



AKADEMIN FÖR UTBILDNING OCH EKONOMI
Avdelningen för humaniora

Swedish Belief and Swedish Tradition

The Role of Religion in Sweden Democrat Nationalism

Tomas Stenbäck

2020

Degree Project, Second-Cycle Level (Advanced Level), 30 Credits
Religious Studies
Master Program in Religious Studies
Master Thesis in Scientific Studies of Religion

Supervisor: Peder Thalén
Examiner: Olov Dahlin

Abstract

In the context of Western, European, Nordic, and Swedish radical nationalism, this study is an analysis of the various ways the political party the Sweden Democrats talks about religion; primarily about Swedish Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity and the Church of Sweden.

The study investigates the party expressions on religion and nationalism, using theoretical models of interpretation, constructed for this specific purpose, out of hermeneutic methodology.

The purpose has been to analyse the different functions of the various ways the Sweden Democrats talk about religion, and to investigate how the references to religion legitimize the ideology of nationalism, with the aim to answer the following questions:

- How do the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion function as an identity marker?
- In what way is it possible to distinguish an aspiration for cultural purity in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion?
- Is it possible to distinguish neo-racism in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion?
- In which ways can the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion be regarded as political strategy?

The results demonstrate in which ways the Sweden Democrats apply religion to promote the party perceptions of nationalism, as well as to legitimize the party conceptions of the Swedish nation and the Swedish people:

- Swedish Christianity and the Church of Sweden are used to identify Swedish culture and to identify contrasting foreign culture.
- Swedish Christianity is used as the determining factor between the good Swedish people and the bad other people.
- Swedish Christianity is used as the determining factor between the right Swedish values and the wrong values of the other.
- Swedish Christian values are used as dividing criteria between the culturally pure Swedish people and the culturally impure other people.
- The degeneration of the Church of Sweden mirrors the degeneration of the Swedish society.

- Swedish Christian homogeneity will guarantee security for the Swedish people and the Swedish nation within the Swedish nation-state.
- Elements of religion and culture sort different peoples into different categories in the hierarchical view of humanity.
- Swedish Christianity and Swedish culture identify and define the Swedish people as innocent to the current precarious situation of the Swedish nation, and Swedish Christianity and Swedish culture identify and define the people of the other, which is to blame for this situation.
- The Swedish people is superior, to the non-Swedish people, because of superior Swedish religion and superior Swedish culture.
- Swedish Christianity is used to promote anti-democratic political positions.
- Swedish Christianity is used to legitimize coercion and force in the enforcement of Swedishness.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose	4
Question Formulation	4
Material	4
Method	6
Terminology and Definitions	9
Nationalism	9
Radical Nationalism	10
Populism	10
The Populist Radical Right	11
Racism	12
Neo-Racism	13
Legitimization	13
Religion as Legitimization	14
The Concept of Religion and the Category of Christianity	15
Background	16
The Appearance of Sweden and Swedish Christianity	16
The Church of Sweden and Swedish Secularity	17
The Sweden Democrats	21
The Sweden Democrats and Nationalism	24
The Sweden Democrats and Religion	25
Christianity and Church as Cultural Inheritance	29
Christianity and Church as Guarantors for Stability and Security	33
Previous Research	35
On Nationalism and Religion	35
On Radical Right Populism, Radical Nationalism and Christianity	37
The Western World and Europe	37
The Nordic Countries and Sweden	41
On the Sweden Democrats	45
On the Sweden Democrats and Christianity	51
Theoretical Points of Departure	56
Models of Interpretation	56
Religion as Identity Marker	56
Religion as Cultural Purity	57
Religion as Neo-Racism	57
Religion as Political Strategy	58
Analysis	59
Interpretation of Expressions	59
The Swedish Christian Cultural Heritage	59
Identity Marker	59
Cultural Purity	60
Neo-Racism	61
Political Strategy	62
The Recreation of Swedish Values	63
Identity Marker	64

Cultural Purity	64
Neo-Racism	65
Political Strategy	65
The Hereditary Essence of the People	66
Identity Marker	66
Cultural Purity	67
Neo-Racism	67
Political Strategy	67
The Great Importance for the Swedish Culture	68
Identity Marker	68
Cultural Purity	69
Neo-Racism	69
Political Strategy	69
Interpretation Summary	70
Religion as Identity Marker	70
Religion as Cultural Purity	70
Religion as Neo-Racism	71
Religion as Political Strategy	71
Discussion	72
Further Investigation	72
The Exclusive People and its Rightful Place	72
The Breach of Normalcy	73
Identity and Identification	75
Cultural Inheritance	76
Distinctive Values	79
The Categories of Humankind	81
People's Rule and Democracy	82
Previous Research and Additional Findings	84
Deviation from Previous Research	84
Support to Previous Research	84
Contribution to Further Knowledge	86
Results	88
Conclusion	88
Possible Further Results	90
Suggested Further Research	90
Nationalism as Civil Religion	91
Populism and Religion	91
The Relationship between Religion and Place in Sweden	91
Swedish Ethnic Nationalism and Violence	92
References	93

Introduction

There are social, economic, and ideological reasons for the Western world currently experiencing strong political trends of criticism of pluralism as well as of the perceived disintegration of values, with the expressed ambitions to turn the society to belief and to tradition. However, there are also reasons connected to religion in these trends. In a European context, Sweden is no exception. If ever gone, religion is now back in public space and in the political debate. Today, religion is an explicit factor in Swedish politics. Another contemporary political reality is nationalism. There is a considerable number of organizations and political parties with a distinct nationalist profile, using arguments with reference to religion to express their views on Sweden, on Swedes and on non-Swedes, applying twofold dualistic parlance of the common people versus the societal elite, and of the righteous people versus the false other.

Scientific studies of religion, for me personally, enable further investigation of my interests in society and culture, in politics and conceptions of life. I find the phenomena of religion and nationalism intriguing enough separately, even more so as a unified scope of survey. There is international as well as Swedish documented research on the phenomenon of religion and nationalism in general. However, there is only a limited number of investigations dealing with Christianity in relation to nationalism in the European and the Nordic countries specifically, and, naturally, even less material in the Swedish context. For these reasons, I aim to examine the religiously motivated nationalism in Sweden in more detail.

According to the ongoing between-election-polls of 2020, this far the largest Swedish political party with an explicit conservative nationalist identity is the Sweden Democrats, with 18.9 to 23.8 percent of the voter sympathies (Kantar Sifo 2020). Unlike many other established political parties in the country, the Sweden Democrats hold and express explicit views on religion. However, the Sweden Democrats is not merely a reactionary party. Their views on tradition are postmodern, while their concept of religion is a static concept used in a globalized and dynamic world. I find the party a useful example of, and an adequate representative for, contemporary Swedish nationalism.

There is interesting published research on how the Sweden Democrats use religion in a polarising way between the perceived Swedish religion and the experienced foreign religion

threatening the perceived Swedish values and the experienced Swedish culture. However, there is not much research on how the Sweden Democrats use religion to promote Swedish nationalism with experienced Swedish religion. The undertaking of this study poses an excellent opportunity to find out more on this specific subject matter.

Purpose

The purpose is to analyse the different functions of the various ways the Sweden Democrats talk about religion, and to investigate how the references to religion legitimise the ideology of nationalism.

Question Formulation

My aim is to answer the following questions.

- How do the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion function as an identity marker?
- In what way is it possible to distinguish an aspiration for cultural purity in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion?
- Is it possible to distinguish neo-racism in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion?
- In which ways can the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion be regarded as political strategy?

Material

I have used the databases 'Discovery', 'LIBRIS', 'Retriever: Mediearkivet', 'Artikelsök', and 'Google Scholar', of the University of Gävle library, and I have had assistance from university librarians in finding the primary source material for the analysis for this study. Further, I have used the search engine 'Google', and the streaming service 'YouTube', the national television broadcasting service 'SVT Play', and the national radio broadcasting service 'SR Play'. The initial search words, in English as well in Swedish, have been 'the Sweden Democrats' [*sverigedemokraterna*], 'the Church of Sweden' [*svenska kyrkan*], 'the Church' [*kyrkan*],

‘religion’ [*religion*] ‘Christianity’ [*kristendom*], and ‘the Christendom’ [*kristenheten*]. Additionally, I have used the terms ‘nationalism’ [*nationalism*] and ‘populism’ [*populism*], to find the background material and the material for the theoretical framework.

The literature on nationalism and populism is mainly by scholars of social science, cultural studies, and sociology, while most of the material on religion is by researchers in different disciplines of scientific studies of religion, and the research is international. The research on the Sweden Democrats is mainly by Swedish and Finnish scholars of religious studies, complemented by Swedish journalism and Swedish studies in social science. Briefly, I will introduce the researchers on nationalism, populism, and religion under the heading ‘Previous Research’.

Some of the texts by the Sweden Democrats have been studied by others before; by Per-Erik Nilsson (2020), in his article “‘Shame on the Church of Sweden’: Radical Nationalism and the Appropriation of Christianity in Contemporary Sweden”, by Jonas Lindberg (2011) in his article “The Uses of Christianity in Nordic Nationalist Parties’ Opposition to Islam”, by Sami Lipponen (2004, 2005) in his dissertation *‘The Last Defenders of the Nation’: A Scientific Religious Study of Neo-Nationalistic View of Society and Understanding of Life* [*’Nationens sista försvarare: En religionsvetenskaplig studie av neonationalistisk samhällssyn och livstolkning i Sverige*] and in his article “The Religious Aspect of Nationalism” [*’Nationalismens religiösa ansikte*”], and by Anna-Lena Lodenius and Mats Wingborg (2009), in their book *The Battle of the Swedishness: Debate the Sweden Democrats* [*Slaget om svenskheten: Ta debatten med Sverigedemokraterna*]. These authors have studied and referred to the party program, and to some of the documents on specific party policies on the party website, for example on school and on migration. However, to my knowledge, my investigation is the first study of recent years that additionally involves the analysis of political motions and questions to ministers.

To find opinions and expressions on religion, by the Sweden Democrats, I have searched the party websites and the Internet; different social media and blog-posts of the party and its representatives; information on and by the party group for church policy, *Fädernas kyrka*; the online newspaper closely ideologically connected to the party, *Nya Tider*; biographies and opinion articles; and news media articles and interviews. The party’s political program and different manifests have provided rich information. There is important information also in the

political motions made by the party. I have investigated motions to the Swedish Parliament, and questions to Ministers of Parliament. Initially, in order to find the current party positions, my ambition was to use contemporary material, dating back to only the last two or three years, however, I needed to go further back in time to find enough satisfying material for the theme of the study, and ended up using material from 2013 until March of 2020. Furthermore, I have studied the political motions, of the same time span, to the local councils, *kommunfullmäktige*, of Sjöbo and Sölvesborg, where the Sweden Democrats have strong local support. Additionally, I have read political Sweden Democrat motions to the highest decision-making body of the Church, the Synod, or the Church Meeting, *Kyrkomötet*, and to the local Church councils, *kyrkofullmäktige*, of Sjöbo and Sölvesborg. Furthermore, I have studied scientific articles, and dissertations, for any opinions and expressions by the party.

I am performing this study between January and June of 2020, aware of the fact there is a reworked 'Program of Principles' of the Sweden Democrats to be publicised. The program, of the party convention of 2019, is supposed to be published at the party homepage when it is finished. According to what has become publicly known, there are some alterations to be made to the previous program of 2011, analysed for this study. According to some news media reports, among other changes, after external criticism for being racist, the formulations on 'inherited essence' will be reconsidered, and the view on the status of national minorities will be clarified (Poohl 2019; Lönnaeus 2019; Löfvenberg 2019; Svensson & Karlsson 2019; Sverigedemokraterna 2020b). However, as the perception of hereditary essence has constituted a central position in the party conception for many years, it is likely to assume this perception continues to be noticeable in the party philosophy in the foreseeable future, whether how it is presented in the party program, or not.

Method

As my ambition is to find any deeper meaning of the public expressions, to find what lies behind what is explicitly expressed, I have opted for a methodology from hermeneutic theory. I have applied suggestions on reading and interpretation, by Björn Vikström (2005) in his *The Creating Reader* [*Den skapande läsaren*], by Bengt Kristensson Ugglå (2004) in "The Metamorphosis of Interpretation in the Age of Hermeneutics" ["Tolkningens metamorfoser i hermeneutikens tidsålder"], by Peter J. Rabinowitz (1987) in *Before Reading*, by Carola Skott

(2004) in “To Tackle the Narrative” [“Att gripa sig an berättelsen”], and by Ingvild Saelid Gilhus (2014) in “Hermeneutics”.

To Vikström (2005), the interpretation of the reading material is set in the social community of the interpreter of the text, and the competence of interpretation is connected to collected knowledge and practical skills, evident in the ability to apply what one has learned. Total objectivity is impossible, Vikström holds as a cornerstone in hermeneutic reasoning; an interpretation cannot be proven, but it can be motivated. To avoid merely expressing opinions and subjective reflections, we must, according to Vikström, seek support for our argumentation in our reading material, and we must be able to argue for the credibility and probability of our interpretations. The interpretation is an activity of listening reception, critical analysis, and creative application. According to Vikström, the different hermeneutic schools of thought are united in a sensibility of the fact that every interpretation is dependent on the interpreter's life situation, and, thus, is contextually tinged by the social, historical and ideological environment of the interpreter. The choice of research task, the material, the approach angle, and the interpretation method, are influenced by our social milieu and by who we are as individuals, and no interpretation is impartially performed, Vikström holds. We endow our research task a given framework in the same way we perform our active attempts to understand and interpret the coherence and patterns in our existence. The ‘hermeneutic circle’, Vikström explains, is the perception that the understanding of the entirety of a text affects the understanding of the separate parts of the text, while, simultaneously, the understanding of the parts affects the understanding of the entirety. There is a dynamic correlation between the entirety of a text and the parts of the text. Here, a critical approach is necessary to identify any unstated goals, for example, ideological, political, or religious, Vikström recounts. Additionally, the ‘hermeneutic bow’, he holds, explains the dialectics between explaining and understanding. Here, an uncritical “listening” of the text is followed by an explanation, in the form of some sort of methodological analysis, and completed by a critical challenging understanding. However, this is not about three separate moments, it is rather about concurrently present dimensions in the interpretation process as a whole. The first form of understanding is a kind of pre-understanding or assumption of the meaning of the text. When we try to formulate the intuitive understanding into words, we are forced to seek support in the text and in other possible supporting texts. The formulation functions as a hypothesis that is converted and nuanced as the analysis advances. The hypothesis is not proven, it gains support through convincing argumentation. Vikström holds, the results of the interpretation cannot present any final truth which can never be questioned,

so the ambition should be to find the arguments for the most probable interpretation (Vikström 2005, pp. 7-134).

In contradiction to Vikström's position, that there is no interpretation better than the other, Kristensson Uggla (2004) argues, it actually *is* possible to hold an interpretation as better than the other, and that there is not any requirement to give equal worth to different narratives. According to Kristensson Uggla, the fact that we are interpreting differently, that our interpretations lead to interpretational conflicts, and that there are limitations of our interpretations, implicate responsibility for each interpretation, rather than show any relativism or arbitrariness in hermeneutics (Kristensson Uggla 2004, pp. 36-40).

Rabinowitz (1987) supports the notion of Vikström's on social communities, holding readers from different interpretative communities might find different aspects in the same text, and might find different elements to support their different claims. Furthermore, Rabinowitz stresses the hierarchical organisation of details in a text, as we cannot attend to everything equally. To him, we need to pay many forms of attention, and therefore we must use the two interrelated aspects of notability, that is concentration and scaffolding. We must concentrate on what is central and skim what is possible to skim, and we must be aware that we read with our prior understanding which leads us to notice some details more than others (Rabinowitz 1987, pp. 36-42, 52-58).

Skott (2004) shows, if it is complicated to find the wholeness of a text, it will be fruitful to concentrate on the repetition, on what is repeated in the text, to search for themes and motifs. The themes and motifs can be understood by being simplified, to capture the important points and essential focal points (Skott 2004, pp. 87-88).

"In religious studies the study of texts and utterances is not an end in itself, but a means to say something about religion and religious processes in a society (Saelid Gilhus 2014, p. 275)", Saelid Gilhus (2014) holds. In her opinion, "Culture and religion can be seen as 'textual' and as webs of signs which can be analysed by means of hermeneutical methods (Saelid Gilhus 2014, p. 276)". Furthermore, she shows, "A text is an imprint of cultural knowledge and will always tell more than its author(s) intended, because the horizon of a text is wider than that of its author (Saelid Gilhus 2014, p. 281)".

Terminology and Definitions

Nationalism

The designation 'nationalism' can be described as "Advocacy of or support for the interests of one's own nation, esp. to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations (Oxford English Dictionary 2016d)".

According to Sverker Sörlin (2006), in his *Nationalism [Nationalism]*, the term 'nation' is ambiguous, however, one meaning is close to 'people' [*folk*], and another meaning is a form of provincial categorisation. The nation postulates a mutual origin, however, to Sörlin, the fact it is possible to change citizenship shows the meaning of 'nation' is also political. Thus, to him, a nation can have the definition of a people or of a political fellowship. Nationalism, to Sörlin, is the ideology of the nation (Sörlin 2006, pp. 5-38). "In its simplest form, nationalism can be defined as the idea that the world population can be divided in nations, and that each of these [nations] has a legitimate right to its own state (Sörlin 2006, p. 38)".¹

According to Jonas Lindberg (2011), in his "The Uses of Christianity in Nordic Nationalist Parties' Opposition to Islam", nationalism has different impacts in different countries. "In some countries, it is seen as a natural and important ground for common identity and in other countries it is viewed with scepticism as a cause of international hostility and a possible root for racism (Lindberg 2011, p. 137)". To Lindberg, and to Benedict Andersson (1985), in his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, nationalism originated in Europe when the perception of the God-given hierarchical dynastic rule and its legitimacy was crushed by the Enlightenment. Nationalism is not a successor to religion, but nationalism has its origin in the Christian dynastic rules and therefore a common ground in Christian thinking; the concepts rather share the notion of standing for the truth, and an appreciation of the Church as well as the nation as sociological organisms steadily moving through history. Furthermore, to Lindberg and to Anderson, the sovereign state is seen as a symbol for religious freedom in the secular nation state. Nationalism is a political construction, an imagined community, as the members of the community are unlikely to have met every other community member, while at

¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "I sin enklaste form kan nationalism definieras som idén att världens befolkning kan indelas i nationer och att var och en av dessa har en legitim rätt till en egen stat (Sörlin 2006: 38)".

the same time the community is viewed as sovereign and limited from the rest of the world by its borders. To Lindberg and to Anderson, language is the prime tool for the construction of a collective identity, and language is the most important instrument for the growth of nationalism (Lindberg 2011, pp. 138-140; Anderson 1985, pp. 1-36, 67-82, 155-162).

Radical Nationalism

Radical nationalism is, in "Nationalism: It's Conservative, Liberal, And Radical Conceptions", by Farid Zulfugarli (2018) described as "[...] a desire to change the regional and international order in favor of your nation (Zulfugarli 2018)". According to him, "The radical right-wing nationalist form condemns the old order, privileged classes, and obsolete institutions on the grounds that they have betrayed their nation (Zulfugarli 2018)". However, Tomas Lundström (2015), in "Extreme Mess" [*Extrem röra*], and Markus Lundström and Tomas Lundström (2016), in "A hundred Years of Radical Nationalism" [*Hundra år av radikal nationalism*], suggest, in a Swedish context, the designation 'radical nationalism' [*radikal nationalism/radikalnationalism*] useful to describe the motley collection constituting the environment of organisations united in the perception of 'one nation – one people' [*en nation – ett folk*] as the common driving force, and with 'radical' referring to the mutual focal point on the actual root of the idea of the nation. To the Lundström's, the term is well appropriate, as the Latin word for 'root' is '*radix*', and as the Latin '*natio*' translates to 'birth' [*födelse*], 'people' [*folk*], 'race' [*ras*] (Lundström 2015; Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 42).

Populism

A synoptic description of 'populism' for the scope of this study is "The policies or principles of any of various political parties which seek to represent the interests of ordinary people [...]" Also: support for or representation of ordinary people or their views; speech, action, writing, etc., intended to have general appeal (Oxford English Dictionary 2016e)". However, the type of nationalism discussed in this study has one more parameter: the other.

The Populist Radical Right

In her *We Are Saying What You Are Thinking: The Right-Wing Populism in Europe* [*Vi säger vad du tänker: Högerpopulismen i Europa*], Anna-Lena Lodenius (2015) holds, the common features for right-wing populism, or the populist radical right, PRR, are some type of ethno-nationalistic orientation, an opposition to immigration, and the claim to speak for the people against the societal elite, while being conservative and authoritarian. The most important feature of populist radical right parties, to Lodenius, is the opinion of a conflict line between the population and the rulers. In Lodenius' view, the essence of populism is to speak for the people. Other political parties are seen as a part of the establishment, and the own party is portrayed as the only opposition to the current state of affairs; other politicians are described as corrupt professionals in contrast to the populist party who represents the people against an elite. Populist parties have, to Lodenius, an idealised conception of the culture of their own country, and often put forward accusations of betrayal of the country, by the current policy of the other parties. The right-wing populist parties claim they favour democracy, however, in Lodenius' view, often show a lack of democracy in their own political organisations (Lodenius 2015, pp. 19-27). Furthermore, "Radical right populists are not here to strengthen democracy, they are here to slander it. Secondly, they want to enforce a beforehand known end policy (Lodenius 2015, p. 24)".²

According to Nadia Marzouki and Duncan McDonnel (2016), and their "Populism and Religion", there are more Western democracies with populist parties than those without, and "[...] the most important new populists of the past four decades in established democracies have been almost exclusively right-wing (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 2)". As Marzouki and McDonnel recount, right-wing populists base

[...] their appeal on the claim that a homogenous 'good' people is suffering due to the actions from above, by elites and, from below, by a variety of 'others'. Populists express strong moral judgements in decrying this state of affairs, portraying society in Manichean terms as divided in to a good 'us' and a bad (even 'evil') 'them'. In defining both of these categories, religious identities often play an important role (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 2).

² My translation of the original Swedish text: "Radikala högerpopulister är inte här för att stärka demokratin, de är här för att baktala den. I andra hand vill de driva igenom en politik de redan på förhand vet hur den ser ut (Lodenius 2015, p. 24)".

However, to Marzouki and McDonnel, “[...] the populist use of religion is much more about ‘belonging’ than ‘belief’ and revolves around two main notions: ‘restoration’ and ‘battle’ (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 2)”. It is the importance of a particular religious identity or set of traditions and symbols that need to be restored, rather than any theological doctrine with rules and precepts. In turn, this restoration “[...] requires battling two groups of ‘enemies to the people’: the elites who disregard the importance of the people’s religious heritage, and the ‘others’ who seek to impose their religious values and laws upon the native population (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 2)”.

Racism

According to Mattias Gardell (1998), in *Risk with Race/Risk of Collapse: Racists, Separatists, and American Cultural Conflicts* [*Rasrisk: Rasister, separatister och amerikanska kulturkonflikter*], before the European imperialism and the slave trade, there was no systematic racism. The idea of biological reasons for natural inferiority in certain peoples had not yet emerged. Until the eighteenth century, the concept of ‘race’ was used to categorise lineage. During the colonial era, race was used to designate the different peoples encountered, but for a long time lacked the genetic biological implication of the concept in the twentieth century. Racism was not the reason for slavery, Gardell holds. On the contrary, the racist ideas developed from the slavery and the colonialism, and came to saturate all frameworks of ideas (Gardell 1998, pp. 30-33).

A simple way of describing racism is as a perception of how different groups of humans possess different behaviours because of their respective physical appearance, that there are superior and inferior races, and that any prejudice, discrimination and antagonism of other people can be explained by the perceived status of the own race compared to any other. However, the Light On Project, financed by the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Commission, demonstrates ‘racism’ as

[...] an ideology or discourse about “higher” and “lower” races related to supposedly fixed biological and genetic characteristics, and is connected to aggressive practices of discrimination, subjugation and exclusion of the other. In a wider sense, racism encompasses any kind of

aggressive attitude (hate speech, hostility, humiliation, aggressive speech, and call for aggressive acts) that legitimises or mandates racist behaviour (The Light On Project 2014, p. 5).

Neo-Racism

Ideologically, today, not many political actors talk publicly about race and biology when referring to different behaviours and values of different people and peoples. The common contemporary references to peoples are to cultural traits. The Light On Project explains ‘neo-racism’ further:

The “newer” forms of racism are embedded in social processes and structures and are more difficult to explore and challenge. [Referred to] as neo-racism, based on claims of cultural differences. Strengthened by nationalist and ethnocentric attitudes, the concept of race and racial superiority has therefore evolved or changed into cultural difference and superiority. Contemporary racism has also been termed “new” or “cultural” racism. The belief is that cultural differences explain why some groups are backward. Cultural racism needs to prove the superiority of “Europeans” (replacing “whites”). This Eurocentric view claims that progress has spread from Europe around the world: the core is thus Europe and European settlement overseas, especially the USA, while “periphery” means everything else. [...] a new form of “differentialist” racism, according to which different groups of people (ethnic or national) are not superior or inferior but simply “different” [...] the concept of race (biology, nature) is replaced by the concept of culture (The Light On Project 2014, p. 5).

Legitimization

Any claims, political or religious, or other, need to be provided by legitimacy. Every act and every ideology necessitate a process for the act or the ideology to become acceptable and normative to any group or to any audience, to appear internally and/or externally legitimate. The term ‘legitimize’ means “To make legitimate; to serve as a justification for (something) [...] (Oxford English Dictionary 2016c)”, and ‘legitimization’ stands for “The action of legitimizing something; an instance of this (Oxford English Dictionary 2016b)”. The American English references for this study mostly use the term ‘legitimation’ – instead of legitimization – which means “To affirm or show to be legitimate; to authorize by word and example; to serve as justification for (Oxford English Dictionary 2016a)”.

Legitimation is a process in which new situations in society are sought, or current ones sustained, through reference to widely shared values and/or qualities. Law and order, tradition, justice, patriotism, class affiliation, and ethnic identity are common legitimating values; charismatic leadership, the status quo experience of success, and the sting of oppression are common legitimating qualities. Legitimation is a feature of all formal governance but must not be construed exclusively as such. Nongovernmental groups also seek to preserve or alter social arrangements, and their success similarly depends upon their capacity to link goals with common values and qualities, sometimes³ for and sometimes against the interests of governments (Luther Adams & Mikelson 1987, p. 5396).

