

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE BITTERNESS OF UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

A Survey of the Opinions of
Sweden Democrat Voters

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Sweden Democrat voters are not disappointed Social Democrats. Instead, they rather often identify themselves as politically right-wing. If the ambition is to attract Sweden Democrat voters to the left, our survey has shown that there is no silver bullet to use in doing this.



The goal of equality should not be abandoned. The survey we analyse shows that there is strong support for equality and that there are deeply held values regarding politics for equality. Instead, many of the Sweden Democrats' voters actually deviate strongly from "ordinary people" in this respect.

Content

INTRODUCTION 2

BACKGROUND 5

Populist attitudes and socio-economic orientation for nine European right-wing radical parties.....	7
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THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY 8

Who are the Sweden Democrat voters?	8
Attitudes among the Sweden Democrat voters	8
Areas where the Sweden Democrat voters are close to other parties' voters (1)	9
Areas where the SD voters differ from other parties' voters (2)	9
Areas where the SD voters are closer to the right-wing parties (3)	10
Areas where the SD voters are closer to voters for the left-wing parties (4)	10
Areas where SD voters and Left Party voters differ from voters for other parties (5)	10
What can make voters abandon the Sweden Democrats?.....	10

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION OF THE SURVEY 12

Authoritarian left or conservative right?	12
What led to this?	12
Why does one turn to the Sweden Democrats?	13
Welfare chauvinism	13
Welfare programs are associated with Social Democrats	14

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATTRACTING SD-VOTERS 15

Sweden Democrat voters are not disappointed Social Democrats	15
Don't abandon equality	15
Fair, income-related welfare benefits	15
Poorer service	15
Trust in SD can be undermined if the SD has power	15
Local examples of good social services	16

Appendix	17
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1

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on a survey conducted immediately after the latest Swedish elections in the autumn of 2022. It was published in Swedish in the spring of 2023. Since then, much has happened in Swedish politics. However, the conclusions drawn in the Swedish edition stand up well even against more recent developments.

The 2022 elections led to the resignation of the Social Democratic government and its replacement by a right-wing government consisting of the Moderate Party (conservative), the Christian Democrats (conservative) and the Liberal Party (liberals). These parties came to power through parliamentary co-operation with the Sweden Democrats (right-wing radical). The co-operation was regulated in an agreement, called the Tidö Agreement, after the castle where the party leaders met to settle their differences.

The agreement gives the Sweden Democrats (SD) decisive influence over Swedish politics. The Tidö Agreement states that “the cooperating party that is not in the government has full and equal influence over issues in cooperation projects in the same way as the parties in the government do”. Co-operation also entails that even though the SD does not have any ministers, it may place a number of political officials in the Government Offices. Both formally and informally, the SD’s influence on government power has been clearly in evidence during the period since the last election.

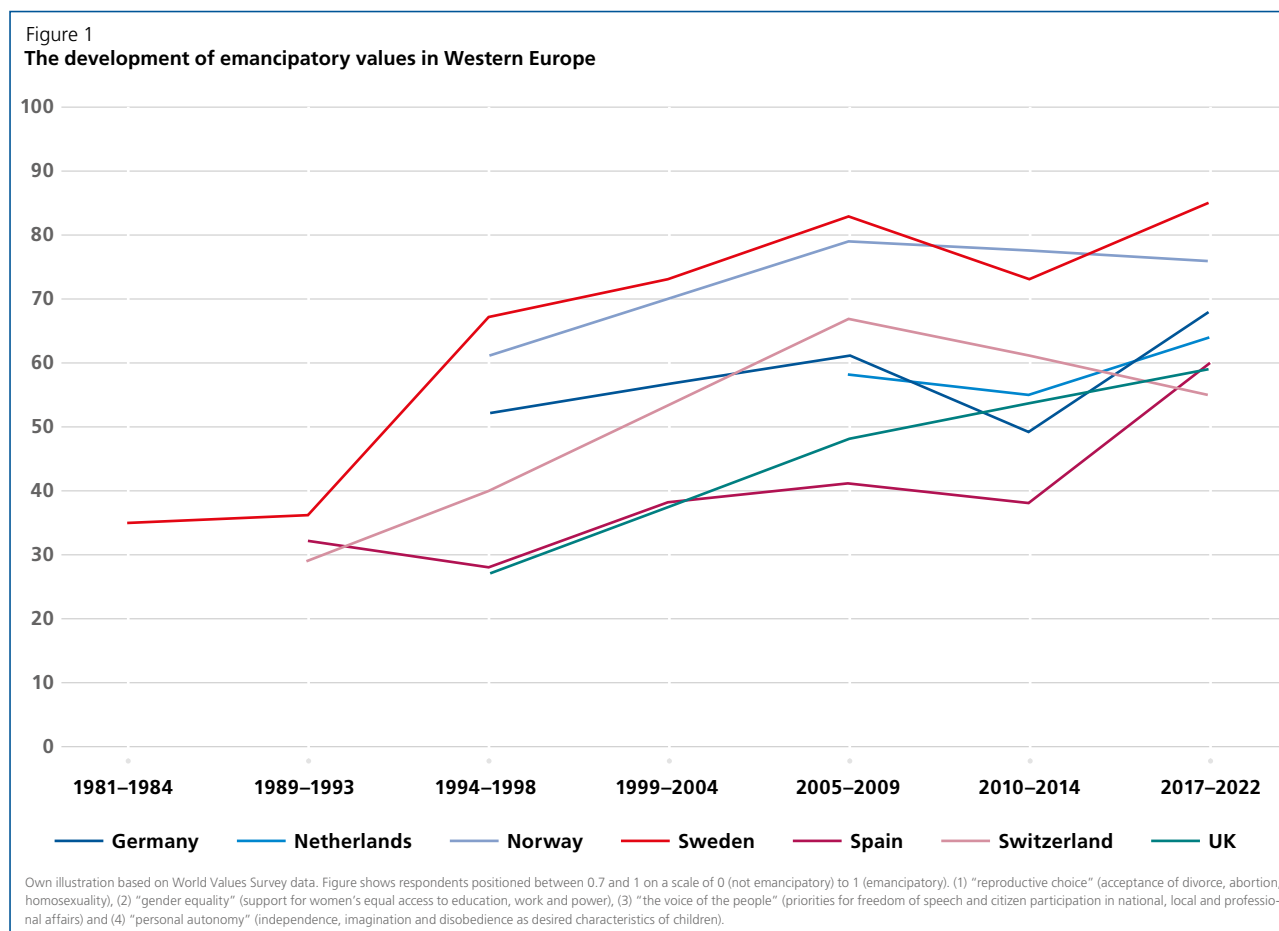
This report focuses on Sweden Democrat voters. We looked into what unites Sweden Democrat voters and in what respects they are similar to and different from other parties’ voters. The aim is to identify factors that could lead these voters to vote for other parties, preferably the Social Democrats. If we disregard the political questions that usually are on the SD voters’ lists over prioritised questions, namely migration as well as law and order, what other issues are emphasised and prized by their voters? The results are not encouraging. There is a potential for shifting voters from SD to S, but it is limited.

In essence, the study suggests that we must considerably nuance the image of the right-wing radical voter as some kind of authoritarian leftist, who is only dissatisfied with (for example) migration policy, or demands a tougher approach to crime, but otherwise supports traditional left-wing poli-

cies. Rather, it here appears most accurate to depict the average SD voter as an authoritarian rightist. On economic left-right issues, SD voters tend to position themselves clearly to the right, sometimes even further to the right than supporters of the mainstream right-wing parties.

We should also emphasise that the Sweden Democrat voters stood out in the 2022 election as the group of voters that most frequently stated that their own economy was crucial for how they voted in the election (ValU 2022). This can explain, or possibly be explained by, the fact that the party put more focus during its election campaign on prices for electricity and fuel than on classical questions about the culture wars. During the 2018 election campaign, by contrast, we could for instance see how SD’s conservative standpoints about abortion gave the party serious problems, meaning that they had to back down in the end. There is a hard core of SD voters who think that culture war issues are important, but if the party wants to increase the number of voters, this hard supporter core is a problem.

