she too leans "in the conservative direction". At this point an older man in pink shirt, shorts and sunglasses approaches us, "One question, my wife is from Argentina".

and she was wondering whether you stand to the right or left – I told her I couldn't answer that. She's going to vote [for the first time]. I can't say that I'm to the right or left, but I'm liberal and I'm going to vote for you". Pausing for a moment and looking down, the man exhales "Yea, there's been a lot going down"; a colloquialism seemingly in reference to the current state of Sweden. "Uhhh yup!" Axel replies. "We're social conservatives..." Sarah starts. Interrupting her, Axel continues, "That is, we're conservative when it comes to values: family policies, law, and order". Seemingly unphased by what Axel is saying, the man continues, "One thing: all this with EU and what you think about that. But you can't like everything". "But we're not socialists" Axel counters a bit awkwardly. "There is a limit" adds Sarah. Still not really listening the pink shirted man continues, "We had to wait for 7 years for my wife to get her citizenship and then we got the question, 'does she want money'? No, she has her own money! But they want to push the money! Then we were put at the very bottom of the pile. And she is a non-European citizen – super messy! And then everyone else goes before us, even those who have gone into hiding. So, we've been living in Argentina because of this. And my mother had to repair her teeth for 120,000 crowns and she's a pensioner and my father has passed. I mean, things are really collapsing. And wait 10 more years. If you can't change [things]. [...] And there are just..." Visibly frustrated, the man waves his hand as if swatting away a fly and exclaims, "argh, it's just so much!" To this, Sarah and Axel laugh, signalling agreement at the apparent magnitude of problems facing Sweden.

As the man walks away, David comes up to us and asks Sarah and Axel how it's going. "We've recruited three more!" Sarah exclaims. Turning to survey the rest of the attendees, I spot a young woman wearing a *folkdräkt* (folk dress). Seeming to notice my not-too-discrete staring, another youth party member asks me if I like it? Telling her that it's just quite uncommon to see this dress in Sweden (save for members of the royal family during the official national day festivities), in contrast to Norway, where the annual constitution day (17 May) sees a widespread wearing of the so-called *Bunad* folk dress. "Of course, it's common there"! she exclaims. "But in Sweden it's more like, okay it's the national day, but how does this affect me? Trust me, a lot! I'd love to start dressing up and parading around with the Swedish flag so that people start to see it as something fun. I really feel great when I see the Swedish flag and all that. It's a completely different environment for me. I want it to be blue and yellow all over. And

we're going to change that. With songs and ballads and all that." (Fieldnotes, 6 June, 2018)

Sweden's lackadaisical national day

The origins of why the 6 June was chosen as Sweden's National Day offer an interesting mixture of both official history and opportunity. The date of 6 June marks the ascension to the throne of King Gustav Vasa in 1523 who is often described as the founder of modern Sweden, as well as the adoption of the 1809 constitution which redistributed power between Parliament and the King (Rodell, 2009). However, historians also note that the fact that happenstance contributed greatly to the choice of 6 June. Indeed, this can certainly be understood as constituting an 'Invention of Tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). As Rodell has shown, the opening of Skansen in Stockholm, the world's first open-air museum, played a significant role in why the date was ultimately chosen. Due to weather conditions, the original opening was delayed and the founder, Artur Hazelius (who also founded the Nordic Museum) declared that the last day of the opening festival would be 6 June, 1893, Sweden's 'national day' (Rodell, 2009). As a well-connected individual, Hazelius was able to mobilise 'a benevolent attitude from the press' and the festival received widespread positive coverage (ibid: 125). The well-attended and widely mediatized festival featured a wide range of activities such as 're-enactments of traditional Swedish peasant culture', military parades and speeches which were collectively, 'used as tools to forge narratives on a common past' (ibid: 127).

Interestingly, while the SAP's *folkhem* project was certainly a national endeavour emanating from nationalist undertones, Rodell argues that 'a consequence of the Social Democratic political and national culture' was that 'extrovert celebrations' were seen 'as an expression of irrationality, a kind of nationalism that Sweden had surpassed' (Rodell, 2009: 132). Indeed, in its rationalised social engineering, the SAP sought to replace emotive nationalism with the belief in scientific progress and that the Swedish people were particularly receptive to these values (Musiał, 2002). Although celebrations at Skansen continued ever since 1893, the national day was, as aforementioned, only officially declared in 1983. As Schall has shown, parliamentary debate in the early 1990s towards making the day a public holiday were opposed by the SAP because 'national days were merely 'a sign of human vanity' (Schall, 2014).

The party, however, changed its stance towards the end of the 1990s. The reasons for this, Rodell argues, was normative. As a result of both the levels of immigration and the rise of right-wing extremism during the 1990s (recall the burning of refugee accommodation centres described in the Chapter Four), there was broad consensus in the *riksdag* that a national holiday in an increasingly globalized Sweden could function as a way 'to reconquer the flag' and 'serve as an occasion to officially welcome new citizens' (Rodell, 2009: 129). When it was finally approved and the first holiday was celebrated in 2005, the day is framed in precisely this manner.

Although it receives significant media attention and the festivities which include the royal family attending televised events at *Skansen*, public interest in the day (beyond having the day off work) is very limited in contrast to neighbouring Norway (Elgenius, 2011a). For instance, in comparison to survey data that 78 percent of Norway's population celebrates their abovementioned 17 May constitution day (Elgenius, 2011b), 2016 SOM survey data found that 31 percent of respondents in Sweden said that they celebrate the 6 June national day (Bové and Oscarsson, 2017). This must be understood in stark contrast to the 84 percent of the same respondents who indicated that they celebrated Midsummer's eve in late June, a de facto public holiday in Sweden that has long been understood as a more 'genuine' national day by many Swedes (ibid: 587). Moreover, the SOM survey shows that the reported increase of national day celebration from 25 percent in 2011 to 31 percent in 2016, has a clear party-political underpinning. Whereas 41 percent of SD voters stated that they celebrated the national day, only 28 percent of SAP supporters responded that they did the same (ibid: 591).

Indeed, whereas all my informants planned on celebrating Midsummer's eve, few told me that they would partake in any national day celebrations, beyond 'relaxing at home with family or friends' or 'gardening' (Fieldnotes, 29 May, 2018). As the only party that hosted an event on the national day, SD's subtle message becomes screamingly explicit. It is precisely this overt display which leaves a bad taste in the mouths of a broad swathe of political and cultural commentators. As Schall argues, the passionate counter reactions to the 'idea of multiculturalism' inherent to the contemporary celebrations has increasingly hardened new 'lines of cleavage [...] between multiculturalists, traditionalists and cosmopolitans' (Schall, 2014). While not actually doing anything tangibly exclusionary, it is the mere decision to hold a party event on 6 June that has no other message than to 'celebrate Sweden', which causes

discomfort. The official national day celebration in Norrköping is organised by the municipality in the park adjacent to the Saint Olai church in the city centre. As one of the organisers describes, in the effort to attract more attendees (particularly young people), in addition to a performance by the artist CajsaStina Åkerström, the main guest is Shanga Aziz, whose acclaimed organization 'Locker Room Talk' seeks to promote equality and anti-racism in locker rooms (Olsson, 2018).

"People are starting to wake up"

I ask Sarah who she would join if she was not in SD? "Ooph that's really difficult. Nothing to the left, absolutely not. Probably the Christian Democrats or the Moderates but I've lost faith in both those parties. So, I'd probably just cast a blank vote." Does this mean that you're not convinced by the Moderate party's 'hardened' position towards immigration?" "No that's just their desperate attempt at saying we want your [SD] voters she replies scornfully, "they aren't doing it because they want to". I ask if she thinks that this apparent to the electorate.

Of course, it is! They won't fool me. They have tricked the Swedish people for so long now that I just can't understand how we keep falling for it again and again. It's almost as if one loses hope about one's own people. But I also see that we are growing so it might be good once again. Those that are experiencing problems, they know immediately who they should vote for. I bet every girl that has been gang raped; her whole family will vote for us. I feel as if people are starting to wake up. If you wanna come and become one of us, then you are more than welcome. But don't think that you can come and change us. That's where my patience runs out.

"How should I convince a neutral researcher to vote for our party"? the young woman in her early twenties asks after a moment's pause. "Well I suppose you have to agitate", I retort. "Well you are apparently well-travelled and have seen how it is in other societies. And therefore, you should be able to see how it looks in Sweden right now and feel that it can't be so bad for you as a researcher to vote for our party". Smiling, I change the subject and ask why she decided to get involved in the party? "Well, I'm not blind. That's why. I was a sympathizer before and then I saw that I just can't sit by

and wait for someone else to do something for me. I have to do it myself." (Fieldnotes, 6 June, 2018)

The SD youth's world-under-nostalgement

As the above interactions illustrate, the framing of SD as so-called 'ethno-cultural nationalists' needs to be re-articulated if one is to understand the party's meteoric ascendancy. Though this classification was arguably valid in the party's earlier principle programs and manifestos, it has successfully broadened its definition of who belongs in the nation; thereby attracting certain ethnic minorities who feel included within their cultural nationalism and are in part fuelled by an aversion to Islam. As Darko and David both attest to, their party is a broad ideological church when it comes to questions of political economy. The linchpin is to save the country and restore the trygghet that the established political elite have purposefully eroded in the name of immigration and tolerant multiculturalism.

As with the young couple at the fair, the SD youth party activists articulate a rather diffused longing to return to an imagined Sweden they had never, nor could ever, experience. The party activists' cultural-nationalism manifests itself within what Casey calls the 'world-under-nostalgement' (Casey, 1987: 367). Central to this realm is the 'paradoxical relationship between timeliness and unreality' (Lems, 2016: 421). The party members' phantomic longing, goes beyond, 'the grasp of memory, [as] the world-under-nostalgement calls for imagination' (ibid: 367). As Trigg argues,

The world for which I have become nostalgic is no longer placed in a temporal distance, as though time were able to be measured spatially, but sits alongside me in the present, *felt* in its immediate (corpo)reality (Trigg, 2012: 185, original emphasis)

Indeed, Axel wants Sweden's aesthetic-cultural preferences to constrict and regress to an imagined era in which landscape portraits were in his mind's eye the only agreed upon form of 'fine art'. Sarah wants Swedes to follow Norway and wear *folkdräkter* and saturate everything in the Swedish flag's blue and yellow in order to viscerally assert their undying love for the nation in a nation that has a tremendous unease with such overt displays of patriotism. Seeped in their respective myths that seem to

temporally correlate with the late 19th century, they are indifferent to the fact that this epoch they want to return to was one of extreme poverty. It was long before the SAP constructed the *folkhem*. An industrial backwater at the outskirts of Europe, Sweden was an impoverished agrarian economy.

What is 'nostalged' is a past that we *cannot rejoin*. We cannot rejoin it precisely because we cannot re-experience it *in propria persona*, even if it has left tantalizing marks in the present (Casey, 1987: 365, original emphasis).

Concluding Summary

Through a selection of encounters I had during summer 2018, this chapter has dissected how SD sympathizers and party members' make sense of contemporary Swedish politics and how this helps to explain a nostalgic longing for a *trygghet* that they feel has been lost. The older lady had worked as a specialist nurse and the Lund university educated man had worked at the civil aviation administration. *Thriving* far more than just surviving – far from the inarticulate and misguided economic losers of globalisation that supporters of SD are often portrayed by pundits. Materially, the young couple had just bought a new home near the coast and are – *finally* – going to escape the – in their minds at least – tumultuous stir of central Norrköping. Here, the particular strength of ethnographic methods comes vividly to the fore. Through these unstructured, unrehearsed interactions that were uninhibited by the rigidity of surveys (which they might not even have responded to), I gained a much richer understanding of these individuals' political worldviews. The visceral resentment and nostalgia they expressed would have remained hidden from the empirical gaze were they not allowed to freely express themselves.

Opening with an interaction I had with a young couple at a summer fair, I then illustrated how SD sympathizers' momentous resentment towards refugees' manifests in mythological nostalgic visions of a spellbinding epoch when and where *trygghet* reigned. This, I argued, has been tactically nurtured by SD's tapping into and repackaging of SAP's imagery of the *folkhem*. For these supporters, the widespread invocations of SD as a neo-Nazi party only serve to aggravate them further. SD, and in particular Jimmie Åkesson, has the courage to speak *their* truths about contemporary Sweden that goes against the singular narrative of Sweden as a welcoming

multicultural superpower. Indeed, the continued collective hatred towards SD by the 'traditional' parties and the media only seems to entrench their support for SD even further. From here I turned to SD party members and argued that, although Darko and David hold differing understandings of political economy, what unites them is the culturally nationalist conviction that Sweden needs to be saved.

This nationalism, I argued, has indeed extended from the party's early ethnopurity to a potentially less-restricted vision of cultural purity that Islamophobically demands cultural assimilation. With the younger members Sarah and Axel, the preceding generation of party members behind David, I showed what this form of nationalism has cultivated; a visceral cultural conservatism fuelled by an aversion to what they understand as normatively leftist aesthetics. Though manifesting with different emphases, sympathisers and party members alike find themselves enraptured in a spiralling vortex of nostalgia for a *trygghet* that is insurmountable. In the next chapter, I show how Norrköping's SAP too are plagued by nostalgia. Spurred by the heightened salience of non-European immigration following the 2015 crisis, the party members have competing nostalgias for differently bounded understandings of what the bases for social democracy are, and for whom it extends.

Chapter 6 – Visions of immigration and trygghet in NLC

In this chapter I explore how the socio-politics surrounding post-2015 refugee immigration caused ruptures in SAP members' understandings of Social Democracy. In contrast to SD's nostalgia for a *trygghet* found in a mythological socio-culturally sanitized *folkhem*, SAP members' nostalgia is expressed in a longing for an imagined return to when the labour movement was *the* guarantor for socio-economic *trygghet*. However, as I argue, the SAP is internally plagued by conflicting nostalgias of how far Social Democracy extends the power of this socio-economic guarantee of *trygghet*, and for whom.

The chapter opens with an episode in November 2017 during which a vocal minority of SAP members in Norrköping joined the broader demand from municipal labourer communes throughout Sweden for the SAP-led government to grant amnesty for approximately 9,000 Afghani asylum seekers who had entered the country during the 2015 refugee crisis. Ultimately unsuccessful, this episode helps to expose an important contrast among party members who articulate either a 'bounded nostalgia' or a 'boundless nostalgia' towards socio-economic *trygghet* and refugee immigration. Combining survey and interview material with both elite and non-elite party members I then showcase the differing positions SAP members hold towards non-European immigration. I then argue that these differing nostalgias intersect with party members' contrasting positions on the Left-Right economic spectrum, and I ask to what extent they are willing to accept pragmatism over idealism.

The unaccompanied Afghanis

Let us stay!

According to the official report on the 2015 crisis, a total of 23,480 minors from Afghanistan entered Sweden in 2015, with just over 1,000 coming to Norrköping that year (State Public Report, 2017). In contrast to the absolute majority of Syrians being granted asylum, the outcome for the Afghanis was far less certain. In addition to the Migration Board (as well as the EU) contending that parts of Afghanistan were in fact secure enough to return to, the other issues were twofold. First, thousands of Afghanis asylum applications had been rejected due to lack of sufficient evidence (or medical evidence to the contrary) that they were under the age of 18 when they had entered Sweden. Second, cases of Afghanis that turned 18 since they had entered Sweden had not been processed when they were still minors because of the high volume of asylum claims (Efendic, 2017; Migration Board, 2017; Taubert, 2017). Titled 'Let us stay!', in a letter to the editor in early April 2017, nine Afghanis attending a language introductory course in Norrköping questioned why it was that 'other groups are granted the right to stay, but not us from Afghanistan' (Kazem et al., 2017, own translation). The violence in the country and the pursuit of a better life in Sweden was why they fled a country ravaged by the Taliban and Islamic State:

Our experience is that the government and the parliament is discriminating against us. We believe we have just as great a need for protection as other groups of refugees (ibid, 2017, own translation).

Spearheaded by a few pressure groups such as #WeCantStandIt (#ViStårInteUt) and organisations such as Save the Children and the Swedish Church, the call for a general amnesty for those Afghanis facing repatriation grew throughout the summer of 2017. The issue had completely dominated the SAP's coalition partner the Greens' party congress in May, with the decision taken at the congress that the party was going to increase pressure on the SAP for more Afghanis to be granted the right to stay (Karlsson, 2017). Following the summer parliamentary recess (of approximately three months), this pressure became increasingly pronounced. By November, anonymous internal sources described a coalition government that was 'paralysed' by the debate

on the issue (Holmqvist, 2017a). The SAP were reported to be strictly opposed to any alteration of the rules, 'while the Greens proposed a legal change that would allow those teenagers that had not turned 18 when they reached Sweden during the 2015 refugee crisis to stay' (Holmqvist, 2017a, own translation). When asked about the ongoing negotiations, SAP finance minister Magdalena Andersson responded, "One doesn't get asylum based on how well one has rooted or established oneself" (quoted in Holmqvist and Karlsson, 2017, own translation). At the same time, a growing pressure within the SAP had also begun to demand that the government revise its position. As a party member told Sweden's largest tabloid Aftonbladet,

We are risking our party's soul. In order to coax those disappointed voters who have gone to SD, are we really going to risk hundreds of thousands of others turning their backs on us? These are social workers, teachers, families and people that have, in different ways, involved themselves with these youngsters and who want to see a more humane migration politics (quoted in Holmqvist, 2017b, own translation).

A growing number of S-organisations and Labourer Communes made public announcements and/or wrote letters to the government or the party leadership council demanding that the unaccompanied Afghanis be given the chance to stay in Sweden (Runblom, 2017). Coverage of the rift in the party described tense discussions within local Labourer Communes. In mid-November, a total of 15 members of parliament, 35 S-organisations, and 29 Labourer Communes had joined the call for the party leadership to re-think its position (Holmberg, 2017).

In Norrköping, the issue was raised at the final Labourer Commune meeting (representantskapsmöte) of the year on Thursday evening, 16 November. Towards the end of the meeting, when it was time to deal with 'any remaining business', one of the initiators of the demand for amnesty stood up and read aloud the proposal for what NLC should send to the party leadership and the parliamentary group.

We in NLC are worried about the revaluation of the ages of unaccompanied minors. If the law is changed during the course of this revaluation, it is important that this is legally inviolable. The revaluation of age means that teenagers are forced to leave Sweden on shaky grounds. We would like that this message is sent

to the party leadership and the parliamentary group. (Fieldnotes, 16 November, 2017, own translation).

"We've been so goddamned coochy coo"

What happens next is a matter of some debate. According to the meeting protocol, the chair of the meeting (also the chairperson of NLC), considers the topic of too great importance for it just to be considered in the 'remaining business' end-segment of the meeting. They therefore propose (and find agreement with the other meeting cochairs) that the issue must be addressed at the following meeting scheduled for 25 January, 2018 (Corbelius, 2017). However, when I discuss the meeting with one of the amnesty initiators a couple of weeks later in early December, her perception of the chair's reaction is rather different. As 'Matilda' summates, the chairperson's underlying message in her mind was:

[A]part from not agreeing with all of you, these are issues that I work with all the time and they are incredibly complex. That's when I got really angry. I was then told that this issue will be brought up with the leadership council in Norrköping. [...] As I walked out, I thought 'this is when I leave the party [...] This is precisely the problem with the party now compared with how it used to be — we don't talk politics anymore. It is precisely this issue that should have been discussed. Not just summaries of various municipal committee activities [...] But I've changed tactic now, I'm not going to the leave the party. I'm going to write to the party leadership myself. I think it's disgusting how these people have been treated. (Recorded interview, 21 November, 2017, own translation).

I ask Matilda if she had heard of the Lucia Decision in 1989 (see Chapter Four), when the SAP government denied the asylum claims of tens of thousands of Turk-Bulgarians? She nods. "But that's the same thing", she said, and added:

Now we guard the [train] platform demanding visas and other things. We woke up too late. Other laws should have already been in place so these things can be avoided. We've been so goddamned coochy coo and kind and then all of the sudden we discover that we can't continue to be like that. We can't do that to

people" [...] I think it's hellish. I mean, I might think that there are too many people that come from other countries because we then get problems once they're here and [they] are meant to be comfortable. We just can't do that, just turn our backs and lock these young men up and then send them off on places. I find it disgusting. I think the reason that things are the way they have been is because we have SD. (ibid, own translation).

Matilda's focus in the SAP, she tells me, has always been on "social issues [...] I saw how others had it and how I had it when I was very poor" (ibid, own translation). Her drive and motivation for action is immediately and strongly apparent. She tells me that it is deeply saddening that there are fewer active party members these days. Glowing with longing, she recalls how the NLC meetings used to draw scores of party members,

For me, the party is also about socializing. It's also a lifestyle so to say. But it's not the same now. When I was young, I used to bring my children to *repskapen* because I didn't have a babysitter. (ibid, own translation).

Sighing, she tells me that this change has happened slowly, gradually. Now she doesn't even see the point of the meetings, so she has mostly stopped attending. In addition to a lack of spirit that she sees in the party nowadays, when I ask her what she thinks were the SAP's biggest challenges, both locally and nationally, she responds,

This morning I attended an open [free of charge] rehearsal for the symphony orchestra and I can tell that you that I don't think we in Norrköping have understood just how many newly arrived migrants there are here. They filled entire stalls! They go there as part of their process to learn Swedish. I sat there and thought to myself, 'these people deserve a good life in the city — how are we going to provide this'? (ibid, own translation).

A vocal minority

Towards the end of November, readers of *Norrköping's Tidning* could learn that the SAP-Greens coalition government had in fact reached an agreement that would eventually be put to a vote in parliament.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, as decided at the November 2017 meeting, the proposed statement was the first topic at the late January 2018 NLC meeting. Teresa Carvalho, chairperson of NLC and one of Norrköping's two MP's, opened by clarifying:

I thought it was such a principally important and big topic that we weren't able to cover it at that meeting but that it should instead be treated separately. I therefore did not allow any debate during that meeting so we'll just have to have that now if need be. As mentioned, the committee has addressed the position paper and you have all been given our suggested response, but I thought I would also take the opportunity to describe our response now. (Fieldnotes, 25 January, 2018, own translation).

The committee's response was then to reject the amnesty initiators', then obsolete, demand. Of the roughly 35 party members in attendance (of which Matilda was not), only a couple of hands were not raised in support of the committee's position. One of those naysayers addressed the attendees and qualified his rejection by describing an LO workshop on xenophobia that he had recently partaken in:

We spend one day watching a documentary film on the Holocaust and Hitler's rise to power. I don't want to say that history repeats itself but we can see similarities in history. We start by looking at what parameters were in place when Hitler first got into power, and we check-off, among other things, the economy, lots of people in movement, hunger and starvation. Then we look at what the

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⁴⁶ With the support of the liberal Centre Party and the Left Party, the government was eventually able to pass the so-called 'High School Law' (*Gymnasielagen*) in June 2018 (Grönlund, 2018). Strongly opposed by the remaining centre-right parties and SD, the law made it possible for those approximately 9,000 Afghanis who had applied for asylum prior to 24 November, 2015 but had turned 18 prior to their claim being processed, to re-apply for asylum provided that they fulfilled certain requirements such as being actively enrolled in high school (hence the name) (Regeringskansliet, 2018).

situation is like today and what similarities exist, and we can find almost all of them.

Thanking the man for his "thought provoking contribution", Carvalho responded:

There are few who do not empathize with what you convey, all those feelings of course exist in this room. It is very, very easy to feel for these teenagers who have predominantly come from Afghanistan.

However, she added:

If you are found not to have the right to protection, and that's what the entire Right to Asylum is based on, then one must leave the country. If we don't have that sort of principle, then we don't have the principle of regulated migration. And that has, as far as I know, always been a social democratic principle. [...] I get TONS of mail, learn about terrible fates, and I feel really strongly for them. I realize that they would have a much better life in Sweden. But my responsibility as a member of parliament and as a trustee for the Social Democrats means that I must weigh all of this against my total responsibility as a politician to guarantee a good welfare, a regulated migration, and many other aspects that I think are important in politics. (Fieldnotes, 25 January, 2018, own translation).

Carvalho's notion of what sort of migration policies had 'always been' SAP principles was not shared by all Norrköping's party members.

Although not in attendance at the November meeting when the call for amnesty for the unaccompanied Afghani asylum seekers was made, 'Rebecca', who had joined the party after SD more than doubled its support in the 2014 election, described her reaction to the restrictive measures taken by the government in November 2015:

I was shaken to the core that MY party could do this. I understand to some extent that one did so, cause otherwise the party would be at like 5% [in the polls]. It was to some extent to save one's skin. [...] One of the reasons I joined the SAP was that I knew that it stands firmly on the foundation of value principles that everyone is of equal worth. And that one fights for this principle as it isn't realized

yet. [...] But with the decision in 2015 it became very clear that not everyone is of equal worth. We close our welfare for some just because they aren't from here [...] [Laughing] I don't really know why I'm still here [as a member of SAP]. And then when they extended the decision that didn't make things better. But I'm trying to convince myself that in order for us to make a difference we need a certain percent of the votes. (Recorded interview, 4 December, 2017, own translation).

