

**Master in Global Energy
Transition and Governance**

POPULISM IN POWER

***Lessons from the Swedish
far-right's energy discourse***

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Abstract

This master's thesis analyses the growing influence of far-right populist forces, here embodied by the Sweden Democrats, on debates and policies related to the energy transition in Sweden. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining political theory, discourse analysis and empirical studies, this research demonstrates how populism and the far-right are restructuring public debate around energy sovereignty, national identity and resistance to European injunctions. An analysis of the Sweden Democrats' election manifestos (2022 and 2024) reveals a crisis rhetoric, an opposition between 'the people' and 'the elites', and a minimisation of the climate emergency, justifying a wait-and-see approach and the promotion of nuclear power as a symbol of national independence, to the detriment of renewable energies and social justice. On the ground, while populist rhetoric contributes to polarising the debate and slowing down the adoption of ambitious policies, Sweden's economic, social and institutional dynamics show resilience and a capacity to pursue a just energy transition, despite the rise of the far-right. This work highlights the importance of strengthening citizen participation, social equity and transparency in energy governance to counter the risks of fragmentation and political polarisation, while offering a reflection on the challenges of the energy transition in the broader European context.

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List of acronyms

AfD:	<i>Alternative für Deutschland</i> – Alternative for Germany
ECR:	European Conservatives and Reformists
EGD:	European Green Deal
EU:	European Union
ET:	Energy transition
FN:	<i>Front National</i> – National Front, today <i>Rassemblement National</i> (RN) – National Rally
IEA	International Energy Agency
L:	<i>Liberalerna</i> – Liberals
LTI:	<i>Lingua Tertii Imperii</i> – The Language of the Third Empire (2)
M:	<i>Moderata samlingspartiet</i> – Moderate Party
MEP:	Member of the European Parliament
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NECP:	National Energy and Climate Plan
PM:	Prime Minister
UK:	United Kingdom
UMP:	<i>Union pour un Mouvement Populaire</i> – Union for a Popular Movement, today <i>Les Républicains</i> (LR) – The Republicans
US:	United States (of America)
USA:	United States of America
RPR:	<i>Rassemblement Pour la République</i> – Rally for the Republic, today <i>Les Républicains</i> (LR) – The Republicans
S:	<i>Socialdemokraterna</i> – Social Democrats
SD:	<i>Sverigedemokraterna</i> – Sweden Democrats
SDM:	Sweden Democrats' Manifesto
TFEC:	Total Final Energy Consumption
V:	<i>Vänsterpartiet</i> – Left Party

Introduction

Energy: The far-right's new battleground

Over the past decade, the growing influence of far-right political forces has become a defining feature of the European political landscape, with significant implications for the direction and ambition of energy transition (ET) policies. After focusing primarily on immigration for years, far-right parties across Europe and beyond are now targeting climate and energy policy as one of their major political battlegrounds. This shift is evident in countries such as Germany, Italy, Poland and Sweden, where right-wing populist groups have organised opposition to climate action, portraying it as a threat to national sovereignty, economic security and traditional lifestyles. Sweden was chosen as a case study because of the uniqueness of its political, energy and social model, which contrasts with the trajectories observed in other European countries mentioned. While most European nations face similar tensions between sovereignty, ET and social justice, Sweden stands out for the maturity of its public debate, the historical centrality of environmental issues in the political agenda, and the coexistence of particularly strong national and local dynamics. By choosing Sweden, we are therefore seeking to use a unique case to analyse the complexity of the discourse and policies related to the ET, while highlighting general trends which could also be relevant to understand the phenomenon in the wider European context.

The enduring legacy and evolving challenges of Sweden's welfare state

To paint a portrait of contemporary Sweden, is to capture the trajectory of a nation whose identity and political culture have been profoundly shaped by social democracy and, above all, by the vision of Hansson¹. It was Hansson, in his landmark 1928 speech to the *Riksdag*, who articulated the concept of *Folkhemmet* – ‘the people’s home’ – as the cornerstone of a new social contract for modern Sweden (3). This vision, rooted in ideals of equality, solidarity, and inclusion, was not merely rhetorical: under Hansson’s leadership from 1932 to 1946, Sweden saw the implementation of sweeping reforms – unemployment insurance, health and maternity benefits, pensions, and public housing – that transformed a society marked by deep class divisions into one of the world’s most admired welfare states. This social model, sometimes referred to as ‘the Swedish Middle Way’ (4) was a deliberate alternative to both *laissez-faire* capitalism and revolutionary socialism, seeking instead a pragmatic, reformist path that placed social cohesion and universal welfare at the heart of national identity. Further developed by figures such as Palme², it became synonymous with Sweden’s postwar success and stability (5). It was credited not only with lifting millions out of poverty and building a robust welfare state, but also with insulating Sweden from the authoritarian and populist waves that swept across Europe during the twentieth century. The Social Democrats (S), by forging broad coalitions and emphasizing consensus, maintained power almost uninterruptedly from 1932 to 1976, and the *Folkhemmet* became both a political project and a powerful metaphor for Swedish society.

The durability of this model has come under increasing strain in recent decades. The economic crisis of the 1990s, the pressures of globalisation, and rising inequality have eroded the

¹ Leader of the Social Democratic Party from 1925 to 1946, PM of Sweden from 1932 to 1936 and from 1936 to 1946.

² Leader of the S from 1969 to 1986, PM of Sweden from 1969 to 1976, and from 1982 until his unsolved assassination in 1986.

foundations of the social contract (6). The very concept of *Folkhemmet* – once a unifying ideal – has become a site of political contestation, appropriated by the radical right to argue that the left has sacrificed national cohesion for multiculturalism, and immigration. This rhetorical shift mirrors a broader European trend, termed the ‘Populist *Zeitgeist*’ by Mudde (7; 8), in which far-right parties recast themselves as defenders of the ‘real people’ against ‘cosmopolitan elites’ and supranational institutions. Sweden therefore offers a distinctive perspective for observing developments in European politics.

The Sweden Democrats and the polarisation of energy policy

The Sweden Democrats (SD), members of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group, have become a pivotal force in Swedish politics, supporting a minority government through the Tidö Agreement (2022-present). This unprecedented arrangement raises the following problem statement: the resilience of Sweden’s political system in the face of populist challenges, and its capacity to meet the demands of a just and ambitious ET in an increasingly polarised international context.

The ET occupies a central place in both Swedish imagination and its policy reality. As a pioneer in decarbonisation, Sweden, the 3rd lowest carbon intensity³ member of the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 2023 (9), has built more than 55% of its energy mix on biomass and nuclear power (Fig. 1).

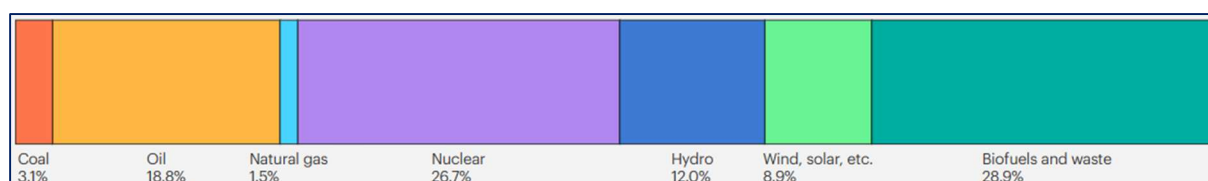


Figure 1. Total energy supply, Sweden, 2023 (10)

The 1980 referendum on nuclear energy⁴, held in the aftermath of the Three Mile Island accident, marked a historic moment – demonstrating the country’s ability to organise a democratic debate on energy sovereignty, but also exposing the fragility of consensus around technological pathways and transition strategies. Today, the energy question has returned with renewed force, intensified by price volatility, the effects on the energy sector by the war in Ukraine and the centrality of climate change on the European agenda. The recent bankruptcy of the battery manufacturer *Northvolt*, once a symbol of green industrial ambition, starkly illustrates the vulnerability of this model to external shocks and rapid political change. In this context, the rise of populism is profoundly reshaping the contours of the energy debate. What was once a largely consensual project has become a battleground for political polarisation. Energy sovereignty, the defence of living standards, and criticism of the European Union (EU) now dominate public discourse. The SD’s ideological and rhetorical strategies allow them to channel public anxieties, mobilise a sense of crisis, and challenge the legitimacy of ambitious

³ 3.1 tonnes of CO₂ per capita.

⁴ A gradual, long-term phase-out of civil nuclear power, with a halt to the construction of new nuclear power stations, including other measures such as a tax on profits from hydroelectric power stations, assistance for low-income earners in their energy expenditure, and more research into renewable energies, won the referendum of 23 March 1980 by a narrow margin (39.1% against 38.7% in favour of shutting down existing nuclear power stations within 10 years, as well as a ban on new power stations or uranium mines).

climate policies. As this thesis will show, the opposition of ‘the people’ to ‘the elites’, the denunciation of renewables, and the critique of European standards are not merely rhetorical devices; they are structuring the political landscape in Sweden and, increasingly, across Europe.

The Impact of the SD’s energy programme on Sweden’s climate ambition

As Sweden’s electricity production is largely decarbonised⁵ and its energy consumption is already highly electrified⁶, Sweden’s transition differs from countries such as Poland, which is still heavily dependent on coal for its electricity production⁷. However, these specific characteristics do not lead to the elimination of political divisions about the ET, which can be observed where energy mixes remain very carbon-intensive and where the transition may seem more difficult to achieve. The challenge in Sweden is then to meet future electricity demand, particularly that of its energy-intensive industry⁸, which is estimated to increase by 66 to 81 TWh by 2035 (11). Debates over the future of nuclear power and the protection of national industry reflect broader tensions between questions of sovereignty, competitiveness, and sustainability that define Swedish ET today. It is this complex and evolving landscape that this thesis sets out to explore. At its core lies the question: how could the SD’s energy programme impact Sweden’s ability to achieve its climate and energy goals, particularly those related to European commitments? This question is not only timely but also emblematic of broader uncertainties facing liberal democracies and the European project. It invites us to explore the interplay between populist rhetoric, national identity and energy sovereignty to assess the risks and points of resilience for Sweden’s social contract and its contribution to the European ET.

A multidimensional analysis of populist influence on Sweden’s ET

Methodologically, to address these issues, this thesis adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining political history, discourse analysis, governance theory, and public policy studies. The conceptual framework for this thesis is grounded in the academic literature on populism, the far-right, and the legacy of fascism. The decision to mobilise these three closely related but distinct concepts is driven by the need to understand the discursive strategies of protest deployed in the context of energy and climate transition. Firstly, populism, as a form of rhetoric and political mobilisation, to understand how certain parties present society as divided between a ‘homogeneous people’ and ‘corrupt or disconnected elites’. Secondly, the far-right, as a political family distinguished by its rejection of pluralism, its attachment to the traditional order and, often, nationalist and identitarian rhetoric, to understand resistance to the ecological transition and the questioning of European institutions. Thirdly, the legacy of fascism as a complementary analytical framework for examining the persistence or reactivation of certain ideological and discursive patterns, even if the current historical and institutional contexts differ from those of the 1930s, and to better understand the logic at work in the transformation of the Swedish and European political landscapes. To move beyond this interpretation based on classical political economy, a second triptych will be used to grasp the complexity of the current debates, which combine concerns about national independence, social justice and the scientific legitimacy of public policies. Firstly, the concept of energy sovereignty – crystallising the

⁵ Hydro: 39.9%, nuclear: 29.2%, wind: 20.6% (10).

⁶ Electricity accounts for around a third of Swedish Total Final Energy Consumption (TFEC), among the highest levels in the world (9).

⁷ 60.1% of the Polish electricity generation mix in 2023 (75).

⁸ Forests, chemicals, mines and steel.

tensions between national autonomy and European integration, particularly visible in the Swedish context, where the issue of energy dependence and security of supply is central to the political debate. Secondly, the concept of ‘just transition’ – an essential concept for understanding the link between climate efficiency and social justice in a country where the welfare state has long been a model, and for analysing how the discourse on ‘just transition’ can be instrumentalised or appropriated by different actors. And finally, climate scepticism – to understand the resistance and controversies surrounding the ET. This approach is complemented by exploitation of interviews with Swedish economic actors, local political and non-political decision-makers, and on new studies conducted at Swedish universities. The study of these six key concepts (populism, the far-right, fascist heritage, energy sovereignty, just transition, climate scepticism) ultimately enables us to identify analytical indicators – rhetorical, symbolic and programmatic – which we will then compare with the SD discourse to verify their presence, consistency and modes of expression, using Maingueneau’s method of discourse analysis (12) and Eco’s fourteen characteristics of fascism (13) on the SD’s manifestos (SDMs) from 2022 and 2024 – documents chosen for their central role in defining political orientations and electoral mobilisation, as well as for their capacity to reflect how the Swedish social contract is being renegotiated in the context of globalisation and European integration. The operational indicators identified will then be compared with the socio-economic realities in Sweden in order to assess their suitability for achieving carbon neutrality. This three-pronged approach – theoretical, discursive and empirical – aims to determine whether SD strategies, while responding to electoral considerations, compromise the effectiveness of climate policies. If so, this study will attempt to identify where mitigation levers – such as narrative reframing and institutional counter-narratives – to counter the influence of populist rhetoric and ensure that the imperatives of the ET are not undermined by demagogic strategies.

From theoretical framework to stakeholder perceptions

This research is structured in three stages, echoing the pedagogical and poetic journey of Nils Holgersson (4), the fictional character of a beloved Swedish schoolbook, who flies over Sweden on the back of his wild goose and discovers the beauty, diversity but also fragility of his country. The first chapter establishes the conceptual foundations via a literature review clarifying some of the important terms and theoretical debates that structure the Swedish and European ETs. The second chapter applies this framework to a detailed analysis of the SD’s 2022 and 2024 election manifestos to operationalise the analysis and assess the extent to which the SD’s discourse aligns with the analysis matrix derived from the literature review. The final chapter examines how this discourse is perceived by economic actors and local civil servants and considers the potential for mitigation or amplification of its effects by institutional, economic, and civil society stakeholders.

1. Conceptual foundations for understanding the populist and far-right challenges to the energy transition

Like Nils (1), who soars above the Swedish landscape to gain perspective before descending to observe its details up close, this first chapter invites us to zoom out and explore relevant concepts that structure the Swedish debate on the ET. This review of theoretical literature aims to give a better understanding of the political and ideological dynamics at work, but will, above all, help us identify the most relevant analytical indicators of our study, though their implication in the field of energy. The objective is thus to clarify the concepts of populism, the far-right, fascism but also sovereignty, climate scepticism and ‘just transition’, in order to understand how they influence the perception and treatment of the ET by the SD.

1.1. Political theories and concepts

1.1.1 The Concept of Populism: Crisis of representation and implications for energy policy

Populism is a controversial concept with many meanings. It is often defined as a ‘thin ideology’, *i.e.* an ideology that does not propose a global vision of the world but is built around a central principle: the division between ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’ (7). For Mudde, populism means that politics must claim that they express the general will of the people. Taggart (14) stresses the flexibility of populism, which is grafted onto more consistent ideologies (nationalism, socialism, etc.) in order to take shape. Laclau (15) proposes a discursive approach, seeing populism as a logic of constructing the ‘people’ through opposition to an ‘other’ (elite, minorities or Brussels). In a context of crisis in Western democracies, where authoritarianism or illiberalism are seen by some as systems of government better able to respond to profound crises (economic, social, climatic or health crises), Müller (16) sees populism as an intrinsic threat to pluralism, because it rejects the legitimacy of opposition, whereas Canovan (17) considers that populism can revitalise democracy by responding to the crisis of representation.

As we will see, populism is shaping a vision of energy in which the fight against elites, the promotion of national control and the protection of citizens are becoming the foundations for challenging European transition and integration policies.

Denouncing energy policies deemed elitist or out of touch with reality

Populism in the energy sector is primarily manifested in the denunciation of policies deemed elitist or disconnected from the realities of the people. This stance translates into a discourse of mistrust towards supranational bodies, which are accused of imposing ideological choices to the detriment of national interests. Italian Council President Meloni, for example, proclaims: *“The ideological approach that accompanied the creation of the European Green Deal and has supported its development thus far has had disastrous effects. [...] It is not true that the only possible path to defend the environment and nature is the one defined by a blatantly ideological minority.”* (18), illustrating how rejection of European policies is used to defend a national vision of energy justice.

Promoting energy sovereignty

At the same time, promoting energy sovereignty is central to populist rhetoric. It involves claiming national control over energy resources and choices, presenting independence as a guarantee of prosperity and security. This aspiration is powerfully expressed in the words of the US President Trump: “*We have ended the war on American energy, and we have ended the war on beautiful, clean coal. We are now an exporter of energy to the world. And the United States is now the number one producer of oil and natural gas anywhere in the world. We are energy independent.*” (19), thus affirming the primacy of the nation over any external constraints and the value of traditional energy resources as the foundation of national power.

Defending living standards against the ‘sacrifices’ imposed by the elite

Finally, defending living standards against the ‘sacrifices’ imposed by the elite is another pillar of populist rhetoric in the energy sector. Here, the aim is to present transition or regulatory measures as threats to the well-being of ordinary citizens, justifying policies to protect them from price increases or restrictions. In Hungary, PM Orbán has legitimised energy price caps as a bulwark against Brussels, claiming to protect the people from decisions perceived as arbitrary or punitive coming from outside the country (20).

While populism provides a flexible framework for understanding the opposition between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ and the ways in which this antagonism is mobilized in the energy debate, it is often intertwined with, but distinct from, the ideological currents of the far-right. Indeed, while populism can attach itself to a variety of host ideologies, including both left-wing and right-wing traditions, the contemporary European context – and the Swedish case in particular – shows that it frequently intersects with nationalist, authoritarian, and exclusionary discourses. To fully grasp the specific threat posed by populist actors to the ET, it is therefore essential to move beyond the general logic of populism and examine how it merges with the ideological repertoire of the far-right. The next section will clarify the contours of the far-right, exploring how these movements not only adopt the populist dichotomy of ‘the people’ versus ‘the elite’, but also infuse it with themes of national identity, nativism, and a more radical rejection of pluralism – elements that have direct implications for their approach to energy policy and climate action. By shifting our focus from the broad logic of populism to the more specific ideology of the far-right, we can better understand the mechanisms through which energy sovereignty, resistance to European norms, and the defence of traditional industries become central pillars of political mobilisation. This will allow us to distinguish the rhetorical strategies common to all populist actors from those that are particular to the far-right, and to later assess their concrete impact on Swedish energy debate.

1.1.2. The concept of the far-right: National identity and contestation of the energy transition

Before delving into the concepts of the far-right, it is important to clarify why this section does not address the far-left. While both ends of the political spectrum can, in theory, challenge mainstream approaches to the ET, the reality of Swedish politics over the past decade justifies this focus on the far-right. In Sweden, it is the far-right – embodied above all by the SD – that has experienced significant electoral growth, shaped public debate, and exerted a tangible influence on both national and European policy agendas, especially regarding energy and

climate issues. In contrast, the far-left⁹, represented mainly by the *Vänsterpartiet* (V) – the Left Party, has remained marginal in terms of both electoral dynamics and agenda-setting power, particularly on ET debates. Moreover, the rhetoric and policy proposals of the far-right, as we will see in chapter 2, have been far more disruptive to the consensus on climate action and the direction of the ET. The SD, unlike the far-left, have opposed to European environmental regulations, shown scepticism towards renewable energies, and enhanced the defence of national sovereignty is central to their platform – often framing these issues in terms of identity, security, and resistance to ‘elites’. This focus is also justified by the broader European trend, where far-right parties have become key actors in contesting climate policy and promoting energy nationalism (21; 22). In the Swedish case, the far-right’s discourse has not only influenced public opinion but has also shaped coalition agreements and government priorities, as evidenced by the Tidö Agreement and the debates surrounding nuclear power and EU climate targets. For these reasons, and in order to provide a relevant and context-sensitive analysis, this section will concentrate on defining and analysing the far-right, whose impact on the ET in Sweden is both more direct and more significant than that of the far-left.

The concept of the far-right remains fluid and debated, as it encompasses a variety of currents and strategies depending on the national context. Milza (23) defines it as a political current based on the rejection of pluralism, the exaltation of national identity and the desire to restore an order perceived as threatened. This vision is rooted in a reaction to the supposed erosion of traditional values and the loss of national homogeneity, often expressed through opposition to immigration, multiculturalism and supranational integration. The far-right is also distinguished by its radical criticism of liberal democracy, which it accuses of promoting relativism, moral decadence and the dilution of collective values. It generally promotes an organic conception of the nation, perceived as a community of destiny based on heritage, culture and sometimes ethnicity, and values authority, order and a return to hierarchies considered natural. For Eatwell and Goodwin (24), the term ‘national populism’ refers to the alliance between populist rhetoric – which pits the ‘real people’ against the elites – and an identity agenda that is often xenophobic. These movements mobilise concerns about cultural change, economic insecurity and mistrust of institutions, presenting themselves as defenders of national sovereignty. The boundary between populism and the far-right remains blurred. Mudde (7) proposes the notion of ‘radical right-wing populism’, characterised by a combination of three elements: populism (opposition between the ‘people’ and the ‘elites’), nativism (priority given to the national group of origin) and authoritarianism (preference for order and the repression of deviance). Rydgren (25) highlights the adaptability and diversity of these movements’ strategies, in adjusting their discourse to local contexts. Finally, several authors, including Mudde (26), warn against overly broad or imprecise use of the term ‘far-right’, at the risk of diluting its analytical scope. The far-right is thus distinguished by its exclusive nationalism, its rejection of pluralism and its questioning of democratic norms, while remaining a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon.

In the energy sector, the far-right stands out for its particularly strong mobilisation around the defence of national control over resources, opposition to European policies and a preference for

⁹ It is important to bear in mind the historical and traditional differences that make it difficult to compare left-wing parties in continental European countries such as France, and Sweden. In general, the Swedish left is considered less radical. In Sweden, where social democracy (see Introduction, p.8) has been the norm for a very long time, the perception of what is “extreme” in the left-wing sense has been slightly different. In Sweden, the tendency to label the “*Vänsterpartiet*” (V) as ‘far-left’ has emerged among other parties over the last decade.

nuclear and traditional energies¹⁰, thus articulating a unique and radical vision of the ET. Looking at the influence of the far-right on energy policies, beyond populist rhetoric, we will examine how these positions are translated into concrete policy choices, institutional dynamics, and long-term impacts on the direction and ambition of national ETs.

Defence of national control over resources

The far-right has made national control over energy resources a fundamental principle. This demand is reflected in policies such as Trump's 'America First Energy Plan' (27), which rejects all international constraints and asserts the primacy of US energy independence. Through this stance, the far-right seeks to guarantee national prosperity and security, while promoting traditional resources as the foundation of the country's power.

Opposition to European regulations

Additionally, the European far-right is strongly opposed to the regulations imposed by Brussels, which it perceives as infringements on the sovereignty and autonomy of nations. PM Orbán of Hungary has stated that *"We have only one mission left: to defend these achievements again and again against attacks from Brussels, which is trying to take away our energy tariff shield [...]"* (28). This rejection is accompanied by rhetoric of resistance, in which the defence of the national model prevails over any external interference.

Preference for nuclear and traditional energy sources

Finally, the far-right favours the use of nuclear energy and traditional energy resources, which it presents as guarantees of stability, security and independence. This orientation is reflected in the SDs' 2024 manifesto: *"In this way, the EU can help to stimulate more nuclear power in Europe and the world."*¹¹ (SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy). The choice of nuclear power and the continued use of fossil fuels are thus justified by the desire to maintain living standards and industrial competitiveness, while rejecting innovations perceived as costly or unreliable.

The far-right distinguishes itself from other political currents by its emphasis on national identity, its rejection of pluralism, and its narrative of a nation under threat, all of which are mobilized to challenge established approaches to the ET. While the boundaries between populism and the far-right remain debated in academic literature, the latter brings a more exclusionary, nativist, and often authoritarian dimension to the populist dichotomy of 'the people' versus 'the elite'. As exemplified above, this is evident in the far-right's consistent advocacy for national control over energy resources, its opposition to supranational regulations, and its preference for traditional energy resources such as nuclear and fossil fuels.

However, to fully understand the discursive strategies and symbolic resources mobilized by these movements, it is necessary to further explore the ideological underpinnings that inform their worldview. In particular, the legacy of fascism, as theorized by Eco (13), offers a useful framework for analysing how references to tradition, the rejection of modernity, and the

¹⁰ Traditional energy often refers to fossil fuels. Here and elsewhere in this thesis, the term refers to Sweden's historical energy mix based on hydroelectricity and biomass, to which non-traditional energy sources, namely nuclear power, should be added.

¹¹ The SDMs were fully translated from Swedish to English using the DeepL online translator. Corrections to this translation are indicated by brackets [...] throughout the document.

construction of internal and external enemies shape far-right approaches to energy and climate issues. The next section will therefore examine how and to what extent these elements are manifested in contemporary discourse, and what they reveal about the deeper ideological roots of the far-right's stance on the ET.

1.1.3. The legacy of fascism: Glorification of the past, rejection of modernity, and the construction of threats in energy discourse

Fascism is a concept with blurred and evolving boundaries. Eco (13) identifies fourteen characteristics of 'eternal fascism', including the cult of tradition, the rejection of modernity, fear of difference, and obsession with conspiracy. For Eco, fascism is a 'vague constellation' rather than a strict ideology. Griffin (29) favours a definition centred on the myth of national renewal. Paxton (30) emphasises the dynamics of action rather than ideology. However, in line with Stanley (31) warning against the inflationary use of the term 'fascism' to describe any form of authoritarian populism, this concept must be used with caution and embedded in specific political contexts.

In the energy sector, the far-right mobilises discursive strategies that are part of the legacy of fascism as theorised by Eco: cult of the past, rejection of modernity, and designation of external enemies. These traits are reflected in three major areas.

Glorification of an idealised past

Firstly, the far-right holds up a glorified past as a model, in which rural life, agricultural traditions and national industrial power are the pillars of a collective identity that must be preserved. This nostalgia is expressed in the passionate defence of landscapes and skills threatened by modernity and technocracy. Thus, President Meloni defends the Italian agricultural tradition threatened by European technocrats (32), erecting the land and national heritage as ramparts against the uniformity imposed from outside. This recourse to rural and industrial imagery, far from being insignificant, aims to reunite the national community around values perceived as authentic and immutable.

Mistrust of innovation and renewable energy

A deep mistrust of technological innovation, particularly renewable energies such as wind and solar power, runs through the discourse of the far-right. These solutions are often caricatured as ineffective, costly, and even harmful to the environment and society. President Trump did not hesitate to mock them: *"A windmill will kill many bald eagles [...] After a certain number, they make you turn the windmill off, that is true. By the way, they make you turn it off. And yet, if you killed one, they put you in jail. That is OK. But why is it OK for windmills to destroy the bird population? You want to see a bird graveyard, go under a windmill someday. You will see more dead birds than you've ever seen in your life."* (33)". This rhetoric aims to discredit renewable energy sources.

Denunciation of foreign interference

This is a cornerstone of far-right rhetoric on energy issues. The EU, and supranational institutions more broadly, are accused of imposing standards and policies that run counter to national interests. This rejection of external authority is embodied in the slogan of the SD:

“Keep Brussels away from the Swedish forest” (SDM 2024, p.8), which summarises the desire to preserve local management of resources and defend sovereignty against any form of control perceived as hostile or disconnected from national realities.

The concept of fascism – whether understood through Eco’s constellation of characteristics, Griffin’s focus on national rebirth (29), or Paxton’s emphasis on action (30) – offers a powerful analytical lens for deciphering the symbolic and ideological resources mobilized by contemporary far-right actors in the energy debate. The glorification of an idealised past, mistrust of technological innovation, and denunciation of foreign interference are not merely rhetorical flourishes; they serve to reinforce a narrative of threat, loss and resistance that resonates with segments of the population anxious about rapid change and perceived increase in external control.