Religion as Legitimization

Gardell (1998) exemplifies religious legitimization when he describes the ideologies of slavery and colonialism. According to him, the first attempts to designate negative properties to people because of black skin colour was from theological reasoning on the actuality they were slaves. The view of the fate of the poor and the disabled, with their suffering explained as a visible sign of condemnation from God, was applied also to the slaves, a doomed breed, marked by the black colour of sin. The Christian colour symbolism, used to describe the fundamental Christian dichotomy between lightness and darkness to distinguish God from the Devil, was applied to White and Black people, where the sinful became considered punished by God with their black colour. With the introduction of evolutionism during the second half of the nineteenth century, humanity was considered developed through certain predetermined stages of development. Human development was considered as going from primitive societies to civilisations, from the primitive stage of the colonised savages to the civilised cultural world of the colonisers. Technical development was equated with mental development. Colonialism was presented as a civilisation project, as a duty to teach the uncivilised the advantage of the presence of the civilised European imperialists. Thus, to this notion, the best for the black peoples was remaining as slaves (Gardell 1998, pp. 30-37).

For “[...] legitimation of and by governments in general or social action promoted by secular, nongovernmental groups [...] religious and parareligious values and qualities are sometimes used as legitimating references (Luther Adams & Mikelson 1987, p. 5396)”. In this context, to James Luther Adams and Thomas Mikelson (1987), ‘social action’ are efforts

³ Luther Adams’ and Mikelson’s spelling.

of nongovernmental groups for any promotion for, or resistance against, social change (Luther Adams & Mikelson 1987, p. 5396).

According to Meredith B. McGuire (2002), nationalism and nationalist aspirations are often fed by religion. To her, dominant groups often attempt to manipulate religion to serve their purposes (McGuire 2002, pp. 211-212, 241-242). In the view of McGuire, religion is a powerful resource when used in the creation of national belonging and nationalism, because religion

[...] can become a “sacred marker” that accentuates and stands for the totality of divisions between people. [...] When conflicting groups treat their religions as cultural *possessions*, the value of which rests not in religious practice itself, but rather in defending the cultural possession against others, religion is particularly likely to serve as such a marker [...] (McGuire 2002, p. 212).

In the view of Max Weber (1963), religion is used to legitimize and justify a social or economic privilege that privileged classes use towards the misfortunate. To Weber, this is a universal phenomenon of certain psychological patterns; when someone who is happy compares himself to someone who is unhappy, and is not content with the happiness, but desires something more, that is, the right to his happiness. He seeks the consciousness he has earned his good fortune, while the unfortunate equally must have earned his misfortune (Weber 1963, pp.107-110).

The Concept of Religion and the Category of Christianity

As I expect any reader of this study familiar with the ancient and continuous interpretation, reinterpretation and debate on whether the designation ‘religion’ is proper or not, and, if so, what it stands and should stand for, I will simply conclude the designation is complex and questioned but nevertheless still useful and adequate. I find a dictionary explanation as good as any. Here, religion can be “A state of life bound by religious vows [or an] Action or conduct indicating belief in, obedience to, and reverence for a god, gods, or similar superhuman power [or] A particular system of faith and worship (Oxford English Dictionary 2016f)”. Furthermore, for this study, I simply conclude ‘Christianity’ is one category of religion, and additionally, so is ‘Islam’.

Background

The Appearance of Sweden and Swedish Christianity

What is officially known today as the nation-state of the Kingdom of Sweden [*Konungariket Sverige*] for centuries comprised of several independent societies of Norse and Sámi traditions. Roman-Catholic missionaries brought the Christian tradition to Scandinavia in the 820s, and established the first Christian parish around the year 830. However, many Scandinavians were in contact with Christians and churches much earlier. Christianity was to a large extent accepted, however, the old Norse traditions existed alongside the new Christian tradition until the end of the tenth century, until full public acceptance of Christianity, alongside the establishment of a Church organisation supported by converted powerful kings. In some regions, Christians and Pagans lived alongside each other throughout the eleventh century. For a long period, the old Norse traditions and the new Christian overlapped, in some parts for more than two hundred years. The last remains of the Norse traditions in the pre-Swedish societies lasted the longest in the kingdoms of Svealand, and especially in its most famous Scandinavian cult centre in Uppsala, as late as 1080, and in some other remote regions, as late as 1123. Concurrently, the Sámi traditions further up north persisted alongside the new Christian tradition, and was in ways influenced by it, until as late as the 1600s and the 1700s. During this period, the colonialization of the Swedish parts of Sápmi was intensified, and the Sámi peoples experienced severe and violently forced conversion campaigns.

What would eventually become the unified kingdom of Sweden developed from around year 1000 to around year 1500. In the early 1500s, the Reformation had lasting impact on the country, and in 1544 Sweden officially became a Protestant realm with an Evangelical-Lutheran Church (Virdi Kroik 2020a, 2020b; Kulturkraft Syd 2020; Svenska kyrkan 2019; SO-rummet 2016; Populär Historia 2000, 2001; Sawyer & Sawyer 1993, pp. 27-105).

The Church of Sweden and Swedish Secularity

By the early 1600s, the ruling powers of the Swedish kingdom and of the Swedish Church were amalgamated into a unified body of authority over their subjects, and the Church was considered a state Church. The Church of Sweden remained a state Church until the year 2000, when the Church, by legislation in the now parliamentary constitutional monarchy, was declared one religious community among others. However, the Church of Sweden is still governed by political parties, following regular elections to local, regional, and national parliaments of the Church (Svenska kyrkan 2020; Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, pp. 127-133; Populär Historia 2000).

Today, there are a number of religious minorities in Sweden, and the largest of them are of the Mormon (approximately 8 000 people), Jewish (8 000), Hindu (10 000), Eastern Orthodox (15 000), Jehovah's Witnesses (20 000), Buddhist (25 000), Roman Catholic (100 000), free churches (300 000), and Muslim (400 000, 4 percent) traditions. The Church of Sweden has 6.3 million people, or 62 percent of the population, as members. Even though, also in recent times, the membership of the Church of Sweden used to be 70 percent of the population, and the membership numbers gradually have gone down, the Church of Sweden is by far the largest faith community in the nation, and there are still specific legal regulations pertaining to the majority Church (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, pp. 127-133).

According to Johanna Gustafsson Lundberg (2018), in "Christianity in a Post-Christian Context: Immigration, Church Identity, and the Role of Religion in Public Debates", and to Jayne Svenungsson (2013), in "Public Faith and the Common Good: A Radical Messianic Proposal", during recent years, there has been increasing interest for, and increasing criticism of, the Church of Sweden from both secular and Christian parts of society. The Church has been asked to clarify its position on different theological areas, and its leadership have continually been criticized for lack of clarity to proper Lutheran theological tradition and for lack of distinction towards Islam. To Gustafsson Lundberg, there are three main reasons for the increased number of identity debates on what it means to be a Lutheran Church. One reason is the fact the Church has become one faith community among others, which marks a new independence. Another reason is the development of a multi-religious society, and a majority Church with decreasing numbers in membership. A third reason concerns the self-image of being a majority Church and having a history as a state Church. As the majority population has

been members of the majority state Church, “[...] people are unprepared for debates in which they need to argue actively for their positions in a pluralistic situation (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 130)”.

Furthermore, to Gustafsson Lundberg, historically, church members have never needed to defend any certain positions. “Connected to this secular context, another important factor that contributes to a kind of religious illiteracy has to do with a lack of education about the Christian cultural heritage [and also with a] religious ignorance concerning the Lutheran tradition (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 130)”. To Gustafsson Lundberg, migration has induced the accentuated identity debates, however, to her, the borders are not drawn only between different religions, but also within different religions. In her view, the positions are partly liberal-conservative and secular-religious, and partly Humanist-Christian and Orthodox-Lutheran. There is a call for distinctiveness in theological and religious matters concerning faith and solidarity with Christians in the world. However, “[...] the very same call for religious distinctiveness concerning Christianity does not easily rhyme with a secular societal frame and heritage that have influenced the Christianity proclaimed by the Swedish majority Church to a large extent throughout the twentieth century (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 130)”.

In Gustafsson Lundberg’s account, for a long time, Sweden has been influenced by the type of secularism that holds religion and politics should be separated, and that “[...] the public agenda could never base its content upon religious views, but neither should religion be counteracted by the public (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 131)”. Only 6 percent of the 62 percent of the population who are members of the Church of Sweden attend services regularly, while 65 percent of the Church members come in contact with the Church through one or more of the rituals of baptism, marriage and death during a year. This fact shows, to Gustafsson Lundberg and to Grace Davie (2007), in “Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge”, that the Church of Sweden serves as ‘vicarious religion’, that is, “[...] the notion of religion performed by an active minority but on behalf of a much larger number, who (implicitly at least) not only understand but, quite clearly, approve of what the minority is doing (Davie 2007; see Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 131)”.

Swedes do not generally or regularly go to church but support the Church of Sweden, mainly by member fee, and its activities and engagements. “This picture makes it hard to actually point out who is a believer and who is not, and the boundaries between religious and secular can in

that sense be described as fluid (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 131)". Furthermore, to Gustafsson Lundberg and to David Thurfjell (2015), in *The Godless People: The Post-Christian Swedes and Religion* [*Det gudlösa folket: De postkristna svenskarna och religionen*], Swedes do not consider themselves as religious. "Instead they tend to perceive the other (Muslims, Jews, or Hindu) as religious, while being blind to their own Christian Protestant heritage (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 131)". For example, Gustafsson Lundberg and Karin Kittelmann Flensner (2015), in *Religious Education in Contemporary Pluralistic Sweden*, show a Swedish comprehension of Muslim celebration of Ramadan as religious while comprehending the Swedish celebration of Christmas as merely maintaining a tradition. Furthermore, to Gustafsson Lundberg and to Kittelmann Flensner, the religious other is associated with a perceived old and outdated way of thinking, while the Swedish secular and rational way of reasoning is depicted as well-informed and enlightened. According to Svenungsson, "[...] many Swedish Lutherans today feel more akin to secular humanists and atheists than to religious people from other traditions – Muslims being the most obvious example, but also Jews and non-European Christians (Svenungsson 2013; see Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 132)".

To Gustafsson Lundberg and to Svenungsson, although it is marginalised in its traditional forms, Christianity "[...] remains a dominating cultural interpretative scheme that continues to influence the majority's view on private and public, individual and collective, rational and irrational (Svenungsson 2013; see Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, p. 132)". To Gustafsson Lundberg, to Svenungsson, and to Mattias Martinson (2012), in "Atheism as Culture and Condition: Nietzschean Reflections on the Contemporary Invisibility of Profound Godlessness", this mutual esteem of Christianity and secularity, in large parts originated from encounters with forms of religiosity new to Swedes, challenges the hitherto dominating Swedish narrative of the Swedish culture governed by ideals as rationality and progression, with a strict separation of religious life from the public sphere (Gustafsson Lundberg 2018, pp. 127-133; Thurfjell 2015, p. 112; Kittelmann Flensner 2015; Svenungsson 2013, pp. 748-752; Martinson 2012, pp. 75-86; Davie 2007, p. 22).

According to Mattias Gardell, in his *Islamophobia [Islamofobi]* (Gardell 2011), the self-appreciation of Sweden as a religiously homogenous country goes hand in hand with the simultaneous self-appreciation of Sweden as a linguistically and ethnically, or racially, homogenous country, an image developed during the era of National Romanticism, and the construction of the Swedish nation-state. A self-image that has been enforced over the years,

no matter the sort of political leadership and their respective ideologies (Gardell 2010, pp. 23-43).

There is a standard narrative of Sweden as an ethnically, culturally, and religiously homogenous country where peace and concord has ruled and where everybody speaks Swedish in the homes, until most recently, when a wave of immigration has undermined the serenity and the common agreement sprung from this natural uniformity. This picture has been nurtured by our authorities, mediated in school education, and constituted a starting point for numerous research projects financed to investigate the “transformation” of Sweden to a multicultural meeting place. To the narrative, a common perception of the Swedish exceptionalism is added. Exactly what our exceptional status consists of has changed over the years, but the idea of Sweden as a unique exception in the world is maintained. We used to be ‘the Outpost of the True Church’ in the world. Now, we are the most secular country in the world. For a period, we were world-leading in eugenics, thereafter we became the place where ambiguous eugenics never kept a precarious hold. We have always been uniquely homogenous. With a mutual value-system, now being undermined by foreign elements. The narrative rests on two cooperative components: the exclusion of the foreign and the production of collective amnesia. In this, the Swedish state power has had a key role. For, as we will see, Sweden has never been homogenous. However, the state power has been legitimized through ideologies of unification (the Evangelical-Lutheran doctrine, nationalism, the People’s Home) and adhesive political programs, aiming to homogeneity and consensus through exclusion of the foreign and divergent (Gardell 2010, p. 23).⁴

⁴ My translation of the original Swedish text: ”Det finns en standardberättelse om Sverige som ett etniskt, kulturellt och religiöst homogent land där fred och endräkt härskat och där alla talar svenska i hemmen, fram tills helt nyligen, då en våg av invandring underminerat det lugn och samförstånd som sprungit ur denna naturliga enhetlighet. Denna bild har vårdats av våra myndigheter, förmedlats i skolundervisningen och utgjort utgångspunkt för otaliga forskningsprojekt som fått medel för att undersöka ”omvandlingen” av Sverige till en multikulturell mötesplats. Till berättelsen knyts vanligen föreställningar om den svenska exceptionismen. Exakt vad vår exceptionella status består i har skiftat genom historien, men idén om Sverige som ett unikt undantag i världen står fast. Förr var vi Den sanna kyrkans utpost i världen. Nu är vi världens mest sekulära land. En tid var vi världsledande i rashygien, därefter blev vi platsen där dunkla rasläror aldrig fått fäste. Unikt homogena har vi alltid varit. Med en gemensam värdegrund, som nu undermineras av främmande element. Berättelsen vilar på två samverkande förutsättningar: exkluderingen av det främmande och produktionen av kollektiv amnesi. I detta har den svenska statsmakten haft en nyckelroll. Ty, som vi kommer att se, Sverige har aldrig varit homogent. Däremot har den statliga makten legitimerats genom enhetsideologier (den evangelisk-lutherska läran, nationalism, folkhemmet) och vidhållade politiska program som eftersträvat homogenitet och konsensus genom att exkludera det främmande och avvikande (Gardell 2010, p. 23)”.

The Sweden Democrats

The political party ‘the Sweden Democrats’ [*Sverigedemokraterna*] considers itself a social conservative and cultural nationalistic party (Sverigedemokraterna 2014). The concept of ‘people’ [*folk*] is fundamental to the party. Any state with different types of people within its borders will, according to the party, cause problems with keeping a true popular rule [*folkstyre*]. To the Sweden Democrats, a unified national identity is one of the most fundamental cornerstones in a strong and well-functioning democracy. Social conservatism and nationalism mean, to the party, security, high moral standards and law and order from responsible reforms, and with a bracing fellowship from national unity, national identity, common culture, and common history. The party stresses fellowships as the nation and the family, and advocates for the designation People’s Home [*folkhem*] as important for the society and for the self-acclaimed modern social conservative party with a value conservative and nationalistic outset. To the Sweden Democrats, nationalism is “[...] the single-most important tool in the work to affirm the communal identity and the internal solidarity of the society (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 13)”.⁵ After the family, the nation is the most important, oldest and most natural human fellowship, to the Sweden Democrats, who define the Swedish nation in terms of loyalty, common identity, common language and common culture. There is a difference, to the party, between citizenship of the Swedish state and belonging to the Swedish nation, and the best interest for the society is if as many citizens as possible also have a Swedish identity. Education and mediation of values are primarily tasks for the families, however, to the party, the school system should, among other specified tasks, implement respect for the Swedish cultural heritage. The Sweden Democrats support the current conditions of the Swedish monarch as the chief of state in the constitutional monarchy, and consider the function of the state is to administrate the nation, to maintain good relations with the surrounding world and to use its monopoly on the use of force to protect the nation against domestic and foreign threats. Furthermore, to the party, the core duty of the state is to protect the security and independence of the nation, care for weak and vulnerable individuals, to uphold the laws, and to defend the historical legacy and cultural peculiar nature of the nation (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, pp. 5-6, 11-17, 36).

⁵ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] det enskilt viktigaste verktyget i arbetet med att bejaka den gemensamma identiteten och samhällets inre solidaritet (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 13)”.

The party concept of mankind considers some environmentally and biological factors have influence on the individual's development, however

There is also a hereditary essence within every human being, that cannot be repressed to any limited extent without consequences. Parts of this essence are common for most people, while other are unique for some groups of people or for the individual. [...] most people are social and communal beings with an ancestral need of belonging to a larger fellowship, most people identify themselves primarily with other individuals who resemble themselves and most people show solidarity and empathy more easily with individuals they experience being of the same fellowship as themselves. Our conclusion from this is that a favourable effect on the unity, security and stability within a society requires a pronounced national identity and a minimum of linguistic, cultural and religious disparities (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 8).⁶

The Sweden Democrats hold they acknowledge social constructions, however, to them, the hereditary essences unite a certain group of people, but not the whole humanity. Humankind, the party holds, is both constructive and destructive, “[...] and within every human there is a life-long daily struggle between these opposing powers, emotions, instincts and drives (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 9)”.⁷ Because of these aspects of human nature, the most important duty for politics is “[...] to try to create, support and uphold norms, moral, laws, customs, environments, behaviours, traditions and fellowships that aid the individual to affirm the good and constructive parts within him- or herself (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 9)”.⁸ In the view of the Sweden Democrats, the inherited human egoism and competitive spirit can be destructive but also constructive for the common good, and that the inherited feelings, instincts and drives limit the individual ability to sensible reasoning and action. Therefore, to the party,

⁶ My translation of the original Swedish text: ”Det finns också en nedärvd essens hos varje människa som man inte kan undertrycka i hur hög utsträckning som helst utan att det får konsekvenser. Delar av denna essens är gemensam för de flesta människor och annat är unikt för vissa grupper av människor eller för den enskilde individen. [...] de flesta människor är sociala och kollektiva varelser som har ett nedärvt behov av att tillhöra en större gemenskap, att de flesta människor primärt identifierar sig med andra individer som påminner om en själv och att de flesta människor har lättare att visa solidaritet och empati med individer som man upplever är en del av samma gemenskap som man själv tillhör. Av detta drar vi slutsatsen att en stark nationell identitet och ett minimum av språkliga, kulturella och religiösa skillnader har en gynnsam effekt på sammanhållningen, tryggheten och stabiliteten inom ett samhälle (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 8)”.

⁷ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] och att det inom varje människa pågår en daglig kamp mellan dessa motstridiga krafter, känslor, instinkter och drifter (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 9)”.

⁸ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] att försöka skapa, stödja och upprätthålla normer, moral, lagar, sedvänjor, miljöer, betenden, traditioner och gemenskaper som hjälper individen att bejaka de goda och konstruktiva sidorna inom sig själv (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 9)”.

the solution to reach good results and avoid potential disasters, is a cautious march of step by step changes, and affirmation of the aggregated experiences and reasoning of previous generations (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, pp. 7-10).

Culture, to the Sweden Democrats, is defined by a way of living that unites a society or a certain group of people, and this perceived fact has a central political function. To the party, the peculiar nature of Swedish culture lies in the Swedish history and in the nature and the climate of the nation, with close and natural relationship to the surrounding populations. To the Sweden Democrats, the Swedish culture is a part of a Scandinavian and Nordic cultural sphere, and a part of a North European, European, and Western cultural area. To the party, the cultural heritage has an intrinsic value, however, the most important aspect of the cultural heritage is its function as a cohesive force of corporate norms and values, collective memories, unified myths, common holidays and traditions, mutual manners and practices, for a society to keep together. Because of the perceived importance of culture for the survival of the society and the nation, the Sweden Democrats designate themselves as strong opponents to multiculturalism [*mångkultur*], and consider multiculturalism a political idea that a society benefits from accommodating a number of different national cultures. The party's alternative to multiculturalism is a policy of community assimilation, with the aim that immigrants should do as the Swedes do, and abandon their original cultures and identities, to become a part of the Swedish nation. "The foundation of the intention of assimilation is to establish that "[...] the culture of the Swedish nation [...] is superior to cultures of other nations within the territory of the Swedish state (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 21)".⁹ The party policy to immigration to Sweden is that what they call mass immigration from distant countries has acutely negative economic and social impact on the society. The Sweden Democrats hold they are not against immigration, but state any immigration must be kept at such a level, and be of such a character, to not constitute a threat to the Swedish national identity and the welfare and protection of Sweden. (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, pp. 15-23). In addition, the party wants to "Change the asylum legislation so that Sweden shall accept asylum seekers only from our neighbouring

⁹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Kärnan i assimilationstanken är att slå fast att [...] den svenska nationens kultur [...] är överordnad andra nationers kulturer inom den svenska statens område (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 21)".

countries and stop all asylum provision as long as Sweden's zone of accumulation is secure (Sverigedemokraterna 2020a)".¹⁰

The Sweden Democrats and Nationalism

To the Sweden Democrats,

The ideology of nationalism is generally defined loosely, and basically means that the interests of the own nation are the most important, that the nation should be free and sovereign in relation to other nations and states, and that the border of the state coincides with the geographical expansion of the nation as far as possible (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 13).¹¹

Additionally, to these perceived basic principles of nationalism, the Sweden Democrats hold their nationalism is democratic, as they grant the same freedom and rights to all the world's nations and nation states. Furthermore, the party considers its nationalism non-racist, as they "[...] define the nation in terms of culture, language, identity and loyalty, and not in terms of historical national belonging or genetic group affiliation [...]" (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 13).¹² The party holds its nationalism pragmatic as it accepts deviations from the nationalist ideal, and find it necessary to accept several nations within one state, and exemplifies with the alleged Sámi [*samiska*] and Torne Valley Finnish [*torndedalsfinska*] nations [*nationer*] within the Swedish state, and that some nations of minorities within the state can be allowed cultural autonomy and be excluded from the actions of assimilation.

To the party, a native Swede is "[...] a person who is born in Sweden to, or adopted to Sweden at an early age by, Swedish speaking parents with a Swedish or Nordic identity (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 15)",¹³ while a person assimilated to the Swedish nation is

¹⁰ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Förändra asyllagstiftningen så att Sverige endast ska ta emot asylsökande från våra grannländer och stoppa allt asylmottagande så länge Sveriges närområde är säkert (Sverigedemokraterna 2020a)".

¹¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Den nationalistiska ideologin är i allmänhet löst definierad och innebär i sin mest nedskalade form endast att den egna nationens intressen skall sättas i främsta rummet, att den egna nationen skall vara fri och suverän i förhållande till andra nationer och stater samt att statens gränser så långt det är möjligt skall sammanfalla med nationens utbredningsområde (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 13)".

¹² My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] definierar nationen i termer av kultur, språk, identitet och lojalitet, och inte i termer av historisk nationstillhörighet eller genetisk grupptillhörighet [...]" (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 13)".

¹³ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] den som är född eller i tidig ålder adopterad till Sverige av svensktalande föräldrar med en svensk eller nordisk identitet (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 15)".

someone “[...] with a non-Swedish background who talks Swedish fluently, regards him- or herself as Swedish, lives according to the Swedish culture, find the Swedish history as his or her own [history] and have more loyalty to the Swedish nation than to any other nation (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 15)”.¹⁴ The Sweden Democrats define the Swedish nation in terms of loyalty, common identity, common language and common culture, and differentiate between citizenship of the Swedish state and belonging to the Swedish nation (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, pp. 5-6, 11-17, 36). The current party leader, Jimmie Åkesson (2013), concludes, “To me, Swedes are a people of their own, with their own history and their own culture. Sweden is not a constructed nation. [...] Sweden and Swedes belong together (Åkesson 2013, p. 186)”.¹⁵

The Sweden Democrats and Religion

The Sweden Democrats consider themselves a secular and non-confessional political party, and hold they support religious freedom and religious rights, but are of the opinion that there must be definite restrictions on religious practice. The Sweden Democrats hold that the Swedish State should not be neutral religiously. On the contrary, in their view, the nation should be unequivocally Christian because, to them, Christianity is connected intimately with the Swedish culture and the Swedish identity. Christianity and the Church of Sweden [*Svenska kyrkan*], like few other ideas and institutions, have been important in forming, what the Sweden Democrats call, the Swedish culture, and this cultural inheritance needs protection. Thus, in their opinion, Christianity should have an exceptional position. To the Sweden Democrats, Islam is the most difficult religion to coexist with the Swedish and the Western culture, and therefore migration from Muslim countries is emphasized as notable immigration because of its fundamentalism and Islamism. The religious politics of the Sweden Democrats states that the administration and development of the Church of Sweden is a matter for all Swedes, regardless of their positions on faith, inalienable for the lives of the Swedish people. To the party, The Church of Sweden and Christianity are intertwined inextricably with the Swedish culture and history. Because of

¹⁴ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] den med icke-svensk bakgrund som talar flytande svenska, uppfattar sig själv som svensk, lever i enlighet med den svenska kulturen, ser den svenska historien som sin egen och känner större lojalitet med den svenska nationen än med någon annan nation (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 15)”.

¹⁵ My translation of the original Swedish text: “För mig är svenskar ett eget folk med en egen historia och en egen kultur. Sverige är ingen konstruerad nation. [...] Sverige och svenskar hör ihop (Åkesson 2013, p. 186)”.

the significance of the Church of Sweden for the establishment of the Swedish identity, and because of the importance for the continuance the Church still carries for the common cultural heritage as an enforcement for the nation's Christian basic values, the Church of Sweden cannot, and should not, be bracketed with other religious institutions, the party argues. Though considering themselves a non-confessional political party, the Church policy of the Sweden Democrats means to strengthen the position of the Church and of Christianity in the Swedish society, a position they now consider devaluated by liberalism and socialism, by working against the negative liberal and socialistic influences within the Church. The Sweden Democrats do not want a Church that contributes to the advance of Islam in Sweden, and not any Church that contributes to the continuing dissolution of normative ideals and traditional fellowships (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 27).

To the party, there is no difference between Islam and Islamism. The Sweden Democrats' current party secretary, Richard Jomshof, holds, on Swedish moderate Muslim engagement, "They are not especially influential. If you look at other parties, those [politicians] with that [moderate Muslim] background have proved to be Islamists almost everyone [...] I believe, Western Europe will go under, as a result of Islamisation, if we do not dare to handle the problems of today [...]" (Eriksson 2018)".¹⁶

The Muslim call for prayer is reoccurring topic to the party when it comes to non-Christian religious presence in Sweden, and to non-Christian symbolism in the Swedish public space. Sometimes with secular reference, and other times with religious. "Freedom from religion also means a freedom from coercion, a freedom from religious expressions and religious propaganda in the public space. The latter is highly topical, as Islam again and again has shown itself incompatible with our Western values (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/2020:521)".¹⁷ "Unlike the church bells calling to the Christian service, the call for prayer

¹⁶ My translation of the original Swedish text: "De är inte speciellt tongivande. Om man tittar i de andra partierna så verkar de som har den bakgrunden ha varit islamister nästan allihop [...] Jag tror att Västeuropa kommer att gå under, som en följd av islamisering, om vi inte vågar hantera de problem som vi har i dag [...]" (Eriksson 2018)".