Over coffee in early December 2017, I asked her about EU negotiations about member states taking greater responsibility — what does she think about, say, if no deal is reached: should Sweden still accept many more asylum seekers regardless of if other states accept very few? Absolutely, she said,

That doesn't matter at all. I think that the debate is banal. There is all this petty argument about the wrong things. People's lives are at stake. People are dying daily. And here 'we' stand and say that we can't afford it. We are one of the world's wealthiest countries and we can't save lives?! (Ibid, own translation).

How much further is she willing to see her party go in restricting refugee immigration in order to remain in power? Now staring intently at me, she coldly replied, "You mean the SD questions." After a brief pause she continued, "If the party starts to have too hard of a rhetoric — I'm not prepared to move at all in my value systems. If they go too far, I think they'll lose quite a few members." (Ibid, own translation).

Having joined the party around the same time as Rebecca, and for very similar reasons, 'Oscar' told me a few months later how he too thought that the SAP is trying "too much to become a popular party." Leaning back in his chair, he continued, visibly frustrated: "Instead of remaining committed to their traditional thoughts and ideas, they choose to pursue that which is popular — turncoat behaviour." (Recorded interview, 7 March, 2018, own translation). I asked him if he had any specific examples of this? "There's one thing that bothered me deeply. It was sometime last fall when they released an advertisement with a border guard." (ibid, own translation).

The image Oscar was referring to, showed Swedish border police leaning over an unidentifiable person on a train with large red and white text underneath stating 'We are safeguarding Sweden's security' and was published on the party's Facebook page

in October 2017. Although shortly removed after being posted, the image had gained national media attention after a number of party members reacted against the implied message they felt that the advertisement signalled (TT, 2017). As the party's press secretary told the Swedish news agency TT, "We want to show that we take *trygghet* issues seriously. But we have seen the criticisms and we think it's unfortunate that several people, not least party members, have interpreted the picture as being directed towards new arrivals [nyanlända – Swedish term for non-European immigrants]" (Gestrin quoted in TT, 2017, own translation).

Indeed, as the chair of the Christian S-association 'Faith and Solidarity', Göteborg University political scientist UIf Bjereld commented, "In the current political climate prevailing in Swedish debate, one should have thought about this beforehand that closed borders would be associated with protecting against immigrants and refugees" (quoted in TT, 2017, own translation). An outspoken supporter of the amnesty for the unaccompanied Afghanis (Bjereld, 2017), Bjereld added, "my worry is that this can help contribute to fomenting xenophobia — that now one says "look, even sossarna47 are doing it" (quoted in TT, 2017, own translation). A member of the Christian S-association, Oscar agreed with his association's chair. For him this was personal, telling me that he had family members who had come to Sweden as refugees. The policies towards unaccompanied minors had been "beneath contempt" he told me, clearly moved. On the so-called 'emergency brake' of November 2015, he thought that the government, "pulled the brake because we have scare propaganda from the Right; instead of doing what they should have". This inability for the SAP to shape opinion, he argued, goes hand in hand with how terrible the party are at,

telling what we want to do but not what we have succeeded at, what we have achieved. And then it also feels like the party has always had big issues to push for. I mean, 8-hour workday, parental benefits, State pension, all those big issues. And now that we have achieved the welfare society, we don't know what the party's next step should be. The party doesn't have any issues that can actually engage the average citizen [...] the SAP has become too diffuse for many. (Recorded interview, 7 March, 2018, own translation).

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⁴⁷ As aforementioned, a common colloquialism for the SAP.

This sentiment was shared with 'Johnny', the above-described naysayer who had so emotively expressed his support for the amnesty. As he told me six months later after the (as he saw it) deeply regretful meeting, one of the key reasons why the call for amnesty was not passed is because, "most SAP members in Norrköping are right-wing sossar." (Recorded interview, 5 June, 2018, own translation). For him, the government's decision to shut the borders in 2015, was "to make the same mistake as other Social Democrats in Europe." I interpreted this as a jab at the Danish Social Democrats, who have in recent years adopted a far more restrictive position towards refugee immigration than their sister party in Sweden.⁴⁸ What would have been the right path? I ask. Reflecting for a few moments, Johnny answered that he just found the whole handling of the situation wrong and inconsistent: "It's strange that one has an actually logical position that Europe doesn't build walls", echoing SAP PM Stefan Löfven's proclamation from September 2015, "and then a couple of months later he does the same thing" (ibid, own translation).

Chuckling when I — considering what he had just told me — asked him if he identifies as a 'left-wing sosse', he said with a broad smile that he most certainly does, adding that he takes after his grandfather who used to tell him stories of how engaged and spirited party meetings used to. Does he think that there is a limit to how many refugees Sweden can absorb? He responded with a "vision" that he seems to have given quite a bit of thought to: "Many, many years ahead, national boundaries will be erased — like municipal boundaries [...] I mean even country's borders are pretty blurry", he proclaimed resolutely. Despite being "so incredibly right-wing", Johnny sees the EU as the most effective medium to realize this vision, adding that he still hopes "to experience it before I have my nose to the wind" (ibid, own translation).

Beyond holding conservative attitudes towards borders and refugee immigration, for Johnny, one of the key determinants behind what makes a 'right-wing sosse' were issues relating to profits in the welfare sector. Here, he was pointedly critical of Norrköping municipal chair Lars Stjernkvist's vocal resistance to the consequences of a definitive ceiling for profits for those private actors already providing welfare services (Stjernkvist, 2017). Johnny described a televised debate between Stjernkvist and the Left Party leader, Jonas Sjöstedt, and how he found

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⁴⁸ In February 2018, the Danish Social Democrats (*socialdemokraterne*) announced that they wanted to cease all unplanned border asylum applications and were open to the establishment of EU asylum application centres in North Africa; something that SD has also advocated for (Rasmusson, 2018).

Stjernkvist's outspoken resistance to Sjöstedt's overtures that such a prominent SAP member and *the* "drawing card" in Norrköping, should push against a profit ceiling "so strange" (Recorded interview, 7 March, 2018, own translation). He added that the general right-wing tendencies of Norrköping's party members made it difficult for him to know how he'd respond if someone asked why they should vote for the SAP and not the Left Party:

I wouldn't be able to argue against that. I'd probably just say that it's good that they're placing their vote to the left, and that's what's important. [...] But I'd find it extremely difficult to disagree with that person. (ibid, own translation).

A few months later I discussed the amnesty issue with Carvalho over coffee at my usual hangout, *Broadway Konditori*. She explained:

My understanding of this is that when I look out over the country and speak with others [e.g. other Chairpersons and/or Members of Parliament], it actually probably looks like this in most other places. That there are a clique very involved and active people, often personally involved, that push this issue. But that the large mass in the party has made this journey [accepting central party's position] and think that the government is doing the right/necessary thing with of course certain shades of nuance of course. (Recorded interview, 2 May 2018, own translation).

On the call for amnesty for the unaccompanied Afghanis in Norrköping more specifically, she added:

My experience is that this clique is very small in Norrköping, it's bigger in Linköping — it is more tone-setting in Linköping — and I think that there is something with that [Norrköping has taken a much greater responsibility]. [...] [T]hey [Linköping] haven't taken anywhere near the same responsibility [...] And the insight that we have — in spite of the fact that we are a city that has structures that we are wrestling with, higher unemployment, lower education levels, the social inheritance, and that, in spite of that, we have still taken this great responsibility. (ibid, own translation).

Indeed, Carvalho's observation was further corroborated by municipal commissioner Kikki Liljeblad. Speaking with her a month later she told me:

Here in Norrköping my experience is that we haven't had, like in Linköping, there has been a much larger and stronger group that has vocally supported all this with the Afghani refugee boys. That hasn't been as prominent here. We see the practical consequences of so many coming who do not understand the language and have another culture; how you have to handle that practically. (Recorded interview, 8 June, 2018, own translation).

When I ask another municipal commissioner, Olle Johansson, about this the day after my conversation with Carvalho, he clarified that,

There's definitely a faction within the party that is tremendously supportive of amnesty and that we should accept more and open [the borders] and so on, absolutely. There are lots of emotions, an incredible amount of emotions involved. But I think that leading SAP members in Norrköping from early on realized what enormous problems this was going to have for the municipality. I was one of the first that came out and questioned this — what are we doing?! We'll never be able to handle this. 150, 160, or 170 thousand! Just think of all the housing, primary school staff, all of it! It became so clear! So, the heart says one thing but *realpolitik* says no, this doesn't work. And the positions that I think we leading SAP members took from very early on showed clearly where we draw the line. We put our foot down. The municipality has done what it can. (Recorded interview, 3 May, 2018, own translation).

A March 2018 online survey sent out on my request to all Norrköping's approximately 600 registered party members (although I was never provided with an exact figure)⁴⁹ found that, although a noticeable minority supported the call for amnesty, the majority

⁴⁹ It should be clarified that there is a substantial discrepancy between the number of survey respondents and the number of party members that I would encounter at party meetings and events.

For instance, as aforementioned, during NLC's representatsskap meeting in November 2017, there were only about 35 party members in attendance and this was about average attendance rate for those meetings that I went to during my year in Norrköping.

of respondents were either undecided or in disagreement with the call (see Figure 43). Respondents, however, were significantly more evenly divided when asked specifically about Norrköping's acceptance of refugees (see Figure 44). When asked in an open-response question how they think that refugee immigration has affected Norrköping, though voicing concerns pertaining to socio-economic *trygghet* such as employment opportunities, segregation and housing, respondents felt that overall, the experience had been positive.

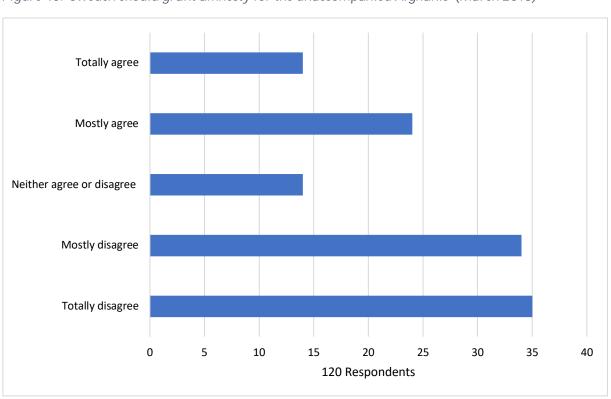
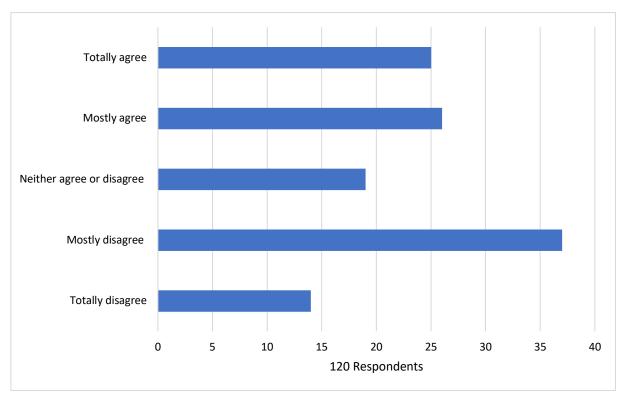


Figure 43. 'Sweden should grant amnesty for the unaccompanied Afghanis' (March 2018)





As the party scholarship has long argued, factionalism within parties is endemic (Sartori, 1976). This has recently been found to be especially true for the SAP membership size, that has historically, and continues to, dwarf all other parliamentary parties in Sweden. Indeed, based on the largest ever survey of over 10,000 Swedish political party members, Kölln and Polk (2016) found that, by far, the SAP had the greatest ideological incongruence out of all parliamentary parties (excluding SD, who were not surveyed) between party members, and their perceptions of their party's official positions. This incongruence was measured by the distance between how members placed themselves and their party 'on a 0-10 general left-right scale' (Kölln and Polk, 2016: 21). In contrast to the Left Party which was found to have the least incongruence, members of the SAP were found to, 'not only have the largest share of ideological incongruence among members, its members also report the largest differences on average compared to members of other parties' (ibid: 22). According to the SAP, the survey was sent, 'to a large randomly drawn sample from their membership list' across all of Sweden (ibid: 21). Here, the geographical variation of different party districts is one potential explanation as to an extent of the

incongruence. Yet, as I illustrate in this chapter using the unique combination of ethnographic and localise survey data, even within one Labourer Commune, there is a substantial breadth of positions towards various issues. Indeed, as a party member told me with both a hint of satisfaction but also frustration, when asked if she thought that her fellow party members agreed with her open stance towards immigration:

No, I don't think so. Some, absolutely. But that is both the upside and downside of the SAP. That because we are such a large party and such a broad party, the upside is that we have a lot of people. The downside is that the range [of views] is enormous. (Recorded interview with 'Rachel', 15 June, 2018, own translation).

In combination with the above interactions following the unaccompanied Afghanis episode, through a number of interactions with various party members in Norrköping, I now turn to the differing understandings about immigration and how this helps to reveal contrasting nostalgias for Social Democracy and *trygghet*.

Bounded | Boundless Social Democratic nostalgia

Seeped in their particular memories of their journeys into the Labour Movement, party members were convinced that their understanding of the essential contours of Social Democracy was the purest form. The 2015 migration crisis was, in many ways, a Damascene moment for party perceptions on immigration. Though the party is a broad church and have certainly had internal debates before, particularly on matters of political economy (e.g. joining the EU in 1994 and the Eurozone in 2003), the growing significance of the socio-cultural cleavage surrounding refugee immigration in Sweden makes these opposing positions particularly intense and divisive.

As I showed in the previous chapter, SD sympathizers and party members' nostalgias manifest in a resentfully tinged, mythological longing for a sanitized socio-culturally conservative *folkhem*. SAP members, in contrast, exude two competing nostalgias of the remit and *raison d'être* of Social Democracy - with each camp equally convinced that their observance is authentic. Understood through the lens of the party's post-2015 position towards refugee immigration, two distinctive – antipodal – positions emerge: a geographically bounded and a boundless nostalgia. Here, Boym's (2001) distinction between 'restorative' and 'reflective' expressions of nostalgia are

useful in helping us to disentangle which of these visions of Social Democracy SAP members in Norrköping long for:

Restorative nostalgia evokes national past and future; reflective nostalgia is more about individual and cultural memory. The two might overlap in their frames of reference, but they do not coincide in their narratives and plots of identity. In other words, they can use the same triggers of memory and symbols, the same Proustian madeleine pastry, but tell different stories about it (2001: 49).

As shown above with Matilda, Rebecca, Oscar and Johnny, the decisions taken in November 2015 were a disappointing misstep for some party members in what they saw as the SAP's teleological destiny as the vehicle of righteousness and guarantor of socio-economic trygghet. Most clearly described perhaps by Johnny with his 'vision' of a future with no nation-state, these members' 'reflective nostalgia' manifest a boundless understanding of the endless horizons for Sweden's ability to accept non-European refugees and thereby to extend the assurance of trygghet accordingly. As Boym accounts,

Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future [...] nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory (2001: xvi).

As all four party members told me, with the 2015 decision and reluctance to issue amnesty for the unaccompanied Afghanis, the SAP was betraying its 'traditional' values. For these 'boundless' visionaries, a 'reflective nostalgia' could be more utopic in its longing for a condition whereby a spirited future-oriented SAP fulfils an ability to articulate an idealistic political worldview, knowing that this potentiality will by necessity remain unrealized. Yet that might be the allure of their activism. Before introducing party members who are boundedly nostalgic for a contrasting position towards immigration, I first trace the metamorphosis of Teresa Carvalho's nostalgia, from Boundless to a Bounded vision of *trygghet*.

Teresa Carvalho's journey

In her mid-30s, Teresa's involvement in the party started comparatively late for such a senior politician. Though she had long been a passive supporter of the youth wing SSU, which she thinks her parents (who were both active in the party) probably paid for, it was first when she moved to the city of Växjö for university studies that she first tried to become involved. There, however, she said smiling, it became clear quite quickly that she was uncomfortable in such a "leftist party district". After a year in Växjö, in 2005 she transferred universities to Linköping but lived in Norrköping. It was there that she first started to become truly activated and interested in municipal politics. However, during her studies in politics, her ambition as she described laughing, was to. "[...] go out and save the world. I was going to become an aid worker in Mozambique." (Recorded interview, 2 May, 2018, own translation).

Describing her "journey", as she called it, on the issue of refugee immigration, Teresa told me that she, "was one of those that in the [2014] election campaign found it difficult that we had, as I experienced it, such a rhetoric that didn't embrace the more free, liberal". She said:

There were those who from the start resisted the more liberal currents that exist in our party. They saw that we had started to waddle after the Alliance and the Greens. I myself was probably one of those who waddled after, but relatively early made that journey and thought okay, we need to get back to basics. (ibid, own translation)

Her perception, she told me, changed when she became an MP and,

got into the social insurance subcommittee that also handles migration, then I was able to follow this very closely. And I got a bit of a different insight or understanding for, well, the whole debate and complexity and also what was actually starting to happen. So, I changed my understanding [surrounding refugee immigration] essentially in parallel with the developments in September, October [2015]. Of course, I felt that it was going to be a tough decision, but at the same time I felt that it was completely right when we announced the

temporary legislation [to effectively shut the border in November 2015]. (ibid, own translation).

"Not everyone around me in the parliamentary group" she continued, "made that journey":

It was a really tough situation in the group. Very polarised. [...] But I was one of those who made the journey relatively quickly. [...] And then there was a gang that never even needed to make the journey! Like, they were from the get-go very clear that we had a waaaay too liberal a position towards immigration. (ibid, own translation).

Reflecting on the party's positions during the last 20 years and why this split might have formed in the party, she ponders whether the SAP has been poor at representing itself as the party for everyone — the poor and also the rich.

Perhaps we started to emphasize rights more than responsibilities and the duty side which has — if one looks back — been two legs of the same reality. And if you speak with the older party members, then they recognize this sort of reasoning. And when I'm out speaking with the Old Guard (a local S-association of pensioners — many of whom have held various positions in municipal and even national politics), they can't understand why it wouldn't be Social Democratic to have discipline and order [...] Because there has been a backlash and a discussion that we are talking too much about law and order and discipline and order and so on, but my experience is that the older Social Democrats don't think that this is strange at all. (ibid, own translation).

'Ulf' and 'Olof's bounded nostalgia

Teresa Carvalho's reflections were confirmed over a late-afternoon coffee with one of the Old Guards' most vocal and active members a few months later, during the record warm and dry summer of 2018. The member, 'Ulf', had a long career within the labour movement, having first become active in the union as a young man when working at a mill and then holding an array of professional positions within the SAP. When I asked

Ulf how he had reacted when the government pulled the 'emergency brake' in 2015 and greatly restricted access to Sweden for asylum seekers, in his still rather pronounced dialect that seemed only slightly diluted after many decades living in the Norrköping, he told me:

I am wholly supportive of the 'emergency brake'. We saw locally how we were flooded with people and had to enact emergency solutions until our heads spun. We managed okay within the municipality, but there was no way we could have continued with those volumes. (Recorded interview, 4 June 2018, own translation).

However, he was not sure what the situation looked like "for those groups of Afghanis and Ethiopians; if they've been able to find housing". What he did know is "that it's been stopped now and if we hold the line we will of course be able to handle it". This is not to say that there has not been issues in Norrköping. He continued:

We've had some problematic youth, some cars set ablaze and youth gangs and stuff like that [...] and it wears on you. I notice that among members [in the Old Guard S-Association] that they aren't too happy about this [...] this older generation mutters about how it's goddamn unfortunate that we have so many immigrants. (ibid, own translation).

He recounted his "first experience" with immigrants at the mill where there were a few "finnpajsare [a dated colloquialism for a Finn] and the odd Yugoslavian or two," saying it had been very formative for how and what he thought about immigration in general:

During the 60s and 70s, we had a highly regulated immigration regime in the sense that one almost went and collected people. [...] Then during the 90s we had the war in former Yugoslavia and we had Chileans during the 1970s. But back then there were many who came with some form of trade skills or other education so there weren't such great problems then. I was supportive of that, but this new perspective that I'm not fond of is that one is supposed to have sympathy for immigration instead. Rather than focusing on the organisational needs that we

have, we are meant to accept because we are meant to be kind. I think we were certainly forced to dig our heels in back in 2015. (ibid, own translation).

Ulf's bounded nostalgic visions for an SAP freed from the pity chains towards refugees was surpassed by, 'Olof', an animated ombudsman in the labour movement who told me a few days later how he had grown increasingly disparaged in the years leading up to 2015:

The traditional society in which the SAP built the *folkhem* and the welfare state that sticks together and keeps inequality low — that will never come back again. And that, to a large extent, can be linked to immigration. We talk about how the inequality is growing and that might be true to some extent, but I think that if Sweden hadn't accepted as many immigrants as it has then those inequalities wouldn't be as high as they now are. (Recorded interview, 11 June, 2018, own translation).

Visibly frustrated, he told me that "historically, there was a regulated immigration" which the party was completely for. "I mean the party effectively decided to stop refugee immigration in the 1980s". The Lucia decision? Nodding, Olof continued,

Back then it worked like grease in the machinery. Yes, now we can't accept more, then we have to do something about it and they did. There was no real debate about it. There was no hegemonic view about refugee issues like there is nowadays. I mean today one uses all this new language that is completely bizarre. One can't even use the word illegal anymore, one has to say 'paperless'. It's an Orwellian Newspeak in order to make something appear to be positive. I find it deeply problematic. (ibid, own translation).

In stark contrast to these tightly bounded nostalgic visions was Sara Karlsson, one such parliamentarian that Teresa described as finding the migration "journey" difficult. A member of parliament since 2010 for neighbouring Södermanland County, Karlsson's resignation in the spring of 2018 was picked up by the national media as an illustration of the deep rift within the SAP concerning immigration (Lindahl, 2018; Peterson, 2018; Rogvall, 2018). When she announced her long-anticipated resignation

via Facebook in early May, she expressed that her party "was taking big steps towards the precipice" with its continued hardened positions towards immigration (quoted in Allen and Berglund, 2018, own translation).

Following Karlsson's resignation, the leader of the SAP's parliamentarian group, Anders Ygeman, commented on her departure by saying that,

It's sad, but not totally unexpected. This goes back to those decisions we took at the party congress. She [Karlsson] is deeply engaged with these issues and clearly has a different understanding [than the party], and therefore this is the consequence. (quoted in ibid, own translation).

At the April 2017 Party Congress in Göteborg, Karlsson, as the then-chair of the 'Migration Politics' S-Association, had motioned for the party leadership (and in turn the government) to revert to Sweden's pre-2015 migration policies and enact considerably less-restrictive polices than other EU member states with more relaxed policies for permanent residency and family reunification (Mattsson, 2017). Though the party leadership compromised by stipulating in the party's new political guidelines adopted at the congress (that the party was 'in principle' positive to 'permanent residency statuses and the possibility for family reunification') they clarified that Sweden cannot have migration policies that diverge from other EU member states (SAP, 2017, own translation). As many party members told me during, and after, the congress, it was important for the party to have a clear stance on the issue in order to not come across as inconsistent, as that could play into SD's hands.

"I was much more comfortable when things were becoming more and more liberal"

Karlsson, who I met with in Stockholm a month before the election in September, told me that when it comes to perspectives on migration within the SAP, there are "the so-called traditionalist, or the reactionary line OR the more progressive, the more libertarian". I put to her the government's (and Olof and Ulf's) claim that the SAP's post-2015 'new' migration policies were actually just a 'return' to traditional SAP politics. She rejected this forcefully:

No, I don't agree at all that it is a return to classic SAP politics. I think one says that for lack of a better argument. Or one doesn't have the energy to argue one's point, or perhaps one doesn't want to. Because it's just a crappy ... even if it was true, it would be a crappy argument. I don't know, it just gets so strange. Because then one could make the argument to go back to forced sterilizations or whatever. And moreover, if we are going to return to the politics we had in the 60s, then that would also bring with it a different perspective for how we organize welfare too. But I think that what people think of as classic SAP migration policies are that they have been determined by Swedish society's need of people. And that's sort of what we have returned to. I mean it isn't designed for that – because we do need people – but if it were then we would need a different politics than what we have now. But it is also the case that the character of migration has changed so much that it almost becomes pointless to discuss. To compare the migration politics that we had before when a ton of labour was needed, you can't compare that to a lot of people fleeing from war. These are two completely different things. But I think that's how people are thinking. Before we took in those that we needed. (Recorded interview, 8 August, 2018, own translation).

