

Sweden Democrat voters

Who are they, where do they come from, and where are they headed?



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Foreword

The most remarkable change in the Swedish political landscape is the rapid rise of the Sweden Democrat political party during the last fifteen years. The party was formed in 1988 and in the parliamentary elections up till 2002, it received less than 0.5 percent of the vote. Then a rapid rise started: 1.4 percent (2002), 2.9 percent (2006), 5.7 percent (2010, entering parliament), 12.9 percent (2014) and 17.5 percent in the latest election 2018.

Now the party is well-established as Sweden's third-largest party after the Social Democrats and the mainstream conservative party Moderaterna and may even be on its way to becoming the second largest party. Scholars used to talk about Swedish exceptionalism since, unlike most other European countries and especially its Nordic neighbours, for a long time Sweden didn't have substantial radical or populist right-wing party in the parliament (Rydgren & van der Maiden 2018). With the Sweden democrats, Sweden has joined the European and international trend of having such a party represented in the parliament.

On the evening of November 8, 2016, I met with Mats Elzén from the polling company Novus. We were of course discussing the upcoming US presidential elections. Soon, however, we started to discuss the Swedish political landscape and we lamented the fact that there was so little known about the values and motivations of the Sweden Democrat voters. This is surprising since Sweden has a strong tradition in election research. As Mats explained, Novus could put together a big panel of voters to whom one could ask many and detailed questions about different beliefs and values. What was needed was funding and some excellent researchers in the area, which could be provided by the Institute for Futures Studies.

I suggested the idea to Professor Jens Rydgren (sociologist) and Professor Pontus Strimling (economist and norm researcher) who brought in Dr. Kirsti M. Jylhä (psychologist) to the team. The result of this interdisciplinary groups' work is this thorough and unique report on the Sweden Democrats voters, who they are, where they come from, and where they are headed. It was first presented in Swedish in the summer of 2018 just before the Swedish Parliamentary Elections. I'm very happy that it is now available for an international audience since the results are of general interest when one tries to understand the global trend of the rise of radical right-

wing political parties. The rich data set makes it possible to analyse and understand the values and motivations of voters supporting such parties in an unusually detailed way and it is my hope that this report will inspire similar studies in other countries.

Gustaf Arrhenius

Director, Institute for Futures Studies

Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy

About the report

The work on this report has been led by Kirsti M. Jylhä. The other authors are (in alphabetical order) Jens Rydgren and Pontus Strimling, who were also primarily responsible for the research design and the construction of the questionnaire.

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We would like to thank Novus for conducting the data collection and the respondents from the Novus Sweden Panel who participated in our survey. Without you, this study would not have been possible. We would also like to acknowledge the fact that the report is the result of the work of several people, and we would particularly like to thank Erika Karlsson, Marie Nahlin, Corrie Hammar, and Irina Vartanova for advice and valuable comments.

Introduction

Europe has experienced major political changes over recent decades, with new political parties having emerged and become established in many countries. The same development has also been seen in Sweden, where the Sweden Democrats has rapidly grown from a once marginal position to become one of the country's largest parliamentary parties. The Sweden Democrats was formed in 1988, and entered parliament following the 2010 general election, in which it obtained 5.7 percent of the votes. In the general election of 2014, the party won 12.9 percent of the votes, and this upward trend has continued. At the time when this report was written, the Sweden Democrats had the support of approximately 18.5 percent of the electorate (Statistiska centralbyrån [SCB], 2018). In the parliamentary election, in September 2018, the Sweden Democrats received 17.5 percent of the votes.

The Sweden Democrats belong to a group of European parties that previous research has referred to as the radical right (Rydgren, 2018). These parties are defined as right-wing parties based on their nationalist and politically conservative positions, and as radical based on their ambitions to radically transform society. In contrast to *extreme* right parties, parties of the radical right aim to influence society via the use of lawful and democratic means (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007). The growth of these parties has led to changes in the respective countries' party systems. In many countries, radical right-wing parties have tended to support conservative political parties, and in many cases, they have also governed in coalition (Kitschelt, 2018). Thus, social democrats and parties to the left of centre are those that have suffered the most as a result of the growth of the radical right (Bale, 2003). In Sweden, however, none of the parliamentary parties have engaged in open cooperation with the Sweden Democrats at the national level. Like many other radical right parties, the Sweden Democrats is not easily located on the left-right economic spectrum. The party has pursued issues that are traditionally associated with social democratic parties, such as investment in the healthcare sector, but has also moved towards the right on economic issues since the general election of 2014. This is not least seen in the party's position on the issue of profits made by private companies in the welfare sector.

Socioeconomic questions do not however constitute the Sweden Democrats' most high-profile issues. Instead, the party's political agenda can primarily be described as one of social conservatism and nationalism. The party's key issue is immigration, to which they advocate a very restrictive approach. Like other European

parties of the radical right, the Sweden Democrats are characterised by focusing very little on socioeconomic issues (Rydgren & van der Meiden, 2018). Rather, these parties distinguish themselves by their ethnonationalist position, which is rooted in a nostalgic view of their respective nation's history and which seeks to defend the position of the majority group or culture. These parties also tend to be populist in the sense that they present themselves as the opponents of established political parties, and at a more general level they mobilise against political and cultural elites, which they argue have lost touch with the people – not least in their views on issues such as immigration and diversity (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010; Rydgren, 2017).

The Sweden Democrats have attracted voters from both the right and the left, primarily from the Conservative Party (*Moderaterna*) and the Social Democrats, as well as from groups who were previously non-voters (SCB, 2016; Valforskningssprogrammet, 2018). Thus, the backgrounds of Sweden Democrat voters vary, and it is not entirely clear what they have in common. This report poses a number of different questions: How – and to what extent – do Sweden Democrat voters differ from those who vote for other parties? Why have they moved away from the parties they previously voted for, and is it likely that they will return to them? What political opinions do they hold, besides being critical of immigration? Is their view of immigration driven by a concern over societal change or is it a manifestation of a more deep-rooted antipathy towards immigrants? And finally, to what extent are there differences within the group of Sweden Democrat voters, i.e. how homogeneous a group are they?

Aims

Given the rapid change that has occurred in Swedish party politics, it is of substantial interest to examine what lies behind the electoral support garnered by the growing Sweden Democrat party. It is similarly of interest to analyse the reasons for – and the potential future extent of – the mobility between the Sweden Democrats and the two political parties from which they have won the majority of their voters, namely the Social Democrats and the Conservative Party (*Moderaterna*).

This report combines explanatory models from the fields of sociology and psychology to analyse these issues from different perspectives. The analyses are based on a large-scale questionnaire survey conducted among 3,518 participants, which Novus was commissioned to conduct on our behalf. Based on a substantial interdisciplinary data set, the report provides a both broad and detailed picture of those who vote for the Sweden Democrats and also of what may account for the electoral mobility away from the Social Democrats and the Conservative Party and towards the Sweden Democrats. More specifically, the report aims to analyse the following three questions:

1. What characterises the voters who support the Sweden Democrats, and how do they differ from Social Democrat and Conservative Party voters?
2. What characterises the voters who have shifted their support to the Sweden Democrats from the Social Democrats and the Conservatives, and how do they differ from those who today vote for the Social Democratic and the Conservative Party?
3. What are the reasons behind the flows of voters between the Sweden Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Conservatives, and what might these flows look like in the future?

Overview of the report

The analyses and results presented in this report are based on a survey of 2,217 Sweden Democrat voters, 634 Conservative Party voters, 548 Social Democrat voters, and 119 respondents who stated that they would not vote if there was a general election today. The survey was conducted on our commission by Novus during the spring of 2018.

The report is organised on the basis of seven overarching themes: voter mobility between the parties, the voters' ideological position, sociopolitical opinions, psychological characteristics, relationship with society, views about the past and views about the future. The analyses examine both differences between the parties and differences within the group of Sweden Democrat voters.

For the most part, the analyses have compared the proportions who agree or disagree with different statements. It is important to note that all results probably contain a certain degree of error, and it is likely that the point estimates are too high or too low by a few percentage points. No strong conclusions should therefore be drawn based on specific questions, and the results should instead be interpreted on a more general level in terms of general differences between the groups examined.¹

1. Floating voters

The analyses in this section examine previous voter mobility from the Social Democrats, the Conservatives and former non-voters to the Sweden Democrats and the potential for future voter mobility. The results show that most of the Sweden Democrat voters come from the Social Democratic and the Conservative Party. Further, we estimate that the potential for future voter mobility is greater between the Con-

1. Confidence intervals for proportions are calculated on the basis of the size of the proportion and the number of respondents. This study has a large number of respondents, and the confidence intervals are therefore small. We do not however know exactly how representative the sample is for the Swedish population, and the results should therefore be interpreted with caution regarding the exact figures.

servatives and the Sweden Democrats than between the Social Democrats and the Sweden Democrats.

2. Right-wing or centre voters?

This chapter focuses on the Sweden Democrat voters' socioeconomic and sociocultural orientation on the left-right spectrum. The results show that Sweden Democrat voters can on average be regarded as right of centre voters rather than centre voters when it comes to their views on both socioeconomic and sociocultural issues, although there is a large degree of variation and heterogeneity in their views on the former issues.

3. Immigration and immigrants

The Sweden Democrats' central issue is that of reducing immigration to Sweden. This chapter analyses attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. The results indicate that a critical view of immigration as a societal phenomenon constitutes the primary reason for voting for the Sweden Democrats, with Sweden Democrat voters viewing immigration as both an economic and cultural threat, but also that there is a substantial sub-group of Sweden Democrat voters who appear to harbour a deeper antipathy towards immigrants. Differences between these groups are examined more closely in Chapter 7.

4. Anti-establishment attitudes and distrust

This chapter analyses the electoral groups' distrust of parliament and other societal institutions, and whether this distrust also involves a greater propensity to believe in conspiracy theories. The results show that Sweden Democrat voters have less confidence in politicians, courts of law, and the media than Social Democrat and Conservative voters. The degree of knowledge resistance and belief in conspiracies is generally low in all groups of voters, including those who vote for the Sweden Democrats.

5. Marginalisation and wellbeing

In previous research, electoral support for radical right-wing parties has in part been explained by reference to perceptions of economic insecurity and the feeling of having been left behind by societal change (Arzheimer, 2018). This section of the report analyses the socioeconomic status of the different voter groups, their perceived level of integration in society and their psychological wellbeing. The results show that Sweden Democrat voters cannot be described as being particularly marginalised either socioeconomically or psychologically. We do however find that they experience a sense of exclusion in relation to society to a greater extent than others.

6. Looking to the past, looking to the future

The ideological position of the Sweden Democrats is in part based on social conservatism and a nostalgic view of Sweden's past (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2018). This section of the report examines the voter groups' views about the past, whether they perceive a change for the better or for the worse, and their degree of faith in the future. The results show that Sweden Democrat voters do not perceive that things have deteriorated for them personally over recent years to a greater extent than Conservative or Social Democrat voters, but that they tend to have less faith in the future and feel that society has become worse by comparison with Social Democrat and Conservative voters.

7. Different types of immigration sceptics among Sweden Democrat voters?

This chapter examines differences between two sub-groups of Sweden Democrat voters: those who express low (57 percent) or high (43 percent) levels of xenophobia. The group with the higher level of xenophobia also expresses higher levels of ethnonationalism and conservatism/authoritarianism and a somewhat greater degree of allegiance to the party. On the majority of questions only small or insignificant differences were found, e.g. in relation to socioeconomic status, confidence in societal institutions and political cynicism. It is possible that the group with the higher level of xenophobia may constitute the nucleus of Sweden Democrat voters and that the rapid increase in the Sweden Democrats' electoral support might conceivably be explained as the result of their having succeeded in also mobilising voters who lie outside this core group.

1. Floating voters

The Sweden Democrats (SD) have been represented in the Swedish parliament since 2010, when they won 5.7 percent of the votes in the general election. In the general election of 2014, they obtained 12.9 percent of the votes, and in 2018 they received 17.5 percent of the electorate. This is a remarkable increase in electoral support, which should be viewed in light of the fact that voter mobility has generally increased among the Swedish electorate over recent decades. In the general election of 2014, 35 percent of the voters shifted their party allegiance (SCB, 2016). In this chapter, we specifically examine where the Sweden Democrat voters have come from and the likelihood that they will return to their previous party allegiances. We focus particularly on the Social Democrats (S) and the Conservatives (*Moderaterna*, M), which constitute the parties that the majority of Sweden Democrat voters have previously voted for (Statistics Sweden: SCB, 2016; Valforskningsprogrammet, 2018).

A contributory factor to the Sweden Democrats' electoral success may also be that they have succeeded in mobilising electors for whom there has not previously been a suitable party to vote for. It should be noted, however, that previous research results have shown that the growth of European radical right-wing parties cannot be explained by mobilization of a large number of former non-voters (Immerzeel & Pickup, 2015). The growth of these parties is rather due to their success in attracting voters from the established political parties. There may nonetheless be reason to look further into this question in the Swedish context, not least since we know that electoral participation has increased during the period in which the Sweden Democrats have grown stronger.

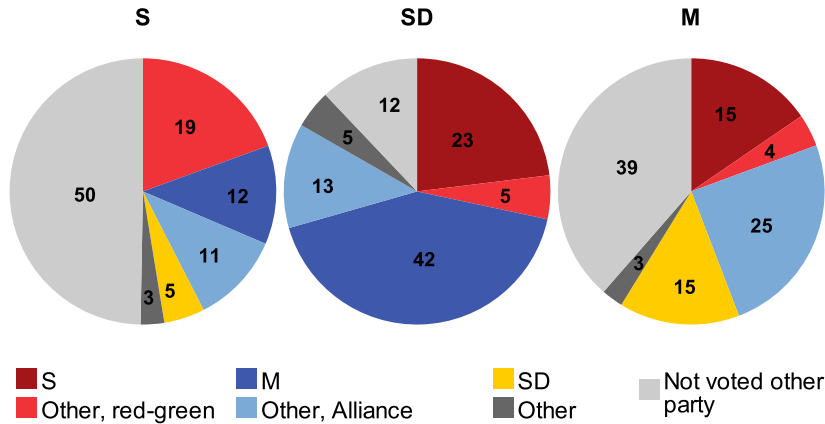
From the Conservatives and the Social Democrats to the Sweden Democrats

In order to study voter mobility between the parties, the survey respondents were asked if they had previously voted for a different party than the one they would vote for today, and if so, which party.

Figure 1.1 shows, as we would expect given that the Sweden Democrats are a relatively new party in parliament, that it is unusual for their voters not to have previously voted for a different party (12 percent). The majority (55 percent) have previously voted for one of the centre-right Alliance parties, while 28 percent have

previously voted for one of the parties from the red-green block². In line with the findings of other studies (SCB, 2016; Valforskningsprogrammet, 2018), the majority of the Sweden Democrat voters in our data set had most recently voted for either the Social Democrats (23 percent) or the Conservatives (42 percent).

Figure 1.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who chose different parties in response to the question: “Which party, that you would not vote for today, did you vote for most recently?”



One way of estimating potential future voter mobility is to examine which parties the respondents report as their second choice. The results presented in Figure 1.2 suggest that the Sweden Democrats’ potential to attract additional Social Democrat voters is relatively limited. Only 7 percent of Social Democrat voters name the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party, which suggests that most of the Social Democrat voters who may have been inclined to switch to the Sweden Democrats have already done so.

By contrast, our results indicate that there is a relatively substantial potential for the Sweden Democrats to attract Conservative voters. Thirty-nine percent of these voters name the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party.

2. The red-green block consists of the Social Democrats, the Left Party, and the Green Party. The Alliance consists of the Conservative Party, the Center Party, the Liberals, and the Christian Democrats.

Figure 1.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who chose different parties in response to the question: “If your first choice was not available to vote for, which party would you vote for” (Respondents who answered “No party” or “Don’t know” excluded).

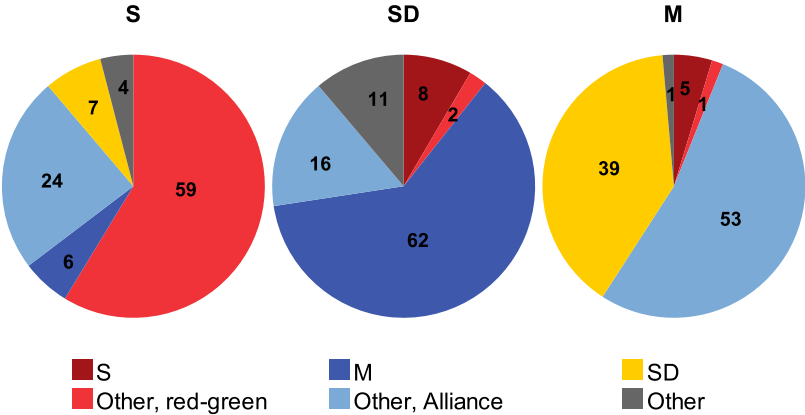
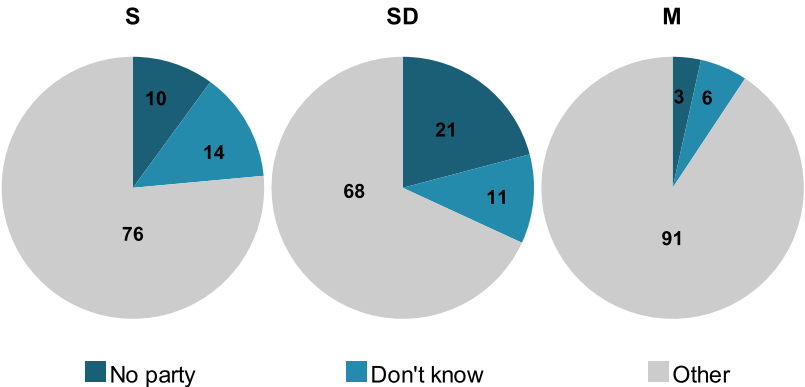


Figure 1.3. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who answered “No party” or “Don’t know” in response to the question: “If your first choice was not available to vote for, which party would you vote for then?”

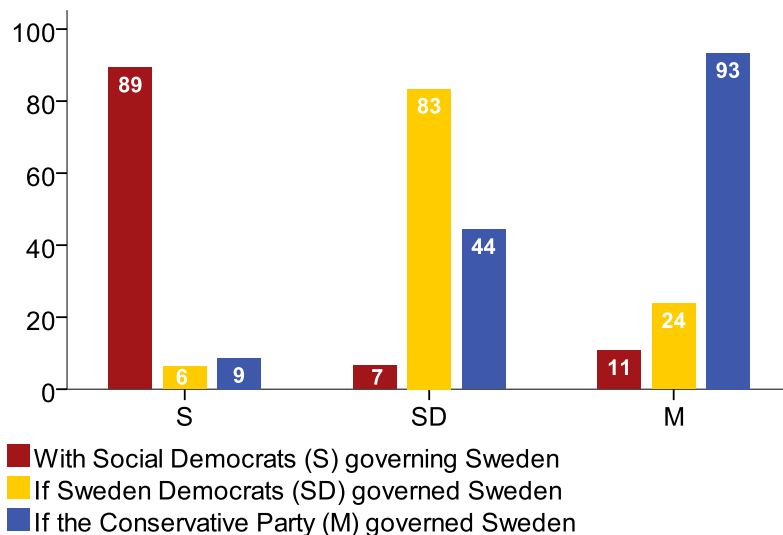


As can be seen from Figure 1.3, there is also a group of both Social Democrat voters (10 percent) and Conservative voters (3 percent) who would not vote at all if it was not possible to vote for their first-choice party. There are also voters who state that they do not know what their second-choice party is, and this group is larger among the Social Democrat voters (14 percent) than among the Conservative voters

(6 percent). It is possible that there are additional individuals in these sub-groups of voters who might consider voting for the Sweden Democrats, but it is difficult to determine how large a proportion these individuals might account for.

A further way of estimating future voter mobility between parties is to look at how the respondents would view Sweden's future if different parties governed. Figure 1.4 shows, as would be expected, that all voter groups would have a more positive view of the future if their first-choice party would govern Sweden. It is very uncommon for Social Democrat voters (6 percent) to report a positive view of Sweden's future if the Sweden Democrats was governing the country, which provides further support for our interpretation that there is a relatively limited potential for the Sweden Democrats to attract additional Social Democrat voters. Conservative voters are on average more positive than Social Democrat voters about a future with a Sweden Democrat government (24 percent).

Figure 1.4. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who would have a very positive or quite positive view of the future if Sweden was governed by different parties.



... how would you see Sweden's future?

Back to the Conservatives and the Social Democrats?

Figure 1.1 above described previous voter mobility between the parties, and how common it is for Sweden Democrat voters to have most recently come from the Social Democrats or the Conservatives.

With regard to the respondents' second-choice parties, Figure 1.2 above shows that only 8 percent of Sweden Democrat voters name the Social Democrats as their second choice, while as many as 62 percent name the Conservatives (excluding those who answered "Don't know" or "No party").

The second-choice parties specified by the Sweden Democrats are described in more detail in Figure 1.5. The Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats name the Social Democrats as their second-choice party to a greater extent (27 percent) than other Sweden Democrat electors, but even among these voters there are more who specify the Conservatives as their second-choice party (47 percent).

Figure 1.5. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters who chose different responses to the question: "If your first choice was not available to vote for, which party would you vote for?" (Respondents who answered "No party" or "Don't know" excluded).

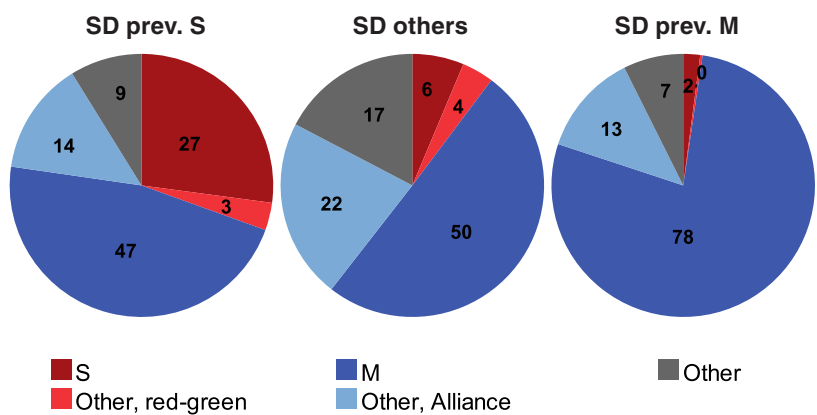


Figure 1.6 shows the proportion who do not know which party they would vote for, or who would not vote at all if it was not possible to vote for their first-choice party. The results show that it is less common for former Conservative voters (27 percent) than for former Social Democrat voters (40 percent) and other Sweden Democrat voters (35 percent) to answer that they don't know who they would vote for or that they would not vote at all.