Nevertheless, according to our results, we identify two dimensions where there is some kind of potential point of contact between SD voters and the left. One is in the form of a kind of popular anti-elitism. The other concerns a distinct dissatisfaction with the way in which the welfare state works, including publicly financed welfare functions. We therefore note that one weak point for the Sweden Democrats, based on their actual position of power, involves becoming associated with a political elite that is seen as responsible for concrete material deterioration for ordinary people, whether through austerity in public welfare systems such as pensions or health care, or through other factors such as rising prices for food, energy and fuel. But even if there is little overlap between the positions of SD voters and the left, these issues may not be the most important for most SD voters, who may be more influenced by issues such as crime and immigration. Developments since the survey was conducted support this assumption. Immediately after the latest election, the Sweden Democrats were subjected to a massive drop in public opinion support. It was a period characterised by an emerging inflation crisis and the incoming government’s unwillingness to do anything to address it. The period was also characterised by austerity measures in state subsidies which affected welfare provision in municipalities and regions, as well as obvious



breaches of promises and a flagrant inability to deliver on clear election promises regarding fuel and electricity prices.

Since then, however, the SD's polling has recovered. In some polls at the end of 2023, they were even bigger than the three parties in power put together. There may be several explanations for this, but it is clear that one of them is that SD has found a successful strategy to deal with the current situation. By provocative verbal attacks against Muslims in particular, and by advocating increasingly radical and unlawful proposals in the domain of policy on crime, almost always with a xenophobic undertone, the Sweden Democrats have succeeded in distancing themselves somewhat from the government, i.e. the political elite, and above all in moving the focus of policy debate into domains where they run lesser risks of losing voters. One of the core issues for the SD, crime, has also been the most important issue for citizens since the autumn of 2023.

It is worth emphasising that in our survey we do not find a strong cultural conservative undercurrent in Swedish voter opinion. There is one segment that stands out in terms of views on gender equality, for example, and this segment is found almost exclusively among SD voters, but even there they are not a dominant group and the corresponding gender-conservative potential of other parties' voters is low.

Nevertheless, like right-wing radical parties in other countries, the SD has in recent years tended to raise "culture war" issues, such as voicing opposition to storytellers in

drag reading fairy tales in libraries. One hypothesis is that this has two main effects on party support: culture wars mobilise the most radical base, while also drawing attention away from other issues which are more problematic for the party to deal with. However, there is no support in our study for the idea that such conservative positions in themselves have any great potential to attract voters in Sweden, since the support for emancipatory values has increased linearly for decades and is higher than in most other Western European societies as, for example, World Values Survey data show (Figure 1).

The title of this report alludes to the concept of "the dissatisfaction of rising expectations" on the welfare state, coined by long-time Social Democratic prime minister Tage Erlander. This expression referred to popular pressure for further improvements that came as a direct consequence of the expanding welfare state. As the welfare state was steadily strengthened, with each generation becoming materially better off than the last, there were growing expectations that this development would continue and accelerate.

"The bitterness of unfulfilled expectations" is a similar expression, coined so as to capture a mood that better describes the Sweden of today. Faith in the future has been replaced by concern about crime, about people's own prospects, and about what will happen to the country. The SD voters we captured in our survey generally want public welfare, but they do not trust in the left's ability to deliver it, or the left's traditional solutions.

In the spring of 2024, SD party leader Jimmie Åkesson has just been appearing in the media presenting proposals that the government should be given the mandate to expel people without basis in suspicion for crimes or in other legal grounds. New figures from Freedom House show that Sweden is one of the countries where freedom is being pushed back. The right-wing government, with the SD's enthusiastic support, is making proposals that crack down on civil society and that directly affect the funding of the opposition parties, as well as proposals that cut back on public media support that has ensured some level of media diversity in the country, enabling even left-wing newspapers to survive.

Swedish democracy is solid and strong, but it is not invulnerable. With this report, we hope to contribute to a renewed and deeper understanding of the right-wing radical vote. We want to understand the driving forces behind increasing support for the radical right, in order to eventually turn the trend around – preferably before it is too late.¹

¹ The report was written by Josefin Fürst and Johan Sjölander. Carl Melin has contributed with scientific advice, statistical analysis and extensive experience. However, the expressed views and the report's conclusions are the authors' own.

2

BACKGROUND

During the last decades, right-wing radical parties have gained ground in a number of Western democracies. Some have an anti-tax agenda (such as the Norwegian *Fremskrittspartiet* and the Danish *Fremskridtpartiet*). Most of them are founded on resistance towards multicultural society and “political correctness” (pertaining to the Danish *Dansk Folkeparti*). Some have a distinct regional base (the Swedish *Skånepartiet* and the Italian *Lega*), while others have roots in Nazism or fascism (like *SD*, the Austrian *FPÖ* or *RN* in France and several Italian parties). In some cases, radical rightism also affects established parties that have undergone fundamental changes (Hungarian *Fidesz*), or where populist groups are now a large part of the involved parties’ voter bases (as for the Tories in Great Britain and the Republican Party in the US).

Our survey is included in a larger project, with two main parts. In the first part, “Populism in Europe”, it was examined how nine European far-right parties positioned themselves regarding various political issues.² The main focus was put on measuring the parties’ radical attitudes and socio-economic direction. The parties and their politics were compared to deepen understanding of the landscape of European radical right-wing parties. The second part takes a look at how the different parties voters feel about various political issues (the report you are reading is included in the project’s second part).

The Sweden Democrats, and several of the other parties examined, pursue a sprawling financial policy that traditionally would place them both to the right and the left. For example, the *SD* are against increasing taxes and advocate relaxation in the regulation of small- and medium-sized companies. At the same time, they also advocate increases in pensions, as well as in unemployment benefits (however, they want to move the administrative responsibility for the benefit from the labour unions and the state).³ But taking

both traditional right- and left-wing political stances is not unusual among the researched parties in our international comparison. *Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)* advocates both lower taxes and an increase in unemployment benefits, while *Fratelli d’Italia* favours both reduced overall economic redistribution and raised pensions. It seems like it is more common that radical right-wing parties have a strategy whereby they adapt their financial policy to the political context, for example in order to become a more attractive coalition partner.

Another important aspect to understanding the motivation behind these parties’ “leftist stances”, and whether they are genuinely for redistribution and equality or just eager to support their own (ethnic) electorate, is to look more closely at whether the parties make welfare-chauvinist redistribution proposals. When welfare for all has been contrasted to welfare chauvinism in surveys, all the studied parties’ supporters thought to some degree that welfare should be limited to the native majority. That is true for the Sweden Democrats as well, who have proposed that some welfare provisions, like child benefits, housing and pensions, should be limited to Swedish and EU/ESS citizens.

All of the parties we have studied use populist narratives to contrast the interests of “the people” against those of a “corrupt elite”. Just like when representatives for the Sweden Democrats call their opponents “enemies of Sweden” (“*sverigefientliga*”) and their supporters “friends of Sweden” (“*sverigevänner*”), *AfD* speaks in negative terms about their opponents as a “political elite” and about public broadcasting as a “media elite”. We see this pattern among voters and representatives for many of the right-wing radical parties that we have studied.