Karlsson added that, in contrast to party members like Ulf, she "really prioritize[s] people on the run over labour migrants" saying that she's "positive to the fact that we can have substantially more immigration than we have had from the whole world". The debate within the party surrounding migration, she regretfully described, has become far more infected than it had to be,

For a long time, it was something that one didn't speak about, and that yea, we just saw it in a certain manner. Most didn't care. Then it became a massive issue and the problem was that we had never discussed it in a reasonable and collected manner. Instead, the discussion has transpired in a very pressed situation. And very emotively infected. And that may well be. These are complicated issues and so brutally concerns people. It's such a shame that we haven't spoken more about it earlier. (ibid, own translation).

As the election was barely a month away and the cityscape was covered with SAP election posters promising *trygghet*, I asked Karlsson what she thought of the party's message of *trygghet* and allusions to the 'strong society'? She sighed:

Well it's this return to a more authoritarian understanding of society, a more disciplining vision of the individual. I don't like it. And it comes along with all that, strong, *trygga*. (ibid, own translation).

I asked her if she was referring to the 'dark sides' of the *folkhem*, such as the forced sterilizations? Nodding Karlsson continued,

Yea, it's so incredibly authoritarian. I don't think we'll return to that, that still feels quite far away. But there are other ways of disciplining people, all this stuff surrounding forms of social control that come about when one starts thinking in that direction. I was much more comfortable when things were becoming more and more liberal. [...] With regards to the strong *trygga* society and all that, I don't actually have any problems talking about the strong society. I see it as a precondition for people to live good and free lives and so on. But there is something in the spirit of the age right now whereby it's not just about the strong welfare system but it's something more authoritarian. (ibid, own translation).

For Karlsson, the SAP's road to guaranteeing *trygghet* is far from over. But it needs to be broadened, made boundless:

I really don't agree with the notion that there's nothing left to do; that the welfare state is fully constructed. But in some ways perhaps it's true. Or it becomes true in a way because we — it was quite long ago that we had a new idea. [...] Instead it's more about tinkering with the existing systems that were created during Erlander's era. But that doesn't mean that there aren't things that need to be done. And then of course, yes, the SAP's project during the 1900s was to build the welfare state, but that doesn't need to be an eternal project. I mean now we should have more about the notion of sustainability; how do we live in a sustainable welfare society. There are tons of things that have to be done. (ibid, own translation).

What needs to be done, however, conflicts forcefully with the direction she thinks the party has taken for as long as she has been active, "and even for quite some time before then". In her eyes, the SAP has "lost a material perspective towards politics" and have "been anxious about talking about class or having that perspective in politics". This "displacement" of a class perspective has spawned a singular focus on identity, leading people to "think it's more important what pronouns one uses than if people have decent working conditions". This focus on "identity and representation" and those "who are fighting for LGBTQ people's rights or against racism" are of course matters close to her heart, she said, but it has blinded the party from its core task of ensuring socio-economic *trygghet*. For her, this is explained by what she sees as the party's long-held "budget disciplinary doctrine":

Nothing can cost anything, nothing can exceed the scope. Nothing can be system altering. So, everything should just be status quo. And what is there then to fight for? Well, that which doesn't cost anything. Like counting the number of women or black people. And then what do you do when politics has taken this turn... it's almost like people think it's wrong to be anti-racist. (ibid, own translation).

Karlsson's dissection connects well with what has become known as the 'post-political' settlement (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2014). In her critique of European Social Democratic parties' ideological lurch towards the centre during the 1990's (e.g. the 'third way' of New Labour), Mouffe argues that there was an overly optimistic effort to make politics devoid of, indeed *beyond*, antagonism (Mouffe, 2005). This 'shallowness', was fuelled by the widespread acceptance of 'neoliberal hegemony' among Social Democratic parties (ibid: 60). Increasingly, this 'consensus at the centre' was resulting in the rise of right-wing populist parties throughout Western Europe, 'due to the incapacity of established parties to put forward significant alternatives' (ibid: 66; 69).

In contrast to the traditional established parties, these new populist parties were thereby able to 'provide people with some form of hope, with the belief that things could be different' (ibid: 71). Mouffe is certainly correct in asserting that it is incorrect to fall into a classist and normative trap of dismissing populist party supporters as uneducated dullards who are particularly 'susceptible to being attracted by

demagogues' (ibid: 65). However, her singular political economic explanation for the growing support of populist parties is too totalizing. Problematically, it completely disregards the salience of socio-cultural issues that, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, are of particular importance to SD supporters. As will be argued below, despite various debates throughout its history, the SAP has always been pro-growth. The party's, and Sweden's, success has always been pegged to an export-heavy capitalist economy. Teresa Carvalho's transition from a Boundless to a more Bounded nostalgia occurred in tandem with a shift from an idealistic to a more pragmatic position towards what she understood to be achievable and sustainable. In contrast to Carvalho, Sara Karlsson could not allow herself to be motivated by the middle-way, shelve-your-beliefs, praxis of SAP *realpolitik*. She was too principally opposed to this and therefore stepped down as an MP. In many ways, this tension is endemic to the SAP.

The SAP's tug-of-war between idealism and pragmatism

'The primacy of politics'

The pragmatic versus idealistic axis has affected the SAP since the party's inception in 1889. Unlike Germany's SPD that held a far more dogmatic, intellectualized understanding of Marxism, from early on the SAP took a far more instrumental approach (Berman, 1998: 50). This eventually culminated during the party congress of 1917 when the youth wing of the party opposed the main party's embrace of cross-class parliamentarism, arguing that revolutionary methods should not be ruled out. As a result, the decision taken by the party leadership was to expel the youth wing that in turn formed a Left socialist party; the eventual forbearer to the contemporary Left party (*Vänsterpartiet*) (Tingsten, 1967: 63-64). Although this debate (and eventual split) was encouraged by substantial segments of the SAP's grassroots, in Norrköping the reception was reportedly lukewarm; with only a small minority of party members choosing to leave the SAP and form a 'Left socialist club' (which eventually was incorporated into the Left party) (Hjorth and Nordström, 1989: 66).

The SAP's reformism through parliamentary means and cross-class appeal, Berman argues, has entrenched Social Democracy's hold on power in Sweden; a modus operandi guided by a firm belief in what she designates the 'primacy of politics':

a conviction that political forces [i.e. the State] rather than economic ones could and should be the driving forces of history and that the "needs" or "good" society must be protected and nurtured (2006: 6).

On the one hand, as a self-described 'worker's party' (arbetareparti), the SAP (along with LO) has pitted itself against a chimerical elite comprised of capitalist interests and their political manifestation in borgligheten (the so-called bourgeoisie — the collective grouping of all centre-right parties and business interests in Sweden) that are intent on exploiting the folk and, in turn, disintegrating socio-economic trygghet. On the other hand, however, ever since it began its long reign in Swedish politics in the early 1930s, the SAP has also embodied the establishment — the political elite that has presided over the Swedish State's actions for most of the twentieth century. It has been deeply entangled with Swedish industry and promoted its interests domestically and internationally. As Steinmo summated, historically the party's success has depended, 'on a strong economy (a strong capitalist economy) and their willingness to eschew more-radical demands from within their own movement' (1988: 435, original emphasis).

Reformism, redefined

Beginning in the mid-1960s, LO began to pressurise the SAP to take an active role in legislating more progressive wage-agreements and better working environments visà-vis the superior position held by members of the white-collar workers union *Tjänstemännens centralorginsation* (TCO) and the Swedish Employers' confederation Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen (SAF) (Blyth, 2002: 203-204).⁵⁰

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⁵⁰ This pressure from the LO leadership was, to a large extent, stoked by a growing disenchantment among its members that was famously made visible in the wildcat strike at the state-owned Kiruna ironore mines in 1969 (Tilton, 1990: 215-216). As Tilton summates, from the mid-1960s onwards, LO members had begun to express their frustration and worry over the 'negative consequences of technological change – the increasingly stressful pace of work, the introduction of new and dangerous substances to the workplace, growing instability of employment, and the potential loss of influence over these developments' (ibid: 223).

These increased demands famously culminated in the SAP acceding to LO's demands in the so-called 'Wage-Earner fund' debacle in the early 1970s. Essentially, the proposal sought to 'socialize the economy and reverse the trend toward the concentration of economic power in private hands' (Steinmo, 1988: 431). This would be achieved by imposing a profit-tax on corporations and allowing the LO unions to pool the revenue to then purchase majority shares in Swedish corporations, thereby 'transferring power over the means of production to the hands of the working (now wage-earning) class' (ibid: 431). This revolutionary proposal created tremendous schisms (particularly between the SAP elite and the LO leadership) in the labour movement, and is often pointed to as a contributing factor (a clear majority of the electorate was decidedly opposed to it) to SAP losing the 1976 general election — for the first time 44 years. Eventually the original tenets of the proposal lost momentum due to both the 1976-1981 centre-right coalition government's strong opposition but also to the labour movement's (particularly the SAP's leaderships) own hesitancy (Sainsbury, 1991).

As Hirdmann argues, this proposal emanated from the 'radicalization of ideology in a Marxist direction' that had tinged elements of Sweden's labour movement (part of the broader so-called 'New Left') after the revolutionary upswing in 1967-1968 throughout Europe. Paradoxically, she argues, these 'far less sophisticated' ideas undermined 'the reformist agreements struck in the 1930s', which in turn ruptured the 'balance of power between state, labor and capital' (Hirdman, 2002: 163). This arrangement was known as Saltsjöbadsandan (the spirit of Saltsjöbaden – titled after the seaside locality in Stockholm county where the meeting took place) and was supported by a broad coalition of parties, reinforcing the 'collectivist view of democracy' that captured the era (Rothstein, 1992: 118-119). It was characterized by the historic compromise between LO, TCO and the SAF, which had been essential to the consensual post-war labour-market success that defined the 'Swedish Model' (Johansson, 2005: 673). However, the often youthful New Left (particularly social workers) had grown increasingly vocal in their critiques of the limits of the social democratically inflected 'strong state/society'; that despite the post-war optimism of the ability of industrialism to deliver growth and prosperity, Swedish society's weakest slipped through the cracks and 'social exclusion' persisted (Andersson, 2006: 54-55). Although hesitant to accept the veracity of these criticisms at first (many of which were published in reports), spurred by the growing regional inequality as certain industries

disappeared (e.g. textile in Norrköping), economic uncertainty and ecological awareness, the SAP's leadership gradually acknowledged 'social exclusion as a problem intrinsically related to industrial capitalism', with prime minister Olof Palme clarifying in 1971 that 'growth had social limits' (ibid: 67). As Andersson argues, this 'rearticulation' saw 'a radicalisation of the party's standing in social and welfare issues in what has been described as an 'equality wave' within the labour movement' (ibid, 66). She further contends that,

During the 1970s, a number of party working groups discussed [...] [the SAP's] relationship to the handicapped, the elderly, children and youth, immigrants, recipients of public assistance, criminals, addicts and women. Party programmes and rhetoric now dealt with their rights of citizenship and the adaptation of society to their social needs (ibid: 74).

In order to realize this growing focus on equality, segments of the public sector expanded in the 1970s. Yet tensions persisted in how the 'weakest', excluded members of society should be viewed. The fundamental issue was that despite the expanded assistance to these groups, the labour movement failed to formulate a proactive way of integrating them into society. Rather, they were continuously framed as being fundamentally different from the working class; with workers instead discursively encouraged to show 'working class solidarity' and 'fraternity' rather than joining in the struggle to find 'structural solutions' to their exclusion (ibid: 79). As a result, from the 1970s onwards, the SAP adopted what Meret and Siim describe as a 'dual strategy: maximising their potential electoral support (mainly appealing to highly educated, public employed and professionals), and developing left-libertarian and egalitarian positions on multiculturalism, gender equality, environmentalism' (2013: 127, emphasis added).

A weakened SAP but an entrenched Social Democracy

The centre-right led by the Moderates won back power between 1991-1994 due to, amongst other factors, a public perception that the centre-right was more competent in facilitating economic recovery during the so-called 'crown crisis' (see Chapter Four). Although the SAP accepted the necessity of deficit reduction, they were able to

successfully articulate strong criticism of the centre-right's retrenchment of social spending (which had sparked public distress by threatening *trygghet*), thereby winning back power in the 1994 election (with an impressive 45.3 percent of the popular vote) (Merkel et al., 2008: 161). Though suffering poor results in 1998 (36.4 percent, the worst in 77 years), the SAP were able to maintain power due in part to the centre-right faring even worse and because the Left party (which generally supports the SAP in parliament) – had its greatest result to date with 11.9 percent – becoming the third largest party (Hancock, 2003: 398).

In the years leading up to the next election in 2002, the Swedish economy boomed and so-called "visible unemployment" (that is, not including those undergoing retraining or other hugely expensive programmes run by the Labour Market Board) had halved to 4.1 percent" (Madeley, 2003). The 2002 election thus rewarded the SAP, with the party gaining 39.85 percent of the vote. The Moderates, on the other hand, suffered greatly due to the party's obsession surrounding massive tax-cuts that found little appetite from the electorate; gaining only 15.26 percent, in comparison to 22.9 percent in 1998. Commenting the results of the 2002 election, Madeley asserted that whilst Blair's New Labour 'went in search of the modern political equivalent of the North-West Passage, Sweden's Social Democrats have stuck doggedly to the toughminded pragmatism which has been their trademark as a local brand since the 1930s' (ibid: 165). However, the above described tension surrounding society's 'weakest' percolated and left the SAP vulnerable.

Energised by a new party leader, Fredrik Reinfeldt, the Moderates⁵¹ and the three other centre-right parties formed the aforementioned Alliance in 2004. Despite a booming economy, the SAP under PM Göran Persson, 'struggled to deal with the increasingly apparent fact that Sweden's impressive economic growth had not brought many jobs' (Aylott and Bolin, 2007). Similar to the 1970s, there remained a proportion of citizens (specifically, young people, non-European immigrants and those classified as too ill to work) outside the 'real' labour market (i.e. partaking instead in a range of subsidised training programmes via the Labour Market Board). A relatively young, energetic politician, Reinfeldt attacked the SAP for its complacency, arguing that the

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⁵¹ The leaders of the centre-right coalition government from 2006-2014 who famously in 2004 borrowed from Tony Blair's New Labour the title – New Moderates (*Nya Moderaterna*) and proclaimed they were the real party of workers (not, however, the working class) – read: 'the people' – in Sweden.

SAP always coddled the weakest in society, rather than developing solutions for making work pay. As Reinfeldt asserted in a parliament debate in 2005:

We are challenging a government that claims that it is enough to be dependent on benefits in order to be *trygg* in Sweden. That is not our belief. We will never stop pushing for the ability for more to find employment and thereby can transition from living on benefits to working (Reinfeldt, 2005).

Indeed, employment became the most important issue ahead of the 2006 election. However, SAP PM Göran Persson downplayed the significance of employment during the entire campaign; responding to a journalist's question on his choice not to focus on unemployment in his May day speech four months ahead of the September 2006 election, "I should think that once the campaign begins, no one will talk about unemployment, least of all the bourgeoise [centre-right parties]" (Elmbrant, 2010). This miscalculation proved disastrous. The Alliance wrestled power from a seemingly tired SAP in power for the previous 12 consecutive years (Persson resigned immediately as party leader on the election night). The Moderates won 26.3 percent of the vote, and together with the three other Alliance parties, gained 178 seats in the parliament; while the SAP won 34.9 percent and, together with the other centre-left parties (Greens and the Left) achieved 171 seats (Valmyndigheten, 2006). Though the SAP retained the LO working-class vote, it lost a considerable amount of white-collar voters to the Alliance parties, in particular, losing 154,000 voters to Reinfeldt's Moderates (Oscarsson and Holmberg, 2008). 'While the Social Democrats Party suffers', Svallfors proclaims, 'the Social Democratic welfare state thrives' (Svallfors, 2011: 820). As long-time student of Swedish politics Henry Milner asserts, there has been a tendency by observers (in Sweden and abroad) to focus on minor policy changes pursued by the Alliance government (between 2006-2014), rather than showing how the Moderates 'hav[e] reconciled themselves to the core components of the welfare state' (ibid: 119).

As argued in the Introduction and Chapter Four, the pre-2015 increase of the volume of non-European migration was the result of a rupturing of Sweden's policy consensus on migration quotas, which had existed historically between the SAP and the Moderates. However, during the Alliance's two-term tenure in government between 2006-2014, legislation was then passed with support from the Green party

that facilitated a significant increase of refugee immigration to Sweden. Though critical of some of the particularities of this, the SAP were largely supportive. As the context chapter showed (see Figures 17, 18 and 19), the levels of non-European migration increased significantly during these years. Here, a socio-conservative void was exposed that SD increasingly capitalised on by articulating a nostalgia for a *trygg* Sweden before non-European immigration, as argued in Chapter Five.

The novel salience of immigration and the strange bedfellows it produces

It is clear that these broader currents have left powerful residual effects on different party members' understandings of what the core tenets of Social Democracy are. Indeed, as Ingelhart and Norris assert, '[t]he orthogonal pull of cultural politics generates tensions and divisions within mainstream parties' (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). This reality came screaming to the fore following the 2015 refugee crisis and, to a certain extent, amidst the 2017 call for amnesty for the unaccompanied Afghani youth. At the intersection of either a bounded or boundless nostalgia for a yesteryear of SAP politics that was more steadfast in its ability to ensure socio-economic trygghet, and their belief in idealism or pragmatism, party members were forced to make a choice on a sociocultural axis that historically has remained dormant in Sweden. This choice also had the consequence of revealing contrasting opinions on 'traditional' Left-Right economic issues. With a slight look of anguish, Teresa Carvalho snickered.

I do however find it interesting that one can see these unholy alliances when it comes to migration and integration issues and how a person who is considered as very left in the party and a person who is thought to be more rightist can find one another in these sorts of issues. (Recorded interview, 2 May, 2018, own translation).

One particularly stark example of such strange bedfellows can be seen between Widar Andersson, the outspoken editor of the Norrköping-based Social Democratic newspaper *Folkbladet*, and long-time Norrköping party member, 'Peter'.

Widar Andersson's bounded liberalism

A former MP during the 1990s and a mainstay in national media circles, Andersson has been immensely vocal in his criticism towards Sweden's liberalised immigration policies. For instance, in a televised debate with another SAP member in April 2017, Andersson argued that "Sweden has tremendous problems with integration" and that there is no support for "risking the welfare state or increasing taxes endlessly just to accommodate more immigration" (quoted in Mannheimer, 2017, own translation). On the other hand, he also sticks out in the SAP as one of, if not the, most outspoken supporters of so-called private 'free schools' (friskolor) in Sweden, having earlier been both the chair of the national organization for free schools as well as an advisory board member for one of Sweden's largest free school companies (Östman, 2014). This reform whereby privately run schools compete with municipal schools over public resources (allocated per student), was passed during a centre-right government in 1992 and has long been strongly opposed by the SAP, with the party announcing a proposal to block the establishment of new free schools in June 2018, something that both the centre-right and the national organization were highly critical of (TT, 2018). As Widar described when I met with him at his newspaper's offices in mid-June 2018, for him, the strength of the SAP has been its prioritization of "entirely materialistic issues". He continued:

All this about ideology, the SAP has never had much of that. It started as a materialistic people's movement. Our situation is going to improve, we are not to work more than eight hours, have to have paid holiday and unemployment insurance.

Thinking about the party's membership base, he observed what he sees as a "mass denial" among a lot of party members as to what sort of party the SAP actually is, telling me that it's as "clear as the sun" that for ordinary member's the "next best party is the Left party". For him, this means that there is a "very bizarre understanding of what kind of party this is" (ibid, own translation). The party, he told me, made a clear choice in 1917 when they "kicked out the communists." This spelled the end of any debates as to what sort of party the SAP is — "we are reformists" he added with vigour. In his eyes, one pivotal error that the party made ahead of the 2010 election is that

then-party leader Mona Sahlin caved to the demands of the notable economically leftist S-district of Skåne in southern Sweden, and announced an official pre-election coalition with the Left party (Fieldnotes, 12 June, 2018, own translation).

As Widfeldt describes, this proposed coalition was perceived as strategically essential because the Left and the Greens had made it increasingly clear that they would no longer provide parliamentary support to a minority SAP government (as had been the case between 1998-2006) without ministerial positions (Widfeldt, 2011: 584-585). From the SAP's economic 'right wing', led by Göran Persson's ex-finance minister Pär Nuder, the idea that the SAP should become beholden to the Left party was unacceptable. From the 'left wing', there was resistance to the Green Party, as they were thought too economically liberal and anti-Statist; too far removed from traditional Social Democracy (Möller, 2013: 29). Despite resistance, in late 2008 Sahlin eventually announced an official 'Red-Green' coalition with both the Greens and the Left. At the same time as the coalition was announced, the 2007-2009 global economic crisis and subsequent recession deepened. Sweden, however, weathered the economic storm comparatively unscathed. Therefore, ahead of the 2010 election the sitting Alliance government were perceived as having competently navigated the crisis and the SAP were increasingly seen as erratic and plagued by in-fighting, with Sahlin also seen as less competent than sitting premier Reinfeldt (Widfeldt, 2011: 585).

Peter's bounded illiberalism

'Peter' on the other hand, is deeply sceptical of Mona Sahlin's tenure as party leader (which ended following the 2010 election defeat), both because of her 'rightist' economic positions (having been labour-market minister during the austere mid-1990s), but especially because of her progressive positions towards minority groups. Sitting in the break room at his work in mid-March, he told me that for him, Sahlin showed too much — as he put it — "niche solidarity" with minority groups. As he explained:

One needs to have a very clear line here and pursue a general welfare. But instead it was like, yes, we pay a lot of taxes but then all the money went only to homosexuals and to immigrants and so on. And there I thought that we had a real departure. (Recorded interview, 14 March, 2018, own translation).

A party member for more than 30 years, Peter told me, in reference to what he saw as the astronomical costs associated with migration:

If we don't have the resources to enact redistributive politics then we're screwed. And if we reach that situation where the state's coffers are empty, then we can't bribe the working class. And then we're screwed. (ibid, own translation).

Though he thinks that Sweden should have refugee policies, he said that he had sometimes wondered if,

certain politicians have the intent to empty other countries. I've really wondered that sometimes, in how they reason. As if they are saying, 'of course not, you shouldn't remain in your country'. And that's a defeat in itself I think. Because every refugee is a defeat. Because the best scenario has to be that one can live and thrive where one comes from. If no one is shooting at you, of course. (ibid, own translation).

He described himself as definitely a 'leftist' SAP member; that he would never want to be in a position where he was dependent on a salary for his politics as it drives you to the 'right'. Responding to my slightly confused expression, he told me of an incident in which a salaried politician in Norrköping was proactive in removing the right to vote for unionists within the supervisory boards for the public utility companies, adding that, "there are some issues that an SAP member just doesn't touch" (ibid, own translation). Although with a more generous and warm tone in his voice than Johnny, Peter also thinks that Lars Stjernkvist is far too much to the economic right, telling me somewhat cryptically that "Stjernkvist is more like a Liberal Party member than I am, if I can say so". Confused I ask, "you mean on freedom of choice issues in welfare"? "I just think that he's more generally bourgeoise, which I am not. My impression is that it was very easy for him to make arrangements with the four-leaf clover here" Peter says, referring to the governing coalition in Norrköping (ibid, own translation).

[&]quot;An honourable compromise is better than a proviso"

Also called 'the quartet' (kvarteten), the coalition in Norrköping since the 2014 election between the SAP, Liberal party (Liberalerna), Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna) and the Agrarian Liberal Centre Party (Centerpartiet) is one that Lars Stjernkvist told me he is quite content with:

It's really been a privilege to get to work with people who have such a professional attitude towards politics and their mission. I'm even comfortable ideologically because — and I really am a leftist politician and am fully convinced that Sweden needs more left politics — but I don't think we'll achieve that if we sharpen the conflict between the traditional blocks [centre-right parties and SAP, Greens and Left party]. Instead I think that will help to strengthen the political right. (Recorded interview, 28 February, 2018, own translation).

Sitting in his large city hall office that's décor reflects his long-standing senior status in the party and his obsession with all things sports, Stjernkvist articulated what he sees as the only way for the SAP to continue in power:

We have three political blocks – SD are a fact. We can't think of cooperating with them, which I think is wise and cooperating with the left isn't enough for us to do what we want, so we have to choose these types of cooperation. (ibid, own translation).

Stjernkvist, who has held a multitude of prominent positions in the party, including as the SAP's national secretary from 1999-2004, was clear that this form of give-and-take cooperation bears far more fruit than just a principled opposition:

Sometimes it seems like the SAP thinks that it's just us that are affected by them [centre-right parties], and a lot of so-called Leftist-SAP members say, 'how can you spend time with them and not be affected'? But the reverse is also true. I've heard Reidar Svedahl [Liberal party municipal commissioner] argue for a tax raise in a way that, as far as I can remember, I've never heard a Left Party member do in Norrköping's city council! Because the money was needed for the school in order to improve the support for children who need extra support. And then I think that Left partisans and even some SAP member who are critical should

humbly ask themselves 'why haven't I made that speech?!' (ibid, own translation).