Figure 1.6. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters who answered “No party” or “Don’t know” in response to the question: “If your first choice was not available to vote for, which party would you vote for?”

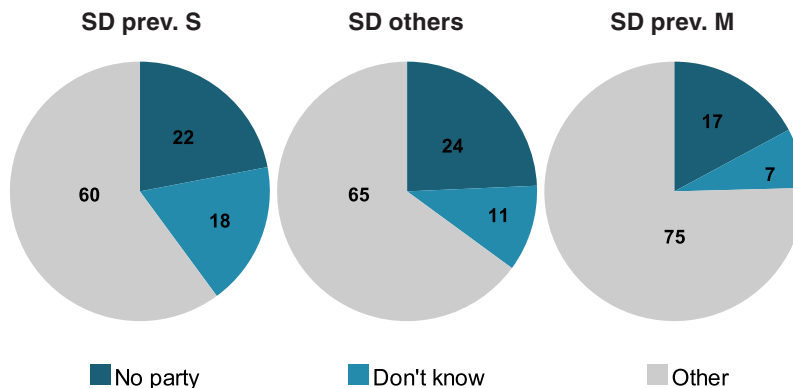
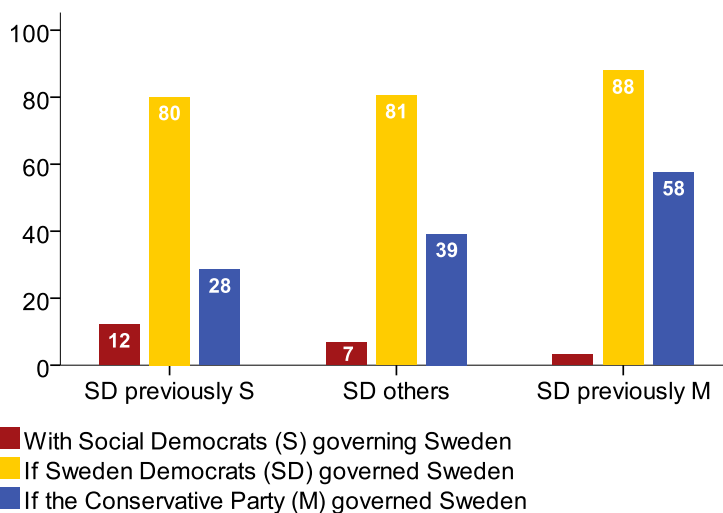


Figure 1.7. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters who would have a very positive or quite positive view of the future if Sweden was governed by different parties.



... how would you see Sweden's future?

The above picture is further confirmed by Figure 1.7, which shows how Sweden Democrat voters would view Sweden's future if the country was governed by different parties. Irrespective of their previous party allegiances, the majority would have a more positive view of the future if the Conservatives governed than if the

Social Democrats governed. Even among the Sweden Democrats who have most recently come from the Social Democrats, only 12 percent would have a positive view of Sweden's future if the country was governed by the Social Democratic Party.

Sweden Democrats – a party for former non-voters?

Viewed in combination, the above results suggest that one of the principal reasons for the growth of the Sweden Democrats is that voters from other parties have switched to voting for them. This is in line with previous research results (e.g., Immerzeel & Pickup, 2015). However, there is also reason to examine the extent to which the Sweden Democrats have provided an alternative for those who have previously not found a suitable party to vote for.

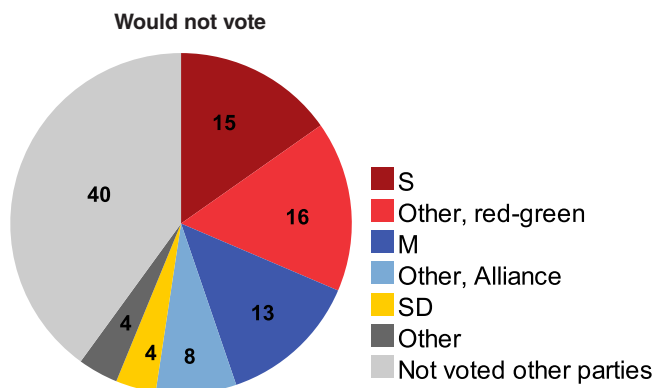
Figure 1.1 above shows that only 12 percent of Sweden Democrat voters have not previously voted for a different party. These may include both voters who have previously been too young to vote and voters who have previously felt that none of the parties were suited to them.

Figure 1.3 shows that a relatively large proportion of Sweden Democrat voters state that they would not vote for any party if their first-choice party was not available (21 percent). This proportion is considerably larger than that found among Social Democrat voters (10 percent) and Conservative voters (3 percent). This suggests that although the majority of Sweden Democrat voters have previously voted for other parties, it is relatively common that they today view the Sweden Democrats as the only possible party to vote for.³

We have also studied the potential for the Sweden Democrats to attract new voters from among those who are non-voters today. Figure 1.8 shows that the tendency to refrain from voting is relatively stable, since as many as 40 percent of non-voters state that they have not voted previously either. Among those who have voted previously, it is somewhat more common to have voted for parties from the red-green block (31 percent) than for one of the parties from the centre-right Alliance (21 percent). It is almost equally common to have most recently voted for the Social Democrats (15 percent) and the Conservatives (13 percent) but is considerably less common to have voted most recently for the Sweden Democrats (4 percent).

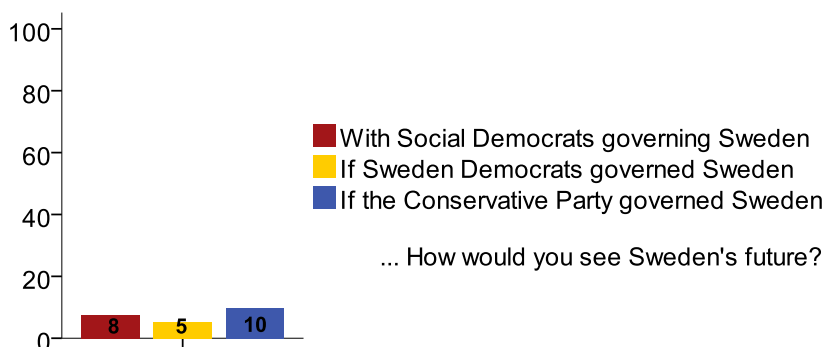
3. It is also possible that some of those who have previously voted for another party may not have voted at all for a long period of time but have again become active voters following the appearance of the Sweden Democrats as an alternative.

Figure 1.8. Proportion (%) who have previously voted for different parties among those who would not vote if there were a general election today.



Analyses of how non-voters would view the future, if different parties governed Sweden, provide further support for the suggestion that the potential for the Sweden Democrats to mobilise further support from this group is relatively limited. Figure 1.9 shows that only 5 percent of those who state that they would not vote in an election today would view Sweden's future in a positive light if the country were governed by the Sweden Democrats, which is fewer than the number who would have a positive view of Sweden's future if the Social Democrats (8 percent) or the Conservatives (10 percent) governed. The general conclusion is that all three parties in focus here (and possibly even the other parties) would find it difficult to mobilise those who are non-voters today.

Figure 1.9. Proportion (%) of those respondents who would not vote if there were a general election today who would have a very positive or quite positive view of Sweden's future if the country was governed by different parties.



In line with previous research on radical right parties in Europe (Immerzeel & Pickup, 2015), the general picture is that we find little to suggest that the Sweden Democrats would be particularly successful in mobilising former non-voters. At the same time, however, the proportion of Sweden Democrat voters who would today refrain from voting if they were not able to vote for their first-choice party is greater than the corresponding proportions among Social Democrat and Conservative voters.

Summary

This chapter has analysed both previous and potential future voter mobility to and from the Sweden Democrats. The results show that:⁴

- Sweden Democrat voters have previously primarily voted for the Social Democratic or the Conservative Party. This is in line with the findings of other studies of Swedish voters (e.g. SCB, 2016).
- Most Sweden Democrat voters have previously voted for other parties. This is in line with results from international studies which suggest that radical right-wing parties have grown because they have successfully attracted voters away from established political parties (Immerzeel & Pickup, 2015). We have further shown that one-fifth of Sweden Democrat voters would not vote at all if it was not possible to vote for the Sweden Democrats today, which may mean that they have become alienated from the other political parties.
- The potential for future voter mobility is greater between the Conservatives and the Sweden Democrats than between the Social Democrats and the Sweden Democrats. This may mean that those Social Democrat voters who may have been inclined to switch to the Sweden Democrats have already done so, and that the Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats no longer feel an allegiance to their former party of choice.

In subsequent chapters we will analyse psychological and socioeconomic characteristics in order to study similarities and differences between those who today vote for the Social Democratic and the Conservative Party and those who have switched from these parties to the Sweden Democrats. The aim of these analyses is to study in more detail the possible reasons for the shift of voters and the future voter mobility between these parties.

4. These results should be interpreted with a certain amount of caution since respondents may have forgotten which party they have previously voted for, particularly if many years have passed since they voted in a general election.

2. Right-wing or centre voters?

The Sweden Democrats are usually placed in the new radical-right party family that has emerged in Western Europe over recent decades (Rydgren & van der Meiden, 2018). This party family includes for example the Danish People's Party (Denmark), the National Rally (formerly known as the National Front: France), the Party for Freedom (Netherlands) and the Finns Party (formerly known as the True Finns: Finland), which all share ideological positions on social conservatism, ethnonationalism and a sceptical approach to immigration. Another common denominator among these parties is that they do not primarily engage with the traditional socioeconomic issues which otherwise tend to be in focus of the political debate (Mudde, 2010). For this reason, it can sometimes be difficult to determine these parties' positions on the left-right political spectrum. This chapter examines the sociopolitical orientation of Sweden Democrat voters, with a specific focus on left-right issues.

It is difficult to define the Sweden Democrats' ideological orientation on the basis of *socioeconomic* issues. The party itself has stated that it is a party of neither the right nor the left and has expressed an ambition to "combine the best elements from the traditional right- and left-wing ideologies" (Sverigedemokraterna, n.d.). This can be seen in concrete terms in the party's support for tax cuts (which are usually part of the agenda of right-wing parties) and on endorsing the welfare state (which is traditionally emphasised by parties of the left). This may contribute to explaining why the party has attracted voters from both the right and the left. Sweden Democrat voters on average tend to be located towards the centre on socioeconomic issues (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014; Sannerstedt, 2014; 2015), and regarding the left-right spectrum, they have recently moved somewhat to the right, but remain relatively close to the middle (Sannerstedt, 2016). This has led to questions being raised as to whether Sweden Democrat voters can be described as being from the extreme right, the radical right or the populist right – or whether they are right-wing voters at all (Sannerstedt, 2015).

But a person's left-right orientation is not determined only on the basis of socioeconomic issues. Opinions on *sociocultural* questions linked, for example, to social hierarchies and gender equality also influence our ideological orientation. Although the concept of right-wing radicalism can be defined in a number of different ways, the term is not usually related to attitudes towards socioeconomic issues, such as tax cuts or free markets, nor even to a more powerful leaning towards the

right along the traditional left-right spectrum (van Hiel, 2012). Right-wing radicalism involves conservative sociocultural ideologies and opinions, such as nationalism, xenophobia, authoritarianism and social conservatism (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018). The radicalism concept refers to an ambition to radically transform society, but in contrast to *extreme* right parties, the goal of *radical* right parties is to influence society via lawful and democratic means (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007). The new radical-right party family is also characterised by a populist rhetoric and a populist critique of the political establishment. Based on the Sweden Democrat's position on sociocultural issues, the party may be defined as a right-wing party since both the party's politicians and voters tend to express nationalist, social conservative and authoritarian attitudes (e.g. Jungar & Jupskås, 2014).

A further question is what is meant by the Sweden Democrats' defence of the welfare state. Radical right-wing parties may wish to preserve – or even expand – the welfare state, but they often do so within the framework of what has been labelled *welfare chauvinism* (Goldschmidt & Rydgren, 2015; Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015; Norocel, 2016). This concept refers to an exclusionary view of who should benefit from the welfare state. More specifically it means that the welfare state is something desirable in itself, but that certain groups – particularly foreign-born residents – should be excluded from receiving the benefits of it (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990). These groups are viewed as exploiting and depleting public sector resources and their presence is thus regarded as a reason for the perceived decline of the welfare state. In this chapter, we examine whether there are a larger number of respondents who may be characterised as welfare chauvinists among Sweden Democrats than among the voters of other parties.

Finally, the attractiveness of different political parties and sociopolitical positions may vary among individuals with different values and personalities. Those who lean towards the political right and who have conservative sociocultural attitudes more often tend to value obedience and view tolerance and respect as less important (Pew Research Center, 2014). In Western countries, right-leaning political orientation is also correlated with authoritarianism and conservatism (Aspelund, Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2013). Authoritarianism/conservatism also tend to characterize radical right-wing parties and be expressed by their voters (Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016; Rydgren, 2007). Further, there is also a link between sociopolitical views, and empathy and agreeableness (Bakker, Rooduijn, & Schumacher, 2016; Sinclair & Saklofske, 2018). This chapter will analyse and compare these psychological characteristics among the different groups of voters.

Socioeconomic issues

Figure 2.1 shows, in line with previous studies (Sannerstedt, 2014), that Sweden Democrat voters lie to the right of Social Democrat voters and a little to the left of Conservative voters on socioeconomic issues. Approximately half of the Sweden Democrat voters (49 percent) agree that *it is good to have private profit-driven alternatives in the care sector*, while the corresponding proportion of Conservative voters is significantly larger (67 percent) and that of Social Democrat voters significantly smaller (9 percent). As to the proportions who agree that *the public sector is too large* and that *taxes should be reduced*, the difference between Sweden Democrat voters and Conservative voters is small (a difference of 4–7 percentage points), whereas there is a large difference between Sweden Democrat voters and Social Democrat voters (a difference of 41–52 percentage points). It should be noted that a minority of all three voter groups *disagree* with the statement that *income differences should be reduced*. However, it is considerably less common for Social Democrat voters (2 percent) to disagree with this statement than it is for Sweden Democrat voters (19 percent) or Conservative voters (29 percent).

Figure 2.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements on socioeconomic issues. NB: The fourth statement in the figure was formulated “Income differences should be reduced”, and the figure presents the proportions of respondents who partly or completely disagree with this statement.

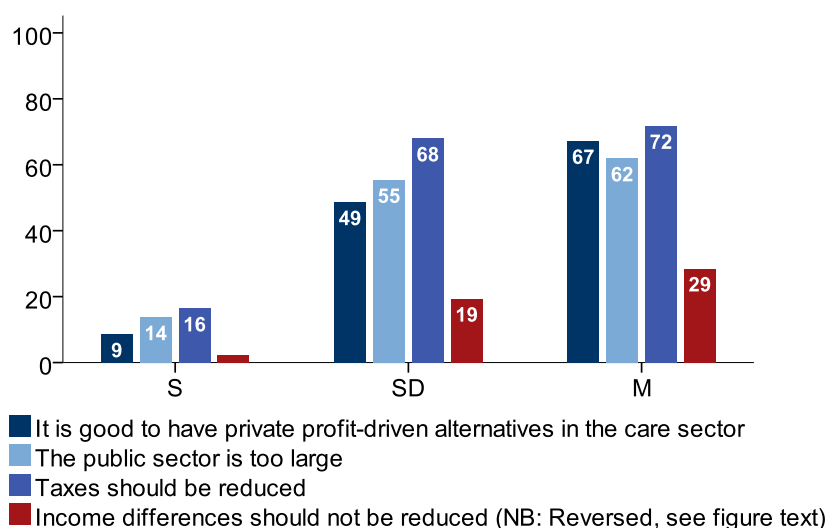
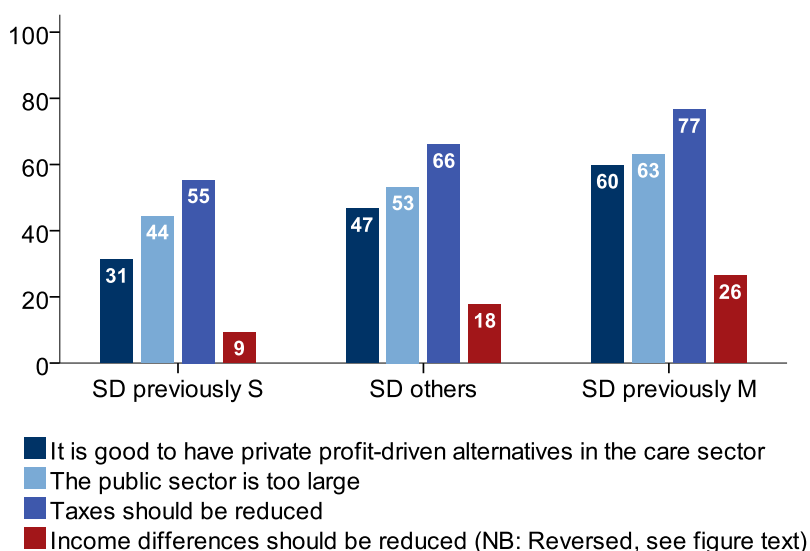


Figure 2.2 presents a more detailed analysis of Sweden Democrat voters, with the results confirming the picture presented above. Irrespective of their previous party allegiances, Sweden Democrat voters are positioned significantly to the right of Social Democrat voters and closer to Conservative voters on all issues. Even among those who had previously voted for the Social Democrats, it is considerably more common to agree that taxes should be reduced (55 percent) and that the public sector is too large (44 percent), and to disagree that income differences should be reduced (9 percent), than it is among those who would today vote for the Social Democrats.

Figure 2.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters who partly or completely agree with statements on socioeconomic issues.



We also analysed views on socioeconomic issues among those Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters who specified Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party. The results show that Conservative voters who name the Sweden Democrats as their second choice differ very little from other Conservative voters in relation to any of the socioeconomic statements (differences of 1–5 percentage points). This is also the case among the Social Democrat voters in relation to two of the issues (income differences and profit-driven alternatives in the care sector; differences of 0–1 percentage points). By contrast, there is a substantial difference between those Social Democrat voters who specified the Sweden Democrats as their

second choice and other Social Democrat voters with regard to the issues of whether the public sector is too large or whether taxes should be reduced (differences of 22–31 percentage points).

On the basis of their responses on socioeconomic issues, the results suggest that Sweden Democrat voters may be defined as right-wing rather than centre voters. They are positioned considerably closer to Conservative voters than to Social Democrat voters, and this is the case even for Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats (despite the fact that this group lies to the left of other Sweden Democrat voters).

Sociocultural issues

Immigration

Over recent years, the issue of immigration has attracted an increasing amount of attention in the Swedish political debate. Figure 2.4 shows the proportion of voters who agree that *immigration to Sweden should be reduced*. As expected, virtually all Sweden Democrat voters agree with this statement. This is in contrast with the corresponding proportions among Conservative voters (76 percent) and particularly Social Democrat voters (39 percent).

Figure 2.3. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree that immigration to Sweden should be reduced.

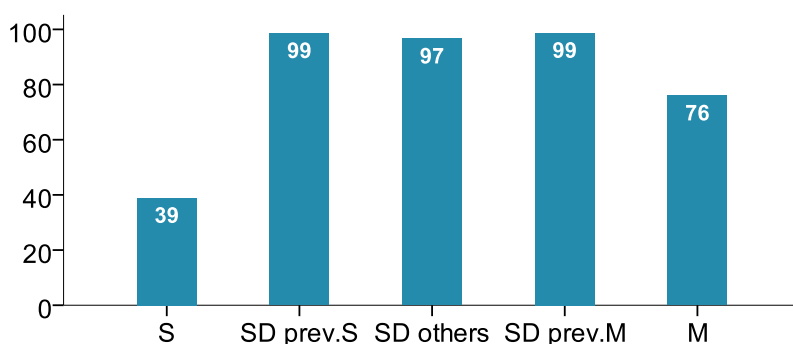
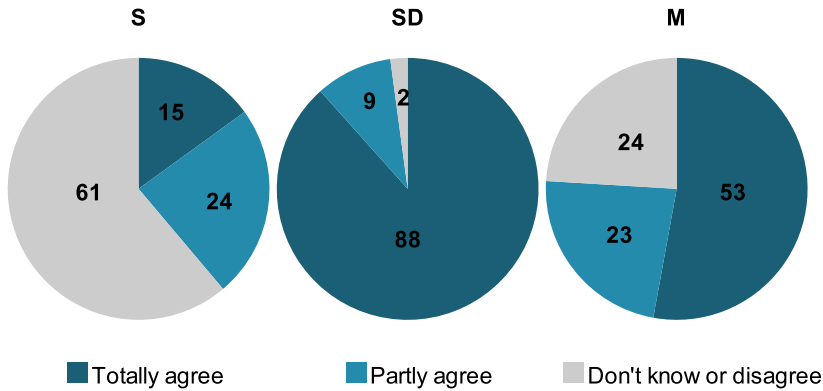


Figure 2.4. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who don't know/disagree or partly or completely agree that immigration to Sweden should be reduced.



Since immigration constitutes the core political issue for the Sweden Democrats, the voter groups' preferences for a reduction in immigration were analysed in more detail. The results presented in Figure 2.5 suggest that there are major differences between the voter groups with regard to whether they *completely* or *partly* agree with the statement. The proportions of voters who state that they completely agree with the statement are 88 percent among the Sweden Democrat voters, 53 percent among the Conservative voters and only 15 percent among the Social Democrat voters.

Further analysis shows that there are very few differences among the Sweden Democrat voters, irrespective of their previous party allegiances. Former Social Democrat voters (88 percent), former Conservative voters (90 percent), and other Sweden Democrat voters (87 percent) completely agreed with the statement to almost the same extent.

We also analysed the desire to reduce immigration among those Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters who specified the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party. The results showed that it is considerably more common for Conservative voters who specify the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party (82 percent) to completely agree that immigration should be reduced than it is for the corresponding group of Social Democrat voters (67 percent), and that both groups express a stronger preference for a reduction in immigration than other Social Democrat and Conservative voters.

In combination, these results show that a considerable proportion of the respondents in all three voter groups think that immigration to Sweden should be re-

duced, but that Sweden Democrat voters express a significantly stronger preference for a reduction in immigration than Conservative and particularly Social Democrat voters.

It should finally be noted that there may be several different reasons for the desire for reduced immigration, which are not in themselves elucidated when attitudes towards immigration are measured using this question. For this reason, attitudes towards immigration and immigrants are analysed in more detail in the chapter ‘Immigration and immigrants’.