In the Swedish and broader European context, these fascist tropes do not constitute a formal political programme, but they do shape the discursive strategies of parties like the SD. As we will seek to verify by studying their election manifestos in chapter 2, by invoking tradition, casting doubt on renewable energy solutions, and framing the EU as a hostile force, these movements seek to mobilise public anxieties and steer the national debate on energy and climate in a direction that prioritises national sovereignty and identity.

1.2. Illustrative themes in political analysis

1.2.1. The notion of sovereignty: Anti-Europeanism, national control, and resistance in the energy sector

Sovereignty refers to a political doctrine that defends the sovereignty of nations, *i.e.* their autonomy and ability to exercise exclusive control over their internal affairs, particularly in the face of transfers of powers to supranational bodies such as the EU (34). Historically linked to the Westphalian conception of the state, sovereignty opposes any form of integration deemed likely to threaten national independence or the democratic legitimacy of the people (35; 36). It is expressed on the right, in the defence of national identity and the primacy of the people of any external authority, and on the left, through the denunciation of the European ‘democratic deficit’ and the desire to preserve the state's ability to protect social interests against the logic of the single market.

In Europe, sovereignty shapes much of the contemporary debate on governance, identity and democracy in the age of globalisation. This opposition is reflected in the European Parliament, particularly between the ECR group, to which the SD belongs, and the new group Patriots for Europe. The ECR positions itself as a right-wing, anti-federalist and Euro-realist group, advocating the sovereignty of Member States, institutional flexibility and intergovernmental cooperation, while respecting the democratic framework and displaying an Atlanticist stance. In contrast, the more radical Patriots for Europe group brings together sovereignist and nationalist parties that are staunchly opposed to so-called ‘ultra-federalism’, advocate a weakening of the EU and defend a Europe composed strictly of independent nation states, with tougher rhetoric on migration, sovereignty and identity. This diversity of positions illustrates the centrality and polysemy of sovereignty in the current political realignments in Europe.

In the energy sector, sovereignty is emerging as a central theme, articulating the defence of national control in the face of globalisation and European integration. Interplaying with

concepts such as populism – which centres on opposition between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’, and the legacy of fascism and the far-right – which are rooted in authoritarianism and exclusionary nationalism, sovereignty specifically foregrounds the nation-state’s exclusive authority to set its own energy, economic, and environmental policies. This demand is expressed in three main areas, which reflect the concrete desire to regain control over energy, economic and environmental choices.

Defence of local management of natural resources

Here, it is a question of claiming a historical and exclusive right, inherited from past generations, to administer and preserve the wealth of the national territory. Åkesson, leader of the SD, embodies this stance by stating: “*We do not need Brussels to tell us how to take care of our forests. The Swedish people have managed their land and resources for generations, and we will continue to do so in the best interest of our country.*” (37). This type of statement aims to contrast the wisdom and legitimacy of the people with European technocracy, while setting up local management as a bulwark against foreign interference.

The revival of nuclear power as a symbol of independence

Energy sovereignty is also expressed through the promotion of energy sources considered to guarantee national independence, foremost among which is nuclear power. For countries such as Poland, investing in nuclear power is tantamount to affirming a desire to free themselves from dependence on external suppliers and to guarantee the nation's energy security. As Mateusz Morawiecki, then PM of Poland, stated “*Our task is to guarantee Poland the energy independence at low carbon emissions and this is why we look favorably at nuclear energy*” (38). Nuclear power here becomes a symbol of renewed power and strategic autonomy, in contrast to the vulnerability brought about by the globalisation of energy markets.

Protecting the agricultural and industrial sectors from ‘Brussels bureaucracy’

Finally, sovereignty translates into the defence of national agricultural and industrial sectors, which are portrayed as victims of excessive EU regulation. This rhetoric emphasises the need to preserve jobs, lifestyles and economic competitiveness in the face of standards that are perceived as arbitrary and disconnected from local realities. Bardella, MEP and leader of the Rassemblement National (RN), has repeatedly accused the EU of wanting to kill agriculture, saying that the farmers' protests are “*the cry of France, which does not want to die*” (39). This discourse contrasts the protection of the national productive fabric with the uniform and punitive logic of Europe, elevating resistance to ‘Brussels bureaucracy’ to an act of sovereignty.

The resurgence of sovereignist and anti-EU rhetoric in the energy sector reflects a broader trend in contemporary European politics, where national control over resources and the protection of key economic sectors against ‘Brussels bureaucracy’ have become central themes for right-wing and populist actors. These discourses, illustrated by leaders such as Åkesson, Morawiecki, and Weidel (AfD, *Alternative für Deutschland* – Alternative for Germany), are not simply a reaction to specific EU policies but rather a strategic mobilisation of national identity and economic anxiety in the face of globalisation and supranational governance. In the Swedish context, as in much of Europe, the defence of sovereignty is invoked both as a shield against perceived external threats and as a means of legitimising resistance to ambitious climate and energy policies. This sovereignist posture often reframes the debate; instead of focusing on the challenges of decarbonisation or the opportunities of the green transition, it foregrounds the

risks of losing national control, economic competitiveness, or cultural distinctiveness. However, it is important to note that the concept of sovereignty, much like other notions central to the energy debate, is not always mobilised in good faith. In the context of electoral competition, populist actors from all political wings frequently instrumentalise the defence of sovereignty – not to promote genuine democratic participation or social justice, but to galvanise support by fuelling fears of external control and by presenting themselves as the sole protectors of working class or national interests.

This strategy of rhetorical appropriation is not limited to sovereignty alone. As we will see in the next section, the concept of a ‘just transition’ also becomes a tool for political mobilisation, including for far-right populist parties.

1.2.2. The concept of just transition: From social justice principle to instrument of populist mobilisation

The ‘just transition’ refers to policies aimed at accompanying the transformation of energy systems without widening social inequalities (40). Heffron and McCauley (41) highlight the difficulty of reconciling social justice and climate efficiency. Newell and Mulvaney (42) stress the risk of political recuperation of the notion, which can be used to slow down the transition. Some authors criticise the lack of concrete mechanisms to guarantee equity in the distribution of costs and benefits, including a fairer allocation of decision-making power to citizens – constitutes a major shortcoming. Both the lack of redistribution and the limited participation in decision-making are framed as injustices, and are frequently invoked in populist discourse to argue that the ET should be halted in order to protect the people. Populist movements often misuse this notion to denounce the supposed ‘injustice’ of transition, presented as a threat to people's standard of living.

Among the populists, ‘just transition’ or ‘social justice’ are being hijacked from their original meaning to become instruments of electoral mobilisation, used to pit the ‘people’ against the ‘elites’, to slow down the ecological transition or to reinforce exclusion. This phenomenon is part of a long tradition of lexical recuperation analysed by Klemperer in LTI, the Language of the Third Reich¹² (2). The author details how the Nazi regime misappropriated notions of justice and the social to serve its propaganda:

“The word ‘sozial’ becomes an obligatory ornament, emptied of all universal content, reserved for the community of the German people and to the exclusion of others.”
(Klemperer, LTI, 1947)

Here, the reference to social justice, omnipresent in nazi rhetoric, is not intended to promote equality but to reinforce the cohesion of the majority group and justify the exclusion or persecution of minorities.

Hungarian PM Orbán regularly uses the notion of social justice to justify maintaining subsidies for fossil fuels and capping energy prices, which he presents as a way of protecting the citizens with the most modest means from the ‘sacrifices’ imposed by Brussels: *“Mr Orbán said*

¹² The characteristics of LTI defined by Klemperer will not be used in the study of SD’s discourse. However, it should be noted here that the argument is limited to discourse and its discursive characteristics and does not seek to draw a link between a modern political party and the Nazi regime.

Brussels further demands the termination of the reduction of household energy bills, despite the fact that it means survival for millions of families.” (43) And in Italy, President Meloni has used the rhetoric of just transition to oppose certain measures in the European Green Deal (EGD), presenting them as unfair to workers and the working classes: *“We intend to pursue a just transition to support the affected communities and leave no one behind.”* (44). Emptied of its progressive content the ‘just transition’ become a tool for defending national interests and a weapon against European integration.

While the notion of a ‘just transition’ was born of a desire to reconcile ecological transformation and social justice, it is now frequently used by populist or sovereignist movements. Far from serving solely to guarantee fairness in the distribution of the costs and benefits of the ET, it has become a rhetorical tool for mobilising the electorate against climate policies deemed elitist or imposed from outside. This diversion, which is part of a long tradition of lexical recuperation analysed by Klemperer (2), empties the concept of its progressive substance and turns it into a lever for defending national or sectoral interests, or even for exclusion.

This strategy of politicising ‘justice’ and ‘just transition’ is often accompanied by a discourse that plays down the urgency of climate change or challenges the scientific consensus. It is therefore only natural that in the next section we should look at contemporary forms of climate scepticism and climate denial. We will see how these movements, while claiming to defend the ‘people’, are helping to slow down or delegitimise climate action by mobilising distrust of the scientific and institutional elites.

1.2.3. The dynamics of climate scepticism: Forms and political functions in populist discourse

Climate scepticism refers to questioning the scientific consensus on climate change, while climate denial goes as far as denying the reality or seriousness of the phenomenon (21). McCright and Dunlap (45) distinguish several forms of climate scepticism; contesting causes, consequences or solutions. Forchtner (22) analyses the identity and political dimension of denial, often linked to the defence of traditional or national ways of life. Brulle (46) stresses the role of industrial lobbies in the spread of climate scepticism. In populist discourse, climate scepticism is often ‘soft’; it consists of acknowledging the scientific consensus while downplaying urgency or national responsibility.

Radical climate denial, rejecting not only the urgency but the very legitimacy of climate action, and framing climate policy as a collective error imposed by elites is well illustrated by Nigel Farage (UK, Brexit Party), who has called following the climate change agenda *“one of the biggest and most stupid collective mistakes”* (47).

‘Soft’ climate scepticism, which does not deny climate change outright but questions human responsibility, can be seen in invoking natural cycles to justify inaction and national policy autonomy: Salvini (Lega), recently claimed ice melting is a naturally recurring phenomenon, a fact easily disproved by data (48).

As we shall see in the next section, the SD is adopting this ‘soft’ climate scepticism in their official communications, accepting the scientific consensus but justifying a wait-and-see policy.

Climate scepticism, in its various forms, is a central element of populist discourse, oscillating between partial questioning and more radical denial. It often takes the form of ‘soft’ scepticism, acknowledging the reality of climate change while playing down the urgency of action or national responsibility. This strategy allows populist parties, such as the SD, to position themselves as pragmatists while avoiding ambitious commitments, thus preparing the ground for a climate policy that allows alliances with traditional parties, more attached to the seriousness of their discourse and political positions.

A framework for analysing far-right populist discourse on ET in Sweden

At the end of this first chapter, we can conclude that energy matters are not just a technical issue, but a powerful vector for political mobilisation, where identity, security and competitiveness are intertwined. The use of the populist discourse by certain players helps to polarise the debate and to call into question the ability to bring about an ambitious and inclusive ET.

Having laid the conceptual and contextual foundations needed to understand how the energy debate is structured by oppositional logics (for example, between ‘the people’ and ‘the elites’), we will now, just as Nils (1), after surveying the vast landscape from above descends to observe the details of a particular village or field, focus on the discourse of the SD. To this end, we will operationalize the theoretical framework established in this chapter.

Concepts	Analytical indicators
Energy sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National energy independence • Rejection of European standards • Promotion of nuclear power/local energy
Just transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of national industry • Criticism of the EGD • Little attention to social equity
Climate scepticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the scientific consensus but minimisation of the urgency and national responsibility
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euroscepticism • Mistrust of the EGD • Emphasis on subsidiarity
Polarisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a threatened ‘people’ • Mobilisation of local identity, opposition between elites and the people
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of green innovation in populist discourse • Promotion of the status quo

Table 1. Analytical matrix of far-right populist opposition to the energy transition

This matrix, which connects the key concepts under study to their analytical indicators, will be expanded after the analysis of the SD’s discourse by adding discursive indicators – namely, the concrete ways in which these analytical indicators are manifested in their rhetoric.

2. Analysis of the electoral discourse of the Sweden Democrats

Now that the theoretical framework of terms useful to our study has been established (chapter 1), they can be applied to the material at hand. At the end of this chapter, we will return to our analytical matrix to verify whether and how it is operationalised in the SD's discourse.

Election manifestos are the face that political parties officially show. The product of their ideology and the preparation for elections, they are their program basis. Here we look at the election manifestos produced by the SD for the last two Swedish elections: the 2022 parliamentary election and the 2024 European elections.

The parliamentary elections to renew the three hundred and forty-nine members of the *Riksdag* were called for 11 September 2022, at the end of the four-year term provided for by the Swedish Constitution. The highly polarized election campaign followed the resignation in 2021 of PM Löfven (S), who was earlier censured by parliament. The campaign was dominated by security and crime issues as well as economic concerns, particularly inflation and energy prices. This preoccupation with energy issues stems from a combination of structural, economic and geopolitical factors that have had a direct impact on the purchasing power of Swedish households and the competitiveness of Swedish businesses. The war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation in Ukraine and the subsequent reduction in Russian gas and oil supplies have caused energy prices to soar across Europe, with Swedish electricity prices rising to unprecedented levels in 2022, sometimes reaching over €120/MWh compared with €35/MWh in the 2010s (49), particularly in the south of Sweden where hydroelectricity is not as abundant as in the north of the country. As a result, the political parties have rivalled with each other in putting forward proposals to reduce household energy bills, ranging from a revival of nuclear power to direct subsidies and massive investment in the electricity network. The position on this matter contributed to the success of the right-wing bloc, including the Moderates, Christian Democrats, Liberals and SD, which obtained a narrow majority with 176 seats, compared to 163 for the left-wing bloc. This victory led to the resignation of the outgoing PM Andersson (S) and the formation of a new government led by Kristersson (M - *Moderata samlingspartiet* – Moderate Party).

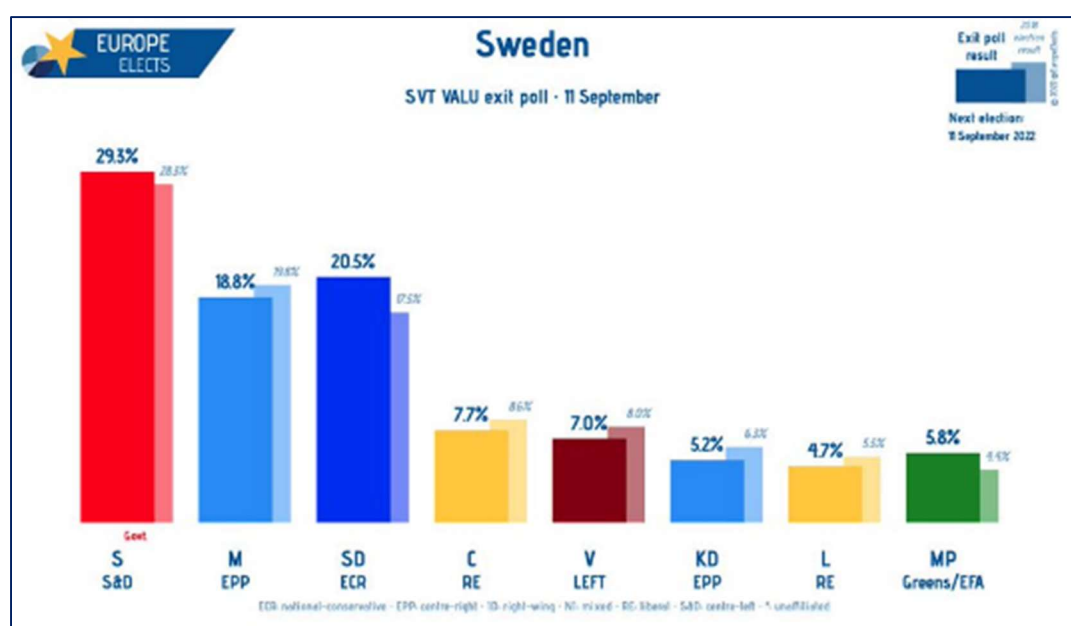


Figure 2. Result of the parliamentary election in Sweden in 2022, by share of votes (50)

Elections to renew the twenty-one Swedish MEPs were held on 9 June 2024, at the end of the MEPs' five-year term. The campaign issues included security, social inequalities and environmental challenges. With the fall in electricity prices recorded at the end of 2023 and beginning of 2024 having reduced the pressure on Swedish households and businesses (51), the subject of energy prices had become less of a rallying point in public opinion. Going against the electoral results in many European countries, the results show a rise in green parties and a slight decline in far-right parties compared to the 2022 national elections. Pro-EU parties, particularly the Liberals, saw their influence diminish. Liberal voters made the party pay for its participation in government on the basis of the Tidö Agreement with the SD. Indeed, participation in the coalition government has blurred their identity with pro-European and centrist voters, who may have been put off by the influence of the far-right on national politics, or disappointed by government compromises. In particular, Pourmokhtari (L), the minister responsible for climate, presented a climate action plan that was deemed highly inadequate by experts, the opposition, NGOs and even Swedish industry (52). This lack of strong measures was seen as a step backwards for Sweden, once a leader in ecological transition.

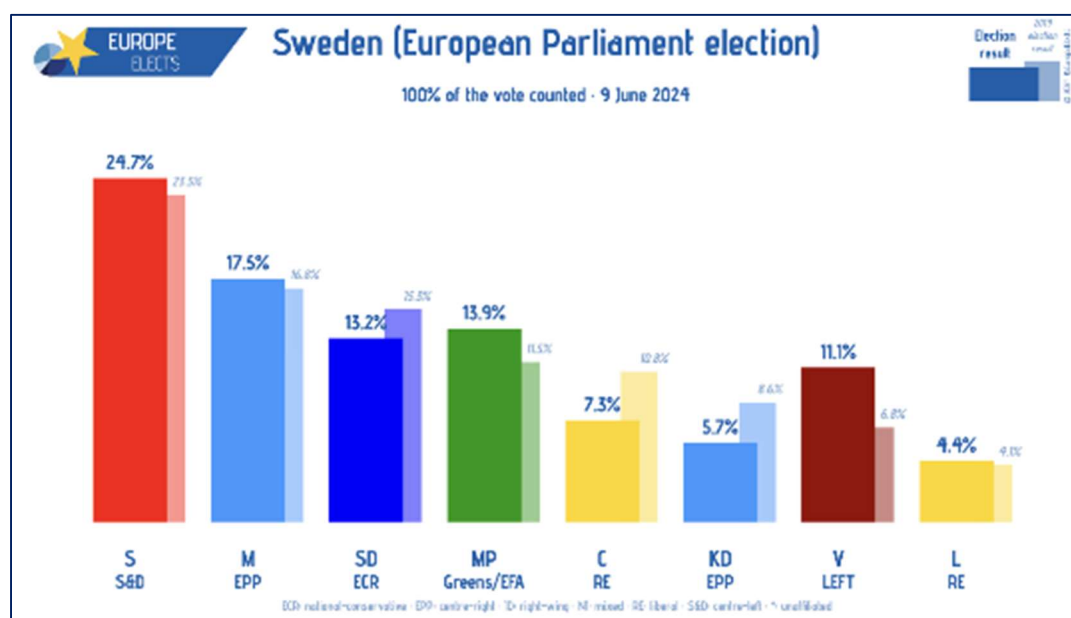


Figure 3. Result of the European elections in Sweden in 2024, by share of votes (50)

In order to better understand the dynamics during these campaigns, we will study the two manifestos of the SD, still available online on the party's website, using the theoretical framework of discourse analysis proposed by Maingueneau (12). This semiological study is supplemented by the search in these texts for the fourteen characteristics of fascism defined by Eco in his speech delivered on 25 April 1995 for the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Europe (13). The detailed study is provided in Appendix 3. Note that this method, applied only to these two manifestos, aims to characterize the discourse and not the political party itself. These tools will enable us to look for the characteristics of populism (2.1) before focusing our study to the treatment given to energy and climate issues (2.2) in more detail.

2.1. Characteristics of populist rhetoric in the Sweden Democrats' campaigns

2.1.1. Populist scenography

Of the two manifestos, only the one for the 2024 European election features an image. The interpretation of this image reveals its implicit meanings, like a perfect iconic summary of the textual discourse to follow.



Figure 4. Cover page of the Sweden Democrats' election manifesto for the European elections on 6-9 June 2024

A full page of the manifesto is devoted to this depiction of a summer landscape whose Swedish context is implied, with no flag or Midsummer pole, which adorns many Swedish gardens, nor any classic red and white painted wooden houses emblematic of the Swedish countryside, to make it explicit. This idealised vision of the Swedish countryside reinforces a sense of belonging to a specific territory without resorting to ostentatious nationalist symbols. The scene evokes a rural world where traditional values are highly prized, and nature is carefully managed. Although there is no human presence, it too is implied, interacting with this environment; the road, fences and carefully tended lawns suggest that people must play an active role in managing the environment, shaping the landscape. Projecting its receptor into the future, it acts as a call to remember one's roots, the landscapes that have shaped Swedish identity, and one can almost hear the echo of the wild geese guiding Nils across the kingdom (1). The contrast between wild verges and manicured gardens symbolizes the delicate balance between

preserving nature and economic development. The image suggests active land management, where nature is not simply left to its own devices, but is shaped by human action. The winding path represents a political journey that is not straightforward but requires caution and a thorough knowledge of the terrain. It is not a motorway, but a path that winds its way through challenges. This choice of the countryside rather than the urban landscape, unlike many other Swedish parties, marks a certain rejection of modernity. It is also possible to see in this landscape preserved from any modern infrastructure, *a fortiori*, the threat of a deterioration of the rural environment by installations such as solar or wind farms.

The flowers, touches of discreet beauty, could represent one major traditional Swedish value, the importance of simplicity. Progression from shadow to light evokes hope and optimism, but also the need to overcome obstacles, calling for action. This consensual first page of the 2024 election manifesto is intended as a symbol of pragmatism, where solutions are based on 'common sense' and 'local knowledge', concepts dear to populists.

Populist scenography is even more evident in the textual discourse of the SD. Let us take as an example two discursive methods that directly echo the constituent elements of populism: the people/elite dichotomy and the notion of urgency and crisis (chapter 1). They can be found right at the beginning of the introduction, in the second sentence of the 2022 manifesto:

"For a long time, Swedish politics has been about putting interests other than those of Sweden and its citizens first. As a result, Sweden has become a country [of] crisis and division."
(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

Dichotomy people/elite

As discussed in the first section (1.1.1, p.12), populism is characterized by the dichotomy between 'people' and 'elite', referring all rejected ideas to another group, exogenous to the 'people'; *i.e.* the 'elite'. It is a structuring element of both manifestos.

In 2022, the dichotomy is implicit: the "*irresponsible policies*" has been "*inflicted on Swedish society*", *i.e.* the 'people', by "*both Social Democratic and centre-right governments*"; *i.e.* the 'political elite'. The policies criticized are no longer electoral choices made by the people in the past; they have been imposed on the people by an elite. The electorate is thus freed from its potential responsibility for the directions taken in the past, since it becomes their victim.

In 2024, the dichotomy is amplified, and the discourse becomes more explicitly anti-elite. The figure of the 'people' is promoted as the only source of legitimacy in the face of corrupt 'elites' who are out of touch with reality. These elites, in opposition to the 'Swedish people', are globalized, European, 'Brussels' supranationalism', against which "*The Sweden Democrats therefore want to give the Swedish people a strong voice*" (SDM 2024, p.3, Introduction).

Crisis and urgency

The prominence of a crisis is a powerful tool in populist staging. Policies are described as irresponsible and led by the globalized political elite that generates crises. As we have seen, in 2022, the SD defined Sweden as being divided. The crisis is presented as widespread:

"But the consequences of the irresponsible policies that have characterized past decades have now had repercussions in all branches of politics and throughout Sweden."
(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

This general wording allows the party to raise concerns without committing to specific solutions. The manifesto for the 2024 European elections is much more specific. It depicts a Europe in crisis, facing terrorist attacks:

"Europe is at war – Islamism, gang crime and insecurity are spreading, while Brussels' supranationalism has never been as pervasive as it is today."

(SDM 2024, p.3, Introduction)

The threats here are internal (crime, Islamism) and external (Brussels supranationalism). The polycrisis depicted affects many sectors, with as many potential electorates to mobilize. Let us look at two examples:

Agricultural crisis and threat to food production:

"All over Europe, farmers are protesting against the excessive amount of rules and requirements imposed by the EU on agriculture, the protests can be seen as a cry for help from the sector."

(SDM 2024, p.7, Protecting the interests of Swedish farmers)

"We cannot accept this; it has never been more important to protect Swedish and European food production."

(SDM 2024, p.7, Protecting the interests of Swedish farmers)

Threat to Swedish forests and urgent need to protect them: the chapter *"Keep Brussels away from the Swedish forest"* (SDM 2024, p.8) emphasizes the urgent need to protect Swedish forests from interference from Brussels. The language of crisis and urgency is used to mobilize voters and justify future policy proposals. Finally, two topics, energy issues and the EU, perfectly illustrate this populist scenography.

Energy/climate issues

Populist scenography is deployed in the treatment of climate and energy issues. In this official program, the SD do not deny climate change and accept the scientific consensus at first glance: *"The world is facing a serious situation, as emphasized by the IPCC's latest AR6 report."* (SDM 2022, p.23, Climate). On the other hand, they are spreading the idea that Sweden's action will not be decisive in the global fight that is being waged: *"While it is important to emphasize that a country like Sweden, which [accounts] for one [thousandth] of emissions, cannot have a direct impact on the climate."* (SDM 2022, p.23, Climate). This plea for climate inaction is based on the elements of populist scenography discussed above. The SD presents themselves as the shield to defend Swedish *"standard of living and competitiveness"* (SDM 2022, p.23, Climate) against EU's climate policy. The chosen approach is therefore mainly national autonomy and the protection of natural resources. For the 2024 European elections, the 'soft' climate scepticism (see section 1.2.3., pp. 20-21) arguments used at the national level are applied to the 27: *"Today, EU countries account for 7% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and this share has decreased significantly in recent decades"* (SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy). The use of emergency scenography is reversed: *"There is an imminent risk that radical climate policies will lead to high costs for households while jobs, growth and emissions are shifted to other countries without benefit for global climate work"* (SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy). The crisis, the existence of which seems to be initially recognized, would therefore not be climatic but economic and social. Nor

is the designated enemy the increase in the level of carbon in the atmosphere and other greenhouse gases, but policies, “*characterised by virtue-signalling, emotion and pure alarmism*” (SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy) led by the EU. We will see that environmental issues are in fact exploited to make the EU responsible for environmental constraints that are supposedly harmful to Swedish economy.