Indeed, he sees this reciprocity of influence as something incredibly positive; the essence of what Social Democracy is for the SAP:

If we want to be this mass people's movement party, if we want to be the dominant party, then we cannot afford to disregard friends outside of the most friendly [political] circle. (ibid, own translation).

What is in the party's "DNA", as he described, is the belief in the power of pragmatism:

There are of course other parties that are passionate about fairness and equality, but what makes us the SAP is that in all conditions we have always said that an honourable compromise is better than a proviso. In all conditions we want to try to take responsibility, get as much accomplished as possible. So, pragmatism is the most beautiful thing for us because those who have it the toughest in society won't in the first instance be helped by those who want to fight for everything all at once and risk failing. Those who have it the toughest need results, concrete results and then it's more important to accept a small change. (ibid, own translation).

It is, however, precisely this pragmatism that he sees as threatened by the rapid growth of SD. For him, the Moderates, the SAP's historic arch-rivals, have now been replaced by SD, he explained describing how a party member had recently reacted to his proposition:

How can you at all describe the Moderates not as our arch enemies when they stand for defending a classist society and social injustices?! And I argued that despite that, it's easier for me to speak with someone who defends social injustices than with someone who denies their very existence. That's the problem with SD – they suddenly speak about a conflict that we in no way are able to relate to. By imposing immigrants and saying that it's not social injustices that contribute to the faults [in society] but rather the problem is that so many have

come to our country. And when that [mindset] has stuck, we find ourselves on the defensive. It's impossible to compromise. They have such an entirely different societal analysis. I can compromise with a Moderate. Okay you stand there and I stand here but at least we exist in the same reality. Right now, you may have the upper hand but perhaps I can get you to move on this and then I've won something. We proceed from the same foundational societal analysis. SD have an entirely different one. And one can find this all incredibly contradictory that in an age in which more and more of us understand that openness needs to increase, and has increased, and that our perspectives have widened that a party that turns its back on all this progress is so successful. (ibid, own translation).

Though speaking more than half a year before the election, Stjernkvist pointed at the essence of what creates such a momentous and problematic rift between the SAP and SD. Exuding a vivid nostalgia for the political line of scrimmage of yesteryear surrounding *trygghet* between the SAP and the Moderates, Stjernkvist was at a loss as to understand how his party should face a party that articulates such an alternative view of reality that is fuelled by socio-cultural issues which have historically not formed the political lines of scrimmage in Sweden.

As explored in the previous chapter, SD's mythological vision of Sweden before immigration comes into sharp contrast with the above representations by SAP members. SAP members are still, after all, guided by a strongly different notion of what their party's main function is to Sweden. It is the paragon of socio-economic *trygghet*. This vision of *trygghet* germinated when the SAP blueprinted modern-day Sweden; well before the socio-cultural cleavage surrounding immigration took root. Although party members express contrasting beliefs about the level of refugee immigration to Sweden, they all agree upon fundamental principles of justice and the legitimacy of the State. A vivid illustration of this is something that Teresa Carvalho clarified to me during a lull in our conversation. While I searched through my questions, having just discussed her 'journey' through different positions to immigration, she added, unprompted:

I think it's really important to point out that we haven't closed the borders, we haven't abolished the right to seek asylum. There are other parties in Sweden that want to do this, but not us. And we never will — I feel very *trygg* saying that we

will never go there because for us Social Democrats, the right to asylum is a moral compass. It's important to remember that there are still around 20-30 thousand asylum seekers that enter Sweden per year. (Recorded interview, 2 May, 2018, own translation).

As I argue in the next chapter, this 'moral compass' that Teresa reflects on, presents a fundamental schism between the SAP and SD. Guided by a national election strategy that was designed with the assumption that SAP and SD voters envisage and long for the same *trygghet*, I argue that this proves difficult in Norrköping. It is precisely the SAP's – sossarnas – quixotic politics that SD supporters and party members alike believe has led Sweden down the road to ruin which they feel it is currently on.

Concluding Summary

This chapter has analysed how the post-2015 politics of immigration have been understood by members of Norrköping's labourer commune. Whilst the comparative party literature identifies the broad trajectories of political party dynamics, this chapter has demonstrated the strength of how sustained ethnographic fieldwork contributes to unpacking the inner life of political parties. Combining participant observation with semi-structured interview and survey data, this chapter has dissected how the complex interplay of national party level debates interact with the particularities of local conditions.

In Norrköping, the support for amnesty had only received a handful of supporters; a vocal minority had tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to guide the absolute majority of party members. The overarching consensus among party members was that Norrköping had already done more than its share; even if they tend to see immigration as having had a generally positive impact. I argued that the party's incongruence on immigration can be understood as profoundly different forms of nostalgia: bounded versus boundless. Focusing on Rebecca, Johnny and Oscar's accounts, who were all strongly opposed to the SAP's post-2015 refugee immigration policies, I explored their understandings of what, and for whom, the Social Democratic project should extend socio-economic *trygghet* to. Following Teresa Carvalho's nostalgic metamorphosis, I then explored Ulf and Olof's bounded nostalgias for a

'traditional' era in which immigration was not a priority and the SAP could direct its energy to the betterment of the Swedish people's socio-economic *trygghet*.

These bounded articulations were then contrasted with the views of former MP Sara Karlsson who, although yearning for an economic pivot left-ward and a reprioritization of material politics, profoundly disagreed with any notion that the party's post-2015 positions towards immigration were in any way a 'return' to traditional SAP politics. I then traced how this underlying tension traces a long history within the party, and how party members' diverging nostalgias and positions on political economy converge with pragmatic versus idealistic understandings of Social Democracy; a division that has plagued the SAP historically. By examining Widar and Peter's narratives, I then illustrated how these two axes were further complicated by party members' economic positions on the Left-Right spectrum. Lastly, I argued that Lars Stjernkvist's reflections (on the importance of pragmatism and why the rise of SD has deeply complicated the established praxis of political arbitration) pinpoint a tremendous hurdle that confronts the SAP in its task of re-claiming former voters who have turned to SD.

What the chapter ultimately illustrates is that the SAP is a rather pliable organisation that is able to capture a seemingly broad array of perspectives. This has indeed served the party well in its long reign. Yet, with the growing support for SD among segments of its traditional voters, the question then becomes, can the SAP contort enough to remain attractive for voters perceived to be deliberating between the SAP and SD? It is this episode that the next chapter turns to.

Chapter 7 – The 2018 election campaign: *Trygghet* in a New Time?

In this chapter I explore how the SAP's 2018 national election strategy is localised and experienced in Norrköping. Guided by the electorate's heightened concern surrounding immigration and the associated haemorrhaging of support to SD among segments of the its base, the strategy's leitmotif is *trygghet*. Focusing in on how *trygghet* is messaged to voters identified as deliberating between the SAP and SD ('deliberators'), I argue that there is an inherent tension in the strategy. The *trygghet* that the SAP promises is antithetical to the *otrygghet* that energizes and enrages these voters.

The chapter begins in mid-February 2018 aboard the M/S Viking Cinderella for the 'Labour Movement's boat' (Arbetarrörelsens båt). Here, I focus on two public presentations of the then-newly revealed electoral strategy by the SAP's electoral strategist John Zanchi and party secretary Lena Rådström Baastad. Importantly, these presentations show how the SAP officially fuses trygghet with the increased salience surrounding immigration in order to appeal to 'deliberators'. Zooming in on Norrköping, I then present the localised articulation of this strategy. I show how party members' explanations for the growing support for SD sits well within the party's strategy. Norrköping's legacy, many contend, has made traditional SAP voters' particularly susceptible to what they see as SD's populist scapegoating of immigrants. Therefore, the strategy is to show that, rather than immigrants, it is SD that threatens otrygghet.

Drawing on recent historical scholarship, I show how this explanatory framework traces a long precedent in the SAP. In order to construct the cross-class appeal of the *folkhem*, the party diluted the rage that it had initially channelled to politically mobilise Sweden's labourers. What replaced this rage was an emphasis on the SAP's sole capability to defend Sweden against worry and economic *otrygghet*

both in the present and the future. Yet, in the face of the heightened salience of sociocultural issues surrounding immigration, SD's has fused resistance to this development with *otrygghet* and once again conjured a rage in Sweden. Focusing in on the SAP stronghold neighbourhood of Vilbergen, I then use interactions between SAP members and SD supporters/deliberators to explore how the strategy was actually executed. These encounters illustrate the immense difficulty for the SAP to constructively engage those enraged voters who have accepted SD's competing vision of *Otrygghet*.

The SAP's National Electoral Strategy

Trygghet in a 'New Time'

Organised before each parliamentary election campaign, the 'Labour movement's boat' (Arbetarrörelsens båt) departs from Stockholm on Saturday afternoon and then sails to the capital of Åland, Mariehamn, (in order to permit duty-free shopping) before returning to Stockholm the following day. Following festivities on Saturday evening, Sunday features presentations and appearances from senior members from both LO and the SAP and offers the around 600 participants (comprised of a few journalists and labour movement grassroots and professionals) a forum to both socialise and attend campaign-focused seminars. As one of the organisers tells me, the cruise is meant to serve as a sort of adhesive for party members; a time to socially and politically charge their batteries ahead of prolonged campaigning. On Sunday morning following an ample breakfast buffet, I attend two full-seated seminars. The first is an overview of the SAP's electoral strategy by its chief architect, John Zanchi. This is followed by a shorter session by SAP party secretary Lena Rådström Baastad titled "How we win the election". Just over two weeks earlier, Zanchi and Baastad had unveiled the strategy together at a televised press conference in Stockholm.

Figure 45. The 'Labour' boat



'Electoral Victory 2018, The Labour Movement's Boat' (LO and SAP, 2018, own translation)

In his trademark finely woven fitted jumper, Zanchi looks less like a senior partisan (who always wear suits) and more like a Silicon Valley tech-entrepreneur. Full of energy with an intense smile, Zanchi exudes competence. Thanking everyone for attending, he continues,

So before get started I just wanted to say that we have the chance to do something unique together. All too unique in these times. And that, is as a broad centre-left progressive movement, we can win a greater confidence. Get more people to gather under Social Democracy's banner. If you look out over Europe and the world, this is all too unique right now. In country after country, sister parties are experiencing not only electoral defeats, but electoral catastrophes. And there are always national explanations as to why this happens in specific countries; why it went like it did in Norway or in Germany, Holland or France. But there are also

certain things that unite those who have failed to win over people's confidence. (Recorded speech, 18 February, 2018, own translation).

Zanchi highlights two aspects that other "sister" Social Democratic parties across Europe have lacked, "an updated societal analysis and that we don't sugar coat the campaign" (ibid, own translation). This updated societal analysis, he describes, is based on the fact that,

We have had a serious conversation with each other ahead of this election, and not because of tactical reasons, but because we have seen society the way it is. Neither denigrating nor idealizing reality. And we have had a conversation within the party with our congress last year. Trygghet in a new time. The work that we have been doing the last two years. A bit like the grey sosse's return. A little more pragmatic Social Democracy. This we have agreed upon and are quite in agreement within the party. (ibid, own translation).

A key ingredient to this, Zanchi describes, is premised on the fact that,

We have returned to a migration politics that are a bit more traditionally Social Democratic — solidaristic; helping people on the run but also combinable with high welfare ambitions and a growing integration challenge. (ibid, own translation).

Figure 46. Trygghet in a New Time



(SAP, 2017, own translation)

Indeed, ahead of the April 2017 party congress, the party published its 'political guidelines' document for the period 2017-2021. The resounding message was that, although the Swedish economy is booming, Swedes feel a 'diminishing trygghet and growing inequalities'; the Social Democratically inflected 'Swedish Model' is threatened (SAP, 2017: 3, own translation). In the previous pre-election guidelines ahead of the 2013 congress, titled the 'Future Contract' (*Framtidskontraktet*), the emphasis had been on re-claiming power in order to deliver a 'future-oriented politics' that can deal with the 'growing unemployment, sinking school results and growing inequality' (SAP, 2013: 1; 3, own translation). The limited mention of immigration attests to the then still-stable consensus surrounding Sweden's refugee migration policies, with the party stating that 'Social Democratic migration policy presumes a strong solidarity between people. Sweden shall have a generous and regulated immigration' (ibid: 28, own translation).

In the 2017 guidelines, in contrast, an entire section is dedicated to this policy area. The rationale for why the SAP-led government instituted border controls in November 2015 are described. Due to these developments, 'it is not possible for Sweden to have [migration] legislation that substantially differs from other EU states' (SAP, 2017: 34, own translation). Looking forward, 'the Swedish model must develop a responsible politics of migration' (ibid: 34, own translation). Though it is not stated explicitly, the underlying message of the 2017 guidelines are that, despite the SAP regaining power in 2014 and the booming economy, the 2015 crisis, increasing crime rates, and the mounting challenges of integrating hundreds of thousands of non-European refugees, have left a growing number of Swedes uneasy, otrygga. Therefore, in order to achieve 'Trygghet in a new [post- 2015 migration crisis] time', Sweden needs more SAP and therefore, the party's 'Swedish Model must be upgraded, not downgraded' (ibid, 38, own translation).

Due to this alleged agreement and pragmatism surrounding *trygghet* and immigration, which, as I showed in Chapter Six, is more tenuous and complicated than Zanchi describes, the SAP can "give voters those answers that they expect politics to give them" (ibid, own translation). Party members can therefore "actually enter the campaign with a very large self-confidence" (ibid, own translation). With the conditions seemingly ideal, Zanchi zooms out and situates the gravity of the SAP's continued success, telling us:

There are many that now look to Sweden, watching what we are going to do this year and hoping that we can show the way; show that it is possible to gather more progressive movements in these times that we are living in. (ibid, own translation).

Shifting to a more sombre tone, he clarifies that this election marks a fundamental shift for the SAP and for the party's preferred understanding of *trygghet*:

We have had a discussion in the party: is this new *otrygghet* real or is just something that has been conjured by the media? Of course, the media inflate and exaggerate, but we have also had serious discussions among ourselves and we see that there is a new *otrygghet* that has become rooted in our country and we want to pull those roots. (ibid, own translation).

In contrast to the 2014 election which "was about jobs and schooling",

The migration question has shot up [in voters' political agenda] [...] Why is this so important? It's important because when we close this mandate period we'll have taken in upwards of a half million asylum seekers into Sweden. Of course, this is going to affect the placement of this issues on the political agenda. And it's the same for Law and Order issues which have also increased. Because people see that something has happened and they want politics to give them the hope that it is fixable. (ibid, own translation)

Acknowledging that this new Law and Order agenda sphere is perhaps not the most encouraging, not exactly the SAP's forte, Zanchi continues,

If we choose to see this somewhat authoritarian agenda as something positive, then that is that the electorate is hungry for politics! And that is an enormous advantage for us in the movement that believe in the possibilities of politics to change society. So, we have to see it as a possibility. (ibid, own translation)

As I showed in the previous chapter, this does not sit comfortably with all members of the SAP (recall Sara Karlsson's 'post-political' dissection). Indeed, Zanchi's preemptive defence of his strategy resonates with an interaction I had a few months prior in November 2017, at a so-called 'deliberation' (överläggning) for five county's SAP political secretaries and ombudsmen. Held at the hallowed grounds of Bommersvik, a serene lake-side conference centre owned by the party to the southwest of Stockholm, Zanchi had presented a far more condensed trial version of the strategy (during which there was strictly no photography nor audio recording, though I was allowed to take notes). He had ended the presentation by stressing that some party members were destined to be incredibly uncomfortable with the party's electoral messaging focusing so much on what he had called "hard trygghet issues", but that it was the responsibility of the audience members to ensure that the grass roots were on point. At a coffee break later that day, I had asked an ombudsman in his early-to-mid 30s whether he thought that the strategy was a response to Sweden's levels of non-European immigration? Almost blushing as he looked at me, the man very sternly replied, "No I absolutely don't believe that that's the reason"! He then quickly found someone else to converse with, seemingly very put off by my question (Fieldnotes, 29 November, 2017).

Back on the Labour cruise, Zanchi recites the party's core narrative that he has scripted:

Essentially our story that we are going to communicate to voters is a story about how we want a *tryggare* Sweden. With better welfare in the whole country, for ordinary people and that we have the ability to do what it takes to also deal with the new *otryggheten*. (ibid, own translation).

"So", excitedly rubbing his hands together, Zanchi looks out the audience, "if we have this analysis of reality, and we believe that we have the correct political priorities, then who are we going to convince? There are two main groups we are told:

The one group, and this is the one that I believe that you're familiar with because these are the ones that we lost in the 2006 election and haven't really succeeded in getting back. And that's the middle-class voters. Those are the ones who are a bit more white-collar than blue-collar that are from 28,29 to 40-45 [years old], have children living at home, live in larger municipalities, work a bit more in the

private sector. Have jobs, decent incomes, but also have quite high loans. That's one group, around 3/4 of a million voters. (ibid, own translation).

As discussed in Chapter Six, this group of voters were those smitten by the dynamism of the Moderate-led Alliance, that successfully framed the SAP as lacking novel ideas and always coddling the downtrodden rather than celebrating the hard-working tax payers. Continuing, Zaanchi prefaces his introduction of the second group by adding that this campaign is "a bit more complex, it's more difficult to succeed because it's a more difficult landscape that we are operating in than the one that our predecessors had 20,30, 40 years ago" (ibid, own translation):

The other group that is new for us are those voters who are standing between the SAP and SD. Often voters who have voted for us once upon a time but have then broken up. A lot of feelings towards the one that has contributed to ending the relationship. They are angry at us. They feel that we are no longer an interest party for them. And this is demographically a completely different party [than the middle-class voters]. They are older, 40-plus, not old, but older than the first group. There are many more blue-collar workers. Not everyone is organised in a union, but there are those who of course are members of LO. There are roughly twice as many men as women in this group. (ibid, own translation).

Zanchi emphasises that "there is A LOT that unites this group with our core voters and that's the political agenda... it's roughly the same" (ibid, own translation). However, the two groups' hold different perspectives on two interrelated issues. They differ strongly in their "attitude towards the development of Sweden", with the potential SD voter "much, much more worried about where Sweden is headed" than the middle-class, or 'block changers' (blockbytare), as Zanchi calls them (ibid, own translation).

As a result of these contrasting understandings of Sweden's trajectory, the block changers, "are scared to death of what it would mean if SD were allowed to have influence in Swedish politics. What is included in the package if these powers are let loose"? Therefore, the SAP has to, "remind them of SD's racist representatives, their Nazi roots, all that that we have been used to saying for a decade" (ibid, own

translation).⁵² Zanchi adds that there is a real opportunity to do this, as the issue of SD has proven contentious within the Alliance. Both the Liberals and the Centre party have adamantly stated that they will not form any sort of government that relies on any form of support from the party. If successful, this strategy will help to drive a wedge between the Alliance parties, which is the SAP's number one priority, as many prominent party representatives have been open about (Löfven, 2017). But for the "the other group, the workers" of approximately 300-400,000 voters, however, this scare tactic obviously does not play well, nor does the "racist card". He elaborates:

I'd go so far to say that it is counter-productive. Because they know what SD stand for and they are still considering voting for them. So instead what we need to do is change tact in how we approach these voters. We need to tell them that SD are a party that wants to push Sweden far rightwards when it comes to their positions to the labour market, when it comes to their views on welfare, when it comes to their views on marketizing rents. That's what we need to tell them. They are at least as right-wing as the Moderates if not more. And that's something that is still undiscovered. People don't know this. We need to tell them. (ibid, own translation).

When facing the prospect of 'populist radical right' parties poaching blue-collar voters, Bale et al. (2010) argue, various European Social Democratic parties have largely been left with three potential strategies: defend the principles of immigration and multiculturalism; 'defuse' the salience of immigration in the debate arena, or; 'adopt' the radical right's position on immigration and multiculturalism (412-414, original emphasis). The authors hypothesise that, only when the first two strategies (in that order) have been implemented, will a Social Democratic party consider the third strategy (adoption). Based on an analysis of the strategies employed in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway between 1980-2006, they conclude that, despite different levels of perceived threat and the shifting salience of immigration in the various countries, the parties:

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⁵² There are countless examples of senior SAP figures referring to SD as a "neo-fascist party" as both Stefan Löfven and finance minister Magdalena Andersson were quotes as saying in an interview in December 2014 (Löfven quoted in Mellin, 2014, own translation).

[...] end up mixing and matching, boxing and coxing, in the hope that they can stay competitive without surrendering too many of their values and too much of their credibility (ibid: 423).

The SAP is no different. Party secretary Lena Rådström Baastad begins her seminar by reflecting on this very issue. In a much smaller lecture theatre than the expansive café-entertainment hall that Zanchi had presented in, she describes her recent experience at the Norwegian Labour Party's (*Arbeiderpartiet*) election night party in September 2017 in which the party suffered its second lowest result (27.4 percent) since 1921:

I asked the day before, what are your priority issues? Yea well they had education, it was schooling, it was the climate and healthcare. Well that's good! But then we started to look at what issues the voters were prioritizing? Well the top issue was integration. I asked, why aren't you talking about that issue? [...] 'No well we don't think that's a good issue to discuss. We think it's bad for our party organisation; it doesn't mobilise our organisation and we therefore don't dare getting close to that issue. (Recorded speech, 18, February, 2018, own translation).

This, Baastad describes, has for too long been endemic for European Social Democracy, holding even when it comes to her own party,

That's precisely how we have handled a number of issues for many years. We've had a wishful thinking about what we want the election to be about. But this wishful thinking hasn't always aligned with the agenda that voters expect us to talk about [...] voters haven't really understood what the SAP's message is. (ibid, own translation).

For the 2006 election, she describes,

It was the Moderates who wanted to move Sweden forward. But when you asked them [the electorate] what we the SAP stand for, well then there was a buckshot of responses. What they really didn't understand was what was the story and the prioritized issues that the SAP stood for? (ibid, own translation).

With the present strategy's "communicative framework" centring around the Swedish Model however, she tells us she is highly encouraged,

It is really the first thing that in many, many years voters actually perceived, 'aha, here comes something real from the SAP! (ibid, own translation).

In her mind, what further strengthens this framework is that it is comprehensive, "for the whole party":

During many years we have conducted 290 different election campaigns. Every municipality has conducted their own campaign. [...] And sometimes it isn't so strange that it sprawls. And at the national level one has thought, 'well if only we have that press conference'. But then that just stays there, it doesn't interplay with the rest of the party. So now we really need to make sure that we help each other so that we maintain the message. One election campaign with that red thread in which we tie in the local examples. [...] We've never had this good of a message when we have begun a campaign. So, there is a lot to gain by maintaining all of these aspects and tying them to local examples. (ibid, own translation).

Indeed, this national-local nexus is clearly evident in Norrköping when I join a number of NLC members for an overview of the election strategy two weeks after the cruise.

Norrköping's localized electoral strategy

The meeting is held in one of the larger conference rooms at the SAP headquarters. Effectively, what is presented and discussed is a localized synopsis of what both Zanchi and Baastad had discussed. We are again told that this is a "fateful year". That if the "bourgeoisie" (a relatively neutral term for the centre-right in Swedish) are not held back on the 9th of September, then they will return with "boom and fuss" and all that the SAP have achieved during the past four years will be eviscerated. The strategy is focused around "three main parameters" of which door-to-door canvassing is the main

priority — until party activists are "blue in the face". In addition, campaigning will consist of a limited degree of phone canvassing and worksite campaigning by LO party members. The goal for the campaign is to hold 21,000 conversations with voters in Norrköping and to increase the party's votes by five percent from the 2014 results for the parliamentary list.

Mirroring the national strategy, the two targeted groups of voters are those perceived to be deliberating between the SAP and SD, and the middle-class 'block changers' (between the centre-right and centre-left). Turning to the first installation of the campaign, the *trygghets* door canvassing campaign; "where all those lovely SD voters live" "Eww", someone mutters, which is met with vocal affirmation from other party members. For this group, we are shown a slide with a map of a section of the electoral district, Klockaretorpet. The map is covered in various shades of green. We are told that "the darkest areas are where SD sympathisers are concentrated" and that this is based on a statistical analysis that the central party has provided to all municipalities.

Throughout the presentation, the importance of never canvassing alone is reiterated. One participant shares an experience they had during the 2014 campaign:

We were in a rental-apartment complex and there was a man who after opening made it clear to me quite quickly that he was an SD sympathiser. At that point I tried to end our conversation and I felt a very uncomfortable mood develop between us. And the whole time it seemed to be his intention for me to come into his apartment so we could talk in there. But I realized quickly that he and I had nothing to say to one another. But we were two [canvassers] in that stairwell so the other person could also hear all of this, so I could say 'I have my friend waiting so we need to keep canvassing'. That's an example where it can go badly if you're alone, which one should never be. Never ever.