Gender roles and gender equality

Another current topic in the political debate involves issues relating to gender roles and gender equality and the question of whether there is a need and a desire to influence these by means of various policy proposals. This section analyses the voters’ attitudes towards gender roles, women and feminism.

Figure 2.5. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with the statement that feminism has gone too far.

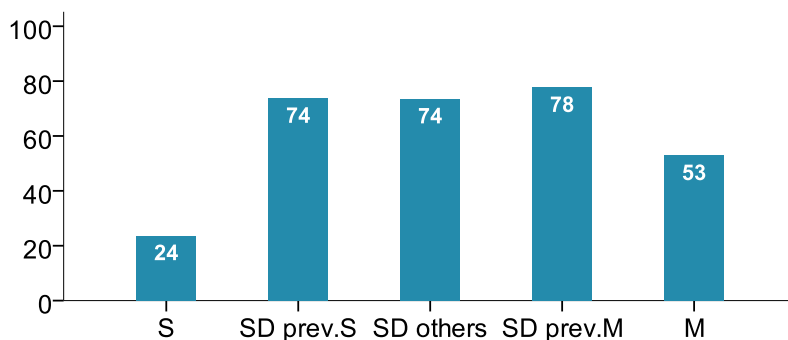
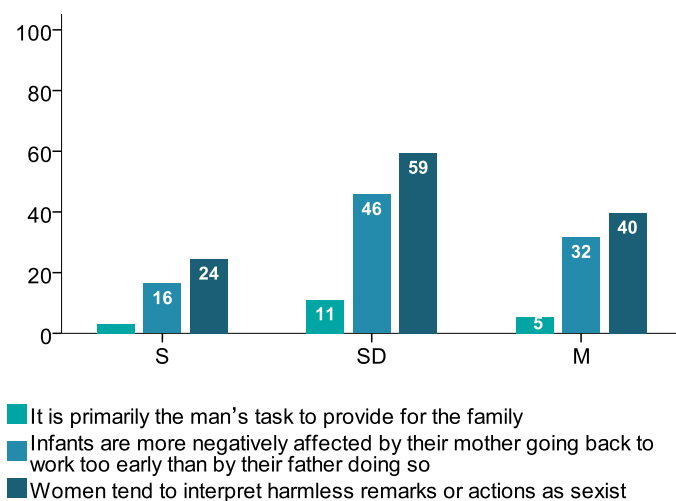


Figure 2.5 shows that a clear majority of Sweden Democrat voters, irrespective of their previous party allegiances (74–78 percent), agree with the statement that feminism has gone too far. Approximately half of Conservative voters (53 percent), and a minority of Social Democrat voters (24 percent), agree with this statement.

Figure 2.6 presents results relating to statements that measure sexist attitudes and views on traditional gender roles. It is unusual for respondents from all voter groups to agree with the statement that *it is primarily the man’s task to provide for the family*. This statement is supported by only 11 percent of Sweden Democrat vot-

ers, 3 percent of Social Democrat voters and 5 percent of Conservative voters. There is more variation in agreeing that *infants are more negatively affected by their mother going back to work too early than by their father doing so*. This statement receives the support of 46 percent of Sweden Democrat voters, 32 percent of Conservative voters and 16 percent of Social Democrat voters. The level of variation is even greater when it comes to agreeing with the statement that *women tend to interpret harmless remarks or actions as sexist*. This is also the statement that receives the greatest level of support in all voter groups. The majority of Sweden Democrat voters (59 percent) agree with this statement, whereas the corresponding proportion is considerably smaller among Conservative voters (40 percent) and Social Democrat voters (24 percent).

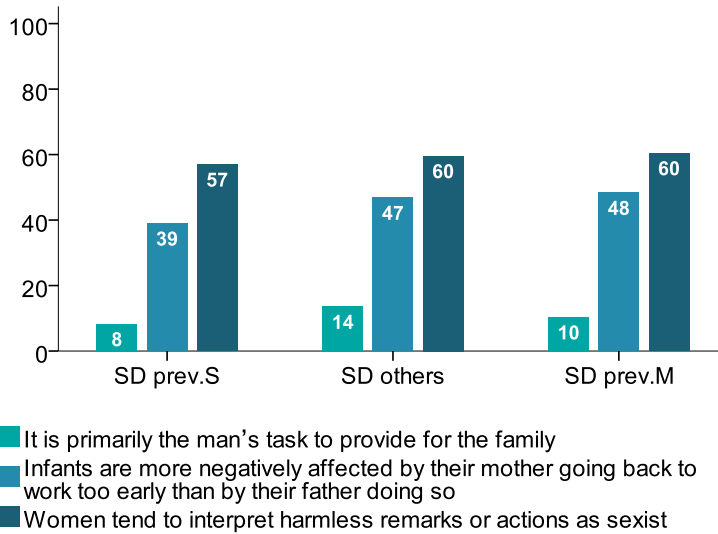
Figure 2.6. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements that measure attitudes towards women and gender roles.⁵



A more detailed analysis of the Sweden Democrat voters is presented in Figure 2.7. Differences between former Social Democrat voters, former Conservative voters and the remaining Sweden Democrat voters are very small in relation to all of the statements. This suggests that on the question of gender issues, there are significant differences between those who have left the Social Democrats or the Conservatives for the Sweden Democrats and those who have continued to support these two parties.

5. Men agreed with the statements that measure attitudes towards feminism and sexism to a greater extent than women, but the central findings regarding the differences between the voter groups remain unchanged when the analyses included controls for the respondents' gender.

Figure 2.7. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters who partly or completely agree with statements that measure attitudes towards women and gender roles.



Vegetarian food at school

Vegetarian food has become a political issue in Sweden, and there are today municipalities that have meat-free days in their school canteens. This has met some resistance. Previous research has found that negative attitudes towards vegetarianism are more common among individuals with social conservative values and prejudiced attitudes toward ethnic outgroups (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Dhont, Hodson, & Leite, 2016). One explanation for this is that vegetarianism may be regarded as a threat to prevailing lifestyles and societal values. This section examines whether respondents think *it is reasonable that schools have days when they only serve vegetarian food*.

Figure 2.8. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree that it is reasonable that schools have days when they only serve vegetarian food.⁶

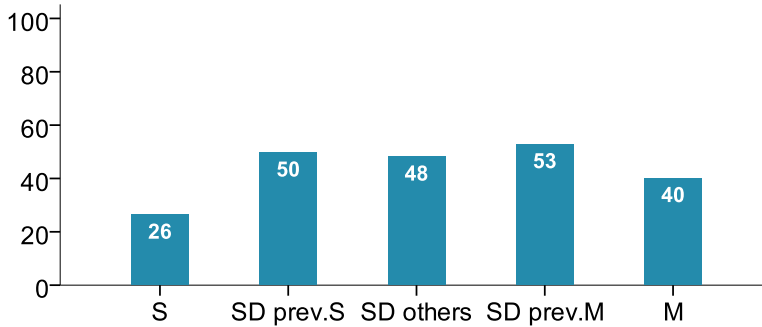


Figure 2.8 shows that approximately half of the Sweden Democrat voters (48–53 percent) disagree with the statement, irrespective of their previous party allegiance. This is somewhat larger than the corresponding proportion among Conservative voters (40 percent), and considerably larger than that found among Social Democrat voters (26 percent).

Political correctness

In order to examine attitudes to political correctness in different voter groups, a question was asked about whether *too much consideration is given to people who feel offended by what other people say*.

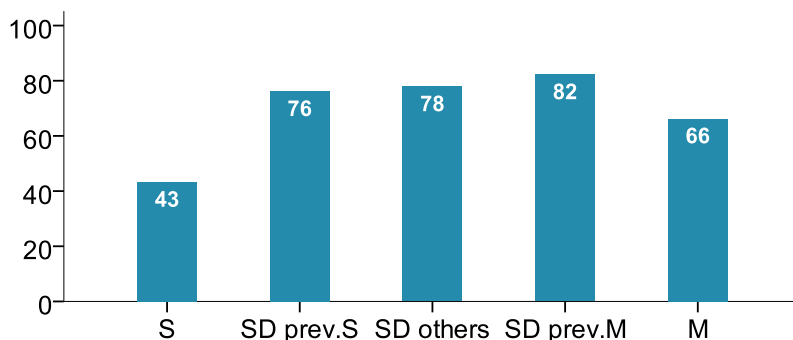
Figure 2.9 shows that it is relatively common for members of all the voter groups to agree with this statement. The Sweden Democrat voters agreed with the statement to the greatest extent (76–82 percent). Among the Conservative voters, a majority agreed with the statement (66 percent), while the corresponding proportion was smaller among the Social Democrat voters (43 percent).

A more detailed analysis of the respondents with high and low levels of immigration scepticism showed that particularly those who are sceptical towards immigration (i.e. agreed with the statement that *immigration to Sweden should be reduced*) also agreed with the statement used to measure attitudes towards political correct-

6. Older respondents (> 40 years) tended to view schools having vegetarian days as unreasonable to a greater extent than others. The difference between older and younger respondents was greater among Social Democrat voters (a difference of 22 percentage points) than among Conservative voters (a difference of 13 percentage points) and Sweden Democrat voters (a difference of 3–6 percentage points). The difference between the voter groups examined remains when the analyses include controls for the age of the respondents.

ness. Even within this group, however, it was more common for Sweden Democrat voters (81 percent) to agree with the statement than for Social Democrat voters (60 percent) or Conservative voters (73 percent) to do so.

Figure 2.9. Proportion (%) of respondents from each voter group who partly or completely agree that too much consideration is given to people who feel offended by what other people say.



Welfare chauvinism

Welfare chauvinism is a concept used to label the view that the welfare state should be preserved, or even expanded, but that its benefits should be restricted to native-born residents (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990). In this report, a combination of two questions is used to measure welfare chauvinism.

Swedish welfare policy is based to a relatively large extent on the public sector. The question of whether immigration is a problem for the welfare state can therefore be measured using the statement *immigration costs too many public resources*. However, since it is possible to agree with this statement even if one does not support the welfare state per se, it should be combined with a question that specifically measures this (see Table 2.1). The respondents' view of the welfare state is here measured using the statement *the public sector is too large*. This statement does not usually find support among very many people in Sweden, with only around 20 per cent agreeing (SOM, 2016).

Table 2.1. Combinations of views on the size of the public sector and the cost to the public sector of immigration.

	The public sector is too large	Immigration costs too much in terms of public sector resources
Left	No	No
Welfare chauvinism	No	Yes
Libertarianism	Yes	No
Right	Yes	Yes

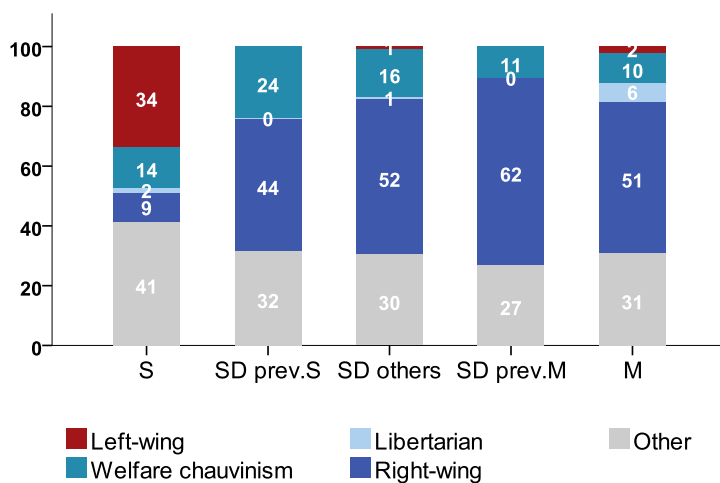
Note: There is also a category labelled “others” comprising those respondents who neither agreed or disagreed with one of the statements.

Table 2.1 summarises the different combinations that are of relevance in the discussion of welfare nationalism. Right-wing voters tend to agree that the public sector is too large to a greater extent than left-wing voters (SOM, 2016). Scepticism towards immigration is also more common among right-leaning individuals (Dinesen, Klemmensen, & Nørgaard, 2016), and right-wing voters may thus be expected to agree that immigration costs too many public resources – even if they also think that the public sector is too large. This combination may therefore be regarded as a *right-wing combination*. A *left-wing combination* would in turn involve an individual *disagreeing* both that the welfare state is too large and that immigration costs too many public resources. *Libertarianism* involves a desire that individuals should be free from compulsion and state influence in their lives, and the combination of agreeing that the public sector is too large but not disagreeing that immigration costs too many public resources may be regarded as representing this point of view. Finally, *welfare chauvinism* would involve disagreeing that the public sector is too large, but agreeing that immigration costs too many public resources. Those who neither agree or disagree with one or both statements have been assigned to a category labelled “others”.

The results presented in Figure 2.10 show that the most common combination among both Sweden Democrat voters (55 percent) and Conservative voters (51 percent) is the *right-wing* combination. *Welfare chauvinism* is little more common among Sweden Democrat voters (16 percent) and Social Democrat voters (14 percent) than among Conservative voters (10 percent). The *left-wing* combination is relatively common among Social Democrat voters (34 percent), but very rare among Sweden Democrat voters (0.3 percent) and Conservative voters (2 percent). The *libertarian* combination is unusual in all voter groups, but more common among

Conservative voters (6 percent) than among Social Democrat voters (2 percent) or Sweden Democrat voters (0.3 percent).

Figure 2.10. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters found in different categories related to welfare chauvinism.



A closer analysis focused only on Sweden Democrat voters shows that the proportion who may be regarded as welfare chauvinists is highest among former Social Democrat voters (24 percent) and lowest among former Conservative voters (11 percent), while the proportion found among the remaining Sweden Democrat voters lies between these two (16 percent).

The psychology behind sociopolitical views

Authoritarianism and conservatism

Figure 2.11 shows that it is relatively common for the members of all voter groups to agree with the statement that measures authoritarianism, i.e. that *a powerful leader is needed to stop the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today*. However, the proportion of Sweden Democrat voters (69–73 percent) who agree with this statement is larger than that found among Conservative voters (60 percent) and particularly Social Democrat voters (45 percent).

Figure 2.11. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree that a powerful leader is needed to stop the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today.

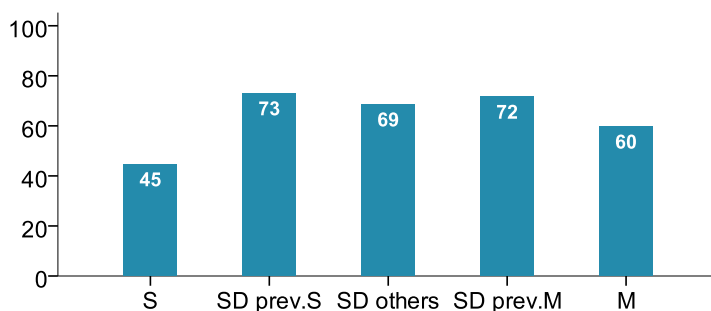
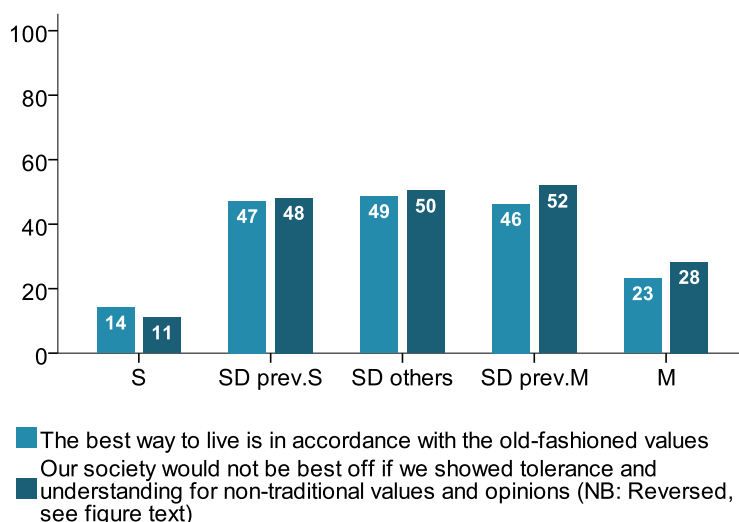


Figure 2.12. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements measuring conservative attitudes. NB: The second statement in the figure was formulated, "Our society would be best off..." and the figure presents the proportion of respondents who partly or completely disagree with this statement.



The statements used to measure social conservatism and tolerance for non-traditional views and values are presented in Figure 2.12. The results show that approximately half of Sweden Democrat voters agree that *the best way to live is in accordance with the old-fashioned values* (46–49 percent), while this proportion is considerably smaller among Conservative voters (23 percent) and Social Democrat voters (14 percent). Similar results are found in relation to the statement that *our society*

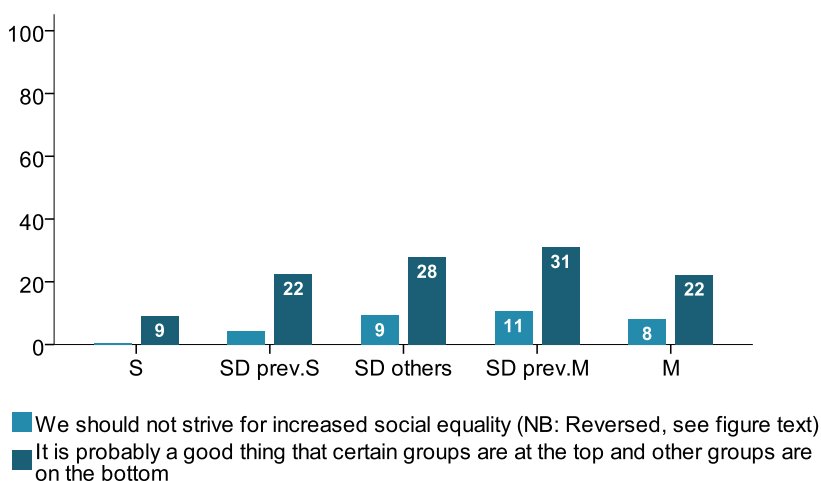
would be best off if we showed tolerance and understanding for non-traditional values and opinions. Approximately half of Sweden Democrat voters (48–52 percent), and a smaller proportion of Conservative voters (28 percent) and Social Democrat voters (11 percent) *disagree* with this statement. There is a substantial difference in relation to both statements between Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted for the Conservatives or the Social Democrats and those voters who have retained their allegiance to these parties.

Together these results show that the desire for a powerful leader to combat radical and immoral currents in society (authoritarianism) is relatively common in all voter groups, whereas social conservatism is more uncommon. Sweden Democrat voters are more authoritarian and conservative, which suggests that they are ideologically positioned to the right of both the Conservatives and the Social Democrats.

Views on social inequality

Figure 2.13 presents results relating to statements that measure attitudes towards social hierarchies and equality between different groups in society. Only a minority of voters in all voter groups disagree with the statement that *we should strive for increased social equality*. However, it is more common for Sweden Democrat voters to disagree with this statement (4–11 percent) than for Conservative voters (8 percent) or Social Democrat voters (1 percent) to do so.

Figure 2.13. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements measuring attitudes towards social hierarchies. NB: The second statement in the figure was formulated, “We should strive for increased social equality”, and the figure presents the proportion of respondents who partly or completely disagree with this statement.



The statement that *it is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are on the bottom* received more support in all of the voter groups. Among Sweden Democrat voters, 22–31 percent agree with this statement, which is a larger proportion than that found among Conservative voters (22 percent) and Social Democrat voters (9 percent). These results suggest that the majority of Swedish voters are supportive of social equality, irrespective of their political orientation and identification.

Obedience and tolerance

One way of studying values is to ask respondents which qualities children should be encouraged to learn at home. Previous research suggests that politically conservative individuals tend to think that obedience is an important quality whereas political liberals more often mention tolerance and respect (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Figure 2.14. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who chose ‘obedience’ and ‘tolerance and respect for other people’ among five particularly important qualities that children should be encouraged to learn at home.

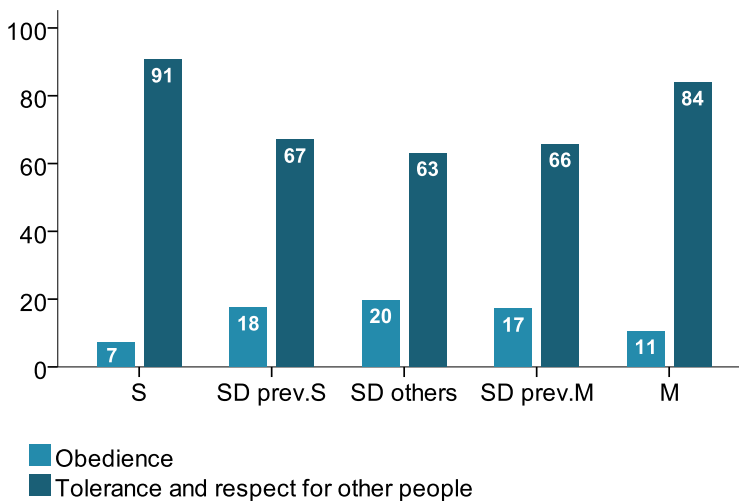


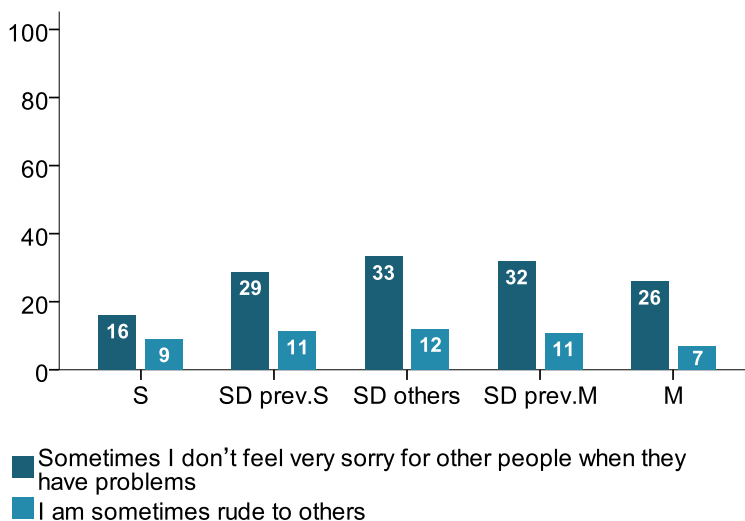
Figure 2.14 shows that a minority of our respondents chose *obedience* among the five important qualities that children should learn at home, and that this was the case across all voter groups. Obedience was chosen more often by Sweden Democrat voters (17–20 percent) than by Social Democrat (7 percent) and Conservative

voters (11 percent). The quality *tolerance and respect for other people* was chosen by a majority in all the voter groups, but less often by Sweden Democrat voters (63–67 percent) than by Social Democrat voters (91 percent) and Conservative voters (84 percent).