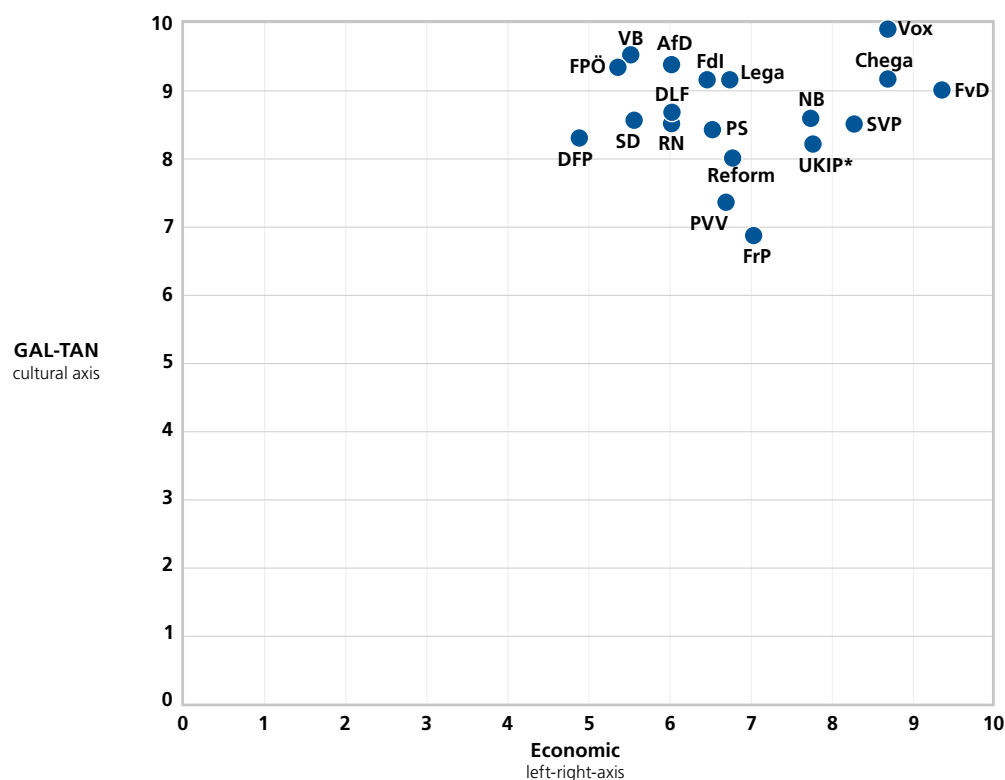
Even though the right-wing radical parties have very different backgrounds, there are also several common denominators. The largest number of these parties’ voters are found outside the larger cities, within the white working class and others who feel that they have been “left behind” in developments during recent decades.

² Populism in Europe – a comparative study of 9 populist parties (2022), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Griechenland: <https://athens.fes.de/projekte/populism-in-europe> [15.12.2023]; “Two out of three don’t think the pension system provides a sufficiently high standard of living” (2021), *Arbetsvärlden*: <https://www.arbetsvarlden.se/tva-av-tre-tycker-inte-att-pensionssystemet-haller-en-tillrackligt-hog-levnadsniva/> [15.12.2023]

³ Together with countries like Finland and Denmark, Sweden has an institutional arrangement whereby unemployment benefits are ad-

ministered and paid out by union-linked funds rather than by a government agency. The benefit is partly subsidised by the state. This system is called the Ghent system and has been shown to have positive effects on unionisation rates,

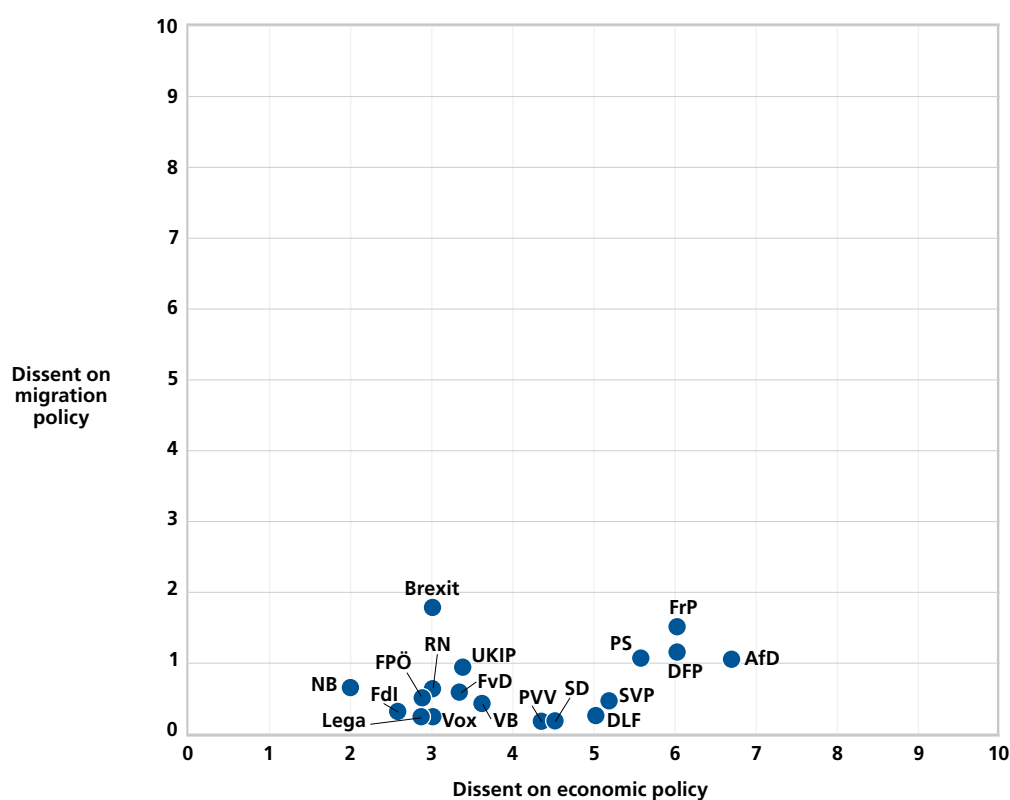
Figure 2

Positioning of radical right-wing parties on the GAL-TAN axis and on economic policy issues

Data: Speed CHES 2023 (Hooghe et al. 2024). * = Data for UKIP from CHES 2019 (Jolly et al. 2022). 0 (cultural axis) = Green-alternative-libertarian, 10 = Traditional-authoritarian-nationalist.

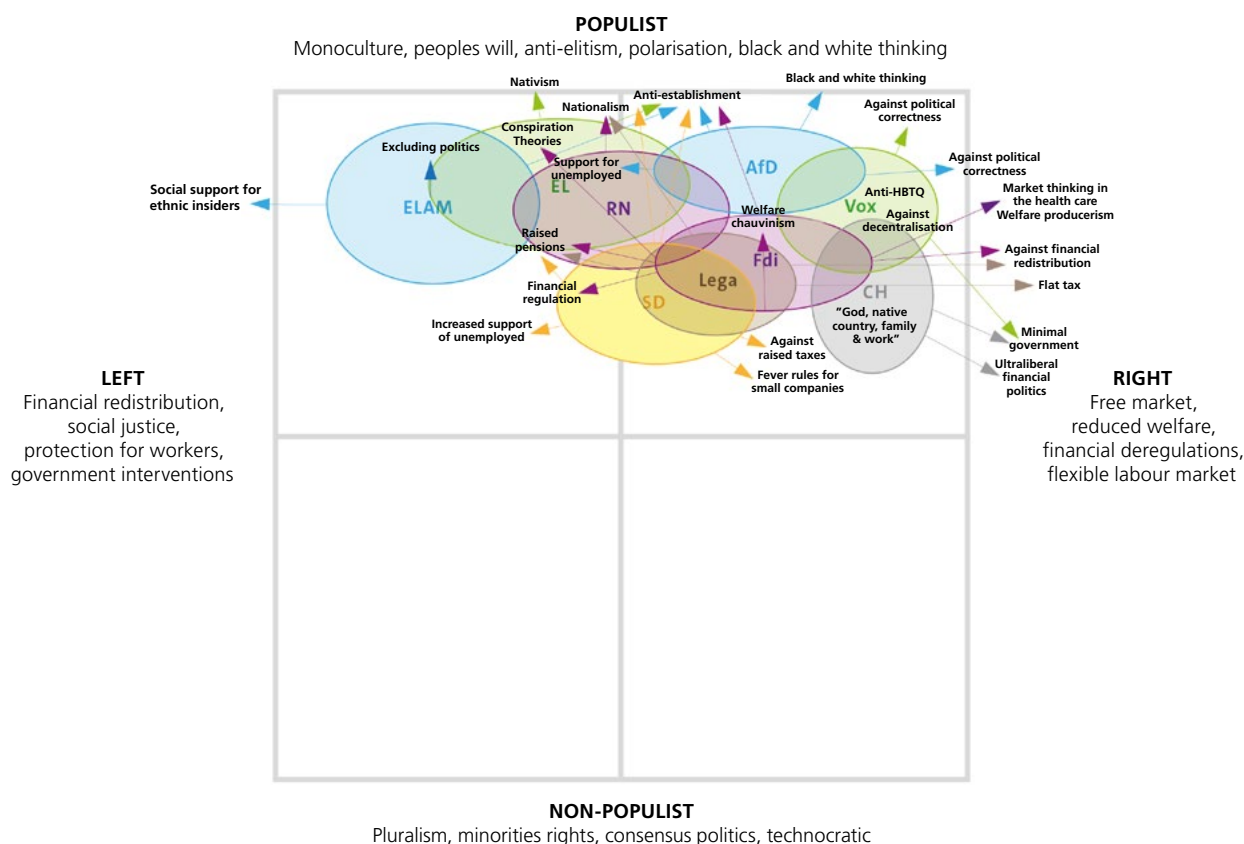
Abbreviations: DFP=Danish People's Party; NB=New Bourgeois (Denmark); SD=Sweden Democrats; FPÖ=Freedom Party of Austria; DLF=Debout la France ("Stand up for France"); RN=Rassemblement National ("National Assembly"; France); AfD=Alternative for Germany; Reform=Reform UK (formerly "Brexit Party"); UKIP=United Kingdom Independence Party; PVV=Party for Freedom (Netherlands); FvD=Forum for Democracy (Netherlands); FdI=Fratelli d'Italia ("Brothers of Italy"); Lega=Lega (formerly "Lega Nord"; Italy); PS=The True Finns; SVP=Swiss People's Party; VB=Vlaams Belang ("Flemish Interests"; Belgium); Vox=Vox (Spain); Chega=Enough! (Portugal); FrP=The Progress Party (Norway).