However, apart from voters who are explicitly hostile to the SAP, the strategy with voters who are perceived to still be deliberating between the SAP and SD, is to purposefully divert the conversation away from immigration and towards issues that are more traditional for the SAP:

When you are speaking with people and you can get them to say that welfare is important for them, then we're on the right track. Then you can take the conversation in different directions, and after a while they can't defend themselves. They aren't able to. It's all about finding that thing that makes them say what they are interested in. Because if you can get them to do that, then it's much harder for them to say that 'ah well it doesn't matter'. Then you have invited them to say what's important for them, and you've made them feel important. Then of course it's also good if you have a personal story about something you yourself have experienced that is good. Say you are told that 'ah the healthcare is awful', and there are many that express themselves like this. Then perhaps you have a personal experience in which you have had great care and you tell them this. It's these kinds of things that make people go from saying 'pschhh' to 'mmm yea perhaps', and then you have a chance to continue the conversation (Fieldnotes, 1 March, 2018).

Trygghet-as-electoral-leitmotif

Echoing the national strategy, *trygghet* is the leitmotif for Norrköping's entire campaign (see Figure 47). As one of the participants elucidates:

Trygghet — it can be that I have a good school for my children, it can be that I know that when I go to my local health central I know that I will be received and cared for and all of that. It can also be that can I go out on the streets without being afraid that someone is going to jump me. So, there are many aspects in this trygghets campaign and it's therefore a good thing that we have produced a brochure that shows this. And you can you use it for every occasion, regardless of what specific question we are talking about. (Fieldnotes, 1 March, 2018).

Figure 47. Forward together – for a tryggare Sweden



(Photo by author, 24 March, 2018)

Figure 48. Election Priorities



'We have two prioritised target groups: Block changers: 750,000 voters between the SAP and the Alliance; Between SAP and SD: 350,000 voters between SAP and SD', (Photo by author, 24 March, 2018)

This is further elaborated on by Teresa Carvalho at the Labourer Commune's annual meeting three weeks later. In her opening speech of the day-long meeting held in a university lecture theatre in one of the former textile mills along the Motala river,

Carvalho sets the tone for the forthcoming election campaign. "When we leave here today" she tells the approximately 50 attendees, "we'll have with us a determined politics to bring to the residents of Norrköping. And we also need to decide what we think is the most passable way to create a *tryggare* and better Norrköping for all". The threat of a right-wing coalition between the Moderates and SD is real, she tells everyone. Their combined politics:

Would wear down cohesion, and that is something that threatens the Swedish Model. We the SAP want something different. We want to continue making large investments to improve the situation for families with children and pensioners. We want to continue our uncompromising fight against crime. That is *trygghet* for us. And Sweden will be *tryggt* in a new era. We can have high ambitions. We see that our economy is strong and that we have turned the deficit into a surplus. We have accelerated job growth and we have created order in our migration policies. But we still face challenges. We make no secret about that. The welfare needs to get better. *Otrygghet* must be fought. We have to make sure that newly arrived immigrants find employment faster. All of this is naturally about *trygghet*. *Trygghet* that creates a future vision and cohesion.

When the meeting reaches the section titled 'integration that unites', the responsible author and chair of the 'programme group', addresses the delegates. She begins by telling them that, although there is probably nothing too controversial in the section, she feels the need to explain the rationale behind the section because of its novelty. In previous election programmes, she describes, integration has not received an entire section, but rather has been discussed in conjunction with education and work (Fieldnotes, 25 March, 2018). However, in stark contrast to the previous election in 2014, integration has become more and more of a focused political priority. As the section details, Norrköping has 'historically been an open city [...] and will continue to take responsibility for people fleeing from war and oppression' (Norrkoping's SAP, 2018: 14, own translation). However, due to the migration volumes during autumn 2015, 'Norrköping accepted more newly arrived asylum seekers than most other municipalities' (ibid, 2018: 14, own translation). Because of the added strain this caused on an already socio-economically pressed situation in Norrköping, this can never be allowed to happen again. Therefore, Norrkoping's SAP demands that there

be a fairer distribution of asylum seekers to wealthier municipalities and that other EU member states take a greater responsibility in accepting asylum seekers (ibid, 2018: 14, own translation).





'Local election programme, trygget [sic] is the foundation', Photo by author, 24 March, 2018)

Equally so for the final section of the programme, 'Trygget [sic] is the foundation' (see Figure 49), Norrkoping MP Mattias Ottosson feels compelled to comment on the section's focus. Standing underneath a slide with a police van, Ottosson tries to energize the late-afternoon fatigued attendees by joking that the sight of police car always makes him sit up and act alert, so attendees better follow suit. This elicits some laughs, but more than anything it seems to highlight the novelty and awkwardness of the issue area for the SAP. Ottosson says that, although not nearly as affected as much larger municipalities such as Stockholm, Malmö and Göteborg, Norrköping has not been completely spared from gang-related violence which has contributed to an overall growing sense of otrygghet.⁵³ Therefore, among other things, the programme proposes a 'trygghets inventory for all the milieus which people move through and a plan of action for increased trygghet in the physical environment' (Norrkoping's SAP, 2018: 25, own translation). Ottosson finishes pro forma by saying that he supports the proposed programme.

⁵³ A 2015 report by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention found that Norrköping had a frequency of attempted murders per 100,000 citizens that was nearly on parity with the much larger municipalities of Stockholm and Göteborg (Andersson, 2016)

As the meeting chair asks if there are any reservations, Teresa who is sitting near the front says "we should probably add an h to *trygget*", commenting the slide's misspelling (Figure 49). To this, I jokingly whisper to 'Klara' that the misspelling should perhaps stay as this makes it seem folksier (*folklig*). A running joke between us, Klara laughs and shakes her head saying, "no way, it has to stop somewhere!" (Fieldnotes, 25 March, 2018). A few months prior Klara had expressed resentment towards the concept of the labour movement's boat, telling me that in the past it had been *too* folkish; with heavy drinking and even reports of sexual assault.⁵⁴ It was, in her mind, an outmoded affair that helped reinforce stereotypes of a male-dominated labour movement with a noxious relationship to alcohol (Fieldnotes, 3 December, 2017).

SD are otryggheten!

Klara tells me months later over lunch in mid-June that she could never have gotten involved in the SAP in her hometown due to what she sees as an infected political culture, where there is still a "working-class romanticism" for poverty that she is "allergic to" (Recorded Interview, 12 June, 2018, own translation). She therefore waited to join until she was away at university. What prompted this was the anger she had felt upon reading an exposé in the late-1990s of the identities of active neo-Nazis by Sweden's three largest newspapers. She was truly aghast, she describes, "that there were so many of them and that they were able to silence so many people" and that this anger therefore propelled her to join a party that in her mind represents the antithesis of neo-Nazism (ibid, own translation). This motivation still burns bright and conjures the strongest reaction when I ask Klara about the SAP's electoral strategy towards potential SD voters. She tells me that the party must of course do their best to try to support each member in how to engage with potential SD voters. But admits that with "SD it's the toughest, everyone feels insecure because it is so painful and difficult" (ibid, own translation). Conjuring this insurmountable feeling is the vastly different perceptions of reality that Klara thinks that SD supporters and party members hold in comparison to the SAP:

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⁵⁴ Though I do not doubt Klara's allegations, I was never able to receive any confirmation of these allegations when I asked other party members, nor did I witness any excessive drinking during my time onboard the cruise.

That these feelings are so deeply rooted in these people, that they feel such hatred, it's like do you and I live in the same city!? (ibid, own translation).

She recounts a recent visit to a nuclear fallout shelter outside the city that included all the members of Norrköping's city council. Completely untouched since the early 1980s, this expansive bunker deep within the bedrock was to act as a municipal command centre in the event of nuclear war. With fired enthusiasm in her eyes, Klara cries out:

but all I could feel was that, the threat is in here, the threat is SD! They're standing right here! They want to divide society. [...] I just felt like, I am not trygg in here at all. I should be incredibly trygg in here. They told us that the shelter can handle a 100-megaton nuclear bomb. I mean, that's 100 times more than the Hiroshima bomb and the mountain could withstand it! [...] SD is otryggheten for me. (ibid, own translation).

Despite SD's pro-welfare imagery, Klara says that this is just a smoke screen for a hyper economic liberalism. "We have to be honest [to voters]" she says, "and say that this is what divides Swedish politics today. It's NOT about immigration. (ibid, own translation). She continues:

And that's the watershed question you have to ask. I think that we should have a universal welfare with great healthcare for everyone who needs it instead of cutting taxes so that more people can afford private insurances [...] And it is incredibly difficult to have these conversations [with potential SD voters] and I notice that we're having plenty of them at the moment. And we would have to really get to know these people to understand why they can at all reason the way they do. And this we probably aren't able to do at their doorstep. Because if you look at Facebook, what they share. Then you see that they are divorced, have heart disease and are suffering from obesity. This isn't even a stereotype, this is somehow fact. And so many pictures with beer and I just feel like, how tragic isn't this fate? (ibid, own translation).

I ask her if it might not also be the case that an increasing number of voters directly connect immigration with issues such as longer queues for healthcare? What if they see migration as a prism through which all other welfare problems are visualized? She replies:

If they think that and there is no way of getting them to open up, then we just have to accept that then they aren't susceptible — then we cannot find common ground. [...] I can tell you that SD supports lowering taxes for the already rich. [...] but if you and I don't have the same understanding about what direction our society should go in then it's time to end the conversation as quickly as possible. (ibid, own translation).

Klara's understanding of SD supporters aligns with (see Figure 50) how the SAP officially represents those voters most susceptible to SD: sedentary, apartment dwellers with a particular affliction for betting and television. It is important, however, to emphasise that it is not that Klara does not understand that SD sympathizers were critical of immigration. Rather, echoing the electoral strategy, she means that the SAP has to divert SD sympathizers' hatred away from immigration and instead channel it towards the economic self-damage they would do by voting for SD. This is the real threat to their *trygghet*. Indeed, a majority of respondents in a survey of Norrköping's party members (see Figure 50) associated potential SD support among traditional SAP voters (broadly referred to as 'workers' — *arbetare*) with either immigration alone and/or ignorance or protestation.

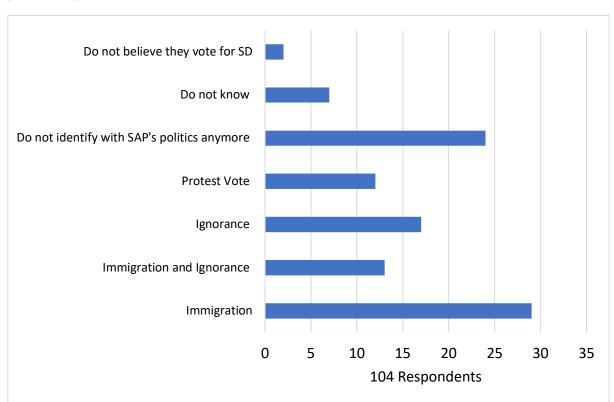


Figure 50. 'Do you believe that traditional SAP voters would consider voting for SD, and if so, why'? (June, 2018)

However, most members are dismissive of voters' resistance to immigration as being the fundamental reason for sympathising with SD. That is, many believe that the oftenstark aversion to immigration conceals what is *really* behind their support for SD. Many cite Norrköping's legacy of stagnation, unemployment and lower education levels as the primary reasons why support for SD has grown more there than in other comparably sized municipalities. As a former municipal commissioner tells me:

Coupled with the lot in life that many of Norrköping's residents have, then I think that they are afraid of the unknown. When they have very little knowledge of other cultures then they also become more protective over the things that one has control over. When things happen that one isn't familiar with dealing with then that creates insecurity. And it is precisely that insecurity that SD captures. (Recorded interview, 6 March, 2018, own translation).

This insecurity (osäkerhet), an older seasoned member describes, is because SD supporters, "are the first that feel the impact of competition". For him, the growing support for SD in Norrköping is a direct consequence of the "internationalisation from

the 80's and onwards and also joining the EU". These processes have ushered in the establishment of staffing agencies and increased labour immigration. Therefore, he tells me, "I'm not at all surprised that people have these sorts of reactions when they feel as though they are replaceable". As to how his party should to appeal to this new precariat, he says:

we need to think through and discuss how we create a coherent politics that shows how we remain a society in which *trygghet* is more than just police but where *trygghet* is also that one has a job to go to. (Recorded interview, 4 June, 2018, own translation).

Current municipal commissioner Lars Stjernkvist is still optimistic, however, that what (in his mind) is driving SD support can be broken:

It isn't so that the possibility to live a better life than one's parents ended when the manufacturing industry disappeared from Norrköping. You can have a part of the development. But then you have to get the education that is required. That's what I think is the root cause of all this *otrygghet* and insecurity. (Recorded interview, 28 February, 2018, own translation).

"Ignorance", a newly active party member in his 40s bluntly responds when I ask him the same question (Recorded interview, 4 April, 2018, own translation). He feels that it is his responsibility as a union representative to always actively "have the discussion" with the "SDers" (ibid, own translation). Having been at the same workplace for the past 20 years, in the last couple of years he has found that an increasing number of colleagues (almost all of who are LO members) seem to sympathise with SD. How does he know who supports SD? "When they talk about the foreign-born, then I know immediately" he replies sighing (ibid, own translation). How does he 'take the discussion' with them? "I try to tell them that they've been given the wrong information. This is how it really is and then I explain" (ibid, own translation). How does this sit with them? Laughing, the man answers in between sips of his Coke, "Well, that really depends!" (ibid, own translation). At home at an elderly couple, this idea of ignorance is reiterated:

It's a shame to say it but I believe that our voter base is on the lesser intellectual half of the pitch. That's just how it is. (Recorded interview, 9 June, 2018, own translation).

When I ask what they think the party should do locally to retain potential SD sympathisers the man looks slightly bewildered and shakes his head saying, "I have absolutely no idea" and quickly passes the question over to his partner (ibid, own translation). "I think we need to talk about welfare and *trygghet*" the woman clarifies (ibid, own translation). "And not always feel as though we need to answer questions about immigration. We should of course always clarify our position, but we should not discuss it." (ibid, own translation). Interestingly, these above SAP members' perspectives mirror a substantial portion of the literature explaining the growing support for right-wing populist parties in Europe.

The misleading analytic comfort of economism

The so-called 'losers of globalisation' thesis (e.g. Betz, 1994; Lubbers et al., 2002; Oesch, 2006) posits that the increasing post-industrialisation of advanced economies has sparked a growing resentment among certain segments of the electorate (e.g. the unemployed, low-educated and/or unskilled labourers). This has, in turn, been increasingly capitalised on by parties belonging to the so-called 'radical right' (Rydgren, 2006b), which SD is argued to belong to. The argument has recently been reinforced by a number of Swedish economists who argue that the growing support for SD is primarily related to the segment of the electorate affected the most by increased economic insecurity and inequality (Dehdari, 2018). Rather than the dramatically increased levels of immigration to Sweden (both before and after the 2015 refugee crisis), it is instead the growing sense of deprivation felt by this economically threatened segment of the population that has drawn them to SD's nativism and antielitism (Bó et al., 2018). For economists, this correlative exercise might seem conclusive. However, echoing Mouffe (2005), there is a classist element to these analyses whereby liberal academics try to explain their discomfort at the growth of parties such as SD as being due to, 'the role of uneducated, lower-class voters, susceptible to being attracted by demagogues' (2005: 65; cf. Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

In addition to being superbly elitist, these analyses completely flatten the ability to analytically drill beyond purely economic motivations. Here the particular strengths of qualitative methods come to the fore. While surveys are essential in identifying the broad contours of SD supporter's motivations, it is the richness of ethnographic interactions that allows for a unique level of insight into the complicated motivations for voting for SD. During these interactions, supporters are given the unbridled opportunity to elaborate on what motivates their vote for SD. As the interactions with SD voters in Chapter Five showed, these people did not at all feel economically threatened by immigrants. Immigrants are not, as the colloquialism so often goes, 'taking their jobs'. Rather, it was the perceived lack of immigrants' integration into the Swedish 'way of life' which fuelled dismay. What primarily energises SD voters is a socio-cultural aversion to immigration that simply cannot be captured in economic data. Indeed, while fitting well (and comfortably) into the SAP's societal vision, these diagnoses are entirely disconnected from what the SD supporters themselves articulated in Chapter Five. As I argue in the next section, the SAP traces a long history of understanding and framing trygghet in precisely this manner. Fundamentally, this explains the SAP's strategy to either re-claim or prevent its voters from deserting the party for SD.

The SAP's shifting emotive catalyst: from rage to otrygghet

In an illuminating analysis, Ljungren (2015) argues that agitators in the labour movement's infancy during the late 1800s and early 1900s, mobilised what he terms a 'thymotic emotionology' in order to conjure a rage among Sweden's labourers (2015: 74, own translation).⁵⁵ However, as the party under Per Albin Hansson's leadership became more established and set its sights on parliamentary power and sought to mutate from a working class-based party into a *folkhem*'s party, this rage proved increasingly problematic. As described in the previous chapter, the party had expelled the youth wing in 1917 due to its revolutionary tendencies that were built on rage. Yet these currents, Ljunggren argues, were not so easy to dispel. The 'confrontational rage'

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⁵⁵ Ljunggren's usage of the ancient Greek concept of 'thymos' ('spiritedness') draws from Sloterdijk's (2010) exploration of how the thymotic impulse of 'rage' has manifested politically in various historical junctures. Though with a different normative footing, Sloterdijk draws on neoconservative scholarship on the importance of 'thymos' (cf. Fukuyama, 1992) to argue for a renewal of the concept for a transformative leftist politics.

that had once served as a powerful instrument for the party's early agitators was therefore seen as deeply problematic for Hansson. In his mind, it had the potential to undermine democracy and scare away the middle class from the SAP and his project of the encompassing *folkhem* (Ljunggren, 2015: 265, own translation). Hansson and his advisors associated rage with 'lower instincts, psychotic conditions, irrationality, uniformly leftist politics, [and] dictators' (ibid: 150, own translation). Therefore, Ljunggren argues, in both speeches and propaganda Hansson and party secretary Gustav Möller deliberately sought to moderate and transform the base's rage into 'worry and *otrygghet*' (ibid: 137, own translation and emphasis). The distinction between these emotive thymotic impulses is important. While rage conjures 'an aggressive will to seek justice', worry and *otrygghet* invokes an, 'angst-filled sensation of change or the need to handle an unknown future' (ibid: 137, own translation).

To achieve this emotional-political reorientation, *otrygghet* was increasingly linked to the 'economic concentration of power' in the private sector (ibid: 162, own translation). This existential *otrygghet* was argued to affect the entirety of the SAP's broad cross-class base and was therefore used as a powerful justification for the party's encompassing welfare agenda that was blueprinted in the 1944 manifesto:

But *trygghet* for all cannot be achieved solely by a good organisation of the private sector. [...] A large support burden can make even a good income inadequate. Industrial policy must therefore be complemented by social-political arrangements (SAP, 1944, own translation).

As Ljunggren details, from the 1940s and onwards, the SAP's mobilisation of *trygghet* became increasingly enveloping, used in conjunction with everything from growing industrial production rates to solidarity and nuclear disarmament (2015: 163).

However, as the post-war economy boomed and the expansive welfare socialized more and more of the risks used to originally conjure the sensations of worry and otrygghet, the challenge for the SAP became how to sustain these mobilizing precepts. This became increasingly apparent during Hansson's successor Tage Erlander's premiership (1946 – 1969). To overcome this budding paradoxical impasse, whereby a growing socio-economic trygghet diminished the ability to mobilise the vital sense of otrygghet, for the first decade of his premiership Erlander sought to internationalise the potential otrygghet that threatened to undermine the SAP's

domestic achievements (ibid: 187-197). By the early 1960s, however, the continued boom of the Swedish economy fuelled a need for massive effectivization reforms in order for the export-oriented economy to remain competitive. Defending the necessity of these reforms, Erlander recognized that the rapid changes that Sweden had undergone had created a new opportunity to connect worry and *otrygghet* to domestic politics. Ahead of the 1968 election, Erlander argued that worry saturated both the international arena (e.g. the war in Vietnam) and domestically with the industrial reforms and expanding urbanisation. Swedes had a legitimate reason to feel worry and *otrygghet* and therefore should cast their vote and confidence with the safe and steady hands of the SAP. However, the prevailing radical leftist political winds sweeping through Europe had also reached Sweden.

Navigating trygghet

What the previously discussed New Left rebelled against was precisely the trygghet the SAP was advocating for. These young people, often university students, argued fervently that Sweden was too predictable, too trygg and that the 'SAP's politics of trygghet was an illusion' as it quelled all possibility to find deeper meaning (ibid: 270, own translation). While middle-class parents increasingly took the trygghet that the welfare state provided for granted, their children rebelled against the conformity and predictability of it all. Importantly, Ljunggren argues, the New Left re-ignited a thymotic impulse of rage that the SAP had long sought to supress. Olof Palme, the new SAP leader and PM, tried to find commonality with them by directing rage directed towards international events such as the Vietnam war, while he continued to argue that the economic worry and otrygghet that existed in Sweden could only be remedied through traditional pragmatic SAP politics (ibid: 253-261). From the 1970s onwards, the SAP's ability to effectively moderate the articulation of other thymotic impulses, particularly rage, has receded. As Ljunggren summates,

The Scylla and Charybdis of worry and otrygghet has been rage and trygghet. SAP party leaders have had to skilfully to navigate between these [positions] (ibid: 274, own translation, original emphasis).

Although Ljunggren's analysis only extends to the 1970s, the SAP has largely maintained the same course until present day, claiming that it is the most assured bulwark against *otrygghet*. Though increasingly emphasising cultural difference, human rights and identity, which as we saw in the last chapter has also helped to attract certain members, the party writ large has continued to strategically formulate and dissipate its politics against worry and socio-economic *otrygghet*.

Sweden as an industrial society was increasingly transitioning towards a 'knowledge society', and the individual (now at the centre of attention) was encouraged (or rather, expected) to adapt through learning new skills (Andersson, 2010). The SAP was explicit in framing this new entrepreneurially-tinged 'knowledge society' with the 'values' of folkhemmet, seeing it as 'a logical continuation of its teleological trajectory' (Andersson, 2009a: 240; 232). This was a time of 'trygghet i förändring' (trygghet during change) (Andersson, 2009b: 121, original emphasis). From the 1990s and onwards, concerned with an increasingly post-industrial 'knowledge economy', the party increasingly grappled with the fact that 'growth no longer seems to need everyone to begin with' (Andersson, 2010: 142). The growing visibility of a 'knowledge proletariat' that had been left behind by advancements in industry, Andersson argues, highlighted an awkward ideological tension for the SAP in its vision of ensuring trygghet (2009b: 142; 143). Therefore, the party increasingly emphasized a wide array educative measures - 'the modernization of folkbildning' [people's educational cultivation]' – in the effort to reintegrate those left behind by the acceleration of 'knowledge capitalism' (ibid: 142;143).

In its 2002 election manifesto, titled 'Together for trygghet and development', the emphasis on everyone having a rightful place was central. Equally so in 2006, the message was even more explicit, 'Everyone is coming along' (SAP, 2006: 3, own translation). Yet, as I argued in the previous chapter, this position left the SAP open to attack from the re-energised Moderates. The two elections that the SAP then fought in opposition, 2010 and 2014, increasingly emphasised how, under the Moderate-led Alliance government, more and more people were being left behind as an accelerating inequality took hold. The only guarantee for 'a better Sweden for everyone' was a vote for the 'future party' (SAP, 2014: 4, own translation). Yet, the emboldened salience of the socio-cultural cleavage surrounding the growing presence of non-European asylum-seekers and refugees has arguably increasingly ruptured segments of the traditional base's subscription to this explanatory model. To illustrate how this

manifested in the 2018 campaign in Norrköping, the next section zooms in on the neighbourhood of Vilbergen. Though still an SAP stronghold, the significant increase in support for SD in the 2014 election led to Vilbergen being a key prioritized area in the 2018 local electoral strategy. After contextualising Vilbergen, I then show how SD supporters' caustic anger towards immigration severely weakens the SAP's ability to capture them with traditional warnings of worry and otrygghet.

Vilbergen, from 'wild backwater' to the future

Peripherally situated on high ground 2 kilometres to the south of the city centre (see Figure 3 in the Chapter Three), Vilbergen comprises a mixture of rented and tenantowned low and high-rise apartment buildings. Up until the late 1960s, this expanse of undulating hills had been occupied only by a limited number of small farms and villas. These were then demolished to make room for modern apartment complexes as part of the SAP government's so-called 'million programme'. As Horgby and Nilsson observe, apart from its previous utility as a powerplant for industry, the Motala River functioned as a natural sociO-economic demarcation between the 'working' Norrköping to the West and North, and the well-heeled commercial and administrative classes to the East and South (2000: 530). For much of Norrköping's industrial history, workers lived in squalid conditions (among the absolute worst in Sweden) — with the affluent moving out of the increasingly slum-like city centre.