European Union

In the section of the 2022 manifesto dedicated to Europe, the SD introduces immigration, a central theme for the party. The concept of “net zero”, nowhere to be found when the manifesto addresses climate and energy, is applied: “*the Sweden Democrats' net-zero migration policy vision*” (SDM 2022, p.59, Europe). The discourse aimed at denouncing an extension of the Union's powers beyond the terms of the treaties, and at the expense of the Member States, is being employed. It discreetly draws on the conspiracy narrative that has emerged since the health crisis of 2020: “*The transfer of power from national democracies to the EU has accelerated during the pandemic.*” (SDM 2022, p.59, Europe). The undemocratic nature of the European institutions, primarily due to the opposition between ‘national democracies’ and the EU, is emphasised by the SD:

“*More and more political issues are being decided in Brussels*”
“*...democratic opportunities for influence and transparency for citizens are very poor.*”
“*...increase the EU's grip on economic policy...*”
(SDM 2022, p.59, Europe)

A democratic deficit that the SD propose to correct by organizing a referendum on the transfer of powers to the EU. The use of the referendum on European matters is not neutral; since Brexit in 2016, only populist parties have proposed to ‘get back to the people’. This is part of the long tradition of rejecting representative democracy. For 2024, the SD takes this argument even further by incorporating the bias of the people's opposition to the elite represented by European politicians: “*For decades, the EU has been allowed to take power away from the Swedish people and put it in the hands of politicians in Brussels.*” (SDM 2024, p.4, Stop the transfer of power to Brussels). This elite, accused of being undemocratic and monopolizing power, is also accused of using that power against the Swedish people and their way of life: “*Brussels is painting [a picture of] agriculture and primary production of food as an environmentally hazardous activity that require ever tighter regulations.*” (SDM 2024, p.7, Protecting the interests of Swedish farmers) and even “*Brussels is actively working to deny Europeans healthier alternatives to tobacco smoking and is currently pushing the issue of banning white snus.*”¹³ (SDM 2024, p.14, Stop the EU's greediness). In the 2024 manifesto, opposition to the EU is becoming more outspoken and open than in 2022. It is spreading to many areas and is thus likely to reach a more diverse and numerous electorates.

This populist scenography serves to create a powerful narrative framework, in which the SD position themselves as the only legitimate defenders of the people in the face of multiple threats.

¹³ Snus is a tobacco product that comes in small pouches that are placed on the gum to allow nicotine to be absorbed through the mouth lining. Manufactured and consumed in Sweden since the 1820s, it has long been the country's main tobacco product. When it joined the EU in 1995, Sweden obtained a permanent exemption allowing it to continue manufacturing and selling snus on its domestic market, on the grounds of cultural and traditional considerations.

Now that the scene has been set, we can examine the rhetorical processes used by the SD to reinforce their message and win over their electorate.

2.1.2. Populist rhetorical processes

The analysis of the rhetorical processes used in the manifestos of the SD initially focuses on three identifiable populist processes: the call for national unity, simplification and the creation of a hybrid enemy. Other general but significant processes, studied at a later stage, such as the use of interdiscourse and paratopias, reinforce populist rhetoric.

Call for national unity

The call for national unity in the face of a designated enemy in a context of crisis and emergency is a rhetorical device used by the SD. It is not unique to populist movements. The ‘flag effect’ is often used by political leaders to mobilise citizens in the face of a crisis. This is currently the case in Western Europe in the face of the Russian ‘existential threat’ denounced by the French President in March 2025, for example¹⁴. Usually understood as the coming together of the whole nation, national unity aims to transcend political divisions. In the face of crisis, the factors that bring people together are greater than the factors that divide them. This process is therefore difficult to articulate with a liberal democratic logic that organises the confrontation of pluralist points of view. For the SD, who use a populist approach that divides ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’, this method aims to offer voters a unifying image. Yet the call for unity is exclusive to one section of the population. Thus the 2022 manifesto mentions that the “*Swedish politics has been about putting interests other than those of Sweden and its citizens first*” (SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction) and that the policy of the SD aims to “*prioritise Swedish interests and pursue policies that [benefit] all citizens*” (SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction), showing without actually saying so a desire to refocus policies on a specific section of the population, namely ‘Swedish citizens’, while implicitly excluding other groups, such as migrants or those perceived as not sharing Swedish culture. For the 2024 elections, the national unity advocated by the SD is logically articulated in opposition to the European institutions, which are criticised in carefully chosen terms, as we will see later in the analysis of the lexicon used: “*It is time for Sweden to speak out. We must show the bureaucrats in Brussels that we are serious when we say that our country should never become a tax province that finances mismanaged countries in a European federal state. The Sweden Democrats therefore want to give the Swedish people a strong voice.*” (SDM 2024, p.3, Introduction). This last passage also perfectly illustrates the use of another rhetorical device in the election manifestos of the SD, namely simplification.

Here again, simplification is a rhetorical device used across the political spectrum. For Derville (53), political discourse, as a ‘constructed, dialectical and detailed exposition’ of the orator of the Athenian agora, has faded with the development of the mass media. This effect is further reinforced by the use of social media such as Tiktok, which reduces political discourse to slogans. The manifestos of the SD are more developed; they represent seventy-eight pages of organised and structured political discourse. However, the solutions proposed to resolve complex issues such as the ET or the EU are always simple in the manifestos:

¹⁴ Press conference given by President Macron at the end of the extraordinary EU summit in Brussels on 6 March 2025.

“At the same time, the situation in Sweden has been jeopardised in recent years, as energy policy has developed in a more ideological than pragmatic direction.”
(SDM 2022, p.24, Energy)

This phrase simplifies the complexity of energy issues by contrasting an ‘ideological’ approach with a ‘pragmatic’ one, suggesting that recent political choices have been guided by abstract considerations and by biased rather than concrete realities. For the SD, the carbon neutrality of Sweden's electricity production, ensured by decarbonised, safe and sovereign hydroelectric and nuclear power, is more likely to ensure that the targets are met than renewable energies. Particularly, wind power, which is decried, or a green tax system accused of damaging the purchasing power of households and the competitiveness of Swedish industries.

Creation of a hybrid enemy

The joint appeal for national unity is necessarily constructed in the face of a designated enemy: an epidemic, an economic crisis, external such as a state (the Russian Federation) or a coalition (NATO) or internal (visible or invisible minority).

By construction, the process of simplification used leads to amalgams:

“A new brutal gang culture has hit Sweden as a result of the immigration policies pursued by both centre-right and social democratic governments. The number of segregated neighbourhoods where gangs and clans have pushed back Swedish has grown in both number and degree of segregation.”
(SDM 2022, p.6, Gang-related crime)

This quote conflates migration policies, gangs and the rise in violence, constructing a hybrid enemy that links immigration, organised crime and social decline. Once again, it simplifies the complex causes of social problems by singling out one group as the main culprit.

The 2024 manifesto shows more clearly the hybrid aspect of this enemy since, in addition to being guilty of the democratic confiscation of the rights of the Swedish people, the EU is presented as the main threat, responsible for all the problems presented to the everyday life of Swedish people:

“At the same time as the EU fails in its basic core tasks, the bureaucrats see their chance to usurp more power. Through their own interpretations of the treaties, they want to seize our forests, impose a radical climate agenda, make life difficult for Swedish hunters and scrap our vintage cars.”¹⁵
(SDM 2004, p.3, Introduction)

We will now look at the SD’s use of interdiscursive techniques. As mentioned above, paratopia and interdiscourse are not specific to populist discourse. However, they do play a key role in reinforcing the discourse because of their ability to manipulate discursive frameworks and establish strategic connections between different ideological and social registers.

¹⁵ Here, more than just collectors of classic cars, the SD are speaking to a growing electorate group, favourable to the far-right, the *raggare*. *Raggare* is a Swedish subculture bringing together young, white ‘red necks’ around old cars and alcohol. It is inspired by the 1950s-60s American rock n’ roll, hot rod, ‘greaser’ concept. Particularly popular in rural areas, it has become more widespread over the last years, especially among young adults and even women.

Paratopia

Paratopia, a concept developed by Maingueneau (12), designates an unstable or marginal position of enunciation that allows the speaker to present himself/herself as outside the established structures while at the same time inserting himself/herself into them in order to criticise them. In the populist discourse of the SD, this allows them to position themselves outside the political or intellectual elites, reinforcing their image of authenticity and closeness to the people.

“We do not believe that EU politicians fundamentally have the same interests as Swedes, quite [the] opposite. Greedy politicians in Brussels seize every opportunity to usurp more influence for themselves and regard Swedish taxpayers as an ATM that never runs out.”
(SDM 2024, p.4, Stop the transfer of power to Brussels)

This paratopia enables the party to forge a position from which it can claim an alternative legitimacy, often based on moral or cultural values perceived as authentic that the enunciator makes his own.

“The Sweden Democrats love our free and democratic Europe. The diversity of nations, cultures and shared history has laid the foundation for the Western civilisation we enjoy today.”
(SDM 2024, p.3, Introduction)

Interdiscourse

Interdiscourse refers to the integration and recycling of discursive fragments from other discourses or contexts. This ideological syncretism, borrowing elements from across the political spectrum, blurs ideological boundaries to bring together a heterogeneous audience.

“Europe is at war – Islamism, gang crime and insecurity are spreading, while Brussels' supranationalism has never been as pervasive as it is today.”
(SDM 2024, p.3, Introduction)

This demonstrates ideological syncretism because it combines right-leaning concerns about immigration and crime with left-leaning critiques of centralized power structures (Brussels' supranationalism). The SD are appealing to different groups by addressing multiple issues simultaneously. Combined with the use of memorable and simple segments, slogans, the emotional and mobilising impact of the speech is even more effective: *“Stop the transfer of power to Brussels”* (SDM 2024, p.4, Stop the transfer of power to Brussels).

The simultaneous use of paratopia and interdiscourse creates a binary opposition between ‘them’ (the corrupt elites) and ‘us’ (the people) and polarises the electoral stakes. This discursive dynamic pave the way for the emergence of political and symbolic logic that can be found in analyses of fascism. It is therefore relevant to examine the extent to which the SDMs display some of the characteristics identified by Eco (13) in his typology of fascism.

2.1.3. Fascist characteristics: analysis of the manifestos of the Sweden Democrats

It should be pointed out once again that the fourteen fascist characteristics, if present in a political discourse, only characterise that discourse and not the party's political action, let alone the party itself. Let us take the example of the *‘Rassemblement Pour la République’* (RPR); a

French conservative political party that was in power between 1986 and 1988 and between 1993 and 1997. Under the same analysis, the RPR's discourse in the 1980-90s would also show points of convergence with the characteristics of *Ur-fascism* defined by Eco: rejection of diversity, exploitation of frustrations, designation of an emerging enemy with a particularly harsh anti-immigration rhetoric. The exercise of power by the RPR¹⁶ illustrates that a political discourse using populist resources characterised as fascist by Eco does not necessarily lead to fascism. Eco nevertheless relies on the ubiquity of the term 'fascism' to justify the maximalist use of this word. In his view, the Italian experience of the twentieth century was only the first of a new type of despotism that would take on different forms. The fourteen characteristic points, whose presence was sought in the two manifestos, are, in his view, the fundamental matrix: "*Fascism can be played in a thousand ways, without the name of the game ever changing*" (13).

The analysis of the presence of these characteristics in the SDMs, presented in Appendix 3, enables us to validate the relevance of the political theoretical framework of this study and ensures that the conceptual matrix derived from the literature review (see chapter 1; Table 1, p. 21.) can indeed be applied to the discourse of the SDs. Apart from two notable absences; the explicit cult of the charismatic leader and the apology for political violence, the two SDMs fulfil 11 of the 14 of Eco's characteristics (see Appendix 3, p.136). Anti-system rhetoric and exclusive identity-based nationalism are very present and dominant. The migration crisis is used as a lever to mobilise the electorate. we will see in the next section how the energy crisis is also used to mobilise voters.

At this stage of the study, it appears that the election manifestos of the SD systematically mobilise the classic motifs of populist rhetoric. The staging of a radical opposition between a genuine Swedish 'people' and 'elites' perceived as disconnected, the dramatisation of the crisis and the emergency, and the call for the defence of national interests against external interference, structure the whole of their political discourse. This populist scenography is reflected in both the iconographic choices and the argumentative construction, permeates both the general themes and the more specific subjects addressed in the manifestos.

This analysis of the discursive mechanisms of populism among the SD now allows us to look in more detail at the way in which these processes are applied to energy and climate issues, used to mobilize public anxieties and to orient the national debate on energy and climate in a direction that favours national sovereignty and identity.

¹⁶ Chirac was cohabitation PM under President Mitterrand from 1986 to 1988, Balladur from 1993 to 1995 and Chirac was elected President of the French Republic in 1995 and again in 2002, this time under the name of the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP), created in the second round against the far-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen (Front National - FN).

2.2. Sweden Democrats' proposals on energy transition

A careful reading of the 2022 and 2024 manifestos of the SD reveals a particularly marked discursive oscillation on the climate issue. This oscillation manifests itself in a permanent tension between, on the one hand, recognition of the need to act on climate change and, on the other, minimisation of the urgency and potential effectiveness of Swedish, or even European, action.

The SD adopt a position of 'soft' climate scepticism (see section 1.2.3., pp. 20-21 and 2.1.1 p.26). They explicitly state in their 2022 manifesto: "*The world is facing a serious situation, as emphasized by the IPCC's latest AR6 report.*" (SDM 2022, p.23, Climate). This position allows them to align themselves with the scientific consensus and avoid being labelled as radical climate sceptics, which broadens their electoral potential and lends credibility to their message among an environmentally conscious audience.

However, this acknowledgement is systematically counterbalanced by highlighting Sweden's low share of global emissions: « *Sweden, which [accounts] for one [thousandth] of emissions, cannot have a direct impact on the climate.* » (SDM 2022, p.23, Climate). This rhetorical strategy serves to justify a form of inaction or, at least, a slowdown in ambitious climate policies. This argument aims to justify a form of "climate pragmatism" (54). Sweden should not, in their view, impose constraints on itself that would weigh on its economy and standard of living when its action would be negligible on a global scale. It is accompanied by a reversal of the crisis narrative: the primary threat is no longer climate change, but the economic and social consequences of climate policies deemed too radical, particularly those promoted by the EU.

The SD thus oscillate between the injunction to 'act' (so as not to appear irresponsible or backward-looking) and the plea for 'prudence' which, in practice, leads them to relativise the urgency and prioritise the defence of the national standard of living. This tension can be seen in their proposals: they support national energy autonomy, the development of nuclear power and want to protect Swedish industry, but reject renewable energies and European climate policies. After examining each of these points, we will see how social justice is used for electoral purposes in the SD's discourse on energy.

2.2.1. National energy autonomy

The issue of energy autonomy occupies a central place in the election manifestos of the SD, particularly in the post-2022 context marked by the Ukrainian crisis and soaring energy prices. Discursive analysis reveals the use of a strongly connoted energy vocabulary, structured around strategic antonyms and a lexicon borrowed from the sphere of war, which serves to dramatise the issues and reinforce the party's sovereignist stance.

An energy vocabulary full of connotations

The SD mobilise a lexical field that values energy control, security and resilience. Terms such as 'energy independence', 'national control of resources', 'self-sufficiency' and 'security of supply', are recurrent. The term 'security' is used forty-seven times in the 2022 manifesto, compared with only twice in 2024. This difference, over and above that due to the length of the 2022 manifesto, can be explained in particular by the international context in 2022 and the

shock caused by the outbreak of the war of aggression led by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, a crisis that deeply worried Swedish society. The term ‘security’, or ‘insecurity’, is therefore used to address issues traditionally dealt with by the far-right, such as crime and immigration, as well as defence and energy issues: “*introducing a security of supply target*” (SDM 2022, p.25, Energy). Conversely, European policies are associated with ‘dependence’, ‘vulnerability’ and ‘loss of control’. This dichotomy is based on strategic antonyms: autonomy/dependence, security/risk, control/submission. Energy vocabulary thus becomes a tool for distinguishing between a protective national model and a European model perceived as imposed and dangerous.

Antonymic strategy and the construction of otherness

The opposition between an autonomous Sweden and a ‘restrictive Europe’, in particular for the exploitation of national resources, structures the discourse. It is another use of the opposition between the Swedish ‘people’ and ‘elites’ perceived as corrupt, distant and harmful. The vocabulary used to describe these elites is particularly revealing: the terms ‘bureaucrats’ or ‘bureaucracy’ are used six times, and the terms ‘political establishment’, ‘greedy politicians’ and ‘unelected commissioners’ or ‘centralisation’ and ‘corruption’, are used repeatedly:

“We want to see a more transparent EU, removing power from non-elected European Commissioners and introducing greater personal accountability for European decision-makers.”

(SDM 2024, p.4, Stop the transfer of power to Brussels)

These words are associated with the idea of a confiscation of power, a loss of national sovereignty and the opaque and inefficient management of public affairs. In contrast, the lexicon that promotes the Swedish people and nation is based on antonyms such as ‘self-determination’, ‘transparency’, ‘local democracy’, ‘will of the people’, ‘Swedish interests’ and ‘sovereignty’. This semantic opposition aims to present the elites as opponents of national and popular interests, while the party presents itself as the defender of the voice and rights of the Swedish people.

In the same vein, the SD systematically contrasted ‘national management’ of resources (forests, nuclear power, hydroelectricity) with ‘Brussels bureaucracy’ and European ‘diktats’. Energy becomes a symbolic battlefield where two visions of the world clash: that of a sovereign Sweden, pragmatic and concerned for its people, against that of a technocratic Europe, far removed from local realities. This antonymic strategy serves to polarise the debate and present any concession to the EU as an existential threat to the nation.

War vocabulary to dramatise and mobilise

The bellicose tone of the discourse is particularly marked in the manifestos’ rhetoric. Energy is presented as a ‘vital issue’ in an ‘economic war’ in which Sweden must ‘defend itself’ against ‘attacks’ from Brussels. Expressions such as ‘protecting our resources’, ‘defending our sovereignty’, ‘resisting external pressure’ and ‘keeping Brussels out of the Swedish forest’ (2024) illustrate this use of martial language. The enemy is no longer just the energy crisis, but also European policy, personified as a hostile force that is ‘attacking’ the Swedish way of life. This warlike scenario aims to create a sense of urgency and collective mobilisation, transforming the energy issue into a matter of national survival.

The programme emphasises the development of national resources, particularly hydroelectricity, biomass and sustainable forest management. They advocate local management tailored to the specific characteristics of each region and denounce the ‘Brussels bureaucracy’ that they claim hinders Sweden's capacity for innovation and adaptation. For the party, the cornerstone of Swedish energy independence is a massive revival of nuclear power.

2.2.2. Priority to nuclear energy

The promotion of nuclear power is central to the policies of countries that see it as the cornerstone of their vision for national energy independence and a pragmatic response to the energy price crisis. This priority is articulated both as a strategic necessity and as a marker of sovereignty in the face of European injunctions.

A nuclear revival as a response to the crisis

From 2022, against a backdrop of soaring electricity prices, the SD’s manifesto states:

“Our fundamental position is that energy policy should be geared towards ensuring a long-term competitive and reliable energy supply, for both households and industry. [...] Sweden has historically had a power system that is exclusively fossil-free with a high level of security of supply. The background to this is that we invested early on in a large-scale expansion of nuclear power [...].”

(SDM 2022, p.24, Energy)

Nuclear power is presented as the safest solution for guaranteeing ‘security of supply’ and ‘price stability’, in contrast to intermittent renewable energies, which are considered responsible for market volatility. The DS denounces the closure of reactors decided by previous governments, likening it to ‘political irresponsibility’ that has weakened Sweden in the face of external shocks:

“[...] the situation in Sweden has been jeopardised in recent years, as energy policy has developed in a more ideological than pragmatic direction. The power system [...] has pushed through forced closures of several nuclear power reactors, tax burdens that plague combined heat and power and slow work to speed up the authorisation processes with expanded transmission capacity. As a result, people around the country are now forced to live with the consequences of the energy policy being pursued, with electricity prices over the past year being the highest ever.”

(SDM 2022, p.24, Energy)

In 2024, this line is maintained and reinforced, with nuclear power being explicitly opposed to EU policies:

“In recent decades, environmental policy has come to be characterised by virtue-signalling, emotion and pure alarmism.”

(SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy)

The programme not only argues for the preservation of the existing fleet, but also for the construction of new reactors, the facilitation of authorisation procedures and support for innovation in the nuclear sector.

A marker of sovereignty and autonomy

The choice of nuclear power is systematically associated with the defence of national sovereignty. The DS insists that mastery of the nuclear cycle allows Sweden to ‘free itself from energy dependence’ and ‘resist external pressures’, particularly those from Brussels.

“The EU must stop opposing nuclear power.”
(SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy)

The rhetoric employed thus contrasts the ‘security’ and ‘control’ offered by nuclear energy with the ‘vulnerability’ and ‘dependence’ generated by imports or renewable energies imposed by the EU.

A strategy between determination and uncertainty

While the revival of nuclear power is presented as a common-sense and pragmatic solution, this strategy raises several structural limitations. International experience shows that political decisions alone do not guarantee the effective implementation of projects or their profitability. Of the 800 reactors built worldwide since 1951, at least 92 units in 18 countries have been abandoned before coming online, representing 11.5% of the total (55). Having a reactor project, or even an advanced construction site, therefore offers no guarantee that the reactor will be connected to the grid and actually produce electricity. There are many reasons for these failures; underestimated construction costs, chronic delays, social opposition, regulatory changes and technological developments. Even in Sweden, the time and investment required to build new reactors are considerable, making the promise of a quick and sovereign solution questionable. In the short and medium term, dependence on imports and price volatility could therefore persist despite the stated priority given to nuclear power.

2.2.3. Criticism of renewable energy

In contrast to their support for nuclear power, the SD are developing a frontal critique of ET policies based on the massive development of renewable energies. Their discourse is based on anti-transition rhetoric that associates renewables with instability and dependence, while denouncing European policies in this area.

The 2022 manifesto questions the reliability of renewables, particularly wind power, and their impact on prices and energy security:

“[...] the situation in Sweden has been jeopardised in recent years, as energy policy has developed in a more ideological than pragmatic direction. The power system has been transformed exclusively into a weather-dependent system with a major expansion of wind power.”

(SDM 2022, p.24, Energy)

They oppose the European ET with a vision they present as pragmatic and realistic. In the 2024 manifesto, criticism intensifies and becomes more international, directly targeting European policies:

“There is an imminent risk that radical climate policies will lead to high costs for households while jobs, growth and emissions are shifted to other countries without benefit for global climate work.”

(SDM 2024, p.6, A realistic environment and climate policy)

The anti-transition rhetoric here is explicit: the ET is presented as a threat to the national economy and the Swedish way of life, with no real benefit for the global climate. The SD denounce a European policy ‘characterised by virtue-signalling, emotion and pure alarmism’, opposing this approach with one based on ‘common sense and local knowledge’. The manifesto goes so far as to question the very logic of the transition, insisting on the need to preserve national resource management and rejecting the injunctions of Brussels.

Finally, criticism of renewables is linked to the defence of rural and forest heritage, with SD opposing the transformation of the Swedish landscape by solar and wind infrastructure, which is perceived as a threat to the traditional environment:

“Defend Sweden’s autonomy over forests vis-à-vis the EU.”

(SDM 2022, p.32, Agriculture and forestry)

In order to appeal to feelings of nostalgic valorisation, opposing patriotism to globalism, the SD also refers in various ways to the Swedish heritage: “*cultural heritage*” (SDM 2022, p.51, Culture), “*a great historical and cultural heritage*” (SDM 2022, p.59, Europe) and “*Swedish security policy choices have historically led to a unique period of peace for the country, and this heritage should continue to be utilised in the future*” (SDM 2022, p.62, Defence). With the same objective, the term ‘tradition’ is used seven times (in the chapters on Hunting, Agriculture and Forestry, Schools and Education, Culture and Democracy).

This anti-ET rhetoric, which associates renewables with instability and dependence, opposed to the tradition and an idealised heritage, systematically pits Swedish sovereignty and pragmatism against the EU-led ET.

2.2.4. Protection of national industry

Protecting the country's industry, particularly in the face of energy challenges, is a key part of the rhetoric of the SD, which is fully integrated into the nationalist scenario. Their discourse emphasises the need to guarantee the competitiveness of Swedish companies and preserve industrial jobs, while denouncing the threats posed by European energy policies and market volatility.

In the 2022 manifesto, rising energy prices are directly linked to the vulnerability of Swedish industry:

“Sweden does not contribute to reducing emissions by raising fuel prices, increasing electricity prices and making it more costly for companies to operate in Sweden.”

(SDM 2022, p.23, Climate)

They present security of supply as an essential condition for companies to be able to plan their investments and maintain their competitiveness, insisting that ‘high and unpredictable energy prices’ threaten industrial production and employment. In 2024, the debate went international, targeting again European regulations, which were accused of undermining Swedish industry to the benefit of foreign competitors.

This rhetoric pits national industrial interests against the logic of EU's ET. The SD want to protect strategic sectors from unfair competition caused by European standards.

2.2.5. Energy transition as electoral tool

The notion of ‘just transition’, which aims to ensure that the transformation of energy systems takes place without increasing social inequalities (see section 1.2.2., pp. 19-20), is totally absent from the programmatic discourse of the SD in their 2022 and 2024 manifestos. On the contrary, the energy crisis – exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and price volatility – is systematically used to construct an opposition between the interests of the Swedish ‘people’ and the national or European ‘elites’, who are accused of imposing a socially unjust ET.

The SD use the energy issue to dramatise the economic and social situation, stressing the threat posed by transition policies to the country's standard of living, industrial employment and competitiveness. The ET is thus portrayed not as an opportunity for social progress, but as a source of insecurity and de-industrialisation, imposed by a disconnected elite.

Social justice, in the sense of a fair distribution of the costs and benefits of the transition, is systematically reinterpreted as the protection of ‘the people’ against the ‘sacrifices’ demanded by Brussels and previous governments. This stance makes it possible to unite a worried electorate, particularly in industrial and rural areas, around a discourse of resistance and defence of the Swedish way of life.

This instrumentalisation of the energy crisis and the transition is part of a highly populist scenography, in which urgency and the feeling of threat are omnipresent. The SD use a rhetoric of crisis, opposition between the people and the elite and national sovereignty that resonates with several of the 14 characteristics of fascism proposed by Eco: rejection of modernity, fear of difference, appeal to social frustration, worship of tradition and obsession with conspiracy (in this case, the Brussels ‘conspiracy’ against national interests).

Expanding the framework

All these discursive indicators, derived from the analysis of the SD discourse, can now be incorporated into the analysis matrix developed at the end of the first chapter.

Concepts (Chapter 1)	Analytical indicators (Chapter 2)	Discursive indicators (SD manifestos)
Energy sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National energy independence Rejection of European standards Promotion of nuclear power/local energy 	Validated analytical indicator: SDMs focus on energy sovereignty, criticism of European norms and prioritisation

		of nuclear power and local resource management.
Just transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of national industry • Criticism of the Green Deal • Little attention to social equity 	Validated analytical indicator: Manifestos defend heavy industry, criticise subsidies for households and reduce the ‘just transition’ to national competitiveness.
Climate scepticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the scientific consensus but minimisation of the urgency and national responsibility 	Validated analytical indicator: SD recognise the scientific consensus but minimise the urgency and Sweden's responsibility, justifying a wait-and-see approach.
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euroscepticism • Mistrust of the EGD • Emphasis on subsidiarity 	Validated analytical indicator: Manifestos denounce Brussels' ‘interference’, reject European standards and value subsidiarity.
Polarisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a threatened ‘people’ • Mobilisation of local identity, opposition between elites and the people 	Validated analytical indicator: SD discourse mobilises protection of the people, industry and the Swedish way of life, and pits elites against ‘real Swedes’.
Innovation	Absence of green innovation in populist discourse, promotion of the status quo	Validated analytical indicator: Manifestos offer little on innovation, prioritising nuclear power and the industrial status quo.

Table 2. Analytical & discursive matrix of far-right populist opposition to the energy transition applied to the discourse of the Sweden Democrats

In conclusion, an analysis of the 2022 and 2024 manifestos shows that the crisis and the ET are above all electoral levers for the SD, who rely on a rhetoric of threat and victimisation of the Swedish people. This populist scenario, which mobilises resentment and distrust of the elites, is part of a wider dynamic that can be observed in populist movements in power in Europe and elsewhere, which systematically present the ET as a threat to sovereignty and social justice. We will therefore reuse our framework one last time in the next chapter, now operationalised to identify the impact of the indicators on the achievement of Sweden's ET objectives and see how they are received, counteracted or reinforced by local actors and the private sector.