¹⁷ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Religionsfrihet innebär också en frihet från tvång, en frihet från religiösa uttryck och religiös propaganda i det offentliga rummet. Det sistnämnda äger dessutom sin aktualitet, då islam gång på gång visat sig vara oförenligt med våra västerländska värderingar (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/2020:521)".

is a part of the Islamic service. The call for prayer shall also proclaim Islam over a town or a geographical area (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:734)".¹⁸

"What is more, Sweden is a country with strong historical bonds and cultural connections to Christianity and has traditionally no connection whatsoever to Islam. The ringing of church bells is a natural and cultural-historical substantial part of the acoustic image in Sweden, just like Islamic call for prayer is a natural part of the acoustic image in Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:734, 2018/19:727)".¹⁹

Furthermore, "[...] the Christian bell ringing [...] is a part of our cultural and historical inheritance [...] (Sveriges riksdag. Interpellation till Statsråd 2017/18:434)",²⁰ and "[...] the Christian bell ringing is a part of our cultural and historical inheritance [...] (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:521)".²¹ Additionally, "As opposed to Christian bell ringing, which is a sound signal that is a part of our cultural and historical heritage, the Muslim call for prayer is a religiously articulated message in the form of the creed, that among other things seeks to demonstrate power and control over the area (Sveriges riksdag. Interpellation till Statsråd 2017/18:434)".²²

Another frequently applied comparison is between the symbolism of the Muslim veil with the democratic and secular Swedish society, or with the symbolism of the Christian cross. "To allow the wearing of, in addition to the police uniform, a Muslim veil, a symbol that symbolises

¹⁸ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Till skillnad från kyrkklockornas kallelse till den kristna förrättningen så är böneropet en del av den islamska förrättningen. Böneutropet skall dessutom proklamera islam över en stad eller ett geografiskt område (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:734)".

¹⁹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Sverige är dessutom ett land med starka historiska band och kulturella kopplingar till kristendomen och har traditionellt ingen som helst koppling till islam. Kyrkklockors ringning är en naturlig och kulturhistoriskt grundad del av ljudbilden i Sverige, precis som islamska böneutrop är en naturlig del av ljudbilden i exempelvis Saudiarabien och Irak (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:734, 2018/19:727)".

²⁰ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] de kristna klockringningarna [...] är en del av vårt kulturella och historiska arv [...] (Sveriges riksdag. Interpellation till Statsråd 2017/18:434)".

²¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] de kristna klockringningarna är en del av vårt kulturella och historiska arv [...] (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:521)".

²² My translation of the original Swedish text: "Till skillnad från kristna klockringningar, vilka är en ljudsignal som är en del av vårt kulturella och historiska arv, är det muslimska böneutropet ett religiöst artikulat budskap i form av trosbekännelsen, som bland annat syftar till att visa makt och kontroll över området (Sveriges riksdag. Interpellation till Statsråd 2017/18:434)".

religious submission as well as fragmentation between men and women, is amazing and ought to contravene to everything our democratic and secular society stands for (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2013/14:Ju392)".²³ The Sweden Democrats,

"[...] do not consider the veil an expressly religious symbol such as for example a Christian cross piece of jewellery around the neck. Apart from having a strong anchoring in Sweden and being a part of our cultural inheritance, Christianity and its symbols can neither equate with the veil for other reasons. When it comes to the veil, it is for example decisive that disparity is made between the sexes when the woman is expected to yield to the man. The veil should therefore not only be seen as a religious symbol, but also as a part of an oppressing philosophy. [...] The City Council is suggested to decide: that dress codes are imposed [...] that amount to that the symbols for the oppression of women, hijab, chador, abaya, niqab and burka is prohibited (Sölvesborgs kommun. Motion till kommunfullmäktige 030517)".²⁴

The party, though holding itself secular, argues for missionary work by the Church of Sweden. It is important, both abroad and domestically, "[...] to take the creed to the world [...], not least to areas of alienation and parallel societies (Zetterman 2017)",²⁵ and even against God's instructions not to do so, as "To not aim to convert persons of a different faith, to aid the establishment of other religions [...] can thus be said to be acting in direct conflict with the bible (Karlsson 2012)".²⁶

²³ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Att till polisuniformen tillåta bärandet av muslimsk slöja, en symbol som symboliserar såväl religiös underkastelse som uppdelning mellan män och kvinnor, är häpnadsväckande och torde strida mot allt som vårt demokratiska och sekulära samhälle står för (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2013/14:Ju392)".

²⁴ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] anser dessutom inte slöjan enkom vara en religiös symbol såsom exempelvis ett kristet korssmycke som bärs runt halsen. Förutom att kristendomen har en stark förankring i Sverige och är en del av vårt kulturarv, kan dess symboler heller inte likställas med slöjan av flera skäl. När det gäller slöjan är det exempelvis avgörande att skillnad görs mellan könen när kvinnan förväntas underkasta sig mannen. Slöjan bör alltså inte endast ses som en religiös symbol, utan även som en del av en förtryckande filosofi. [...] Kommunfullmäktige föreslås besluta: att klädkoder införs [...] som innebär att de kvinnoförtryckande symbolerna hijab, chador, abaya, niqab och burka förbjuds (Sölvesborgs kommun. Motion till kommunfullmäktige 030517)".

²⁵ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] föra ut sin lära [...] inte minst i utanförskapsområden och i parallellsamhällen (Zetterman 2017)".

²⁶ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Att inte sträva efter att omvända personer av annan tro, att underlätta etablerandet av andra religioner [...] kan alltså sägas vara ett agerande som står i direkt strid med bibeln (Karlsson 2012)".

Furthermore, the Sweden Democrats find support for their policies for assimilation and against multiculturalism in the bible:

The support for assimilation/adaptation is increased further in the Book of Numbers 15:15: “One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.” The quotation above shows some parts of the bible not only allows, but even encourage to assimilation of immigrants before multiculturalism (Karlsson 2012).²⁷

Christianity and Church as Cultural Inheritance

When it comes to Christianity, Church, nation and people, the designation of ‘culture’ [*kultur*] is frequently used by the Sweden Democrats, and so is the designation of ‘inheritance’ [*arv*]. In their ‘The Program of Principles of the Sweden Democrats’ [*Sverigedemokraternas principprogram*], the party opine,

The Swedish state cannot and should not be religiously neutral. Sweden has been a Christian country for over a thousand years. Christianity is interwoven intimately with Swedish culture and identity. Few other ideas and institutions have been as important to the shaping of Swedish culture as Christianity and the Swedish Church. The Swedish language, art, literature, philosophy, morals, traditions, architecture, music etc. are all examples of social areas that have been and are tinged strongly by our Christian heritage. However, the influence has been mutual. The circumstances, conditions and culture of our country have meant that the history of Swedish Christianity contains certain features in comparison to other Christian countries. Many Christian holidays and traditions are still a natural part of our national culture, and are important elements also in the lives of many non-believers. Knowing and understanding the Swedish Christian cultural heritage is an important key to understanding our country's history and culture, as well as our time. Thus, the preservation of this cultural heritage is a matter for all Swedes, believers as well as non-believers. In order to remain strictly religiously neutral, the state would need to remove a significant part of the Swedish cultural heritage from public activities and public space, and this is not something the Sweden

²⁷ My translation of the original Swedish text, except for the Book of Numbers passage from Bible Gateway (2020): ”I Fjärde Mosebok 15:15 förtydligas stödet för assimilering/anpassning ytterligare: ’När en invandrare eller en tillfällig besökare nu eller i framtiden vill offra ett eldoffer, en lukt som gör herren nöjd, skall han göra på samma sätt som ni. En och samma stadga skall gälla i församlingen för er och för invandraren som bor hos er. Detta skall vara en oföränderlig stadga för er genom alla släktled.’ Ovanstående citat visar att vissa delar av bibeln inte bara tillåter, utan till och med uppmuntrar till assimilering av invandrare framför mångkulturalism (Karlsson 2012)”.

Democrats consider desirable. By virtue of its history, Christianity should be allowed to hold an exceptional position in relation to other religions in Sweden (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 27).²⁸

In the declaration of 'Belief and Tradition' [*Tro och tradition*], the party finds,

Sweden is a fantastic country with a thousand years of traditions resting on the Christian heritage. Even though there are major problems today, that require solutions, no one can take the love to our country, and the gratitude to those who made the Sweden we love, away from us. The Church is a natural part of the Swedish soul – a place that has been forever available to Swedes in both good and difficult times. Therefore, it is important for the Church to continue to be there, as it always has. [...] The Church of Sweden is Sweden's national Church, in which a majority of the nation's citizens are members [...] The Church is a major and noticeable cultural bearer and a participant of great importance to our mentality. It is present through all the different stages of life, both for the individual and for the family. For centuries, in joys and sorrows, the Church has been an indispensable part of the life of the Swedish people, and remains so today. Therefore, we regard the fate of the Swedish Church as a matter for all Swedes – believers as well as non-believers. Our vision is a broad and offensive Church where the Christian faith and identity are strong and secure in themselves, where there is a warm welcome without the Church venture towards unrecognizability. A Church in which the love of one's own country has a natural place alongside the general human love. A Church that affirms its role as cultural bearer and evangelist of the Christian message. A Church that, without sacrificing its values, its dignity or its traditions, appeals to society [...] (Sverigedemokraterna 2017).²⁹

²⁸ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Den svenska staten kan och bör inte vara religiöst neutral. Sverige har varit ett kristet land i över tusen år. Kristendomen är intimt sammanvävd med den svenska kulturen och identiteten. Få andra idéer och institutioner har varit lika betydelsefulla för formandet av den svenska kulturen som kristendomen och den svenska kyrkan. Det svenska språket, konsten, litteraturen, filosofin, moralen, traditionerna, arkitekturen, musiken m.m. är alla exempel på samhällsområden som varit och är starkt färgade av vårt kristna arv. Påverkan har dock varit ömsesidig. Förhållandena, förutsättningarna och kulturen i vårt land har gjort att den svenska kristendomens historia innehåller vissa särdrag i jämförelse med andra kristna länder. Många kristna högtider och traditioner är fortfarande en självklar del av vår nationella kultur och utgör viktiga inslag även i många icke-troendes liv. Att känna till och förstå det svenska kristna kulturarvet är en viktig nyckel till att förstå vårt lands historia, kultur och samtid. Bevarandet av detta kulturarv är således en angelägenhet för alla svenskar, troende såväl som icke-troende. För att kunna förhålla sig strikt religiöst neutral skulle staten behöva fjärma en betydande del av det svenska kulturarvet ifrån de offentliga verksamheterna och det offentliga rummet och detta är ingenting som Sverigedemokraterna ser som önskvärt. Kristendomen bör i kraft av sin historia tillåtas att inneha en särställning i förhållande till andra religioner i Sverige (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 27)".

²⁹ My translation of the original Swedish text: Sverige är ett fantastiskt land, med tusenåriga traditioner, vilandes på det kristna arvet. Och fastän det idag finns stora problem som oroar, och som behöver lösas, så är kärleken till vårt land, och tacksamheten till dem som byggt och gjort Sverige till det vi älskar, någonting som ingen kan ta ifrån oss. Kyrkan är en naturlig del av den svenska folksjäl – en plats som funnits för svenskar i såväl goda som svåra tider, i alla tider. Därför är det viktigt att kyrkan får fortsätta att finnas där, så som den alltid har gjort. [...] Svenska kyrkan är Sveriges folkkyrka med en majoritet av landets medborgare som medlemmar [...] kyrkan är en stor och synlig kulturbärare samt en aktör av stor betydelse i vår mentalitet. Den finns närvarande genom livets alla olika skeden, för såväl den enskilda människan som för familjen. I århundraden har kyrkan i såväl glädje som sorg varit en omistlig del av det svenska folkets liv och är så än idag. Vi betraktar därför Svenska kyrkans öde som en angelägenhet för alla svenskar – troende såväl som icke troende. Vår vision är en bred och offensiv kyrka där

Furthermore, to the Sweden Democrats, Sweden has strong cultural connections to Christianity, where Christianity is a natural cultural-historical founded part of the country, and Christianity and its symbols are part of the Swedish cultural and historical inheritance where a thousand years of Christianity has embossed the nation. The Christian inheritance and the Christian values are of major importance and a prerequisite to understand Swedish society and Swedish uniqueness. The exceptional position of the Church has had strong impact on the development of the country for a long time. The Church and Christianity have a solid anchoring in Sweden, and are parts of the cultural heritage, but are also guarantees for this cultural heritage, of the nation. The Sweden Democrats want to “[...] defend our mutual culture, our Christian heritage and also preserve and maintain the family (Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014, p.57)”.³⁰ The classic terminology of the Church, in the Swedish language, that emphasises the family, the home and the nation, should be kept in prayer and words. To the party, the history of the Church of Sweden, the Swedish nation and the Swedish state is intimately intertwined, and have influenced each-other bilaterally over the centuries. The Church has rendered the Swedes participation in an international Christendom and a European cultural community, and has had an enormous impact on the life of the nation in many other ways. The Swedish nation, in turn, along with the Swedish nature, has had an impact on the Church, which has resulted in the specific features of the Swedish Church, in comparison to other faith communities, and as the Church also administer the largest cultural inheritance of Sweden, the Church is not merely a faith community, but also a culture bearer. The long tradition of the Christian inheritance in Sweden defines the culture, and results in a knowledge that the traditions spring from something much older, and thus give security, awareness, and continuity. The Christian values and message should guide the Church of Sweden to clearly announce and administer the doctrine of the Church for future generations. The Church of Sweden is “[...] an inalienable part of our history and present day [...] one of our very most important institutions. On the strength of this,

den kristna tron och identiteten är stark och trygg i sig själv, där välkommandet är varmt utan att trösklar sänks eller att tak höjs mot en kyrka på väg mot oigenkännlighet. En kyrka där kärleken till det egna landet har en naturlig plats vid sidan av den allmänna människokärleken. En kyrka som bejakar sin roll som kulturbärare och missionär av det kristna budskapet. En kyrka som utan att göra avkall på sina värden, sin värdighet eller sina traditioner, vänder sig till samhället [...] (Sverigedemokraterna 2017).

³⁰ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] värna vår gemensamma kultur, vårt kristna arv samt bevara och upprätthålla familjen (Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014, p.57).

it is also a bearer of a gigantic part of our cultural heritage and could be so to a higher degree with another leadership (Karlsson 2012)".³¹

To the Sweden Democrats, along being a majority Church, the Swedish Church is a National Church, or a Folk Church [*folkkyrka*]. The party favours a Church that is professing what they consider a traditional Christianity, and lives up to its role as a bearer of traditions. To them, the Church of Sweden and Christianity is inextricably intertwined with the value-system, culture, and history of the country (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:3194, 2019/20:734, 2019/20:555, 2019/20:521, 2019/20:349, 2019/20:348, 2018/19: 727, 2018/19: 651, 2018/19:443, 2018/19:134; Sveriges riksdag. Interpellation till statsråd 2017/18:434; Sölvesborgs kommun. Motion till kommunfullmäktige 030517; Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2017:78, 2014:83, 2014:81, 2014:57; Sverigedemokraterna 2018a, 2017, 2014; Eriksson & Rosén 2019; Åkesson & Emilsson 2019; Emilsson & Kronlid 2017; Emilsson 2017, 2016; Zetterman 2017; Karlsson 2012).

To the former Sweden Democrat spokespersons for religious matters, Julia Kronlid and Aron Emilsson, "The Church is an inherent part of the Swedish people's soul [...]" (Zetterman 2017)",³² and the ideal Church should be "A Church where there is natural room for the love of one's own country [...] A Church that affirms its role as culture bearer and custodian of Swedish, Nordic and Western cultural inheritance (Emilsson 2016)".³³ According to the alleged chief ideologist and former Sweden Democrat group leader in the Swedish Parliament, Mattias Karlsson, "It is not a sin to love one's country and have a will to protect it from over radical changes. It is an act of love (Karlsson 2012)".³⁴ Furthermore, to Karlsson, "[...] our adversaries have genuinely forced us into an existential battle for the survival of our culture and our nation [...] There are only two options, victory or death (Habul 2018)".³⁵ Additionally, to Karlsson

³¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] en omistlig del av vår historia och nutid [...] en av vår nations allra viktigaste institutioner. I kraft av detta är den också en bärare av en gigantisk del av vårt kulturarv och skulle kunna bli det i en högre utsträckning med en annan ledning (Karlsson 2012)".

³² My translation of the original Swedish text: "Kyrkan är en naturlig del av den svenska folksjälens [...]" (Zetterman 2017)".

³³ My translation of the original Swedish text: "En kyrka där kärleken till det egna landet har en naturlig plats [...]. En kyrka som bejakar sin roll som kulturbärare och förvaltare av ett svenskt, nordiskt och västerländskt kulturarv (Emilsson 2016)".

³⁴ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Att älska sitt land och vilja bevara och skydda det från alltför radikala förändringar är ingen synd. Det är en kärlekshandling (Karlsson 2013)".

³⁵ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] våra motståndare har på riktigt tvingat in oss i en existentiell kamp om vår kulturs och vår nations överlevnad. [...] Det finns bara två val, seger eller död (Habul 2018)".

(2012), there are support in the bible that God does not want to see a cosmopolitan world, but instead a world of different nations, borders, languages and countries; and, thus, the protection of these are in line with God's will. To the party ideologist, with reference to the bible, it is evil to try to restrict the self-determination of a nation, and it is evil to try to create a common world culture that will force the different peoples to follow the customs of the foreign culture and to abandon their own laws and customs. It is evil to betray one's own country, and to abandon one's own laws and traditions as well as to let strangers take over what is considered one's home without resistance. On the contrary, in Karlsson's further reasoning, it is a good thing to maintain one's own customs, traditions and faith, and to protect one's countrymen and fight for one's motherland [*fosterland*]. According to the Sweden Democrat ideologist, the Church of Sweden is a particular Swedish Church, that has aided Swedes to become a part of an international Christendom, and that the characteristic of the Church of Sweden has provided Swedes with a Swedish identity, as well as supported Swedish nationalism and the love of the motherland, throughout history (Karlsson 2012).

Christianity and Church as Guarantors for Stability and Security

A distinct 'identity' [*identitet*] of the Church and the nation is significant to the Sweden Democrats. To the party, this important Christian identity is a prerequisite for the 'security' [*trygghet*] of the nation and of the people.

In 'The Manifest on the Direction of the School Policy' [*Skolpolitiska inriktningsmanifestet*], the Sweden Democrats reckon,

The role of the school is not only acting as a knowledge communicator, the school also has the role of conveying a deep understanding and acceptance of our Swedish cultural heritage – from one generation to another. The cultural heritage includes the common history, culture, traditions, norms, values, language and religions of the Swedish people. These are the building blocks the Sweden Democrats believe form the basis for a secure and stable Sweden. Without knowledge of these building blocks, and above all the common norms, values and language, it is difficult, if not impossible, to become a natural part of the Swedish society. The school should therefore emphasize the importance of the family, the collective knowledge and experience of previous generations, the Christian ethics and, not least, the central importance of Western humanism to our society (Sverigedemokraterna 2018a, p. 22).³⁶

³⁶ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Skolans roll är inte bara att vara kunskapsförmedlare, den har också rollen att förmedla en djupgående förståelse och acceptans för vårt svenska kulturarv – från en generation till en

Furthermore, to the Sweden Democrats, the Church of Sweden must dare to be explicit in its Christian identity, and needs to stand up for this Christian identity and for vulnerable Christians in Sweden and abroad. As the Swedish society has undergone profound changes during the last decades, with few historical parallels, and as traditions, fellowships, norms and moral have been immiserated and loosened, the Church must emphasise values as belief, tradition, security and continuity, and constitute a fixed point in an increasingly shallow and insecure world. The Church needs to be clear in its Christian identity for the members to experience safety and continuity from the confession and creed of the Church of Sweden, and let the Christian message stand for security, belief and tradition in the contemporary inconstant society. The Church must stand up for a direct Christian identity, and a part of the Christian identity is “[...] to take the creed to the world, as it is important to us [the Sweden Democrats] it is done, not least to areas of alienation and parallel societies (Zetterman 2017)”.³⁷ The Church should let its missionary spirit flow, and its symbolism be evident. According to the Sweden Democrats, more and more people are experiencing insecurity and are lacking belonging in the society, and therefore the Church must be there in peoples’ lives as a stable support, and as a conveyer of security. The Church should be relevant in the world today but watchful over its values and dignity, and its classical Christian belief (Sverigedemokraterna 2017; Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014:68, 2015:30, 2017:78; Zetterman 2017; Emilsson & Kronlid 2017; Emilsson 2016; Karlsson 2012).

annan. I kulturarvet ingår det svenska folkets gemensamma historia, kultur, traditioner, normer, värderingar, språk och religioner. Dessa är de byggstenar vilka Sverigedemokraterna menar utgör grunden för ett tryggt och stabilt Sverige. Utan kunskaper om dessa byggstenar, och då framförallt gemensamma normer, värderingar och språk, är det svårt, om inte omöjligt, att bli en naturlig del av det svenska samhället. Skolan bör därför betona familjens betydelse, tidigare generationers samlade kunskap och erfarenhet, den kristna etiken samt inte minst den västerländska humanismens centrala betydelse för vårt samhälle (Sverigedemokraterna 2018a, p. 22)”.

³⁷ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] föra ut sin lära, då är det viktigt för oss [Sverigedemokraterna] att man gör det, inte minst i utanförskapsområden och i parallellsamhällen (Zetterman 2017)”.

Previous Research

On Nationalism and Religion

Eric J. Hobsbawm was a historian of University of London, United Kingdom, and his *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* [*Nationer och nationalism*] (Hobsbawm 1990) is considered a classic investigation on the phenomena of nations and nationalism. Already three decades ago, Hobsbawm observed, there was a global growing identification between nationalism and religion. This phenomenon was not surprising to Hobsbawm, as he found religion an old and proven means for constructing unity and community between people with not much else in common (Hobsbawm 1990, p. 90).

As a doctoral student at Uppsala University, Sweden, Jonas Lindberg wrote the article “The Uses of Christianity in Nordic Nationalist Parties’ Opposition to Islam” (Lindberg 2011). Benedict Anderson was a social anthropologist, political scientist, and professor of International Studies, at Cornell University, the United States. His *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Anderson 1983) is considered a classic release on nationalism.

The visibility, or return, of religion in the public sphere has made the combination between religion and nationalism more obvious, according to Lindberg. To him, nationalist parties and radical right-wing populist parties mainly use religion incorporated in a cultural sense “[...] within their ideology and use rhetoric as a way of further strengthening their cause (Lindberg 2011, p. 137)”. According to Lindberg and to Anderson, nationalism is linked to religion by similar purpose and origins, and, thus, nationalism and religion are comparable entities (Lindberg 2011, pp. 138-140; Anderson 1985, pp. 1-36, 67-82, 155-162), and this is visible in

[...] a cultural language that stretches beyond the status of symbols, consisting of knowledge and values rather than words and grammar. [...] a language that unites within a nation and at the same time excludes those who are not able or are unwilling to take on this language, e g immigrants of a religion other than that of the majority of a country (Lindberg 2011, p. 140).

Lindberg holds the importance of memory within nationalism can be compared to the theory of “[...] religion as a chain of memory, where the past and the future are actualized in the present through religion. Religion is a form of belief that specifically implies reference to the authority

of a tradition. Thus, losing such a memory is thought to cause a symbolic vacuum in society (Lindberg 2011, p. 140)". To Lindberg, when religion has played a major role in a national heritage, religion can be used to complement nationalism with such a chain of memory in national identity (Lindberg 2011, pp. 140, 154).

The studies of Tania Wettach, at Tuebingen University and Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany, in her article "The Role of Religion in Ethno-Political Conflict" (Wettach 2006), shows the repercussions on societies where this phenomenon of ethnicity and religion appears. Through the religious and historical identity of ethno-religion, the territory connected to the ancestral community is seen as holy land, according to Wettach. The living space of the original community is regarded as received from the ancestors and indivisible from them; it determines the inalienable roots of the community. The ethnic community and the religion are connected in a close symbiosis, where worldly and religious experiences originate from the same source so that the religious experience includes the entire society and forms its ethics and culture (Wettach 2006, p. 207). To Wettach, in exclusive religious nationalism, everything beyond the ancestral community, that is the ethnicity, is considered threatening or hostile. Ethnicity, territory, and political order need to be homogenised or unified. The ethnicity must be kept as pure as possible, and the perceived constant threat of others can only be met within the territorial limits of the own political order. The clan exclusivity with a dogmatic fixed claim to universal absolute truth leads to the view of the ethnic group, the territory, and the state as sacred. The dogmatic fixedness leaves no room for negotiations, thus, in case of conflict, violence may appear as the only option to reach the group's goals. (Wettach 2006, pp. 211-213).

Catharina Raudvere is a Professor of History of Religions at University of Copenhagen, Denmark. In "Between Romanticism and Politics: The Midgard Project and the Contemporary Challenge" ["Mellan romantik och politik: Midgårdsprojektet och den samtida utmaningen"] (Raudvere 2001), she demonstrates that the terms 'tradition' and 'traditional' have a diffuse meaning of something old-fashioned or accustomed in common usage, however, that in a more rhetoric parlance, contain implications that are far more serious. Ethnic identities are neither attributed nor obtained; they are both; out of selection as well as out of decree. According to Raudvere, when symbols and stories of the past are used to understand the contemporary world, the religion, and the heritage, in relation to a specified place, play noticeable parts. The language and the symbols of religion can be adapted by progressive political actors and by challenging artistic players, she holds, but have often served conservative powers. To Raudvere, the social

memory is moulded in ritual, and the expressions of ritual are founded on common meta-stories, while the boundary between myth and history becomes confused in peoples' storytelling (Raudvere 2001, pp. 16-17). "In its most innocent form, the result is romanticism and nostalgia. In its most disgusting [form] – ethnic cleansing (Raudvere 2001, p. 17)".³⁸

On Radical Right Populism, Radical Nationalism and Christianity

The Western World and Europe

Nadia Marzouki, Doctor in Political Science at Harvard Kennedy School, the United states, and Duncan McDonnel, professor of Politics at Griffith University, Australia, hold, in their article "Populism and Religion" (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016), all forms of populism, without exception, involve exaltation of and appeal to the people, and are anti-elitist. In the right-wing populist narrative, the good honest homogeneous people stands in opposition to a set of elites and others, with both of these categories depicted as dispossessing, or attempting to dispossess, "[...] the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 3)". Additionally,

[...] like all ideologies, populism proposes an analysis designed to respond to three essential questions: 'what went wrong; who is to blame, and what is to be done to reverse the situation?' For populists, the answers can broadly be summed up as: (1) the government and democracy, which should reflect the will of the people, have been occupied, distorted and exploited for their own interests by elites, (2) the elites and 'others' (those not of 'the people') are to blame for the current situation (inevitably portrayed as a crisis which is going to get much worse); and (3) the people must be given back their role as rightful sovereign before it is too late (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 3).