This changed in the 1960s as part of the expanding *trygghet* ambitions of the SAP government, Norrköping was designated a number of these housing developments (e.g. Vilbergen, Hageby and Navestad) (Kvarnström et al., 2000). As the name suggests, the aim of the project was to build a million new modern homes between 1965-1975 in order to meet the demand for modern housing that accompanied Sweden's post-war economic boom (Hall and Vidén, 2005). In addition to having an elementary school, this Vilbergen Centrum (see Figure 52) offers residents an array of amenities including a grocery store, bowling hall, library and café. Demographically, with an official population of 4,884 in 2018, Vilbergen is almost precisely half the size of Norrköping's by far largest neighbourhood of Hageby (pop. 9,546) (Norrköping Municipality, 2019a).

Richon And Zongo.

Berget

Kneippen

Sapkullen

Soderstaden

Liura

Etura

Skarphagen

Karrhagen

West

Vilbergen

Hageby

South

Figure 51. Vilbergen's 3 Electoral Districts

(Created with OpenStreetMap, 2020; Data from: Swedish Electoral Authorities, 2014)





Vilbergen Centrum still offers an array of amenities and functions as an important meeting point for local residents (Photo by author, 8 May, 2018)

Figure 53. Vilbergen North



Southward view of the high-rises in Vilbergen North from the other side of the E22 motorway (located behind the trees) in the neighbourhood of Ektorp (Photo by author, 8 May, 2018

Figure 54. The 'Wild Mountains'



A farming settlement in Vilbergen in 1963 before it was demolished to make room for modernity – the 'million programme' housing development (Photo by unknown, 1963)

Figure 55. The future has arrived



Vilbergen in 1970 (Photo by unknown, 1970)

"This used to be called the Wild Mountains [a pun that only works in Swedish] and have a slightly bad reputation", a man who has worked in Vilbergen for more than three decades, describes over coffee at the café in Vilbergen Centrum in late-August, 2018 (Recorded interview, 30 August, 2018, own translation). Though from the "other end" of Norrköping to the north, 'Nils' had played football on makeshift pitches in his youth in the area before the land and settlements were cleared to make room the new housing in 1968. He tells me that before this, Vilbergen "was pure countryside and a bit unkempt and housing wasn't so regulated back then so all sorts of small cottages would pop up and there were even rumours of moonshining." (ibid, own translation). A perceptive man with a keen interest in local history and affairs whose political allegiance is on the left (although he is not a member of any political party), Nils explains that Vilbergen is quite different from the other million programme housing projects in Norrköping. This is, he says, due to the presence of two of the largest tenant-owned housing associations in Sweden. As a result, he thinks that this is the reason why there has been very little subsidised housing in Vilbergen. He qualifies this by adding,

[...] this isn't to say that working-class people didn't live here. Because they definitely did. But it was perhaps a more affluent part of the working class that lived here. It was the diligent worker that lived here. (ibid, own translation)

One thing that particularly struck him when he first moved there, which in his opinion, still holds, is the number of pensioners in Vilbergen. Thirty-five percent of its population are over 65 years of age, giving it the greatest percentage of residents in retirement age in the entire municipality (e.g. the equivalent in Hageby is 15 percent). Its open-unemployment rate of 8.7 percent is below Norrköping's overall rate of 9.5 percent (Hageby's is 29.4 percent) (Norrköping Municipality, 2018).

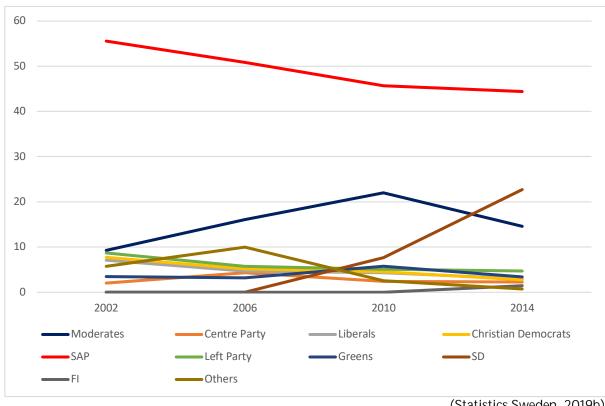


Figure 56. Average Parliamentary List Results for Vilbergen's 3 Districts (2002-2014)

(Statistics Sweden, 2019b)

An unappreciative reception

During a crisp evening in mid-March, Vilbergen resident and party member 'Göran' tells a group of eight canvassers that the area has long been an SAP stronghold for support.⁵⁶ Indeed, as shown in Figure 57, all three of Vilbergen's districts have been, and remain, strong SAP seats on the municipal, regional and parliamentary lists. In charge of the campaigning for that particular evening, it is Göran's responsibility to contextualize the electoral district for everyone. As we walk up from the centre area's parking lot towards the apartment blocks designated for door canvassing in 'Vilbergen North', he describes how support for SD "shot through the roof here in 2014". Someone asks why he thinks that is? "They want to signal that they don't want immigrants", Göran quickly replies. He later clarifies that voters there do not want Vilbergen to turn into Hageby which it is separated from by a motorway and the Vrinnevi forest (Fieldnotes, 14 March, 2018). In Hageby, only 43.5 percent of the population are born in Sweden (in contrast to Vilbergen's 86.3 percent) (Norrköping Municipality, 2019b).



Figure 57. Vilbergen, Hageby and Navestad

Vilbergen and Hageby separated by the Vrinnevi forest and Vrinnevi Hospital (Norrköping Municipality, 2017)

Once we reach the entrance to the first of three looming 9 story brick buildings, we are split into pairs and each designated one stairwell to canvas. My partner that evening is 'Alfred', an ambitious younger party member. Exiting the elevator at the top floor, there is a faint musty smell that is cut with surface cleaner. Three units to each floor,

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⁵⁶ Vilbergen only became a distinguishable cartographic ensemble of 3 electoral districts ahead of the 2002 parliamentary election (when all of Norrköping was substantially re-districted).

the lighting in the hall casts a synthetic warmish yellow dim glow that seems to drain the energy I had amassed from the brisk walk up from the parking lot. We start with the door furthest from the elevator. "Hi, Alfred and Carl, we're with the SAP". Almost before Alfred finishes his introduction, the man, straightening his posture (almost like he's about to spit at us), bawls loudly 'ARGHHHHH" as he slams the door shut. This raucous is then met with a deafening silence. With an exaggerated surprised facial expression, Alfred turns to me smiling and mouths "okaayyyy".

When we are finished with 'our' stairwell, Alfred and I join 'Olof' in the outside courtyard after he has completed an entire stairwell by himself. "Ugh it's so frustrating" Olof says when Alfred asks how it went for him. "This gets me nervous. Like, many people aren't home. But I think there was one or two max that I felt like I was at least positively received by, but all the others just said, 'Ah I'm not interested in politics'. As if one is intruding". Nodding, Alfred says, 'But it's like the last campaign when we thought this area was ours. When we were 30 people and, like, had time for the whole neighbourhood. Alfred sighs, 'But ugh. Then came the results. Chuckling he asks, what did SD get, 25 percent? Olof, whose walking in place trying to keep warm, says softly, 'I don't know. Alfred adds, 'It was like when we were knocking in Hageby. There everyone was a sosse first. But as soon as we moved to the villas and townhouses, it turned. I still think we have the Ring houses (as the million project apartment complexes are called), but not the villas and townhouses – there one isn't a sosse. Olof and Alfred laugh seemingly in agreement. Alfred sounding almost defeatist, says how lots of the old S-associations like the Bosnian one has had to be written off. Olof says that since the 1970s, lots of first-generation immigrants have been sossar but now it's their kids, 'and they become Sweden Democrats'. We all laugh. Perhaps this banter is some comic relief that helps party activists deal with the sort of paralyzing, overwhelmingly defeatist sensation that seems to swell whenever they talk about how the 'SD code' can be cracked when there is such apparent visceral hatred towards sossar (Fieldnotes, 14 March, 2018).

Indeed, the support for the SAP in the million programme complexes in Hageby was very strong. In the 2010 election, the party received an average of 55 percent across its five districts. The equivalent for the second largest party, the Moderates, was 14.6 percent. In 2014, support for the SAP decreased to 48 percent and 11.7 percent for the Moderates, while SD averaged support of 16 percent. Due to the significantly reduced level of electoral participation (more than twenty percent lower in certain

districts such as 'Hageby North'), the SAP's strategy for the entire area is strictly 'mobilization' during the final two weeks before the 9 September election. Although I did partake in a significant number of these speed sessions, the focus was to remind and/or clarify for Hageby residents that they were eligible to vote, when the election was and where the nearest polling station was. In order to maximise the level of 'mobilization', the level of substantive dialogue is therefore, by necessity, minimal.

On the other hand, the opposite is true for Vilbergen. Although still an SAP stronghold, the swift jump in support for SD there between 2010 and 2014 is, I am told repeatedly, of particular concern for the SAP. As one seasoned party member sighs to me with palpable frustration at the aforementioned Labourer Commune's annual meeting "these are our voters" (Fieldnotes, 25 March, 2018). Over coffee later that spring, I ask Göran about Vilbergen and the support for SD there. After reflecting for a moment, he tells me:

I think that many of these [people]... they aren't impacted by immigration more than that they see them and don't want a bunch of goddamn immigrants coming and they get angry about that. (Recorded interview, 6 June, 2018, own translation).

I ask if he thinks that the door-to-door canvassing there will have any effect on this?

I mean you've been with us canvassing and sure we meet SD people but we can have a good dialogue with them. Whether or not we can convince them of anything I don't know! (ibid, own translation).

His tone then grows more serious:

But I think in order to approach them we need to say, 'let's ignore immigration'. Remove that issue and instead talk about healthcare. Are you really prepared for the kind of healthcare that SD stands for? They want to cut a lot in the budget and that will affect you. We'll get lower pensions and they will lower the taxes for the well-off. [...] In the labour market too, they want to get rid of the *trygghets* laws there too. (ibid, own translation).

Göran's prescription aligns closely with the official SAP strategy for dealing with SD: try to broaden the conversation *beyond* immigration; get the SD supporter (or deliberating supporter) to open up and share their worldview with you in order to then rupture it by showing how SD aim to severely weaken your economic *trygghet*. This is put to the test a multitude of times throughout the 2018 campaign. However, many SAP members tell me over the course of the summer how incredibly difficult they find it to get purported SD supporters to interact in the first place, let alone re-direct their resentment away from the SAP, who they almost uniformly see as *the* progenitor of the insurmountable mess that Sweden, in their minds, is in. Indeed, this difficulty is strongly exemplified during another evening of campaigning in Vilbergen.

Conveying 'hard' and 'soft' trygghet

Two months after first canvassing in 'Vilbergen North', I join a new group of members for another evening of canvassing in the remaining large apartment buildings in the district that were not covered previously. The priority is *trygghet* and the accompanying pamphlet (see Figure 58) to be distributed with a female police and nurse on the cover, seeks to fuse both 'hard' and 'soft' *trygghet* issues. "I haven't canvassed with you before, I usually start by asking what's the most important issue in the election, does that work for you?" 'David' asks 'Britta' and me in the elevator up to the top floor. David is among the best canvassers I encounter in Norrköping. Though he is relatively new to the party (joining in 2013, this is his second campaign), he is engaged and vibrant and always has a respectful and upbeat tone. However, despite David's simpatico affect, the following vignette from canvassing in Vilbergen exemplifies the tremendous difficulty even skilful canvassers had when seeking to appeal to SD supporters.

Figure 58. Hard and Soft trygghet



'Both harder and softer responses: The Largest Trygghets Programme in Modern Times' (Norrkoping's SAP, 2018b)

Navigating disinterest and rage

After the first few doors yield no response, a woman in her mid-30s finally responds to David's knocks. As David hands the pamphlet to the woman who is now busy translating into Arabic to her partner who also comes to the door, he tells them both "this is our party but you can of course read up and decide which you think is best". He has just explained that, because the family has lived in Sweden for four years, they are certainly eligible to vote on the municipal list in September's election. Just then an older man in shorts walks past where we are standing by the entrance to the Syrian families flat.

Turning his attention to the man who is now digging for his keys to one of the other flats on the floor, David says, "do you also perhaps want to say something to the SAP now that you have the chance"? Looking slightly away from his task, the man bellows, "NO, SD!" and then mumbles while directing his attention once again to his

door. Undeterred, David responds, "We're out listening to what the residents of Vilbergen..." "SD"! the man rasps loudly once again. "Okay, I understand", David responds, then says in a mild tone, "well, we are listening to what the residents of Vilbergen think, but you have a good one anyways". By this point, the man is halfway inside his apartment. Without turning towards us, he slams his door shut so loud that my eyes shutter reflexively. "We have to try at least" David says shrugging. "They haven't understood what they are losing" Britta, who takes a backseat role in the interactions with voters that day, says softly as we start up the stairs to the next level. I tell them both that I have actually never heard anyone say specifically that they support SD before. "Ah yea well I have. Quite a few times", David says. "I could have perhaps asked some sort of counter question, but, and perhaps I'm being judgemental, in this case it felt like this was a person who had already clearly decided". Pressing the buzzer to the next flat, he adds, "so it's probably just better to move on". "Yea, they aren't susceptible", Brita sighs. "Precisely, it's those that are still on the fence that we should really try to talk with" David says as the apartment door is opened by an elderly lady.

In his characteristic upbeat and energized tone, David introduces us and asks the elderly lady if there is anything she thinks is extra important in the coming election. With the television blaring in the background, the lady answers cautiously, "well I don't know". "Is there something, some part of politics that you think..." Before David can finish, the lady looks at us, "I'm not interested in politics". "Not at all" David asks. "And there is nothing that you think that we can do better"? "I don't think so" the lady replies. "How wonderful that everything is so great that there is nothing that needs changing" David exclaims. He continues, "It's important that we politicians listen to those who live in the municipality and hear their perspectives. But you don't think that you're going to vote at all this autumn"? Unphased by David's leading assumption, the lady says, "Oh, one has to vote". "Do you want to say for who" David asks. "Yes, it'll be for the SAP". "How wonderful – then we'll be very happy! Is there anything you'd like to ask?" David asks again. "Well I grew up with them" the lady explains. "Well that's so nice!", David exclaims. "As I said, we'll gladly listen if there is something that you'd like for us to pass on to the municipal counsellors. If there's anything in particular that works well..." "No there's nothing" the lady says in response to this first question. "No?" "Nope, nothing" she replies with slight impatience. "Otherwise you can of course contact us and tell us if there is anything we can do for you". As he hands her a pamphlet, David says:

Then we wish you a nice evening. Do you want some information about which issues we are prioritizing? There is a lot on *trygghet* politics. Above all how we want to restore welfare — more police, more personnel in healthcare. It's important that we strengthen these because there have been lots of cuts for a long time and we therefore need to strengthen healthcare and *tryggheten*. But otherwise, we wish you a nice evening.

Looking slightly relieved, as she shuts her door, the lady replies, "Yes, thank you. Good bye". Chuckling as he rings the next door, David says, "sometimes one has to fish a little".

A short lady who looks to be slightly younger than the lady we just spoke with opens the door. David once again introduces us all. To this the lady, who, judging from the smell coming from inside her apartment is still, or has just, eaten dinner, replies, "Yeaahhh I was given a paper in town today". "Oh, so you've already read?" asks David. "Yup, so it's all sorted" replies the lady quickly. "Did anyone ask you what you think the most important issue in the election is?" "Do you know what I told them?" the lady asks. Before David or Britta can reply, the lady continues, "I'm not going to vote for the SAP this election". "Oh shucks, have you chosen someone else" asks David. "No, I might not have. As it looks now, I might not vote. I don't think anything works the way it should." "Anything in particular?" "Yea it's here in this town, I don't think it's working".

Growing visibly agitated and raising her voice, a smouldering rage seems to spill over. "SO much money that goes to those who do nothing!" the lady blares. "And all of those, I'm not a racist but one can't just go around for years and collect lots of money. This isn't right!" "So, you mean the benefits system and those related issues" David asks calmly. Now entranced in anger, the lady does not seem to listen. Instead she points upwards towards the above flat where we had recently been. "There's a couple up her that have been in Sweden for four years. I asked them when they'd been here for 2 or 3 years if they pay rent. Yes, we pay through the Social Insurance System. That's our tax money, I told them!" Her sharp tone echoes in the hallway. To this, David answers calmly, "We have talked quite a bit about integration issues." "Yea, well

it's all pork-barrelling" the lady retorts. "But SD have a lot of good things to say, put in competent people!" "Yes, that's a problem", David says nodding, signalling intently that he is listening. "Yes, I think that, I mean we've taken in so many people from outside and they will never lift a finger in Sweden. Never. Just cost a lot of money. I think it's so wrong!" The lady says loudly. David nods again, and says, "Yes, in Norrköping we have had an especially high level of immigration because we have the EBO [see discussion in Chapter Four] law which means that people move here."

The floodgates of enraged discontent have opened. The lady broadens her resentment to fixate on another particular grievance she has. "In Södertull [bus depot in Norrköping city centre] today, it was terrible. Both men and women sitting drinking their beer and smoking on the benches. There are lots of things that need to be sorted". "Yes, I understand that it's a lot", David replies. "We can't do too much about that in Norrköping. But centrally, there they are talking about *trygghets* issues and that people feel *otrygga*". He exclaims, "We at least have the right people on our pamphlet!" "It's a police officer and a nurse." "Yes, yes, I have a grandchild who is a nurse" the lady replies unconvinced. David continues, "Yes we also notice that there are of course lots of promises made, but it's precisely these issues that you bring up that we in the SAP have understood that we are losing many core voters because of." "Yes, yes, that's the way it is" the lady counters hastily.

After at length cataloguing examples of how "acquaintances" of hers are cheating the benefits system in various ways, David finally interjects, "It's precisely this kind of thing that winds people up." Nodding, the lady adds that it is the same with a group of pensioners she has seen in Norrköping's city centre protesting about their low pensions. Rather than sympathising, she adds that they too probably are on housing benefits. "Well", David says, "raising pensions is one of our electoral promises." "Yea well you are going to raise housing benefits as well" the lady snarls. "So, with me you can discuss these issues", implying she will not be fooled by David's politicking. Raising her voice, she says,

I'm very well-read on all of this. And it's all wrong. They [the aforementioned protesting pensioners] stand and say they only get 8,000 in pension and when I ask her, who pays your rent? I DO! It's our tax money I tell her. I call these people social cases!

To this swell of outrage, David gets slightly more defensive, and clarifies his party's position,

We want people to have the right to a certain standard of living and benefits do not always have to be a bad thing, but it should of course go to the right people.

This just seems to energise the lady even more. Following a difficult to follow rant on unemployed immigrants, David, eager to end the conversation, nods and says "Yes, they need to be motivated. But we thank you so much for the conversation. It sounds like we are on the right track, but there is a lot left to do." "Yea well you can try, but you know what, I think I'm going to vote for SD this time around" the lady says, grinning. "Oh well then we aren't happy!" "No!" the lady exclaims, laughing. "Well then we have failed" David says. "We will try to do what we can. But it's good that you tell us. Maybe we'll come back here and knock on your door sometime in the summer if we manage to solve some of the problems!" The lady laughs. Closing her door, she says derisively, "Yea that sounds good. Have a good one." That was precisely one of those voters I say to David and Britta. "Yea there are many." David replies. "And that's when we can say straight out that we are losing those who used to vote for us." (Fieldnotes, 8 May, 2018, own translation).

When socio-cultural worlds collide: competing visions of trygghet

The reticence to placate rage

David's interaction with the first elderly lady who remains a steadfast SAP voter is representative of many interactions I experience during the campaign. These lifelong voters do not require any convincing and are often rather disinterested in hearing about specific policies that the party is proposing. For them, it is second nature to vote for the SAP. David's inability, on the other hand, to break through to the other elderly lady who is less sure about who she will vote for, is a vivid example of the cognitive disconnect between the SAP and its purported audience.

As David tells me over coffee in early March when I ask him if he can understand why voters might feel anxious towards non-European immigrants:

I can't identify with that feeling, that one sees a person with a headscarf or a bourka — for me that has never led to any sort of feeling of *otrygghet* [...] I've never had the thought, 'oh how many people there are that don't look like me'. I can't really understand how we are supposed to respond to that. (Recorded interview, 6 March, 2018, own translation).

I play devil's advocate and ask how he would respond if he is faced with a voter who does indeed feel an anxiety towards immigrants:

Well society doesn't look the same way, I mean, I can't deliver something political and just say, 'we will change it back to the way it used to be'. [...] Society will change. (ibid, own translation).

Growing slightly flustered, which is rare for an otherwise very calm and collected person, David continues,

I wouldn't give a shit if you found it difficult that society is changing! I don't want to discuss that with you. That's your problem... (ibid, own translation).

He seems to catch himself; smiling, he pauses before he says, "Ohh I don't know, then I probably can't convince you after all!" (ibid, own translation). As a university educated professional, David simply cannot understand why ethnic and/or cultural difference would prove so triggering. He used to be "substantially redder when he was younger", but he was finally convinced to join the SAP due to the direction the party took ahead of the 2014 election, when the focus on the 'Swedish Model' became more explicit: "Redistributive politics are important for me, as is prioritising care of the weakest." (ibid, own translation).

David's Boundless nostalgia (which very much resembles Klara's) is far removed from the enraged old lady who indicates that she used to cast her vote for the SAP. Although he follows the party strategy to a tee, he is unable to break her rage against a plethora of injustices that she herself activates by condemning the Syrian family living above her. Their undeserving presence, and particularly, their lack of contributing to the Swedish social contract is deeply troubling to her. If we recall Nils' description of Vilbergen as home to the 'diligent' worker, this arguably touches on a

deep-seated mentality in Sweden that I also described in the interactions with SD supporters in Chapter Five. Their idea of *trygghet* is one in which 'diligence' (*skötsamhet*) is central. The rage of SD supporters is diametrically opposed to how the SAP envisions its teleological mandate of being *the* arbiter and provider of *trygghet*. When David tries to repeatedly articulate the SAP's policies that are meant to increase *trygghet* such as investing in more police or raising pensions, the lady is insusceptible and just gets more enraptured by her anger. He never finds the opportunity to explain to her that, rather than the Syrian family living upstairs, SD are the real threat to her *trygghet*. It is therefore hard to imagine how, if he had told her this, it would have broken her enraged trance.

Though often not as visceral as Alfred's and my encounter with the growling man, throughout the campaign, SAP members often describe how encounters with SD supporters differ markedly from interactions with other party supporters on both sides of the Left-Right spectrum. Indeed, this was also my perception in the approximately thirty campaigning activities I partook in during the spring and summer of 2018. In contrast to the often-resentful rage of SD supporters, interactions with voters on the centre-right were, more often than not, amicable. One such instance that illustrates this well is in late August when Alfred and I were once again canvassing together, this time, however, in an affluent villa area in the neighbourhood of Smedby.

Having made our way up most of the long hill, we come to an intersection of two roads. Standing adjacent to us on the corner of where the two streets meet is a newly painted in all white large villa with a pool. An expensive BMW sedan stands in the driveway. "You think they are sossar?" Alfred quips as we approach the door. A middle-aged woman wearing a Barbour jacket and a baseball cap who seems to have either just gotten home, or is on her way out, opens the door. Alfred introduces himself and asks her if there is anything she wants us to "bring back into politics?" She replies, "No and I've already made up my mind." "Was the SAP an alternative?" Alfred counters. "Nope" the woman says smiling. He wishes her a nice Sunday and we move on. (Fieldnotes, 25 August, 2018).

The SAP's stalemate: discordant visions of trygghet and otrygghet

"It's a way of painting populism"

The absolute majority of active party members in Norrköping seem convinced by the central strategy precisely because it fundamentally does not disrupt their Social Democratic compass. Although there is a greater reference to a form of *trygghet* that they were not accustomed to, nor perhaps entirely comfortable with, the general thrust of the strategy and electoral manifesto is familiar. Indeed, in spite of the disagreement highlighted in Chapter Six surrounding the party's position on refugee immigration and the small fraction of members who quit as a result, grassroots members in Norrköping are indeed 'believers' (Panebianco, 1988: 26, original emphasis). For them, part of the allure with the party is that it has the capacity to accommodate a broad church of perspectives, collectively guided by the belief that the SAP's pragmatism is informed by the fundamental precepts of solidarity and equality. Though they may be critical, few would actually dream of quitting. The more senior members working for the party or holding elected positions — the 'careerists' (ibid, 1988: 26, original emphasis) — are equally, if not more, convinced by what they see as the SAP's teleology.