3. Confrontation on the ground: Sweden's energy transition put to the test by populist rhetoric

Let us set off once again like Nils' goose (1), now about to land to get even closer to everyday life in Swedish civil society. The purpose of this chapter is to contrast the discursive dynamics identified in the previous chapters with the reality on the ground. The aim is to understand how SD's populist rhetoric – with its focus on sovereignty, protection of the people, ‘soft’ climate scepticism and defence of a national energy model – is translated, adapted or collides with the practices and perceptions of local, economic and institutional actors. This approach is based on the exploitation of a selection of interviews with Swedish economic actors, local political and non-political decision-makers, whose study enabled the selection of the corpus used here, and on new studies conducted at Swedish universities. This approach allows us to go beyond the description presented in the second chapter and investigate the appropriation of or resistance to populist discourse.

3.1. Sweden Democrats' energy policy and the realities of Swedish society

The argument of energy sovereignty: from appropriation and selective appropriation to rejection

Energy sovereignty, a cornerstone of SD's discourse, notably in relation to their focus on building out nuclear power, is omnipresent in energy debates. As Schneider recently stated to Swedish press: *“The idea that we could go from zero to 10 reactors in 10 or even 20 years is a completely distorted idea of the feasibility of nuclear programmes,”*¹⁷ For him, *“it is well established that a single nuclear project, from conceptual idea to grid connection, can take up to 25 years to finalise.”* (56). This observation highlights the gap between political rhetoric and economic and technological constraints, reminding us that professed energy sovereignty can mask increased dependence on global markets or imported technologies. Academic studies further emphasize that the revival of nuclear power in Sweden relies on a complex network of actors, institutional realignment, and substantial financial risks, making total independence a political fiction (57).

A recent study on the social acceptability of energy in Sweden confirms that preference for nuclear power goes hand in hand with a strong attachment to national independence, but that this attachment diminishes when new power plants are built closer to where people live, particularly among those who hold traditional and nationalist values (58). This phenomenon of ‘motivated reasoning’ partly explains the polarisation of attitudes: energy sovereignty becomes a lever for political mobilisation, but encounters local resistance as soon as it involves concrete constraints.

¹⁷ The 1980 referendum, mentioned in introduction, following the Three Mile Island disaster (1979) led to a gradual phase-out of nuclear power, with 12 reactors remaining in operation. Following the Chernobyl disaster (1986), the number of reactors in operation fell to 10. In 2009, a political agreement allowed existing reactors reaching the end of their life cycle to be replaced, but without exceeding this ceiling of 10. In autumn 2023, Kristersson's (M) government passed a law in the *Riksdag*, with the support of the SD, authorising this threshold to be exceeded. The Swedish National Energy and Climate Plan submitted to the European Commission in 2024 provides for the construction of at least two new large-scale reactors by 2035, with up to ten new large-scale reactors by 2045.

Fahlander emphasises the identity dimension of resource management: *“The EU forest strategy of 2021 has led to increased resistance among Swedish forest owners, who perceive it as a threat to their autonomy and national identity”* (59).

A political member of the County Administrative Board of Dalarna confirms that *“Without seed funding from the Swedish Institute, our EU project never would have happened. National and EU funding interact effectively, and this synergy is now opening new opportunities for local development”* (60). Energy sovereignty thus becomes a space for negotiation and compromise, where local, national and European interests intersect, and where populist rhetoric can be used to legitimise inaction or slow down the transition.

The energy sovereignty mobilised by far-right populism, embodied by the SD in Sweden, reveals a fundamental tension between the demand for national independence, criticism of European standards and the promotion of nuclear power – all identified as analytical indicators in our first two chapters – and the reality of structural, economic and institutional constraints. An examination of the SDMs confirms that energy sovereignty is being used to legitimise a discourse of mistrust towards the EU and to promote a national identity based on technological autonomy and local resource management. However, this rhetoric comes up against the impossibility of total independence, as academic studies point out; the revival of nuclear power depends on networks of international actors, external capital and institutional compromises, while local support for energy sovereignty wanes as projects take shape on the ground, particularly among traditional and nationalist voters (58). This contradiction highlights the electoral opportunism and unrealistic nature of the energy policy promoted by the SD. Energy sovereignty serves as a vehicle for political mobilisation, but it clashes with the requirements of European cooperation and local socio-economic realities. This transforms sovereignty into a space for negotiation and compromise, where inaction or slowing down the transition can paradoxically be justified by the defence of national interests.

This tension between energy sovereignty and European cooperation highlights the need to continue comparing theory and discourse with reality on the ground, based on a concept rightly promoted by the EGD: the ‘just transition’.

Effective argument of the ‘just transition’

Firstly, it should be noted that although Sweden committed in its latest NECP to defining the concept of ‘just transition’, this has so far been addressed through its historic social democratic model, the ‘welfare state’ presented in the introduction, without any specific legal framework. A study (61) notes that Swedish political parties avoid explicitly linking climate transition and social justice, favouring a technocratic approach. However, far-right populist rhetoric exploits this concept as a tool for electoral mobilisation (see 1.1.2., pp. 19-20), as clearly illustrated by the SDMs (see 2.2.5., p.37). The SD has nevertheless opposed the extension of public aid for energy renovation, in the name of reducing public spending and defending industrial interests, and in November 2022 it participated in the abolition by the *Riksdag* of state subsidies for the purchase of electric and rechargeable hybrid cars. The removal of these subsidies mainly penalises low-income households, which benefited most from this aid to access less-polluting vehicles or insulation work. The policy of ‘justice’ advocated by far-right populists focuses on heavy industry and tax cuts, rather than social redistribution or the fight against energy poverty (21).

The logic behind this distortion of the ‘just transition’ by SD is based on a dual dynamic; on the one hand, a mistrust of redistributive public policies, which are perceived as favouring an ‘urban elite’ (see 1.1.1, p.12. and 2.1.2., p.26); on the other hand, the promotion of a national and industrial identity. Ultimately, the ‘just transition’, as promoted by far-right populism tends to marginalise issues of social justice and equity in the transformation of energy systems. This instrumentalisation of the concept makes it possible to mobilise groups weakened by globalisation for electoral purposes, while justifying public policies that reinforce inequalities and slow down the ecological transition. This inertia is entirely consistent with the ‘soft’ climate scepticism of the SD.

Circumvention of the climate scepticism argument

As noted by a municipal climate officer, *“When SD claims that Sweden only accounts for 0.1% of emissions, it becomes an argument for inaction. In practice, this undermines local energy renovation and clean transport projects”* (62). The study by Lindvall et al. (58) shows that this form of ‘soft’ scepticism (see 1.2.3., pp. 20-21 and 2.1.1, pp. 26-27), often referred to as ‘motivated reasoning’, allows political actors to justify a wait-and-see policy, presented as pragmatic, but which slows down the transition momentum. A private sector representative adds, *“Businesses respond to SD’s climate scepticism by acting independently: investments in offshore wind power and smart grids continue because market and international customer demands transcend political divisions.”* (63). This ability to adapt on the part of economic actors, who pursue strategies of innovation and diversification, is consistent with the logic of socio-technical systems, where energy choices are shaped as much by values and norms as by technical and economic constraints (64).

In addition, as a media analyst points out; *“Climate scepticism acts as a brake, but it is not an absolute obstacle: economic actors and committed communities continue to drive progress.”* (65). ‘Soft’ climate scepticism, far from being an absolute obstacle, seems to act as a differentiated slowing factor; it weighs on public policy and citizen mobilisation, but is partially circumvented by economic dynamics and the action of the most committed communities.

Ultimately, the ‘soft’ climate scepticism mobilised by far-right populism acts as a differentiated brake on the ET; it weighs on citizen mobilisation and the formulation of public policies, but does not completely prevent action, which continues under the impetus of autonomous economic and social dynamics.

Having analysed how ‘soft’ climate scepticism is shaping the national energy debate, we now turn our attention to the consequences of this dynamic for Sweden's complex relationship with the EU, caught between dependence and resistance.

Rejection of the resistance to the EU argument

The relationship with the EU, central to SD’s rhetoric, oscillates between condemnation and exploitation. As highlighted by recent academic research, *“Political polarisation around the EU and energy results in fragmented preferences and difficulty in building lasting compromises. Structural dependence on European funding and frameworks puts the scope of overt sovereignty into perspective, but also fuels mistrust of institutions and the temptation to retreat into nationalism”* (66).

Swedish businesses and local civil servants confirm this reality. According to the independently liberal newspaper Dagens Nyheter, “*Many climate investments in Swedish municipalities would come to a halt without EU funding*” (67). Local actors, as noted in a study from Lund University, “*face the challenge of meeting citizen expectations for the energy transition while navigating a complex institutional landscape shaped by European dependencies and political polarization*” (68).

The work of Lindvall *et al.* (58) highlights that political polarisation around the EU and energy is resulting in fragmented preferences and difficulty in building lasting compromises. Structural dependence on European funding and frameworks puts the scope of overt sovereignty into perspective but also fuels mistrust of institutions and the temptation to retreat into nationalism.

Despite Eurosceptic rhetoric, the practical reality is that Swedish municipalities and businesses continue to rely on European funding mechanisms to advance local projects and sustain the momentum of the ET.

Political polarisation of energy debates

Polarisation, as theorised in chapter 1, is based on the discursive construction of SDMs, which systematically pit the interests of the Swedish people against those of urban, European or technocratic elites (see 2.1.1, pp. 27-28). On the ground, polarisation translates into a fragmentation of energy preferences, strongly correlated with political orientation, traditional values and level of trust in institutions (58). This 2025 study argues “*that low-carbon energy investments in Sweden are likely to encounter resistance due to a sizable antagonistic minority who are strongly opposed to either wind or nuclear energy. Interestingly, among those with traditional, nationalistic, and authoritarian values and right leaning political ideology, the enthusiasm for nuclear energy seems to reduce the closer a new nuclear power plant would be to their own residences*” (58).

While the very close referendum on nuclear energy in 1980 (see Introduction, p. 9 and 3.1, p. 39) focused on the risks of accidents and environmental considerations (69), in 2021, according to a survey, right-leaning voters were 58 percentage points more likely to favour nuclear power than left-leaning voters (58).

We can conclude that, on energy issues, the polarisation between ‘people’ and ‘elites’ observed in the discourse analysis is also clearly reflected in energy debates.

Innovation argument: from selective appropriation to rejection

SD’s discourse against green technological innovation – particularly wind, solar and smart grids – is marked by mistrust of renewable energies, which are perceived as unstable, costly and imposed by ‘Brussels’ or the technocratic elite (see 1.1.2., pp.15-16 and 2.2.3., pp. 35-36). However, local and economic actors adopt a variety of strategies in response to this discourse, ranging from appropriation to rejection and circumvention.

Local and economic actors in Sweden have demonstrated an ability to adopt elements of the SD discourse to defend their autonomy, while adapting their position to socio-economic realities. This dynamic is particularly visible in conflicts related to wind power, where sovereigntist and anti-EU rhetoric is used to negotiate local interests. Europe’s largest wind farm, Markbygden, located in Swedish Lapland, has sparked tensions between developers, Sámi communities and residents. Local groups, initially hostile, have adapted the SD’s

discourse on *‘defending traditions’* to demand socio-economic compensation: *“For the Sami people, reindeer herding is much more than an economic activity: it is a pillar of our identity and traditions. The establishment of wind farms represents a new form of industrial colonisation, which threatens the transmission of our heritage to future generations”* (70). This strategy has led to agreements to redistribute wind energy revenues to local infrastructure (schools, roads), illustrating a pragmatic approach despite critical public positions.

The economic sector, meanwhile, often adopts a stance of resistance or rejection towards the anti-green innovation discourse of SD. Tengblad, head of sustainable development at the Swedish Wind Energy Association, affirms that *“The transition to renewable resources such as wind energy is not only an environmental necessity, but also an essential economic strategy for Swedish companies. This transition is being driven not only by rising fossil fuel costs, but also by a global movement towards sustainability”* (71). This testimony illustrates the ability of economic actors to break free from the prevailing political discourse by pursuing innovative strategies guided by market demands and international competitiveness.

Local authorities are also developing strategies to circumvent SD’s discourse. Rather than outright rejection, they favour cooperation, experimentation and citizen participation to advance the ET. One municipal official explains: *“Swedish municipalities and municipally owned energy utilities (MEUs) primarily act as representatives of citizen interests, bridging the gap between technical complexities and community needs. While urban development projects follow a top-down approach with limited direct citizen input, municipally led energy communities lower financial and technical barriers but often result in passive citizen participation. The research highlights the need for a balanced approach that combines representative governance with direct citizen engagement to strengthen public involvement in the energy transition”* (72).

Ultimately, while some local and economic actors demonstrate a great capacity to adapt, sometimes appropriating certain arguments to strengthen their autonomy, they most often reject or circumvent the anti-innovation discourse, and particularly the anti-renewable energy discourse of the SD. This dynamic shows the resilience of the Swedish model in the face of political polarisation and the vitality of green innovation on the ground.

3.2. Operationalisation of analytical and discursive indicators

Comparing the results of this study of the Swedish situation with the analysis matrix developed chapters 1 and 2 allows us to refine our understanding of the mechanisms at work. The conceptual framework (energy sovereignty, just transition, climate scepticism, rejection of the EU) and their analytical and discursive indicators are translated into different operational indicators depending on the context: sometimes they reinforce polarisation and inaction, other times they are used to justify the defense of particular interests. The framework reveals discrepancies between the official discourse of SD and the actual practices of local and economic actors, highlighting the need for a detailed analysis that is attentive to scale and power dynamics.

Energy sovereignty, central in the SDMs, is however, on the ground, mainly used as a rhetorical lever, while dependence on European funding and cooperation remains strong. This limits the effectiveness of this argument to slow down the transition.

Just transition, framed by the SD as protection of national industry and criticism of the EGD fails to translate into equitable policies at the local level, where concrete aid and inclusion are often lacking.

Climate scepticism, as a minimisation of the urgency of the situation and of national responsibility for CO₂ emissions despite recognition of the scientific consensus, justifies public inaction at the national level. However, the private sector and some local actors continue to invest, demonstrating resilience to this discourse.

SD's Euroscepticism and mistrust of the EGD make the EU a rhetorical target but, in practice, local actors and businesses remain dependent on European funds and projects, and cooperation continues despite Eurosceptic rhetoric.

Polarisation is driven by SD narratives that construct a threatened 'people', mobilise local identity, and oppose elites to 'real Swedes'. This political polarisation is observed on the ground, particularly around contested energy projects such as wind power.

Innovation is largely absent from SD discourse, except for criticism of renewable energies. In contrast, businesses and local authorities are innovating, experimenting, and involving residents, demonstrating a circumvention and resilience that exceeds what political discourse suggests.

Concepts (Chapter 1)	Analytical indicators (Chapter 1)	Discursive indicators (Chapter 2)	Operational indicators (on the ground)
Energy sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National energy independence Rejection of European standards Promotion of nuclear power/local energy 	Validated analytical indicator: SD manifestos focus on energy sovereignty, criticism of European norms and prioritisation of nuclear power and local resource management.	<p>Validated analytical indicator: research confirms that sovereignty structures discourse and mobilisation against projects or norms perceived as imposed.</p> <p>Partially validated discursive indicator: on the ground, sovereignty is mainly used as a rhetorical lever, but dependence on European funding and cooperation remains strong, limiting the effectiveness of this sovereignty.</p>

Justice/Just transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of national industry • Criticism of the EGD • Little attention to social equity 	Validated analytical indicator: Manifestos defend heavy industry, criticise subsidies for households and reduce the 'just transition' to national competitiveness.	<p>Validated analytical indicator: research notes that the justice promoted by the SDs mainly benefits industry, not households.</p> <p>Unvalidated discursive indicator: local needs (concrete aid, inclusion) are not taken into account, and the rhetoric of justice is not translated into equitable policies on the ground.</p>
Climate scepticism	Recognition of the scientific consensus but minimisation of the urgency and national responsibility	Validated analytical indicator: SD recognise the scientific consensus but minimise the urgency and Sweden's responsibility, justifying a wait-and-see approach.	<p>Analytical indicator validated: climate scepticism in SD is perceived and cited by stakeholders.</p> <p>Partially validated discursive indicator: this scepticism justifies public inaction, but the private sector and some local actors continue to innovate and invest despite this discourse.</p>
Europe/multi-level governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euroscepticism • Mistrust of the European Green Deal • Emphasis on subsidiarity 	Validated analytical indicator: Manifestos denounce Brussels' 'interference', reject European standards and value subsidiarity.	<p>Validated analytical indicator: Criticism of the EU structures discourse and influences local perceptions.</p> <p>Discursive indicator partially validated: dependence on European funds and the momentum of European projects persist, even if Eurosceptic rhetoric may slow down certain investments or cooperations.</p>

Polarisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a threatened 'people' • Mobilisation of local identity, opposition between 'elites' and the 'people' 	Validated analytical indicator: SD discourse mobilises protection of the people, industry and the Swedish way of life, and pits elites against 'real Swedes'.	Analytical indicator validated: actors observe that sovereignty and identity are powerful levers for mobilising against unpopular projects. Validated discursive indicator: polarisation is indeed observed on the ground, particularly around wind and nuclear energy and 'imposed' (by the EU) energy projects.
Innovation	Absence of green innovation in populist discourse, promotion of the status quo	Validated analytical indicator: Manifestos offer little on innovation, prioritising nuclear power and the industrial status quo.	Validated analytical indicator: SD discourse places little value on green innovation. Discursive indicator not validated: on the ground, businesses and local authorities are innovating, experimenting and involving residents, demonstrating a capacity for circumvention and resilience that is greater than political discourse suggests.

Table 3. Analytical, discursive & operational matrix of far-right populist opposition to the energy transition applied to the realities of Swedish society.

Conclusion

The energy transition put to the test by populism – the Swedish case

This research sought to analyse how the rise of populist and far-right forces, here embodied by the Sweden Democrats (SD), is shaping energy transition (ET) debates and policies in Sweden. Using an interdisciplinary approach combining political theory, discourse analysis and empirical studies, it sought to answer the central question: how does the SD's energy programme impact Sweden's ability to achieve its climate and energy goals, particularly in the context of European commitments? More than just a case study, this work is part of a broader reflection on the resilience of liberal democracies in the face of growing polarisation around energy and climate issues.

ET and populism: a conceptual, discursive and operational analysis framework applied to the Swedish case

We have studied the theoretical foundations of populist discourse which, applied to energy, denounces policies deemed elitist, promotes energy sovereignty and defends living standards against imposed sacrifices. We have distinguished populism from the far-right, which adds exclusion, nationalism and rejection of pluralism. The legacy of fascism, analysed through Eco (13), reveals the glorification of the past, mistrust of innovation and the designation of external enemies such as the EU. Other important concepts like energy sovereignty becomes a lever of resistance to supranational governance, while the hijacking of the 'just transition' and the use of climate scepticism serve to mobilise the electorate and slow down climate policies. An analytical framework thus articulates six key concepts and themes: energy sovereignty, 'just transition', climate scepticism, critique against Europe, polarisation and innovation.

We have applied this conceptual and thematic framework to the SDMs for 2022 and 2024, revealing a structuring populist narrative. The SD dramatises the crisis, creates an image of a people threatened by hybrid enemies (elites, Brussels) and mobilises a rhetoric characterised by urgency and victimhood, in which Sweden is portrayed as a nation under siege from internal and external threats. On energy issues, they adopt a 'soft' climate scepticism and acknowledge the reality of climate change but downplay its urgency and national responsibility. In their discourse, they value energy independence, nuclear power and the defence of Swedish industry, while criticising renewable energy sources and the global ET. The 'just transition' is used to strengthen the competitiveness of Swedish industry at the expense of social justice, and renewable energy is rejected. As a result of the discourse analysis, a discursive framework complements the initial analytical indicators.

Finally, we have contrasted SD's populist rhetoric with the reality on the ground, drawing on recent studies and quotes from media. It reveals a disconnect between the promise of total energy sovereignty, nuclear-focused, and structural, economic and institutional constraints; the complexity of the projects, long lead time and continued dependence on European funding and technology limit this ambition. The 'just transition', as advocated by the SD, translates in concrete terms into abandoning the fight against 'energy poverty', a concept that is not yet defined in Sweden. 'Soft' climate scepticism and the rejection of green innovation, although present in political discourse, do not prevent economic actors and certain local authorities from continuing to innovate and invest in renewable energies. The relationship with Europe remains ambivalent; while official rhetoric denouncing Brussels' interference may appeal to nationalist aspirations, businesses and local authorities remain dependent on European funds and projects.

Political polarisation is leading to fragmentation in energy preferences, but the resilience of the Swedish model limits the real impact of far-right populist rhetoric on the ET.

The impact of the Sweden Democrats' energy programme on Sweden's ET

Our research question finds its answer in the tension between populist and far-right rhetoric, which structures public and political debate around sovereignty, identity and resistance to European injunctions, and the complex reality of Sweden's ET, marked by multiple interdependencies and the need to cooperate at different levels. By exploiting the energy crisis and mobilising populist and identity-based arguments, SD contributes to polarising the debate and slowing down the adoption of ambitious climate and energy policies, even leading to the government abandoning its national decarbonisation targets. However, their influence remains limited, as economic, social and institutional dynamics continue to favour innovation and cooperation, despite the rhetoric of mistrust and withdrawal.

This thesis thus highlights the resilience of the Swedish model, which is managing to maintain momentum in the ET despite the rise of SD. Following these findings, it also emphasises the need to strengthen citizen participation in decision-making, social equity and transparency in energy governance in order to counter the risks of fragmentation and identity polarisation.

European ET in light of the Swedish case

Beyond the Swedish case, this research invites broader reflection on the ability of European democracies to reconcile climate ambitions, national sovereignty and social cohesion. It calls for an integrated approach to ET, based on participation, innovation and social justice, and for increased vigilance against the risks of political exploitation and identity polarisation. These tensions are echoed at European and international level, as illustrated by the Trump administration in the USA. The arrival in power of an executive that is resolutely hostile to international climate policies, favouring the revival of fossil fuels and calling into question multilateral agreements, increases the pressure on European democracies, including Sweden, by weakening the legitimacy of transition policies and fuelling a rhetoric rejecting environmental constraints. Due to their geopolitical and economic weight, the choices made by the USA risk reinforcing the temptation to retreat into nationalism and climate scepticism, even in countries historically committed to the fight against climate change. This context also highlights the importance of language in the construction of political realities, as Eco points out in his reflections on newspeak and the manipulation of vocabulary (13). This analysis finds contemporary echoes in the banning of terms related to ET within the US federal administration (73). By prohibiting the use of words such as 'energy transition', 'carbon neutrality' and 'climate justice', the aim is to reshape public debate, limit the scope of environmental policies and defuse social protest. Such a process, which is reminiscent of Eco's newspeak, shows how much the battle of words precedes and shapes the battle of ideas, and calls for vigilance in the face of the temptation to euphemise or erase climate issues from political discourse.

In conclusion, I would like to warmly thank Martin, Nils Holgersson's domestic gander, whose initiatory journey over Sweden inspired the structure of this work. We flew over the theoretical landscape, then descended into the details on the ground to better understand the complexity of contemporary energy issues. This approach allowed to measure the importance of preserving the spirit of *Folkhemmet* – 'the people's home' – in a context of polarisation and increased mistrust.

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Appendixes

1. Sweden Democrats election manifesto 2022¹⁸

Sweden Democrats Election Platform 2022

Policy programme for the Sweden Democrats' influence on Swedish
politics during the next parliamentary term

¹⁸ The document was fully translated from Swedish to English using the DeepL online translator.

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Introduction

For a long time, Swedish politics has been about putting interests other than those of Sweden and its citizens first. As a result, Sweden has become a country in crisis and division.

The Sweden Democrats want to break the trend and move policy in a direction that can heal Sweden and allow society to heal the wounds that both Social Democratic and centre-right governments have inflicted on Swedish society.

The insecurity that has a structural social problem is the most serious consequence of the borderless migration policy pursued by a long series of governments. Rebuilding a society based on the rule of law that can be trusted will be a thematically central task when the Sweden Democrats gain control. But the consequences of the irresponsible policies that have characterised past decades have now had repercussions in all branches of politics and throughout Sweden.

The anxiety that characterises our times can be replaced by optimism about the future. Swedish society and culture are fundamentally something to be proud of. Few countries have historically been able to match the Swedes' ability to combine individual freedom with great concern each other. Previous generations of Swedes have built a society that was long among the best in the world. But gradually, progressive progress has been replaced by tolerance of the intolerant. Political concern for the different living conditions of Swedish citizens has been exchanged for consideration of all interests other than those of Sweden itself.

Solving the crisis caused to Sweden requires a broad political approach and a policy that reaches out to the whole of Sweden. It also requires a completely different perspective from that which has characterised previous governments.

It is high time for a policy that puts Sweden first.

The Sweden Democrats will always prioritise Swedish interests and pursue policies that all citizens. This policy programme sets out the direction of the policies that the Sweden Democrats will formulate for real influence during the next parliamentary term.

Crime and punishment

Sweden's crime policy needs to be completely reorganised to be based on zero tolerance and incapacitation. Restoring security for citizens must be an overarching thematic mission for the next government.

In recent decades, insecurity has across Sweden and fundamentally changed the social climate. Link to harmful and excessive immigration over a long period is obvious. No task is more important than reversing this trend. The whole of Sweden must be safe for everyone who lives here. The parties that have governed the development of society bear a great deal of responsibility, but that does not absolve criminals of responsibility for the crimes that are committed. Instead of explaining away crime and focusing on preventive integration measures that have not proven to work, it is high time to change the direction of crime policy. Neither centre-right nor socialist governments have managed to do so, despite tough rhetoric.

As a consequence of the current legal system, victims can also be left almost completely without redress when serial criminals have committed offences against many people, due to the so-called quantity discount.

The Sweden Democrats want to change criminal policy in favour of locking up and deporting criminals who create insecurity and commit crimes. Punishment should not only be seen as a rehabilitative measure, but by proportionate to the offence, it should provide redress for victims and, through incapacitation, prevent dangerous criminals from committing new crimes. The starting point should be that all crimes, even those that do not make headlines, should be investigated and that the police should be close at hand throughout Sweden.

The Sweden Democrats want to significantly increase sentences and invest heavily in police, prosecutors and prisons. Discounts for those who have committed multiple offences or committed a serious crime as a young person will be abolished and the entire sentence will be served before conditions can be imposed on the release of those sentenced to prison. The judicial system's cooperation between authorities and tools for detecting and prosecuting criminals will be improved. Sweden must be a place for law-abiding, hard-working and good citizens, not a paradise for criminals.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Substantially increase penalties and abolish quantity discounts for serious offences against the person
- Introduce zero tolerance for crime so that even less serious offences are investigated and prosecuted
- Fundamentally changing crime policy to protect good citizens
- Expel foreign criminals and revoke residence permits and, where , citizenship of migrants who commit serious offences
- Ensure investments for a significantly upgraded judiciary
- Increase security throughout Sweden and in all neighbourhoods
- Increasing the availability of places in prisons in Sweden and abroad

Gang-related crime

Sweden should not be a place for organised gangs, shootings and explosions. Swedish society must be uncompromising in reclaiming the space conquered by gangs in recent decades.

A new brutal gang culture has hit Sweden as a result of the immigration policies pursued by both centre-right and social democratic governments. The number of segregated neighbourhoods where gangs and clans have pushed back Swedish has grown in both number and degree of segregation. Shootings, bombings and robberies have become commonplace from north to south and increasingly the lives of innocent and ordinary people. Gang violence takes up large social resources and is fuelled by a culture of silence, widespread disdain for Swedish society and a parallel culture that has been allowed to take hold through an overly tolerant integration policy. Despite the fact that the cost of integration policy measures and investments in schools, welfare and housing in segregated areas has been considerable, the policy has failed to such an extent that second-generation immigrants are more likely commit crimes than their parents and constitute the recruitment base for gangs.