Figure 3

Intra-party dissent on migration and economic policy issues among the radical right

Data: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019 (Jolly et al. 2022). 0=low, 10= very high.

Figure 4

Populist attitudes and socio-economical direction in nine European right-wing radical parties

Unlike established centre-right parties, which mainly focus on opposing tax hikes and an extensive public sector, the right-wing radical parties focus their criticism on what they see as elites who think that they “know better” and want to rule over “ordinary people”. A unifying factor is often critique against “the others”. These others can be anything from immigrants to political elites, “woke”, the “politically correct” and others. In Poland the EU and “globalist elites led by George Soros” are described as these “others”. Ideas that have previously only been found among right-wing extremists are increasingly normalised, and show up in broader public debate.

While left-wing populism often is about opposing the people/working class to an elite consisting of the rich and/or capitalists, right-wing populism is often about claiming that an elite exists which favours other groups – often migrants or other minorities – at the expense of the “native” majority. In some cases, the resistance against “the others” has become more important than the radical rightist parties’ own political standpoints. As one example of this, for the Republican Party in the US, few things currently seem to unify the party more than antipathy towards their political opponents. One can interpret support for the Sweden Democrats in the same way. Party supporters’ and representatives’ resistance to immigration is a constant, while their other standpoints seem to be more flexible.

POPULIST ATTITUDES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORIENTATION FOR NINE EUROPEAN RIGHT-WING RADICAL PARTIES

In the sub-project “Populism in Europe”, we examined the positions of nine European right-wing radical parties on a number of political issues, primarily focusing on the parties’ populist attitudes and socio-economic orientations. The parties and their politics were compared to each other in order to get a better understanding of the landscape of European right-wing radical parties. It is important to keep in mind, that monoculturalism is a core feature of nativism or the “populist radical right” but not of populism as such. Left-wing populist parties, for example, would not fit in this analytic schema.

3

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

This is a report about Sweden Democrat voters, what unites them and in what respects they are similar to and different from other parties' voters. We also try to answer the question of what could make these voters abandon the Sweden Democrats. If we disregard the political questions that usually are on the SD voters' lists over prioritised questions, namely migration as well as law and order, what other issues are emphasised and prized by their voters? This text is based on an opinion poll conducted by Novus and commissioned by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Nordic Countries (FES) and the think-tank Tiden.⁴ The analysis of the material was done by Yordan Kutyski, computer analyst at Kieskompas BV, Netherlands. The report also uses results from the general election of 2022 as well as certain other statistics.

WHO ARE THE SWEDEN DEMOCRAT VOTERS?

In public political debate, the Sweden Democrats are often described as a predominantly male party, whose voters mainly live outside the larger cities and largely come from a white working-class background. This signifies a change from when the party was newly founded (e.g. by veterans of Swedish Nazism and Fascism), signally consisted of neo-Nazi skinheads, and had strong overrepresentation in the southern Swedish regions of Skåne and Blekinge.

As the Sweden Democrats' voter base has grown, the parties' voters have become more and more like voters in general. Even though the party is stronger among voters with lower education, and stronger among men than among women, the SD is still the third-largest party also among academics and women. The party is stronger in sparsely populated areas than in large cities, but is at the same time one of the three largest parties in all parliamentary constituencies except for the municipality of Stockholm (where they

are the fourth largest). Based on the extensive party sympathy survey conducted by Statistics Sweden, the SD is among the top three parties in the sympathies of almost all researched subgroups. One exception is women with higher education, but even there SD is over the four-percent electoral threshold. Just like the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party, the SD of today is a party with voters in all main groups in society.

We can thus not use socio-economic, demographic or geographic factors to distinguish the Sweden Democrat voters. There certainly are groups on these dimensions where the party is overrepresented, but to discuss SD as a party for "men with low education living in the countryside" is an oversimplification that is deceptive and insufficient in order to understand their voters.

ATTITUDES AMONG THE SWEDEN DEMOCRAT VOTERS

The FES and the think-tank Tiden commissioned Novus to map out the differences between Sweden Democrat voters and those that vote for other Swedish parties. The survey questions were not only put to SD voters, but to the entire adult population, since the purpose is not only to find out what the Sweden Democrats think, but to find out how their opinions differ from those for other groups of voters. Some of the questions have also been asked in several European countries, while some have been asked only in Sweden (where Novus has collected the data). A substantial number of questions is involved – in consequence, it is possible to see patterns as to where and how SD voters differ from those that voted for other parties, and in which respects SD voters are much like other people in Sweden.

Five particularly interesting and to some extent contradictory patterns can be discerned in analysing the answers:

- 1) On most issue dimensions, Sweden Democrat voters are close to other parties' voters.
- 2) Generally, Sweden Democrats are the only outlier. There are small differences between the other parties' voters on most issue dimensions, but SD voters stand out.

⁴ Novus is one of Sweden's best-known survey companies. The compilation of data has been done through the Novus Sweden panel, which includes about 50 000 panel participants. The panel is randomly recruited via population selection (one can't enrol oneself to make money or if one wants to affect opinions). It is representative for the population concerning age, gender and region, and the sampling frame includes people of all ages between 18 and 84. The survey was conducted in November 2022, and a total of 1,234 people replied to the survey.

- 3) The Sweden Democrats lie between the liberal/conservative parties and the left, but closer to the right wing, when it comes to issues like financial redistribution.
- 4) The Sweden Democrats lie between the liberal/conservative parties and the left, but closer to the left, on issues like the importance of politicians being like the people.
- 5) On a number of remaining issues, the voters for the Sweden Democrats and the Left party (Vänsterpartiet) differ most from voters for the other parties in parliament. This means that they are similar on opposed extremes.

All these patterns can be found in the results of the survey. Alternative 5 is unusual in our results though. It is included in the report, since previous studies (for instance Melin and Uvell, 2013) point out that a common view among the Sweden Democrats' voters and voters for the Left Party is that Swedish society "was better in the past".

It is methodologically questionable to compare how common the above patterns are, since the degree of commonality is greatly affected by what questions, and which versions of similar questions, are included in the survey. However, the overall assessment here is that the survey questions are relatively mutually exclusive and that they cover a wide spectrum. The selection of questions is based on previous research, knowledge, and also hypotheses about factors that explain support for the Sweden Democrats.

In descriptions of the dominating political blocs in Swedish society, the "left-wing parties" is used for the Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna), the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet), and the Green Party (Miljöpartiet), while the description "right-wing parties" refers to the parties in the 2006–2014 government, that is the Moderate Party (Moderaterna), the Center Party (Centerpartiet), the Liberal Party (Liberalerna) and the Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna). Expressions like "Sweden Democrats" and "leftists" are used to describe both voters and representatives of the party.

A selection of the questions and the responses can be found in the appendix.