There are, however, a few dissenting voices that once again allows us to see both the consequences of the salience of the socio-cultural cleavage, and the SAP's attempt to manipulate its vision of *trygghet* to accommodate this new reality. As a member who has been active since joining the youth wing in the early 1990s describes in early June:

This latest flyer [see Figure 58] got me thinking, [...]... there were five or four points in total and three of them were about *trygghet* slash yea... and then I felt like it might have been enough to just have one point about that! If there are four points then three shouldn't be about having [neighbourhood] security guards. I don't believe in that. It's a way of painting populism. (Recorded interview, 4 June, 2018, own translation).

Echoing this notion of 'populism', a much older party member tells me of an instance when, during a recent town square campaign near the university campus, a man comes

up to her and tells her, "I've always supported the SAP, but this recent stuff, it's just pure populism". "I found myself nodding along to what he said", she tells me on the car ride back from a canvassing session in Skärblacka, 20 kilometres outside of central Norrköping (Fieldnotes, 5 May, 2018). "But you would never leave the party" I ask her when we meet for coffee later that month. "Never" she replies sternly (Recorded interview, 31 May, 2018, own translation). Softening her tone, she expands,

If you look at the SAP's members, no one likes everything, that's just how it is. It's hopefully such a broad party still that there are always going to be things that you don't like and things that you do like. But I do think that we are biting ourselves in the tail a bit when we are getting more populist because we think we'll get more votes. (ibid, own translation).

This sentiment of populism was most strongly articulated by a Swedish-Somali man, 'Barre', who I had first met in autumn 2017 at an educational seminar for new SAP members. In contrast to many of the other seminar participants, many of whom came from various LO unions and were 'finally' taking the step of getting politically active, Barre's demeanour was different. His attendance was with purpose. He wanted to achieve something very special within the SAP: become the party's first Swedish-Somali MP and thereby strengthen the bond between the party and the local Swedish-Somali community; many of whom live in Hageby but none of whom are active in the party (Fieldnotes 24 September, 2017). Many months pass before I hear from Barre again when he calls me in late May 2018 and tells me that he has cancelled his membership. When we meet for coffee in early June, I ask him what led him to this decision?

The reason is that I am disappointed with this move that they [the SAP] did about immigration and those sorts of things and that isn't the party that I thought was tolerant because I am not one of those people that thinks that a single occurrence shouldn't change values. (Recorded interview, 2 June, 2018, own translation).

The single occurrence he is referring to is the 2015 refugee crisis. While he can understand the reasons why the SAP-led government originally restricted the possibility for asylum seekers to enter Sweden in the immediate aftermath of the crisis,

he cannot understand why the party continues to actively signal that it stands for a restrictive migration policy. What finally pushed him to quit was a press conference in early May with SAP Migration Minister Heléne Fritzon and Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in which he took the implied message to be that Sweden has accepted too many refugees in recent years (Berglund and Holm, 2018). He clarifies:

So, I wasn't satisfied. I thought that in some way one was trying to Sweden Democratize the Social Democrats instead. And that's what irritated me a little; if one has stood for solidarity, for openness and everything, then one's fundamental values can't change because of a single occurrence. (Recorded interview, 2 June, 2018, own translation)

Though he never actually became active in the party, Barre's resistance to the SAP's strategy highlights a tension for the SAP. In the 2018 election, Norrköping's strategy largely took for granted the votes in those districts with the highest concentration of immigrants and second-generation Swedes. As one middle-aged Somali-Swedish man that Barre introduced me to described:

We Somalis that live in Norrköping usually vote for the SAP – the main governing party in the municipality. But they are wasted votes as we don't get anything in return for the Somali community. (Recorded interview, 29 July, 2018, own translation).

With the party continuing to lose segments of its traditional base who are mobilised by the socio-cultural cleavage relating to increased non-European immigration, the SAP must do more to energise the other segments of its core electorate who are diametrically opposed to its hardened *trygghet* tactics.

"SD all of the sudden has an answer to all your problems"

In sharp contrast to the above critical voices who feel that the SAP's strategy is wrong because of its 'populism', is Olof, the vocal and contrarian ombudsman from Chapter Six. Although certainly not all active members who partook in campaign activities thought that their party's attempt to re-attract/retain voters from SD was desirable or

effective, none were as prescient as Olof. His critique of the strategy is grounded in the fact that it does not actually take seriously the experienced *otrygghet* of traditional LO voters.

It's been shown time and again that it doesn't work [to put SD in the 'right-wing cage'] like that. Besides, even if you want to paint SD as a right-wing ghost, they could easily just change their policies so that they are more, what's it called, appealing for traditional SAP voters. But this is unfortunately something that even though it has been acknowledged that it is wrong to do so, it keeps happening, even in this election campaign as well. (Recorded interview, 11 June, 2018, own translation).

When I ask him to expand on this, he paints the following picture:

If you live in Flen [small former industrial community about an hour's drive north of Norrköping] and you have a manual labourer job — you don't have especially big material problems in your life. You have a good [...] you work as a craftsman and you earn 35,000 [Swedish Crowns = 3,030 GBP] a month. Your wife is a nurse's assistant and you pull in around 40-45 [thousand Crowns] in total a month [after tax]. You have a great home and maybe a boat or something; you aren't exactly on the road to ruin materially. But you think it's a problem that the entire cityscape is full of Somalis and that there are those that have developed an addiction to Khat [a plant native to the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula that's leaves produce a mild euphoric effect] and those kinds of things and then [at the same time] you hear about aunt Agda that has problems getting a place at a nursing home. That's your everyday. That's their reality that they exist in. Then of course all that rhetoric trying to frame SD as the ultimate right-wing party isn't going to bite. Because SD all of the sudden has an answer to all the problems that they see. (ibid, own translation).

"Well they have ONE answer!", I quip. Olof continues as though he is voicing the response from his imagined couple from Flen:

Yea well it's all because too many refugees have been accepted; that's our problem. We don't have any other big societal problems. It keeps trucking along. We have good incomes and go on holiday abroad every year. (ibid, own translation).

Putting his ombudsman hat back on, he mockingly adds:

And then we're [the labour movement] supposed to promote the idea that "well you know that there SD is a real smug devil, once they get power they're going to strangle everything that's called welfare". It doesn't sound believable in the slightest. (ibid, own translation).

Indeed, the circumstances of the young couple from Chapter Five seems, in many ways to parallel that of Olof's imagined household in Flen. Thriving far more than just surviving. Materially, they tell me that have just bought a new home near the coast and are finally going to escape the — in their minds at least — tumultuous stir of central Norrköping. While the young couple and the old burn care nurse signal that they would never vote the SAP, others such as the young hard rocker, the older man and the elderly lady in this chapter, say that they have in the past. But the accelerated level of non-European immigration that culminated in the autumn of 2015, and the conviction that the SAP has been instrumental in encouraging this, fuels a particularly visceral resentment. What binds these disparate voters together is a longing for a yesteryear when the social contract ensuring trygghet is strictly for, in their minds, diligent and thus deserving Swedes. They are not at all convinced by the sustained effort to paint SD as a right-wing extremist, even neo-Nazi party. This sort of 'bullying', in their eyes, exposes a smug arrogance of the 'establishment', and in particular the SAP, towards theirs, and many others, genuine anxieties. They do not express a resentment towards labour immigration; they explicitly focus their resentment and rage towards what they feel are the far too many refugees that have come to Norrköping (and Sweden more generally) in recent years. It is primarily this that has diminished their sense of trygghet and conjured a powerful nostalgia. They feel that something is lost in Sweden, and only SD hold the key to finding it. SD, echoing Olof, confirm and indeed, stoke this sense of otrygghet by explicitly connecting this sociocultural longing to an

imagined era before Sweden's contemporary immigration regime that reached fever pitch during the autumn of 2015.

Concluding Summary

The SAP's strategy was acceptable to most of its active members precisely because it only played lip service to this sense of otrygghet felt by SD voters. For SAP party members it was a tactic, rather than a conviction, that guided the SAP's strategy. Although it could be argued that the party sought to tap into a legacy on immigration that it had once blueprinted, there was a seemingly insurmountable discrepancy between the legacy of the folkhem described in Chapter Four, and what the majority of party members, and indeed the electorate, associated with the contemporary SAP. The liberalisation of immigration that the Alliance presided over (even encouraged), and the SAP's defacto endorsement of this, glossed over any distinction that SD voters might draw between the centre-right and centre-left. This, coupled with the prominent position that the SAP has long held towards societies weakest, made the party's attempt to 'harden' its message ahead of the 2018 election ring particularly hollow to the voters it was intended for. Guided by its long-held understanding of trygghet as fundamentally an economically-tinged precept, the party therefore tried to refract this otrygghet back onto SD by framing the party as the real harbinger of economic distress. This is precisely why, as Olof crassly summated, the SAP's strategy fell on deaf ears for a seemingly growing number of SD voters. Regardless of what the SAP claimed, they do not feel that their economic trygghet is under threat from SD. Rather, SD understands and stokes a resentment towards refugee immigration that has long smouldered in Sweden but has in recent years grown in tandem with the increased levels of non-European immigration.

On the one hand, the SAP attempted in its 2018 strategy to show that it understands the gravity of potential SD voters' otrygghet by denouncing the migration politics of recent years and demanding law, order and integration. On the other hand, the party then dismissed the veracity of these grievances by framing SD as the real threat to their and Sweden's trygghet. In the 2018 campaign, as both I witnessed and many of my informants described, constructive engagement with SD supporters were extraordinarily rare. As the above interactions show, for those residents of Vilbergen who have already committed themselves to SD, the mere mention of the SAP drew fits

of visceral rage. Though far more tempered, David's interaction with the still deliberating older lady showcases the immense difficulty in breaking through the spiral of rage towards immigration.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions

Will the aggravated socio-political cleavage surrounding immigration amplify Social Democracy's 'crisis'?

European Social Democracy, social scientists habitually contend, is, has, and continues to be in a prolonged state of crisis (Castles, 1978; Dahrendorf, 1990, 1983; Diamond, 2016; Hobsbawm et al., 1981; Judt, 2010; Karreth et al., 2013; Keating and McCrone, 2013; Pontusson, 1995). With increasingly bifurcated voter bases of, on the one hand, socially liberal voters in white-collar professions, and on the other, socially conservative blue-collar voters, Social Democratic parties are indeed at an impasse.

As witnessed recently in the December 2019 UK general election, the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn's divisive leadership saw its worst performance in 85 years (winning less than half the seats won in its landslide victory in 1997), with the Conservative party gaining substantively in many historically dyed-in-the-wool Labour constituencies (BBC, 2019). Indeed, the accelerating decline of the traditional working-class vote for both Labour and continental Europe's Social Democratic parties is an especially painful loss, both symbolically and numerically. The salience of socio-cultural anxieties forms an essential part of this story. Clearly, there is a geography and a socio-cultural specificity to these anxieties. Whether it is the surge in support for the Tories by pro-Brexit former Labour voters in the North of England (Smith, 2019), or the increased support for Alternative for Germany (AfD) in eastern German states by former SPD voters (Chazan, 2019), powerful notions of identity and belonging are clearly important. As I have argued throughout this thesis, a similar spectrum of anxieties helped to fuel support for SD in the years leading up to the September 2018 election.

The main event: the September 2018 election

On the warm early autumn evening of 9 September, I joined Norrköping's SAP for their election night party; an occasion historically marked by exuberance as party members celebrated the end of an intensive final month of campaigning. The party was held in an event hall situated in the heart of the former industrial landscape. Around 9 pm, the initial exit polls as calculated by Sweden's state television, SVT, were broadcast on the large projector screen situated behind a makeshift stage where Teresa Carvalho delivered various accolades throughout the evening. In the exit polls, SD were indicated as the second largest party with 19.2 percent, with the Moderates gaining 17.8 percent and the SAP with 26.2 percent (Skoog and Lindström, 2018). Moreover, the exit polling suggested that the SAP had lost 11 percent of its voters to SD and 7 percent to the Left party. An astounding 19 percent of SD voters indicated that they had voted for the SAP in the 2014 election (and 18 percent for the Moderates) (SVT, 2018a).

Reacting to the results, which, if accurate, would be the SAP's by far worst result since the 1908 election, Carvalho remained resolute, telling everyone,

SD climbs forcefully. The Moderates do the opposite. We also go backwards but it looks like we have recovered a few percentage points, a few very important points towards the end and therefore remain the largest party!

This is met with an abrupt cheering and applause. Yet there is a palpable tension in the air. Carvalho soon continues,

This election has not just been a choice between right and left, but it has also been a choice between decency and the lack thereof. A choice between giving a party that has its roots in the white power movement that still continuously excludes members because they say clearly racist things. That want to remove my and hundreds of thousands other Swedes' dual citizenships and thereby also part of our identity. That wants to restrict women's rights and that, of course, also wants to massively make cuts to our welfare. So, it's been both a familiar election but also a very different election and I hope that when we get the real result that we'll see not only Stefan Löfven remain prime minister and the SAP

remain Sweden's largest party, but also that decency perseveres. Because I think that many of us in here have had a lump in our stomachs the last few months. (Fieldnotes, 9 September, 2018, own translation)

Less than a week later, the finalised results were announced. With a participation rate of 87.2 percent of the eligible electorate (the highest since 1985), the national parliamentary results (see Figure 62 in Appendix) saw the SAP get 28.3 percent, its worst result since before universal suffrage was introduced a century ago in 1918. SD gained 17.5 percent (by far the greatest increase of any party), though remaining Sweden's third largest party as the Moderates managed 19.8 percent (Valmyndigheten, 2018c). Voter turnout according to age was relatively evenly distributed, with voters under 30 and over 78 less likely to participate (Statistics Sweden, 2019c). Support for SD was the highest among voters between the ages of 31-64 (21 percent), and support for the SAP was the highest with older voters over 65 years of age (33 percent) (SVT, 2018b).

In Norrköping (see Figure 63 in Appendix), parliamentary support for SD increased to less than a percentage point below the Moderates (19.6 and 20.5 percent respectively), while the SAP slightly outperformed its national result (gaining 28.3 percent). On the municipal list (see Figure 64 in Appendix), SD saw the largest increase of all parties, adding 3.8 percent from 2014 to gain 15.5 percent. The SAP and Moderates both performed better than in the parliamentary list, recording 30.3 and 23.3 percent respectively) (Valmyndigheten, 2018d). For the regional list (see Figure 65 in Appendix), SD saw an increased support to 14.8 percent, up 3.6 percent from 2014. Support for the SAP shrank by 5 percent to 29.4 percent, while the Moderates only decreased by 0.4 percent to 23.2 percent (Valmyndigheten, 2018b).

Although not as significantly as in 2014, support for SD in Vilbergen continued to increase on all three lists. This was especially pronounced on both the municipal and regional lists, in which support for the party had lagged behind significantly in the previous election. Support for the SAP, on the other hand, decreased substantially across the board on all three lists, with the greatest loss of 11.4 percent in Vilbergen West for the regional list (Valmyndigheten, 2018e). Across Hageby's five electoral districts, although the party also saw a decrease on parliamentary lists (with the greatest decrease of 5.3 percent), the party still managed to gain over 51 percent in one

district. SD increased support there as well, gaining at most 23.5 percent of the vote (Valmyndigheten, 2018f).

The 'worst election ever': SAP's post-election analysis

In the SAP's own post-election analysis released in March 2019, a large section is dedicated to the increased salience of irregular immigration in Swedish politics. The election, the report describes, had been characterised by a significantly reduced room for 'traditionally important issues in Swedish politics' that correlate with debates on the left-right economic spectrum (SAP, 2019: 14, own translation). Reflecting on the press conference that had prompted Barre's departure from the party in May 2018 when it was announced that Sweden's post-2015 migration policies would stay in place until further notice, the report states,

In retrospect, the rhetoric during the presentation was unnecessarily harsh. It also became clear that it was not only about the tonality and rhetoric, but rather it was also that this U-turn in migration policy had not been established well enough within the party. This internal conflict that had played out in the media, hurt the SAP's credibility in issues surrounding migration and also raised questions about the party's future course of direction (ibid: 39, own translation).

The lessons learned are that, in addition to having a more extended debate within the party on these issues, this new course should have been set more clearly before the campaign began. Otherwise, there was a risk, that 'it could be interpreted as populism or pork barrelling'; a risk that was indeed articulated multiple times by members of Norrköping's SAP (ibid, 41, own translation).

Moreover, the report details how the SAP suffered its greatest loss in so-called rural municipalities (with 197 of Sweden's 290 falling into this category), with the most significant loss (averaging 5.9 percent) in the 141 municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants — and an average of minus 4.65 percent in the 56 municipalities with a population of over 20,000. In the 46 largest predominantly urban municipalities, the party largely maintained its support, losing an average of 0.16 percent. However, in the intermediate urban municipalities (such as Norrköping), the party lost an average of 2.85 percent (ibid: 10). This 'centre-periphery' division coupled with 'social class',

the authors argue, mutually reinforces the growing support for SD (ibid: 11, own translation). Rural voters are predominantly older, have lower salaries and are less educated than urban voters. Drawing heavily from the 'losers of economic globalisation' argument, the authors argue that these apparently downtrodden voters are more likely to be '[t]hose who have lost out to the societal development of the last ten years tend to vote to a larger extent for SD' (ibid: 11, own translation). Here, 'working class' and rural voters are grouped together in their apparently united 'pessimistic' view of the trajectory of Sweden, in contrast to urban middle-class voters. This widespread pessimism among 'voters who have left, or have thought of leaving the party' the authors anguish, is despite the fact that, according to most barometers such as 'employment, growth and labour market integration [of immigrants]' are pointing 'in the right direction' (ibid: 11, own translation).

Casting their gaze beyond Sweden's borders, the authors assert that it is the 'growing inequality and the subsequent feeling of *otrygghet* that has created an opening for populism and right-wing nationalist parties' (ibid: 32, own translation). As centre-right parties 'triangulated towards the centre' and 'immigration has dominated the political conversation', the SAP (and its European sister parties) have been seen as 'system-defending, rather than standing on the side of the electorate' (ibid: 34, own translation). Whilst Social Democratic parties have haemorrhaged supporters to 'parties with strong Green or social liberal' positions, the main reason for their decline is the 'right-wing populist parties that working-class voters have chosen out of protest' (ibid: 34, own translation). It is this toxic cocktail of 'increased inequality, neoliberalism and globalisation's connection to identity politics' that has produced a formidable headwind for Social Democratic parties, the authors contend (ibid: 34, own translation).

Writing in the SAP's own weekly newspaper, Aktuellt i Politiken (Current Politics) following the election, the director of the LO-funded think tank Katalys (Catalytic Action) and prominent SAP commentator Daniel Suhonen argued (with a colleague) that 'SD are seriously challenging the SAP as Sweden's largest labour party' (Suhonen and Gerin, 2018, own translation). In an op-ed in Sweden's largest newspaper, Suhonen further expanded on how SD's growing support among the electorate had largely been ignored by commentators, arguing that they,

have talked a lot about [internet] trolls and bots but much less about people. Has anyone once described SD as the fighting people's movement [folkrörelse] that they are? Look at photos from Åkesson's campaign events. They are mass meetings. At every work place today, there are many fervent agitators for nationalism and for stopped immigration (Suhonen, 2018, own translation).

The only chance of defeating this destructive 'right-wing extremism', Suhonen argues, is if the 'civil war between the identity-Left and the distributive-Left ceases' (ibid, own translation). If this necessary truce is indeed possible, he asserts, then urban middleclass 'latté dads, housing estate mothers, immigrant academics and LO-workers can together form a majority for democratic socialism' (ibid, own translation). While Suhonen's 'Left' extends beyond his own party, as I showed in Chapter Six and the SAP too acknowledges in its post-election report, this conflict continues to simmer within the party. In contrast to those SD supporters and party members I encountered in Chapter Five, through the prism of the 2015 refugee crisis, both elite and grassroots SAP members articulate competing nostalgias of who their party is able to extend trygghet to. These bounded versus boundless nostalgic understandings of the SAP's position towards immigration are then further complicated by exploring the competing positions party members hold on political economy. What the chapter ultimately illustrates is that the SAP is a rather pliable organisation that is able to capture a seemingly broad array of perspectives. This has indeed served the party well in its long reign. Yet, with the growing support for SD among segments of its traditional voters, the question then becomes, can the SAP contort enough to remain attractive for voters perceived to be deliberating between the SAP and SD?

What kind of 'crisis of democracy'?

The editors of a recent three-part volume series forebodingly titled 'Populism and the Crisis of Democracy' warn that, '[t]here is no threat to Western democracies today comparable to the rise of right-wing populism' (Fitzi et al., 2019: 4). Indeed, the shrinking parameters of contestation due to the apparently accelerating homogenizing consequences of economic 'neoliberal' globalization, coupled with an obsession with consensus-fuelled 'governance', has long been argued to be eating away at the legitimacy of democracy (Crouch, 2000; Mouffe, 2000; Žižek, 2007).

Pronouncements of a general 'crisis of democracy' have, in particular, been echoed with a growing intensity ever since the 2007-2008 financial crisis (Gagnon and Vasilev, 2016). The crisis, it is argued, helped to exacerbate European publics' frustrations with the 'establishment' writ large, and has fuelled 'manifestations of right-wing populism' that 'attack or even compromise the core elements of democratic societies, such as the separation of powers, protection of minorities, and the rule of law' (Mackert, 2019: 1). Yet, as Urbinati asserts, rather than populism engendering a wholesale 'crisis of democracy', it is instead, 'a decline of a particular type of democracy — [...] party democracy' (2016: 26). In Sweden, as elsewhere, this dynamic has been shaped by particular socio-cultural political configurations.

With an aforementioned voter turnout of 87.2 percent in the 2018 election — the fourth highest in the EU (Malta having the highest at 92.1 percent) (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2020) — formal participation in the democratic process is certainly not 'in crisis' in Sweden. However, SD's rapid rise in support since the 2014 election has profoundly disrupted the historically settled party-political line of scrimmage in the country. With the growing salience surrounding immigration and increased crime rates in recent years, *trygghet* has increasingly become absorbed into a political conflict dimension that draws strength from the socio-cultural anxieties stemming from these developments. If we recall Mair's (2013) final warning about the 'void' spawning between the electorate and increasingly distant cartelized party-State nexus, parties such as SD that are indeed growing their grassroots membership should give considerable pause for thought.

As Chapters Five and Seven illustrate, although top-steered and linked to a singularly charismatic leader, Jimmie Åkesson, SD energizes a palpable rage against the socio-cultural consequences of an immigration regime and a support for multiculturalism that has largely been encouraged by the traditional centre-right and centre-left parties. Whilst membership to these traditional parties continues to shrink, as Suhonen rightly describes, SD's membership and appeal is indeed growing. To use his words, it seems to be morphing into a *folkrörelse* (people's movement). Although the SAP is still – by quite some order of magnitude – the largest *folkrörelse* party in Sweden and still has an active membership base that it can mobilise during campaigns, the rapid haemorrhaging of support from its traditionally strong blue-collar LO base is an especially worrying development. Here, like elsewhere in Europe, it is the overwhelming power of immigration that fuels this loss.

In their sweeping review of European party politics, Eatwell and Goodwin rightfully assert that Social Democratic parties persistently 'refuse to acknowledge that people's concerns about immigration and rapid ethnic change might be legitimate in their own right and that these are not simply to do with jobs' (2018: 189). That is, parties 'maintain that this divide [between blue-collar workers and Social Democracy] is really just about racism or objective economic deprivation' (ibid: 189). Indeed, at their own peril, Social Democrats continue to discount the immense power of sociocultural anxieties towards non-European immigration and what consequences this has for party systems. Indeed, across a growing number of European polities, right-wing populist parties have become increasingly adept at mobilizing public apprehension about the consequences of increasingly 'open' Europeanized and multicultural societies (Berezin, 2009).

The SAP's wishful otrygghet

As I argued in Chapter Seven, the SAP identified the growing public concern over immigration as important factors contributing to support for SD. However, the party then abstracted this reasoning through a political-economic prism and ultimately concludes 'they know not what they do'. For the absolute majority of SAP members, SD voter's visceral resistance to immigration camouflages their real *otrygghet* that emanates from a nexus of ignorance and vulnerability to economic globalisation that weigh heavy when Norrköping's legacy of economic hardship and stagnation is considered. Therefore, it was paramount to convince these voters that SD will amplify this *otrygghet* through a frenzied cascade of economically right-wing policies. 'SD are otryggheten', Klara insisted. Through the overarching framework of 'Trygghet in a New Time', the SAP sought to naturalize its U-turn on migration in 2015 as a 'return' to traditional SAP politics. Indeed, the party tried to subtly tap into a tainted legacy that it had previously downplayed. By framing itself as *the* party of *trygghet*, it thought that it could attract both 'flexible' middle class voters and those voters thought to be considering SD.