Along with the preaching of doom, right-wing populists also promise salvation and exculpation to the people. After a journey of sacrifice there will be emancipation, while in the meantime, the people of the country are not to be blamed for the current situation, in fact "[...] these righteous, clean-living citizens are said to be the prime victims of the elites and 'others' (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 4)".

³⁸ My translation. "I sin oskyldigaste form är resultatet romantik och nostalgi. I sin vidrigaste – etnisk rensning (Raudvere 2001, p. 17)".

To Marzouki and McDonnel, central to populism is the existence of a virtuous and homogenous people, where the people constitutes an inherently good community, and where the community is considered a place of mutual trust and evident clarity on who is of the people and who is not. The people is viewed as an exclusive and morally upright community connected to a distinct geographical area where the virtuous unified population resides. The place of the people is connected to the right-wing populist anxiety of the replacement of the supposedly united, plain, and unambiguous society of the past with the increasingly blurred and polluted society of the present. Right-wing populists fear “[...] the people risk losing their very identity due to elite-promoted phenomena like globalisation, immigration and multiculturalism (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 4)”. Additionally, to Marzouki and McDonnel, the nostalgic celebration of this idyllic past also serves to increase the assurance of the calls for cultural re-awakening and re-conquest. “Such calls are often linked by right-wing populists to the defence of native religious identities and symbols, which are said to be under threat from elites and ‘others’ (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 4)”. These identities and symbols are stressed by populists, to fight back against the perceived undermining of native identity from secularisation, immigration, and multiculturalism. The restoring aspects are followed by the aspects of battle, in the form of campaigns to keep native religious symbols in public places and to defend local spaces from alien religions, with the consequence of a clear distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, pp. 4-5).

As for the enemies of the people in right-wing populist discourse, these consist of elites and ‘others’. The former are charged with being, at best, distant from the people and incompetent (and, at worst, downright corrupt), while the ‘others’ are made up of those whose identity, behaviour or beliefs prelude them from being part of the natural community formed by the people. For contemporary right-wing populists in Western democracies, the main ‘others’ are almost always immigrants and, in particular since 9/11, Muslims (Marzouki & McDonnel 2016, p. 5).

Olivier Roy is a Professor of Political Science at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy. In his “Beyond Populism: The Conservative Right, the Courts, the Churches and the Concept of a Christian Europe” (Roy 2016) he holds, in the recent decades, right-wing populist parties in Western democracies have used religion “[...] to define a good ‘people’ whose identity and traditions are alleged to be under siege from liberal elites and dangerous ‘others’ (Roy 2016, p. 185)”. According to Roy, all European right-wing populist parties are anti-Muslim, and their opposition to Islam is identified with immigration. Furthermore, Roy shows,

they all stress the Christian identity of their country. The right-wing populist parties perceive the Christian identity of the European nations threatened

“[...] by a potentially deadly combination of pro-globalisation, national/supranational liberal elites on the one hand, and, on the other, by an aggressive process of Islamisation. While the latter claim seeks to exploit national immigration trends in many countries, it is also clearly linked to the international replacement of the communist ‘red threat’ with the ‘Islamic threat’ as the main physical and ideological ‘enemy’ of Western civilisation. As such, Islam is not only portrayed as a serious danger to the identity and values of the people, but also to their very physical wellbeing. The events of 9/11, of course, presented an excellent opportunity for populist mobilisation on these themes, and most right-wing populists in the West grabbed it with both hands (Roy 2016, p. 186)”.

For European right-wing populists, “[...] religion matters foremost as a marker of identity, enabling them to distinguish between the good ‘us’ and the bad ‘them’. Most populists tend to be secular themselves, and do not consider Christianity as a faith, but rather as an identity. They place Christendom above Christianity (Roy 2016, p. 186)”. To evoke Christian identity, Roy holds, populists tend to refer to Christian symbols rather than to any theological dogma. Christian symbols, like the cross, have become an important part of the right-wing populist discourse. The populists define the good Christian people in different ways – secular, secular with Christian roots, Catholic, or pagan, for example – but the unambiguous constant is the rejecting of Islam. Thus, the definition of ‘us’ varies, but the notion of ‘them’ is always Islam and Muslims. In fact, populist views on Christian and Muslim symbols have support in several national European court rulings and among political actors, Roy shows, allowing Christian symbols, like the cross, in public spaces, while banning Muslim symbols, like veils and minarets. This arrangement does not, according to the court rulings, oppose freedom of religion, because Christian symbols do not denote religious practice, and are European culturally, while, in contrast, Muslim symbols are considered explicitly religious and culturally alien, and thus amounting to proselytising. In this reasoning, Christianity is defined as culture, not as a faith; Christianity is identity. To Roy, the European right does not advocate a Christian identity for Europe to promote Christianity, but to fight Islam and the increased presence of Muslims in European societies.

According to Roy, the influence of Christian churches on politics is in decline everywhere, nevertheless, the more secular the political scene in Europe becomes, the more vocal the calls to reclaim the Christian roots of Europe become, he holds (Roy 2016, pp. 185-201). To Roy,

this reference to the European Christian identity “[...] started with the right-wing populist movements, but this discourse has slowly pervaded a part of the new conservative right and of the political establishment (Roy 2016, p. 192)”.

Anna Rowlands, Associate Professor of Catholic Social Thought and Practice at Durham University, United Kingdom, argues, in her “Against the Manichees: Immigration Detention and the Shaping of the Theo-political Imagination” (Rowlands 2018), that over the last decade, categories of ‘religion’, ‘migration’, ‘violence’, ‘security’ and ‘terror’ are increasingly intertwined with European political discourse, as political responses to migration to Europe, “[...] displaying increasingly evident religiously inflected ‘bio-political hierarchy’ in political decision making on migration matters (Rowlands 2018, pp. 163-164)”. The increasing orientation toward enforcement and deterrence of so-called survival migration of border management policies betray important religious and racial biases, to Rowlands. Central to public discourse is “[...] the reinvigoration of the quasi-moral language of good and evil (Rowlands 2018, p. 164)”. In the public presentation there are “good” migrants and “bad” migrants, based on religious identity, Rowlands holds. In this light, persecuted non-Muslims, and Muslim women and Muslim children, are good migrants, while Muslim men are bad. The categories of good and bad “[...] also relate to the perceived quiescence of migrants to Western narratives of agency, dependency, and self-determination (Rowlands 2018, p. 164)”. Seen as vulnerable, or as victims of Islam, those who remain in camps or urban settlements in Africa or the Middle East, are also seen as deserving migrants, while those who seek other ways, out of camps and urban settlements, are seen as largely undeserving and of no responsibility to no one but themselves, to Rowlands. Seen as existing by choice outside the established forms of responsibility for international protection and duty, the “[...] political discourse thus fosters a tension between international legal norms on migration and current state practice (Rowlands 2018, p. 164)”. Furthermore, these political narratives often relate to the “[...] Christian ethical norms that suppose the need for – and the duty to provide – ‘salvation’ for the vulnerable non-European other (Rowlands 2018, p. 164)”. To Rowlands, the increasingly prevalent distinction between good and bad migrants is both a form of secular governance and a political theology (Rowlands 2018, pp. 163-165).

Tomas Poletti Lundström (also known as Tomas Lundström) is a Doctoral student in History of Religions at Uppsala University, Sweden. In his article “The New Battlefield of the Alt-Right – The Churches” (Poletti Lundström 2017), he demonstrates how the so called alternative

right, or alt-right, movement in the United States and the European countries has been involved in international collaboration and ideological exchange for decades, and further shows that in recent years the bonds have become stronger; now the movement has its eyes on Christianity. In the United States, the alt-right is focusing on the Evangelical churches of the conservative American right, while in Europe the focal point is on the monocultural Christian Europe, where the movement is mainly focusing on the Roman-Catholic churches. To Poletti Lundström, the inspiration for the ideologists of the European radical nationalist environment is the European traditional cultural inheritance. “A part of this conceptualized cultural inheritance that stands out as particularly important for this fascism of our time: the Christian Church. [...] The Christian Church has a value in its own right (Poletti Lundström 2017)”.³⁹

The Nordic Countries and Sweden

The research of Ann-Cathrine Jungar, Associate Professor at Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden, concerns the populist radical right parties in Europe and the Nordic countries. In *Populism in the Nordic Countries: From the Margins to the Middle of Politics* [*Populism i Norden: Från marginalen mot den politiska mittfåran*] (Jungar 2017), she holds, the Nordic populist right parties have all been normalised as they, each of them using different strategies, have moved towards the established political establishment, after starting up as protest- and niche parties; today these populist parties are considered legitimate cooperating parties to most of the other political parties. To Jungar, the Nordic populist right parties combine nationalism with value conservatism, and are critical to the European Union, to multiculturalism, and to immigration, and consider Islam as a threat to the Western culture. The current political climate is favourable to the Nordic populist right parties, Jungar holds, because the established political parties on the left and on the right have been brought closer to each-other in their socio-economic policies, leaving room for the populist right to suggest solutions on the subject matter. According to Jungar, it is because of the repercussions of the substantial socio-economic changes, value politics and socio-cultural matters dominate the discourse on national identity and national values, rather than the standard socio-economic left-right-politics (Jungar 2017, pp. 13-15, 94-96).

³⁹ My translation of the original Swedish text: ”En del av detta föreställda kulturarv sticker ut som särskilt viktig för denna vår tids fascism: den kristna kyrkan. [...] Den kristna kyrkan har ett värde i sig själv (Poletti Lundström 2017).”

Mattias Martinson is a Professor of Systematic Theology and Studies in Worldviews at Uppsala University, Sweden. His *Secularism, Populism and Xenophobia: An Essay on the Debate on Religion* [*Sekularism, populism, xenofobi: En essä om religionsdebatten*] (Martinson 2017), demonstrates, there is a new politically articulated dimension, hitherto neglected in modern Western democracies, replacing the classic left-right political scale for polarising potentials: the dichotomy between the ‘people’ and the ‘elite’. This new dichotomy of populism makes it

[...] possible to understand why the contemporary argumentation for enlightenment, democracy and tolerance also can carry elements of xenophobia. When ‘people’ and ‘elite’ are allowed to unclasp the political space, rather than left-right, a kind of adjustment to all arguments (from left to right) takes place in the abstract category ‘the people’, in definite negation to everything holding any tinge of elitism or establishment. When the direction of the argumentation becomes a popular fear for a religion not adapted to Swedish circumstances, the argumentation for freedom and democracy short-circuits. The populist distinction between people and elite takes the upper hand, which leads to the political vision of democracy, diversity and openness becomes associated with the conspiracy of the elite (Martinson 2017, p. 97).⁴⁰

Sverker Sörlin is a Professor of Environmental History at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. In *Nationalism* [*Nationalism*] (Sörlin 2006), he recounts that the Swedish welfare project, starting in the late 1920’s, was a Social Democrat political ambition to make the state care for every citizen who could not care for themselves, with the political goal to replace the class society with the People’s Home [*folkhemmet*] within the state. To Sörlin, this project succeeded because of the horizontal culture of consensus of the municipal organisation; the sum of these small decision-making collectives became the conception of the ‘people’. The horizontal culture of consensus could be connected easily to the old and very popular established national notion. It could furthermore be easily connected to the cooperation between the state, the capital, and the popular movements the conservative parts of the society already propagated for.

⁴⁰ My translation of the original Swedish text: [...] en möjlighet att förstå varför samtida argumentering för upplysning, demokrati och tolerans också kan rymma element av xenofobi. När ”folk” och ”elit” tillåts spänna upp den politiska rymden, snarare än höger-vänster, sker en sorts anpassning till alla argument (från vänster till höger) till den abstrakta kategorin ”folket”, som står i bestämd negation till allt som luktar elitism och etablissemang. När det styrande i argumentationen blir en tänkt folklig rädsla för en religion som inte anpassar sig efter svenska förhållanden kortsluts resonemanget om frihet och demokrati. Den populistiska distinktionen mellan folk och elit tar överhanden, vilket leder till att den politiska visionen om demokrati, mångfald och öppenhet blir associerad med elitens ränksmideri (Martinson 2017, p. 97).

Thus, the Swedish nationalism not only gained popular democratic [characteristics], but also corporative characteristics, which made it acceptable for the business sector and for different societal elites. In combination with high economic growth, this type of nationalism became very efficient and rather a societal “top-ideology” [...] (Sörlin 2006, pp. 50-51).⁴¹

The People’s Home nationalism [*folkhemsnationalismen*] was well-functioning until the 1980’s, when it became difficult to maintain because of the internationalisation and the deregulations of the time. Since then, Sörlin holds, the Swedish national ideology has been ambiguous and tentative, and the increased immigration as well as the European integration have complicated the Swedish national self-understanding. To Sörlin, the modern Swedish welfare nationalism is considered universal, being equal for everyone, with the consequence of high demands on everyone to contribute with work, health, and good behaviour. In Sörlin’s view, in this puritan control of oneself and of others, all people that can be accused of being freeloaders become especially unwelcome. These accusations can be put forward to any immigrant who has not arrived to perform the work that the native population does not want to perform. Thus, the welfare nationalism, with its roots in universal welfare, has a built-in risk for xenophobia, as the native population must share equally with immigrants and refugees (Sörlin 2006, pp. 49-52, 90-91). “The welfare nationalism, consequently being nationally including, can thereby very quick become ethnically and culturally excluding (Sörlin 2006, p. 51)”.⁴²

To Poletti Lundström (2017), in the Nordic countries, radical nationalism is best understood as an environment, where the different actors coexist and benefit from each other “[...] in a kind of ecumenicalism, a dream of a multifaceted ideological and tactical cooperation between the Sweden Democrat voters as well as the national socialists in the Nordic Resistance Movement [*Nordiska motståndrörelsen*] (Poletti Lundström 2017)”.⁴³

⁴¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: “Den svenska nationalismen fick således inte bara folkligt demokratiska utan också korporativa drag, vilket gjorde den acceptabel för näringslivet och för olika samhällseliter. I kombination med en hög ekonomisk tillväxt blev denna nationalism mycket effektiv och närmast en samhällelig ”överideologi” [...] (Sörlin 2006, pp. 50-51)”.

⁴² My translation of the original Swedish text: ”Välfärdsnationalismen, som alltså är nationellt inkluderande, kan därigenom mycket snabbt bli etniskt och kulturellt exkluderande (Sörlin 2006, p. 51)”.

⁴³ My translation of the original Swedish text: ”[...] en sorts radikalnationalistisk ekumenik, en dröm om ett mångfacetterat ideologiskt och taktiskt samarbete mellan såväl sverigedemokratiska väljare som nationalsocialisterna i Nordiska motståndsrörelsen (Poletti Lundström 2017).”

In Sweden, the radical nationalists have their eyes on “[...] the classical power broker of Christianity, the historical Churches (Poletti Lundström 2017)”.⁴⁴ In the view of Poletti Lundström, the ideological interest of the Sweden Democrats, and other radical nationalists, is a mono-cultural Christian Europe. To him, there are no signs for any decrease in the radical nationalist engagement in the Churches; on the contrary, “[...] Churches and Christian communions might become one of the battlefields for nationalism (Poletti Lundström 2017).”⁴⁵

Markus Lundström, Doctor at Department of Economic History and International Relations, Stockholm University, Sweden, and Tomas Lundström, in their study ”A hundred Years of Radical Nationalism” [”Hundra år av radikal nationalism”] (Lundström & Lundström 2016), have summoned and analysed the research on the ideological tendencies usually called ‘extreme right’, or ‘white power’, in Sweden between 1915 and 2015. However, Lundström and Lundström consider they have identified nationalism as the common denominator, and the writers find the type of nationalism in question radical, and therefore suggest the analytical designation ‘radical nationalism’ [*radikal nationalism/radikalnationalism*]. To Lundström and Lundström, the political project for these movements, involved in a complicated tracery of collaborations and exchanges, is to “[...] link a hereditary feeling of national solidarity to a geographical place (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 42)”.⁴⁶

To Lundström and Lundström, a branch of radical nationalism is the social conservative nationalism, which since the 1930’s has promoted the idea of an ethnical homogenous feeling of national solidarity [*folkgemenskap*]. This Swedish feeling of national solidarity is considered important for the preservation of the Swedish territory. Since the 1950’s, the movement has put less importance on the category of race in its political analysis, and instead put more emphasis on the role of culture, for the feeling of national solidarity. The conservative notion of slow change of society and the emphasis on the Swedish culture, and not ‘the Swedish race’, is, to Lundström and Lundström, the political project to preserve the cultural inherited feeling of national solidarity of Swedish social conservative nationalism (Lundström & Lundström 2016, pp. 39-45).

⁴⁴ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] kristendomens klassiska maktfaktorer, de historiska kyrkorna (Poletti Lundström 2017).”

⁴⁵ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] kan kyrkor och kristna samfund komma att bli ett av nationalismens slagfält (Poletti Lundström 2017).”

⁴⁶ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] knyta en nedärvd folkgemenskap till en geografisk plats (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 42)”.

On the Sweden Democrats

According to Mattias Martinson (2017), the main worries for the Sweden Democrats are the liberalisation and the disintegration of standards of the society. The main reasons for their concerns are the churchly national identity markers being erased by theoretical reflection on the doctrines and practices of the Church. The political party takes a preservative and monumental stance on the dominating cultural forms of the Church of Sweden. To Martinson, the anti-liberal reasoning, of the Sweden Democrats, on the Church of Sweden, deals with an external political standard allowed to govern the way the Church shall be understood and valued. Here, the requirements of Sweden are central. The life of the Church is arid to national order. The Church represents the force behind one of the main foundations for the shaping of a Swedish identity. Herein lies, to Martinson, an anxiety of cleanliness, a devotion for purity, for the pure Swedish culture. This attitude on the purity of the Church of Sweden as a stable historical form for Swedish identity leads to criticism of a living Christian practice of continuous modifications of the forms of the Church. The need for purity prohibits the Sweden Democrats' perspective to understand the Church as inconstant and as a cultural living greatness. For the Sweden Democrats, the Church of Sweden simply must express Swedishness, to favour the Swedish identity. If the Church does not accomplish exactly this task, there is, by definition, something wrong with the content of the Church, especially with its leadership. The mould of the Church is associated with external factors, as Swedish legislation, and cultural tradition, considered pure and attractive, no matter the content any ignorant leadership will give it, in the view of the Sweden Democrats. To Martinson, Islamophobia is not far away. To him, the party conception of the Church of Sweden as a guarantor for Swedish identity is a crucial factor to distinguish the type of culture and social order that is fundamentally incompatible with Muslim culture and social order. Only the pure features count, not any ecumenical or interreligious work. The effect, to Martinson, of the Sweden Democrats equating Christian with Swedish is an explicit but abstract cast of suspicion on Islam as unenlightened, barbarous, and dangerous (Martinson 2017, pp. 43-46).

Mattias Gardell is a Professor in History of Religions and at the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies on Racism at Uppsala University, Sweden. In his *The Race Warrior: The Serial Killer Peter Mangs* [*Raskrigaren: Seriemördaren Peter Mangs*] (Gardell 2015), he recounts for a new parlance he calls 'Sweden Democrat Swedish', [*sverigedemokratiska*]. Gardell refers to the new vocabulary successfully introduced into the Swedish language by the Sweden Democrats. An

alteration in the language, a modification of the use of terminology, a newspeak of encoded terms and new specific cue words, carrying a new way to view the world “[...] with concepts such as culture enrichers, bearded children, multiculturalism, multicultural, criminality, welfare tourism, politically correct, friends of Sweden, enemies of Sweden (Gardell 2015, p. 364)”.⁴⁷

To Gardell, any action against racism must be political, because racism is primarily about justice and equal opportunities, and not about values and basic principles. The Swedish focus on values and basic principles, in the fight against racism has, to Gardell, led to a Swedish view on racism as a matter of individual attitudes, and this is the reason Swedes have learned to not call themselves racist. Not even a political party with an outspoken racist policy admits to racism. “Every racist manifesto has to begin with an insurance not being racist, to have any chance to catch on. In this light, the zero tolerance on racism of the Sweden Democrats makes considerable sense, and is in tune with the signs of the times (Gardell 2015, p. 366)”.⁴⁸ The Sweden Democrats are of the idea that racism requires a notion of biological races, Gardell holds, but, to him, the history of racism precedes, by centuries, the idea of biological race, and was for a long time legitimized with religion rather than with natural science.

To Gardell, the neo-racism, talking of culture and religion instead of race, is, in that light, a throwback to the thinking of the pre-“scientific” racism. To him, not even historical fascism was exclusively about race; fascism was, as well, about culture, civilization, spirit, refinement and will power. After the post-war decline of the notion of biological race as a scientific truth and legitimate outset for the political argument for difference, the underlying idea of racism, hereditary essences, embedded in concepts such as culture, ethnicity, and religion. In this reasoning, culture, ethnicity, and religion coin the being of the people of a culture, of an ethnicity and of a religion. These hereditary essences, and peoples, are ranked on a scale from valuable to useless, with status, privileges and opportunities allocated differentially and with inequality. The idea of hereditary essences is the underlying idea of racism, and easily incorporated in the idea of the people, by assigning an entity – like a culture, an ethnicity or a

⁴⁷ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] med begrepp som kulturberikare, skäggiga barn, multikulturalism, mångkulturell, kriminalitet, bidragsturism, PK, sverigevänner, svenskfientlig (Gardell 2015, p. 364)”.

⁴⁸ My translation of the original Swedish text: “Varje rasistisk programförklaring måste inledas med en försäkran om att den inte är rasistisk för att ha en chans att slå igenom. Sverigedemokraternas nolltolerans mot rasism ter sig i detta ljus fullt logisk och i takt med tidens tecken (Gardell 2015, p. 366)”.

religion – the actual essence of the people, as a bearer of the conceptualized fellowship of the nation. This idea of hereditary essences, together with the idea of correspondence between the borders of a people and the borders of nation, is used to sort out the people who does not belong within the national borders. Like Muslims. Because Muslim is not a race, when the Sweden Democrats are talking about Muslims, the party cannot be accused of racism, not even when they refer to the hereditary essence of Muslimness as a reason for Muslims being a foreign threat that cannot become proper Swedes unless they abandon their Muslimness and convert to Swedishness. This notion of the monoculturalism of the Sweden Democrats means that the righteous society rests on assimilation in terms of culture, ethnicity, and religion, but not race. “If the racists of the twentieth century feared miscegenation, the racists of the twenty-first century fear the mixing of cultures, multi-culture (Gardell 2015, p. 368)”.⁴⁹ In the idea of the people rests the seed of genocide, Gardell holds. Noticeable minorities, who have not abandoned their distinctive indications, might provoke anger and annoyance with the majority population when it notices it only constitutes a majority and not one entire, homogeneous, undefiled people. The idea of the unity of the people is, to Gardell, closely related to the idea of purity, where purity is a by-product of systematic arrangement. Appearances are not filthy in themselves; what is filthy is what is in the wrong place in the system of classification. According to the cultural nationalism of the Sweden Democrats, there is nothing automatically wrong with people of other cultures, if they are in their right places. It is when they are in Sweden, they become filth, vermin, and parasites, and must be removed.

According to Gardell, racist violence is subjective violence acted out by individual actors who we can single out. This violence is visible because of its breach of the normalcy of non-violence. This type of violence contrasts to the objective violence, impossible to derive to identifiable individuals, being part of the order of things, not breaching the normalcy, and therefore becoming invisible for everyone not affected by it. The objective violence is either systematic or embedded in language. The systematic violence is maintained by the structural discrimination of uneven distribution of the social, cultural, and economic capital.

Embedded in the language is how we talk about any specified presentation of a problem and thus our understanding of it. When the systematic violence is explained in terms of cultural peculiar nature, and referring to factors such as skin colour, patriarchal structures, religion, or

⁴⁹ My translation of the original Swedish text: “Om 1900-talets rasister fruktade rasblandning fruktar 2000-talets rasister kulturblandning, mångkultur (Gardell 2015, p. 368)”.

accents, we are exercising objective violence. “The logic is reserved for the places inhabited by Swedes the (culture) racist parlour converts to strangers in their own homes, those who are called immigrants although they are natives (Gardell 2015, pp. 370-371)”.⁵⁰ To Gardell, racism means violence inherently. Racist speech and racist explanations have been normalised to the extent of being incorporated with the spirit of the time. Objective violence leads to subjective violence (Gardell 2015, pp. 364-371). “The politics of the Sweden Democrats affirm the structural racism, and seek support for a policy to encourage the valuable life, defined as a *Swedish* life (Gardell 2015, p. 371)”.⁵¹

According to Tomas Poletti Lundström (2017), the church policy of the Sweden Democrats is tactical and ideological. To him, the radical nationalist party the Sweden Democrats, calling themselves social conservative, summarise the radical nationalist currents of the Western world with their slogan of ‘belief and tradition’ [*tro och tradition*], and with the campaigning of their message. In their radical nationalism, the Sweden Democrats relate to the Christianity of the Church of Sweden, especially in the party’s industrial operation to get electoral representation in the different bodies of the Church. However, to Poletti Lundström, the Sweden Democrats do not have an interest in the Church of Sweden because of tactical reasons alone (Poletti Lundström 2017). The ideologists of the Sweden democrats “[...] find the setting of the comprehended disintegration of the society in the history of the Church. A degenerated Church results in a degenerated society. Not seldom, the Bible is referred to as support for this thought (Poletti Lundström 2017)”.⁵²

In his analysis of the Sweden Democrat usage of religion in web site articles, Lindberg (2011) concludes, the party’s political engagement with the Church of Sweden goes deeper than the sake of gaining political legitimacy. Lindberg quotes the party leader, expressing that Sweden has been a Christian country for a thousand years, and that any Christian symbols and references

⁵⁰ My translation of the original Swedish text: “Logiken reserveras för de orter som befolkas av svenskar som det (kultur)rasistiska talet omvandlar till främlingar i sina egna hem, de som kallas invandrare även om de fötts i Sverige, utlänningar fast de är inlänningar (Gardell 2015, pp. 370-371)”.