The Sweden Democrats believe that few political measures are too far-reaching when it comes pushing back both the criminal gangs and the culture that allows them to take hold. A first and important measure is to stop the immigration of groups that have difficulty integrating into Swedish society and culture. Significantly higher expectations must also be placed on parents and the public to become part of society and stop the growth of gangs. This can only be done with simultaneous police and intervention efforts against those individuals who are currently in criminal environments, and with early markings against those on the fringes of gangs and clans.

Anyone who is in a gang environment and commits offences should be sentenced to particularly long prison sentences or detention. Many measures that have been trialled in Denmark will be implemented to combat gangs. The police, social services and bailiffs will be given the tools to set an example and make the criminal lifestyle unattractive, e.g. through far-reaching possibilities to seize assets in the circle of criminals, to restrict the freedom of movement of gang members and to take care of children and young people who grow up in a negative environment. Schools should be made a sanctuary through special placement of delinquent students and zero tolerance of gang-associated attributes. Where possible, residence permits should be revoked and citizenship cancelled for immigrants with links to gangs. Above all, the judiciary needs more effective tools to combat gang-related crime. Measures should be taken to better identify gang members through, for example, intelligence work and information gathering, surveillance, camera surveillance and wiretapping. Procedural obstacles to enable increased prosecution must also be removed.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Stop asylum immigration and pause quota refugee reception and focus on return
- Breaking the attractiveness of a criminal lifestyle
- Give law enforcement the resources and tools fight gangs
- Sharply increase penalties for gang criminals
- Introducing a requirements-based integration policy

- Empower social services, schools and the judiciary to intervene with tougher measures at an early stage
- Lowering the age of criminal responsibility

Victims of crime

Policies must be designed in the best interests of the victim, not the offender. Victims of crime must receive redress and the full support of society to regain safety in society.

One group that is rarely seen behind reports of increased and increasingly serious crime is the victims of crime. In practice, few of these crimes make the headlines or result in , but for every robbery, assault or rape, someone's freedom and security are destroyed with consequences that can last a lifetime. Victims of crime rarely receive the support from society needed to restore their sense of trust. Instead, victims are often forced to live in fear meeting the offender, and on those occasions when someone is convicted, an excessively lenient sentence further victimises them.

The Sweden Democrats want to shape policy on the terms of victims of crime. The right to furlough should be changed so that victims of crime do not have to worry about suddenly encountering the offender on the street shortly after sentencing. Victims should always be informed about furloughs and in some cases have a say in the decision. Offenders who have committed serious crimes should be monitored more closely after serving their sentence and banned from returning to the place where the crime was committed or in the vicinity of the victim.

The right to compensation, support and assistance after the crime has occurred must also be strengthened. Compensation can never fully heal the damage caused by a crime, but it can help to alleviate the effects and to re-establish a normal life. The right to compensation must be guaranteed, and the fear of having to pay it back years later, if the victim has even received it in the first place, cannot be accepted.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Empowering and supporting victims of crime
- Introduce penalties that are proportionate
- Increasing damages
- Restricting the right to leave for convicts
- Improving the possibilities for restraining orders
- Enabling restrictions on freedom of movement after serving a sentence

The police

The police must be visible and available throughout the country and at all times of the day. To be able to provide the thin line against an ever-growing and more brutal crime, the police must be significantly increased in number and given better tools to act.

Although crime has become a social crisis, the number of police officers relative to the population has not increased. Despite many qualified applicants, places in police training programmes are rarely filled, while many existing police officers have left the profession prematurely. The everyday life of the police is all too often characterised by frustration at working against the tide. Despite a good knowledge of criminals, it is common for arrested for an offence to be released by the prosecutor before the police completed their administrative follow-up of the arrest, only to be subject to criminality and police intervention again soon afterwards. This creates resignation. Moreover, serious crime has created such a workload that the types of crime that affect most people – theft, robbery, assault and vandalism – or that take place outside criminal hotspots are rarely followed up even with a good evidence base.

The number of police officers must be greatly increased in order to have both the strength to crack down on serious and organised crime and to be able to create security with visibility and intervention in all parts of society. The aim should be to – that anyone in need of police can get it quickly. To achieve this, major investments must be made in the entire justice chain, but especially in the police. The number of training places must be increased, but the criteria for admission to training also need to be reviewed according to the need to mobilise against criminals. More routes into the police profession also need to be explored, as does the possibility supplementing the existing police organisation by employing security guards with extended powers and appropriate equipment. More trained police officers who have left the profession should also be incentivised to return to policing.

The Sweden Democrats also want to make the police profession more attractive. Salaries and working conditions must be improved, and – it is possible to delegate administrative tasks to civilian staff, this should be done to a greater extent, while the police authority should be reorganised to fight crime and be close to the citizens. The emergency police should be reinstated in order to be able to relieve and assist the regular police organisation when needed.

The safety of police officers must also be improved by strengthening protection against threats, harassment and violence. Anyone who commits blue light sabotage or behaves with particular disrespect towards police officers should be considered for special measures, such as detention and deportation if the person is not a Swedish citizen.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Increasing police pay
- Introduce paid police training
- Improving working conditions and the working environment
- Relieve police officers with civilian employees
- Give the police the means to fight crime
- Ensuring safety and security for police officers and their families

Terrorism

Terrorism and extremism are the ultimate expression of the failed multicultural project that has been pursued in Sweden. Terrorists and extremists must not be allowed to exist or be nurtured in our country. The security and cohesion of society must be safeguarded.

Terrorism as a phenomenon has recently grown stronger in Sweden and Europe, several terrorist attacks have taken place and everyone remembers the attack on Drottninggatan in Stockholm, where several people including a young girl tragically lost their lives. At the same time, we know that Islamist extremism is financed both by state funds and foreign donations. Hundreds of people have travelled from Sweden to fight for ISIS, and many have returned. Security threats in the form of terrorist mummies are allowed to remain in Sweden even without citizenship, because they risk being exposed in their home countries.

The Sweden Democrats will ensure that strong and effective measures are put in . It cannot be permitted to participate in, or support, terrorist organisations. It must be forbidden to spread their propaganda. Extremists and terrorists have, by their actions, denied themselves the right to be in our country. By using reduced aid, sanctions or other pressures, security threats should leave the country.

Extremist breeding grounds must also be fought. Mosques and other religious communities or organisations that promote extremism should not receive subsidies from the public sector or foreign regimes. The security threats operating in these environments must be controlled and expelled.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- prohibit participation in, and association with, terrorist organisations
- Expel terror convicts and revoke citizenship where .
- Prevent foreign funding of extremist faiths and organisations
- Impose harsh restrictions and detention for security threats present in Sweden.

Integration

Integration policy should encourage new arrivals to get into education and work quickly, counteract passivisation and reduce dependence on benefits. Those who come to Sweden want to become part of society should be met with openness and clear and fair rules. Self-sufficiency and cultural integration are the basis of our demand-based integration policy. The right to welfare and social benefits is linked to the individual's willingness and effort to do the right thing. Integration policy should be based on assimilation and promote cohesion in the country.

Sweden is one of the countries that has historically spent the most money on integration policy among the member states. At the same time, we are the EU country with the highest difference in unemployment and school results between those born in Sweden and those born abroad. Sweden has the highest number of shootings and is breaking record after record when it comes to marginalised areas, corruption and criminal clans. The problems are due to a combination of many factors: naivety in the face of differences in norms and values; laxity in the face of crime and anti-social behaviour; a misguided benevolence that enables permanent public provision; and above all an anxious political correctness that prevents us from talking about the obvious problems and their causes.

The failure of integration policy affects us all. It is getting worse all the time.

The Sweden Democrats want to establish a requirements-based integration policy based on the two principles of going where you come from and freedom with responsibility. Anyone new to Sweden should be met with clear, normative social information explaining what is required to fit in and succeed in Sweden. To counteract passivisation, benefit dependency and reduce our attractiveness to economic migrants, new arrivals should receive welfare benefits as they learn the language, work and finally become citizens. The Sweden Democrats are also striving for an integration policy "borderline", which means that people who do not learn Swedish, do not want to work and do not want to adapt to our norms and values should be helped to return home.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Develop a demand-based integration policy that provides rights to welfare in line with language learning, work and finally citizenship
- Inform newcomers about what it takes to fit in and succeed in Sweden
- Stop state support for extremist organisations and other groups that act as segregationists
- Introduce compulsory preschool for children excluded from society
- Create an active re-immigration policy for people who do not succeed in settling in Sweden

Migration

Sweden needs to reverse decades of irresponsible mass immigration and focus on voluntary return programmes. Asylum immigration from countries outside our neighbourhood must stop, and more people who are in Sweden without rights or who have no connection to Swedish society should leave than immigrate to Sweden.

Throughout the 2000s, Sweden has had an unprecedentedly generous regulatory framework that has attracted almost two million foreigners to choose Sweden as their final destination, of whom almost one million have come as asylum seekers or family members. Those who have sought come to Sweden in the 2000s have mainly come from countries that are not in our neighbourhood. Many have also had their asylum applications rejected but have nevertheless chosen to stay, have been able to benefit from welfare and have contributed to the emergence of the so-called shadow society. The consequences for Sweden - in areas ranging from the labour market and schools, to crime trends, cohesion and public finances - are difficult to exaggerate.

Word of Sweden's generosity spreads through diasporas, social media and attracts even more people to come here. Swedish legislation must therefore be kept more restrictive than comparable countries. Despite broad public support for a strict migration policy, Sweden's regulatory framework remains very generous.

Moreover, labour immigration rules have effectively stopped working. Corruption, cheating and trafficking in both residence permits and people common. The bills submitted and announced by the government are far from sufficient.

The fundamental position of the Sweden Democrats is that asylum should be sought in the first safe country. Refugee aid and relief for crisis-affected countries should primarily be handled in the neighbourhood. If further resettlement is needed, it should be voluntarily through UNHCR's resettlement programme, based on the receiving countries' own capacity to receive refugees.

Based on these principles, the Sweden Democrats want to formulate the strictest possible immigration legislation that possible within the framework of European asylum rules. The direct reception of asylum seekers from countries that are not in our neighbourhood should be reduced to almost zero. Reception from neighbouring countries should be temporary assistance until the crisis over. In addition, family immigration, which for bulk of asylum-related immigration, must be limited as far as possible and subject to strict requirements. Social pull factors, such as benefit systems, need to be reviewed restrict non-citizens' access to welfare.

The thresholds for detaining and deporting people and enforcing deportations also need to be lowered. For work permits, Sweden needs to introduce a proper labour market test prevent employers from importing cheap labour from poor countries to do jobs that require little or no training. Many such jobs could be done by the hundreds of thousands of unemployed people already living in Sweden.

The benchmark for the foreseeable future should be that more of those who are in Sweden illegally or have no connection to Swedish society return each year than those granted asylum from outside our neighbourhood. The requirements for immigrants to integrate into Swedish culture and society should be tightened and citizenship should be linked to strict conditions.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Stop asylum immigration from countries outside our neighbourhood
- Prioritising quota refugees from the neighbourhood
- Tighten the rules in the Aliens Act to the strictest possible level under EU law

- Fighting the shadow society and illegal migration with more controls and more deportations
- Tightening requirements for family immigration
- Tightening the conditions for citizenship and raising the threshold for tax-funded welfare
- Encouraging voluntary return migration for marginalised migrants

The problem of honour

Honour culture is incompatible with Swedish values and must be fought with society's collective resources. Clans, networks and families that prevent young people from living with all choices that should be available to everyone in Sweden must be deprived of their opportunities to remain in Sweden.

The cultures of honour that have accompanied migration to Sweden take different forms. It ranges from implicit expectations from family and relatives for girls to veil themselves, to limit socialising, activities and interests - to forced marriage, freedom of movement and outright violence. It is increasingly common for young girls to be monitored by relatives and compatriots at school and in their daily lives to ensure that they follow the rules of the clan or country. Many grow up without the opportunity for a free sexuality. Female genital mutilation and virginity checks are very common in segregated areas and among large migrant groups. Boys and adults also suffer from honour-based oppression. LGBT people in Muslim or reactionary environments are a particularly vulnerable group. Those who grow up in a culture of honour lack almost all the rights that everyone should be able to in Sweden. Anyone who challenges the clan or family risks paying the ultimate price. Around one in three femicides committed in Sweden is motivated by honour.

The Sweden Democrats want to increase society's knowledge and efforts to combat honour culture and oppression. Schools, social services and the judicial system must be given a clearer mandate to identify children and young people who are suspected of living in an honour culture, and the opportunity to take strong action against adults who practice such oppression. Veiling should be banned in schools and children from cultures where honour issues are common should receive regular follow-up by school health services and counsellors, as well as special training on the rights that belong to everyone in Sweden.

Social services and police should make regular home visits to households where honour norms are suspected. Cousin marriages are common in cultures based on honour and where the marriage is arranged by the family. Therefore, Sweden should investigate how these marriages can be prevented within the country and how they can be prevented from continuing in Sweden if they occur abroad. Appropriate assistance should be offered to those who wish to break with a culture or religion under which they are subjected to honour-based oppression by family or wider communities.

Anyone who commits an offence with an honour-based motive should be sentenced to a significantly harsher penalty and expulsion under a special criminal code. It should also be possible to expel persons on the grounds of anti-social behaviour for practising honour-based oppression even without a specific crime having been committed. When it comes to such expulsions, no account should be taken of the person's connection in Sweden.

Civil society has a major responsibility to help those who have broken free from honour-based oppression or are trying to do so. Women's shelters focusing on honour issues must be supported and given better conditions.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Introduce a specific honour crime
- Banning full face veils in public places
- Coordinate efforts against honour-based oppression
- Tightening rules on forced marriage, polygamy and child marriage
- Banning cousin marriages
- Supporting those who want to break free from honour-based oppression

Gender equality

Men and women should have the same rights, be equal before the law and feel safe and respected. Each individual should be free to make their own choices and shape their own lives, without public authorities controlling these choices.

In recent years, women's insecurity has increased sharply and the number of reported sexual offences is among the highest in the world. At the same time, honour-related violence and cultural oppression limit the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Sweden. Many young girls are restricted on a daily basis in terms of socialising, clothing choices and activities. Cultural and religious pressures limit their freedom to participate in society, choose a partner and enjoy the individual freedom associated with the Western social order. Sweden is one of the countries in the world where gender equality has progressed furthest and where the perception of gender as a decisive factor in someone's life is low. But developments in Sweden have rapidly gone in the other direction, mainly as a result of political priorities in migration policy.

Women are particularly vulnerable to the growing insecurity in the public environment, to domestic violence and to sexual offences. Action needs to be taken both in terms of prevention and by the judicial system. Among other things, the Sweden Democrats want to see a clear action plan for victims of violence. Society's efforts free living in an environment of honour must be strengthened. The Sweden Democrats want to safeguard children's equal opportunities in school and therefore believe that the veil should be banned in schools. Full-face veils are an expression of the oppression of women and should therefore not be allowed in public spaces.

The Sweden Democrats the equality of all people in Swedish culture and law. Every person should have the same opportunity to shape their life based on individual circumstances, choices and endeavours. But just as it is wrong to limit someone's opportunities based on gender, it is also wrong to force men and women to make the same choices. True gender equality is not achieved by taking political action to create the same outcomes for men and at group level, but by taking action against social phenomena that limit the individual. The Sweden Democrats want to work against discrimination and special treatment, safeguard freedom of choice, ensure equality before the law and formulate policies that make life easier for both men women in the life situations of their choice.

In female-dominated occupations, wages in general and the public sector in particular are relatively low. Combined with poor working conditions, this has effects, both health-related and economic. The Sweden Democrats want to see increased occupational health care in female-dominated occupations. Shared shifts should be abolished and shift work, especially in health and social care, needs to be reviewed. Furthermore, the status of these occupational groups needs to be strengthened, for example through career paths and improved salary development. Both cultural norms and subsidy systems that tend to lock women into the home must be counteracted.

The Sweden Democrats want to work for equal healthcare where men and women are treated equally. For example, childbirth injuries should be taken as seriously as other injuries. Access to abortion and Swedish abortion legislation must be safeguarded.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Girls and boys should have the same life chances, regardless of their background
- Oppose oppressive clothing for women and ban full-face veils in public spaces
- Strengthening the fight against violence and assault

- Establish an action plan for the victim domestic violence
- Severely increase penalties for sexual offences and deport foreign rapists for life
- Combating discrimination and unequal treatment based on gender
- Improve status, working conditions and increase occupational health care in female-dominated occupations

Economy

focusing policy to a much greater extent on the interests of Sweden and its citizens, both better welfare and greater prosperity can reach the whole of Sweden. Economic policy should concentrate on restoring the welfare of Swedes, stimulating growth and jobs in society and restoring the rule of law.

Sweden has close to the highest tax burden in the world, but far from the best welfare in the world. For a long time, both centre-right and socialist governments have had different priorities from the Swedes. This has led to crime and segregation becoming a structural problem, rising unemployment, increasingly poor results in schools and healthcare, and a local government sector that is not considered to have the resources to fulfil its welfare mission in the long term. The Sweden Democrats instead want Swedish justice, welfare and industry to be put first.

The Sweden Democrats recognise that a market economy, freedom of choice in welfare and international trade benefit society and are important to defend, but can also see that the great wealth created must benefit more people. Large groups of striving and good citizens and many parts of the country do not recognise themselves in the description everything has improved. Instead, there are many stories of neighbourhoods that are rapidly being transformed beyond recognition, of how revenues from raw material extraction and industry rarely benefit local communities, and of how those who find it difficult to make ends meet are always the ones who have to take the greatest responsibility for global problems. Sweden's taxpayers have the right to expect a greater return on the large proportion of income paid to the public sector. Too much of it is currently spent on various types of benefits and expenses for people who have contributed little to the building of Swedish society.

The Sweden Democrats are neither a right-wing nor a left-wing party. On the contrary, we are united in the realisation that strong growth, conditions for business and entrepreneurship, and a policy that encourages people to work and strive are a prerequisite rebuilding a welfare system that can provide security for all citizens.

The foundation for prosperity is created in companies. Businesses need favourable conditions and long-term conditions that are globally competitive. It must pay better to contribute to society by working and otherwise being a good citizen. Public funding should primarily be focused on strengthening the heart of welfare through increased pensions and funds that ensure that police, healthcare, schools and care are available regardless of where in the country you live.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Prioritising the interests of Swedish citizens in economic policy
- Creating the conditions for a viable industry
- Review public spending and redirect funds to welfare and justice
- Making it worthwhile to work and contribute to society
- Making it harder to exploit Swedish welfare
- Reducing the costs of migration policies, aid, EU contributions and climate action that can be made more effective
- Sharing prosperity across the country

Swedish jobs

Everyone who is able should work in real jobs, earn a living and contribute to building a better Sweden. For most people, work is the key to an independent life, freedom and participation in society.

Sweden has the fourth highest unemployment rate in the EU and long-term unemployment is higher than ever - higher than during the major economic crises that hit Sweden in the 2000s. Long-term unemployment is particularly a problem among groups with an immigrant background. But even among those who are not part of open unemployment, many are dependent on taxpayers for their livelihood through various types of labour market measures and subsidies. In 2016, more than 600 000 foreign-born people of working age were already not self-sufficient, i.e. with a personal income below half the median income. The cost to society of those who do not work is eroding welfare and is a strong factor behind the deteriorating finances of municipalities and tax increases.

Sweden needs a policy that enables more people to get real jobs, support themselves and contribute to the common good. Instead of ineffective labour market policies such as new start jobs, start-up jobs and introductory jobs, policies should work to create greater demand for real jobs. This must start with an industrial policy that safeguards the ability of companies to invest and grow and stimulate growth.

The education system and integration programmes must also be better adapted to the needs of the labour market. The Sweden Democrats want to invest in high-quality, business-oriented education, provide good infrastructure and combat unemployment and long-term exclusion.

It must also become more profitable to hire and to work. The incentives for contributing to the common good must be clearer for those who have long relied on taxpayers. Integration policy must be changed to be based on much higher demands on those who are to be integrated into Swedish society. Access to the social insurance system and Swedish welfare must be linked more closely to citizenship and work. The obligation to work must also become a condition for people who are currently supported by municipal income support.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Making it easier to hire and creating the best conditions for Swedish industry
- Abolish ineffective labour market and integration programmes designed to hide unemployment
- Training to meet the needs of the labour market
- Introducing a requirements-based integration policy
- Making it more profitable to work
- Introduce work requirement for benefits

Small businesses

Small businesses for a significant proportion of the tax revenue that builds welfare, and most jobs in the labour market are created in small businesses. Creating a good breeding ground for entrepreneurship is crucial for Sweden's economy and labour market.

A favourable climate for creating and running businesses is important both for the country and for the local community. Businesses create jobs, growth and a vibrant local community. However, running a business is often associated with high levels of effort and risk, and often inhumane workloads and stress. Bureaucracy, regulatory burdens, taxes and administrative costs risk taking the focus away from the core business and eroding an entrepreneur's drive. Despite long-standing ambitions to reduce regulatory burdens, studies show that these burdens have remained at high levels or increased over time. Unnecessarily strict conditions in industry standards and tenders often make it difficult for smaller players to enter the market.

Risk-taking is a natural part of entrepreneurship, but business risk need not necessarily be so extensive. Long-term liability for sick leave can be crucial to the survival of a small business. Another major concern is many businesses, not least in the retail sector, report an increase in crime in the form of theft, threats, violence and fraud. But organised crime is also affecting many business owners. There are many examples of entire neighbourhoods abandoned by business owners because of crime. It is a structural problem that is devastating for both Sweden and the local community.

To encourage more and growing businesses, it is important to remove unnecessary regulations where the costs for businesses do not correspond to the benefits for society. New rules should be cost-effective and existing rules need to be reviewed. It must pay to take risks in order to grow. Furthermore, the costs of employer contributions and sick pay need to be reduced.

More needs to be done to stimulate new entrepreneurship. In a step to lower the thresholds and for more people to take the step and realise their drive, the Sweden Democrats want to develop a start-up grant for professionals.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Promote regulatory simplification and reduce the administrative burden on small businesses
- Reducing social security contributions and sick pay costs for small businesses
- Fighting crime affecting entrepreneurs
- Creating the conditions for new businesses and entrepreneurship
- Modernising the 3:12 framework stimulate entrepreneurship

Business and industry

The prosperity and welfare of the future will be built through good, long-term rules for the entire business community. Society must offer a reliable infrastructure for industry and businesses and long-term rules for investment that are not disrupted by political obstacles and red tape.

Sweden's economy and labour market are entirely dependent on the viability of industry and business. There are many signs that Swedish competitiveness is weakening relative to other countries and in a global market that is increasingly exposed to competition from rapidly growing economies around the world. As a result of policies pursued, barriers to raw material extraction and reliable supply chains have increased, access to reliable and cost-effective electricity supply has deteriorated, and transport and travel infrastructure between different parts of the country is under threat. Permit processes are often long and unpredictable, and Sweden's attractiveness for investment and employment is declining because the labour supply created by policy is to business needs.

The Sweden Democrats want to pursue a determined policy make Sweden a leading industrialised country by taking greater account of Swedish growth and Swedish industry in political decisions. Symbolic policy measures risk hampering the conditions for industry will be. Instead, policies should be pursued to ensure that the business community is better provided with the infrastructure that is often crucial to choosing to establish or expand operations in Sweden. According to a forecast by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, electricity consumption in Sweden is expected to increase by as much as 60 per cent by 2045. The electricity system is central to the competitiveness of basic industries. Electricity is needed all year round at reasonable prices. The Sweden Democrats want to make a long-term investment in new generation nuclear power.

Authorisation processes for mining, electricity grid expansion and industry need to be streamlined and made faster. A prerequisite for profitable investments to be made is a long-term policy that takes into account the industry's need for a predictable process. Stricter environmental and emission requirements in Sweden compared with other countries often risk penalising Swedish industries and having globally counterproductive results when it comes to the goals the requirements aim to achieve. Evidence, results and Swedish competitiveness should govern the implementation of climate goals to a greater extent than politicians' desire to be the first and the furthest.

In a world of global value chains and international competition, tax levels affect the competitiveness of businesses. Reduced or better designed taxes in many cases increase tax revenues in the long run as such policies lead to higher growth. Tax policy must therefore aim for competitive taxes that do not deviate too much from the rest of the world, especially those imposed on businesses.

The smooth functioning of the economy also requires a shift in transport infrastructure policy in terms of road, rail and air. Goods must be able to be transported and employees must be able to get to work within a reasonable time throughout the country.

The Sweden Democrats want to redirect prestige investments in high-speed trains to the faster and more urgent need to upgrade transport infrastructure in all modes of transport.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Ensure access to reliable and cheap electricity by investing in the nuclear power of the future.
- Streamline and increase the predictability of authorisation processes for mining, electricity grid expansion and industry

- Keep taxes at a level that does not hamper Swedish companies in international competition
- Prioritising Swedish industry and competitiveness
- Stop symbolic policies that jeopardise the ability conduct industry and business
- Promote a labour supply that better responds to labour market needs

Environment

Sweden Democrat environmental policy is based on the idea of stewardship and strives to find the most environmentally efficient and cost-effective methods, which at the same time do not harm industries and the countryside. Similarly, active farming is the prerequisite for much of the biodiversity of the agricultural landscape. Overgrowth is a threat to biodiversity.

The Sweden Democrats focus on what most effectively conserves species, sometimes using new techniques, goes hand in hand with active and productive forestry, where new technology and smart methods can achieve the goals without costly and extensive expansion of reserves. Experience shows that voluntary and responsible management works best to create environmental values, supported by competent and helpful advice. Support systems in the agricultural sector play an important role here.

Our waters are vital to enable life. It is therefore serious that the situation in our waters and especially in the Baltic Sea is so bad. The situation regarding eutrophication and toxins in the Baltic Sea is serious. In this context, more focus must be placed on international cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries, as Sweden alone cannot help to resolve the situation. Our marine and aquatic environment must be prioritised more clearly over overly intensive fishing and extensive wind power development.

Environmental policy must always be reconciled with new research findings and based on facts rather than emotions. Different interests often come into conflict, and politicians must dare to take a stand between the cement industry and nature interests, for example. Municipalities must be given greater support and assistance in environmental work. In this regard, the Sweden Democrats would like to see greater focus on efforts to clean up polluted areas in cases where the polluter is unable to pay for the clean-up due to bankruptcy, for example. Increased funding is required in the work to restore the thousands of contaminated areas in our country. More must be done to prevent and solve the problems of invasive plant and animal species.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Strive for eco-efficiency and find the measures that deliver the most environment per cent
- Using new technologies in nature conservation
- Accelerating the restoration of the marine environment in the Baltic Sea
- Increasing the priority given to the remediation of contaminated sites
- Prioritising adapted forest management over reserve designation
- Farmland is managed and overgrowth is prevented
- Preventing and reducing problems with invasive plant and animal species

Climate

By designing climate action more effectively and evidence-based, we can get more impact for every cent invested; the best climate policy is not the same as the most expensive one. From this perspective, maintaining and developing nuclear power is one of the most important measures.

The world is facing a serious situation, as emphasised by the IPCC's latest AR6 report. At the same time as this is causing concern, there are good reasons to feel confident about mankind's innovative ability to manage and combat climate change. Swedish climate policy is currently contradictory and cannot be said to fulfil the requirements for a cost-effective climate policy that helps to make a difference at global level. The climate is a global issue where national borders are irrelevant. Swedish climate policy has instead been transformed into a costly poster policy where it is more important to spend a lot of tax money, introduce new taxes and introduce oversized regulations than to make a real difference.

While it is important to emphasise that a country like Sweden, which for one per mille of emissions, cannot have a direct impact on the climate. This also means that a policy that deviates sharply from the EU and the rest of the world's policy in this area can damage our competitiveness and contribute to moving production from Sweden to other countries, which can increase emissions at a global level. Given that Sweden's emissions only account for around one per cent of global emissions, it is important to maintain a global perspective. For example, Sweden does not contribute to reducing emissions by raising fuel prices, increasing electricity prices and making it more costly for companies to operate in Sweden if China can simultaneously increase its emissions each year by more than Sweden as a whole emits.