Empathy and agreeableness

Previous research has shown that a political right-wing orientation is correlated with lower levels of empathy and agreeableness (Sinclair & Saklofske, 2018). Figure 2.15 shows that a minority of our respondents have low levels of empathy, but that this is more common for Sweden Democrat voters to answer that the statement *sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they have problems* describes them well (29–33 percent) than it is for Conservative voters (26 percent) and Social Democrat voters (16 percent) to do so. Nor is it common for the respondents to be low in agreeableness, but it is somewhat more common among Sweden Democrat voters (11–12 percent) than among Social Democrat (9 percent) and Conservative voters (7 percent) to feel that the statement *I am sometimes rude to others* describes them well.

Figure 2.15. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who feel that statements measuring empathy and agreeableness describe them quite well or very well.



Summary

This chapter has explored whether Sweden Democrat voters may be viewed as right- or left-wing voters. The results show that:

- On *socioeconomic issues*, Sweden Democrat voters lie relatively close to the middle of the left-right spectrum, but closer to Conservative voters than to Social Democrat voters. Those Sweden Democrat supporters who previously voted for the Social Democrats and the Conservatives respectively differ significantly from one another, but the former Social Democrat voters who have switched to the Sweden Democrats lie a considerable distance to the right of those who vote for the Social Democrats today. However, former Conservative voters who have switched to the Sweden Democrats do not differ from those who today vote for the Conservatives.
- With regard to *sociocultural issues*, Sweden Democrat voters are positioned significantly to the right of both Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters. Sweden Democrat voters are more united on sociocultural issues and opinions linked to right-wing ideology than on socioeconomic issues. The differences between voters who have switched to the Sweden Democrats from the Social Democrats or the Conservatives and other Sweden Democrat voters are very small.
- A larger proportion of Sweden Democrat voters are characterised by a right-of-centre view of the welfare state, rather than by *welfare chauvinism*, which is viewed as a mix of right- and left-wing positions (i.e. the view that the welfare state should be preserved but that non-native born Swedes should be excluded from its benefits).
- Sweden Democrat voters cannot be described as *non-empathetic or disagreeable* in general, but these characteristics are somewhat more common among Sweden Democrat voters than among Social Democrat and Conservative voters.
- Compared with Social Democrat and Conservative voters, Sweden Democrat voters are less inclined to think that *tolerance and respect* are particularly important qualities for children to learn at home, and more inclined to think that obedience is important. It should be emphasised however that even among Sweden Democrat voters, a majority chose tolerance and respect as important qualities, and only a minority chose obedience.

It should be noted that analyses of ideologies are not entirely unproblematic, and the reader should be aware of how interpretations have been made in this report. Previous studies have often differentiated between a left-right orientation (socio-

economic issues) and a conservative-liberal orientation (sociocultural issues and ideological views), and concluded that Sweden Democrat voters are centre voters on socioeconomic issues but conservative/authoritarian in relation to sociocultural questions (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014; Sannerstedt, 2014). The results in this report are in line with these conclusions, but our interpretation differs from those presented in previous research. The difference is due to the fact that the liberal-conservative orientation has in this report also been used as an indicator of left-right orientation. The reason for choosing this approach is that conservatism/authoritarianism and views on sociocultural issues are usually central to definitions of right-wing radicalism (Mudde, 2007) and that a right-wing political orientation tends to be correlated with conservatism and authoritarianism, at least in Western countries (Aspelund et al., 2013).

A further result that the reader should reflect on is the finding that all voter groups share a predominantly positive fundamental view of social equality and of reducing income differences. These findings may reflect the fact that Swedish society has been relatively progressive on questions related to equality – which may have influenced the population’s views on this issue. On the other hand, it is also possible that this positive attitude is not entirely preserved when concrete questions are asked about equality (Moffitt, 2017). One example is that it is more common for Sweden Democrat voters to have sexist opinions and negative attitudes towards feminism, a result that is in line with the results of previous research (Norocel, 2016; Towns, Karlsson, & Eyre, 2014).

3. Immigration and immigrants

Immigration is the Sweden Democrats' most central issue, and as was seen earlier from the results of Figure 2.4 (see the chapter 'Right-wing or centre voters?'), virtually all Sweden Democrat voters think that immigration should be reduced (see also e.g. Sannerstedt, 2014). Support for an anti-immigration party may be based on several different types of opinions, such as perceived economic competition between native-born residents and immigrants, or a perception that immigration has a negative impact on a country's traditional culture or that it causes increases in crime. Compared with immigration scepticism, i.e. a desire for reduced immigration that is not grounded in some form of deeper antipathy towards immigrants, xenophobia and racism have been found to be less important factors in explaining support for European radical right-wing parties (Rydgren, 2008).

One could ask, however, whether these findings also hold for parties with a background in openly neo-Nazi or fascist movements (Cutts et al., 2011), such as the Sweden Democrats (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014). Previous research indicates that British National Party voters in the UK – which has a similar ideological background to the Sweden Democrats – have primarily been motivated by racism, although the party has more recently also been gaining support among anti-elitist and immigration-sceptical voters (Cutts et al., 2011). Today the Sweden Democrats state that they have zero-tolerance for racism, and there is research showing that the party's voters do not regard themselves as racist (Mulinari & Neergaard, 2014). At the same time, party representatives have expressed opinions that may be classified as xenophobic or racist (Hatakka, Niemi, & Välimäki, 2017; Mulinari & Neergaard, 2014). There is thus reason to examine the views of Sweden Democrat voters on immigration and immigrants. This chapter studies this question in detail.

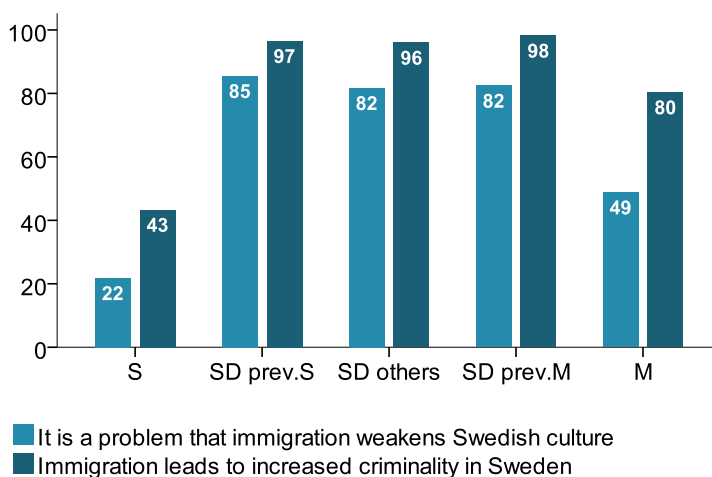
Views on immigration

A threat to Sweden

One reason for voting for an anti-immigration party is a perception that immigration constitutes a threat to one's country in some way, for example by producing an increase in crime or by weakening its culture (Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016; Elgenius & Rydgren, 2017).

The results presented in Figure 3.1 show that Sweden Democrat voters view immigration as a threat to a significantly greater extent than Social Democrat and Conservative voters. 82–85 percent of Sweden Democrat voters agree with the statement *it is a problem that immigration weakens Swedish culture*. The corresponding proportion is much smaller among Conservative (49 percent) and Social Democrat voters (22 percent). It is more common in all voter groups to agree that *immigration leads to increased criminality in Sweden* – but this is still considerably more common among Sweden Democrat voters (96–98 percent) than among Conservative voters (80 percent) and Social Democrat voters (43 percent). There is virtually no difference in these results between Sweden Democrat voters based on which party they previously voted for.

Figure 3.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements about immigration constituting a threat to Sweden.



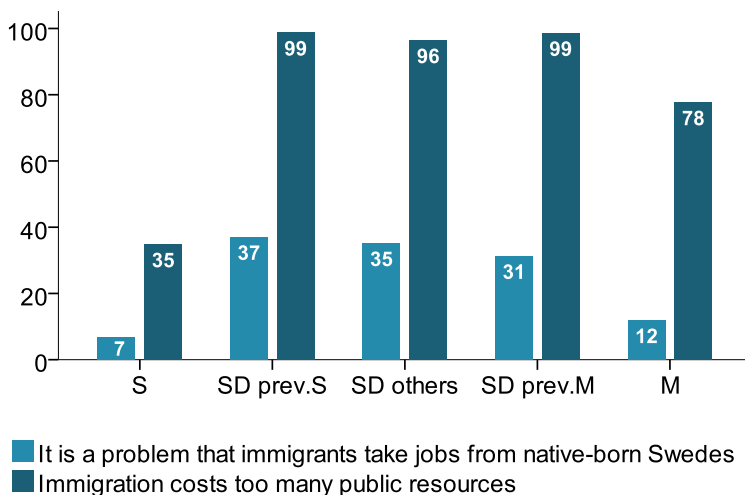
We also conducted a more detailed analysis of those Social Democrat and Conservative voters who named the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party, and the results show that there are substantial differences in relation to other Social Democrat and Conservative voters. Among Conservative voters who named the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party, 97 percent agree with the statement on the effects of immigration on crime (a 17-percentage point difference), and 70 percent agree with the statement on Swedish culture being weakened (a 21-percentage point difference). The corresponding figures for Social Democrat voters who named

the Sweden Democrats as their second choice are 80 percent (a 37-percentage point difference) and 63 percent (a 41-percentage point difference).

Economic competition

A further reason for wanting to reduce immigration is the perception that immigrants compete for the same resources as native-born Swedes (see e.g. Rydgren & Ruth, 2011). Figure 3.2 shows that it is much more common for Sweden Democrat voters to agree that *it is a problem that immigrants take jobs from native-born Swedes* (31–37 percent) than for Social Democrat (7 percent) and Conservative voters (12 percent). The results are similar for the statement that *immigration costs too many public resources*, which as many as 96–99 percent of Sweden Democrat voters agreed with, compared with 35 percent of Social Democrat voters and 78 percent of Conservative voters. Once again there is very little difference among Sweden Democrat voters, irrespective of their previous party allegiances (a difference of 0–6 percentage points).

Figure 3.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements on the economic consequences of immigration.



Additional analyses show that there is a substantial difference between those Social Democrat and Conservative voters who named the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party and other Social Democrat and Conservative voters. Among Conservative voters who named the Sweden Democrats as their second choice, 22

percent agree that it is a problem that immigrants take jobs (a 10-percentage point difference) and 97 percent agree that immigration costs too many public resources (a 20-percentage point differences). The corresponding figures for Social Democrat voters who named the Sweden Democrats as their second choice are 37 percent (a 30-percentage point difference) and 90 percent (a 55-percentage point difference).

It is worth noting that all voter groups view the costs of immigration to the public sector as being more negative than immigrants taking jobs from Swedes, and this difference is very large even among Sweden Democrat voters. This may indicate that support for the Sweden Democrats is not primarily based on perceptions of individual economic competition but rather on a perception that immigration constitutes a threat to the welfare state and that native-born Swedes are not getting sufficient value for money for their taxes, which would be an indication of welfare chauvinism (see the chapter ‘Right-wing or centre voters?’).

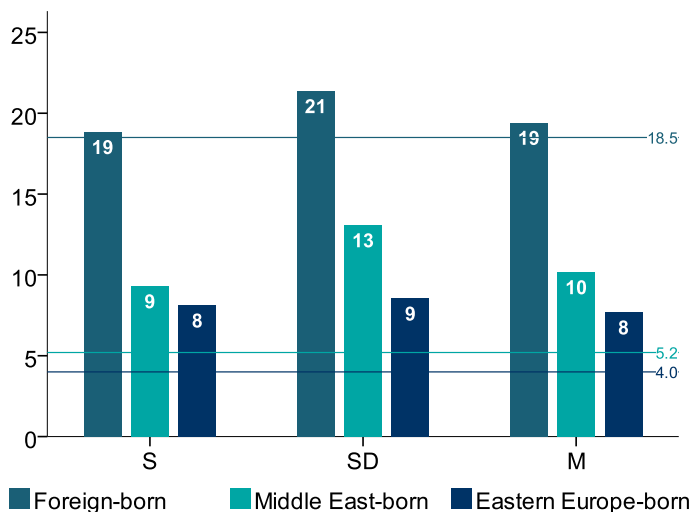
Estimates of the proportion of foreign-born residents

As the above results show, and in line with the party rhetoric (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2017), Sweden Democrat voters tend to a very large extent to view immigration as both an economic and cultural threat. This perception of the threat posed by immigrants, along with the desire to reduce immigration, may be based on an exaggerated view of the proportion of foreign-born residents living in Sweden.

Figure 3.3 presents the electors’ estimates of the proportion of foreign-born people living in Sweden. The results show that none of the three voter groups overestimates the proportion of foreign-born residents to any significant degree, although the estimate of Sweden Democrat voters lies two percentage points over that of other voters (and thus 1.5 percentage points above the actual level). As regards the proportion of foreign-born residents born in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the estimate is more exaggerated (4–5 percentage points over the actual level). The different voter groups overestimate the proportion comprised of this group to approximately the same extent.

With regard to the proportion born in the Middle East, the size of the overestimate is even greater, and Sweden Democrat voters tend to overestimate this proportion more (8 percentage points over the actual level) than either Social Democrat voters (4 percentage points over the actual level) and Conservative voters (5 percentage points over the actual level). Stated somewhat differently, the voters of all three parties believe that the proportion of foreign-born residents in Sweden with a background in Eastern Europe or the Middle East is approximately twice as large as it actually is, and Sweden Democrat voters believe that the proportion of immigrants from the Middle East is as much as 2.5 times as large as its actual level.

Figure 3.3. Mean estimates among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters of the proportion of foreign-born individuals living Sweden.



Note: Horizontal lines indicate the correct proportion of foreign-born residents in Sweden according to statistics from Statistics Sweden for December 31, 2017. The proportion is based on persons with Swedish citizenship and those who have been granted residency permits or permanent residence. 18.5 percent of the Swedish population was born abroad,⁷ 5.2 percent were born in the Middle East,⁸ and 4.0 percent were born in Eastern Europe.⁹

Views on immigrants

Antipathies towards immigrants

Electors who vote for a radical right-wing party because they want to reduce immigration and because they view immigration as a threat may sometimes also harbour deeper antipathies towards immigrants (i.e. it is not only immigration but the immigrants themselves that are viewed as a problem). Antipathies of this kind may

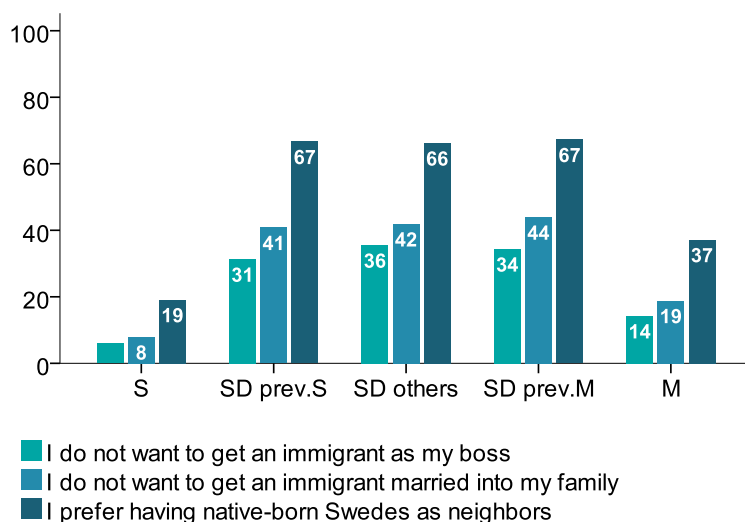
7. If those who lack residency permits are also included, a further 0.5 percent of the Swedish population were born abroad.

8. Countries included in the Middle East category: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Yemen, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. (If Afghanistan and Pakistan are also included, the proportion rises to 5.7 percent).

9. Countries included in the Eastern Europe category: Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Soviet Union, the Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, Hungary and Belarus.

in part be based on xenophobia, which can be defined as discomfort in meetings with unfamiliar and foreign groups of people and a tendency to think that different groups should live separately from one another. Xenophobia may also give rise to hostility and aggression when unfamiliar and foreign groups come too close, particularly if they are perceived to constitute a threat to one's own group. Xenophobia has sometimes been regarded as a form of cultural racism since it encompasses a perception that cultures are essentially different from one another and that they define or determine the characteristics of individuals.

Figure 3.4. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who partly or completely agree with statements measuring xenophobia.



The results presented in Figure 3.4 show that it is considerably more common for Sweden Democrat voters *not to want an immigrant as their boss* (31–36 percent), or to *have an immigrant married into the family* (41–44 percent), as well as to *prefer to have native-born Swedes as neighbours* (66–67 percent) – measures that previous research has used as indicators of xenophobia – by comparison with Social Democrat voters (6, 8 and 19 percent respectively) and Conservative voters (14, 19 and 37 percent). Once again there is very little difference among Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for different parties. It should however be noted that even though Sweden Democrat voters differ markedly from other voters, a minority of Sweden Democrat voters can be considered as being xenophobic in two of the three indicators.

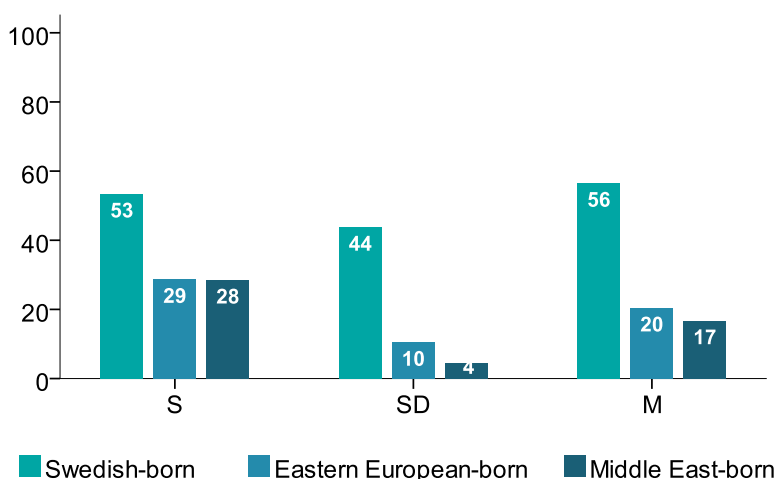
Further analysis shows that, just as was the case with other questions on immigration, there is a clear difference between Social Democrat and Conservative voters who name the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party, and other Social Democrat and Conservative voters. Among Conservative voters with the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party, 26 percent would not want an immigrant as their boss (an 11-percentage point difference), 30 percent would not want an immigrant to marry into their family (an 11-percentage point difference) and 53 percent would prefer to have native-born Swedes as neighbours (a 16-percentage point difference). The corresponding figures among Social Democrat voters who named the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party are 19 percent (a 13-percentage point difference), 38 percent (a 30-percentage point difference) and 45 percent (a 26-percentage point difference).

Trust for immigrants

Levels of trust for other people in general, and trust specifically for immigrants, may in part explain why people have different views on immigration and immigrants.

Figure 3.5 shows that differences between the three voter groups are relatively small with regard to the voters' propensity to trust Swedish-born individuals whom they are meeting for the first time, even though this kind of trust is less common among Sweden Democrat voters (44 percent) than among Conservative voters (56 percent) and Social Democrat voters (53 percent).

Figure 3.5. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who trust people from different groups to a fairly high or very high degree when they meet them for the first time.



The differences are greater with regard to trust for immigrants. Sweden Democrat voters have considerably less trust in Eastern Europeans (10 percent) than Social Democrat voters (29 percent) and Conservative voters (20 percent). The differences are even greater when it comes to trust in persons born in the Middle East, who are trusted by Sweden Democrat voters to a substantially lesser degree (4 percent) than Social Democrat (28 percent) and Conservative voters (17 percent). For the Sweden Democrat voters, it does not matter a great deal which party they have previously voted for (a 1–3-percentage point difference).

As is the case for other questions relating to immigration and immigrants, more detailed analyses show that there are clear differences in levels of trust in immigrants between those Social Democrat and Conservative voters who name the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party and other Social Democrat and Conservative voters. Among Conservative voters with the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party, 54 percent would trust Swedish-born individuals (a 2-percentage point difference), 12 percent would trust Eastern Europeans (an 8-percentage point difference), and 5 percent would trust individuals born in the Middle East (a 12-percentage point difference). The corresponding figures among Social Democrats with the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party are 43 percent (a 10-percentage point difference), 10 percent (a 19-percentage point difference) and 7 percent (a 21-percentage point difference).

What is required to be defined as Swedish?

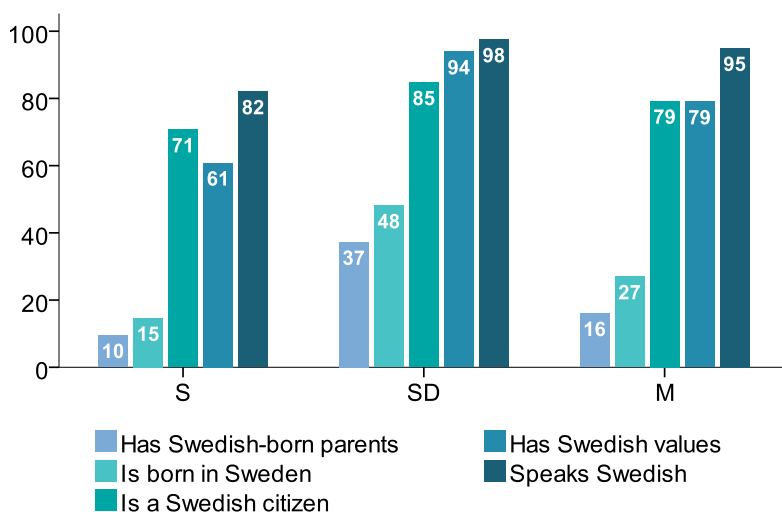
This section analyses how the different parties' voters define Swedishness. Figure 3.6 shows that there is notable agreement between the voter groups with regard to which factors are important for a person to be defined as Swedish. At the same time, there is substantial variation in the weight placed on these factors. The most important factor according to the voters from all three parties is that a person *speaks Swedish*. 98 percent of Sweden Democrats, 82 percent of Social Democrat voters and 95 percent of Conservative voters think that this factor is important.