⁵¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] “Sverigedemokraternas politik bejakar den strukturella rasismen och söker stöd för en politik som går ut på att främja det värdefulla livet, definierat som ett *svenskt* liv (Gardell 2015, p. 371)”.

⁵² My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] söker bakgrunden till samhällets tänkta sönderfall i kyrkans historia. En degenererad kyrka leder till ett degenererat samhälle. För denna tanke söker man inte sällan stöd i Bibeln (Poletti Lundström 2017).”

removed from public activities would violate Swedish culture and Swedish identity. The main theme in the language referring to Christianity, according to Lindberg's investigation, "[...] is to stress the importance of the Swedish cultural and ideological heritage (Lindberg 2011, p. 152)". Also when Islam and Christianity are mentioned in the same articles, Christianity figures as a marker of Swedish identity. Furthermore, there are verbalised support for Christians in Muslim countries. Islam and Muslims are presented as problems and contrasted to Christian ethics which is portrayed as something of a central importance to society. To Lindberg, the Sweden Democrats are not interested in religion from a theological perspective. In Lindberg's conclusion religion, to the Sweden Democrats, is an important cultural marker of Swedish identity as well as "[...] an important marker of the difference between 'us' and 'them': what is Swedish and what is not (Lindberg 2011, p. 153)". Nationalism hand in hand with mono-confessional religion is politicized religion, according to Lindberg. These are the elements providing the Sweden Democrats with a chain of memory in their national identity (Lindberg 2011, pp. 152-154).

In his article "The Religious Aspect of Nationalism" ["Nationalismens religiösa ansikte"], the Doctor in Religious Studies, at Åbo University, Finland, Sami Lipponen (2005) concludes, the Sweden Democrats use a certain symbolic language when rhetorically referring to religion. To Lipponen, the party has firm ideals for the society, and, like other Nordic neo-nationalist parties, considers Lutheranism an axiomatic and inherent part of the Nordic culture. The fact nationalist parties use or refer to religion and religiosity is, to Lipponen, rather a rule than an exception. Furthermore, to him, religious belonging, and the relationship between religion and nation, has become an increasingly important matter for European nationalists. The religion of the country in question is considered a part of the national culture. In the case of the Sweden Democrats, in the view of Lipponen, religion is used for Lutheran profiling and criticism of another religion; that is Islam. Lipponen shows, religion is an important national matter to the Sweden Democrats; Lutheranism is a part of the culture and should be defended from alien and hostile elements. Furthermore, the Nordic way of life is considered more civilised than other ways of life, and the party resists the mixing of cultures and multiculturalism. "Officially, the Sweden Democrats deprecate racism, however, one wonder what signals the party wants to send when it stresses different moral sensibility of cultures or even regards cultures have unequal worth

(Lipponen 2005, p. 5)".⁵³ According to Lipponen, the contemporary established political parties are increasingly becoming ideologically closer to the contemporary nationalistic and anti-immigration politics of the Sweden Democrats, and thus, the party has influence on the contemporary political discourse (Lipponen 2005, pp. 1-12).

The Swedish journalists and writers, Anna-Lena Lodenius and Mats Wingborg, have, with their *The Battle of the Swedishness: Debate the Sweden Democrats* [*Slaget om svenskheten: Ta debatten med Sverigedemokraterna*] (Lodenius and Wingborg 2009), investigated the Sweden Democrats. The party wants to create a society that favours the majority population and supports assimilation and conformity, Lodenius and Wingborg hold. Furthermore, to the writers, the Sweden Democrats talk about security and traditions as a social glue that will solve all societal problems, however, "Exactly who is to be included in the group is not essential, it is the actual signal against the others, those outside [the group], that is important (Lodenius & Wingborg 2009, p. 23)".⁵⁴ The term 'culture' is frequently used by the Sweden Democrats, Lodenius and Wingborg conclude, but usually as something static, and not as something being in a constant changing process, as in the common understanding of the term; the Sweden Democrat interpretation of culture is as something ancient and with next to hereditary patterns and differences that cannot be overbridged. To Lodenius and Wingborg, the Sweden Democrats preach cultural pluralism on the global level, but only Swedish culture in Sweden. The cultural conservatism of the Sweden Democrats means, to Lodenius and Wingborg, that every uncommon cultural expression and change possesses a threat to the cultural expression the Sweden Democrats want to establish. Thus, as the Sweden Democrats consider the Swedish culture is already in decay, the culture conservatism has turned into backward-looking culture nostalgia. To Lodenius and Wingborg, the Sweden Democrats hold people with similar cultures can move between the countries because they blend in with the majority population, but otherwise, the country should be ethnically cleansed. Lodenius and Wingborg hold, the Sweden Democrats use of the term 'nationalism' in the same way they use the term 'Swedishness' [*svenskhet*]; like a general and positive buzzword, without trying to problematise the complicated designation. 'One people – one nation', is the party conception. However, not for

⁵³ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Sverigedemokraterna tar visserligen avstånd från rasism, men man undrar vad partiet vill signalera när det framhåller kulturernas olika moraluppfattningar eller till och med anser att kulturer har olika värden (Lipponen 2005, p. 5)".

⁵⁴ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Exakt vem som ska ingå i gruppen anses inte väsentligt, det är själva markeringen mot de andra, de som står utanför, som är det viktiga (Lodenius & Wingborg 2009, p. 23)".

all peoples. The party never talk about national rights in other countries. Furthermore, Lodenius and Wingborg show, the Swedish indigenous Sámi minority population is not considered by the Sweden Democrats as a people with any right to their own land or country. In the view of Lodenius and Wingborg, the Sweden Democrats argue for the rights of the majority population and against the international declarations of national minorities (Lodenius & Wingborg 2009, pp. 23-51). “Sd consider the interests of ethnical Swedes take precedence over domestic minorities as well as over foreign [minorities] (Lodenius & Wingborg 2009, p. 49)”.⁵⁵

On the Sweden Democrats and Christianity

Sami Lipponen's Doctoral dissertation, *'The Last Defenders of the Nation': A Scientific Religious Study of Neo-Nationalistic View of Society and Understanding of Life* [*'Nationens sista försvarare': En religionsvetenskaplig studie av neonationalistisk samhällssyn och livstolkning i Sverige*] (Lipponen 2004), demonstrates his research on the personal opinions of party members, and how Sweden Democrats consider religion a very important national affair. Christianity, and especially Lutheranism, is connected tightly to the perceived Swedishness. The view of Sweden as a Christian nation has an important ideological function. Most important is the opinion Lutheranism has influenced the moral sensibility and the view of society of the Swedes. The Church of Sweden is considered as a national symbol and moral guiding light. However, Sweden Democrats are critical to the recent politicisation of the Church, and its alleged political leaning to the left. Instead, Sweden Democrats hold, the position of the Church of Sweden should be as a moral educator and as a symbol for community. To Lipponen, the view of national culture of the Sweden Democrats has similarities with civil religion (Lipponen 2004, pp. 72-181).

Both cases [of national culture and civil religion] are about accomplishing and preserving unity in the society. In the view of the Sweden Democrats, the Lutheran Church should be an upholder of culture. Within the party, the members consider the Lutheran Church as a nationalistic symbol with a uniting impact on the people. One could say; the Lutheran confession is held as “sacred” exactly because it is regarded as a part of the national culture. The Sweden Democrat view of the

⁵⁵ My translation of the original Swedish text: “Sd anser att etniska svenskars intressen går före så väl inhemska som utländska minoriteters (Lodenius & Wingborg 2009, p. 49)”.

Church can be characterised as nationalistically tinged folk religiosity (Lipponen 2004, pp. 180-181)”.⁵⁶

Lundström and Lundström (2016) show, during the 1980’s, the racial-oriented organisation ‘Keep Sweden Swedish’ [*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*] started to gradually leave some of its racially oriented nationalism towards a more social conservative leaning. The organisation was one of the founders of the Sweden Democrats in the late 1980’s, and the Sweden Democrats, a party with many branches, kept close connections to parts of the racially oriented movement until 1995 when the party changed its leadership and prohibited uniforms during demonstrations and manifestations. To Lundström and Lundström, the ideas of social conservatism, enabled one of the many branches of the Sweden Democrats to find their way, manifested in the 2011 ‘Program of Principles’, as a party of social conservatism on a direct foundation of nationalism, with nationalism, belonging, national identity, common culture and common history as the key concepts. To Lundström and Lundström, the outset of social conservatism is a “[...] resolute preserving of the national culture, with the logical effect that culturally deviating persons constitute a serious social problem (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 47)”.⁵⁷ To social conservative nationalism, Lundström and Lundström hold, the nation is determined of what is considered a historically distinctive feeling of national solidarity, and not of biology. This is the reason social conservatives can deprecate explanations from racial biology, and, at the same time, exercise a policy of harsh anti-immigration (Lundström & Lundström 2016, pp. 45-48).

Per-Erik Nilsson is a Professor in Sociology of Religion, and Director and Senior Researcher at the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies on Racism, Uppsala University, Sweden. His “‘Shame on the church of Sweden’: Radical nationalism and the appropriation of Christianity in contemporary Sweden” (Nilsson 2020) exhibits a detailed study of the Sweden Democrats. The party view on Christianity is best understood in relation to other populist radical nationalist parties in Europe, according to Nilsson. With these parties, Christianity has become “[...] a

⁵⁶ My translation of the original Swedish text: ”I båda fallen rör det sig om att åstadkomma och bevara enhet i samhället. Sverigedemokraternas syn på lutherdomen går ut på att kyrkan bör vara kulturupprätthållare. I partileden ser man den lutherska kyrkan som en nationalistisk symbol med en sammansvetsande effekt på folket. Man skulle kunna säga att den lutherska konfessionen hålls ”helig” just på grund av att den uppfattas vara en del av den nationella kulturen. Sverigedemokraternas kyrkosyn kan betecknas som nationalistiskt färgad folkreligiositet (Lipponen 2004, pp. 180-181)”.

⁵⁷ My translation of the original Swedish text: “[...] resolut bevarande av den nationella kulturen, med den logiska följderna att kulturavvikande personer utgör ett allvarligt samhällsproblem (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 47)”.

marker of universal identity to create the image of a homogenous and essentialist cultural origin to Europe and Europeans [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 2)". The increasing Christian motifs and themes can be understood, in Nilsson's view, in relation to the anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim discourses being normalized, not only among populist radical national parties, but throughout the whole political spectrum. In agreement with Lundström and Lundström (2016), holding the Sweden Democrats as a populist radical nationalist party with a social conservative and identitarian base, Nilsson additionally holds the Sweden Democrats "[...] a populist radical nationalist party working for the establishment of an ethnocratic liberal order (Nilsson 2020, p. 4)". To Nilsson, populism is "[...] an identificatory technique by which subjects seek to articulate a political and social identity articulated around a notion of the *people* [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 5)". Therefore,

The SD's populism is based on an exclusivist notion of the people which is coded by a culture and ethnicity. As such, the SD belongs to the ideological field of radical nationalism where articulated alterity is seen as essentially and universally incompatible with the people and its alleged natural nation (Nilsson 2020, p. 5)".

By ethnocratic liberalism Nilsson refers to "[...] the SD's exclusivist view on liberal democracy; i.e., deliberative democracy only applies to subjects belonging to the people [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 5)". To Nilsson, the Sweden Democrat view on Swedish Christianity and Swedish nation is as two inseparable entities, representing all-encompassing Western, and most particularly Swedish, norms and values. "The Church of Sweden is, or should be, the institution that maintains and cares for the Swedish 'value base' [*värdegrund*]. Exactly what this value basis is is never explicitly expressed (Nilsson 2020, p. 4)".

Nilsson's investigation on written material produced by the party shows that during the brief history of the Sweden Democrats, Christianity is increasingly given a more articulated and explicit role in the party's ideological text. Just like with other European populist radical right parties, for the Sweden Democrats, "[...] Christianity has become an emblematic category, around which fantasies of an ethnically and culturally homogenous nation are construed and are contrasted to the imagined national others [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 9)". Moreover, to Nilsson, for the Sweden Democrats, Christianity functions as an instrument to articulate the perceived problems from integration and national degeneration (Nilsson 2020, pp. 1-10).

Christianity thus becomes a way to distinguish the SD from its political foes that is included in its ethnic take on national identity (the establishment, the social democrats, the socialists, the LGBTQ community, and the news media), in which the SD appears as the guardian of true Christianity and as the future savior of a Church hijacked by these internal foes. Christianity functions as a way to demarcate an essentialist cultural, religious, and universal boundary between Christians and Muslims, where Christianity and Islam are seen as two incompatible entities: the former democratic and egalitarian, the latter despotic and intolerant (Nilsson 2020, pp. 9-10).

Nilsson refers to the conclusion of Roy (2016), and Roy's understanding that the European populist radical right parties' appropriation of Christianity is not about Christianity and that the parties are not Christian, as they emphasise Christian identity and not Christian faith (Nilsson 2020, pp. 10-11). Instead, Nilsson holds, "[...] Christianity should here be understood as an essentially empty category whose attribution of meaning is part of a meaning-making struggle. Hence, political actors struggle to make their understanding of Christianity the common one – they strive to hegemonize the category's meaning [...]" (Nilsson 2020, p. 10)". Nilsson concludes,

This analysis of the SD's ideological text shows that the ways in which the SD seeks to identify politically with Christianity are in line with the party's professed social, conservative, nationalist discourse. They believe in an organic relationship between Sweden and Christianity, developed in mutual symbiosis, which has led to the *real*, or supposed, Swedish value base. However, the positive content of what it means to be a Christian Swede in the eyes of the SD is void of meaning – except for the tautology that a real Swede is Christian because a real Christian is a Swede. This also is where the impossible identity of the SD reveals itself. It is only through a negative identification with Islam and the SD's so called trinity of cultural radicalism supported by the Church that the SD manages to articulate a hegemonic project. In this regard, the Church becomes a national micro-arena of the national political and social arena. They think that since the Church should be the safe-keeper of Swedish Christianity and not a safe haven for feminism, cultural Marxism, and multiculturalism, the Church is in need of purification from this unholy trinity. Curiously, then, this non-confessional political party has constructed a political project that encourages close ties between the state and the church, active domestic conversion, bringing back Christianity into the school curriculum, the re-installation of the Church as an agent of social welfare, and the Church acting as a national-ethical voice (Nilsson 2020, p. 10)".

For a long time, the Sweden Democrats did not have any Christian profile, and then, suddenly, they had one, Lodenius and Wingborg (2009) conclude. To the writers, Christianity is a political weapon. The core of the Sweden Democrat ideology is to defend the Swedish 'cultural inheritance' and the specific properties of the nation, Lodenius and Wingborg hold. Therefore, the party needs to specify what is typically Swedish. To the writers, defining and constructing Swedishness is a crucial ideological project of the Sweden Democrats. The Swedish Lutheran Church poses perfect solution to this project. The party members are encouraged to engage in the Church of Sweden as it is a part of the Swedish nation. The central theme of the party Church manifest is, to Lodenius and Wingborg, that the Church of Sweden should hold an exceptional position in the Swedish society, that the doctrine of the Church should be based on the bible, and that the Church has an important duty to strengthen the moral in society. Furthermore, the party consider the Church should be restored its role as state Church to prevent other religions from getting a hold in Sweden, and at the same time they opine the Church should exercise missionary work in other countries as well as in Sweden. Lodenius and Wingborg hold the Sweden Democrats' cornerstone is to defend the perceived Swedishness, and this is the reason for using Christianity so extensively. Furthermore, in the view of the writers, the party mainly uses Christianity to attack Islam. Christianity is used as an instrument for the perceived foundation of Swedish values, and presented as a canon for the Swedish society. However, the criticism of the Church of Sweden is harsh. The party displays increasing interest in Church policy and is simultaneously attacking the contemporary Church while romanticising the former Christianity in Sweden (Lodenius & Wingborg 2009, pp. 157-167).

Theoretical Points of Departure

Models of Interpretation

For the analysis of the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion, I have constructed some models of interpretation, in line with the presentation of hermeneutics under the heading 'Theory' above. The models consider four different aspects of the party's use of religion: as identity marker, as cultural purity, as neo-racism, and as political strategy.

These models are sprung from my research of the literature, which has inspired to further considerations. Out of the researcher's discoveries, propositions and conclusions, I have designed the models of interpretation with the intention to, metaphorically speaking, read between the lines and detect what lies beneath the surface of the tip of the iceberg, of the Sweden Democrat expressions on religion. I have used the writings of Lindberg (2011, pp. 152-154), Roy (2016, pp. 185-201) and Martinson (2017, pp. 43-46), to design the model on religion as identity marker; of Martinson (2017, pp. 43-46), Wettach (2006, pp. 211-213), Gardell (2015, pp. 364-371) and Lindberg (2011, p. 137) on religion as cultural purity; of Gardell (2015, pp. 364-371) on religion as neo-racism, and of Poletti Lundström (2017) on religion as political strategy. However, it is in this research material I have collected the fundamental information to my own design of the models; the models of interpretation are to be understood independently from the research material.

Religion as Identity Marker

When stressing the importance of the Swedish cultural and ideological heritage is a main theme in the language referring to religion, the Swedish Christianity becomes an explicit and obvious cultural marker. Furthermore, Christianity becomes a marker of Swedish identity as well as an important marker of the difference between what is Swedish and what is not Swedish, and between Swedish ethics, morals and values, and non-Swedish conceptions. With Christianity, the Swedish people, with its own identity and traditions, is distinguished from the elites of Sweden and from the non-Swede others. The Swedish identity and the Swedish values are threatened, and are best protected within the homogenous Swedish nation within the homogenous Swedish state. The religion marks the identity and enables to distinguish between

us and them. The Swedish identity is equated with Swedish Christianity; the Church of Sweden represents one of the main features for shaping this Swedish identity.

Religion as Cultural Purity

When the main concerns connected to religion is to protect the churchly identity markers, when the requirements of Sweden are essential, and when the Church is considered a main force behind the shaping of Swedish identity, the preservation of the Church and of the identity becomes an anxiety of cleanliness and devotion for purity. The attitude on, and need for, purity necessitate persistence and continuity; any modifications and changes that resemble inconstant tradition and culture challenge the purity and the identity. The Church must express Swedishness [*svenskhet*] to favour the Swedish identity. The Church is pure and attractive in its own value. The need for purity is revealed also in the idea of the unity of the people, and in the idea of the classification system of peoples. In this perspective, ethnicity too becomes important to be kept as pure as possible. Furthermore, the ethnicity, the territory and the political order need to be homogenised or unified, and the perceived constant threat of others can only be met within the territorial limits of the own political order.

Religion as Neo-Racism

The general Swedish focus on values, principles, and individual attitudes in relation to the causes of racial discrimination is strong. This focal point, together with a common comprehension that there must be any notion of, and reference to, biological races for there being true racism, have led to the opinion that any promotion for Swedishness and the perceived uniqueness and moral superiority of Swedes cannot be in any way racist. However, referring to culture and religion, instead of biology, do not automatically equate to any non-racism. In hereditary reasoning, culture, ethnicity, and religion coin the being of the people of an ethnicity, of a culture and of a religion. Especially when these different hereditary essences, and the different peoples, are ranked on a scale from valuable to useless, with status, privileges and opportunities allocated differentially and with inequality. Furthermore, the idea of hereditary essences is incorporated easily in the idea of the people, by assigning an entity – like an ethnicity, a culture or a religion – to the actual essence of the people, as a bearer of the conceptualized fellowship of the nation. This idea, in collaboration with the idea of correspondence between the borders of a people and the borders of a nation, become an

instrument to sort out the people who do not belong within the national borders. The notion of mono-culturalism means that the righteous society rests on assimilation in terms of culture, ethnicity, and religion, but not of race. This new form of racism is expressed in a new form of terminology. Here, the Swedish ethnicity, the Swedish culture and the Swedish religion is paramount to the ethnicity, culture, and religion of the non-Swedish.

Religion as Political Strategy

Even if the church policy is not of tactical reasons alone, there are nevertheless tactical and ideological reasons for nationalist involvement in the Church and in churches. The self-acclaimed social conservative stance of belief and tradition is a campaign to get the nationalist message across. This campaigning is most evident in the efforts to get electoral representation in the Church. The European, Nordic, and Swedish radical nationalists are engaged in ideological and tactical cooperation, with the ideological interest of a mono-cultural Christian Europe, and in Sweden the radical nationalists centre on the foremost power of Christianity, which is the Church.

Analysis

Interpretation of Expressions

Out of the models of interpretation, let us examine some quotations from the Sweden Democrats, which, according to my investigation, express typical Sweden Democrat views of the relationship between Christianity and Church, on the one hand, and the Swedish nation and the ideology of nationalism, on the other.

The Swedish Christian Cultural Heritage

The first quotation is from two, in parts identical, political motions by the party to the Swedish Parliament, both titled ‘Museum of Church History’ [*Kyrkohistoriskt museum*]:

Few other ideas and institutions have been as important to the shaping of Swedish culture as Christianity and the Church of Sweden. The Swedish language, art, literature, philosophy, morals, traditions, architecture, handicraft, music etcetera are all examples of areas that have been and are tinged strongly by our Christian heritage. [...] Knowing and understanding the Swedish Christian cultural heritage is an important key to understand our country's history, culture and future (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:348, 2018/19:651)⁵⁸.

Identity Marker

If we look at the quotation with the perspective of religion as an identity marker for the Sweden Democrats, this perception of Swedish culture is held as the most essential element in the Swedish identity. The Swedish culture, then, is the very identity of the Swedish people, and this culture and this identity originate from the Swedish Christianity and the Swedish Church. Thus, the Christian heritage has shaped, affected, and effected the Swedish artistic and cultural expressions, and this heritage is the foundation for the Swedish values, distinguishing the Swedish people and the Swedish nation from other peoples and nations. As a result, to

⁵⁸ My translation of the original Swedish text: ”Kristendomen och Svenska kyrkan har haft en mer djupgående inverkan på vår kultur än någon annan idé och institution. Konst, filosofi, moral, traditioner, arkitektur, hantverk, musik med mera är alla exempel på områden som varit och är starkt färgade av vårt kristna arv [...] Att känna till och förstå det svenska kristna kulturarvet är således en viktig nyckel för att förstå vårt lands historia, kultur och framtid (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:348, 2018/19:651)”.

understand Swedish culture, Swedish past and Swedish future, everyone must know and understand the Swedish Christian cultural heritage.

However, the formulation ‘few other ideas and institutions’ raises questions. To the Sweden Democrats, there are ‘*few* other’ – and not ‘*no* other’ – ideas and institutions than the Swedish Christianity and the Swedish Church shaping the Swedish culture. Obviously, there are other ideas and institutions considered, apart from the Swedish Lutheran confession and the Church of Sweden, in the forming of Swedish values. Furthermore, there is no indication to which these other ideas and institutions are. The fact they are not mentioned, in neither the quotation nor elsewhere in the party’s expressions on the subject matter, leaves us to speculate.

One explanation is, the party considers other ideas and institutions either less important, equally important, or more important than Christianity and Church, but they do not wish to express them publicly. Here, then, ‘few other’ signal something implicitly known and internally agreed, only for the initiated, for any outsiders to become aware of, or not. Another explanation is the Sweden Democrats choose ‘few other’ as they cannot say which these alleged ideas and institutions are, because they cannot single them out as typical Swedish. If this is the case, the party must construct and emphasise the identity markers of Christianity and Church, and imply there are more ideas and institutions than these religious identity markers – and which they, in contrast, identify and express as very typical Swedish – behind the Swedish culture and the Swedish identity.

Cultural Purity

If we consider religion as cultural purity, the quotation demonstrates the identity markers of Christianity and Church are crucial to the Sweden Democrats. However, the Swedish Lutheran confession and the internal matters of the Church of Sweden become secondary to the interests of the Swedish nation. Thus, any true Swedish Christianity is a culturally pure Christianity, that is, a container of the pure exceptional Swedish features, clearly distinguishable from other cultures, religions, and nations. Because the perceived true heritage is considered a pure Swedish heritage, it needs to be preserved as such; there must be persistence and continuity. Therefore, the Swedish Christianity and the Church of Sweden must express Swedishness to favour the Swedish identity. The purity of the Swedish Church should reflect the ethnically pure Swedish people, the pure Swedish values, and the pure Swedish society within the pure Swedish country.

Additionally, the ‘examples of areas’ that have been ‘tinged’ by ‘our Christian heritage’ are interesting examples, obviously of main consideration to the Sweden Democrats. The category of ‘language’, of course, is important to the party, as to all nationalist parties. ‘Art’, ‘literature’, ‘architecture’, ‘handicraft’ and ‘music’ seem to be the most important artistic cultural expressions, but the reason for this remains unarticulated. Swedish ‘philosophy’, ‘morals’ and ‘traditions’ are designations frequently used by the party, also elsewhere, but remain unexplained. Typically, in Sweden Democrat rhetoric, ‘morals’ and ‘traditions’ are referring to experienced unique, clean and pure ‘Swedish values’ or an exceptional clean and pure ‘Swedish value system’. Though, writing ‘etcetera’ suggests even more implicit party understanding of ‘examples of areas’ being ‘tinged’ by ‘our Christian heritage’. Furthermore, to the Sweden Democrats, the ‘areas’ have been ‘tinged’ only; indeed ‘tinged *strongly*’, but, nevertheless tinged, neither ‘imbued absolutely’ nor ‘dominated entirely’, by ‘our Christian heritage’. There is undoubtedly a strong tinge perceived, but the heritage of Christianity is not all there is to the pure Swedish nation. On the other hand, as I suggested above, if there really is nothing but the Christianity that can be singled out, the construction of clean and pure Swedish culture needs anything typical Swedish, which would explain the intense elaboration on the element at hand, that is Swedish Christianity and Swedish Church, and the implications, that is ‘etcetera’, that there is more.

Neo-Racism

From the perspective of religion as neo-racism, the concept of culture becomes differently value-laden in the quotation. Here, the focus on heritage is most evident. However, the Sweden Democrats do not speak of biological inheritance; the inheritance is Christian and Churchly. The Swedish Christianity and the Swedish Church have formed the explicit Swedish culture with extraordinary Swedish values. The inheritance is Swedishness.

Moreover, in the party opinion, this true ‘knowing and understanding the Swedish Christian cultural heritage’ is not possible for everyone. Here, the only people who can really know and truly understand this Christian cultural ancestry is the Swedish people of the heritable essence of Swedishness. The reference to ‘our country’ refers not to those who live in the nation-state of Sweden, but to those who belong to the Swedish nation. Here, the signal of something implicitly known and internally agreed can fit, in the experienced ‘few other ideas and

institutions', as mentioned above, shaping the Swedish culture. One such idea can be the expressed view of cultural and religious differences between different societies and peoples, with the additional claim of different rights and different obligations to different categories of culture, in a hierarchical system. The hierarchy, then, raises important questions on the categories. We do not know what each category represents. It can be the different values that are ordered hierarchically, but it can also be the worth of the people holding certain values that is sorted and evaluated, and ascribed different positions in the hierarchy, and it can be both the values and the people. In either way, to stick to culture and religion when referring to inheritance means, to the Sweden Democrats, any accusations of racism can be both internally accepted and publicly denied, without any controversy.