Sweden's climate policy must be ambitious without jeopardising Swedish competitiveness. The EU's climate policy is becoming comprehensive and has significant impact on Sweden's opportunities for national measures. The Swedish climate targets should be adapted to the climate legislation that exists at EU level so that the requirements for other countries are not lowered as a consequence of us doing more than necessary at the expense of our standard of living and competitiveness. Swedish exports must become a focus area in the Swedish climate strategy. Given that Swedish companies are world-class when it comes to environmental thinking and low emissions in production, Sweden can reduce emissions by increasing exports.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Pursue an effective climate policy with a clear global perspective
- Contribute to reducing emissions by increasing exports of food, goods and services
- Focus more on research and development to make fossil-free energy more profitable
- Focus on measures that reduce emissions the most per cent invested, such as international climate investments

Energy

Sweden needs an energy policy that can deliver sustainable and fossil-free electricity production that is reliable throughout the year and that helps to strengthen Swedish competitiveness.

Our fundamental position is that energy policy should be geared towards ensuring a long-term competitive and reliable energy supply, for both households and industry. The policy we support aims to enable Sweden to maintain a high level of international competitiveness and standard of living. Sweden has historically had a power system that is exclusively fossil free with a high level of security of supply. The background to this is that we invested early on in a large-scale expansion of nuclear power and hydropower, which serves and has served us well.

At the same time, the situation in Sweden has been jeopardised in recent years, as energy policy has developed in a more ideological than pragmatic direction. The power system has been transformed exclusively into a weather-dependent system with a major expansion of wind power. At the same time, it has pushed through forced closures of several nuclear power reactors, tax burdens that plague combined heat and power and slow work to speed up the authorisation processes with expanded transmission capacity. As a result, people around the country are now forced to live with the consequences of the energy policy being pursued, with electricity prices over the past year being the highest ever.

Sweden needs to invest in plannable and fossil-free electricity production. Nuclear power is central to this and policy must actively work to create the conditions for new modern and environmentally friendly nuclear power in Sweden. There are currently regulations in need of change that prevent new construction and make modern smaller reactors impossible in Sweden. We must make use of the nuclear power expertise that exists in Sweden when it comes to new nuclear power. More resources must be invested in developing solutions for the fourth generation of nuclear power. Technology and expertise that we can then help to spread throughout the world. If we are to be able to reduce emissions in the world, access to plannable and fossil-free energy is crucial.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Permanently reduce taxes on electric energy to facilitate electrification
- Setting fossil-free targets and introducing a security of supply target
- Creating the conditions for new nuclear power in Sweden and a roadmap for the construction of SMRs
- Establish a Swedish research reactor on fourth generation nuclear power
- Safeguarding the municipal veto on wind energy development
- Strengthening the competitiveness of district and combined heat and power

Rural areas

Most Swedes do not live in a big city, so policies must be designed on terms that compatible with the living conditions of people throughout the country. Sweden's nature and countryside are part of our national soul, and policy must create the conditions for them to be utilised and preserved.

Rural areas exist first and foremost for the people who live and work here, and not for city dwellers to have somewhere to stay on holiday or as a refuge for people who are tired of urban culture. There are many challenges today, where rigid rules for construction and business development lie like a wet blanket. This is particularly problematic in smaller towns where public services are poorer and cooperation with neighbours, associations and private businesses is more important than in a big city. By giving more freedom to people, freedom to farm their land, freedom to develop their businesses - freedom for people to reach their full potential, we can unleash the potential that exists in our country.

Swedish companies, from north to south, are involved in everything from aerospace to beekeeping. It is important that policy makers create opportunities for business and entrepreneurship across the country, for the full range of activities, for small, medium and large enterprises.

The authorities must not become the enemies of businesses that put a spanner in the works, but must be given a more supportive role. The Sweden Democrats see the potential relocate more government jobs to smaller towns, but the main tool for growth and jobs in rural areas is simpler rules and opportunities for rural areas to grow.

The value of minerals in the soil, of forests and the potential for recreation and tourism is huge in rural areas. The government's strategy over two terms has sought shut them down. Mines are not allowed to start up, fish farms are moved to neighbouring countries and forests are taken out of production against the wishes of landowners. Sweden needs a policy that utilises the value of rural areas and makes it easier create more businesses, jobs and increased growth in combination with well-balanced environmental considerations.

Petrol and diesel prices are soaring and the travel allowance has been gradually eroded freezing mileage allowances for two decades. Mobility is essential for people to live and work in smaller centres where distances to jobs and public services are longer. We want the property tax levied on industrial and electricity production facilities to remain at regional level.

The price of petrol and diesel at the pump must be reduced, with diesel in particular currently being affected by a radical Swedish biofuel policy largely involves importing unsustainable biofuels from abroad. With reduced taxes on fuels, increased mileage allowance and a more sustainable biofuel policy, we can enable significant reductions in the price of fuel at the pump. The general reduction in speed limits is particularly problematic in rural areas. Domestic aviation is also central to the ability of people across the to run businesses and stay in close contact with their friends and relatives. The value of Bromma Airport and other regional airports cannot be emphasised enough in this perspective. There is a long-term value in maintaining Bromma Airport.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Pursuing a policy for the whole of Sweden
- Improving the maintenance of roads and railways
- Preserving domestic flights and Bromma Airport
- Reduce taxes on motor fuels
- Facilitating industry and business across the country
- Regionalising property tax from industrial and electricity generation facilities

The cars

In the second half of the 20th century, the car was seen as a revolution in freedom that would everyone. After burdens and taxes were placed on motoring and fuels in an aggressive and metropolitan-focused symbolic policy, the car has instead become a class issue.

Sweden is a large and elongated country, with a large proportion of the population living outside the major cities. Many people have great need for transport, and conditions vary greatly across the country and according to living conditions. For many, however, the car is the only option available to make ends meet.

For most people, a car is not a luxury. It is a necessity for families with children who need to combine picking up and dropping off children with getting to work, for living in rural areas where public transport has few or no services. For many, the car is a work vehicle. Moreover, as insecurity has grown in cities and many people are use public transport or walk at certain times of the day, the car is often the mode of transport that is perceived as safest. The car is still a freedom worth keeping.

It is reasonable for petrol and diesel to be taxed, but today environmental taxes far exceed the cost of emissions. The car has become a cash cow for the state. Despite the high and still rising price, some parties are not satisfied and want to continue price increases to force people to park their cars permanently. However, they have no solutions to present in terms of alternative modes of transport.

The Sweden Democrats want to make it easier and cheaper to get around by car. The requirements blending inefficient biofuels that increase the price at the pump and whose environmental effects are uncertain need to be reduced. Electrification is the future of motoring, but electrification in turn requires a good supply of reliable, cheap and environmentally friendly electricity through nuclear power. Conversion of the vehicle fleet needs to take time, for both economic and ecological reasons, and take place on market terms. Not everyone has the opportunity to buy an electric car today. Based on a life cycle analysis, it would not necessarily be beneficial to switch off large parts of the vehicle fleet.

The biggest losers from anti-car policies are those on the lowest incomes. Most can't afford to buy a new car, but are forced to pay for tax subsidies for those who can afford to buy expensive electric cars and also pay for large subsidies to public transport through the tax bill.

The Sweden Democrats believe that all modes of transport, including cars and air travel, are important for society to function. Unilaterally taxing certain modes of transport extremely hard those who lack alternatives to the car. Especially those who live in rural areas. At the same time, the Swedish Transport Administration is working intensively to greatly reduce speeds on many roads, which further complicates the possibilities for commuting to work as journey times become too long.

The Sweden Democrats want to improve roads so that people can travel safely and quickly throughout the country.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Reduce the price of petrol and diesel by cutting fuel taxes and reducing the reduction obligation.
- Improve conditions for car commuting, especially in rural areas
- Strengthen the travel allowance for those who depend on the car to work
- Upgrading the road network
- Stop the Swedish Transport Administration reducing road speeds
- Reduce the use of environmentally harmful and expensive biofuels from abroad
- Promoting Swedish biofuel production

Labour market conditions

The Swedish model has laid the foundation for progress and rights at work, while offering the flexibility that has employers and employees to take responsibility together for the good of Sweden.

The Swedish social partnership model has been beneficial for Sweden's labour market and growth. A high degree of stability in the labour market lays a good foundation for both the position of employees and a productive and well-functioning business sector. Stability requires a good balance between the social partners. It is created by a well-balanced compromise between employees' interests in security, a good working environment and good livelihoods on the one hand, and employers' interests in flexibility, loyal employees and growth on the other. Both the trade unions and the employers' organisations fulfil an important social function. But the Swedish model is currently threatened by proposals from the EU on common rules for wage formation, unemployment benefits and the social safety net.

The Sweden Democrats believe that guarantees for the survival of the Swedish model are a prerequisite for ensuring that Sweden's relationship with the EU does not need to be reassessed. The position of Swedish employees should never be sacrificed as a concession to the EU.

No one should have to die or be seriously injured at work. Every Swedish workplace must have adequate work environment management that creates safety for employees. The Sweden Democrats want to depoliticise work environment management by abolishing the preferential right of politically controlled trade unions to appoint safety representatives. The power to appoint local safety representatives should primarily rest with the employees at the workplace concerned. All employees, regardless of contract or union affiliation, must be included in the work environment programme.

Everyone can experience unemployment at some point in their lives. As part of labour market policy, the public sector should meet the need for further training and retraining for those who need to change profession in their lives. Unfortunately, the labour market policy conducted within the framework of the Public Employment Service and the municipalities has increasingly become an integration activity with very poor results in relation to the costs.

The Sweden Democrats want to adapt labour market measures so that they effectively lead to real jobs. Training programmes will be expanded at all levels and by introducing apprenticeships where participants combine work experience, work and study.

Labour supply in Sweden is poorly matched to labour market needs. While the unemployed are largely made up of low-skilled immigrant groups with little incentive or opportunity to move from benefits to jobs, many activities are constrained by a lack of skills supply. The policies pursued have led to labour immigration even for less skilled jobs, which could have been filled by Swedes or people already in Sweden.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Defending the Swedish model
- Introduce apprenticeships
- Stop the use of public funds for fake jobs
- Increasing safety and security at work
- Depoliticise the work environment
- Increase requirements for non-integrated people to make themselves employable
- Stop labour migration for jobs that can be filled by domestic workers

Unemployment insurance

Employees who become unemployed should have good benefits and not have to worry about their livelihood. Security in the event of unemployment should be as obvious as security in the event of illness. Compensation should be paid on time and increase during the first 100 days.

There are several problems with unemployment insurance. The level of compensation is so low that it often causes immediate consequences and difficulties for those who are temporarily unemployed, and these are often acute due to long processing times. In addition, the requirement for long-term membership of an unemployment insurance fund represents a threshold for many when crises at the societal level cause many jobs to disappear beyond the individual's control.

The Sweden Democrats want unemployment insurance to become part of the state's welfare commitment. A general, compulsory, state-funded and administered unemployment insurance fund should be introduced. This would mean that more people would have access to the insurance that is already largely funded by tax revenue. The requirement for membership of an unemployment insurance fund should be abolished so that the right to compensation is instead based on time worked.

The Sweden Democrats want to increase compensation during the first period when someone needs unemployment benefits in the event of temporary unemployment. Most people encounter situations at some point during their working lives when they need to look for a new job. The best conditions for a quick return to the labour market are not created by the major distractions caused by a shattered personal economy. After the first hundred days, the level should be reduced – it should always pay to work.

Unemployment insurance will be managed administratively by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, which has a sufficient organisation to meet greatly increased needs. The Swedish Social Insurance Agency would also be better able to ensure that the regulations applied correctly and equally.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Increasing financial security for wage earners
- Nationalising unemployment insurance
- Abolish the requirement to join an unemployment insurance fund
- Increase the allowance for the first 100 days

Public waste

Public money should be used effectively for activities that clearly create value for citizens. Taxpayers' money should never be wasted.

Sweden has one of the highest tax burdens in the world and has been a model for creating a welfare model. But at the same time as the country's municipalities have gradually raised taxes for wage earners, Sweden's welfare has become less and less accessible. School results have fallen, queues for healthcare have grown, the police are less and less likely to come to victims of everyday crime, and public services have been dismantled in rural areas and large parts of the country. Instead of going to welfare, a lot taxpayers' money is being wasted.

Unfortunately, the trend has in many ways been the opposite. As public resources increase, so does public waste. The public sector has problems with procurement, financial control and monitoring, as well as with poor leadership and incorrect prioritisation, which together lead to multi-billion dollar costs. These include widespread fraud in welfare systems, an extreme aid budget that fuels corruption, unnecessary costs for administration and bureaucracy, the employment of staff in authorities that pursue activist symbolic politics - which in turn leads to increased costs in other authorities and in companies - expensive consultants, staff buy-outs and many other strange initiatives. The number of agencies is constantly increasing and political prestige projects, such as high-speed trains and EU funds, are prioritised over citizen benefits. Subsidies for jobs, electric bicycles and luxury cars, as well as multi-billion euro investments in integration projects, are made without any evidence-based results.

The Sweden Democrats want to invest in strong welfare and public services throughout the country. For this to be possible, the public sector needs to be financed jointly and with solidarity. But at the same time, the public sector needs to manage taxpayers' money wisely so that it goes to the right purposes and is sufficient for everything we want to finance. Politicians have a responsibility to citizens to ensure that their hard-earned money is used effectively and not wasted.

The Sweden Democrats want to concentrate public spending at the heart of welfare and demand clear citizen benefits for all investments.

The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen opportunities for accountability when there are shortcomings in management of public resources. The Sweden Democrats also want to merge authorities and streamline public activities where possible. Both fraud and systems that tend to encourage fraud and corruption must be counteracted.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Cutting unnecessary public spending
- Tougher penalties for cheating in welfare systems
- Demand clear results for every public investment
- Stop waste in government and merge agencies
- Reinstate civil servant responsibility
- Invest in welfare instead political prestige projects

Hunting

Hunting has a long tradition in Sweden. Hunting is a major leisure interest that has broad popular support and hunters generally do their job well.

The Sweden Democrats are highly critical of the implementation of the EU Firearms Directive. The long processing times for weapons licences are unreasonable. Magazine regulation and a ban on lead in ammunition are examples of measures taken to make legal gun ownership more difficult. At the same time, political measures that should have been directed at illegal weapons and gang crime have instead been directed at legal gun ownership, Swedish hunters and sport shooters. A growing problem is also that hunters and farmers are being subjected to crime by individuals and organisations that are above the law. These offences include threats of murder, arson, destruction of property and the release of animals.

The Sweden Democrats believe in the idea of stewardship. There is a need for long-term management of wildlife populations in order to achieve a good balance between humans and animals - and between different animal species. Swedish hunting and game management should be based on knowledge and experience. There are major problems with damage to forests, agriculture and residential gardens as a result of grazing, sweeping and bending. The increasing number of animals is also causing more wildlife accidents. Particularly problematic is the wild boar population, which has grown significantly in recent decades. Incentives are needed to increase hunting, including making it easier for hunters to sell wild boar meat directly to restaurants and other customers.

In order for Sweden's hunters fulfil their mission, they need a clear and long-term mandate. It was a mistake to take parts of the game management mandate away from the hunter organisations. It should go back to the organisations responsible for hunting and not be shared with those who oppose hunting in all its forms. The ability to own hunting weapons and to engage in hunting should be protected. Penalties should be increased for those individuals and groups who harass hunters and disrupt hunting.

The Sweden Democrats want to reduce the EU's influence over Swedish hunting and game management. In many cases, EU rural and environmental policy is not adapted to Swedish conditions and takes too little account of those who own and manage forests or hunt. There should be greater local influence over predator policy. Large carnivores must be managed responsibly and overall predator pressure must be kept at reasonable levels in all parts of the country.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Stop the hunt for hunters and legal gun owners
- Give the wildlife management mission back to hunters' organisations
- Facilitating hunting in high game areas
- Simplifying the sale of wild boar meat
- Reducing EU influence on Swedish hunting policy

Agriculture and forestry

Swedish agriculture and forestry must be protected and contribute to Swedish competitiveness, good environmental standards, open landscapes and Swedish self-sufficiency and exports. Successful agriculture and forestry are a prerequisite for all of Sweden to live and are an important part of the Swedish economy.

EU agricultural policy has a major impact on Swedish agriculture, often limiting what is possible and causing a large administrative burden and extensive regulations that burden farmers and make it difficult for small-scale farms to maintain profitability. Swedish forestry is under pressure today, both from the government and from the EU and various environmental organisations.

Forests in the EU should be managed by the member states themselves, but the European Commission is increasingly restricting this right. At the same time, the current government is also working to restrict property rights in forestry matters. Moreover, Swedish special requirements for environmental protection and animal welfare often make domestic production more expensive than that of competitors without Swedish farmers being compensated.

Increased profitability in Swedish agriculture provides the conditions for development and sustainability in the agricultural sector. It enables productivity growth and means that major responsibility for the environment and climate is not eaten up by reduced global market shares for Swedish production. The Sweden Democrats want to reduce taxes and charges and increase national funding within agricultural support system. The Sweden Democrats also want to compensate livestock farmers who maintain a higher standard of animal husbandry than generally applies in the EU, and to provide compensation for the customised management of sensitive nature rather than for the creation of reserves.

The Sweden Democrats also want to create the conditions for innovation and technological development and increase measures to combat the problems faced by farmers, such as large wild boar populations and food fraud.

It is also important that Swedish farmers have good working conditions. Many livestock farmers are never able to take a holiday or further training. The Sweden Democrats are in favour of support for relief work to reduce social risks and increase the status and development of agriculture.

The Sweden Democrats want to make it easier to engage in agriculture and forestry. EU rules must be fewer and more flexible, based on each Member State's unique landscape, traditions and standards. The rules on forestry and agriculture also need to be reviewed in order to ensure that there are effective trade-offs, and property rights should be strengthened. Legal certainty needs to be strengthened for those engaged in agriculture and forestry, and the work of the authorities needs to be more closely aligned with the interests of landowners. The setting aside of forests as reserves should be done on a voluntary basis and with good compensation.

The transition to a more fossil-free society is supported by active forestry. We need to develop new sustainable products from forest raw materials, such as fuels, building materials, textiles and different types of plastics.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Increase the competitiveness of Swedish agriculture and Sweden's food self-sufficiency
- Reduce the tax on diesel for agriculture and forestry and the general payroll tax
- Increase national funding in agriculture, for environmental benefits and productivity gains
- Simplifying the regulatory framework and improving legal certainty
- Safeguarding forest owners' right to manage their forests
- Strengthening property rights
- Defend Sweden's autonomy over forests vis-à-vis the EU

- Developing new sustainable products from forest raw material

Animal welfare

The Sweden Democrats want stronger animal protection that takes greater account of the natural behaviour of animals. Animals must be treated with respect and animal cruelty must be stopped. The legal status of animals should be strengthened and there should be greater consequences for breaking the law. The Sweden Democrats want to create a special animal protection police force.

Many animals suffer in human care. This ranges from cats being tortured to death to pigs being unpleasantly anaesthetised before slaughter. Animals on farms and in slaughterhouses are also sometimes neglected or mistreated in ways that are not legal or ethically justifiable. Some of the meat we eat comes from animals that have been slaughtered without stunning in the form of religiously motivated halal or kosher slaughter. Slaughter without stunning causes great suffering, stress and distress to the animals. In Sweden, such slaughter is prohibited, but it is free to import meat products from other countries, including EU countries, where such slaughter is common. A growing problem is the smuggling of puppies often from so-called puppy mills in other European countries, which are transported to Sweden under appalling conditions to be sold to unsuspecting buyers.

The Sweden Democrats want to ban the import of meat and other products from animals that have been slaughtered without anaesthesia, force-fed or otherwise treated in a way that contravenes Sweden's animal husbandry rules. A ban on the export and import live animals for slaughter should also be introduced to reduce painful transport and ensure that poor animal husbandry does not become a competitive advantage.

The Sweden Democrats want to invest greater resources in research into more gentle methods of stunning pigs, as well as increased resources for inspections at farms and slaughterhouses. Efforts should also be made to promote research into alternative methods to reduce the use of animal experiments in the production of medicines and cosmetics.

Customs and veterinarians will be given more tools to the problem of puppy smuggling. Veterinarians should be required to report suspicions of smuggled dogs and anyone who wants to sell a puppy should be identified to facilitate the prosecution of those involved in smuggling. The Sweden Democrats also want to create a special animal protection police force with special expertise in dealing with crimes against animals.

It is also important to make it easier for livestock farmers to keep their animals outdoors. The Sweden Democrats want to give Swedish dairy farmers special compensation for the additional cost of allowing dairy cows to graze outdoors in the summer. The ambition of the Sweden Democrats is that Swedish standards for animal husbandry should become the standard for the entire EU.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Strengthening the legal protection and status of animals
- Establish a national animal welfare police force
- Develop methods to replace animal testing with other testing methods
- Work towards a ban on the import of products from animals that have been force-fed or slaughtered without stunning
- Prohibit export/import of live animals for slaughter
- Increase the possibility for domestic animals to go outside

Housing

Everyone should have access to a good standard of housing and be able to live in a safe, secure and pleasant environment. It should be easier to move or change housing if necessary. There should be more freedom of choice between different types of housing. We will take greater account the different conditions for housing construction around Sweden.

Over the past 20 years, the number of people living in Sweden has increased by more than 1.5 million. During the same period, the pace of housing construction has been nowhere near that needed to meet population growth. At the same time, the number of deprived neighbourhoods has increased dramatically, and cities have gone from gentrification to ghettoisation. The result of these combined factors in the 2000s has been a sharp increase in house prices, displacement effects on the rental market, widespread overcrowding and increased homelessness. Many groups, including young people in Sweden, are now finding it difficult to obtain housing. For young people, this means that their entire adult lives are delayed. For others, the trend has meant being stuck in a neighbourhood that is rapidly deteriorating and where they unsafe outside their own door.

The Sweden Democrats want to facilitate housing construction by simplifying and speeding up decision-making processes and reviewing the extensive regulations and requirements governing housing construction. Measures also need to be taken to curb the spiralling cost of housing so that more people can afford a home. The Sweden Democrats want to stop plans to reintroduce property tax, reduce electricity prices and enable more forms of financing for young people and first-time home buyers.

New construction can be facilitated by reviewing building codes and increasing competition in the construction market. But when new residential areas are established, it is important that mistakes made during the Million Homes Programme are not repeated. The Sweden Democrats want to promote pleasant and safe neighbourhoods with classic architecture. Aesthetics and design are important factors for how an environment is perceived and for safety.

It is attractive to live and build close to water, so reasonable shoreline protection that allows more building is an important rural issue. Rural municipalities are currently forced to compete with metropolitan areas in order to retain residents, attract businesses and skilled labour. The possibility of housing or holiday homes in attractive locations could be an important competitive advantage and thus help rural areas to develop. For this to become a reality, beach protection rules need to be relaxed. The possibilities for building in areas of national interest should also be reviewed. Financing of housing in rural areas should be facilitated. It is not uncommon for the value a newly built property in rural areas to be less than the construction cost.

The problem of homelessness has been getting worse for a long . Partly because of the general housing shortage, but also because the need for social interventions in society has increased. The situation for homeless people has been further exacerbated by the fact that incoming EU migrants have taken large parts of support provided to homeless people by municipalities and non-profit organisations. Combating homelessness is a priority social issue for the Sweden Democrats.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Increase housing construction
- Adapt and simplify rules and processes for planning and construction
- Improving opportunities for young people to get their first home
- Reducing the strain of migration on the housing market through return migration
- Reforming beach protection
- Stop plans to reintroduce property tax

infrastructure

People should be able to live throughout the country and get to their jobs quickly and safely. Businesses should have good conditions for their operations and be able to transport goods by road and rail. Policies must relate to people's actual conditions and not be based on utopias that are only suitable for people living in large cities.

The gap between urban and rural areas has grown as the necessary infrastructure for both transport and public services has fallen behind. Sweden's infrastructure is characterised by a clear difference between urban and rural areas. Roads in rural areas often in poor condition due to lack of maintenance. Railways are neglected and in some places trains have to travel very slowly due to crooked lines and weak embankments. This affects both businesses and living outside big cities. Reduced speed limits on many of the country's roads create problems for people's everyday lives. Commuting to work takes longer and businesses find it harder to compete. Many of the country's regional airports have suffered from reduced air traffic and several are threatened with closure. The government's anti-flight policy threatens the country's cohesion and competitiveness. In light of the major needs in existing infrastructure, the Sweden Democrats believe it is wrong to spend hundreds of billions of kronor on building new high-speed train lines between the major cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. These funds should instead be directed maintaining and improving the road and rail network we already have, with faster results that benefit more citizens.

Subsidies for expensive electric cars, which are mainly used by people in larger cities who also have good incomes, are in practice paid for by those who are not in a position to take advantage of the benefits themselves. At the same time, taxes on petrol and diesel are increased, which mainly affects people in rural areas and those on lower incomes. The outcome of the policy is a combination of poor rural policy and poor distribution policy. The Sweden Democrats are against a ban on the sale new petrol and diesel cars and believe that infrastructure policy should be based more on the needs and everyday lives of ordinary

Ports and shipping are an important part of Sweden's imports and exports. Good roads and railways to and from the ports are needed for logistics to take place quickly and efficiently. We also need to strengthen Swedish shipping to secure jobs and training opportunities, but not least because shipping is part of total defence.

As the electrification of the vehicle fleet gathers pace, a strategy is needed to ensure that charging stations are available throughout the country. For the electrification of the transport sector to work, a stable and increased electricity supply is needed. It also needs to be easier and quicker to open mines for minerals needed to manufacture batteries, for example. All regional airports need to be given the status of emergency airports, so that the service these airports provide to society at large has a secure future. Together with our Nordic neighbours, we want to invest in the electric aviation of the future. However, infrastructure is more than transport systems. The Sweden Democrats are concerned about how rural areas are lagging behind in the expansion of broadband, but mobile phone coverage and postal delivery are also poorer in sparsely populated areas. The Sweden Democrats want to invest in the expansion of broadband and ensure that everyone has access to telephony and functioning postal services, including the possibility of government mail digitally.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Upgrading the road and rail network across the country
- Stop plans for expensive high-speed railway between major cities
- Reducing taxes on petrol and diesel
- Strengthening Swedish shipping
- Expanding the charging infrastructure for electric cars

- Preserving regional airports and making them standby airports
- Invest in the expansion of broadband and telephony throughout the country

Childcare facilities

Childcare, alongside the family, lays the foundations for our children's future. The norms and values that apply to childcare and the way in which it is organised form a large part of the starting point for how children move forward in life. It therefore important that children's stay in care means that society provides them with the best possible care, security and stimulation for their development and learning.

Swedish childcare faces serious problems such as overcrowding, staff burnout, deficiencies in the Swedish language and tight financial constraints. Gender pedagogy as it stands today should not be used because it is largely focused on blurring gender differences. All children should have the right to be who they are.

Swedish childcare has previously been seen as a model in many parts of the world, a position we intend to regain.

All children should have the right to a safe and stimulating environment at preschool, and parents should be confident that their children are doing well. All children should also be given the opportunity to become part of Swedish society, and activities should therefore be conducted in Swedish. In addition to the Swedish language, preschools must give children access to Swedish culture and Swedish values, where gender equality is central, and must therefore be completely free of value-driven veils.

It is essential that staff have the necessary pedagogical knowledge, are able to act professionally and have the opportunity for further training. The working environment and working conditions should ensure that preschool staff enjoy their work. It should be possible to stay at home when sick instead of working. It is also important that premises and outdoor environments are designed for the right number of children.