One characteristic that Sweden Democrat voters regard as important is that a person has *Swedish values* (94 percent). This is regarded as somewhat less important among Social Democrat voters (61 percent) and Conservative voters (79 percent). The three groups differ relatively little with regard to the weight they place on whether a person is a *Swedish citizen*. However, this factor is also viewed as more important by Sweden Democrats (85 percent) than by Social Democrat (71 percent) and Conservative voters (79 percent).

The two factors regarded as least important by all three voter groups relate to first- or second-generation immigrants. Approximately half of Sweden Democrats

(48 percent), and a minority of Social Democrat voters (15 percent) and Conservative voters (27 percent) think that it is important that a person was *born in Sweden* for them to be defined as Swedish. It is even less common for the electors to think it is important that a person has *parents who were born in Sweden*. This too is clearly more common among Sweden Democrat voters (37 percent), however, than among Social Democrat voters (10 percent) and Conservative voters (16 percent).

Figure 3.6. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who think that different characteristics are quite or very important for a person to be defined as Swedish.



Based on these results, it can be concluded that Sweden Democrat voters tend to be more exclusionary in their definition of Swedishness by comparison with Social Democrat and Conservative voters. Even among Sweden Democrat voters, however, it is quite common to think that the concept of Swedishness does not necessarily exclude persons of foreign origin. These findings are in line with the results of analyses that have shown that the Sweden Democrats usually define Swedishness more on the basis of culture than biological factors, although Swedish culture and values have shown themselves to be abstract and difficult concepts to define (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010).

Summary

This chapter has examined views on immigration and immigrants in order to develop a more detailed picture of the views of Sweden Democrat voters and the other voter groups on the issue of immigration. Our results show that:

- Almost all Sweden Democrat voters agree that immigration should be reduced. It is also considerably more common for this group to view immigration as both an *economic* and *cultural threat* than it is for Social Democrat and Conservative voters.
- There is more variation on attitudes towards immigrants. By comparison with questions on immigration per se, a smaller proportion of Sweden Democrat voters agree with statements that may be interpreted as reflecting *antipathy towards immigrants*. They do however agree with these statements to a substantially greater extent than Social Democrat and Conservative voters. In addition, they also tend to have less trust for immigrants and a more exclusionary view regarding which people can be defined as Swedes.
- These findings suggest that Sweden Democrat voters on average have a more negative view of immigration than of immigrants. This is in line with the results of international studies that have shown that immigration scepticism is a more important reason for supporting radical right-wing parties than xenophobia and racism (Rydgren, 2008). However, there is also a considerable group among the Sweden Democrats who appear to harbour a deeper antipathy towards immigrants. Differences between groups characterised by higher and lower levels of xenophobia are explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

4. Anti-establishment attitudes and distrust

The rhetoric of the Sweden Democrats often involves attacks on the political elite, and the party, like its voters, is often very critical of the way Swedish society has developed over recent decades under the leadership of the mainstream political parties (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2017). Also, the Sweden Democrats and their voters tend to be critical of the media and question the reliability of the media's reporting on, for example, immigration and crime (Andersson et al., 2017). As was shown by Figure 3.5 (see the section on 'Trust in immigrants' in Chapter 3), Sweden Democrat voters also have lower levels of trust for people they are meeting for the first time, including people who were born in Sweden.

This chapter examines the voter groups' trust in various societal institutions. It also includes analyses of the voters' attitudes towards established knowledge and conspiracy theories. These analyses are based on previous research, which has suggested that there may be an overlap between distrust in political institutions, and conspiratorial thinking and rejection of mainstream knowledge. These phenomena tend to be based on a worldview where corrupt and powerful groups, such as politicians and researchers, as misleading the public in order to achieve their own economic or political goals (Castanho Silva, Vegetti, & Littvay, 2017; Mudde, 2004).

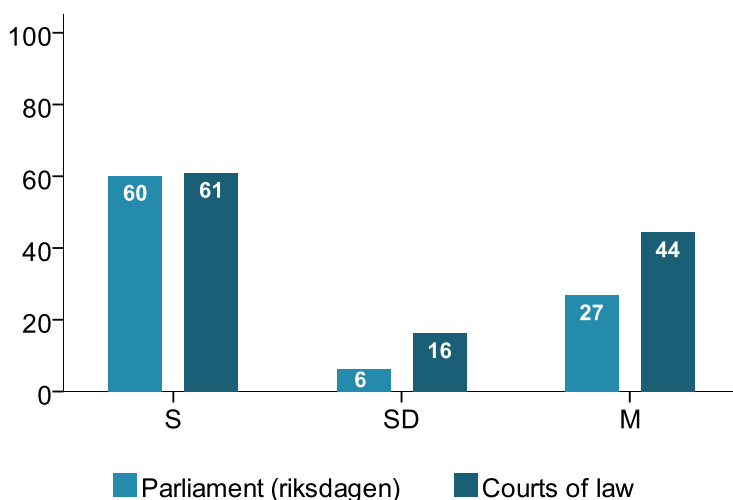
Distrust in politicians and the courts

Figure 4.1 shows that Sweden Democrat voters have significantly lower levels of trust in that *parliament is doing its job* (6 percent) than Conservative (27 percent) and Social Democrat voters (60 percent). They have somewhat more trust in the courts of law (16 percent), but here too their level of trust is substantially lower than that found among Social Democrat voters (61 percent) and Conservative voters (44 percent).

It is worth noting that Conservative voters also distinguish themselves from Social Democrat voters to a substantial degree with regard to levels of trust in both parliament (a 33-percentage point difference) and the courts of law (a 17-percentage point difference). Part of the lower level of trust among Conservative Party and Sweden Democrat voters is probably due to dissatisfaction with the red/green government that was governing Sweden at the time when data was collected.

However, part of the distrust in societal institutions may also be explained by the dissatisfaction with immigration policy. In order to control for this, we also analysed only those who agreed partly or completely that immigration to Sweden should be reduced. Sweden Democrat voters emerged as considerably more distrusting even in this analysis. The proportions who have trust in parliament (6 percent) and the courts of law (16 percent) were unchanged among Sweden Democrat voters. The proportion reporting that they had trust in these institutions declined however among Social Democrat voters (45/48 percent: a 15/13-percentage point difference) and Conservative voters (22/37 percent: a 5/7-percentage point difference), but the differences in relation to Sweden Democrat voters remain notable.

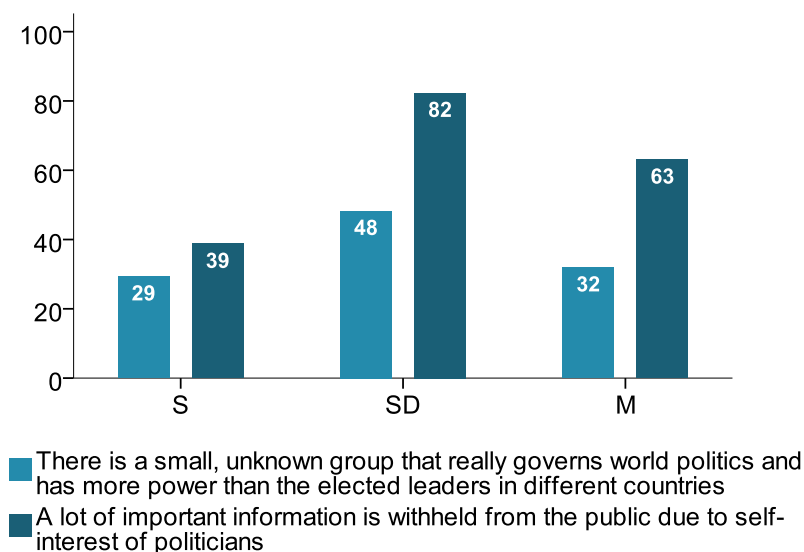
Figure 4.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who have quite high or very high trust in that parliament and the courts are doing their job.



The results for political cynicism are presented in Figure 4.2. It is more common for Sweden Democrat voters to believe that *a lot of important information is withheld from the public due to self-interest of politicians* (82 percent) than for Social Democrat voters (39 percent) and Conservative voters (63 percent). This distrust is not as prominent when it comes to the statement that *there is a small, unknown group that really governs world politics and has more power than the elected leaders in different countries*. However, it is nonetheless more common to believe this among Sweden Democrat voters (48 percent) than among Social Democrat voters (29 percent) and Conservative voters (32 percent).

One interpretation of these results is that the Sweden Democrat voters' political cynicism and distrust are primarily directed at the national political elite and are less about a more conspiratorial view of world politics. The statement on world politics implies that the democratically elected leaders in different countries do not have a great deal of power, a view which might be in conflict with the party's rhetoric that the political elite has had a negative effect on developments in Sweden.

Figure 4.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who have chosen the statements measuring political cynicism to be definitely true or probably true.



Distrust in the media

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of Sweden Democrat voters have low levels of trust in all the different forms of media news reporting that we asked about in the study. This is the case irrespective of whether the news medium in question is (independent) Social Democratic (the tabloid Aftonbladet: 8 percent), commercial television (TV4: 21 percent), public service television (Sweden's Television: 30 percent), local (a local newspaper: 31 percent), or liberal (the newspapers Dagens Nyheter: 21 percent and Göteborgs-Posten: 28 percent). It is also worth noting that only 34 percent of the Sweden Democrat voters have trust in the online news site Samhällsnytt, despite the fact that the site has an (independent) Sweden Democrat political affiliation.

Figure 4.3. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who report having quite high or very high trust in different forms of media.

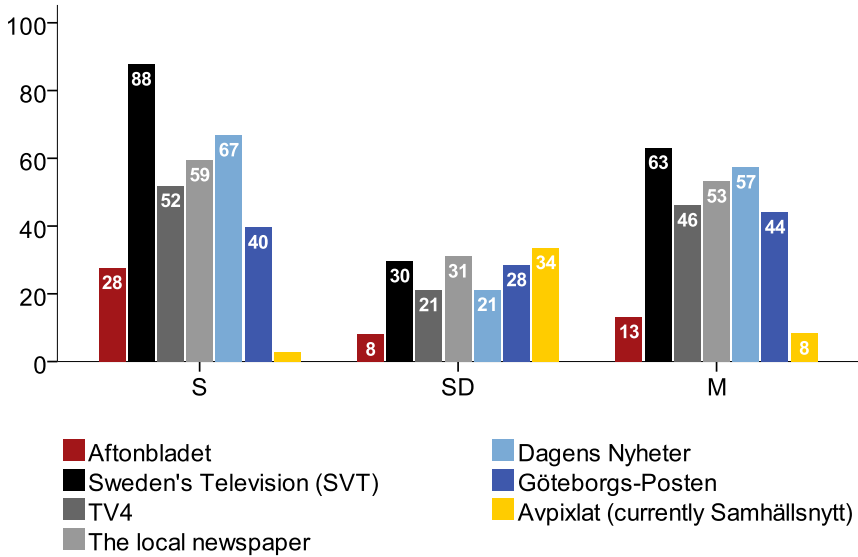


Figure 4.4. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who report having quite high or very high trust in the news reporting of Sweden's Television/Swedish Radio in different subject areas.

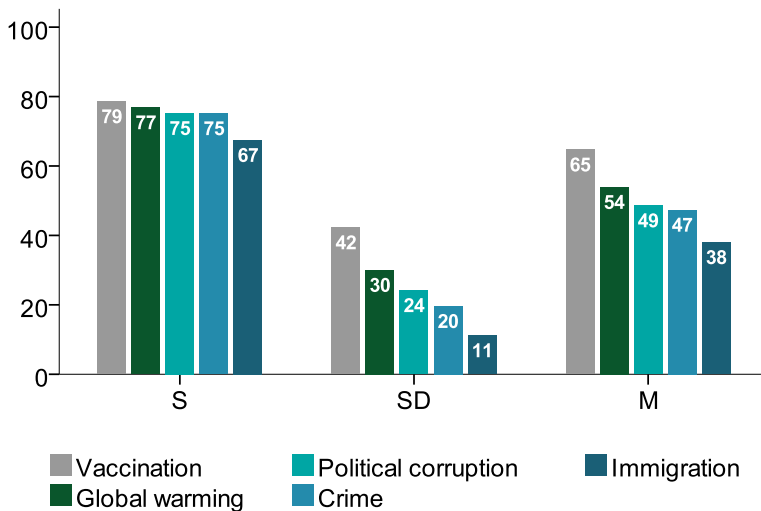


Figure 4.4 shows the degree of trust the voter groups have in the reporting of public service news media in different subject areas, and the results are similar to those described above. It is relatively uncommon for Sweden Democrat voters to have high levels of trust in the news reporting of Sweden's Television (*Sveriges Television*) and Swedish Radio (*Sveriges Radio*) with regard to vaccines (42 percent), global warming (30 percent), political corruption (24 percent), crime (20 percent) and immigration (11 percent). Among Conservative voters too there are many who lack trust for these forms of news reporting (38–65 percent), but these levels nonetheless differ notably from those found among Sweden Democrat voters. By contrast, Social Democrat voters report relatively high levels of trust in public service news reporting across all the areas examined (67–79 percent).

Belief in conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories are theories about secret collaborations among groups of individuals with power, who mislead the public for reasons of malice or self-interest (Goertzel, 1994). As was seen in Figure 4.2, it is more common for Sweden Democrat voters to believe that politicians withhold information from the public and that a small unknown group is really governing world politics. These opinions can be considered as overlapping with political cynicism and distrust, as well as with a belief in political conspiracy theories.

Figure 4.5. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who believe that different conspiracy theories are probably or definitely true (the complete statements are described in the text below).

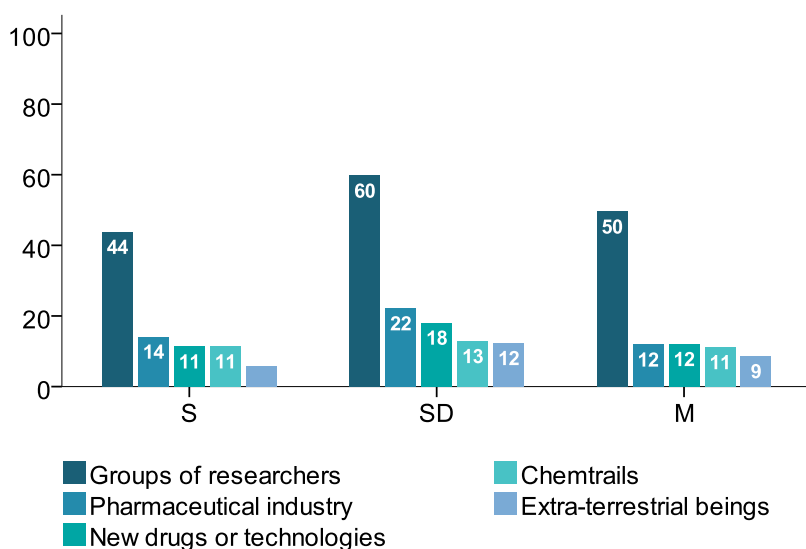


Figure 4.5 shows how common it is to believe in different types of conspiracies. The conspiracy theory that has the greatest support in all voter groups is the view that *there are groups of researchers who manipulate, fabricate or withhold evidence in order to mislead the public*. 60 percent of Sweden Democrat voters believe that this is true, whereas the corresponding proportion is smaller among Social Democrat (44 percent) and Conservative voters (50 percent). Regarding the other conspiracy theories examined, these are shared by only a minority in all the voter groups, and the difference between the Sweden Democrats and the other groups is also smaller. 22 percent of Sweden Democrat voters, 14 percent of Social Democrat voters and 12 percent of Conservative voters believe that *the pharmaceutical industry works to keep people sick, rather than healthy, in order to make greater profits*. 18 percent of Sweden Democrat voters believe that *experiments involving new drugs or technologies are conducted on the public without their knowledge or consent*, with the corresponding figures for Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters are 11 and 12 percent respectively. The difference in perceptions about *chemtrails, i.e. deliberate discharges of substances from aeroplanes that are used to manipulate people or the weather* is very small (11–13 percent of the different voter groups believe this to be true), and the same is the case in perceptions of whether *there is evidence for or contact with extra-terrestrial beings that is being withheld from the public* (6–12 percent believe this to be the case across all three voter groups).

It can thus be concluded that levels of belief in conspiracy theories are generally low in all voter groups. Sweden Democrat voters believe in conspiracies to a somewhat greater extent than Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters, but the size of the difference varies substantially between different conspiracy theories. The clearest difference is found in relation to conspiracies that include the public being misled by politicians (see the section 'Distrust in politicians and the courts'), researchers, or the pharmaceutical industry. This finding may reflect distrust in relation to political and scientific elites.

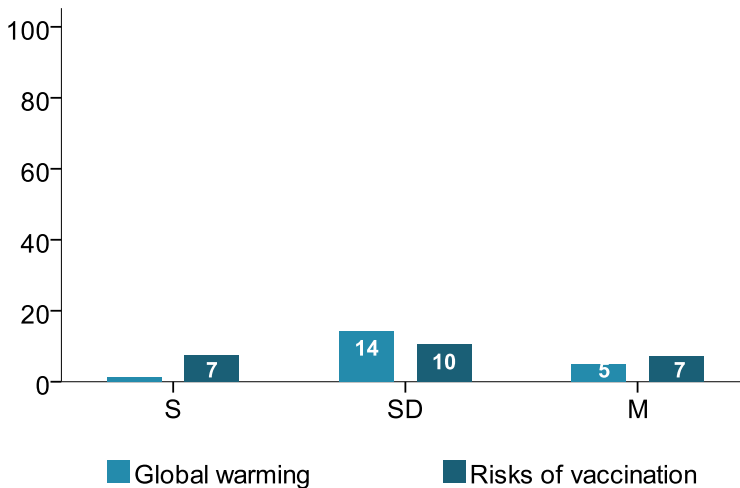
Knowledge resistance

The concept of knowledge resistance, or fact resistance, denotes a tendency to refuse to accept knowledge about some phenomena. The reasons may vary depending on what the knowledge in question implicates for the individual and for society (Hornsey & Fielding, 2017). In the current study we have focused on two subjects that have been the focus of much discussion in the public debate and for which there is solid scientific evidence (see e.g. Hornsey & Fielding, 2017): global warming and its human causes, and vaccination and its desirable effects.

The results presented in Figure 4.6 show that 14 percent of Sweden Democrat

voters disagree with the statement that *a global warming that is caused by humans is currently occurring*, as compared to a substantially lower proportion of Social Democrat voters (1 percent) and Conservative voters (5 percent). The difference between the voter groups is smaller when it comes to the statement that *the risks of vaccination are greater than the benefits in relation to childhood diseases such as measles*. A somewhat larger proportion of Sweden Democrat voters agreed that this statement was true (10 percent) when compared to Social Democrat voters (7 percent) and Conservative voters (7 percent).

Figure 4.6. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who believe that the statement concerning the risks of vaccination is probably or definitely true, and who believe that the statement on global warming is probably or definitely untrue (see text above for the formulation of the two statements).



Summary

This chapter examined voters' distrust in societal institutions and established knowledge. A common denominator in these two forms of distrust is that they tend to be based on a perception that certain groups of people cannot be trusted, for example because they are motivated to mislead the public as a result of their own egoistical goals.

- Most Sweden Democrat voters have a *low level of trust in parliament, politicians and the courts of law* (see also Holmberg, 2007). This finding is not only due to

immigration scepticism, because a difference between Sweden Democrat voters and the other two parties' voters remained when we restricted the analysis to respondents who desire to decrease immigration to Sweden.

- A large majority of Sweden Democrat voters have a *low level of trust in the media*, and this is also true when it comes to media channels with a Sweden Democratic political affiliation. With regard to public service media channels, Sweden Democrat voters report particularly low levels of trust in the news reporting on immigration (see also Andersson et al., 2017).
- Sweden Democrat voters tend more often to believe in conspiracy theories and are more knowledge resistant than Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters. However, Sweden Democrat voters cannot be described as conspiratorial or knowledge resistant, since a majority do not believe in most of the conspiracy theories examined and believe in established knowledge.

5. Marginalisation and wellbeing

One common explanation for the growth of the radical right in Europe is that some voters feel they have become marginalised as a result of rapid societal change. This explanation is sometimes referred to as the ‘modernisation losers’-theory and has gained some support in macro-level analyses, particularly analyses of areas characterised by economic insecurity (Rydgren & Ruth, 2011). However, many individual-level studies show that the majority of those electors who support these parties are no more marginalised than the voters of some other parties, which is also the case for Sweden Democrat voters (e.g. Sannerstedt, 2014; 2015). At the same time, radical right-wing parties tend to have a negative view of their relationship with society; they view themselves as being at a disadvantage and as being bullied in the political arena (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010).

This chapter examines the marginalisation of Sweden Democrat voters in terms of objective and perceived socioeconomic status, psychological wellbeing and their perceived relationship with society.

Socioeconomic status

Occupation

In this section we analyse the respondents’ socioeconomic status on the basis of their occupation. *Retirees* were excluded from the analyses because they may have worked in very different sectors, as were *students* because they may end up in very different occupational sectors later in life.

The majority of Sweden Democrat voters are *workers* (i.e., come from working class: 39 percent), a proportion that is larger than that found among Conservative voters (30 percent) but lower than that found among Social Democrat voters (42 percent). Those Sweden Democrat electors who have previously voted Social Democrat are considerably more often workers (51 percent) than those both who previously voted for the Conservatives (31 percent) and other Sweden Democrat voters (40 percent).

A similar proportion of both Sweden Democrat voters (14 percent) and Conservative voters (13 percent) are *entrepreneurs*. The corresponding proportion is considerably smaller among Social Democrat voters (3 percent). A more detailed analysis of the Sweden Democrat voters shows that entrepreneurs constitute a par-

ticularly large proportion of those Sweden Democrat electors who previously voted for the Conservatives (20 percent), whereas the proportion is smaller among those who previously voted for the Social Democrats (6 percent) and among other Sweden Democrat voters (12 percent).

The proportion of Sweden Democrat voters who are on *long-term sick leave/early-retirees* is greater (8 percent) than among Social Democrat voters (4 percent) and Conservative voters (2 percent). Further analysis of the Sweden Democrat voters shows that fewer are on long-term sick leave or disability pensions among those who previously voted Conservative (7 percent) than among those who previously voted for the Social Democrats (10 percent) and other Sweden Democrat voters (9 percent).

Approximately the same proportion of Sweden Democrat voters (3 percent), Social Democrat voters (4 percent) and Conservative voters (2 percent) are unemployed. A closer examination of the Sweden Democrat voters shows that there is virtually no difference in the proportion of unemployed between those who previously voted Social Democrat (2 percent), those who previously voted Conservative (3 percent) and other Sweden Democrat voters (4 percent).