Political Strategy

If we look at the quotation from the perspective of religion as political strategy, the Sweden Democrats act in line with other contemporary radical nationalists. The party focuses on Christianity to promote their ideology of nationalism. The talk of the heritage of the Swedish Christianity and the Church of Sweden as the shaping entities of the Swedish culture, of the Swedish cultural expressions and of the Swedish values, become political rhetoric and tactics, with the aim to influence the churchly and secular political bodies of Sweden, to promote the idea of radical nationalism. The right knowledge and the correct understanding of Swedish Christian cultural heritage is equated with social conservative interpretation and culture nationalist deduction as the main deciphering keys to the culture, as well as to the past and the future, of Sweden.

Further, in this understanding, 'the Swedish Christian cultural heritage' becomes void of meaning. Instead, 'our country's history, culture and future' provide meaning and explanation. The Western radical nationalist parties of today are on an ideological crusade for their respective national nationalisms, and the international cooperation between self-acclaimed nationalist parties with a common interest in promoting Christianity (and in combatting Islam) is increasing. In contemporary Sweden, any perceived Swedish Christianity provides the Sweden Democrats with the perfect political instrument for national and international mobilisation for the ideology of nationalism. However, there is nothing suggesting Christianity has any intrinsic value to the party, and it is the same with religion at large. In fact, there are signals Christianity is not regarded as especially important. The expressions on Swedish

religion are sympathetic, emphasised and many, but they are secondary, at best, to the nation as a political project. From the perspective of religion as political strategy there are reasons to doubt the sincerity in the benevolence towards Christianity and Church as religious phenomena. For example, let me illustrate the party's secular position with two brief additional quotations: "Belief is and should be a private matter between the individual and his or her god or gods (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:521)".⁵⁹ "[There are] citizen rights to freedom from religious expressions and religious propaganda in public spaces [...] (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:521)".⁶⁰

Furthermore, it is unclear what it takes to truly understand 'our country's history, culture and future'; what kind of education, involvement and frequency that is required for this true understanding. There is nothing suggesting any party members or party voters know and understand 'the Swedish Christian cultural heritage' better than Swedes in general. There is neither anything suggesting Sweden Democrats are less secular than others, not anything showing they attend church services in the Church of Sweden more frequently than people of other political affiliations, and not anything saying they are less privately religious than other Swedes.

The Recreation of Swedish Values

The second quotation is from two Sweden Democrat political motions to the Synod, titled 'The Christian Identity of the Church of Sweden' [*Svenska kyrkans kristna identitet*]:

During the last decades, the Swedish society has gone through a profound transformation with few parallels in history. Traditions, communities, norms and moralities have been challenged and disintegrated, and become increasingly fluid and inconstant. The Sweden Democrats want to arrest this negative trend. We want to recreate a Church that again emphasises values like belief, tradition, security and continuity, and that can constitute a fixed point in an increasingly shallow and insecure world (Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2015:30, 2014:68).⁶¹

⁵⁹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Trosuppfattning är och ska vara en privatsak mellan den enskilde och dennes gud eller gudar (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:521)".

⁶⁰ My translation of the original Swedish text: "[...] medborgares rätt till frihet från religiösa uttryck och religiös propaganda i det offentliga rummet [...] (Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:521)".

⁶¹ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Det svenska samhället har under de senaste decennierna genomgått en djupgående omvandling med få motstycken i historien. Traditioner, gemenskaper, normer och moral har utmanats och luckrats upp och blivit alltmer flytande och föränderliga. Sverigedemokraterna vill bryta denna negativa utveckling. Vi vill återskapa en kyrka som åter betonar värden som tro, tradition, trygghet och kontinuitet

Identity Marker

To the Sweden Democrats, the perceived ‘profound transformation with few parallels in history’ is traumatic. Allegedly, ‘the Swedish society’ is as well in genuine shock. The perception that all ‘traditions, communities, norms and moralities have been challenged and disintegrated’ affect the experienced identity. Here, the Swedish identity is threatened by a contemporary world perceived as ‘increasingly fluid and inconstant’. To the party, any change means a change for the worse, and therefore the Sweden Democrats want to ‘arrest this negative trend’ of fluidity and lack of uniformity. This task will be accomplished with the effort to ‘recreate a Church that again emphasises values’ of certain and specified kinds. The values of ‘belief, tradition, security and continuity’ are at the heart of the matter, however, the meaning of these frequently mentioned values of the Sweden Democrats is not problematized or discussed. Additionally, the party holds, the Church should ‘constitute a fixed point in an increasingly shallow and insecure world’. If the Church is true in its Christian identity, in the view of the Sweden Democrats, in the way the Church once was, in the opinion of the party, the Swedish people will be guaranteed its Swedish identity.

Cultural Purity

The experienced exceptional Swedish ‘traditions, communities, norms and moralities’ stand for exceptional and pure Swedish culture, not influenced by any alien customs, communions, standards or morals. As the Swedish culture is becoming contaminated by foreign culture, the Church must be true to its genuine values. Like the Swedish society, the Swedish Church has become polluted by cultural and religious unfamiliar influences, and therefore the Church must be restored, so that the Church ‘again emphasises values’ believed to be pure Swedish values from a pure era in Swedish history. The ‘traditions, communities, norms and moralities’ that have been defiled will be purified by the Swedish cleansing values of ‘belief, tradition, security and continuity’. However, these values are not further explained or motivated. Furthermore, the quote states that the values are rather examples of Swedish values, and not the actual Swedish values per se. The quote reads ‘values *like*’ the values mentioned, and not ‘*the* values *of*’ those

och som kan utgöra en fast punkt i en alltmer yttlig och osäker värld (Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2015: 30, 2014:68)”.

explicitly expressed. Apparently, there are more values expressing Swedish identity and Swedish purity, however, these values remain untold. What is visibly implied, in contrast, is that the Church must embody its Christian identity, and constitute a rigid symbol of stability and security, for the possibility of any pure Swedish nation.

Neo-Racism

The experienced cause of the ‘profound transformation with few parallels in history’ that ‘the Swedish society has gone through’ is immigration. In the party view, immigration challenges and disintegrates the Swedish ‘traditions, communities, norms and moralities’. To the party, any foreign influence on Swedish culture and Swedish Christianity constitutes a threat to the perceived Swedishness. Here, the Swedish culture and the Swedish Christianity must be protected from any exotic and lesser developed culture and oppressive outlandish politicised belief. The solution, to the Sweden Democrats, is to prohibit any non-European migration to Sweden, to assimilate the non-Nordic population, and to expel those who do not conform to cultural assimilation. The Sweden Democrats fear the thought of any influence from any experienced novelties that might breach the perception of typical Swedish tradition. Simultaneously, the party insists on assimilation and adaptation to Swedishness, for perceived alien members of foreign nations. The experienced horror of multiculturalism is the most obvious type of fear. Security from the dangerous other can only be met by the homogenous Swedish culture of the homogenous Swedish nation within the protected Swedish borders, for the sake of the genuine Swedish people.

Political Strategy

To the party, the Church carries solutions to political matters of the society. The Sweden Democrats want the Church of Sweden to help solve the experienced societal problems of the country of Sweden. Any emphasising of ‘values like belief, tradition, security and continuity’ of the Church will result in the anticipated termination of the ‘profound transformation’ of the contemporary Swedish society, as well as the salvation for the ‘challenged and disintegrated’ Swedish values. Here, the Swedish Church constitutes a political ‘fixed point in an increasingly shallow and insecure world’; a political national symbol to rally around, to restore the Swedish nation to its former glory.

The Hereditary Essence of the People

The third quotation is from the Sweden Democrat party program, under the heading ‘The Sweden Democrats and the Human Being’ [*Sverigedemokraterna och människan*]:

There is also a hereditary essence within every human being [...] Parts of this essence are common for most people, while other are unique for some groups of people or for the individual. [...] most people are social and communal beings with an ancestral need of belonging to a larger fellowship, most people identify themselves primarily with other individuals who resemble themselves and most people show solidarity and empathy more easily with individuals they experience being of the same fellowship as themselves. Our conclusion from this is that a favourable effect on the unity, security and stability within a society requires a pronounced national identity and a minimum of linguistic, cultural and religious disparities (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 8).⁶²

Identity Marker

To the Sweden Democrats, the source of the identity of every person lies in an essence inherited in everyone. According to the official party line, some parts of this essence are universal and ‘common for most people, while other are unique for some groups of people or for the individual’. Identification, for ‘most people’, according to the party, are ‘primarily with other individuals who resemble themselves’, and ‘most people show solidarity and empathy more easily with individuals they experience being of the same fellowship as themselves’. Thus, in this reasoning, the ‘pronounced national identity’ is a prerequisite for ‘the unity, security and stability within’ the Swedish society. Furthermore, the ‘minimum of linguistic, cultural and religious disparities’ will manifest and assure the Swedish Christian identity.

⁶² My translation of the original Swedish text: ”Det finns också en nedärvd essens hos varje människa [...] Delar av denna essens är gemensam för de flesta människor och annat är unikt för vissa grupper av människor eller för den enskilde individen. [...] de flesta människor är sociala och kollektiva varelser som har ett nedärvt behov av att tillhöra en större gemenskap, att de flesta människor primärt identifierar sig med andra individer som påminner om en själv och att de flesta människor har lättare att visa solidaritet och empati med individer som man upplever är en del av samma gemenskap som man själv tillhör. Av detta drar vi slutsatsen att en stark nationell identitet och ett minimum av språkliga, kulturella och religiösa skillnader har en gynnsam effekt på sammanhållningen, tryggheten och stabiliteten inom ett samhälle (Sverigedemokraterna 2014, p. 8)”.

Cultural Purity

A main defining aspect of a certain people is its specific common hereditary essence, and 'groups of people' as well as 'the individual' identify and sympathise with those 'who resemble themselves' and that 'they experience being of the same fellowship as themselves', in the Sweden Democrat point of view. From a purity perspective, what the expression 'pronounced national identity' along the words of 'a minimum of linguistic, cultural and religious disparities' say, is that everyone should remain with their own people, and that the different peoples should not mix and coexist within the same physical space and nationally defined place. The cultural and religious purity will be upheld and guaranteed by the 'minimum' of 'disparities' the strict and clean separation of peoples of specified nations will bring. The party leaves no explanation on any assessment of any acceptable lowest possible degree of differences, or on any conceivable models of measurement for this diverseness.

Neo-Racism

'There is also a hereditary essence within every human being [...] Parts of this essence are common for most people, while other are unique for some groups of people or for the individual', the Sweden Democrats hold. This position echoes modifications of theories from Colonialism and Imperialism. Alternatively, the position might be a modern intentionally newly constructed transcription of a similar train of thought on inherited attributes. In any case, the focal point is on 'a minimum of linguistic, cultural and religious disparities' as the best instruments for 'a favourable effect on the unity, security and stability within a society'.

Political Strategy

The policy of 'a pronounced national identity' along 'a minimum of linguistic, cultural and religious disparities' is required, in the party opinion, to have 'a favourable effect on the unity, security and stability within a society'. Here, the ideology of nationalism is most evident. For the Swedish nationalists of the Sweden Democrats, the 'ancestral need for belonging to a larger fellowship' is met with the Swedish language within the Swedish culture and the Swedish religion, and here, any perceived ethnic, cultural or religious manifestation become the political tools for the promotion of the Swedish nationalism.

The Great Importance for the Swedish Culture

The fourth quotation is from a Sweden Democrat political motion to the Swedish Parliament, titled 'Vigorous Action against Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism' [*Krafttag mot radikalism, extremism och terrorism*].

The Church and Christianity have for nearly a thousand years had great importance for the Swedish culture. To deny the Church and its historical significance for Sweden is to deny a major part of our culture. For this reason, the Church has an exceptional position. The Muslim call for prayer does not have the same status neither historical nor cultural but is a relatively new phenomenon in Sweden. A widespread opinion is that forced religious propaganda in a language one cannot understand is an unpleasant and disturbing element in the cityscape. Therefore, no permits for Muslim call for prayer should be granted (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:555).⁶³

Identity Marker

The experienced foreign threat of Islam is perceived, not as the diverse, heterogenous and multicultural phenomenon with different theological interpretations of multiple religious traditions, that it actually is, but as a single, homogenous, monocultural and unified, religiously-culturally motivated, strategic political attack on European and Swedish culture and identity. Here, the domestic national identity is Christian, and Christian it must remain, because the 'Church and Christianity have for nearly a thousand years had great importance for the Swedish culture'. However, to the Sweden Democrats, Christianity needs to be both protected and expanded, which are opinions evident in the emphasis on Christian culture and on Christian identity, and the fact that the party, despite holding itself secular, argues for missionary work by the Church of Sweden.

⁶³ My translation of the original Swedish text: "Kyrkan och kristendomen har under närmare tusen år haft stor betydelse för den svenska kulturen. Att förneka kyrkan och dess historiska betydelse för Sverige är att förneka en stor del av vår kultur. Kyrkan och kristendomen har en särställning av denna anledning. Det muslimska böneutropet har inte samma ställning varken historiskt eller kulturellt utan är ett relativt nytt fenomen i Sverige. En utbredd uppfattning är att påtvingad religiös propaganda på ett språk man inte förstår är ett oönskat och störande inslag i stadsbilden. Det bör därför inte beviljas några tillstånd för muslimska böneutrop (Sveriges riksdag. Motion 2019/20:555)".

Cultural Purity

The ‘relatively new phenomenon in Sweden’ of Islam is compared to the ‘nearly a thousand years’ of ‘Church and Christianity’ as ‘a major part of our culture’. The impure novelty of the foreign culture and exotic religion is contrasted to the pure Swedish culture and clean Swedish Christianity. In this interpretation and understanding of culture and religion, in relation to the nation and to the nation-state, any experienced non-Christian, or non-Swedish, cultural or religious expression, at all, will possess ‘an unpleasant and disturbing element in the cityscape’.

Neo-Racism

The ‘Muslim call for prayer does not have the same status’ as the ‘Church and Christianity have’, in the view of the secular Sweden Democrats. The ‘great importance for the Swedish culture’ is Christian. History and culture are significant for the status of Swedishness, and thus to the entitlement of the Swedishness as well as to the degree of this Swedishness. There is different status ascribed to different types of cultural and religious expressions and symbols. Cultural manifestations and religious symbolism can be allowed, but only if they are the right kind of manifestations and symbolism. That is, if it is Christian, it can be allowed, if it is non-Christian it must be banned. Here, Christian means Swedish, and non-Christian means non-Swedish. Thus, reversely, Swedish means Christian, and non-Swedish means non-Christian. Because ‘the Church has an exceptional position’ and represent ‘a major part of our culture’, the Swedish Christianity is superior in relation to every other kind of religious confession, and should be treated as unequal and exceptional to the other confessions, within the Swedish nation-state.

Political Strategy

One could be tempted to question the logic in being exposed to ‘forced religious propaganda in a language one cannot understand’, but let us treat this expression as a dangling modifier. However, the designation of ‘propaganda’, sends rhetoric signals, loud and clear. Furthermore, the implications of ‘to deny the Church and its historical significance for Sweden is to deny a major part of our culture’ insinuate there is any substantial denial of this assertion. In the Sweden Democrat vocabulary, there is a general frequent use of the word ‘our’ when it comes to culture and nation, underlining the us versus them dichotomy. The political strategy is evident

in the contrasting of the ‘propaganda’ of the foreign people of that strange politicised dangerous religion, to the Churchly sanctioned ‘our culture’ of the good Swedish people.

Interpretation Summary

A summary of my interpretations of the Sweden Democrat perceptions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity and the Church of Sweden, in relation to the Swedish nation, this far exhibits the following answers to the research questions.

Religion as Identity Marker

In which ways do the Sweden Democrats’ talk on religion function as an identity marker?

- Christianity and Church are used to identify culture.
- Christianity is used as the determinant between good and bad peoples.
- Christianity is used as the determinant between right and wrong values.

Religion as Cultural Purity

In which ways is it possible to distinguish an aspiration for cultural purity in the Sweden Democrats’ talk on religion?

- Christian values are used as dividing criteria between clean and unclean peoples.
- The degeneration of the Church mirrors the degeneration of the society.
- Christian homogeneity will guarantee security.

Religion as Neo-Racism

In which ways is it possible to distinguish neo-racism in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion?

- Religion and culture sorts different peoples into different categories in the hierarchical view of humanity.
- Religion and culture are used to identify which peoples to blame for the current agonising situation.
- The Swedish people is superior to the non-Swedish people, because of superior religion and culture.

Religion as Political Strategy

In which ways can the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion be regarded as political strategy?

- Christianity is used to promote anti-democratic positions.
- Christianity is used to legitimize coercion and force.

Discussion

Further Investigation

To understand more of the Sweden Democrat expressions and positions, let us investigate and discuss the interpretations, in comparison to previous research, to see how we can reach the most probable explanations and obtain further knowledge. The discussion presents the differences and correspondences between the findings of previous studies and the findings of this study.

The Exclusive People and its Rightful Place

Poletti Lundström (2017) demonstrates the Sweden Democrat position in a European context, where European radical nationalists are focusing on the European churches as European traditional cultural inheritance, and he further demonstrates how the Sweden Democrats, in this international nationalist collaboration for a mono-cultural Christian Europe, has its focus on the Church of Sweden, and consider it as a source for the Swedish cultural inheritance. Furthermore, the Swedish response to migration is in line with other European political responses, as Rowlands (2018, pp. 163-165) holds, exhibiting negative biases towards migrants. In a Swedish context, Lundström & Lundström (2016, pp. 39-45) show, the Sweden Democrats act in line with other radical nationalist political parties over the years, promoting the idea of an ethnically homogeneous feeling of national solidarity, and, as we have seen, attempting to “[...] link a hereditary feeling of national solidarity to a geographical place (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 42)”.

Roy (2016, pp. 185-201) holds, the more secular the political scene in Europe becomes, the more vocal the calls to reclaim the Christian roots of Europe become. In contrast, especially now, after studying the subject matter rigorously, I find this position completely wrong. To my knowledge, it is the other way around. The more religion is involved in politics, the more vocal the claims for Christianity, and reclaims of Christian roots, become. Furthermore, I find, Roy treats populism as an ideology, and Marzouki and McDonnel explicitly say, “[...] like all ideologies [...] (Marzouki and McDonnel 2016, p. 3)”, about populism. I must disagree with this assertion. To me, populism is a method, an instrument, a tool, *for* your ideology, and not

an ideology itself. A party of interest can exercise populism, and a party can be populist, in the interpretation of the political situation and in the promotion of the policies of its actual ideology; the exercised populism is not the political idea, it is a model for political analysis and a way to reach the political goals. I further agree with Nilsson on his position of populism with radical nationalists, as “an identificatory technique [...] to articulate a political and social identity articulated around the notion of the *people* [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 5)”.

Nevertheless, as Roy points out, for radical right populists, “[...] religion matters foremost as a marker of identity, enabling them to distinguish between the good ‘us’ and the bad ‘them’ (Roy 2016, p. 186)”. Additionally, Marzouki and McDonnel (2016, pp. 4-5) highlight the relationship between the experienced people and its experienced rightful place, and the necessity for the people to be homogenous and virtuous. Furthermore, to Marzouki and McDonnel, radical right populists defend religious identities and symbols, to preserve and restore the native identity, under threat from the elites and the other, and further perform a battle to keep familiar religious symbols in public places and to defend the public spaces from alien religions, thus creating a clear distinction between the native people and the other.

The Breach of Normalcy

Nilsson concludes, the exclusivist notion of the people, coded by culture and ethnicity, means, to the radical nationalism of the Sweden Democrats, that any changes are “[...] incompatible with the people and its alleged natural nation (Nilsson 2020, p. 5)”. As we have seen Lundström and Lundström show, the Sweden Democrat response to any change must be the “[...] resolute preserving of the national culture [...] (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 47)”, with the effect that what is appearing cultural deviant will be regarded as “[...] a serious social problem [...] (Lundström & Lundström 2016, p. 47)”. According to Lodenius and Wingborg (2009, pp. 157-167), every uncommon cultural trait means a threat to Swedish culture, in the view of the Sweden Democrats. Furthermore, Lodenius and Wingborg hold, the core of the Sweden Democrat ideology is to defend the Swedish cultural inheritance and the specific properties of the nation.

Naturally, to a radical nationalist conservative party, careful reforms for the society are preferred, but the main concerns are protection and preservation. Thus, as my study indicates, it becomes obvious, with the words of Lundström and Lundström, that the serious social problem, to the Sweden Democrats, is everything and everyone that is not of the Swedish values

and not of the Swedish nation. Everything that is not pure Swedish culture constitutes a problem to the Swedish society automatically. I suggest the concept of fear should be added to the comprehension of the breach of the experienced normalcy of Swedishness. The party is scared that the outside world might affect the Swedish nation, and disturb the sentiment of an ideal society. The Sweden Democrats are terrified of being forced to question their firmly elaborated perceptions of their identity.

I find support, for my suggestion that fear is a neglected and important aspect of the politics of the Sweden Democrats, in the psychological research presented in the article “Fear Among the Extremes: How Political Ideology Predicts Negative Emotions and Outgroup Derogation” (van Prooijen et al. 2015). The research, performed by the Associate Professor at the Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology at University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Jan-Willem van Prooijen, and his colleagues André P. M. Krouwel, Max Boiten, and Lennart Eendebak, examines socio-economic fear, i.e. the well-being of oneself or of the collective one is a part of, as the conceptualization of fear of current political and economic developments matches the notions of threats to the stability of the social system, often related to right-wing political orientation.

One of the dominant theoretical perspectives in the psychology of political ideology is the “rigidity of the right” hypothesis [...] The core insight that this theoretical framework offers is that feelings of uncertainty and fear are associated with politically conservative beliefs. This theoretical framework more specifically explains conservatism as a form of “motivated social cognition,” meaning that politically right-wing attitudes are grounded in feelings of fear and uncertainty, resulting in conservative attitudes such as resistance to changing the status quo, and a desire for societal order and structure. Such a desire for order and structure may lead people to justify inequalities between various social categories. Empirical studies support these assertions (van Prooijen et al. 2015, pp. 485-486).

The study shows, there are more uncertainty and fear among the political extremes, of both the left and the right, than of political moderates, and that there is also more outgroup derogation with the extremes. The political right, though, differs from the extreme left and from political moderates, in that the political right experiences uncertainty and fear stronger. Additionally, van Prooijen and his colleagues find, the political right is more dogmatic, less tolerant of ambiguity, and experiences more system instability. Furthermore, the right-wing conservatism associates to personality traits, like authoritarianism and social dominance, linked to negative

attitudes towards outgroups; and there is a higher degree of derogation of societal minority groups, such as immigrants and ethnic minorities, with the political right than with its political counterparts (van Prooijen et al. 2015, pp. 485-495).

Various complementary lines of research underscore that uncertainty and fear are closely related with political extremism. One key insight comes from research on compensatory conviction, which indicates that feelings of uncertainty and fear paradoxically are associated with increased ideological certainty (van Prooijen et al. 2015, p. 487).

Identity and Identification

To defend Swedish cultural inheritance and the specific properties of the nation, according to Lodenius and Wingborg (2009, pp. 157-167), the Sweden Democrats need to specify what is typically Swedish, and thus, the operation of defining and constructing Swedishness becomes a crucial ideological project to the party. According to Lodenius and Wingborg, the Church of Sweden poses a perfect solution to this project. Here, the Swedish Christianity is a political weapon and a tool to defend the Swedishness, and to attack the non-Swedishness. Furthermore, the Swedish Christianity is used as an instrument for the foundation of Swedish values. As Hobsbawm (1990, p. 90) concludes, religion is an old and proven instrument for constructing unity and community between people with not much else in common. Lindberg (2011, pp. 152-154) exhibits, the main function of Christianity, to the Sweden Democrats, is to stress the Swedish cultural and ideological heritage. With Christianity, Lindberg proves, the party presents Christian ethics as something of central importance to the Swedish society, and as an important cultural marker for Swedish identity as well as a marker of the difference between the Swedish and the other.

Moreover, my study shows, the Sweden Democrat talk of identity is about identification as much as identity-making. It is crucial, to the party, to identify who is Swedish and who is not. In the same way the party must construct the Swedish nation, it must construct the Swedish identity. The radical nationalist construction of the Swedish nation and of the Swedishness necessitate factors for identification, and factors for comparison. Here, Swedishness becomes the determining factor for the belonging to the Swedish nation, and the designation of the Swedish identity, as well as of the Swedish identification element. Christian is the same as European and Nordic, and Lutheran Christian is the same as Swedish. The Church of Sweden

marks and identifies the Swedish culture. Additionally, Christianity and Church also mark and identify the other; those who do not belong to Christianity, to the Swedish Christianity and to the Swedish Church. The people of non-Christianity are furthest from Swedishness. There are also Christianity of many sorts and different qualities, some more distant than others from Swedishness. Furthermore, there is Swedish Christianity and there is *true* Swedish Christianity. The true Swedish Christianity, to the Sweden Democrats, can only be the Christianity that promotes the Swedish identity and the Swedishness of the people; the true Swedish Christianity for the true Swedish people of the true Swedish culture and the true Swedish nation in the secured Swedish nation-state. The false Swedish Christianity is the propaganda of the corrupted and corrupting traitorous elites – the politically correct culture worker elite, the society elite, the news media elite, the political elite, and the Church of Sweden elite – for their promotion of multiculturalism and for their deliberate liberal and/or socialist attacks on Swedishness. The marker of identity, in Roy's words, is notably evident in this perspective, and so is the description, by Marzouki and McDonnel, of the necessity for the people to be homogenous and virtuous in relation to its experienced rightful place. With Swedish Christianity and Swedishness, the Sweden Democrats can construct an identity, and are additionally able to single out both true Swedishness and false Swedishness as well as non-Swedishness. Christianity simultaneously provides an opportunity and a model, for categorization, evaluation, gradation, and designation of Swedishness. Christianity defines the people as well as the non-people.