AREAS WHERE THE SWEDEN DEMOCRAT VOTERS ARE CLOSE TO OTHER PARTIES' VOTERS (1)

- Some underlying questions of values do not seem to be ideologically charged or party-separating. One of those is the question of whether people with other political opinions than one's own are evil or not.
- There is also a broad consensus that one can take pride in being a Swedish citizen. Here the Green Party's and Left Party's supporters differ by agreeing with this to a lesser degree.
- Among the voters of all parties, there is a prevailing opinion that problems in society should be addressed scientifically rather than ideologically, that politicians should spend more time out among ordinary people, and that a lot of people are too self-centred.

AREAS WHERE THE SD VOTERS DIFFER FROM OTHER PARTIES' VOTERS (2)

There are a number of areas where SD voters differ a great deal from the supporters of all other parties. The distinguishing traits are described below, divided by issue domain.

- The belief that labour migration presses down the salaries for other groups.

While there is extreme opposition to immigration and integration among Sweden Democrats supporters, views vary among other political party supporters. Moderate and Christian Democratic voters tend to hold a middle position on immigration and integration issues, falling between the more extreme views of Sweden Democrats' supporters and the generally more pro-immigration stance of other parties' supporters.

- Low support for rights for immigrants, as well as believing in welfare chauvinism, i.e. that native Swedes should have priority when it comes to jobs, that the welfare state is a magnet for immigrants, and that immigrants should not have the same access to the welfare state as others.
- Drawing strong distinctions between citizens and non-citizens, and also seeing those born in other countries and their children as second-class citizens.
- Contempt for politicians as well as for experts and scientists.
- Seeing the government as controlled by powerful interests that act to benefit themselves, that the political system is "rigged" against ordinary people and that political parties do more harm than good.
- Populist views that important questions should be decided by referenda, combined with the authoritarian view that the country needs a strong leader who can "quickly decide about everything".
- Politics should "follow the will of the people" rather than acting like there are conflicting interests.
- Widespread mistrust of society in general. Many Sweden Democrats agree with the claim that the pandemic was used to take away people's rights.
- Feeling that public services (mainly schools, health care and police), but also private services (shops, restaurants), have deteriorated where one lives.

- Mistrust towards the pension system and believing that it will not protect the economic situation for future pensioners.
- Belief that some jobs are best suited for men while others are better for women. Some Sweden Democrats also believe that women are not suitable as bosses.

AREAS WHERE THE SD VOTERS ARE CLOSER TO THE RIGHT-WING PARTIES (3)

There is a large number of areas where the SD voters are close to the voters for the right-wing parties.

- This applies to all issues like financial redistribution, taxes, and the size of the public sector.
- When it comes to issues like labour rights, the Sweden Democrats voters are also close to those for the right-wing parties. They also share the right-wing parties' voters' support for increased spending on defence. Sweden Democrats' voters are positive towards private competition in the health care sector and towards private schools. Finally, just like the right-wing voters, they don't believe that it is important to mix children with different backgrounds in school.
- There are also several areas where the Sweden Democrats are closer to the right-wing voters than to the left-wing voters, but still are "closer to the middle". For example, this pertains to their outlook on public spending in general and whether the government should increase benefits for the sick and the unemployed.
- On some fiscal questions the Sweden Democrats' voters are even further to the right than those for the right-wing parties. This pertains to views on labour unions and on whether tax money is used effectively. Here the answers are probably affected by low trust in institutions among these voters.
- Among SD voters there are also very many who agree with the statement that politicians on the left don't care about ordinary people.

AREAS WHERE THE SD VOTERS ARE CLOSER TO VOTERS FOR THE LEFT-WING PARTIES (4)

There are a number of areas that can be considered being about politicians' alignment with the people where SD and left-wing voters are close to each other in their opinions.

- The SD voters agree to a greater extent than voters for other right-wing parties (but less than left-wing voters) with the statement that politicians should be like the people they represent, and that politicians always should listen to the problems of the people.

- SD voters also agree to a greater extent than voters for other right-wing parties (but less than left-wing voters) with the statement that politics "basically is a struggle between the people and those in power".
- SD and left-wing voters also often feel that it doesn't matter who you vote for "since the rich control all of the parties". There seems to be an "underdog" perspective in this respect that unites SD and left-wing voters.
- SD voters agree with left-wing voters that the government should regulate the economy more than they do today.
- There is also support for raising pensions and for government subsidisation of dental care to a larger extent than today.
- SD and left-wing voters also tend to agree with the statement that people with different political opinions than their own are misinformed, that you can judge if a person is good or bad from their political opinions and also that democracy is about finding compromises.

AREAS WHERE SD VOTERS AND LEFT PARTY VOTERS DIFFER FROM VOTERS FOR OTHER PARTIES (5)

- Sweden Democrat and Left Party voters, more often than others, agree with the statement that people don't understand what policies are best for them, and also with the statement that some people in the government are corrupt.
- Sweden Democrats agree, together with both Left Party and Green Party voters, with the statement that coming generations will have a lower standard of living than what we have today. Here, however, it is reasonable to believe that it is not the same things that scare the Sweden Democrat voters about the economic future as what scare the Green Party voters.

WHAT CAN MAKE VOTERS ABANDON THE SWEDEN DEMOCRATS?

In spite of the fact that there are some "left-wing opinions" among the Sweden Democrat voters in certain questions, for instance concerning pensions, the potential for the left side – or for that matter the liberal Center Party – to attract their voters is very slim. At the same time these are naturally not unimportant voters. If every tenth Sweden Democrat changed blocs, that would correspond to about 2 percent of all voters, which can be enough to decide who runs the government.

In the survey the voters were asked how probable it is that they would ever consider voting for another party. The answers are on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unlikely

and 10 very likely. For the Sweden Democrats the likelihood of voting for every other party looks as it does below, summing those answering 6–10:

- The Moderate Party 70 percent
- The Liberal Party 11 percent
- The Center Party 1 percent
- The Christian Democrats 30 percent
- The Social Democrats 1 percent
- The Left Party 1 percent
- The Green Party 1 percent (*rounded up from 0,5%*)

- The voters also got to place themselves to the right or to the left. SD voters often placed themselves further to the right than what the Moderates' voters did. Only 6 percent of the SD voters placed themselves to the left or somewhat to the left. Sweden Democrats and Christian Democrats are those that most often define themselves as conservative (as opposed to progressive), and SD dominates among the very conservative.
- The survey shows that the potential flow between the Center party and the Sweden Democrats is close to nil.
- The potential for the Social Democrats to attract SD voters with labour market policy standpoints seems to be very low. When it comes to redistribution of incomes and employment security, the views of SD voters are close to those of the Moderate Party's and the Christian Democrats' voters. There isn't any strong support for raising unemployment benefits among SD voters either.

According to the assessment of the authors of this report, there are really only two points of commonality between the left-wing parties' policy standpoints and what SD voters ask for:

- The people against the elite: The SD exploits a perceived opposition between the general public and societal elites. In this context, left-wing parties can try to undermine the Sweden Democrats by portraying them as part of the elite establishment, for example with their close cooperation with the government. This strategy may alienate the SD from voters who are inherently skeptical of those in power, thereby challenging the SD's claim to represent the common people.
- Services. Another way to drive a wedge between SD and its supporters would entail building on critiques of deteriorating public and private services in general, and presenting both problems and solutions in the area. Another possibility here is to rebuild trust in, for example, the Social Democratic Party by putting forward positive examples of development in municipalities and regions run by them.

In sum, it seems that winning back voters from SD will be difficult for leftist parties. SD voters are generally positioned far to the right on issues like migration and social

equality, and they are also positioned strongly to the right on issues concerning the economy and the labour market, and largely also welfare policy.

4

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION OF THE SURVEY

AUTHORITARIAN LEFT OR CONSERVATIVE RIGHT?

The image of Sweden Democrat voters as some form of authoritarian leftist grouping is not consistent with our results. In most areas they should rather be considered as authoritarian rightists. There are only two areas in which Sweden Democrat voters have a lot in common with the left. Firstly, they are similarly dissatisfied with how the welfare state works – for instance, they see deficiencies in the supply of public services. Secondly, both groups are very sceptical towards elites and feel that politics should emanate more from “ordinary people”.

The Sweden Democrats have grown by attracting voters from all other parties. Those that they have attracted are, to a certain degree, voters with negative views on equality and who have xenophobic views. They have also attracted voters with generally low confidence not only in politicians but also in their fellow human beings.