The last two categories (long-term sick leave/early retirees and unemployed) may be regarded as relatively socioeconomically marginalised, and the results show that a larger proportion of Sweden Democrat voters (12 percent) are found in one of these categories than is the case for Social Democrat voters (8 percent) and Conservative voters (4 percent). Among the Sweden Democrat voters, it is slightly less common for those who previously voted for the Conservatives (10 percent) to be found in one of these categories than it is for those who previously voted Social Democrat (12 percent) and for other Sweden Democrat voters (13 percent).

In line with the findings of previous studies (Sannerstedt, 2014), these results show that there is a certain overrepresentation of persons from more socioeconomically marginalised groups among Sweden Democrat voters, but that the party's voters cannot generally be described as marginalised.

Higher education

Our analyses of the electors' educational background examine whether they have a university education or equivalent, as against a lower level of education (compulsory schooling only, further education, or no completed education). Students were excluded from the analysis since this group may have a higher education in the future.

Having graduated from *higher education* (university or equivalent) is less common among Sweden Democrat voters (37 percent) compared to particularly Conservative voters (51 percent), but also compared to Social Democrat voters (44 per-

cent). A separate analysis of the Sweden Democrat voters shows that those who have previously voted for the Social Democrats are least likely to have graduated from higher education (25 percent), whereas this is considerably more common among those who previously voted Conservative (42 percent) and among other Sweden Democrat voters (38 percent).

Income

Students were also removed from the analyses of *income* since they are on low levels of income in the short term, due to their studies, and their subsequent income is likely to vary a great deal when they return to the work force, depending on the focus of their studies. Retirees were also excluded from these analyses.

Tabell 5.1. Proportion (%) of respondents per income group (SEK/month) and voter group (excl. retirees and students).

	Social Democrat	Sweden Democrat	Conservative
< 10,000	11.5	4.8	5.6
10,000–19,999	16.2	17.2	9.1
20,000–29,999	35.6	36.1	33.4
30,000–39,999	22.7	26.4	23.1
40,000–49,999	10.1	9.0	14.7
50,000–59,999	2.9	3.7	5.9
60,000–69,999	0.7	0.7	3.8
> 70,000	0.4	2.2	4.4
Total	100	100	100

Table 5.1 shows that the most common income level is 20,000–29,999 SEK per month for all voter groups (33–36 percent). Having a high income is most common among Conservative voters: 29 percent of Conservative voters have a monthly income of over 40,000 SEK, which may be compared with 16 percent of Social Democrat voters and 14 percent of Sweden Democrat voters. The income distributions among Social Democrat and Sweden Democrat voters are fairly similar, but it is somewhat more common for Sweden Democrat voters (2 percent) than for Social Democrat voters (0.4 percent) to have a very high income (over 70,000 SEK per month), and somewhat less common for Sweden Democrat voters (5 percent) than

Social Democrat voters (12 percent) to have a very low income (less than 10,000 SEK per month).

Tabell 5.2. Proportion (%) of respondents per income group (SEK/month) among Sweden Democrat voters with different previous party affiliations (excl. old-age pensioners and students).

	SD, previously Social Democrat	SD, other	SD, previously Conservative
< 10,000	4.1	7.3	3.1
10,000–19,999	22.4	19.5	12.5
20,000–29,999	40.4	39.6	30.8
30,000–39,999	24.1	22.0	31.3
40,000–49,999	6.1	7.0	12.3
50,000–59,999	2.0	2.4	5.6
60,000–69,999	0	0.5	1.1
> 70,000	0.8	1.6	3.3
Total	100	100	100

A separate analysis of Sweden Democrat voters is presented in Table 5.2. This analysis shows the same distribution pattern as that described above. Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted for the Conservative Party more often have higher incomes than both Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted for the Social Democrats and other Sweden Democrat voters.

These findings are in line with the results found in relation to education and suggest that a significant portion of the working-class vote has shifted from the Social Democrats to the Sweden Democrats. Some of those former Conservative voters with lower socioeconomic status have also chosen to shift to the Sweden Democrats.

Subjective status

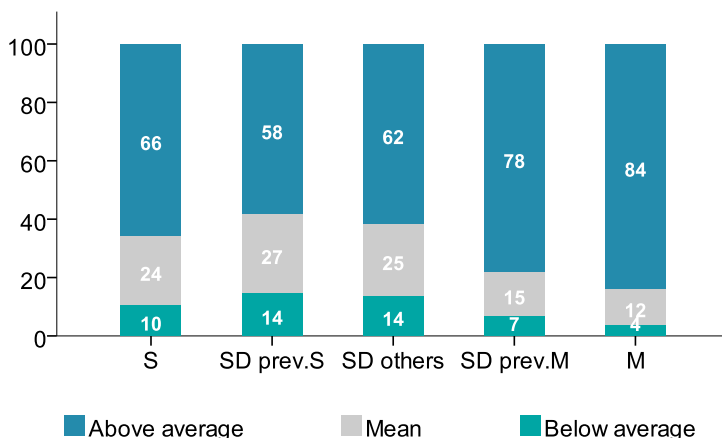
The respondents were asked to estimate their own status on the basis of the following question: *Imagine that you could divide the population of Sweden using a scale where 10 represents the group with the highest status in society, and 0 represents the group with the lowest status in society. Where would you place yourself on such a scale?*

Very few Conservative voters (4 percent) and very few Sweden Democrat voters

who had previously voted Conservative (7 percent) estimated their status to be between 0 and 4, i.e. below the average for the population, as can be seen from Figure 5.1.

The voter groups that gave the lowest estimations of their own status were Sweden Democrat voters who had previously voted for the Social Democrats (14 percent), the other Sweden Democrat voters (14 percent), and those voters who currently vote Social Democrat (10 percent). The Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted Social Democrat are also the group who least often estimated their status to lie in the top half of the status scale.

Figure 5.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who estimated their status to be under average/average/above average on a scale ranging from 0 (lowest status) to 10 (highest status).



Perceived social inclusion

Irrespective of their social status, people may perceive themselves to be integrated in society to a varying extent. Figure 5.2 shows that irrespective of the party that they previously voted for, Sweden Democrat voters less often agree with the statement *I generally feel that society sees me* (19–23 percent), which can be compared with 44 percent of Social Democrat voters and 36 percent of Conservative voters. Only a minority of the members of all voter groups felt that this statement described them well. Further, Sweden Democrat voters were also less likely to agree with the statement *I generally feel that I am part of society* (54–56 percent) than Social Democrat voters (80 percent) and Conservative voters (74 percent).

Figure 5.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who think that statements measuring social inclusion describe them quite well or very well.

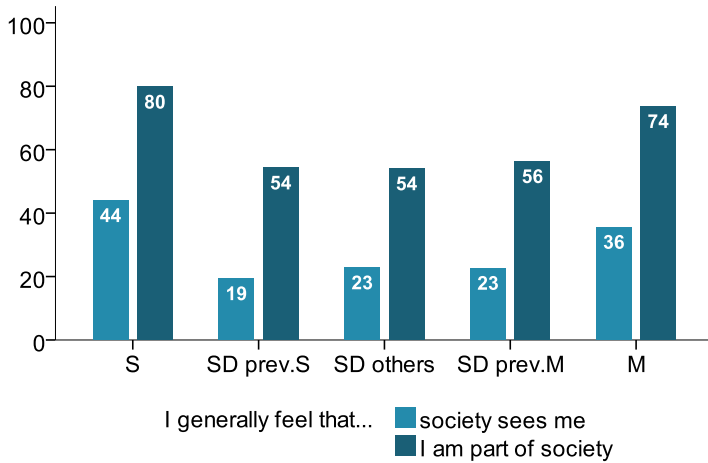
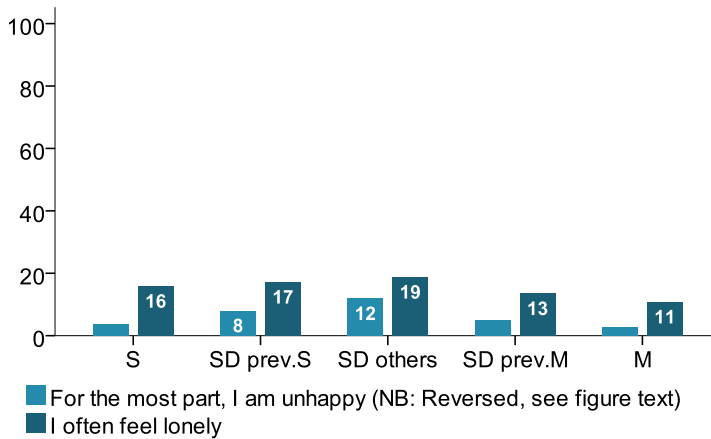


Figure 5.3. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who think that statements measuring well-being describe them quite well or very well. NB: The first statement in the figure was formulated "...I am happy" and the figure presents the proportions who partly or completely disagreed with this statement.



Wellbeing

We find no major differences between the voter groups in psychological wellbeing, with the majority of voters reporting a sense of wellbeing (see also Sannerstedt, 2015). Figure 5.3 shows that it is slightly more common among Sweden Democrat voters to feel that the statement *I often feel lonely* (13–19 percent) describes them well than it is among Social Democrat voters (16 percent) and Conservative voters (11 percent). We found similar results when it comes to the statement *for the most part, I am happy*, as it was more common for Sweden Democrat voters to say that this statement did not describe them well (5–12 percent) than it was for Social Democrat voters (4 percent) and Conservative voters (3 percent).

Summary

This chapter has examined whether Sweden Democrat voters are economically, socially, or psychologically marginalised. The results show that:

- A minority of Sweden Democrat voters has a *low socioeconomic status*. They lie closer to Social Democrat than to Conservative voters in this area. Those Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted for the Social Democrats have lower socioeconomic status on a number of indicators than those who previously voted Conservative as well as other Sweden Democrat voters.
- Sweden Democrat voters less often perceive that they *are part of society* than Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters. Only a minority feel that they are seen by society, although this is also the case among Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters.
- Majority of voters in all voter groups report high levels of wellbeing, but it is slightly more common for Sweden Democrat voters to feel lonely and unhappy compared to Social Democrat and Conservative voters.

Our results suggest that Sweden Democrat voters cannot be described as particularly marginalised, but that marginalised groups are somewhat overrepresented among this voter group (see also Sannerstedt, 2014; 2015). This is particularly the case among Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted Social Democrats. It is likely that the Sweden Democrats have attracted groups of working-class voters who do not share the Social Democrats' positions on e.g. sociocultural questions relating to immigration and gender (Rydgren & van der Meiden, 2018).

With regard to the level of perceived social exclusion, this may in part explain why Sweden Democrat voters chose to shift their allegiance from the parties they

previously voted for. However, their perceived exclusion may also be due to their Sweden Democrat allegiance itself. The Sweden Democrats have viewed themselves as being at a disadvantage and as being bullied in the political arena (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). It is possible that this may intensify the sense of exclusion experienced by some Sweden Democrat voters.

6. Looking to the past, looking to the future

Radical right-wing parties usually share a socially conservative ideology and have a nostalgic and idealised view of their nation's history (Rydgren, 2018). This is also the case for the Sweden Democrats, who define themselves as a “social conservative party with a nationalistic foundation” (Sverigedemokraterna n.d.) and who often communicate a perception that Sweden has been ruined or is on the way to be ruined (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). The supporters of the party often regard the 1950s and 1960s as Sweden's golden age, after which the perceived decline – often linked to increased immigration from outside Europe – began (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2018). This chapter examines the voter groups' perceptions of their own situation and of societal developments, and how they feel about their future.

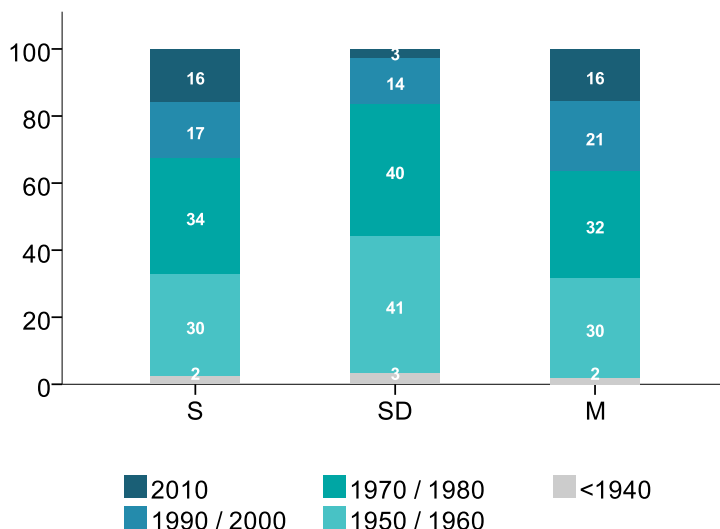
Sweden's golden years

The respondents were asked to choose which of the decades between the 1900s and 2010s was the best in Sweden's history. Figure 6.1 shows that the period most often regarded by the Sweden Democrat Party as Sweden's golden age, i.e. the 1950s–1960s (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2018), was chosen by a large proportion of all voter groups, but was more popular among Sweden Democrat voters (41 percent) than among Social Democrat voters (30 percent) and Conservative voters (30 percent). The present, i.e. the 2010s, was chosen as the best decade by 16 percent of Social Democrat and Conservative voters but by only 3 percent of Sweden Democrat voters.

More detailed analyses of the Sweden Democrat voters show that these results remain largely the same irrespective of which party these electors have previously voted for. It was almost as uncommon for the Sweden Democrat voters to choose the present as the best decade (a 0–1-percentage point difference), and almost as common for them to choose the 1950s or 1960s (a 1–4-percentage point difference), among those who had previously voted Social Democrat, those who had previously voted Conservative, and other Sweden Democrat voters.

These results indicate that Sweden Democrat voters tend to be more focused on the past than Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters.

Figure 6.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters, and their choice of which decade (1900s–2010s) they regard as being the best in Sweden’s history.



Better in the past?

As was shown in Chapter 5, a majority of voters report high levels of wellbeing. However, this does not necessarily mean that there are not many who think that they were better off in the past.

Figure 6.2 shows that a minority of all voter groups agree with the statement *my situation has deteriorated over the past five years*, but that this perception is more common among Sweden Democrat voters (22–27 percent) than among Social Democrat (18 percent) and Conservative voters (14 percent).

With regard to whether respondents *feel more at home in Sweden today than they did five years ago*, it is considerably more common for Sweden Democrat voters (71–77 percent) and Conservative voters (50 percent) to state that they do *not* do so than is the case among Social Democrat voters (27 percent). A more detailed analysis shows that a large proportion of Social Democrat (61 percent) and Conservative voters (44 percent) neither agree nor disagree with this statement, and that relatively few individuals (< 12 percent) in the three voter groups state that they feel more at home today.

Figure 6.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who agree that their situation has deteriorated over the past five years.

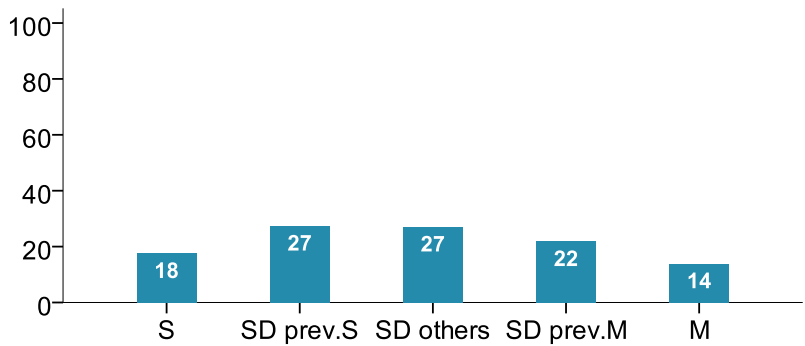
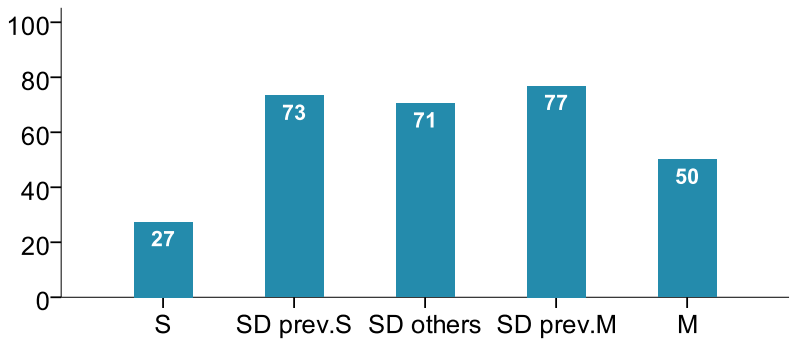


Figure 6.3. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who think that the statement that they feel more at home in Sweden today than they did five years ago describes them quite poorly or very poorly.



One interpretation of these results is that there are no major differences in perceptions of deterioration on an individual level, but that a larger number of Sweden Democrat voters in particular, but also Conservative voters, feel that society has changed for the worse. This may be due to dissatisfaction with the Social Democratic government that governed Sweden at time the present study was conducted, but also depend on a critical attitude towards immigration that is in general more common within these two voter groups.

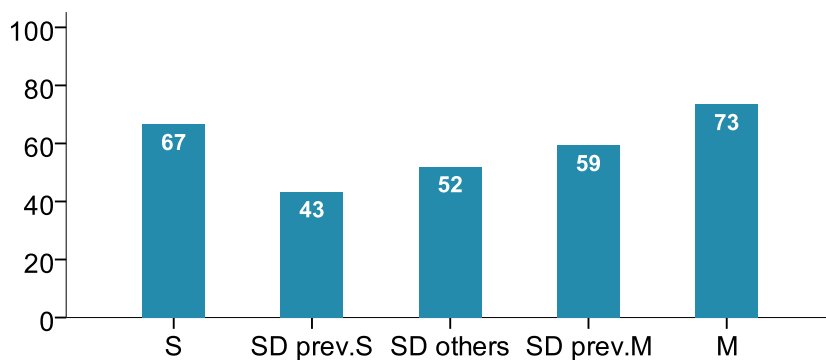
In order to examine whether immigration scepticism might explain these findings, we returned to our analysis of whether the respondents feel more at home in Sweden today than they did five years ago, but including only those who agreed

with the statement that immigration should be reduced. The differences between the voter groups were somewhat altered, but not feeling more at home today remained notably more common among Sweden Democrat voters (72–78 percent) than among Social Democrat (36 percent) and Conservative (65 percent) voters.

Faith in the future

Regarding the voter groups' belief in the future, it is more common for Conservative voters (73 percent) and Social Democrat voters (67 percent) to believe that things are going to go well for them in the future than it is for Sweden Democrat voters to do so (43–59 percent). The group with the lowest level of faith in the future is that comprised of Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats (43 percent).

Figure 6.4. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who believe that the statement that things are going to go well for them in the future describes them quite well or very well.



Summary

This chapter has analysed the voters' views of the past and the future. The Sweden Democrats are a social conservative party which, like other radical right-wing parties in Europe, has a nostalgic view of its nation's past (Rydgren, 2018). The results show that:

- Sweden Democrat voters more often think that the *Sweden's best years* were further in the past (particularly the 1950s and 1960s) than Social Democrat

and Conservative voters. Further, it was more common for Social Democrat and Conservative voters to view the present decade as being the best in Sweden's history.

- It was unusual for voters in all voter groups to *feel more at home in Sweden today than they did five years ago*, but Sweden Democrat voters were the group that least often reported that this was the case for them.
- A minority of all the voter groups examined felt that their own situation had *deteriorated over the past five years*, but this perception was more common among Sweden Democrat voters than among Social Democrat and Conservative voters.
- Compared with Social Democrat and Conservative voters, Sweden Democrat voters have less faith in the future, and the group reporting the lowest level of *faith in the future* were Sweden Democrat voters who had previously voted for Social Democrats.

These findings indicate that it is common for Sweden Democrat voters to perceive that society has deteriorated and to feel less at home in society today than they used to. At the same time, they do not generally report poor psychosocial health (see the chapter 'Marginalisation and wellbeing') or feel that their own situation has deteriorated over the past five years. Since they have less faith in the future in spite of this, it is possible that they believe that their own lives and opportunities are going to be affected by perceived societal changes which they view as negative. It is not however possible to test this explanation on the basis of the questions included in the current study.

7. Different types of immigration sceptics among Sweden Democrat voters?

The results presented in the chapter ‘Right-wing or centre voters?’ showed that virtually all Sweden Democrat voters have sceptical attitudes towards immigration in the sense that they want to see a reduction in immigration to Sweden. The results of the chapter ‘Immigration and immigrants’ also showed that around half of Sweden Democrat voters appear to be characterised by a high level of xenophobia, which can be defined as discomfort in meetings with people from unfamiliar and foreign groups and a tendency to think that different groups should live separately from one another. We also find xenophobia in the other voter groups, but to a considerably lesser extent.

Xenophobia may be expected to constitute a relatively stable characteristic, whereas immigration scepticism may vary as a result of various societal events and individuals’ life situation. A more detailed analysis of Sweden Democrat voters on the basis of their level of xenophobia may therefore illuminate different motives that underly the choice to vote for an anti-immigration party. This chapter examines the ways in which Sweden Democrat voters with high levels of xenophobia differ from Sweden Democrat voters who are critical of immigration but who do not appear to harbour more deep-seated antipathies towards immigrants.

Previous research has shown that xenophobia and ethnic prejudice are associated with other types of prejudice, such as sexist attitudes for example (Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004). As to personality variables, prejudiced attitudes have been found to be more common among individuals with conservative/authoritarian values and lower levels of agreeableness and empathy (Dinesen et al., 2016; Bäckström & Björklund, 2007; Ekehammar et al., 2004). We would therefore also expect to find a covariation between these characteristics and levels of xenophobia in the current study.

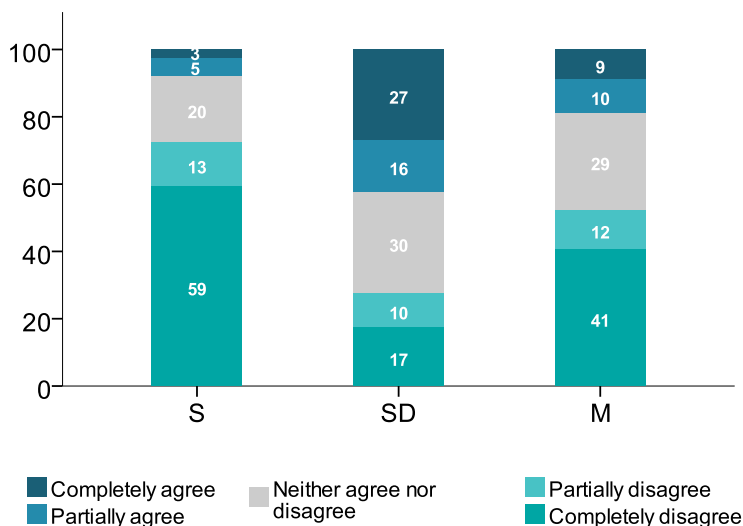
High and low levels of xenophobia

Xenophobia can manifest itself in different ways. In this chapter it is measured in terms of agreement with the statement *I do not want an immigrant married into the*

family. This statement is a good measure of xenophobia because it captures a desire to keep immigrants at a distance from one's immediate environment, i.e. the family circle. Those who partly or completely agree with this statement have been assigned to a "high level of xenophobia" group. Those who partly or completely disagree with the statement, or who neither agree nor disagree, have been assigned to a "low level of xenophobia" group.