Cultural Inheritance

The Swedish people is pure people and the Swedish culture is clean culture. The pursuit for cultural purity is a mission for upholding the status, sovereignty, and exclusiveness of the pure Swedish people. The fear of any breach of completely clean Swedishness is visibly expressed in the perception of the defiling of the Church of Sweden. To the Sweden Democrats, the Church must return to its pristine state of pure doctrine and pure values, as it, allegedly, once was, before the defiling from novel influences and modern interpretations, from strange customs and multiculturalism. To the party, the decline of the Church reflects the decline of the community, visible in the fact, as Poletti Lundström (2017) observes, that the Sweden Democrat ideologists connect a comprehended degenerated Church to a comprehended degenerated society. In this perception, only Christian homogeneity can guarantee the security for the

Swedish people and the Swedish nation. The Swedish people is the most culturally pure people, and the dividing criteria between pure and impure peoples are the Swedish Christian values.

In Mary Douglas' famous *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (Douglas 1966), the anthropologist puts forward her, at the time ground-breaking, conclusions on purity. In academia, her thoughts on the subject matter resonate still. Though, more than half a century after the book's first publication, I find myself struggling to cope with the echoes of Evolutionism in Douglas' defence of the use of the designation 'primitive' when she compares other peoples, religions, and cultures to the perceived 'civilized' peoples, religions, and cultures of the Western world (Douglas 1966, pp. 91-116). However, Douglas has some important points on purity, regardless of any designation of any people or culture or religion, which are highly applicable to the perceptions of cultural purity with the Sweden Democrats.

"As we know it, dirt is essentially disorder (Douglas 1966, p. 2)", Douglas holds. "Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment (Douglas 1966, p. 2)". Dirt-avoidance is, according to Douglas, an attempt to relate form to function, and to make unity of experience, rather than anything unreasoning or fearful. To her, in a society, pollution ideas work at two levels, one instrumental, the other expressive. The first level is where people try to influence one another's behaviour, where beliefs reinforce social pressures. At the other level, "[...] the ideal order of society is guarded by dangers which threatens transgressors. These danger-beliefs are as much threats which one man uses to coerce another as dangers which he himself fears to incur by his own lapses from righteousness (Douglas 1966, p. 3)". Furthermore, Douglas holds, "[...] some pollutions are used as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order (Douglas 1966, p. 4)". To her, ideas on purity is about "[...] to impose system on an inherently untidy experience (Douglas 1966, p. 4)", which can only be done by exaggerating differences. In the view of Douglas, the recognition of anomaly first leads to anxiety, and then to suppression or avoidance (Douglas 1966, pp. 1-220).

To Douglas, dirt is matter out of place. Thus, to her, it implies the two conditions of "[...] a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. [...] Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. (Douglas 1966, p. 44)". It is here, to Douglas, the

field of symbolism enters, which “[...] promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity (Douglas 1966, p. 44)”.

Culture, in the sense of the public, standardised values of a community, mediates the experience of individuals. It provides in advance some basic categories, a positive pattern in which ideas and values are tidily ordered. And above all, it has authority, since each is induced to assent because of the assent of others. But its public character makes its categories more rigid. A private person may revise his pattern of assumptions or not. It is a private matter. But cultural categories are public matters. They cannot so easily be subjected to revision. Yet they cannot neglect the challenge of aberrant forms. Any given system of classification must give rise to anomalies, and any given culture must confront events which seem to defy its assumptions. It cannot ignore the anomalies which its scheme produces, except at risk of forfeiting confidence (Douglas 1966, p. 48).

According to Douglas, “A polluting person is always in the wrong. He has developed some wrong condition or simply crossed some line which should not have been crossed and this displacement unleashes danger for someone (Douglas 1966, p. 140)”. In the view of Douglas, there is a connection between pollution and morals. To her, people think of their own social environment as consisting of other people, which are joined and separated by lines which must be respected. “Some of the lines are protected by firm physical sanctions (Douglas 1966, p. 172)”. Furthermore, “[...] wherever the lines are precarious we find pollution ideas come to their support. Physical crossing of the social barrier is treated as dangerous pollution [...] The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others (Douglas 1966, p. 172)”. Additionally, “When the community is attacked from outside, at least the external danger fosters solidarity within (Douglas 1966, p. 173)”.

Here, I find, Douglas’ observations illustrate the Sweden Democrat perceptions of cultural purity the most. To the party, the polluting other is always in the wrong; the polluting other has crossed a line the other should not have crossed, and therefore constitutes a danger for the Swedish nation and for Swedishness; the polluting other has physically crossed the social barrier, and thus released dangerous pollution to the Swedish nation and to Swedishness, with the two-fold violation of both crossing the Swedish line and endangering the security of Swedes; the perceived foreign attack on Swedish purity nourishes solidarity within the Swedish nation.

Related to Douglas' assumptions is how Gardell (2015, pp. 368-371) demonstrates the idea of the unity of the people as closely related to the idea of purity, where purity is a by-product of systematic arrangement. Here, any appearances are not necessarily impure in themselves. The appearances become polluting when they show up in the wrong place in the system of classification. Thus, to the Sweden Democrats, other cultures, and religions, than experienced Swedish ones, are in the wrong place automatically when they appear in Sweden. Therefore, when the traits of the other become apparent in Sweden, they immediately become impure, and must be cleansed or preferably removed.

The emphasis on cultural and religious disparities between peoples might save the Sweden Democrats from the denomination racist, but not from the designation neo-racist. The party position, as both Nilsson's (2020, p. 10), Martinson's (2017, pp. 43-46), and my own study show, is that Swedish is Christian, and Christian is Swedish, and, hence, both Swedishness and Christianity are exceptional and superior, and both Swedishness and Christianity are threatened primarily by non-Christian influence and non-Christian immigration, incompatible with Swedish values and Swedish culture. A fact that supports Nilsson's assertions that the Christianity and the Swedishness are two inseparable entities (2020, pp. 1-10). The pure Swedishness demands not only protection from defiling cultural influences and unclean strange people, it also demands active purifying measurements in the form of assimilation campaigns and deportations, and, as we have seen, of missionary work and proselytising attempts. Apparently, to remain in Sweden, and to not possess any threat to the Swedish nation, requires total Swedishness, and Swedishness is equal to Swedish Christianity. Swedishness is inherited Christian culture.

Distinctive Values

As we have seen, values are significantly important to the Sweden Democrats' perception of Swedish culture. The perception of distinctive Swedish values and of the unique Swedish value-system, or value base, [*värdegrund*], is central to the perception of the exceptional and homogenous Swedish identity. The Swedish values are not only regarded as challenged and disintegrated, but also as threatened, and have their source in the Swedish Christianity and the Swedish Church. It is also Christianity and Church that will restore these discouraged values again, when the Church of Sweden is restored, finally, to its former identity as a promotor for

Swedish values and Swedish moral. With this task achieved, the Church can constitute what it must constitute, and that is the Swedish identity. Lipponen (2004, pp. 1-12, 72-181) describes how Sweden Democrats consider religion a crucially important national matter, where Christianity, and especially Lutheranism, is connected tightly to the experienced Swedishness. In Lipponen's account, the image of Sweden as a Christian nation has an important ideological function, and most important is the opinion that the Swedish Christianity has influenced the Swedes' moral sensibility and view of society.

To Nilsson (2020, pp. 1-10), the party perception of Swedish Christianity and Swedish nation is as two inseparable entities. This perception is supported by the position of Lindberg (2011, pp. 138-140) and of Anderson (1985, pp. 1-36), holding nationalism and religion as comparable entities, because of their linkage of similar purpose and origin. It is further supported by the position of Wettach (2006, p. 207), holding the ethnic community and the religion are connected in close symbiosis, where worldly and religious experiences originates from the same source, so that any religious experience includes the entire society as well as forms its ethics and culture. To the Sweden Democrats, according to Nilsson, these two inseparable entities represent Western, and especially Swedish, norms and values, where the Church of Sweden is, or should be, the maintainer and carer for the Swedish value-system.

The results from my study support these assumptions; the pure Swedish culture is expressed in pure Swedish values, like the frequently mentioned traditions, communities, norms, and moralities. Here, to Nilsson, Christianity becomes the category around which a culturally and ethnically homogenous nation is construed. Nilsson shows, Christianity distinguishes the Sweden Democrats from their political adversaries, depicts the party as the guardians of Christianity, and demarcates the Swedish cultural and religious boundaries against the non-Swedish ones. To Nilsson, as we have seen, Christianity should be understood as a "[...] part of a meaning-making struggle [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 10)", where the Sweden Democrats "[...] struggle to make their understanding of Christianity the common one [...] (Nilsson 2020, p. 10)".

At times, Martinson (2017, pp. 43-46) appears almost as a spokesperson for the Church of Sweden, and as a defender of the Church and its interpretations of Christianity, against the criticism of the Church leadership, from the Sweden Democrats, rather than as someone who is attempting to describe the circumstances and the relationship between the Church and the party.

To me, it is not obvious if Martinson finds the Sweden Democrat politics equally harmful to the society as he finds it is to the Church.

However, he shows, in the view of the Sweden Democrats, that the Church must express Swedishness to favour the Swedish identity. Furthermore, Martinson demonstrates, the party equates Christian with Swedish. Therefore, the Church must be true to its genuine values, in the way these values are regarded by the Sweden Democrats, to combat the contaminating alien influences on the Swedish culture.

In line with Nilsson and Martinson, and the others, my own study exhibits, Swedishness and Swedish culture often refer to the perceived unique Swedish Christian values. However, from my findings I suggest, additionally, these Swedish Christian values function not solely as Swedishness and identity. Again, the experienced 'typical Swedish' is used for the elevation of the Swedish people and the depreciation of the other. In fact, I regard the values as a battering ram, rather than expressions of ideals. For certain, the Swedish value-system differentiate the pure Swedish from the impure other, but in addition it is a weapon, to swing at the impure people of lesser value.

The Categories of Humankind

My study confirms that peoples, in the Sweden Democrat view of the world and of humankind, are sorted into different categories. These categories are valued and ranked, and ascribed different qualities and worth, as well as designated unequal rights and obligations. It is religion and culture that sorts the different peoples into their respective category. Furthermore, as we have seen, religion and culture function as identification. In the context of religion and culture in a hierarchical system, the categorisation of peoples not only identify the people of Swedish Christian culture as innocent and blameless for the experienced state of affairs in the motherland, which is described as hostile to Swedes [*svenskfiientlig*], with the Swedish people suffering from the elite-supported oppression and discrimination from the other; the categorisation also identifies the people which is to blame for the current situation. The good Swedish people at the top of the system is identified as righteous, and the evil other people at the bottom end is identified as the enemy, and furthermore as a threat to the Swedish society, to the Swedish nation, and to the Swedishness. In the party view, there is a ready-made system of classification, which will categorise and fit every people, and, as my study shows, to the party conception, there is no people that can deserve the equal classification as that of the

Swedish people. Nilsson (2020, pp. 1-10) clearly demonstrates this fact. As we have seen, the party's "[...] exclusivist view on liberal democracy; i.e. deliberative democracy only applies to subjects belonging to the people [...]" (Nilsson 2020, p. 5)". My study reveals, the party opinion is that the good things in life are not for everyone. The salvific traditions, communities, norms, and moralities – the true Swedish values – are for the Swedish people only.

Lipponen (2004, pp. 1-12, 72-181) proves the Sweden Democrat perception of religion is as a part of culture, and that religion and culture should be protected from alien elements. Lipponen further exhibits, Sweden Democrats consider the Nordic way of life more civilised than other ways of life, and they also stress different moral sensibilities of cultures, and further consider cultures have unequal worth. Sweden Democrats, Lipponen finds, resist multiculturalism and the mixing of cultures.

My estimation is, to the Sweden Democrats, at least within the Swedish borders, the Swedish nation is superior to other nations, the Swedish values are better than other values, and the Swedish culture is purer than other cultures, and therefore, the Swedish people, with its inherited refinement, deserves its privileges and the right to exist in undisrupted cultural and ethnic homogeneity. Here, we do not even have to consider the party position on hereditary essence, which Gardell (2015, p. 367) recounts for as the very underlying idea of racism; from what we have seen in the analysis, the perception of heritage is in either way cultural. Only the genuine Swedish people can truly know and really understand the Swedish Christian cultural heritage and thereby the genuine heritable Swedishness. In this reasoning, the different peoples of the different inherited cultures and religions must be kept separated, to not defile the distinctiveness. Only the Swedish people has inherited the true Swedishness. Where separation is not possible, there must be assimilation to the majority Swedish culture.

People's Rule and Democracy

The Sweden Democrats say they support democracy and human rights; they hold their own policy as the only policy for any true People's Rule [*folkstyre*]. Leaving any problematisation of the historical general perception and usage of People's Rule aside, my study shows, the party perception of democracy is not what is generally considered genuine democratic principles. The party opinion is that there is democracy in the Swedish society when the Swedish majority – that is, the majority people of the Swedish nation, and not the majority population in the

Swedish nation-state – makes the political decisions and enjoys exceptional civil rights. National minorities and immigrant minorities must not enjoy equal rights, because the minorities are not Swedish enough. Democracy in Sweden means democracy for the Swedish people, and for the Swedish people only. A fact that connects to Nilsson's important observation, that only the true Swedish people has the right to any true democracy. My study demonstrates, the exclusive right to unique values relates and connects to the exclusive political rights. Again, the party finds support in Christianity as the denominator of Swedish and of non-Swedish. Additionally, the Sweden Democrats find further support in Christianity, and refer to the bible, for the unavoidable coercion and force their assimilation policy brings. The ideal Sweden Democrat society demands that the Swedish borders will be closed to all foreign immigration, and that those experienced aliens who are already in Sweden will be threatened to voluntarily assimilate to Swedishness and to Swedish Christianity, or they will be forcibly deported. The party is not only anti-liberal. The Sweden Democrats oppose democracy.

Gardell (2015, pp. 364-371) demonstrates the historical and sociological mechanisms of structural racism, but he makes a case of the Sweden Democrat perception of purity as a reason for discrimination without much further elaboration on this subject matter, so important to his standpoint. An elaborated analysis and explanation of this central argument of his, is absent here. I find this circumstance remarkable as well as a pity.

However, in the context of the Sweden Democrat opinion on democracy for the Swedish people only, the observations of Gardell become most relevant. The structural discrimination of uneven distribution of the social, cultural, and economic capital maintains the systematic violence against the non-Swedish Swedish citizens outside the Swedish nation within the Swedish nation-state. To me, this fact illustrates the ideology behind the Sweden Democrat realpolitik. Here, the political strategy, with the tools of Christianity and Church, becomes notably visible. Religion and culture are instruments to keep Sweden Swedish.

Previous Research and Additional Findings

To conclude the discussion on the interpretations, let us summarise how this study deviates from previous research, how it supports previous research, and how it contributes to further knowledge.

Deviation from Previous Research

In opposition to some previous research, I do not find populism an ideology. I like to think I have proved populism as primarily a political instrument for any ideology, and as an instrument for analysis, at least when it comes to radical right populism.

Support to Previous Research

As previous studies show, my study demonstrates that the Sweden Democrats act in line with other European radical nationalists in focusing on the national Church to find European and national identity. My study also supports the position that Swedish political response to migration is equal to other European responses, in that political parties in general are becoming closer to the radical nationalist opinions on migration, and that there is increasing general biases against migrants also outside the radical nationalist party. The Sweden Democrats attempt to link a hereditary feeling of national solidarity to the geographical place of Sweden. Religion for radical right populists figures as an identity marker to create a clear distinction between the good and the bad, and as an identificatory technique for a political and social identity around the people.

Furthermore, to the Sweden democrats, as to other radical nationalists, the exclusivist notion of the people is coded by culture and ethnicity, and there cannot be any changes to the people and its natural nation. Therefore, preservation of the national culture is essential, and any uncommon cultural emergence possesses a threat to Swedish culture. To defend the specifics of Swedish cultural inheritance of the Swedish nation is the core project for the Sweden Democrats. The defence of the cultural inheritance and the specific properties of the nation necessitate specification of the typically Swedish, and hence the ideological project of defining and constructing Swedishness. The Swedishness works both as a tool for defence of

Swedishness and for attack on non-Swedishness, and the Swedish Christianity functions as an instrument for the basis of Swedish values, as there is not any other obvious enough mutual identity marker for the Swedish people. The Swedish Christianity works to highlight Swedish heritage of culture and ideology, and to underline the Christian ethics as central to Swedish society, and to function as a marker of Swedish identity as well as a marker of the difference between the Swedish and the other.

The opinion of an exclusive right, for the Swedish people and the Swedish nation, to the geographical place of the Swedish state, is a driving force behind the Sweden Democrat occupation of cultural purity. There is a perception of an intimate and inextricably connection between the Swedish Church and the Swedish society. The Church of Sweden mirrors the society of Sweden, and the purity of the Church as well as of the society is dependent on the Swedish values with its foundation in the Swedish Church, and here the Church must be true to pure doctrine and pure values. Only Swedish Christian homogeneity can guarantee the security for the Swedish people and the Swedish nation, and the conclusive criterion between pure and impure peoples are the Swedish Christian values. The church must favour Swedish identity by expressing Swedishness, and it must be true to its genuine values to defend Swedish culture. The Swedish Christianity is regarded as the source of Swedish values.

To the Sweden Democrats, the cultures and peoples of the world are categorised in a hierarchical system. According to the party opinion and to the categorisation, there are different degrees of value, civilisation and morality of cultures and peoples, and, additionally, there is unequal worth of the cultures and the peoples.

Swedish democracy, to the Sweden Democrats, means majority people rule. There can only be true democracy if the Swedish people decide and exercise all policy in the Swedish state. No non-Swedish minority can be allowed any political influence on national policy. Only the Swedish people must exercise and experience the rights and opportunities of Swedish democracy.

Contribution to Further Knowledge

My study demonstrates the concept of fear a hitherto neglected element in the study of the Sweden Democrats, and perhaps of radical nationalism and radical right populism in general. There are results showing the perceived threat to the identity, and, of course, any perceived threat means fear to any degree. However, my analysis shows the extent of the perceived fear. I find fear a major driving factor for the party's practical politics. Furthermore, my study reveals, the main fear, to the Sweden Democrats, is to be forced to challenge the Swedish identity, to query the elements taken for granted in the identity-making and identity-preserving conception of Swedishness.

From the perspective of the Swedish nation, Christianity marks the Swedish identity as well as it marks the contrasting non-Swedish identity. Christianity functions as identification of peoples. Not only does Swedish Christianity single out the Swedish people from the non-Swedish people. The Swedish Christianity identifies the Swedish people. However, it is not the foreign Christianity or the alien religion that identify the other, it is not other national religions that identifies other peoples; it is still the Swedish Christianity that identifies and designates the others. It is not about the Swedish people and other peoples. In this respect, there are only two peoples, the genuine people, and the other non-people. Either you belong to the Swedish people or you do not belong. If you do not belong, it is your remoteness to Swedish Christianity that determines your possibilities to access the privileges and rights of the Swedish nation, or not. Not until Swedish Christianity functions as an element of comparison, the singular non-people becomes the multiple non-peoples. Here, the Swedish Christianity functions as a model for categorization, evaluation, gradation, and designation of and between groups of people and peoples.

The Swedish values and the Swedish value-system distinguish the typical Swedish from the non-Swedish. However, in addition, the experienced Swedish is used to enhance the status of the Swedish people and to reduce the status of the other. Furthermore, the Christian values of the Swedish culture and the Swedish people are not merely ideals, but are also weapons in the crusade against the inferior other.

To the Sweden Democrats, in the classification of peoples, the Swedish people deserves its superior position in the system, because of its inherited Swedishness. The refinement and the

uniqueness not only demand the cultural homogeneity of the Swedish people, the Swedish people also deserves its homogeneity. Genuine Swedishness is cultural, and, hence, inherited.

Previous research agrees with the Sweden Democrat self-appreciation, as well as with the general political and common public designation, of the party as anti-liberal. However, the results of my study demonstrate, the party not only finds support for coercion and force in Christianity; in addition, the appreciation of unique cultural values are connected to the opinion of exclusive political rights for the Swedish people. Thus, the Sweden Democrats are anti-democratic.

Results

Conclusion

The ways the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion function as an identity marker

- Swedish Christianity and the Church of Sweden are used to identify Swedish culture and to identify contrasting foreign culture.
- Swedish Christianity is used as the determining factor between the good Swedish people and the bad other people.
- Swedish Christianity is used as the determining factor between the right Swedish values and the wrong values of the other.

The ways it is possible to distinguish an aspiration for cultural purity in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion

- Swedish Christian values are used as dividing criteria between the culturally pure Swedish people and the culturally impure other people.
- The degeneration of the Church of Sweden mirrors the degeneration of the Swedish society.
- Swedish Christian homogeneity will guarantee security for the Swedish people and the Swedish nation within the Swedish nation-state.

The ways it is possible to distinguish neo-racism in the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion

- Elements of religion and culture sort different peoples into different categories in the hierarchical view of humanity.
- Swedish Christianity and Swedish culture identify and define the Swedish people as innocent to the current precarious situation of the Swedish nation, and Swedish Christianity and Swedish culture identify and define the people of the other, which is to blame for this situation.
- The Swedish people is superior, to the non-Swedish people, because of superior Swedish religion and superior Swedish culture.

The ways the Sweden Democrats' talk on religion can be regarded as political strategy

- Swedish Christianity is used to promote anti-democratic political positions.
- Swedish Christianity is used to legitimize coercion and force in the enforcement of Swedishness.

Possible Further Results

My investigation of the Sweden Democrat expressions of religion confirm what previous research have presented when it comes to the Swedish Christianity and the Swedish nation in loud contrast to the foreign Islam and the Muslim other. It is evident there is a Sweden Democrat opinion of a good Western culture and Christian religion against an evil Islamist culture and Muslim politicised belief-system. Instead, I have concentrated my study on the importance of Christianity and Church as instruments for Swedish radical nationalists to promote their ideology of nationalism. With this position as my access point as well as my focal point, I might have paid not enough attention to the positions of what others, for example Nilsson (2020, pp. 1-10), Roy (2016, pp. 185-201) and Lindberg (2011, p. 137) suggest, namely that the Swedish, Nordic, European, Western nationalisms perhaps has less to do with an increasingly favourable attitude towards Christianity, but rather with an increasingly and even more hostile approach towards Islam, and should be understood in relation to anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim discourses becoming normalized and mainstreamed, also outside the populist radical nationalist parties, throughout the whole political spectrum.

Moreover, I am thinking, if I additionally had applied ‘Religion as spirituality’, or ‘Religion as faith’ as a model of interpretation, the results from this category could have enhanced the understanding of the Sweden Democrat use of religion in politics, as the creed, most probably, is significantly important to confessional Christian Sweden Democrats in their political mission. Additionally, I cannot help but wonder what the study would had shown if I had used ‘Religion as legitimization of nationalism’ as a model of interpretation, instead of as a dependent clause in the purpose formulation.

Suggested Further Research

With the undertaking of this study, I have touched upon different aspects of the relationship between religion and nationalism, which, to me, show there are still more questions to be answered. I find European Christianity and European radical nationalism an extremely urgent topic, becoming even more urgent by the minute, in the contemporary political climate. There are gaps in knowledge that need to be filled urgently, with investigation of, and publication on, the subject matter. In a Swedish context, I have found most interesting information, and I believe I have identified some pressing focal points. I think the topics of nationalism as civil

religion, of the relationship between populism and religion, of the relationship between religion and place in Sweden, and of the relationship between Swedish ethnic nationalism and violence, would be a good starting point.

Nationalism as Civil Religion

Lipponen (2004, pp. 180-181) suggests the national culture of the Sweden Democrats is like civil religion. It would be interesting to learn more on any further processing of this idea, especially in relation to other Western political contexts, for example to what Ulrich Schmiedel (2018), in “‘We Can Do This!’ Tackling the Political Theology of Populism”, has written on the subject matter in a German context, and to what David Domke and Kevin Coe (2010) have written in their *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*. Here might be some further explanation on the relationship between nationalism and religion.

Populism and Religion

There is an astonishingly insignificant number of published research studies and articles on the relationship between populism and religion. This urgent research field would contribute to tremendously important information on the current political situation in the Western world. The study by Schmiedel (2018), as mentioned above, on German populism and Christianity, and the work edited by Marzouki, McDonnel, and Roy (2016), *Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion*, on European populism and Christianity, are the only ones I have found; they pressing need to be followed by others.

The Relationship between Religion and Place in Sweden

I find the perceptions of ‘place’ fascinating, especially in relation to religion. I would have loved to venture further into place, and into ‘space’, in this study, if the scope had allowed it. It would be very gratifying to my study, to find more contributing information on the subject matter. There is comprehensive published research on both general and specific, sacred as well as profane, perceptions of place and space – and I find Jonathan Z. Smith (1987), *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*, Tim Ingold (2011), *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, Lily Kong and Orlando Woods (2016), *Religion and Space: Competition, Conflict and Violence in the Contemporary World*, for example, display

interesting ideas – but there could be more revealing research on the *nation* as place. Furthermore, I know of no research on the relationship between religion and place in Sweden.

Swedish Ethnic Nationalism and Violence

All over the Western world, nationalism as a political ideology has become normality. In several European national parliaments, political parties are promoting nationalism, using culture and religion as political means. The polarisation of ideas is increasing, and the political discourse is becoming increasingly agitated. Under these circumstances, the risk of physical violence is imminent. Consequently, it is urgent to investigate the relationship between religion, power, and violence in relation to ethnicity and nationalism. Wettach (2006; pp. 195-218) has presented interesting research in this field, and so has Jonathan Peste (2006), “Political Violence in Ethnic-Political Movements” [“Politiskt våld i etnisk-religiösa rörelser”], and Bruce Lincoln (1994), *Authority: Construction and Corrosion*. According to Raudvere (2001, pp. 16-17), any application of the language and the symbols of religion, while simultaneously referring to tradition and the traditional, and confusing myth with history, will result in anything from romanticism and nostalgia to ethnic cleansing. In a Swedish context, according to Gardell (2015, p. 371), objective violence leads to subjective violence, and his colleagues Nilsson (2020), Martinson (2017), Poletti Lundström (2017), and Lundström & Lundström (2016) present important research and interesting ideas on Swedish radical nationalism in violent environments. Otherwise, there is no published research on the subject matter, though there are urgent questions that need to be answered. For example: Which are the expressions of Swedish ethnic nationalism? What is the relationship between Swedish ethnic nationalism and violence? Are there connections between religious movements and political groups? Are there signs of religious-political Christian mobilization? Is there ongoing violence? Are there risks of emerging or escalated violent acts? Furthermore, and not least: How does the largest self-proclaimed social conservative cultural nationalistic political party, the Sweden Democrats, associate to these questions?