At the same time, we should emphasise that the Sweden Democrat voters stood out in the 2022 election as the group of voters that most frequently stated that their own economy was crucial for how they voted in the election (ValU 2022). This can explain, or possibly be explained by, the fact that the party put more focus during its election campaign on prices for electricity and fuel than on classical questions about the culture wars. During the 2018 election campaign, by contrast, we could for instance see how SD’s conservative standpoints about abortion gave the party serious problems, meaning that they had to back down in the end. There is a hard core of SD voters who think that culture war issues are important, but if the party wants to increase the number of voters, this hard supporter core is a problem.

WHAT LED TO THIS?

The one question that without doubt is most associated with the Sweden Democrats deals with their resistance to historically permissive Swedish migration policy. Sweden is also a country that during the time of the Sweden Democrats’ greatest growth has received some two million immigrants, the majority of these being refugees or next-of-kin to primary migrants. SD also grew during the refugee crisis

of 2015, when the then red-green government ultimately changed Swedish migration policy to a much more restrictive one under the pressure of as many as 10,000 refugees a week. Swedish migration policy has been tightened further since 2015 – with the Tidö Agreement, asylum seeker intake shall be adjusted to the minimum level permitted by EU legislation. This doesn’t mean that the question of migration, or segregation or other hard issues like crime, are not as of today still very much on the agenda in Swedish political discourse, or beyond the scope of public interest. Quite the opposite. Those questions, not least crime, are still polling at high levels. What we want to do with this report is to look behind these surface facts. What do the Sweden Democrat voters want, besides being negative to migration and being tough on crime?

During the period 1930–1980, societies in the Western world moved towards a decrease in socioeconomic differences. By contrast, during the subsequent four decades after 1980, socioeconomic differences have generally increased instead. For Sweden, where such differences had been substantially reduced in international perspective, the contrast in time was especially clear. A uniquely strong social democratic movement, in combination with broad popular support and one of the world’s strongest labour union movements, made up the foundation for what was to be called the Swedish model.

The former Social Democratic prime minister Tage Erlander coined the concept “the dissatisfaction of increasing expectations” in order to capture the phenomenon that voters in an expanding welfare state constantly asked for more from the government. Perhaps we should now instead talk about “the bitterness of unfulfilled expectations”? It is possible that this kind of mechanism can contribute to our understanding of why voters who are dissatisfied and feel that the welfare state betrays its promises turn to the right.

Since the strong welfare state of the past is closely connected to the Social Democratic Party, there also exists a narrative that the Social Democratic Party once supported the working class, but that it now cares more for the rights of women and immigrants “instead”, and has thus betrayed the (male) working class. Of course, this view is linked to a rather outdated conception of the working class.

The other component is present in what we usually place under the umbrella term of “identity politics”. In Sweden we can see a “brahminisation” of the left, to use the term of the French economist Thomas Piketty, referring to how the left increasingly attract voters with higher education while the working class turns to the right. Researcher like Stefan Svallfors have shown that the working class actually tends to be more conservative than the middle class, at least on an aggregated level, when it comes to questions of social values.

We can see that low-quality public services and economic insecurity, for example within the pension system, seem to be motivating factors for Sweden Democrats. The paradox here is that this kind of dissatisfaction is directed towards the same kinds of injustices that the political left is against. At the same time, there is no trust that “the left” are the ones with the solutions for these problems.

The Sweden Democrats have managed to direct such dissatisfaction towards “identity politics”. In our survey we can also see that when it comes to values, there is an obvious sounding board here, since the Sweden Democrats attract a fringe – voters with radically different views (for instance, on equality) – than what prevailing Swedish norms tend to stipulate.

But it is also important to see the other side of this problem complex. If we go back to the autumn of 2022, we can see that the topics that tended to get attention before the parliamentary elections were actually about material questions like prices of electricity and fuel, at the same time as the Sweden Democrats’ voters tended to state that private economic issues determined their vote.

WHY DOES ONE TURN TO THE SWEDEN DEMOCRATS?

Sweden Democrat voters do not see the left as a guarantor of a functioning welfare state. Instead, they see the parties to the left as constituting an elite that looks to the interests of others, before those of the Sweden Democrats’ voters. This also means that Sweden Democrats’ voters tend not to believe that (for example) raised taxes would solve the problems that they face in their everyday lives. Research shows that support for high taxes and an extensive welfare state presupposes high trust in politicians, otherwise there is no trust that the money collected in taxes is used the right way.

There is strong voter-attracting potential for the Sweden Democrats in what often is called welfare chauvinism – that is, the idea that welfare in general should go to the native population rather than to immigrants. The support for these ideas is strong among the Sweden Democrats’ voters, and to a certain degree also among the voters for the Moderate Party and the Christian Democrats. Critique against how “immigrants” are favoured by the Swedish welfare system, at the same time as for instance “Swedish pensioners” are being let down by the system, has been an important part

of the SD’s propaganda for a long time. Welfare chauvinism can be seen as the antithesis to a narrative from the left saying that the working class, regardless of background, has interests in common. For Social Democrats it is strategically central to integrate perspectives and interests, to translate them into political outcomes for all workers and to work to resolve possible conflicts and mistrust between the Swedish-born and the foreign-born working class.

We want to emphasize that discussions about welfare eligibility don’t necessarily imply welfare chauvinism. It is possible to debate who should benefit from the Swedish welfare state without resorting to discriminatory or nationalist rhetoric. What we have examined here, is whether there is acceptance for different rules in welfare policy depending on if you are “Swedish” or “immigrant”.

A conclusion that lies close to hand is that problems of the above-described kind also arise when universal welfare programs do not deliver. We can for instance see very strong support among Sweden Democrats for strengthening the pension system, even if, as it is formulated in our survey, it is done by making the government finances underfinanced. We can also see that people who depend on various benefit systems were overrepresented among Sweden Democrat voters in the election 2022 – it was then the largest party among the unemployed and the second-largest party among people receiving sickness benefits.

A possible conclusion is then that the attraction of welfare chauvinism at least to some part gets its support from a justified criticism against the fact that the welfare state actually doesn’t deliver to a satisfactory degree. The trust in the universal pension system is low in the entire population, and Sweden Democrats voters stand out further in this respect.⁵ There has been serious criticism not least from the blue-collar Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) against the abolition of sick leave days, as exemplified in e. g. the public official response from LO to the public inquiry commission on sickness insurance reporting in 2021 (in Swedish).⁶ Upgraded welfare policy is an important areas to invest in, in order to regain public trust for the welfare state.

WELFARE CHAUVINISM

It is in itself not strange that people feel a stronger affinity with others at the same workplaces, in the same region and in the same country. The Swedish welfare state is out of necessity a form of geographically delimited solidarity, within the framework of the Swedish nation-state. The Swedish model largely depends on work, in the sense that that there is a connection between contributing to the system and being able to take part of the benefits it offers in case of illness or

⁵ <https://www.arbetsvarlden.se/tva-av-tre-tycker-inte-att-pensionssystemet-haller-en-tillrackligt-hog-levnadsniva/>, logdate 2024-05-10.

⁶ <https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/03fbb10b31e843b-08710d0d91a14204e/landsorgansiationen-i-sverige-lo.pdf>, logdate 2024-05-10.

other crises. It is founded in the old Marxian (and apostolic) dictum of “from each according to ability, to each according to need”.

Welfare chauvinism of the kind that the survey asks about, however, isn’t about strengthening this geographical solidarity, but rather about splitting cohesion and solidarity. If universal welfare programs don’t keep politicians’ promises, there is a greater risk that welfare chauvinist proposals gain support.

WELFARE PROGRAMS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

In this report, we have approached the question of whether dissatisfaction with publicly financed welfare programs is something which the political left and the Sweden Democrat voters have in common. It should be noted that it was by no means certain to begin with that this is true. Swedish welfare systems as they actually look and work today are for many people in Sweden strongly associated with the Social Democratic Party, more so than with any other political force. That dissatisfaction with how the welfare state actually works evolves into a feeling that the left doesn’t understand or care about the situation for “ordinary people” is thus not completely illogical. Once again, this underscores the need for humility and also self-criticism for leftists that want to attract these voters.