As can be seen from Figure 7.1, 43 percent ($n=907$) of Sweden Democrat voters agree with the statement *I do not want an immigrant married into the family*, whereas 57 percent ($n=1\,228$) either disagree with the statement or neither agree nor disagree with it. Although the other voter groups are not examined here, it is worth noting that xenophobia is not exclusively found among Sweden Democrat voters. Among Social Democrat voters, 8 percent ($n=42$) had a high level of xenophobia, and the corresponding proportion among Conservative voters was 19 percent ($n=116$).

Figure 7.1. Proportion (%) of respondents among Social Democrat (S), Sweden Democrat (SD), and Conservative Party (Moderaterna, M) voters who agree or disagree with the statement 'I do not want an immigrant married into the family', which is used as a measure of xenophobia.



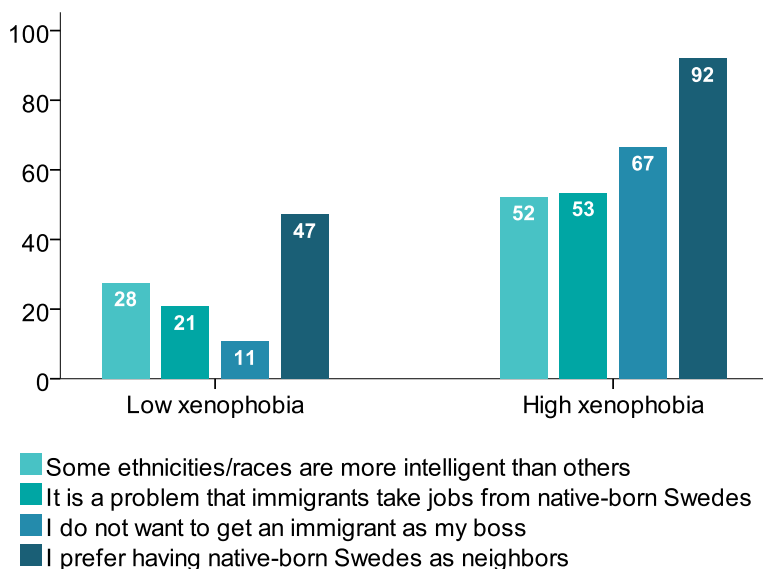
We have also examined the prevalence of xenophobia among those Social Democrat voters and Conservative voters who have the Sweden Democrats as their second-choice party. The results show that it is considerably more common for those Social Democrat voters (38 percent, $n=11$) and Conservative voters (30 percent, $n=65$) who stated that the Sweden Democrats were their second-choice party to

partly or completely agree that they would not want an immigrant married into the family than it was for other Social Democrat or Conservative voters.

In order to test whether the above statement constitutes a good measure of the respondents' levels of xenophobia, we will now compare our results with other questions that focus on attitudes towards immigrants. If we find a substantial between-group difference, there is good reason to analyse these groups separately on the basis of our measure of xenophobia.

Figure 7.2. shows that there are also large differences between Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia respectively (based on the statement regarding family membership) in relation to other questions that measure antipathy towards immigrants. A majority of the group with a high level of xenophobia think that *some ethnicities/races are more intelligent than others*, that *it is a problem that immigrants take jobs from native-born Swedes*, that *they would not want an immigrant as their boss*, and that *they prefer to have native-born Swedes as neighbours*. This can be compared with the group of Sweden Democrat voters with a low level of xenophobia, among whom only a minority agree with these statements, which provides support for the view that this group really is less xenophobic (differences of 24, 33, 55 and 42 percentage points respectively).

Figure 7.2. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high or low levels of xenophobia who partly or completely agree with statements measuring antipathy towards immigrants.



Areas in which there are only small or insignificant differences

Wellbeing, agreeableness, and happiness

We found no major difference in wellbeing and agreeableness between Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia. No more than a 1-percentage point difference was observed between the groups for their answers to the statements: *I often feel lonely*; *My situation has deteriorated over the past five years*; *I believe that things are going to go well for me in the future* and *I am sometimes rude to others*. Nor did we find any significant support for the possibility that Sweden Democrat voters with low levels of xenophobia are happier. In relation to the statement *for the most part I am happy*, we only measured a four-percentage point difference between Sweden Democrat voters with low and high levels of xenophobia respectively.

Social inclusion

Respondents with a high level of xenophobia have a somewhat more negative perception of their relationship with society, based on their answers relating to the statements: *I generally feel that society sees me*; *I generally feel that I am part of society* and *I feel more at home in Sweden today than I did five years ago* (differences of 4, 7 and 7 percentage points respectively).

Education and status

Analyses of socioeconomic factors showed that it is somewhat more uncommon for Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia to have a *university education or equivalent* by comparison with Sweden Democrat voters with a low level of xenophobia (a 5-percentage point difference). There is also a small difference between the two groups of Sweden Democrat voters with regard to their *subjective estimates of their own status*. Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia perceive themselves as having above-average status more often than those with a lower level of xenophobia (a 5-percentage point difference).

Socioeconomic issues

Regarding socioeconomic issues on the left-right spectrum, there were only small differences, with Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia lying somewhat more to the right on all questions. They more often disagree that *income*

differences should be reduced, and more often agree that *the public sector is too large* and that *it is good to have private profit-driven alternatives in the care sector* (differences of 2, 6 and 4 percentage points respectively). A more substantial difference was noted in one question; Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia more often felt that *taxes should be reduced* (a 9-percentage point difference).

Public service news reporting

There is a certain difference in levels of trust in public service news media across different subject areas. Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia had less trust in the news reporting of Sweden's Television/Swedish Radio on *vaccines, global warming and political corruption* (differences of 6, 8 and 6 percentage points respectively). The difference between the groups was smaller however in relation to news reporting on *crime and immigration* (a difference of 2 percentage points for both areas).

Confidence in societal institutions

No major differences were noted in relation to issues relating to *trust in parliament, the courts of law, or public service media* (Sweden's Television) (differences of 1, 2 and 3 percentage points respectively).

Political cynicism

Only a small difference was found in relation to prevalent conspiratorial ideas that reflect a cynicism for politics. Sweden Democrat voters with a higher level of xenophobia are somewhat more likely to believe that *a lot of important information is withheld from the public due to self-interest of politicians* and that *there is a small unknown group that really governs world politics and has more power than the elected leaders in different countries* (differences of 3 and 5 percentage points respectively).

Knowledge resistance and conspiracy theories

Knowledge resistance was also somewhat more common among Sweden Democrat voters with a higher level of xenophobia. The difference was small however in relation to both the belief that *the risks of vaccination are greater than the benefits in relation to childhood diseases such as measles* (a 2-percentage point difference), and *not believing that a global warming that is caused by humans is currently occurring* (a 5-percentage point difference).

Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia were also slightly more likely to believe in certain conspiracy theories, i.e. that *the pharmaceutical industry works to keep people sick, rather than healthy, in order to make greater profits, that experiments involving new drugs or technologies are conducted on the public without their knowledge or consent, and that there is evidence for or contact with extra-terrestrial beings that is being withheld from the public* (a 3-percentage point difference on all statements).

The differences were even smaller, or non-existent, in agreeing with the statements *there are groups of researchers who manipulate, fabricate or withhold evidence in order to mislead the public* or that *chemtrails, i.e. deliberate discharges of substances from aeroplanes, are used to manipulate people or the weather* (differences of 1 and 0 percentage points respectively).

Second-choice political parties

The electors' second choice parties differ somewhat between the two groups of Sweden Democrat voters. Sweden Democrat voters with a higher level of xenophobia were more likely to state that they *would not vote at all if they could not vote for their first-choice party* (a 6-percentage point difference), and were less likely to state that they *would vote for the other parties of the centre-right alliance* (than the Conservative Party) (a 5-percentage point difference). Otherwise there are no differences with regard to the two groups' second-choice parties (differences of 0–1 percentage points).

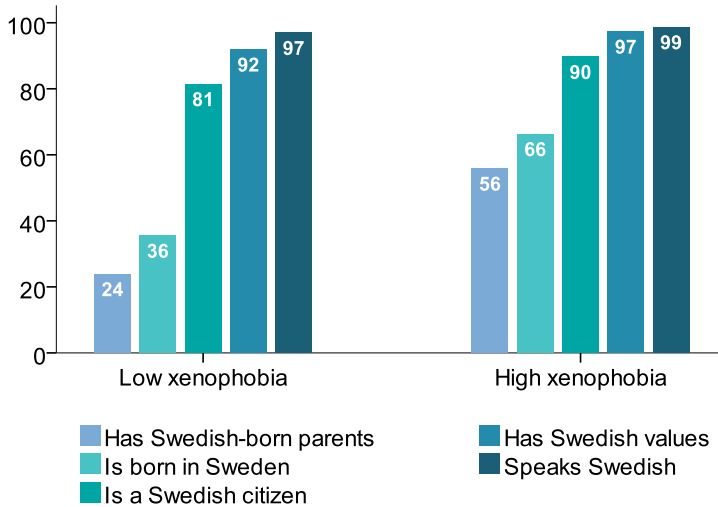
Areas characterised by substantial differences

Views on Swedishness

The view on what is required for a person to be defined as Swedish varies markedly between the two groups examined, as can be seen from Figure 7.3. Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia more often state that it is important that a person *has parents who were born in Sweden* and that the individuals were *themselves born in Sweden* (differences of 32 and 30 percentage points respectively).

Smaller between-group differences were found in relation to the requirements that a person should be a *Swedish citizen*, *have Swedish values* and *speak Swedish* (differences of 9, 5 and 2 percentage points respectively). It should be noted however that these last three areas may be seen as being particularly important for all Sweden Democrat voters, which reduces the possible variation and thereby differences between different groups of Sweden Democrat voters.

Figure 7.3. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who regard various characteristics as being quite or very important for a person to be defined as Swedish.



Views on immigration

Figure 7.4 shows the two groups' views regarding the effects of immigration on society. Since virtually all Sweden Democrat voters agree that *immigration costs too many public resources* and that it *leads to increased crime*, the possibilities for observing between-group differences is minimal. Among Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia, all agree with these statements. Among those with a low level of xenophobia, the proportions who agree are 4 and 5 percentage points smaller respectively.

A substantial difference may be observed between the groups in their views on whether *it is a problem that immigration weakens Swedish culture*, with Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia agreeing with this statement much more often than those with a low level of xenophobia (a 21-percentage point difference). It should however be noted that even among Sweden Democrat voters with a low level of xenophobia, there is a clear majority that agree with this statement.

Figure 7.4. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who partly or completely agree with statements measuring negative attitudes towards the effects of immigration on society.

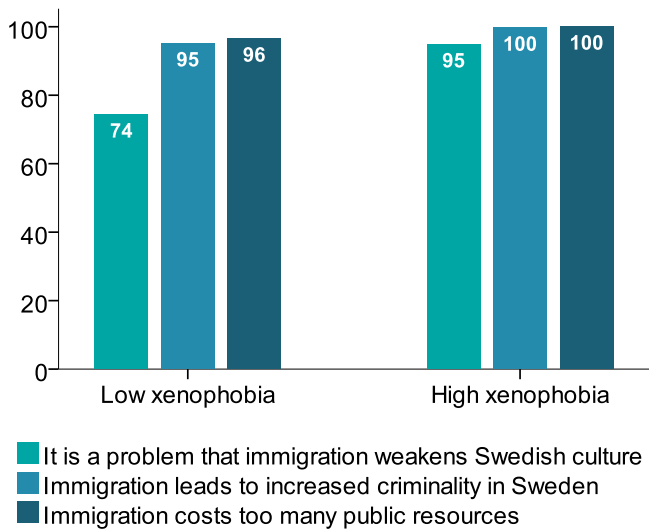
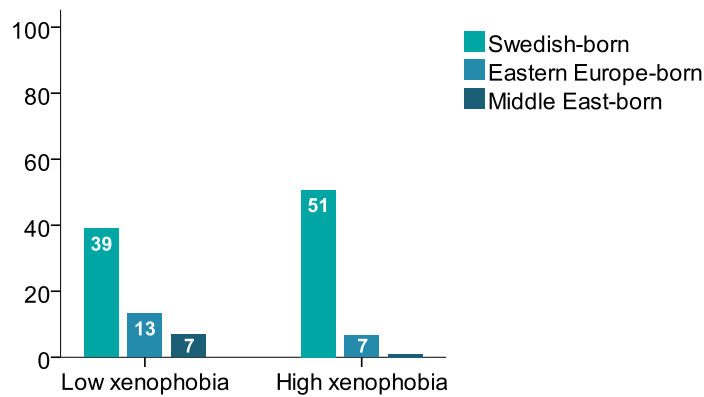


Figure 7.5. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who trust people from different groups to a fairly high or very high degree when they meet them for the first time.



Trust in other nationalities

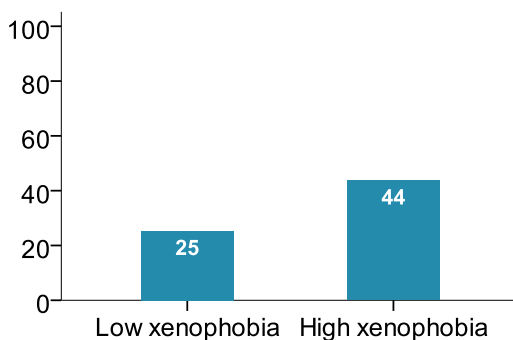
Here too we see a difference among the Sweden Democrat voters, with Figure 7.5 showing that by comparison with those who have a low level of xenophobia, those with a high level of xenophobia have less trust in people from the Middle East and

Eastern Europe and at the same time more trust in people born in Sweden. Levels of trust among Sweden Democrat voters are generally low, with only 13 and 7 percent respectively feeling *trust for Eastern Europeans* when they meet them for the first time. Levels of trust are even lower for people from the Middle East, at only 7 and 1 percent respectively. By contrast, trust in persons *born in Sweden* is much greater. 39 percent of those with low a level of xenophobia, and 51 percent of those with a high level of xenophobia state that they trust Swedish-born people when they meet them for the first time.

Media with a pro-Sweden Democrat editorial position

As was described above, there is no major difference between the groups with regard to their level of trust in public service media. As can be seen from Figure 7.6, however, we find a substantial difference in trust in media with a pro-Sweden Democrat editorial position. 44 percent of Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia report *high trust for Samhällsnytt* (an online news site with an [independent] Sweden Democrat political affiliation), which is a considerably larger proportion than that found among Sweden Democrat voters with a low level of xenophobia (25 percent).

Figure 7.6. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who report having a quite high or very high level of confidence in the online news site *Avpixlat* (now renamed *Samhällsnytt*).



Empathy and basic values

As can be seen from Figure 7.7, it is more common for Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia to have lower levels of self-rated empathy, as measured using the statement *sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they have problems* (a 10-percentage point difference).

Figure 7.7. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who feel that the statement ‘Sometimes I don’t feel very sorry for other people when they have problems’ describes them quite well or very well.

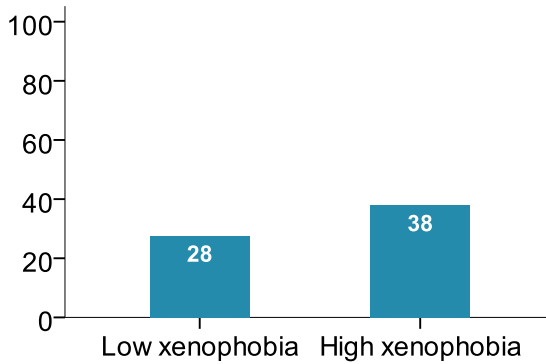


Figure 7.8. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who chose ‘obedience’ and ‘tolerance and respect for other people’ among five particularly important qualities that children should be encouraged to learn at home.

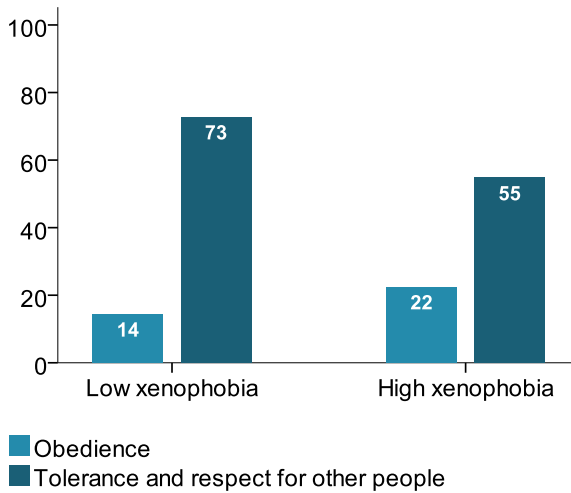


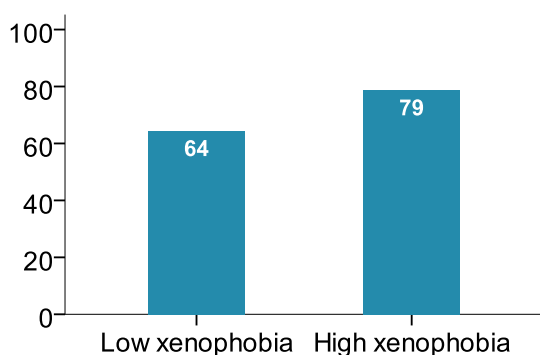
Figure 7.8 shows that there are clear differences in basic values, which have been measured by asking the respondents to state which five important qualities a child should be encouraged to learn at home. A minority of Sweden Democrat voters chose *obedience* as one of the five particularly important qualities, but this was chosen more often by those with a high level of xenophobia (an 8-percentage point difference). The quality *tolerance and respect for other people* was chosen by a majority of both subgroups, but considerably more often by the group with a low level

of xenophobia (an 18-percentage point difference). Only 55 percent of the Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia chose this quality.

Conservative–liberal ideology

Figure 7.9 shows that it is relatively common for the members of both subgroups to agree with the statement measuring authoritarianism, i.e. that *a powerful leader is needed to stop the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today*. However, a larger proportion of Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia agree with this statement (a 15-percentage point difference).

Figure 7.9. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who agree that ‘a powerful leader is needed to stop the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today’.



The same tendency can be seen in statements measuring social conservatism and tolerance for non-traditional values and perspectives. Figure 7.10 shows that it is considerably more common for Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia to agree that *the best way to live is in accordance with the old-fashioned values* and to disagree with the statement that *our society would be best off if we showed tolerance and understanding for non-traditional values and opinions* (differences of 16 and 22 percentage points respectively).

Figure 7.10. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who partly or completely agree with statements measuring conservative attitudes. NB: The second statement in the figure was formulated “Our society would be best off ...” and the figure presents the proportions who partly or completely disagreed with this statement.

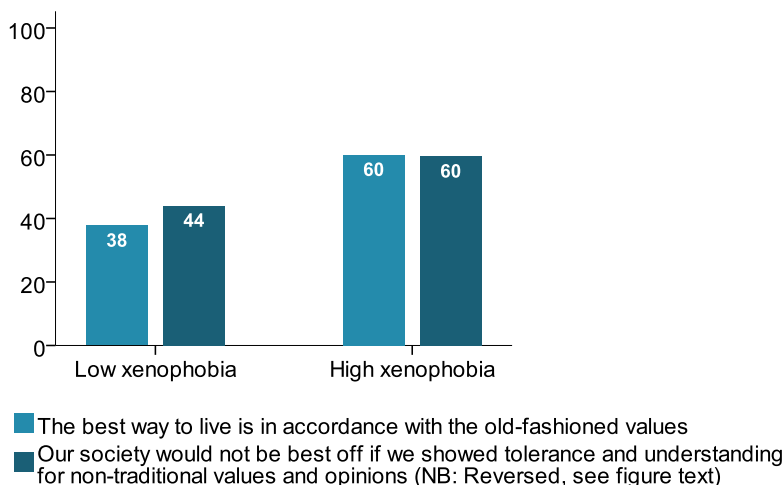
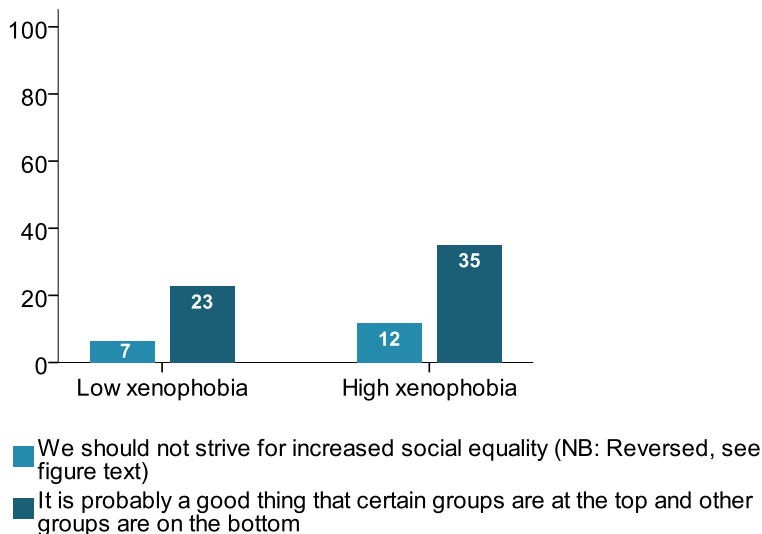


Figure 7.11. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who partly or completely agree with statements measuring views on social hierarchies. NB: The second statement in the figure was formulated ‘We should strive for increased social equality’, and the figure presents the proportion who partly or completely disagreed with this statement.