References

- Ammerman, Nancy T. (Ed.). (2007). *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (Revised Edition, 1991; Ninth Impression, 1999). London: Verso.
- Davie, Grace. (2007). "Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge". In Nancy T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Life*, pp. 21-35. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Domke, David & Kevin Coe. (2010). *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Douglas, Mary. (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. (Routledge Classics Edition, 2002). London & New York: Routledge Classics.
- Emilsson, Aron. (2016). SD: Gör Svenska kyrkan svensk igen. [The SD: Make the Church of Sweden Swedish Again]. *Nyheter 24: Debatt* [Online], 12 Aug. 2016. <https://nyheter24.se/debatt/857378-sd-gor-svenska-kyrkan-svensk>. [Accessed 8 Mar. 2020].
- Emilsson, Aron. (2017). Aron Emilsson (SD): Inte längre (S)venska kyrkan. [Aron Emilsson (The SD): Not a Social Democrat Church of Sweden any Longer]. *Dagen: Debatt* [Online], 8 Aug. 2017. <https://www.dagen.se/debatt/aron-emilsson-sd-inte-langre-s-svenska-kyrkan-1.1005658>. [Accessed 8 Mar. 2020].
- Emilsson, Aron. (2019). Kyrkan ska inte präglas av partipolitik: Slutreplik från SD om kyrkan och flyktingpolitiken. [The Church Should Not be Coined by Party Policy: Final Replies by the SD on the Church and Immigration Policy]. *Aftonbladet: Debatt* [Online], 14 Oct. 2019. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/MRJWyJ/kyrkan-ska-inte-praglas-av-partipolitik>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].
- Emilsson, Aron & Kronlid, Julia. (2017). SD: Svenska kyrkan är otydlig i sin identitet. [The SD: The Church of Sweden is Ambiguous in its Identity]. *Ulricehamns tidning: Debatt* [Online], 14 Sep. 2017. <https://www.ut.se/debatt/sd-svenska-kyrkan-ar-otydlig-i-sin-identitet/>. [Accessed 14 Feb. 2020].
- Emilsson, Aron & Kronlid, Julia. (2019). Kyrkan ska inte vara en vänsterliberal megafon: SD: Ni förminskar svenskars tolkning av kristna värderingar. [The Church Should Not be a Left-Liberal Sounding Board: The SD: You Diminish the Understanding of Christian Values of Swedes]. *Aftonbladet* [Online], 16 Apr. 2019. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/qLy1j1/kyrkan-ska-inte-vara-en-vansterliberal-megafon>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].

Eriksson, Karin. (2018). 'Vi kan inte lämna över till en generation som förstör allt'. ['We cannot pass the torch to a generation that ruins everything']. *Aftonbladet* [On-line], 6 Apr. 2018, updated 4 Dec. 2018.
<https://www.dn.se/nyheter/politik/vi-kan-inte-lamna-over-till-en-generation-som-forstor-allt/> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

Eriksson, Karin & Rosén, Hans. (2019). Partier och väljare splittrade när religionsfriheten ställs på sin spets. [Parties and Voters Divided when Freedom of Religion is Brought to a Head]. *Dagens Nyheter* [Online], 22 Dec. 2019.
<https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/partier-och-valjare-splittrade-nar-religionsfriheten-stalls-pa-sin-spets/>. [Accessed 23 Feb. 2020].

Gardell, Mattias. (1998). *Rasrisk: Rasister, separatister och amerikanska kulturkonflikter*. [Risk with Race/Risk of Collapse: Racists, Separatists, and American Cultural Conflicts]. Stockholm: Federativs förlag.

Gardell, Mattias. (2010). *Islamofobi*. [Islamophobia]. Stockholm: Leopard Förlag.

Gardell, Mattias. (2015). *Raskrigaren: Seriemördaren Peter Mangs*. [The Race Warrior: The Serial Killer Peter Mangs]. Stockholm: Pocketförlaget.

Gustafsson Lundberg, Johanna. (2018). "Christianity in a Post-Christian Context: Immigration, Church Identity, and the Role of Religion in Public Debates". In Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith (Eds.), *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, pp. 123-143. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Habul, Kenan. (2018). SD-toppens inlägg: 'Finns bara två val – seger eller död'. [Entry by the Leading SD-Representative: 'Only Two Options – Victory or Death']. *Aftonbladet*, 13 Sep. 2018. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/samhalle/a/vm73Rp/sds-mattias-karlsson-finns-bara-tva-val--seger-eller-dod>. [Accessed 15 Mar. 2020].

Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1990). *Nationer och nationalism*. (Paul Frisch, "Nations and Nationalism Since 1780", Trans., 1994). Stockholm: Ordfronts förlag: Förlag.

Ingold, Tim. (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London, New York: Routledge.

Jones, Lindsey (Ed.). (2005). *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2nd ed.). Detroit: Macmillan Reference.
https://go.gale.com/ps/infomark.do?type=aboutBook&docId=CX3424599999&tabID=T002&actionString=DO_DISPLAY_ABOUT_PAGE&version=1.0&source=library&userGroupName=hgs&prodId=GVRL. [Accessed 2 Feb. 2020].

Jungar, Ann-Cathrine. (2017). *Populism i Norden: Från marginalen mot den politiska mittfåran*. [Populism in the Nordic Countries: From the Margins to the Middle of Politics]. Tankesmedjan Agenda. <https://www.agenda.fi/Rapport/populism-i-norden/>. [Accessed 6 Mar. 2020].

Kantar Sifo. (2020). *Väljarbarometern*. [*The Poll Examiner*]. <https://www.kantarsifo.se/rapporter-undersokningar/valjarbarometern>. [Accessed 22 May 2020].

Karlsson, Mattias. (2012). Identitetsdebatten: Slutet eller en ny början för fädernas kyrka? [*The Identity Debate: The End or a New Beginning for the Church of the Fathers?*]. *Tankar & Tidssignaler – Mattias Karlsson (SD)*, [*Thoughts & Time Signals – Mattias Karlsson (The SD)*], 6 Apr. 2012. <https://sdkarlsson.wordpress.com/2012/04/06/identitetsdebatten-slutet-eller-en-ny-borjan-for-fadernas-kyrka/>. [Accessed 8 Mar. 2020].

Kittelmann Flensner, Karin. (2015). *Religious Education in Contemporary Pluralistic Sweden*. <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/40808>. [Accessed 4 Oct. 2018].

Kong, Lily & Woods, Orlando. (2016). *Religion and Space: Competition, Conflict and Violence in the Contemporary World*. London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Kristensson Ugglå, Bengt. (2004). "Tolkningens metamorfoser i hermeneutikens tidsålder". [*"The Metamorphosis of Interpretation in the Age of Hermeneutics"*]. In Stefan Selander & Per-Johan Ödman (Eds.), (2004). *Text & existens: Hermeneutik möter samhällsvetenskap*. [*Text & Existence: Hermeneutics Meet Social Science*], pp. 23-42. Göteborg: Bokförlaget Daidalos.

Kulturkraft Syd. (2020). *Svenska kyrkan: Svenska kyrkans historia*. [*The Church of Sweden: The History of the Church of Sweden*]. <http://kulturkraftsyd.se/svenska-kyrkans-historia/>. [Accessed 20 Feb. 2020].

Leppäkari, Maria & Peste, Jonathan (Eds.). (2006). *Hotbilder: Våld, aggression och religion*. [*Threat Scenarios: Violence, Aggression and Religion*]. Religionsvetenskapliga skrifter, Nr. 57. Åbo: Åbo Akademi.

Lincoln, Bruce. (1994). *Authority: Construction and Corrosion*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lindberg, Jonas. (2011). "The Uses of Christianity in Nordic Nationalist Parties' Opposition to Islam". *SMT: Swedish Missiological Themes/Svensk MissionsTidskrift*, Vol. 99, No. 2, 2011.

Lipponen, Sami. (2004). 'Nationens sista försvarare': *En religionsvetenskaplig studie av neonationalistisk samhällssyn och livstolkning i Sverige*. [*'The Last Defenders of the Nation': A Scientific Religious Study of Neo-Nationalistic View of Society and Understanding of Life*]. (Diss.). Åbo: Åbo Akademi's förlag.

Lipponen, Sami. (2005). "Nationalismens religiösa ansikte". [*"The Religious Aspect of Nationalism"*]. *Finsk tidskrift: Kultur, ekonomi, politik*, [*Finnish Periodical: Culture, Economy, Politics*], pp. 1-12, Nr. 1, 2005.

Lodenius, Anna-Lena. (2015). *Vi säger vad du tänker: Högerpopulismen i Europa*. [We Are Saying What You Are Thinking: The Right-Wing Populism in Europe]. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Atlas.

Lodenius, Anna-Lena & Wingborg, Mats. (2009). *Slaget om svenskheten: Ta debatten med Sverigedemokraterna*. [The Battle of the Swedishness: Debate the Sweden Democrats]. Stockholm: Premiss förlag.

Lundström, Markus & Lundström, Tomas. (2016). "Hundra år av radikal nationalism". [A hundred Years of Radical Nationalism]. *Det vita fältet III. Samtida forskning om högerextremism. Specialnummer av Arkiv. Tidskrift för samhällsanalys*, [The White Field III. Contemporary Research on Right-Wing Extremism. Special Edition of 'Arkiv'. Periodical for Analysis of Society], pp. 39-66, Nr. 5, 2016.

https://www.academia.edu/27903031/Hundra_%C3%A5r_av_radikal_nationalism. [Accessed 26 Feb. 2020].

Lundström, Tomas. (2015). Extrem röra: Forskaren Tomas Lundström om den radikala nationalismens historia i Sverige. [Extreme Mess: The Researcher Tomas Lundström on the History of the Radical Nationalism in Sweden]. *Aftonbladet: Kultur* [Online], 28 Oct. 2015. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/a/J1LyzJ/extrem-rora>. [Accessed 7 Apr. 2020].

Luther Adams, James & Mikelson, Thomas. (1987). "Legitimation". In Lindsey Jones (Ed.), (2005). *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2nd ed.), pp. 5396-5404. Detroit: Macmillan Reference. https://go.gale.com/ps/infomark.do?type=aboutBook&docId=CX3424599999&tabID=T002&actionString=DO_DISPLAY_ABOUT_PAGE&version=1.0&source=library&userGroupNam=e=hgs&prodId=GVRL. [Accessed 2 Feb. 2020].

Löfvenberg, Jonas. (2019). Experten: SD:s förändringar ska göra det lättare att samarbeta. [The Expert: The Changes of the SD Aims to Make Cooperation Easier]. *SVT Nyheter*, 7 Nov. 2019. <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/experten-forandringarna-ska-gora-det-lattar-att-samarbeta>. [Accessed 30 Mar. 2020].

Lönnaeus, Olle. (2019). Därför stryker SD "rasbiologin" ur sitt program. [Why the SD Delete the "Racial Biology" from the Party Program]. *Sydsvenskan* [Online], 7 Nov. 2019. <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2019-11-07/darfor-stryker-sd-rasbiologin-ur-sitt-program>. [Accessed 30 Mar. 2020].

Martinson, Mattias. (2012). "Atheism as Culture and Condition: Nietzschean Reflections on the Contemporary Invisibility of Profound Godlessness". *Approaching Religion* 2, pp. 75-86, No. 1, 2012.

Martinson, Mattias. (2017). *Sekularism, populism, xenofobi: En essä om religionsdebatten*. [Secularism, Populism and Xenophobia: An Essay on the Debate on Religion]. Malmö: Eskaton.

Marzouki, Nadia & McDonnel, Duncan (2016). "Populism and Religion". In Nadia Marzouki, Duncan McDonnel & Olivier Roy (Eds.), (2016), *Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion*, pp. 1-11. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marzouki, Nadia, McDonnell, Duncan & Roy, Olivier (Eds.). (2016). *Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McGuire, Meredith B. (2002). *Religion: The Social Context*. (5th ed. 2008). Long Grove: Waveland Press.

Nilsson, Per-Erik. (2020). “‘Shame on the Church of Sweden’: Radical Nationalism and the Appropriation of Christianity in Contemporary Sweden”. *Critical Research on Religion*, 14 Jan. 2020. Sage Journals. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2050303219900252>. [Accessed 30 Mar. 2020].

Oxford English Dictionary. (2016a). *Legitimate*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/107113>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].

Oxford English Dictionary. (2016b). *Legitimization*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37126804>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].

Oxford English Dictionary. (2016c). *Legitimize*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/107118#eid39649980>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].

Oxford English Dictionary. (2016d). *Nationalism*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125289?redirectedFrom=nationalism#eid>. [Accessed 5 Mar. 2020].

Oxford English Dictionary. (2016e). *Populism*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/147930?redirectedFrom=populism#eid>. [Accessed 6 Mar. 2020].

Oxford English Dictionary. (2016f). *Religion*. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/161944?redirectedFrom=religion#eid>. [Accessed 6 Mar. 2020].

Peste, Jonathan. (2006). “Politiskt våld i etnisk-religiösa rörelser”. [“Political Violence in Ethnic-Political Movements”]. In Maria Leppäkari & Jonathan Peste (Eds.). *Hotbilder: Våld, aggression och religion*, [Threat Scenarios: Violence, Aggression and Religion], pp. 125-147. Religionsvetenskapliga skrifter, Nr. 57. Åbo: Åbo Akademi.

Poletti Lundström, Tomas. (2017). Althögerns nya slagfält – kyrkorna: Tomas Poletti Lundström om SD och korståget för ett kristet monokulturellt Europa. [The New Battlefield of the Alt-Right – The Churches: Tomas Poletti Lundström on the SD and the Crusade for a Mono-Cultural Europe]. *Aftonbladet: Kultur* [Online], 13 Sep. 2017. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/a/bp6yv/althogerns-nya-slagfalt--kyrkorna>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].

Poohl, Daniel. (2019). Nya formuleringar – samma unkna nationalism. [New Formulations – Same Stale Nationalism]. *Expo*, 25 Nov. 2019. <https://expo.se/2019/11/nya-formuleringar-samma-unkna-nationalism>. [Accessed 30 Mar. 2020].

Populär Historia. (2000). *Kyrkan och staten: En historisk separation*. [The Church and the State: A Historical Separation]. <https://populärhistoria.se/sveriges-historia/kyrkan-och-staten-en-historisk-separation>. [Accessed 20 Feb. 2020].

Populär Historia. (2001). *När Sverige blev ett rike*. [When Sweden became a Realm]. <https://populärhistoria.se/sveriges-historia/nar-blev-sverige-ett-rike>. [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].

Rabinowitz, Peter J. (1987). *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Raudvere, Catharina. (2001). "Mellan romantik och politik: Midgårdsprojektet och den samtida utmaningen". [Between Romanticism and Politics: The Midgard Project and the Contemporary Challenge]. In Catharina Raudvere, Anders Andrén & Kristina Jennbert (Eds.), *Myter om det nordiska: Mellan romantik och politik*, [Myths on the Nordic: Between Romanticism and Politics], pp.11-22. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Raudvere, Catharina, Andrén, Anders & Jennbert, Kristina (Eds.). (2001). *Myter om det nordiska: Mellan romantik och politik*. [Myths on the Nordic: Between Romanticism and Politics]. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Rowlands, Anna. (2018). "Against the Manichees: Immigration Detention and the Shaping of the Theo-political Imagination". In Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith (Eds.), *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, pp. 163-186. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roy, Olivier. (2016). "Beyond Populism: The Conservative Right, the Courts, the Churches and the Concept of a Christian Europe". In Nadia Marzouki, Duncan McDonnell & Olivier Roy (Eds.), (2016), *Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion*, pp 185-201. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Saelid Gilhus, Ingvild. (2014). "Hermeneutics". In Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (Eds.), (2014). *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, pp.275-284. Abingdon: Routledge.

Sawyer, Birgit. & Sawyer, Peter. (1993). *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800-1500*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Schmiedel, Ulrich. (2018). "'We Can Do This!' Tackling the Political Theology of Populism". In Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith (Eds.), *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, pp. 205-224. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schmiedel, Ulrich & Smith, Graeme (Eds.). (2018). *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Selander, Stefan & Ödman, Per-Johan (Eds.). (2004). *Text & existens: Hermeneutik möter samhällsvetenskap*. [Text & Existence: Hermeneutics Meet Social Science]. Göteborg: Bokförlaget Daidalos.

Skott, Carola. (2004). "Att gripa sig an berättelsen". ["To Tackle the Narrative"]. In Carola Skott (Ed.), (2004). *Berättelsens praktik och teori: Narrativ forskning i ett hermeneutiskt perspektiv*. [*The Experience and Theory of Narration: Narrative Research from a Hermeneutic Perspective*], pp. 85-100. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Skott, Carola (Ed.). (2004). *Berättelsens praktik och teori: Narrativ forskning i ett hermeneutiskt perspektiv*. [*The Experience and Theory of Narration: Narrative Research from a Hermeneutic Perspective*]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Smith, Jonathan Z. (1987). *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.

SO-rummet. (2016). *Sverige under medeltiden, del 1 av 3: Sveriges uppkomst*. [*Sweden during the Middle Ages, part 1 of 3: The Emergence of Sweden*]. (Updated 2020). <https://www.so-rummet.se/fakta-artiklar/sverige-under-medeltiden-del-1-av-3-sveriges-uppkomst>. [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].

Stausberg, Michael & Engler, Steven (Eds.). (2014). *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014:57. *Sveriges Kristna Råds migrationsfolder m.m.* [*The Christian Council of Sweden's Brochure on Migration etc.*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014:68. *Svenska kyrkans kristna identitet*. [*The Christian Identity of the Church of Sweden*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014:81. *Svenska kyrkans kulturarvsarbete*. [*The Church of Sweden's Work with Cultural Inheritance*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2014:83. *Svenska kyrkans roll som traditionsbärare*. [*The Role of the Church of Sweden as Bearer of Traditions*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2015:30. *Svenska kyrkans kristna identitet*. [*The Christian Identity of the Church of Sweden*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2016:33. *Fokus på kärnfrågor*. [*Focus on Core Issues*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2017:78. *Kyrkohandbok med respekt för tro och tradition*. [*Church Manual with Respect for Belief and Tradition*].

Svenska kyrkan. Kyrkomötet. Motion 2017:150. *Öka missionen*. [*Increase the Missionary Work*].

Svenska kyrkan. (2019). *Svenska kyrkans historia*. [*The History of the Church of Sweden*]. <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/historik>. [Accessed 20 Feb. 2020].

Svenska kyrkan. (2020). *Organisation*. [*Organization*]. <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/organisation>. [Accessed 20 Feb. 2020].

Svensson, Olof & Karlsson, Pär. (2019). SD storstädar – stryker flera kritiserade förslag. [The SD Performs Clean-Up – Deletes Several Criticised Proposals]. *Aftonbladet* [Online], 8 Nov. 2019.

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/experten-forandringarna-ska-gora-det-lattar-att-samarbeta>. [Accessed 30 Mar. 2020].

Svenungsson, Jayne. (2013). "Public Faith and the Common Good: A Radical Messianic Proposal". *Political Theology*, Vol. 14, 2013, Issue 6. (Published Online 2015). Routledge. Taylor & Francis Online. [http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/publications/public-faith-and-the-common-good--a-radical-messianic-proposal\(380b0ebe-098f-4a36-93c5-0296f88fb002\).html](http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/publications/public-faith-and-the-common-good--a-radical-messianic-proposal(380b0ebe-098f-4a36-93c5-0296f88fb002).html). [Accessed 4 Oct. 2018].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2014). *Sverigedemokraternas principprogram 2011*. [The Program of Principals of the Sweden Democrats 2011]. Antogs av Landsdagarna 2011. Tryckversion 2.0 – 2014-02-24. https://sd.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/principprogrammet2014_webb.pdf. [Accessed 27 Sep. 2018].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2017). *Tro och tradition: Från (S)venska kyrkan till Svenska kyrkan: Rösta SD i kyrkovalet 17 september 2017*. [Belief and Tradition: From the Social Democrat Church of Sweden to the Church of Sweden: Vote the SD in the Church Election on the 17th of September 2017]. <https://kungalv.sd.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/276/2017/08/Kyrkovalsmanifest.pdf>. [Accessed 28 Jan. 2020].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2018a). *Skolpolitiska inriktningsmanifestet: Sverigedemokraternas skolpolitik 2018*. [The Manifest on the Direction of the School Policy: The School Policy of the Sweden Democrats 2018]. <https://sd.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Skolpolitiska-inriktningsmanifestet.pdf>. [Accessed 20 Jan. 2020].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2018b). *Valmanifest: Sverigedemokraternas valmanifest 2018*. [Manifesto: The Electoral Manifesto of the Sweden Democrats 2018]. <https://sd.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Valmanifest-2018-1.pdf>. [Accessed 20 Jan. 2020].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2019). *Valplattform Europaparlamentsvalet 2019*. [Election Platform to the Election to the European Parliament 2018]. https://ratatosk.sd.se/sd/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/02121655/EU-Valplattform-2019_final.pdf. [Accessed 20 Jan. 2020].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2020a). *Migration på rätt sätt*. [Migration the Right Way]. <https://sd.se/vad-vi-vill/migrationspolitik/>. [Accessed 11 May 2020].

Sverigedemokraterna. (2020b). *Våra politiska dokument*. [Our Political Documents]. <https://sd.se/dokument/>. [Accessed 31 Mar. 2020].

Sveriges riksdag. Interpellation till statsråd 2017/18:434. *Böneutrop*. [Call to Prayer].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2013/14:Ju392. *Neutrala polisuniformer*. [Neutral Police Uniforms].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2018/19:134. *Krafttag mot radikalism, extremism och terrorism*. [Vigorous Action against Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2018/19:443. *Slopas skattestöd till trossamfund*. [Abolished Fiscal Aid to Religious Communities].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2018/19:651. *Kyrkohistoriskt museum*. [Museum of Church History].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2018/19:727. *Nationellt förbud mot böneutrop*. [National Prohibition against Call for Prayer].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:348. *Kyrkohistoriskt museum*. [Museum of Church History].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:349. *Nationell handlingsplan för kyrkor som tas ur bruk*. [National Action Plan for Decommissioned Churches].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:521. *Förbud mot böneutrop*. [Prohibition against Call for Prayer].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:555. *Krafttag mot radikalism, extremism och terrorism*. [Vigorous Action against Radicalism, Extremism and Terrorism].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:734. *Nationellt förbud mot böneutrop*. [National Prohibition against Call for Prayer].

Sveriges riksdag. Motion till riksdagen 2019/20:3194. *Slopas skattefinansierat stöd och utökad granskning av trossamfund*. [Abolished Fiscal Aid and Extended Examination of Religious Communities].

Sölvesborgs kommun. Motion till kommunfullmäktige 030517. [Registration number missing]. *Inför klädkoder för att motverka kvinnoförtryck*. [Impose Dress Codes to Counteract Oppression of Women]. [Attachment to e-mail-reply from the municipal registry office, 29 Jan. 2020, on requested documentation of Sweden Democrat political motions; e-mail: "Begäran om utlämnande av allmänna handlingar: Motioner till kommunfullmäktige", 29 Jan. 2020.]

Sörlin, Sverker. (2006). *Nationalism*. [Nationalism]. Pocketbiblioteket, Nr 21. Stockholm: SNS Förlag.

The Light On Project – Cross-Community Actions for Combating the Modern Symbolism and Languages of Racism and Discrimination. (2014). *Understanding the Perception of Racism: Research as a Tool Against Racism*. http://www.lighton-project.eu/uploads/File/summary_research_report.pdf. [Accessed: 29 Apr. 2020].

Thurfjell, David. (2015). *Det gudlösa folket: De postkristna svenskarna och religionen*. [The Godless People: The Post-Christians Swedes and Religion]. Stockholm: Molin & Sorgenfrei.

- van Prooijen, Jan-Willem, Krouwel, André P. M., Boiten, Max & Eendebak, Lennart. (2015). "Fear Among the Extremes: How Political Ideology Predicts Negative Emotions and Outgroup Derogation". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 2015, Vol. 41(4), pp. 485-497.
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54694fa6e4b0eacc4530f99d/t/573c6644b09f9545623eb15c/1463576133018/Fear+Among+the+Extremes+2015.pdf>. [Accessed 20 Jun. 2020].
- Vikström, Björn. (2005). *Den skapande läsaren: Hermeneutik och tolkningskompetens*. [The Creating Reader: Hermeneutics and Interpretation Competence]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Virdi Kroik, Åsa. (2020a) "Mission bland samer". ["Missionary Work among Sámi"]. *Samer: Allt om Sveriges ursprungsfolk och deras land Sápmi, Sábme, Sábmiem Saepmie*. [Sámi: Everything on the Swedish Indigenous People and their Land Sápmi, Sábme, Sábmiem Saepmie]. <http://www.samer.se/missionen>. [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].
- Virdi Kroik, Åsa. (2020b) "Samerna och religionen". ["The Sámi and the Religion"]. *Samer: Allt om Sveriges ursprungsfolk och deras land Sápmi, Sábme, Sábmiem Saepmie*. [Sámi: Everything on the Swedish Indigenous People and their Land Sápmi, Sábme, Sábmiem Saepmie]. <http://www.samer.se/1138>. [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].
- Weber, Max. (1963). *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Wettach, Tania. (2006). "The Role of Religion in Ethno-Political Conflict". In Maria Leppäkari & Jonathan Peste (Eds.). *Hotbilder: Våld, aggression och religion, [Threat Scenarios: Violence, Aggression and Religion]*, pp. 195-218. Religionsvetenskapliga skrifter, Nr. 57. Åbo: Åbo Akademi.
- Zetterman, Jakob. (2017). SD: Svenska kyrkan ska missionera mer i utanförskapsområden. [The SD: The Church of Sweden Shall Do More Missionary Work in Areas of Alienation]. *Dagen* [Online], 6 Jul. 2017. <https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/search>. [Accessed 8 Mar. 2020]. <https://www.dagen.se/sd-svenska-kyrkan-ska-missionera-i-utanforscapsomraden-1.992117?paywall=true>. [Accessed 8 Mar. 2020].
- Zulfugarli, Farid. (2018). "Nationalism: It's Conservative, Liberal, And Radical Conceptions". *Baku Research Institute*. <https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/nationalism-its-conservative-liberal-and-radical-conceptions/>. [Accessed 30 Mar 2020].
- Åkesson, Jimmie. (2013). *Satis polito*. Sölvesborg: Asp & Lycke förlag.
- Åkesson, Jimmie & Emilsson, Aron. (2019). Kyrkan ska inte lägga sig i flyktingpolitiken: SD: Sveriges kristna råd tar politisk ställning. [The Church Shall Not Interfere in the Refugee Policy: The SD: The Christian Council of Sweden Takes a Political Stand]. *Aftonbladet: Debatt* [Online], 27 Sep. 2019, updated 7 Oct. 2019. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/mRaql1/kyrkan-ska-inte-lagga-sig-i-flyktingpolitiken>. [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].