Free play should dominate preschool activities. It is where children develop social skills, cooperation, creativity and initiative. The development of language skills is fundamental for a successful transition to the preschool classroom. Other important school readiness elements include learning to listen, learning empathy and respecting people and animals. Pre-school should be free of political opinions and indoctrination and should work to ensure that children learn the importance of democracy, independent thinking and forming their own opinions.

The Sweden Democrats are in favour of freedom of choice for every family. One alternative to preschools is educational care. Not all children are ready, for example at the age of one, to face the outside world in a larger group of children with limited attention. Therefore, pedagogical care is an important alternative. National guidelines need to be established that set out comparable requirements for how pedagogical care should be provided and that the activities should be offered equal opportunities.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Prioritising Swedish language in childcare
- Abolish the tax credit for preschool staff
- Improving the working environment of staff and the living environment of children
- Establish a maximum limit on the number of children per adult
- Increase requirements for independent preschools and expand the powers and controls of the School Inspectorate
- Creating better conditions for educational activities

Schools and education

Schools must be made a safe place for pupils and staff, which creates norms for cohesion between people and which focuses on knowledge and education. The aim should be to give everyone who grows up in Sweden the same opportunities to become good and independent members of society.

Few sectors have been hit as hard by failed integration policies and excessive immigration as schools. Results have fallen and it is all too common for the school environment to be characterised by insecurity, disorder and poor pedagogy. Violence between pupils and against staff has become a work environment problem in many places around Sweden. Teachers are often forced to compensate for lack of integration and absent parents and social services. Over a period of several years, Swedish pupils have lost a lot of ground in various international knowledge measurements, and in an increasingly competitive era, many are concerned about this may affect future generations. A pedagogy characterised by flummery, norm criticism and student responsibility has the hardest consequences for those who instead need to learn about norms and be provided with clear structure and knowledge in school, which they do not get from. Independent schools with fundamentalist ideologies contribute to radicalisation and segregation.

The Sweden Democrats want to re-establish a knowledge-focused school. Schools should make room for tried and tested pedagogy and play a clearer normative role in society. A working environment that provides space for study peace, job satisfaction and individual help for students should be prioritised. There should be zero tolerance of threats and violence in schools, and the possibility of intervening with strong measures against pupils who create a poor working environment for others should be reviewed.

Curricula will be complemented with clearer learning objectives. The teaching profession will be strengthened with appropriate pedagogical tools, relief and better conditions. Free choice of school will be safeguarded to give parents and pupils freedom of choice. With the aim of combating segregation and extremist influence on school pupils, we want measures to be taken to ban this type of school, for example Islamic schools. We also believe that schools should be a safe zone where minors should not have to wear forced religious veils. We therefore believe that the veil should not be allowed in schools.

Not everyone wants or is able to go on to further education, but it is important that everyone gets a foundation to stand on their own two feet and be included in the labour market and society. Two-year practical upper secondary education will be introduced to provide faster routes into the labour market. Higher education should be better adapted to the needs of the future labour market. Political control of higher education will be reduced and academic autonomy increased.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Re-establish a knowledge-focused school through proven pedagogies and a focus on traditional learning with a level playing field in all schools
- Improve the working environment by introducing zero tolerance for violence and insecurity in schools
- Empowering teachers and improving their professional status
- Introduce a ban on segregating extremist independent schools
- Ban religious veiling of children in schools
- Stop busing students and other integration experiments
- Give everyone the basis for a profession that is in demand on the labour market
- Safeguarding the independence of higher education

Youth issues

Sweden's young people deserve a better and safer country than the one the other parties have left them. It is time for change and faith in the future. Young should be able to feel good and be safe both at school and out in society. Young people should be characterised by hopefulness and a zest for life. A good education, sports and associations create the conditions realising their dreams.

For far too long, Sweden's young people have been subjected to politically motivated experiments. Gender theories that are out of touch with reality have been widely disseminated and used from pre-school onwards to indoctrinate our children in a gigantic post-modern project. Knowledge-oriented education has taken a back seat to the relativisation of facts. Telling the truth and pointing out facts has become controversial. The biological sex of humans is questioned and the natural development and interests of children have been problematised. Both girls and boys are affected, but boys in particular are negatively impacted when distorted feminism has become the norm. Particularly serious is the use of hormone therapy to alter children's natural puberty and surgical procedures to 'change sex'. We do not yet fully know the long-term effects of these experiments, but mental health problems have increased alarmingly.

In addition, the multicultural experiment has affected young people more than others. Knife attacks and drug sales occur in school playgrounds. One in two young women often worry about being raped or sexually assaulted. Youth robberies have increased by 250% since 2013, and humiliating robberies have become a new feature of life for our children and young people.

Mass immigration has also resulted young Swedes seeing their first job and rental property go to migrants. This is because the state subsidises immigrants' employment and gives new arrivals priority in the housing queue.

The Sweden Democrats have been a counterpoint to other parties' experiments on our children and young people. We believe in science and recognise that confusing gender theories have devastating consequences when put into practice. Growing up would be much better prepared for adulthood if schools were instead characterised by orderliness and focused on imparting knowledge. Mental health is the most important health issue for young people and requires a broad programme of action. This includes improving the knowledge of school staff to recognise warning signs, strengthening counselling and targeted interventions in child and adolescent psychiatry. The most important thing is to put an end to gender experiments and the 'flume school'. In addition, discrimination against people born in Sweden needs to end by not giving priority to new arrivals in terms of jobs and housing.

It is also important to create better conditions for young people to find outlets for their interests and to encourage them to be active in associations. For example, young people with motorised vehicles need to feel that their interest and commitment are appreciated. We want to raise the speed limit for A-tractors instead of letting the police chase music-playing teenagers cruising. The keen interest in computers among many young people can also be a great asset in our increasingly digitised society. It is time to realise that e-sports is a real sport.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- End the political experiments on Sweden's children and young people
- Strengthening efforts to improve the mental health of young people
- Re-establishing a knowledge-oriented, orderly school
- Tackling youth crime
- Stop the favourable treatment of newcomers in terms of jobs and housing
- Increase the speed limit of A tractors to 45 km/h
- Protecting freedom of expression online

Pensions

It should be worthwhile to have worked. Those who have had a long working life should be able to live a good life on their pension. Society has a responsibility to ensure that all Swedish citizens can age with dignity. Elderly poverty must be abolished.

For a long time, the pension system has been both neglected and underfunded. Many of today's pensioners are dissatisfied and future pensioners are worried. This anxiety has even spread to the younger generations who do not know what to expect the day they are too old to work.

Sweden has the highest number of poor pensioners in the Nordic region. Many people who have worked and paid taxes throughout their lives now have to work extra hours, pick up cans or are forced to live on a low economic standard. Despite this, few parties want to strengthen pensions. Instead, political have taken the issue off the agenda and hidden it in a dysfunctional group that has only succeeded in weakening the pension system and forcing people to work at an increasingly older age rather than raising pensions.

At the same time, the cost of financing the pensions of people who have immigrated to Sweden and who have worked and paid little or no tax is increasing. In the long term, there is a risk that this will lead to sharp tax increases and a loss of confidence in the pension system.

It can also be noted that the income gap between men and women is at its widest when they become pensioners. The problem can hardly be blamed on the pension system, which does not differentiate between men and women; the difference is based on each individual's lifetime income and thus the working years, which hits hard on those who have chosen to take responsibility at home during the early years, but also on those who have suffered long-term illness. The pension system is therefore in need of reconstruction create more equal conditions.

The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen the entire pension system and increase pension provisions. Pensions should recognise that people have worked all their lives. At the same time, greater support is needed for the most vulnerable, who have not been able to work to their full due to illness or disability. It must also be made easier to save privately, to minimise people's dependence on the decisions of dysfunctional pension groups. Those who are worn out as result of a long and demanding working life should not be forced to stay in the labour market against their will. While those who feel capable and want to continue their working life should be offered incentives to remain in the labour market.

There is also a need for clearer incentives for those who have come to Sweden to work in order to benefit from the Swedish pension system. Therefore, the exceptions within the guaranteed pension for those who have recently arrived in Sweden need to be reviewed, as well as the support for the elderly, in order to create equal conditions for pensions for those live in Sweden.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Increasing pensions
- Increasing financial support for the most vulnerable older people
- Facilitating private pension savings
- more equal conditions for a good pension
- Review exemption rules and income support for the elderly

Ageing issues

The changes in society, combined with a non-existent elderly policy from the ruling government parties, have resulted in a far from safe, dignified and caring existence for pensioners. Sweden must change and create a society where everyone can grow old in security and dignity

Economic developments indicate that some people are doing well, but those who are worse off are unfortunately still going downhill. For many, life is so bad that they are forced to collect cans and some live on the absolute minimum subsistence level. More and more elderly people are forced to live out their final years in homelessness, which is not worthy of a welfare society like Sweden.

Mental ill-health has also become increasingly prevalent among the country's pensioners due to isolation and loneliness. A meagre pension means limited opportunities for an active and healthy life, with trips and encounters that add value to everyday life. When it comes to moving to a retirement home, it is not uncommon to encounter stressed and exhausted staff, who in some cases do not even speak the language.

To improve the quality of life for both today's and tomorrow's pensioners, the Sweden Democrats want to make several initiatives in addition to substantial pension increases. We want to see ombudsmen for the elderly in the municipalities, who will work actively with the municipality's pensioners and organisations encourage social activities and health promotion. There needs to be a change the way individualism and the importance of social networks are viewed. The view of the strong role of the family and community in this context should not be minimised. For example, eldercare counselling would allow both society and family members to detect incipient or ongoing medical conditions in time. A new law on care for the elderly must strengthen the legal basis for good living conditions, as the current concept of reasonable living conditions is inadequate.

More and more older people are being robbed and assaulted in their own homes. To ensure the safety of older people, the government should enable municipalities to install some form of keyless locks as soon as possible.

Digital keys mean easy handling for the staff, high security and increased safety for the user as ordinary lock keys cannot get into unwanted circulation. We also want to invest in assisted living for those who feel insecure in their everyday lives and where social isolation has become stressful.

All the research points to A&E being by far the worst place for older people with multiple illnesses to be - they need peace and quiet and to receive care quickly. This is why the emergency care of older people needs to change and improve: a dedicated fast track in A&E would get older patients to the right specialised care faster, while reducing pressure on A&E departments.

Today's pensioners have built Sweden and helped create a great country for us to live in. Society therefore has a duty to care for pensioners. Therefore, society has a duty not to compromise when it comes to financial security, care and the right to a dignified quality of life.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Invest in keyless home care and digitalisation for greater security.
- Invest in raising the level of knowledge and prioritisation of mental health issues among older people
- Provide a dedicated Minister for the Elderly.
- Establish fast-tracks for elderly patients to reduce the burden on emergency departments.
- Introduce language requirements home care and elderly care workers.

- Invest in subsidised sheltered housing
- See requirements for elderly ombudsmen in each municipality

Family

The family is the fundamental community in society where children's well-being and security are built and where parenting and family time are invaluable. Families should be free to make their own decisions about their daily lives, with children having access to both parents and good relationships.

The challenges for families with young children can many. Combining work and family life and making ends can sometimes be difficult. Many families, especially single parents, are also struggling financially. In families that struggling in various ways, it is the children who get caught in the middle and can suffer, which is why family policy must also focus on the best interests of children. Family economic policy needs to change course from coercive reforms that restrict freedom of action and well-being, to a more family-friendly attitude that focuses on organising working life around the needs of the family and children rather than the wishes of politicians themselves.

Parental insurance should be flexible and family-friendly, and reserved months should be removed. We want to make it easier for parents who are small business owners and parental days should be transferable to relatives. We want all pregnant women to be guaranteed 10 days of pregnancy allowance in addition to the current means-tested pregnancy allowance. We also want to extend the ten paternity days that can currently be taken after childbirth. In addition, the multi-child allowance needs to be converted into a multi-child deduction that is reflected in a form of tax reduction for working parents. This is prevent dependency on benefits and instead encourage work.

Starting a family is a great joy and an adult responsibility. It is fundamental that children's needs for both parents are met, regardless of the family constellation adults choose. Joint custody should be seen as the norm. However, the interests of the child and the best interests of the child are central to us and practice should always be based on the fact that children have a right to their parents and not the other way round. Children often end up in trouble when adults fail and there currently no adequate support for the child. We want to offer family mediation at an early stage. This may involve disputes over custody, in the legal process or child protection offences in the case of domestic violence.

Social services need to be strengthened and preventive measures are important to young people at risk at an early stage. There is a great need to upgrade and quality-assure the process for children in care. There is also a need to increase the knowledge of all those working with children and young people and family law issues. Investigations concerning children must be quality assured and legally secure. Children and young people who are taken into care must be able to trust society's care and achieve a better life.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Create a flexible and family-friendly parental insurance scheme
- Introduce a generous pregnancy allowance and more paternity days
- Convert the additional child allowance into a tax-reducing additional child allowance for working parents
- Joint custody being the norm
- Create early intervention in the form of family mediation for families in conflict
- The best interests of the child must always be taken into account
- Increase preventive efforts by social services to young people at risk at an early stage
- Improving the quality and legal certainty of investigations concerning children

Health insurance

The welfare society must offer citizens a safety net that means that those who are ill are given the best conditions for rehabilitation. Health insurance must be designed in a legally secure way with conditions that ensure that those who need to focus on recovering from illness are not forced into a personal and private financial crisis.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the way health insurance works today. Seriously ill people have been discharged and referred to work, people have seen their sick days disappear while waiting for treatment, and some are stuck on the sidelines despite their desire to work or study. In some cases, rejections have led to people choosing to end their lives. It is also a very worrying development that sick leave due to mental illness is increasing, and has become the most common reason for sick leave, with the largest proportion being women. At the same time, the National Audit Office points out serious shortcomings in the rehabilitation chain linked to mental illness. There are also major shortcomings in occupational injury insurance and a great deal of dissatisfaction among people who do not receive compensation for occupational injuries and diseases. The problem has been a regulatory framework that has been too rigid and not adapted to current conditions, while the investigation work has in many cases been very inadequate. This, together with a government policy that focuses on saving costs by reducing the number of people on sickness benefit, has led to unsustainable out-insurance. In addition, there are difficulties in cooperation between authorities, which means that people are caught between similar systems and assessments, with the consequence that people have also lost their sickness benefit qualifying income. There have also been major shortcomings in sickness and activity compensation, and rejections of both new grants and renewals have increased sharply, which has also affected people with permanent disabilities. Long processing times at the Social Insurance Agency have also hit many people hard, especially those affected by the government's conversion of care allowance and disability benefit into care allowance and additional costs benefit, and who have thus been caught between two systems. At the same time, the welfare system has been slowly drained by fraud and organised crime, affecting those who really need society's support.

The Sweden Democrats see the need for comprehensive reforms create a health insurance system that is perceived as both safe and legally secure. Those affected by illness should be able to focus on recovery instead of ending up in financial crisis and struggling with the authorities. The regulatory framework must therefore be more flexible and adapted to the individual's needs and opportunities, both within sickness benefit and sickness and activity compensation. Greater focus and more resources must also be placed on preventive work and early rehabilitation programmes. The Sweden Democrats also want to work for a more coordinated system between the relevant authorities so that individuals do not get caught out. The quality of the investigation work which decisions are based needs to be strengthened. The regulations governing occupational injury insurance need to be modernised and improved on the basis of today's reality, so that those who suffer occupational injuries and diseases receive the compensation they deserve. Similarly, the regulations for sickness insurance must be better adapted in terms of both knowledge and decision support when it comes to mental illness and complex diagnoses. The Sweden Democrats also want to work for shorter processing times, more legally certain decisions and quality assurance in the investigation work. Tools are also needed to take action against welfare crime in social insurance.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Promote a safe and legally secure health insurance system
- Work to improve the quality of investigations and shorten processing times
- Increasing flexibility and personalisation in decision-making
- Better adapting sickness and work injury insurance for those with mental health problems

- See more focus and resources on prevention and rehabilitation
- Improving the protection of sickness benefit qualifying income (SGI)
- Stopping welfare crime in social security

Functional right

All citizens should have the right to a good life and an adequate standard of living, even if they born with or suffer from a physical or cognitive limitation or variation. Citizens who, due to circumstances beyond their control, face other challenges in their daily lives should not be restricted in their access to social or labour life.

For several years, people with disabilities have been hit from two directions. Firstly, due to other priorities, politicians have tightened the belt on social security cost developments. Second, the system has been attacked by organised and large-scale fraud. Fraud has led to large amounts of funds that were intended for the needy instead going to clans and organised crime. At the same time, fewer people are granted assistance benefits by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and around 85 per cent their first application rejected, despite the fact that LSS is a law of rights.

This has damaged trust in social security and reputable providers, which leading to further deterioration for a group that is already suffering.

The shared responsibility between the municipality and the state has led to assessments being perceived as very legally uncertain and the different outcomes have led to concern and uncertainty among applicants but also to distrust of the entire system. The levels of compensation for LSS have gradually been eroded and do not currently cover the increase in costs. A long-term calculation model for the standardised amount of assistance allowance should be developed so that the upward adjustment of the allowance better reflects wage and cost developments.

The Sweden Democrats have strongly the cuts in LSS. The regulations for LSS need to be changed and clarified in order to stop the sharp reductions that have taken place in recent . As a first step, it is important to uphold the original intentions of LSS, before precedent-setting judgements and government demands for cost savings.

The Sweden Democrats want all basic needs to be eligible for assistance in their entirety and not to be valued or set against each other. Those in need of support should also receive it.

There are currently major problems with the competence of staff in LSS organisations around the country. The support that a person entitled under the LSS Act may need varies greatly.

Expertise in various diagnoses and diseases is therefore required to meet the needs that actually exist. LSS is neglected and needs to be improved on many points, which is why a national LSS lift is urgently needed.

The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen the opportunities for people with reduced working capacity to participate in working life and in employment based on individual circumstances. The Sweden Democrats also want to invest in a habilitation allowance on equal terms, which means that people who participate in daily activities via the Social Services Act should also be covered.

The opportunities for disabled people and people with reduced mobility to participate in the labour market must be strengthened.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- All basic needs to be eligible for assistance in their entirety
- Develop a new calculation model the flat rate of assistance allowance
- That the habilitation allowance also covers people in daily activities via the Social Services Act, and that a national minimum level of allowance is set.
- Have overall state responsibility for personal assistance

- See a national LSS lift
- Combat cheating and fraud in LSS

Health care

Swedish healthcare must always be of a very high medical quality with well-developed accessibility throughout Sweden. Citizens should be able to expect reliable and safe care for all stages of life, both in emergency cases and for routine visits.

Healthcare is one of the most central and fundamental parts of the welfare society. But despite the efforts of staff and advanced specialised care, the healthcare system is facing extensive and growing problems. Even before the pandemic, waiting lists had grown so long that cancer patients were dying while waiting for treatment. As a result, patients often receive care at a later and often worse stage of their disease than would have been possible with more accessible care. The costs are counted in human suffering and stress for individuals and families, but also for society in economic terms. An increasing problem for emergency care is patients with injuries from gun and knife violence, which often trigger a chain of resource-intensive interventions, sometimes at the expense planned care. A further consequence of the new societal context is unrest in emergency departments and increased incidents of threats and violence against healthcare workers. The ongoing pandemic has further accentuated the structural shortcomings in the organisation of healthcare. Coordination between different regions is lacking and access to care varies across the country. To a significant extent, the main problem is that the governance via 21 different regions creates ambiguity, conflicts of objectives, gradually increasing administration and shortcomings in the supply of skills.

The Sweden Democrats believe that citizens in a high-tax country have the right to expect good and accessible healthcare, even outside the major cities. To achieve this, a new cohesive healthcare system is required in Sweden. Investments in primary care with greater patient contact and coordination of a doctor responsible for patients can relieve the burden on emergency and specialist care through faster care. A real care guarantee should be introduced as a right for citizens. A care guarantee office for care queues should be established under the auspices of the National Board of Health and Welfare. The Care Guarantee Office should also produce documentation and establish cooperation agreements with various care providers, public and private, Swedish and foreign, in order to increase care capacity in treatment, surgery and rehabilitation. Administrative tasks should be relieved to a greater extent from caring staff.

The Sweden Democrats also want to review how the state can take over more of the main responsibility for healthcare, based on successful examples in Norway and Denmark. One important task is to ensure that emergency and obstetric care is available throughout the country, including in sparsely populated regions, and to introduce a common national patient record system. The Sweden Democrats also want to fundamentally increase the number of beds to meet the growing need for hospital care. In addition to recreating world-class healthcare, the Sweden Democrats want to increase the ambitions at the heart of welfare. The ambition should be for the public sector to take the same responsibility for citizens' oral and dental health as for other health.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Abolish care queues and introduce a real care guarantee
- Review the organisation of health care
- Invest in primary care
- Increase the number of beds
- Increasing safety for healthcare workers and in emergency centres
- That all citizens should be offered dental care on the same terms as other care
- Implementing a national patient record system

Mental health problems

Work to strengthen mental health must be prioritised. Sweden needs a comprehensive and long-term plan to tackle the growing mental ill health. Individual and short-term initiatives will never be able to solve the extensive challenges we see, we need a clear goal and a completely new governmental management to achieve real results.

Mental ill-health has increased so dramatically that it is now the biggest public health challenge of our time in Sweden. Despite the fact that around 1 500 people take their own lives in Sweden every year, around 150 000 people have suicidal thoughts and suicide accounts for around a third of all deaths among young people, it unfortunately receives little attention in the public debate. Mental ill-health among young people is a particularly worrying trend, with a tougher social climate, an insecure labour market and widespread housing shortages, combined increased competition and higher pressure in social life all contributing to the development. Mental ill health is also the most common reason for sick leave today. At the same time, resources in psychiatry have been inadequate for several and many people do not have access to the care they need. Today, for example, patients who have attempted suicide are discharged quickly, without any serious treatment measures.

The Sweden Democrats therefore believe that strong measures are needed to improve the mental health of our population. As a first step in reversing the negative trend, a national strategy should be established based on a clear national objective for improved mental health. New structures need to be created for improved co-operation between ministries, authorities and other relevant actors. The Sweden Democrats therefore advocate a clear national driving force in which the role of the Public Health Agency of Sweden is strengthened and clarified. Research is crucial to the continued development of knowledge in the field of mental health and to finding the causes of the growing mental ill-health in society. A national research programme in the field of mental health should therefore be established. Today, mental ill health is also often dealt with reactively rather than proactively. Therefore, there is a need to review how health services can be restructured to recognise patients who are affected earlier. Effective treatment measures, such as counselling, should be offered to a greater extent so that patients' mental health does not risk deteriorating.

The Sweden Democrats want to take decisive action to counteract the incidence of suicide. A national coordinator with overall responsibility for suicide prevention work needs to be appointed, with concrete interim targets being developed for continued work on the adopted vision of zero suicides. Follow-up of patients with suicidal behaviour should also be a natural part of the care process.

In order to tackle mental ill-health among young people, a number of measures are needed to address and prevent future mental health problems at an early stage. The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen student health services, as we believe that schools are an important arena for preventive measures. Through training programmes, all school staff with contact with pupils must have a basic understanding of mental illness in order to be able to involve student health services at an early stage.

The Sweden Democrats believe that treatment resources should not be limited solely to child and adolescent psychiatry.

Long queues to the BUP can be counteracted if treatment expertise is available on site in our schools to the greatest extent possible. The social services also need tools to intervene earlier with sharp measures when it comes to young people who are in danger.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Develop a national strategy for further work on mental health
- Establish a national mental health research programme

- Strengthening resources for psychiatry
- Early detection and treatment of mental health problems
- Appoint a national coordinator responsible suicide prevention
- Promote standardised follow-up of suicidal patients
- Greatly strengthen student health services

Culture

Cultural norms act as a kit to hold a society together. Policies should be designed to ensure that Swedish culture reaches all of Sweden.

Culture is more than art. Socially transmitted patterns of life, common frames of reference, language and expression, traditions of ideas and norms that unite people are the infrastructure for understanding and communication between people. This in turn creates all that is included in the definition of a society. Culture, like language and dialects, evolves organically, over time, between generations and across geography. It is in the diversity of culture that individuals find their unique identity and inner security. But it is also in the cultural kinship that people find belonging and coherence. It is therefore easy to see the formation of parallel societies when there is no cultural affinity.

Multiculturalism has divided and polarised Sweden. Large population groups with a cultural identity that contrasts with that of Sweden today lack a sense of belonging to Swedish society. Cultural norms other than Swedish dominate many residential areas. The lack of shared values has created divisions and led to the replacement of basic respect between and for people, which was once taken for granted, with an increasingly harsh and distrustful climate.

The Sweden Democrats want to work to recreate cohesion and a sense of belonging among those who find their national belonging in Sweden. Instead of breaking down norms and relativising different values found throughout the world, the Sweden Democrats want to build cultural community around Swedish norms. The Sweden Democrats want to protect, nurture and showcase Swedish culture. Swedish culture includes art, music and food, but also social codes, values, collective memories, shared myths, festivals, traditions, customs and practices to keep us together. Cohesion and trust in society must be restored, with a shared pride and respect for cultural heritage, social codes, Swedish democracy and the secularised society that has its roots in a Christian ideology.

The recognition of Swedish culture determines the demands made on immigrants to integrate, the norms disseminated by schools and public institutions, and the allocation of public funds to civil society and institutions. At the same time, independent cultural institutions must be free from political pressure. The Sweden Democrats want to prevent pressure from the EU that threatens to determine what content may be provided through digital services and how material may be distributed on the Internet. Outdated copyright rules also need to be adapted to how people consume and create content in the digital society.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Create cohesion Swedish culture and national identity
- Require immigrants to learn and respect Swedish norms
- Stop funding extremist civil society organisations
- Reduce public financial control over contemporary culture and the media sphere
- Distributing public cultural funds and designing public spaces with greater citizen participation

Sport

Everyone should have the opportunity to engage in physical activity and sport. Stimulating sport is a low-cost way to improve the physical and mental health of a community and contributes to cohesion among its inhabitants.

Often the conditions for sport depend on political decisions and priorities. A widespread lack of facilities leads to a shortage of training time, and sparsely populated facilities lead to long distances to and from training for children and young people. The design of taxes and regulations determines the conditions for viable elite sports and professional leagues that engage hundreds of thousands. As a result of the pandemic, sport has faced difficult challenges due to restrictions and reduced audience revenues. At the same time, sedentary behaviour has increased for a long time in all ages in recent years, with the result that public health is at risk of being negatively affected.

The Sweden Democrats want to promote Swedish sport at all levels. Sport unites people across generations and contributes to both enjoyment of life and good public health. Swedish sports organisations are among the popular movements that bring together the most people and the greatest commitment. There is a clear link between physical activity and good mental and physical health.

Sport should be an integral part of all schools' activities and benefit all pupils equally, regardless of gender or cultural background. Physical education should be increased in schools and leisure-based sport for children and young people should be stimulated. Society should better meet the need for sports facilities, promote community sport and facilitate elite clubs to compete at an international level.

Licensing processes and regulations should be characterised by cooperation between authorities, sports clubs and the supporter movement in a constructive spirit.

Major sporting events tend to bring people together around shared values and contribute to cohesion. It is in the national interest that broadcasts of such events can be made available to the whole population.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Increasing sport participation across the population
- Public service broadcasting of major sporting events
- Give sports organisations the conditions for continued viability
- Protecting Swedish professional sport and the supporter movement
- Provide access to sport for all regardless of gender, age or cultural background
- Improving the position of eSports

LGBT+

Sweden has been a pioneer when it comes to everyone's right to sexual integrity and freedom. The Sweden Democrats want to preserve the progressive view of sexual life and the secularised view of private life in defence against reactionary forces that are gaining ground in society.