This understanding of *trygghet* traces a long history in the SAP. Though the early labour movement was motivated by a 'rage', in the effort to construct a cross-class *folkhem*, the party then sought to moderate this rage into a sense of worry of socioeconomic *otrygghet*. With slight variations, the party has continued to frame itself as

the bulwark against this form of *otrygghet*. To show how this formulation of *otrygghet* was mobilised in the 2018 election campaign, I focused in on the traditional SAP stronghold neighbourhood of Vilbergen. Through various interactions between SAP campaigners and SD supporters there, I argued that SD supporters are fuelled by a rage that the SAP has long sought to diffuse. To varying degrees, this rage manifests towards the SAP's – in their minds – complicity with diminishing *trygghet* in Sweden by supporting refugee immigration.

Because the SAP's 2018 electoral strategy fundamentally still mobilised a vision of trygghet that party members were both familiar and comfortable with, the majority of Norrköping's SAP accepted its veracity. However, as Chapter Seven showed, as a broad church, there were critical voices towards the strategy. Certain long-time members felt that the 'hardened' focus on trygghet was an ineffective populist ploy. The most severe reaction to this came from Barre, whose early ambitions in the party were prematurely ruptured with the SAP's insistence that its post-2015 position towards immigration was a return to tradition. The chapter ended with reflections from a particularly vocal ombudsman whose coarse diagnosis of why the party's strategy was destined to fall on deaf ears among SD supporters holds a considerable degree of merit. While dog-whistling to SD supporters' rage against immigration, the SAP insists that the real source of otrygghet is SD.

Indeed, in the SAP's aforementioned post-election analysis, although crime and immigration receive cursory mention as a contributing factor to the growing support for SD, echoing the academic 'losers of globalisation' thesis, there is still a strong tendency to be wishfully normative when describing what the party sees as the *real* reason for SD's increased support. The disgruntled voters' pessimism and *otrygghet* must still be understood against the backdrop of the 'economic realities for those who have not benefited, despite national affluence' (SAP, 2019: 11, own translation). However, as SD supporters themselves expressed in Chapter Five and Seven, there is a far more complex story behind their support for the party that negates the SAP's wishful analysis. SD supporters nostalgically long for a *trygghet* found in an idealized Social Democratic Sweden before non-European immigration. In a Norrköping (and indeed Sweden) whereby unemployment is increasingly linked to ethnicity, their economic concern stems not from a fear of their jobs being taken, but from a resentment towards, in their minds, undeserving immigrants who do not abide by the

ideal of skötsamhet (diligence) and instead receive preferential treatment to the detriment of deserving Swedes.

As unsettling as it might be for progressively minded researchers to hear, they must do more to actively listen to the actual reasons supporters of populist parties give for why they support these parties. Rather than taking visceral articulations of wanting reduced non-European immigration and then abstracting these through a politicaleconomic prism and concluding 'they know not what they do', researchers need to face uncomfortable truths that might go against their own beliefs. In the effort to dampen my own wishful normativity, in this thesis I used trygghet as a heuristic device and have taken seriously the history, context and configurations of Sweden, and Norrköping specifically. Here, the particular strengths of ethnographic scholarship came to the fore. It was the unique ability of ethnography to develop a much richer understanding of the latent emotive registers undergirding SD supporters' and party members' worldviews. Indeed, this was equally applicable to the ethnography of the inner life of the 'traditional' political party, the SAP. Ethnographically 'being there' (Borneman and Hammoudi, 2009) for an extended period of time allowed me to dissect how the particular legacies of Norrköping's party political culture intersected with the central party messaging coming from Stockholm. By doing so, I unpacked how the contemporary politics of immigration exposed a rich array of contrasting perspectives within Norrköping's SAP that top-down scholarship would be unable to.

The 'January contract', growing otrygghet and SD's continued rise

Due to neither the centre-right Alliance nor the SAP and Greens securing enough votes to have a majority in parliament, and neither 'block' wanting to form a government that depended on SD as the kingmakers (although the Moderates and Christian Democrats opened slightly more to this prospect), it took an unprecedented 129 days for a government to be formed. When it finally did, it saw the SAP and Greens form a minority government through an agreement with the Liberals and Centre party. Titled the 'January contract' (januariavtalet), the parties agreed to a 73-point programme in which the SAP and Greens government would implement an array of reforms spanning a broad range of policy areas. Although the post-2015 more restrictive migration policies are set to remain in place, the programme calls for a liberalisation of family reunification policies. In order to realise the contract, the SAP had to consent to a

number of incredibly economic liberal reforms that the party had long advocated against; including a marketisation of rents on all new-build apartments and the removal of an additional rate of income tax for Sweden's wealthiest top five percent (Ewald, 2019). Although immigration levels have decreased significantly since the years leading up to the culmination in 2015, prognoses by the Migration Board indicate that, in light of the contract, family reunification levels to Sweden from non-European are set to increase (Jönsson, 2019). Reacting to this projected increase on Twitter, SD's party secretary Richard Jomshof argued,

Frightening numbers from the Migration Board. Hundreds of thousands more immigrants projected in the coming years. Socialists and liberals continue to lie about having the situation under control. How much longer are these fools going to keep this up (Jomshof, 2019)?

In parallel with these developments, Sweden has continued to see an escalation of shootings and explosions in a growing number of urban centres throughout the country, including in Norrköping. According to statistics presented by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ), in comparison to 167 in 2018, there were 257 hand grenade and bomb attacks during 2019 (Björklund, 2019). This surge in violence that is linked to escalating conflicts between gangs, has increasingly found its way into anglophone news coverage from outlets such as, Reuters, The Guardian, The New York Times and the BBC (Johnson, 2020; Orange, 2020; Savage, 2019; Sorensen, 2019). As criminologist Amir Rostami told Sweden's largest newspaper in November 2019, 'we unfortunately have to look to war zones or countries with a long history of terrorism to find a comparison' (quoted in Bolling, 2019, own translation). Taken together, the projected increased levels of family reunification immigration and growing violent crime rates suggest that there is still considerable potential for SD to continue tap into public anxieties.

Although the SAP-led government has insisted that they are doing everything they can to arrest this escalation, oppositional parties have taken turns criticizing the 'January parties' for what they see as their failure to come to grips with the violence (Emanuelsson et al., 2020; Eriksson and Svensson, 2019). Concurrently, SD have continued to grow in public polls. In October, 2019, support for the party was, for the first time, found to be so close to the SAP that it was statistically impossible to know

which had more support (Nordenskiold, 2019). Moreover (see Figure 65 in Appendix), in its bi-annual randomized polling of over 9,000 people via telephone and web surveys, Statistics Sweden found that, for the first time since this polling began in 2006, SD was larger than the SAP among male LO members (gaining 33.2 and 30.3 percent respectively). Among female LO members (see Figure 66 in Appendix), the SAP was still the largest party, though support for SD was also growing (with 41.3 and 20.7 percent respectively) (Statistics Sweden, 2019a). Among male white-collar professionals belonging to the TCO union (see Figure 68 in Appendix), the SAP has recently overtaken the Moderates (with 29.7 and 25.5. percent respectively). Yet even here support for SD has increased to 16.4 percent, making it by far the third largest party. As only the fifth largest party, SD receives considerably less support among female TCO members (with only 9.4. percent). Indeed, among female members (see Figure 69 in Appendix), the SAP receives nearly twice as much support as the Moderates (with 29.2 and 15.9 percent respectively) (Statistics Sweden, 2019a).

Naturally the source of immense media speculation and sensationalism, the continued growth of support for SD among LO members has been widely reported to have caused an enormous unease and debate within the SAP (Skoglund, 2019). At the time of writing this, the most recent polling by Ipsos suggests that SD has surpassed the SAP as Sweden's largest party (with the party's showing 24 and 23 percent, respectively) (Olsson, 2020). Though polling is merely a weathervane showing the general direction of public opinion, it would seem that SD continues to draw strength from a growing sense of otrygghet in contemporary Sweden that the SAP is finding increasingly difficult to countenance. As a boundedly nostalgic informant recently summated vividly, he thinks that LO members view the SAP the same way that family members carefully monitor a loved one who is a 'recovering alcoholic'. In his mind, the party's traditional support base remains sceptical that the party will not be swayed by the boundlessly nostalgic idealistic voices within the party and relapse into what Suhonen describes above as an 'identity-Left' (Personal correspondence, 15 March, 2020). Here, considerably more research is needed to better understand what role the inner dynamics of the party play in this process.

It is, of course, far too premature to dismiss the continued relevancy or future success of the SAP. With the current SARS-CoV-2 (Coronavirus) pandemic causing immense disruption and anxiety, publics across Europe (and beyond) increasingly look to the power of the State for assurance and resolve. As the traditional champion

of comprehensive State-led welfare systems, Social Democratic parties are, in many important ways, the most well placed to envisage a societal model that has the necessary resources and organisation to most effectively respond to these challenges. Although the SAP's once-tentacular presence in society has receded, it has successfully imprinted Social Democracy as the default model in Sweden that all other parties (not least of which SD) have to contend with. As during the majority of the twentieth century, the party currently governs Sweden. Yet it does so in an awkward partnership with Sweden's most social and economically liberal parties. Here, the tensions within the SAP will be further put to the test. Moving forward, a significant challenge will be how willing and able the party is to keep its ear to the proverbial 'grindstone' among its once-traditional bedrock of LO-organised supporters. The party must decide if their visions of trygghet are worth it.

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Appendix

Table 2. Completed Interviews

Interviewee(s)	Date	Role/Affiliation
'Jimmy'	15 November, 2017	Ombudsman in Labour Movement
'Matilda'	21 November, 2017	Part-time SAP politician
		with annual stipend
'Rebecca'	4 December, 2017	Uncompensated part-time politician, SAP
'Joakim'	20 January, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour Movement
'Stig'	28 February, 2018	SSU Norrköping
Lars Stjernkvist	28 February, 2018	Norrköping Municipal Councillor, SAP
'Mona'	1 March, 2018	Uncompensated part-time politician, SAP
'Jan'	1 March, 2018	Former Norrköping Municipal Councillor, SAP
'Lina'	5 March, 2018	Uncompensated part-time politician, SAP
'Sarah'	6 March, 2018	Former full-time SAP politician
'David'	6 March, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour Movement
'Robert'	6 March, 2018	Former full-time municipal SAP politician
'Birgitta'	7 March, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour Movement
'Oscar'	7 March, 2018	Active SAP Member
'Alfred'	7 March, 2018	Part-time politician with annual stipend, SAP
'Peter'	14 March, 2018	Active SAP Member
'Rolf'	22 March, 2018	Uncompensated part-time politician, SAP
'William'	4 April, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour Movement
Teresa Carvalho	2 May, 2018	SAP MP
Olle Johansson	3 May, 2018	Norrköping Municipal Councillor, SAP
'Jens'	31 May, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour Movement
'Barre'	2 June, 2018	Former SAP member
'Michael'	4 June, 2018	Part-time politician with annual stipend, SAP
'Ulf'	4 June, 2018	Uncompensated SAP part-time politician

'Christina'	4 June, 2018	Part-time politician with
- Ormound	4 Julie, 2010	annual stipend, SAP
'Johnny'	5 June, 2018	Active SAP Member
'Göran'	6 June, 2018	SAP Vilbergen informant
'Lars'	7 June, 2018	Part-time politician with
Lais	7 Julie, 2010	annual stipend, SAP
Kikki Liljeblad	8 June, 2018	Norrköping Municipal
Kikki Liijebiau	0 Julie, 2010	Councillor, SAP
'Kristin'	8 June, 2018	Uncompensated part-time
MISUH	6 Julie, 2016	politician, SAP
'Karin' and 'Gösta'	9 June, 2018	Active SAP Members
'Daniel'	9 June, 2018	
Daniei	9 Julie, 2016	Uncompensated part-time politician, SAP
'Olof'	11 June, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour
		Movement
'Klara'	12 June, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour
		Movement
'Erik'	12 June, 2018	Uncompensated part-time
		politician, SAP
'Mattias'	13 June, 2018	Active SAP member
'Charlotte'	14 June, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour
		Movement
'Robert'	14 June, 2018	Part-time politician with
		annual stipend, SAP
'William'	15 June, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour
		Movement
'Sally'	15 June, 2018	Ombudsman in Labour
		Movement
'Rachel'	15 June, 2018	Part-time SAP politician
		with annual stipend
Focus group with 3	29 July, 2018	Norrköping Civil Society
Swedish-Somali		
Norrköping residents		
'Siiri'	31 July, 2018	Norrköping Municipality Official
'Viktoria'	6 August, 2018	SAP Official Stockholm
'Fredrik'	6 August, 2018	SAP Official Stockholm
'Josephine'	7 August, 2018	SAP Official Stockholm
Sara Karlsson	8 August, 2018	SAP MP Södermanland
		County (2010-2018)
'Kjell'	15 August, 2018	SAP Official Stockholm
'Ingrid'	14 August, 2018	Non-SAP part-time
_		politician with annual
		stipend
'Alex'	29 August, 2018	Immigration Activist
'Nils'	30 August, 2018	Vilbergen informant

Figure 59. Interview template

Background

Age:

Profession:

Education:

Party info

When did you join the SAP?

Do you remember why you joined the SAP?

Do you currently or have you had political appointments?

Which S-Associations are you a member of?

What is a 'people's movement' for you?

Do you think that the SAP is a 'people's movement'?

What did you think about Mona Sahlin's tenure as SAP leader?

What was your experience of the 2010 election and Håkan Juholt's subsequent appointment as party leader?

What do you think about Stefan Löfven's leadership of the SAP?

Do you think that the SAP is moving with the times?

Do you think that Norrköping's SAP is moving with the times?

Do you think that fellow party members' hold very different attitudes towards the party than you?

Do you feel that your voice is heard within the party?

Current political situation in Sweden

What do you think about the current political situation in Sweden?

What do you think about the SAP's coalition with the Green party?

What do you think about the Quartet coalition here in Norrköping?

What do you think is the SAP's biggest challenge locally and nationally?

What do you think will be the most important issue in the 2018 election, both locally and nationally?

What did you think about the so-called 'emergency brake' in November 2015 when Sweden effectively closed its borders?

How do you think Sweden is managing the integration of immigrants?

Do you agree with some who allege that Norrköping has taken too great a responsibility in the acceptance of asylum seekers and refugees?

What do you think that the SAP has to do to deal with SD?

What do you think that the SAP has to do to 're-claim' voters who have shifted their vote to SD?

Why do you think that SD has more support in Norrköping than in other comparably sized municipalities?

Figure 60. March 2018 Survey Questionnaire

Background data:

Year of birth:

Were you born in Sweden?

Was your mother born in Sweden?

Which of these geographical areas was your mother born in?

Sweden, Nordics, Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, Central America, South America, Oceania

Was your father born in Sweden?

Which of these geographical areas was your father born in?

Sweden, Nordics, Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, Central America, South America, Oceania

What level of education does your mother have?

No education; Primary; Secondary; Vocational; University

What level of education does your father have?

No education; Primary; Secondary; Vocational; University

What is your current occupation?

Business owner; Student; Pensioner; Full-time employed; Part-time employed; Unemployed; Other

What level of education do you have?

No education; Primary; Secondary; Vocational; University

What type of organisation do/did you work for?

Municipal; Region; State; Private company; State owned company; Selfemployed; Other

What year did you join the SAP?

Were you active in SSU?

Did/Do you have any responsibilities in the party?

Which of the following criteria apply to you?

Uncompensated part-time politician; Part-time politician with annual stipend; Full-time politician; Trade Union representative; Elected representative in SAP party organisation; Member

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

'Sweden should have open labour market immigration'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Sweden can and should accept more refugees and their families'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Sweden should require refugees and their families to participate in Swedish for foreigners language training (SFI)'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Refugees and their families should be required to move to instructed place of residence'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Sweden should grant amnesty for unaccompanied Afghani youth'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Feminism is important to me'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Swedish society is governed by patriarchal, heteronormative and racist structures'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Swedish society is governed by class differences'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Freedom of choice is an important principle in welfare provision'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

What do you think about the institution of LOV [Law on Freedom of Choice in welfare provision] in the care of the elderly in Norrköping?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

'The freedom of choice in education is important'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Profits in the welfare sector should be allowed as long as quality and access are guaranteed'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'Begging should be banned in Sweden'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'The EU is a positive project that has good conditions for contributing positively to European and Swedish development'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

Do you think it matters which country an immigrant comes from?

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

'Norrköping has taken an unfairly large responsibility in the acceptance of refugees during recent years'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

How do you think that the acceptance of refugees has affected Norrköping?

What do you think about the acceptance of refugees in the future?

Figure 61. June 2018 Survey Questionnaire

Background data:

Year of birth:

Were you born in Sweden?

Was your mother born in Sweden?

Which of these geographical areas was your mother born in?

Sweden, Nordics, Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, Central America, South America, Oceania

Was your father born in Sweden?

Which of these geographical areas was your father born in?

Sweden, Nordics, Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, Central America, South America, Oceania

What level of education does your mother have?

No education; Primary; Secondary; Vocational; University

What level of education does your father have?

No education; Primary; Secondary; Vocational; University

What is your current occupation?

Business owner; Student; Pensioner; Full-time employed; Part-time employed; Unemployed; Other

What level of education do you have?

No education; Primary; Secondary; Vocational; University

What type of organisation do/did you work for?

Municipal; Region; State; Private company; State owned company; Selfemployed; Other

What year did you join the SAP?

Were you active in SSU?

Did/Do you have any responsibilities in the party?

Which of the following criteria apply to you?

Uncompensated part-time politician; Part-time politician with annual stipend; Full-time politician; Trade Union representative; Elected representative in SAP party organisation; Member

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

'In the upcoming election campaign, the SAP will manage to retain those voters who are considering voting for SD'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'It was right for parliament to recently pass the so-called 'high school law' that grants approximately 9,000 persons the permission to study in Sweden despite having their asylum application denied'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

'The SAP's new position on migration is necessary and is a return to traditional Social Democratic politics'

Totally agree; Mostly agree; Neither agree or disagree; Mostly agree; Totally disagree

Which of the following issues do you think is the most in the election campaign?

- To counteract those forces that want to further restrict refugee policies
- To support the hardened immigration policies
- To improve the care for the elderly
- To do away with profits in the welfare sector
- To increase access to culture throughout the country

Which of the following issues do you think is most important for voters? (Rank in the order: 1 most – 8 least important)

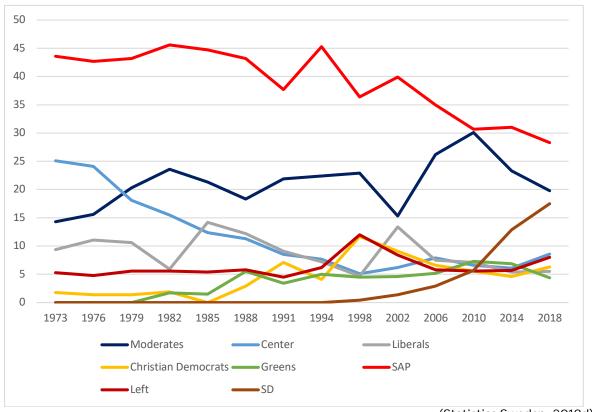
Immigration; Integration; Healthcare; Law and Order; Education and childcare; Environment; Sweden's economy; Equality

Why do you think that traditional SAP voters would consider voting for SD?

Which form of campaigning do you think is the most effective?

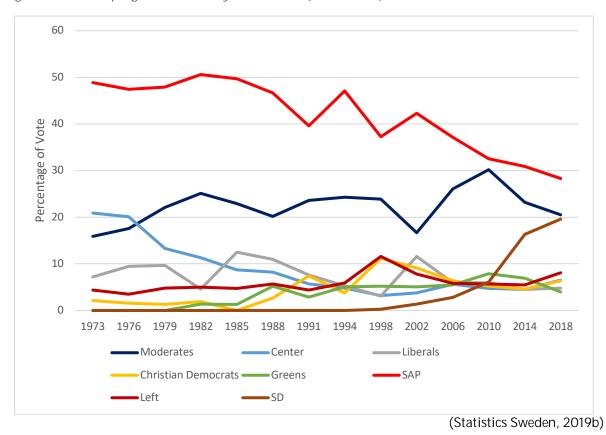
Which form of campaigning for you most prefer partaking in?

Figure 62. National Parliamentary Election Results (1973-2018)



(Statistics Sweden, 2019d)

Figure 63. Norrköping Parliamentary List Results (1973 - 2018)



60

Figure 64. Norrköping Municipal List Results (1973 - 2018)

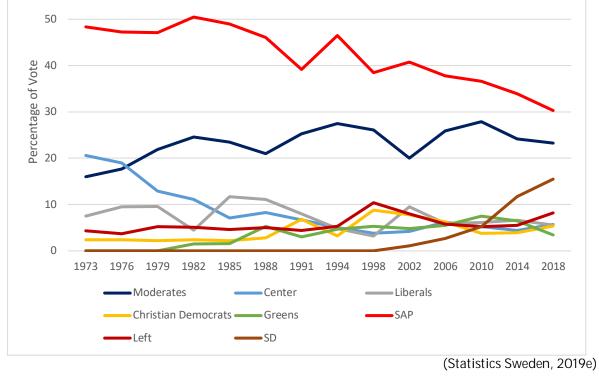
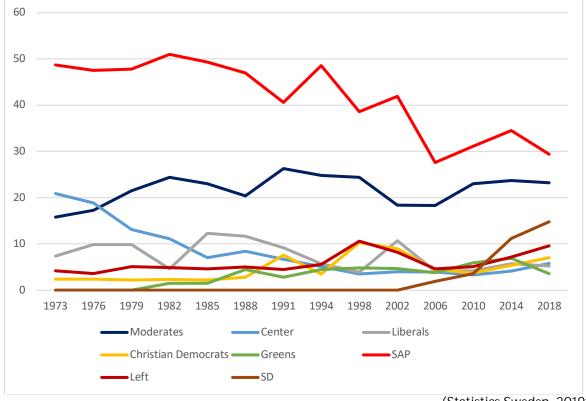
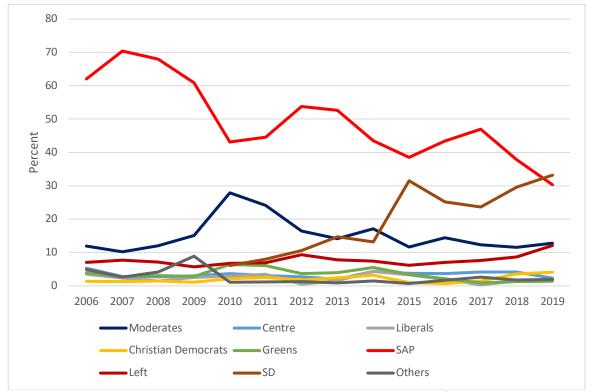


Figure 65. Norrköping Regional List Results (1973 - 2018)



(Statistics Sweden, 2019f)

Figure 66. Party Sympathy Male LO Members (November 2006-2019)



(Statistics Sweden, 2019a)

Figure 67. Party Sympathy Female LO Members (November 2006-2019)

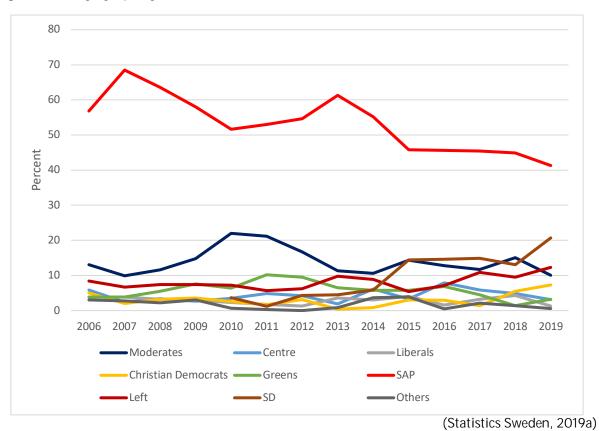


Figure 68. Party Sympathy Male TCO members (November 2006-2019)

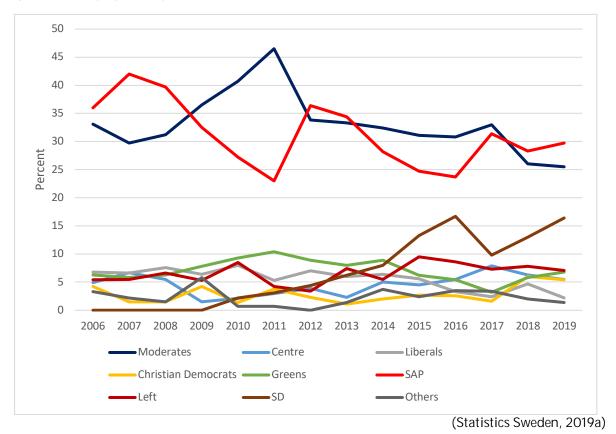


Figure 69. Party Sympathy Female TCO Members (November 2006-2019)