5

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATTRACTING SD-VOTERS

SWEDEN DEMOCRAT VOTERS ARE NOT DISAPPOINTED SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

If the ambition is to attract Sweden Democrat voters to the Social Democratic Party and the left, our survey has shown that there is no silver bullet to achieve this. It is not enough to enact some quick position shifts in order to recreate a trust that is deeply undermined.

The view that Sweden Democrat voters basically are Social Democratic voters who are only dissatisfied on certain issues (for instance migration) gains no support when we ask the voters themselves what they actually think.

DON'T ABANDON EQUALITY

It is also difficult to see that a repositioning in so-called identity politics questions is a possible way forward. First of all, for purely ideological reasons, it is in itself unthinkable that the Social Democratic Party and the left should abandon their view on gender equality or LGBTQI rights. The price to be paid in support from other groups of voters would be far too high. As is shown by the survey we have analysed, there is strong support for progressive stances here, and there are deeply and broadly held values regarding these questions. Instead, it could be argued that on these issues it is actually some of the SD voters who deviate strongly from "ordinary people". Sometimes, as on the abortion issue, the SD doesn't even have their own voters with them in their conservatism. Shifts to the right on cultural issues will also not work as the SD-voter will prefer the original, and often deeply distrust parties on the left. This means that they probably will not buy positional shifts.

FAIR, INCOME-RELATED WELFARE BENEFITS

One way to look at chauvinism is to interpret it as a question of solidarity, and to form a counter-strategy on this basis. SD voters generally feel unfairly treated, are dissatisfied with politics and administration, and feel that they do not get what they give in return. At the same time, SD voters' perception is that other groups seem to be able to collect benefits everywhere. The welfare state is in many ways a form of solidarity-based insurance. People are expected to work

and do the right thing, but they also know that if they get ill or lose their job, others will help them. The same thing goes for other welfare benefits that are paid for jointly and distributed equally. People accept that others can get support because they know that others have contributed and that they may one day need help as well. To maintain general confidence in the system, it is pivotal that everyone who can get something also contributes, but also that one can have a decent life as a pensioner, or if one gets cancer and can't work for a longer period. It is also important for the system's legitimacy that people can maintain themselves through work – the wages of a nurse's assistant, for example, should be enough to live on even if he or she is ill for a few days.

SD and the right try to describe immigrants as people who get something out of the welfare system but don't contribute themselves. It is important for the left to act in relation to such claims in their arguments. Where this is possible, it is therefore important to underline how welfare benefits are connected to work and what people contribute. (This reasoning does not apply to school education or emergency care. For these programs, there is a strong opinion support that even newly arrived immigrants should have access to them.)

POORER SERVICE

Another way to move forward may entail responding to the critique against deteriorating universal public and private service, especially considering SD's mandate in the Riksdag, their current relation to the government and their political posts. In this way, the party can be forced to explain its failed promises about the economy and rights for ordinary people. In Sweden, many welfare functions like schools and care centres are run by private actors, to some extent, who can withdraw profits even if they are fully tax funded. This perspective can be important to expose as a waste of "ordinary peoples'" tax money, thus discrediting reforms that the right and thus the SD support.

TRUST IN SD CAN BE UNDERMINED IF THE SD HAS POWER

Considering how much of a motivating factor dissatisfaction seems to be to understand SD sympathies, it is a possible hypothesis that the potential for the Social Democrats

to attract SD voters will increase if it is made probable that SD actually is in power. In this way, the SD would be seen as part of the same elite that is responsible for social service deterioration, or for that matter that they have not fulfilled the expected improvements which people want to see in their everyday lives.

LOCAL EXAMPLES OF GOOD SOCIAL SERVICES

Directly after the election the Sweden Democrats lost around 250,000 voters. They have to a large part returned. Hard issues like crime are still very much on the agenda of Swedish public discourse, driven by a series of gang-related murders where children are used as shooters and children are often also the victims. The question of migration has in a way turned from how many refugees Sweden should accept to how you can make people who already live here leave the country – the Sweden Democratic term for this is “återvandring” (remigration). The Social Democratic Party has in its turn tried to change the focus to a more successful integration, by a combination of different forms of policies.

This report does not focus on those areas (i.e. crime and migration), because the aim has been to look behind them. The search was for traditionally left-wing issues that could attract Sweden Democratic voters. We found no such silver bullet.

Attracting SD voters leftward thus entails long-term investment in relationship-building, which addresses dissatisfaction and also increases politicians’ proximity to the people. Hope for the future and greater trust in the Social Democratic Party can be generated by putting into evidence successful local policy ventures and reforms, and by continued development of policies for a stronger welfare state. Welfare development is not finished business – it is a fact that people can’t live on their pensions, that one can fall through the social safety net. As long as children grow up with different life opportunities depending on where they live and what their parents work with, we are not done.

APPENDIX

Novus conducted the survey in November of 2022, as commissioned by the FES.

The survey we have analysed was conducted through web-based interviews in the Novus online panel. A total of 2,200 persons was invited to participate and 1,225 persons completed the entire survey, which yields a response rate of 56 percent. The results are weighted for representation by gender, age, level of education, region and vote in the latest election (2022).

The survey consisted of 83 questions and four background questions. It is partly based on similar studies in other countries, partly unique for Sweden. Carl Melin has assisted with scientific method support and analysis.

Below is a selection of the questions used, generating some of the main conclusions of the survey:

- Completely disagree
 - Tend to not agree
 - Neutral
 - Tend to agree
 - Completely agree
- Public services (schools, health care, police etc) where I live have deteriorated in later years
 - Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?
 - Public spending (welfare, police etc) should increase, even if it means tax hikes
 - Private services (shops, restaurants, etc.) where I live have deteriorated in later years
 - In general, tax money is well spent
 - The Swedish pension system ensures that most people have a stable economic situation when they are old
 - The most important political decisions should be decided in referenda
 - Quite a few people in government are corrupt
 - Politicians are mainly working to be re-elected, not to solve problems
 - The ruling parties used the Covid pandemic to deprive people of their rights
 - Women are better at nursing professions than men
 - Men are better leaders than women
 - Immigrants shall have the same rights as people born and raised in this country

Table 1

Public services (schools, health care, police etc) where I live have deteriorated in later years

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	14.5 %	3.9 %	14.6 %	19.6 %	6.4 %	12.5 %	0.5 %	8.2 %	8.6 %
Tend to not agree	25.8 %	7.8 %	14.6 %	19.6 %	15.0 %	21.1 %	7.5 %	19.7 %	16.0 %
Neutral	12.9 %	15.7 %	16.7 %	19.6 %	17.6 %	15.0 %	7.5 %	16.4 %	14.2 %
Tend to agree	43.5 %	54.9 %	31.3 %	28.3 %	41.2 %	37.5 %	37.5 %	39.3 %	38.9 %
Completely agree	3.2 %	17.6 %	22.9 %	13.0 %	19.6 %	13.9 %	47.0 %	16.4 %	22.2 %

Table 2

Public spending (welfare, police etc) should increase, even if it means tax hikes

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	6.0 %	9.4 %	8.9 %	1.9 %	13.8 %	0.7 %	19.1 %	–	8.3 %
Tend to not agree	22.4 %	18.9 %	22.2 %	1.9 %	26.5 %	4.2 %	16.3 %	1.5 %	13.6 %
Neutral	29.9 %	37.7 %	20.0 %	17.0 %	22.4 %	10.7 %	22.0 %	9.0 %	18.8 %
Tend to agree	31.3 %	28.3 %	35.6 %	30.2 %	28.1 %	44.3 %	26.8 %	28.4 %	33.5 %
Completely agree	10.4 %	5.7 %	13.3 %	49.1 %	9.2 %	40.1 %	15.8 %	61.2 %	25.8 %

Table 3

Private services (shops, restaurants, etc.) where I live have deteriorated in later years

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	34.8 %	20.0 %	31.9 %	40.4 %	29.0 %	31.4 %	11.3 %	24.5 %	26.4 %
Tend to not agree	24.2 %	38.0 %	27.7 %	31.9 %	28.5 %	32.4 %	23.2 %	44.6 %	30.0 %
Neutral	19.7 %	10.0 %	14.9 %	19.1 %	22.6 %	13.5 %	21.7 %	15.4 %	17.7 %
Tend to agree	19.7 %	26.0 %	10.6 %	8.5 %	15.1 %	17.9 %	30.0 %	12.3 %	19.3 %
Completely agree	1.6 %	6.0 %	14.9 %	–	4.8 %	4.7 %	13.8 %	3.1 %	6.7 %