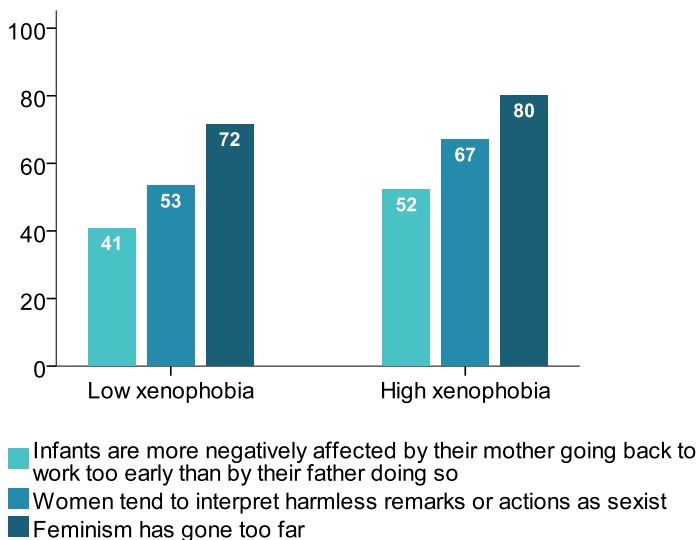


As can be seen from Figure 7.11, there is also a difference between the two groups with regard to attitudes towards social hierarchies and equality between different social groups. A minority of voters in both groups *disagree* with the statement that *we should strive for increased social equality*, but doing so is more common among Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia (a 12-percentage point difference). Similarly, a minority of both groups agree that *it is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are on the bottom*, but Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia agree with this statement more often (a 5-percentage point difference).

Sociocultural issues

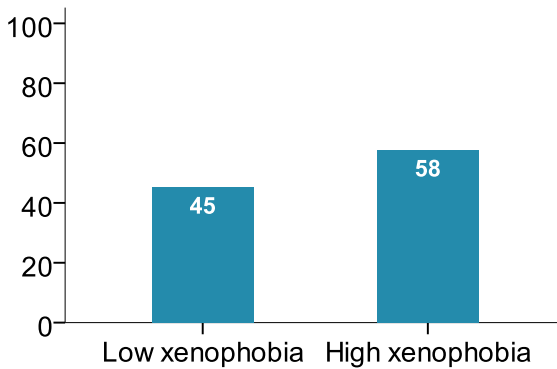
The two groups of Sweden Democrat voters also differ in their views on certain sociocultural issues on the left-right spectrum. As can be seen from Figure 7.12, it is more common for Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia to agree that *infants are more negatively affected by their mother going back to work too early than by their father doing so*, that *women tend to interpret harmless remarks or actions as sexist*, and that *feminism has gone too far* (differences of 11, 13 and 8 percentage points respectively).

Figure 7.12. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who agree with statements measuring attitudes towards gender issues.



As can be seen from Figure 7.13, Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia also disagree more often with the statement that *it is reasonable that schools have days when they only serve vegetarian food* (a 13-percentage point difference).

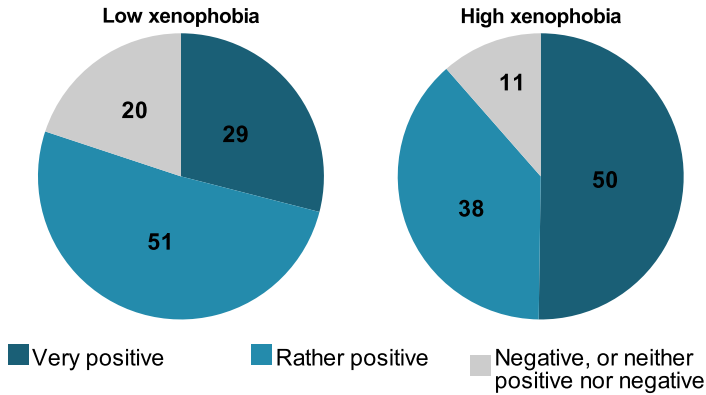
Figure 7.13. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who partly or completely disagree that it is reasonable that schools have days when they only serve vegetarian food.



Views on Sweden's future if the Sweden Democrats were in government

There is no difference between the two groups of Sweden Democrat voters in their view of Sweden's future if the Social Democrats or Conservatives governed the country (a 0–2-percentage point difference). As can be seen in Figure 7.14, however, there is a substantial difference between the groups in how they would view Sweden's future if the Sweden Democrats governed. 50 percent of Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia would view Sweden's future as being *very positive* if this was the case, which is a significantly higher proportion than that found among Sweden Democrat voters with a low level of xenophobia (29 percent).

Figure 7.14. Proportion (%) of respondents among Sweden Democrat voters with high and low levels of xenophobia who would have a very positive, a rather positive, or neither a positive or negative or negative view of Sweden's future if the Sweden Democrats governed the country.



Summary

This chapter has examined differences *within* the group of Sweden Democrat electors based on whether the voters express a low or a high level of xenophobia (assessed on the basis of the statement *I do not want an immigrant married into the family*). The results showed that there were both similarities and differences between these groups. This issue divided the Sweden Democrat voters into two groups of roughly equal size, with 43 percent agreeing with the statement, while 57 percent either disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The results showed that:

- No major between-group differences were noted in relation to *individual well-being or socioeconomic status*. Sweden Democrat voters with a high level of xenophobia assessed their happiness and loneliness in much the same way as the voters with a low level of xenophobia. Nor were any differences noted between the two groups with regard to their relationship with society, their level of education or their self-perceived status. This means that neither group may be regarded as more or less marginalised than the other in either socioeconomic or psychological terms.
- Nor do levels of trust in politicians, society and public service media or of *belief in conspiracy theories* appear to differentiate between the two groups of Sweden Democrat voters. This means that the groups are characterised by simi-

lar levels of distrust and political cynicism, both of which are characteristics that have been found to be linked to populism, i.e. the view that society can be divided into two homogenous, antagonistic groups: ‘the people’, who are pure and good, and a corrupt political and cultural ‘elite’ (Castanho Silva et al., 2017; Mudde, 2004).

- More substantial between-group differences were observed on issues relating to *ethnonationalism*. Sweden Democrat voters who reported a high level of xenophobia more often stated that to be regarded as Swedish, a person should be born in Sweden and have Swedish parents. By comparison with Sweden Democrat voters with a lower level of xenophobia, those with a high level of xenophobia reported higher levels of trust for Swedish-born persons and lower levels of trust for Eastern Europeans and people from the Middle East. They also more often agreed with the statement that it is a problem that immigration weakens Swedish culture.
- The survey responses of those Sweden Democrat voters who express a high level of xenophobia also suggest that they generally have more *conservative* and *authoritarian values* and manifest a more conservative position in relation to feminism and vegetarian food than Sweden Democrat voters with a low level of xenophobia. Voters with a high level of xenophobia also manifested a lower level of self-rated empathy. These results confirm the findings of previous research, which have shown that attitudes towards vegetarianism and various disadvantaged groups, such as women, tend to be correlated with ethnic prejudice (Dhont et al., 2016; Ekehammar et al., 2014). These attitudes are in turn more common among individuals with conservative and authoritarian values and/or lower levels of empathy (Bäckström & Björklund, 2007; Ekehammar et al., 2014).
- There are also some grounds to assume that Sweden Democrat voters with high levels of xenophobia will be more loyal to the party. They are somewhat more likely to say that they would not vote at all if it were not possible to vote for the Sweden Democrats, that they would have a more positive view of Sweden’s future if the Sweden Democrats were in government, and they report higher levels of trust for media actors who support the Sweden Democrats.

Viewed together these results provide a basis for speculation about voter mobility between the Sweden Democrats and other parties. The characteristics that differentiate the two groups of Sweden Democrat voters, i.e. ethnonationalism and conservatism/authoritarianism, are defining characteristics of radical right-wing parties and are also more often expressed by the voters of these parties (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018; Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016). Characteristics that did not differentiate

between the groups to the same extent are linked to the voters' orientation along the left-right spectrum (socioeconomic status and socioeconomic attitudes) or to a more general tendency to vote for populist parties (distrust and political cynicism; Mudde, 2004). It is thus possible that the group with a high level of xenophobia comprises the Sweden Democrats' core voters, which are likely to be a more difficult group for other parties to win over in both the short and longer term. It is conceivable that the rapid growth in electoral support for the Sweden Democrats over recent years may be explained by the party having succeeded in attracting voters from outside this core group, such as among electors who feel excluded in relation to society, have less faith in the future, harbour a distrust for politicians and/or have a critical view of immigration.

8. Discussion

The aim of this report has been to study what lies behind the rapidly growing electoral support for the Sweden Democrat party. The analyses are based on a survey of 2,217 Sweden Democrat voters, 634 Conservative voters, 548 Social Democrat voters and 119 respondents who indicated that they would not vote if there were a general election at the time of data collection. The survey was conducted by Novus on our commission during the spring of 2018. The central findings may be summarised as follows:

Who votes for the Sweden Democrats and how do they differ from Social Democrat and Conservative voters?

The first objective of the report was to examine what characterises electors who vote for the Sweden Democrats and how they differ from Social Democrat and Conservative voters.

The results showed that Sweden Democrat voters distinguish themselves in that almost all of them desire reduced immigration, in that they view immigration as both an economic and cultural threat, and in that they have a low level of confidence in politicians. There is a substantial degree of variation among Sweden Democrat voters in relation to other issues, but a number of other clear tendencies were also observed. On questions relating to the political left-right spectrum, Sweden Democrat voters may generally be described as right-wing voters. This is the case both when it comes to socioeconomic issues, on which Sweden Democrat voters are positioned clearly to the right of Social Democrat voters and somewhat to the left of Conservative voters, and – in particular – when it comes to sociocultural issues, on which they lie to the right of both Social Democrat and Conservative voters. By comparison with Social Democrat and Conservative voters, it is also more common for Sweden Democrat voters to be distrustful of societal institutions, to have conservative and authoritarian attitudes and a negative view of immigrants and feminism, to perceive themselves to be excluded in relation to society, and to have a preference for the past over the present. These findings are generally in line with the results of previous research on radical right-wing parties in other European countries (Arzheimer 2018; Rydgren 2018).

With regard to psychological characteristics, a majority of the respondents have a positive view of tolerance and social equality, and may be described as empathetic and agreeable. This is also the case among Sweden Democrat voters. However, these characteristics are generally somewhat less common among Sweden Democrat voters than among Social Democrat and Conservative voters. As was noted above, there is furthermore a substantial difference between the voter groups when it comes to more concrete questions about groups that occupy a more subordinate position in society, namely immigrants and women. These findings indicate that Sweden Democrat voters tend to share the positive view of social equality that is prevalent in Sweden today, but that this view does not encompass concrete attitudes towards specific groups (see also Moffitt, 2017; Towns et al., 2014).

Our results suggest that Sweden Democrat voters are comprised of two groups, of which one is more xenophobic (43 percent) than the other. The less xenophobic group also expresses a desire to reduce immigration, but without at the same time harbouring a more deep-seated antipathy towards immigrants (57 percent). Our analyses showed that these groups did not distinguish themselves from one another on all issues, but that the group with higher level of xenophobia exhibits a general tendency towards attitudes associated with the radical right, namely expressions of ethnonationalism, conservatism and authoritarianism. There is also a difference between the two groups with regard to psychological characteristics linked to these radical right attitudes (e.g. Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016), since the more xenophobic Sweden Democrat voters estimate themselves to be less empathetic and have less tolerant and more authoritarian values. We speculate that the group with a higher level of xenophobia comprises the Sweden Democrats' core voters, and that it may be difficult for other parties to persuade this group to vote for them in either the short or longer term. At the same time, the rapid growth in electoral support for the Sweden Democrats may be a result of them having been able to attract and mobilise voters who do not belong to this core group. The common denominator shared by the two groups, however, is a desire to reduce immigration to Sweden and a propensity to view immigration as both an economic and cultural threat.

As to questions focused on the respondents' wellbeing and socioeconomic status, it can be noted that it is somewhat more common for Sweden Democrat voters to be psychologically or socioeconomically marginalised than it is for Social Democrat and Conservative voters, but most electors in all voter groups report high levels of wellbeing (see also e.g. Sannerstedt 2014). This may indicate that the average Sweden Democrat elector is motivated to vote for the Sweden Democrats on the basis of a negative view of society rather than perceptions based on the individual's own life situation. It should however be noted that perceived societal changes may be regarded as a potential threat to the voters' future life situation and opportu-

nities. We are unable to clarify this issue based on the questions included in our study, but we find some support for this view in that only approximately half of Social Democrat voters believe that things are going to go well for them in the future.

Who are the voters who have shifted to the Sweden Democrats from the Social Democrats and the Conservatives?

The second aim of the report was to examine what characterises those who have shifted to the Sweden Democrats from the Social Democrats and the Conservatives, and how these electors differ from those who today continue to vote for the Social Democrats and Conservatives.

Sweden Democrat voters tend to agree on many issues irrespective of which party they previously voted for. This is the case, for example, when it comes to views on immigration and immigrants, sociocultural left-right issues, distrust of societal institutions, and a nostalgic view of the past. This may be interpreted as indicating that those Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats are similar to other Sweden Democrat voters with regard to issues that previous research has identified as being central to the new European radical right parties (Arzheimer, 2018). One question that we are unable to answer in this study is whether the views of those voters who have left the Social Democrats for the Sweden Democrats changed after they began to identify with the Sweden Democrats, a party whose political agenda directs a focus at these issues (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2018; Hellström & Nilsson, 2010), or whether it was precisely these opinions and attitudes that originally led them to move to the Sweden Democrats.

There are also issues in which Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats and Conservatives respectively tend to differ from one another, and on which they tend to lie closer to the voters of their former parties. Former Social Democrats position themselves more to the left on socioeconomic issues, but considerably closer to other Sweden Democrat voters than those electors who have stayed with the Social Democrats. Welfare chauvinism is also somewhat more common among Sweden Democrat electors who have previously voted Social Democrat, which means that they are more likely to believe that the public sector is not too large (they support the welfare state) but that immigration costs too much in terms of public sector resources. These results may be interpreted together with the fact that there are certain differences in socioeconomic status and the degree of marginalisation between different groups of Sweden Democrat voters. Former Social Democrat voters have somewhat lower socioeconomic status in both objective and subjective terms, they perceive their own situation to have deteriorated more

commonly, and they tend to have a more pessimistic view of the future than other Sweden Democrat voters, particularly those who have previously voted for the Conservatives. It is possible that those Sweden Democrat voters who previously voted for the Social Democrats are motivated by concern over their own life situation to a greater extent than others.

Reasons for and extent of past and future mobility between the Sweden Democrats, Social Democrats and Conservatives

The report's third aim was to examine possible reasons behind the flow of voters between the Sweden Democrats, the Social Democrats, and the Conservatives, and what we might expect future voter mobility to look like.

In line with the results of previous research (e.g. SCB, 2016), we found that most Sweden Democrat voters have previously voted for the Social Democrats or the Conservative Party. As has already been indicated above, there may be reason to believe that Sweden Democrats who have previously voted for the Social Democrats are somewhat more likely to perceive that they have a difficult life situation and to be worried that immigration could weaken the welfare state and lead to their personal situation deteriorating further as a result. The reasons for former Conservative voters shifting to the Sweden Democrats might conceivably more often be due to perceptions about the negative societal effects of immigration. This conclusion is speculative, however, and should be examined further in future studies, since the analyses presented in this report are not appropriate for the specification of causal explanations.

Our results further suggest that the potential for future mobility between the Social Democrats and the Sweden Democrats is probably relatively small. Our conclusion is based on questions focused on voters second-choice parties and on the respondents' perceptions about what Sweden's future would be like if different parties governed the country, which show that it is relatively uncommon for Sweden Democrat and Social Democrat voters to express positive views of the other party. This conclusion is further strengthened by analyses which show that Social Democrat and Sweden Democrat voters (irrespective of their previous party affiliations) tend to differ quite substantially from one another in most questions examined in this report. This may mean that the Social Democrat voters with a propensity to shift their allegiance to the Sweden Democrats have already done so and that Sweden Democrat voters who have previously voted for the Social Democrats no longer feel affiliation with their former party of choice.

By contrast, there are greater similarities between Conservative voters and

Sweden Democrat voters, and the respondents' answers to questions measuring second-choice parties and perceptions about Sweden's future with different parties governing the country also give grounds for concluding that there is probably a considerably greater potential for future voter mobility between the Conservatives and the Sweden Democrats. Despite these similarities, there are nonetheless clear differences between these two voter groups. Voters of the Conservative Party tend to express less antipathy towards immigrants, and be less conservative and less focused on the past than Sweden Democrat voters. They also tend to have a higher socioeconomic status, feel that they are included in society to a greater extent, and report higher levels of wellbeing and a more optimistic view of the future.

The study's strengths and weaknesses

This report is based on a large data set and can thus provide an unusually broad and detailed description of Sweden Democrat voters. We have not only analysed differences between voter groups, but also differences within the group of Sweden Democrat voters. There is always variation within different groups, and it is important to demonstrate that this variation exists. The Sweden Democrats have attracted electors from diverse groups of voters, which means that a range of different social groups and ideological positions are represented within the party. Studies that do not take this into consideration risk ignoring important explanatory models.

It should be noted that there may be a bias within the sample, since the average age of the respondents is somewhat higher than that within the population as a whole. The results may also include a certain level of error, and it is likely that the point estimates may be wrong by a few percentage points in either direction. It has not however been the aim of this study to identify representative point estimates but rather to study relative differences between the voter groups examined. Confidence intervals are consistently small as a result of the large number of respondents included in the study.

This report provides an extensive basis for discussions and future work both in politics and research. The results may be expected to interest politicians and electors from all different political parties as well as researchers with an interest in current and future societal trends and currents. Further studies are required to examine the different areas in more detail and to identify and test causal explanations.

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Appendix A. Sample

The analyses are based on the responses of 3,518 respondents, of whom 2,217 would vote for the Sweden Democrats if there were a general election today, 548 would vote for the Social Democrats, 634 would vote for the Conservatives, and 119 would not vote.

A total of 3,648 respondents participated in the survey, but 130 were excluded from the analyses for the following reasons: they had not answered which party they would vote for if there were a general election today; they answered to an open question that they had given a wrong answer to the question on which party they would vote for if there were a general election today; they had given an unreasonable estimate (> 50 percent) in answer to the following question: *How large a proportion of everyone living in Sweden do you believe are ... (born abroad/born in Eastern Europe/born in the Middle East)?*; or, among those who had stated that they would not vote, they had motivated their decision on religious grounds (e.g. being a Jehovah's Witness) or as not having Swedish citizenship.

Table A.1 shows that more men than women participated in the survey in all voter groups. Further, the average age was relatively high in all voter groups (52–56 years). The age ranges were 18–79 among Sweden Democrat and Conservative voters, 19–79 among Social Democrat voters, and 22–78 among those who would not vote.

Table A.1. Gender distribution (%) and average age per voter group.

	Gender		Average age (Standard deviation)
	% Man	% Woman	
Sweden Democrats	72.5	27.5	55.8 (15.28)
Social Democrats	53.6	46.4	54.4 (17.89)
Conservatives	64.5	35.5	55.9 (17.04)
Wouldn't vote	74.6	25.4	52.3 (15.59)
Total	68.2	31.8	55.5 (16.06)

Appendix B. Method report

Comparative study Social Democrats, Conservatives and Sweden Democrats 2018

INSTITUTE FOR FUTURES STUDIES

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Target group:

Those who would have voted for the Conservatives, Social Democrats or Sweden Democrats, and those who would not voted, if there were a general election at the time of data collection to the present study.

Sample:

The sample has been drawn from among those in Novus' Sweden Panel who in the background questionnaire stated that they voted for these parties, or did not vote, in 2014, supplemented with those who, when Novus updated the background questionnaire in October 2017, stated that they would consider voting for one of these parties or alternatively not vote for any party. The sample was not stratified.

Method:

The survey was conducted in Novus' Sweden web panel. See below for more info on the Sweden Panel.

Field period:

25 January – 13 February 2018 and 5 – 19 April 2018.

The sample was distributed successively during the periods 25 January to 1 February and 5–6 April.

Reminder:

Distributed 3–4 days subsequent to the initial invitation.

Number of invitations sent:

7,711

Number that were screened out because they did not belong to the target group:

1,601

Number of interviews conducted:

3,409*

*) These were further supplemented with 239 interviews among Norstat's randomly sampled panel, giving a total of 3,648 interviews.

The following figures relate to the 239 interviews conducted by Norstat:

- Did not belong to the target group (Screened out) = 1,696
- Did not complete the survey = 15
- The invitation was sent to: 8,303 panel members

The same method was used as for the Sweden Panel, with the exception that Norstat had no information on which party the panel members had voted for in 2014 or which parties they would consider voting for if there was a general election today, since they do not have this background information on their panel. In addition, Norstat only conducted interviews among Sweden Democrat voters.

Participation frequency:

65 %

Number who did not complete the questionnaire:

356

Response time, median:

18.5 minutes. The majority of responses lie between 15 and 25 minutes.

Reward:

All respondents received 10 reward points for their participation (the standard is 5 reward points). See below for more information on the Novus reward system.

About Novus' Sweden Panel

The Novus Sweden Panel is comprised of approximately 40,000 panellists. The panel is randomly recruited (people cannot apply to join in order to earn money or influence public opinion) and is nationally representative with regard to age, gender and region for the age range 18–79 years. Possible biases in the structure of the

panel are adjusted for by drawing nationally representative samples from the panel, and by weighting results.

We collaborate with a number of partners to conduct continuous recruitment to the panel by phone. These partners ring random samples in order to recruit panel members. Those who agree to join the panel give an e-mail address and we then email them so that they can confirm that they are still interested in being members of the panel and at the same time complete a questionnaire containing background questions.

We take care of the panel by means of a panel management process. Among other things this involves ensuring that panel members cannot participate in too many surveys in a short space of time or in a number of similar surveys. We also have a system of rewards for panel members.

Conducting surveys

A sample is drawn from the panel. These individuals are invited to participate in the survey via e-mail. The invitation contains information on how long it will take to answer the survey, the final response date and a link that they can click on in order to access the questionnaire. All the questions can be answered at once, or the panellists can pause and return to the questionnaire later. When the data collection is completed, the work to compile the data begins.

Novus' reward system

There is a reward for the surveys in which individuals participate. When individuals have completed a survey, a minimum of 5 points are credited to their accounts. 25 points may be used to donate 25 SEK to the Red Cross. 100 points may be exchanged for a cinema ticket that is valid for a film of the panel member's choice at the cinema chains SF Bio and Svenska bio. 100 points can also be exchanged for a gift voucher worth 100 Swedish kronor. The "Super gift voucher" gives the recipient the chance to choose among different gift vouchers. Points that have been earned are valid for a period of two full calendar years subsequent to the year in which they were earned.



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