Table 4

In general, tax money is well spent

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	6.1 %	15.4 %	–	2.0 %	11.1 %	1.3 %	33.3 %	3.0 %	11.2 %
Tend to not agree	13.6 %	19.2 %	31.8 %	12.2 %	29.5 %	16.2 %	36.8 %	18.2 %	23.8 %
Neutral	18.2 %	30.8 %	22.7 %	32.2 %	21.6 %	27.6 %	14.7 %	18.2 %	22.6 %
Tend to agree	57.6 %	30.8 %	40.9 %	46.9 %	34.2 %	45.5 %	14.2 %	57.6 %	37.4 %
Completely agree	4.5 %	3.8 %	4.5 %	6.1 %	3.7 %	9.4 %	1.0 %	3.0 %	5.1 %

Table 5

The Swedish pension system ensures that most people have a stable economic situation when they are old

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	6.1 %	17.3 %	5.7 %	11.9 %	18.9 %	11.9 %	29.6 %	6.3 %	15.8 %
Tend to not agree	24.2 %	38.5 %	26.7 %	29.5 %	32.4 %	29.5 %	41.4 %	31.7 %	32.1 %
Neutral	15.2 %	9.6 %	17.8 %	13.6 %	13.5 %	13.6 %	5.4 %	15.9 %	12.6 %
Tend to agree	42.4 %	26.9 %	44.4 %	32.5 %	25.4 %	32.5 %	17.2 %	34.9 %	29.6 %
Completely agree	12.1 %	7.7 %	4.4 %	12.5 %	9.7 %	12.5 %	6.2 %	11.1 %	9.9 %

Table 6

The most important political decisions should be decided in referenda

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	20.6 %	11.1 %	21.3 %	11.8 %	16.2 %	15.3 %	7.1 %	7.4 %	13.4 %
Tend to not agree	26.5 %	7.4 %	38.3 %	35.37 %	26.2 %	25.2 %	9.0 %	19.1 %	21.8 %
Neutral	16.2 %	27.8 %	10.6 %	29.4 %	15.7 %	21.3 %	12.9 %	17.6 %	18.1 %
Tend to agree	23.5 %	44.4 %	19.1 %	17.5 %	26.2 %	24.9 %	28.6 %	39.7 %	27.3 %
Completely agree	13.2 %	9.3 %	10.6 %	5.9 %	15.7 %	13.3 %	42.4 %	16.2 %	19.4 %

Table 7

Quite a few people in government are corrupt

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	43.9 %	24.5 %	52.5 %	33.3 %	40.5 %	34.2 %	14.4 %	22.6 %	31.3 %
Tend to not agree	27.3 %	28.6 %	20.0 %	24.4 %	27.0 %	25.9 %	20.3 %	24.2 %	24.7 %
Neutral	16.7 %	26.5 %	17.5 %	20.0 %	14.6 %	21.6 %	22.8 %	11.3 %	19.4 %
Tend to agree	9.1 %	16.3 %	5.0 %	13.3 %	11.4 %	11.2 %	24.3 %	30.6 %	15.3 %
Completely agree	3.0 %	4.1 %	5.0 %	8.9 %	6.5 %	7.2 %	18.3 %	11.3 %	9.3 %

Table 8

Politicians are mainly working to be re-elected, not to solve problems

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	8.7 %	1.9 %	8.5 %	8.7 %	3.1 %	4.9 %	2.9 %	9.0 %	4.6 %
Tend to not agree	8.7 %	9.4 %	10.6 %	8.7 %	23.8 %	19.5 %	10.0 %	14.9 %	16.5 %
Neutral	26.1 %	32.1 %	31.9 %	26.1 %	21.8 %	23.1 %	11.9 %	17.9 %	20.9 %
Tend to agree	46.4 %	45.3 %	34.0 %	46.4 %	38.3 %	38.1 %	40.5 %	41.8 %	39.9 %
Completely agree	10.1 %	11.1 %	14.9 %	10.1 %	13.0 %	14.3 %	34.8 %	16.4 %	18.1 %

Table 9

The ruling parties used the Covid pandemic to deprive people of their rights

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	73.1 %	15.4 %	72.1 %	78.4 %	59.9 %	64.4 %	34.3 %	63.6 %	58.8 %
Tend to not agree	19.4 %	19.2 %	16.3 %	13.7 %	18.8 %	21.1 %	23.0 %	15.2 %	19.7 %
Neutral	4.5 %	30.8 %	7.0 %	2.0 %	12.5 %	7.9 %	11.8 %	4.5 %	8.7 %
Tend to agree	3.0 %	30.8 %	4.7 %	3.9 %	6.8 %	4.6 %	17.2 %	10.6 %	8.3 %
Completely agree	–	3.8 %	–	2.0 %	2.1 %	2.0 %	13.7 %	6.1 %	4.6 %

Table 10

Women are better at nursing professions than men

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	35.8 %	30.9 %	35.7 %	45.1 %	24.7 %	33.4 %	11.6 %	47.7 %	29.0 %
Tend to not agree	29.9 %	10.9 %	19.0 %	17.6 %	25.3 %	25.0 %	23.7 %	21.5 %	23.4 %
Neutral	19.4 %	32.7 %	16.7 %	29.4 %	25.8 %	22.6 %	29.3 %	21.5 %	25.0 %
Tend to agree	9.0 %	21.8 %	21.4 %	5.9 %	14.5 %	14.9 %	21.2 %	9.2 %	15.5 %
Completely agree	6.0 %	3.6 %	7.1 %	2.0 %	9.7 %	4.1 %	14.1 %	–	7.1 %

Table 11

Men are better leaders than women

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	78.3 %	58.2 %	69.5 %	82.0 %	54.2 %	72.5 %	24.0 %	77.5 %	59.4 %
Tend to not agree	10.1 %	12.7 %	23.9 %	14.0 %	16.8 %	16.1 %	23.5 %	14.9 %	17.3 %
Neutral	10.1 %	20.0 %	2.2 %	4.0 %	23.2 %	10.2 %	33.0 %	6.0 %	16.9 %
Tend to agree	1.4 %	9.1 %	4.3 %	–	4.7 %	1.0 %	16.5 %	1.5 %	5.5 %
Completely agree	–	–	–	–	1.1 %	0.3 %	3.0 %	–	0.9 %

Table 12

Immigrants shall have the same rights as people born and raised in this country

Which party did you vote for, in the elections to government in 2022?

									Total
Completely disagree	3.2 %	16.7 %	6.5 %	–	22.1 %	7.7 %	44.9 %	–	17.4 %
Tend to not agree	7.9 %	25.9 %	13.5 %	3.9 %	30.0 %	9.3 %	34.3 %	4.3 %	18.9 %
Neutral	17.5 %	14.8 %	13.0 %	3.9 %	17.9 %	17.0 %	8.2 %	5.8 %	13.6 %
Tend to agree	34.9 %	31.5 %	54.3 %	33.3 %	15.8 %	33.0 %	7.2 %	21.7 %	24.6 %
Completely agree	36.5 %	11.1 %	13.0 %	58.8 %	14.2 %	33.0 %	5.3 %	68.1 %	25.5 %

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THE BITTERNESS OF UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

A Survey of the Opinions of Sweden Democrat Voters



Sweden Democrat voters are not disappointed Social Democrats. Instead, they rather often identify themselves as politically right-wing. If the ambition is to attract Sweden Democrat voters to the left, our survey has shown that there is no silver bullet to use in doing this.



The goal of equality should not be abandoned. For purely ideological reasons, it is in itself unthinkable that the Social Democratic Party and the Left Party should abandon their views on gender equality or LGBTQI rights. The price to be paid for this among voters would be far too high. The survey we analyse shows that there is strong support for equality and that there are deeply held values regarding politics for equality. Instead, many of the Sweden Democrats' voters actually deviate strongly from "ordinary people" in this respect.



Hope for the future and greater trust in the Social Democratic Party can be built up by putting into evidence successful local ventures and reforms and by a continued development of politics for strengthened welfare.

Further information on the topic can be found here:
<https://nordics.fes.de/>