Sweden is one of the countries in the world with the most widespread respect for people's different sexualities, orientations and life choices. Compared with many parts of the world, Sweden has come a long way in terms of a society where the public sector does not interfere in private life and where opportunities for family and private life do not differ depending on sexual orientation. But in many places and contexts, the norms for how it is allowed to live one's life in practice have been rolled back. Widespread immigration from cultures reactionary and religiously strict views on privacy and gender roles has led to an increase in hate crimes and restricted the ability of many to be open about who they are in public. Honour-based oppression and cultural norms restrict the right of many young people to live as are or to choose a partner.

The Sweden Democrats want to safeguard the progress made towards equal rights for all. No one should be restricted or discriminated against, in private or in public, because of how they live their lives. Particular focus needs to be placed on vulnerable areas and contexts where Swedish society is weak in order to improve the position of LGBT+ people.

LGBT+ people are as heterogeneous a group as Swedes in general. The expectations on LGBT+ people to fit into an identity-theoretical discourse means that many do not recognise themselves. Just as society should not prevent anyone living as they wish, the identity of LGBT people in the public debate should not be limited to sexuality. Nor should children and young people be led by public institutions to problematise sexuality and identity - the most important thing must be that all children grow up with a positive self-image. Society's handling of children with gender dysphoria and its long-term consequences should be investigated.

Mental illness has become a widespread social problem that affects LGBT+ people to a greater extent than the average. The Sweden Democrats want to target specific efforts to prevent, counteract and treat mental illness and suicidal thoughts.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- That everyone has the same opportunities and rights regardless of sexuality, orientation or identity
- Strengthen law enforcement efforts against violence, threats and honour-based oppression that limit the lives of LGBT+ people
- Defend the right of all people to choose their partner, the right to privacy and work against reactionary forces
- Strengthening action on mental health

Democracy

The notion of the rule of law, civil liberties and freedom of opinion distinguishes the Western model of democracy from many other parts of the world and has been fundamental to a unique culture and society. Defending and strengthening the liberal model of democracy is fundamental to conservative politics.

Despite centuries of democracy and one of the world's oldest press freedoms, the way democracy works needs constant scrutiny. Just as ancient trees can be stately but treacherously hollow under the bark, there is a risk that democracy will gradually erode if it is taken for granted and debate is abstracted. Sweden's democracy is old, but compared to many Western countries, the rule of law principles of separation of powers and the citizen's perspective have been significantly set back in favour of a power perspective built for a traditionally social democratic elite. Judges in Swedish courts are appointed directly by the government and weak constitutional checks and balances have contributed to a limited separation of powers compared to other liberal democracies. A politicised power of appointment, together with a largely informal model of government, makes democratic accountability difficult. Free debate and opinion forming, characterised by transparency and a diversity perspectives in both traditional and new media, are hampered by structures and politics. Serious criticism has been levelled at the fact that political control and ideologically influenced values largely characterise research and academia. In civil society, both trade unions and other organisations with important social missions are to a large extent linked to party politics in a way that risks distorting democratic conditions. A very high level of immigration from countries with a different view of freedom of expression, secularisation and rights and freedoms also puts pressure on Swedish democracy. The Swedish individualistic relationship between state and citizen, with both rights and obligations for the individual, is not always obvious to those who have immigrated from societies characterised by strong clan structures. The infiltration of social institutions by clans, organised crime and Islamists is a growing threat to the democratic model.

The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen the principles of the rule of law in the Swedish administrative model by increasing the separation of powers and strengthening the independence of the judiciary. Civil servant accountability will be introduced and measures will be implemented to increase transparency and the possibility of political accountability. The independence of the media will be increased by reducing political control by the state and taking measures to increase diversity. The right of every journalist, arts practitioner and citizen to express themselves freely without intimidation or reprisal will be protected and strengthened.

The position of the Council on Legislation should be strengthened by investigating the possibility of requiring a qualified majority in Parliament for the adoption of bills criticised by the Council on Legislation.

The Swedish electoral system should be strengthened to ensure that general elections can be conducted in a reliable manner. Opportunities to strengthen elements of direct democracy should complement representative democracy. The Sweden Democrats want to increase the use of popular initiatives. In order to increase democratic legitimacy, decisions should, as far as possible, be brought closer to the citizens. This applies in particular to powers that have been gradually by the EU, at the expense of national self-determination.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Strengthening the independence of the judiciary
- Strengthen constitutional rights protection in terms of freedom of expression, property and religion
- Introducing civil servant liability
- Increase the possibility of normative review in the Constitution

- Fighting Islamism
- Strengthening national self-determination
- Counteracting the power of clans, both in the public sector and in civil society

Freedom of expression online

The internet and digital platforms have grown into the most important channel for democratic dialogue and opinion-forming. It is important to safeguard free debate and to create a level playing field for all forms of expression allowed in a democratic society.

In modern society, public debate increasingly takes place on digital social platforms and forums. However, despite the fact that digital services have taken over much of the dialogue that long ago took place in , the protection of freedom of expression and opinion is very weak online. A number of globally operating platforms have considerable control over what opinions are heard, what information is seen and what messages favoured by algorithms. Transparency is weak and the position of individuals in relation to the platforms is weak and, in practice, the individual is disenfranchised and can be suspended or blocked without warning, legal basis or possibility of appeal. The fact that individual actors, often based abroad, are given such influence over information reaches them is a major vulnerability from a democratic perspective.

The freedoms of expression, opinion and information are three of the pillars of democracy. Without these, free elections become a chimera. The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen users' rights in relation to global social platforms to ensure a free exchange of opinions and information for all citizens. There must be greater transparency about how algorithms influence the dissemination of content, and it must not be possible to depend on subjective value judgements.

The starting point should be that only content that goes beyond is permitted under freedom of expression under Swedish law should be censored by the platforms and that arbitrary suspension or restriction of user accounts should be prohibited. The possibility of judicial review of restrictions imposed on a user in Sweden shall be subject to judicial review.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Strengthening freedom of expression on the internet
- Empowering users relation to social platforms
- Reduce the ability of the state or large private companies to influence information flows based on political interests
- Strengthening the possibility of free and value-independent opinion formation

Foreign Affairs

"Sweden's foreign policy shall be designed to safeguard Sweden's interests and reputation. Our country shall be a voice in favour of peace, freedom and good relations between the peoples and states of the world. Sweden shall speak out clearly against violations of fundamental rights and freedoms and of the territory of sovereign states. Sweden's image in the world has deteriorated during the past term of office, partly due to inconsistency and failures in foreign policy. We want to change that."

Sweden's image in the world has taken a turn for the worse over the past few terms, partly due to inconsistencies and failures in foreign policy.

Sweden must become a clearer voice in favour of democracy, freedom of expression and fundamental human rights and freedoms in world politics. Authoritarian and theocratic tendencies in or near Europe are already real threats to Swedish society. An increasingly aggressive Islamist influence in the Middle East and Africa means that the risk of terrorism is increasing in Sweden and that human rights and respect for women are being pushed back in the world.

Sweden should make greater distinctions in its approach to democratic values and financial or political support to countries or movements that neither contribute to the interests of Swedes nor have a genuine secular rule of law endeavour or respect for human rights and freedoms for all regardless of gender, religion or sexual orientation.

The Sweden Democrats want the focus of foreign policy to be on safeguarding the interests of Swedes on the global stage to a greater extent than today. A fundamental challenge in an increasingly unstable neighbourhood is to prioritise issues that can have a major impact on Swedish society. This involves international co-operation to mitigate migration flows to Europe and to facilitate deportations and return migration to countries where, for various reasons, return does not work well today. But it is also about improving opportunities for global trade and Swedish exports, which are fundamental to Swedish prosperity.

Sweden should work for clear sanctions against Turkey, Belarus, Russia and other countries with negative developments. Relations with Israel, as the only democracy in its region, should be restored and nurtured. A clear Arctic policy should be developed that prevents Russian and Chinese advances and promotes Swedish economic interests. The position of indigenous peoples and cultural values must be safeguarded in foreign policy.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Fighting international terrorism and Islamism
- Protecting Swedish interests in international contexts
- Equipping Sweden for a new security situation in our neighbourhood
- Stopping migration movements to Europe and Sweden
- Using diplomatic pressure and incentives to facilitate returns
- Be a clear voice for the Western model of democracy and human rights and freedoms
- Improve Sweden's position in the international market and in trade
- Affirming and strengthening the independence of Swedish government

The Nordics and our neighbourhood

Our Nordic countries form a family with deep relationships and shared values. The Nordic region rests on deep historical roots and many common cultural markers. The Nordic region is the eleventh largest economy in the world. We are important trading partners to each other, but also cross-border labour market regions and exchanges of ideas.

The Sweden Democrats consider Sweden to be part of a Nordic, European, Western and global community, in that order. In line with this, we want to work in particular to strengthen the Nordic community and broaden and deepen Nordic co-operation. With important building blocks such as the Scandinavian understanding of language and shared values around the welfare state and social safety nets, a developed Nordic co-operation rests on a stable and secure foundation, but there is room for higher ambitions.

In an attempt to prevent the Nordic countries from taking uncoordinated and isolated decisions in the event of crises and pandemics that risk disrupting Nordic integration and community, the Sweden Democrats are in favour of a number of initiatives that would maintain the sovereignty of each country while Nordic coordination. A Nordic crisis preparedness committee under each prime minister would issue coordinated directives to the authorities and work to ensure coordination in the event of major stresses and social crises.

The deteriorating security situation in our neighbourhood requires increased Nordic coordination and preparedness. We believe that defence and security co-operation needs to be further deepened and that joint efforts are required to curb cross-border organised crime and terrorism. A Nordic consensus on migration flows to northern Europe should also be sought, again to maintain internal mobility within our region.

The Sweden Democrats believe that we need to see the Nordic as a collection of small states on the periphery of Europe. The Nordic Region is in fact an economic giant by international standards. Studies in recent years have shown that if the borders within the Nordic countries could be reduced the value of intra-Nordic trade would increase by hundreds of billions. The importance of an integrated labour market and coordinated authorities is therefore considerable. If we are to have an even more integrated Nordic region without thresholds and barriers, we also need greater consensus on the implementation of EU directives and greater foreign policy co-ordination on the external borders of the Nordic region and the EU. Nordic cohesion must not be consigned to history, which is why we also need joint research and technological development as well as efforts to promote Nordic language understanding and cultural exchange.

The cause of the North is ours and the good of the North is our

duty. The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Establish a Nordic crisis preparedness committee for coordinated crisis management
- Deepening Nordic defence and security co-operation
- Promote joint Nordic border surveillance of the Nordic external border
- Strengthen the Nordic language and cultural community
- Increased mobility within the Nordic region - for people and authorities
- Nordic co-ordination in the implementation of EU directives
- Nordic action for our environment - without inefficient climate costs

Europe

Sweden is part of Europe and shares a great historical and cultural heritage and significant economic and security interests with European countries. Jointly capitalising on mutual exchanges and interests is important, while strengthening national self-determination is.

The migration crisis exposed weaknesses in EU co-operation. Migration pressure will increase, and Sweden cannot determine the size of the reception with current conventions and EU rules. The European Commission's new migration pact would reduce our autonomy even further, and if the proposal to distribute new migrants based on their ties goes through, our country will once again have to take a disproportionately high share of migrants.

The Sweden Democrats want to see an EU that, like Denmark, counteracts pull factors and enables large parts of the asylum process to be moved outside the EU. Cooperation in the EU needs to be focussed in the near future on strengthening border protection and efforts to combat cross-border crime and Islamism, as well as more effective return of people. In order to realise the Sweden Democrats' net-zero migration policy vision, Sweden must negotiate similar exemptions from participation in parts EU cooperation as Denmark has.

The transfer of power from national democracies to the EU has accelerated during the pandemic. More and more political issues are being decided in Brussels, which has increased the demand for larger Swedish payments and credits. Sweden's influence in the EU has long been too weak and the democratic opportunities for influence and transparency for citizens are very poor.

We take a very negative view of several planned initiatives that increase the EU's grip on economic policy, as well as proposals for the introduction of new EU taxes and the abolition of veto rights in foreign policy. Swedish control over our labour market model and welfare policy must be secured for future generations. The position of the krona must also be secured by means of a Swedish legal exemption from participation in monetary co-operation. The Sweden Democrats believe that free trade between European countries is of great value to our economy, but there is no need for a more integrated political union to enjoy the benefits of free trade.

It is high time for a European policy that puts Sweden and Swedish interests first. The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen Sweden's negotiating position in the EU through a referendum instrument that gives the Swedish people the opportunity to make their voices heard before proposals to shift power to Brussels are approved by the Riksdag.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Restoring intergovernmentalism and empowering voters
- Stop power transfers and EU taxes
- Defending freedom of expression against EU censorship and political influence operations
- Sharply reduce Sweden's EU contribution
- Strengthen Sweden's negotiating position in the EU through a referendum instrument that gives the Swedish people the opportunity to take a stand on crucial choices in the EU
- Securing the position of the krona through a Swedish exemption from participation in the EU monetary union
- Protecting Swedish interests in free trade agreements
- Strengthening the EU's external border
- Strengthening European cooperation against Islamist organisations, hybrid threats and terrorism

Assistance

Sweden should be a country that helps the most poor and vulnerable in the world to the best of its ability. The Sweden Democrats therefore want to see effective aid that goes to those most in need and that does not encourage corruption or terrorism. Like all other budget items, aid should be valued on the basis of the effect it has, not how much money is spent in the area.

Sweden pays more in aid than any other country. More of Swedes' tax money is spent each year on international aid than on the Swedish police, prosecution and judicial systems combined. The follow-up, transparency and results of the aid policy's focus on disbursing as much money as possible are weak, but there are many examples of how Swedish aid money has contributed to corruption and bribery and helped to finance anti-democratic movements and Islamism. The largest recipient country for Swedish aid has been Afghanistan.

The Sweden Democrats want aid to be focussed on direct efforts to meet basic needs and to respond to disasters and wars, and otherwise to improve the lives of vulnerable children and women in poor or oppressed parts of the world. However, it must be easier to track aid allocations all the way to the final recipient and to allocate them on the basis of concrete results based on predetermined objectives. Overall, international aid must significantly reduced and efforts made more effective.

Assistance must also be distributed on the basis of reciprocity in relation Sweden's interests. As a rule, bilateral aid should be conditional on the recipient country participating in a return programme for persons to be expelled from Sweden. The interest in creating the conditions for people to return to their home country after a conflict or disaster has ended must also be taken into account in international aid. It should be possible to use parts of the aid appropriation directly in return migration programmes to encourage people in Sweden to return to their home countries with the best conditions if they have not created a sense of belonging to Swedish society.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Making Swedish aid more effective and evaluating it
- Focus aid on emergency humanitarian aid
- Reduce Swedish aid in favour Swedish welfare and security
- As a rule, make bilateral aid conditional on twinning agreements
- Stop all aid to Islamist organisations or regimes
- Stimulating voluntary return migration through aid funds

Crisis preparedness

Swedish society's preparedness to deal with major accidents, crises or wars needs to be strengthened. Major crises and disasters that affect society rarely come with advance warning, but the ability to deal with them requires both planning and preparation.

Modern society is vulnerable to disruption. Disruptions to electronic systems, payment services or electricity grids can be caused natural phenomena, attacks or faults and could have incalculable consequences relatively quickly. The last decade has shown that international conflicts can emerge faster than they can be contained and the threat of large-scale terrorist attacks is latent. Severe natural disasters and fires can also occur in Sweden, and global travel patterns mean that serious contagion can quickly have much worse consequences than been the case so far. The global economy, where supply chains depend on international trade and imports, also makes us vulnerable to crises that can occur far from Sweden.

The Sweden Democrats want to strengthen society's preparedness for all types of crises that may arise. Operational crisis management capacity needs to be strengthened at the Government Offices and at the country's authorities, regions and municipalities. Specific legislation should be drawn up on how a crisis organisation can effectively coordinate society's efforts in the event of a crisis and how emergency measures can be rapidly implemented by the public sector. Society's vulnerability needs to be better assessed, including how an increasingly electrified and digital society affects vulnerability in a crisis or disruption.

The Sweden Democrats also want to re-establish contingency stocks to cover critical needs that may arise from different scenarios. They should be dimensioned to cover the potential needs of the entire Swedish population over a period of time that is plausible in a severe crisis. Sweden's self-sufficiency in energy, food and medical materials needs to increase and be quickly scaled up in the event of long-term disruptions.

Funding for the authorities with overall responsibility for civil defence, crisis management and preparedness should be increased and support for civilian organisations with a social mission should be strengthened.

Citizens also need better knowledge of how to respond to different types of crises, what preparedness is expected of households and how individuals can contribute to society's ability to deal with the unexpected.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Develop a specific crisis legislation
- Defending the status of cash as a means of payment in Sweden
- Improving central crisis management capabilities
- Increase Swedish self-sufficiency in critical products and goods
- Re-establishing public stockpiles
- Analysing and planning for different types of major crises
- Reducing dependence on energy imports

Defence

A credible total defence is a guarantee of Sweden's national sovereignty and freedom. The goal is a war fighting defence capability with the capacity to counter foreign aggression, but which can also assist society in times of crisis or unrest.

Since the late 1990s, socialist and centre-right governments have dismantled the defence system and gradually reduced both funding and the level of ambition. The change in focus from total defence to operational defence in the early 2000s has entailed major costs in terms of capital destruction, loss of skills and conversion costs. It has also meant that the possibilities of meeting an attacker and defending Sweden have been greatly reduced. The restoration of Swedish defence capability is proceeding much more slowly than it could be dismantled.

The Sweden Democrats want to re-establish total defence and ensure that Sweden has the capability to meet potential aggressors. The security situation in the world and the immediate region has deteriorated rapidly over the past decade, and long-term determination is required to ensure a credible, modern and sustainable defence that both prevents war and can operate over time. The Sweden Democrats want to ensure long-term funding for defence of at least two percent of GDP within a ten-year period. supply of defence personnel needs to be ensured through a mix of professional soldiers and conscripts. The Sweden Democrats also want to strengthen the Home Guard and voluntary organisations, which are important components of the will to defend and the resilience of civil society. Swedish security policy choices have historically led to a unique period of peace for the country, and this heritage should continue to be utilised in the future. Closer defence cooperation with Finland would have brought strategic and operational benefits in the community of interest that unites the countries.

The Swedish defence industry will also be strengthened continuing to invest in domestic defence technology and by more clearly evaluating the strategic interest of Swedish suppliers when purchasing defence materiel. Defence must be prepared for war. But defence also needs to be adapted so that it can be used to a greater extent to support and assist the police mission in peacetime in a situation where the domestic security situation requires more resources than the police have at their disposal.

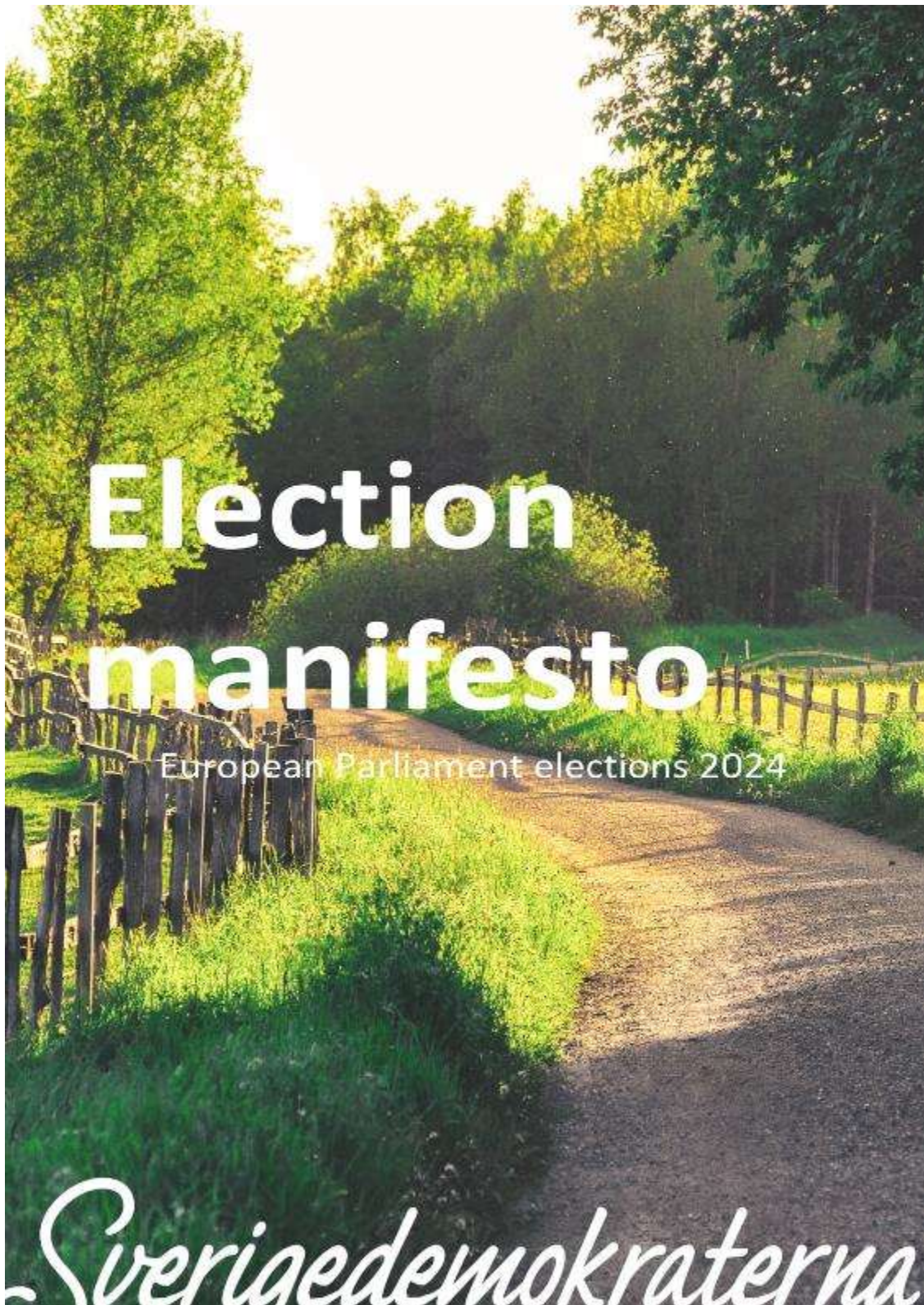
In addition to high-tech equipment, personnel are the most important component of the Swedish Armed Forces. The Sweden Democrats want to invest in retaining personnel and recruiting back those who have left through competitive conditions for specialist and professional officers. Support and gratitude to veterans who have served Sweden should also be more clearly expressed.

The Sweden Democrats want to:

- Guaranteeing the long term financing of a strong defence
- Restoring a total defence that is prepared for war
- Strengthening the position of the Home Guard
- Increase the capacity and competence of the defence to assist the police in operations, surveillance and public order missions
- Invest in upgrading, acquiring and maintaining equipment

- Empowering veterans
- Promote a defence alliance with Finland

2. Sweden Democrats election manifesto 2024¹⁹



¹⁹ The document was fully translated from Swedish to English using the DeepL online translator.

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Introduction

The Sweden Democrats love our free and democratic Europe. The diversity of nations, cultures and shared history has laid the foundation for the Western civilisation we enjoy today. Over the centuries, our continent has become a place of co-operation, development and trade. Or, at least, that was the idea.

The European community and the ideals we as a country embraced thirty years ago are no longer what they were. Europe is at war - Islamism, gang crime and insecurity are spreading, while Brussels' supranationalism has never been as pervasive as it is today.

The old dreams of free states cooperating on fair terms have long been forgotten in Brussels, replaced by bureaucracy, centralisation and corruption.

Being a member of the EU is expensive for Swedish taxpayers, never before has Sweden paid as much money to the Union as we do today. Since 1995, we have paid over SEK 800 billion to the EU to finance other countries' failing economies.

Within the Union, theft gangs travel freely between unguarded border crossings, arms flow and Islamism grows strong. Swedes are being killed in cold blood on the streets of Brussels simply because they are Swedish and have a secular view of freedom of expression.

One terrorist attack after another is fuelled by radical imams who are allowed to preach their vile terrorist propaganda in mosques across Europe, often funded by Islamist regimes that want to fight our way of life.

At the same time as the EU fails in its basic core tasks, the bureaucrats in Brussels see their chance to usurp more power. Through their own interpretations of the treaties, they want to seize our forests, impose a radical climate agenda, make life difficult for Swedish hunters and scrap our vintage cars.

Sweden is also a world champion at self-flagellation. By over-implementing EU legislation and bowing to the establishment in Brussels, Swedish politicians have not prioritised the interests of Swedes - we want to change that!

It is time for Sweden to speak out. We must show the bureaucrats in Brussels that we are serious when we say that our country should never become a tax province that finances mismanaged countries in a European federal state.

The Sweden Democrats therefore want to give the Swedish people a strong voice. Every transfer of power must be preceded by a referendum. The same should apply to new or larger demands for payments to the EU.

We want to show Brussels that we are not backing down at the negotiating table, we want to make it clear that we are willing to leave the co-operation if developments are not stopped and reversed.

For the first time in the history of the EU, we are facing a paradigm shift in the Union. Decades of centralisation, cowardice and waste have made the European people wake up and speak out. We are on the brink of a healthier Europe where, together with like-minded parties, we can turn things around for the better.

We Sweden Democrats will fight to achieve this.

Stop the transfer of power to Brussels

From its origins as a free trade project, the EU has increasingly taken power from Member States in a way that could hardly have been imagined thirty years ago. This means that Sweden and the Swedish people have already lost large parts of their self-determination and risk losing even more in the near future.

We do not believe that EU politicians fundamentally have the same interests as Swedes, quite the opposite. Greedy politicians in Brussels seize every opportunity to usurp more influence for themselves and regard Swedish taxpayers as an ATM that never runs out.

As the EU grows ever more powerful at the expense of individual Member States also highlights the democratic deficit that exists in the Union. The lack of transparency and scrutiny, combined with the extensive bureaucracy, makes politics difficult to understand. We want to see a more transparent EU, removing power from non-elected European Commissioners and introducing greater personal accountability for European decision-makers.

For decades, the EU has been allowed to take power away from the Swedish people and put it in the hands of politicians in Brussels. Time and again, we are overruled and Swedish interests are rarely heard by Brussels. There are many examples of how Brussels only looks after its own interests rather than the good of the people. The consequences of detailed regulation of agriculture, the spiralling costs at EU level and the opposition to Swedish snuff are some examples in this area.

Decisions to be taken by Member States

The principle of subsidiarity means that the EU should not take on tasks that Member States are capable of solving themselves. The principle is one of the basic ideas behind EU co-operation and is intended to ensure that the EU does not interfere with the Member States' right to exist as free sovereign states. The Sweden Democrats want the principle to be applied strictly, so that we can bring decision-making closer to the citizens and strengthen democracy. The EU should not interfere in matters that the Member States can handle themselves.

Facing a referendum lock

For the Sweden Democrats, it is important that power is close to the people and that the democratic process is well anchored. When power is transferred from Sweden to the EU, it is in principle impossible to get it back. For us, it is fundamental that politicians should not be able to give away the Swedish people's right to decide on their country. We therefore want to introduce a referendum lock in the constitution, where every new attempt to transfer power from Sweden to the EU must be approved by a referendum. In this way, we can refer to the will of the people in black and white in the negotiations and the EU's ability to override the Swedish people is severely limited.

Remove EU membership from the Constitution

Sweden is one of the few countries that has written its EU membership into its constitution. This means that in a negotiating situation it is almost impossible for us to show that there are borders that we believe the EU must not cross. Sweden's position in the negotiations with Brussels must be clear, not least that we actually have the option of leaving the Union if necessary. The EU must not be able to take our membership for granted.

Stop the over-implementation of EU directives

When Sweden has implemented directives from the EU, it has often chosen to go further than is actually required. In their fear of upsetting Brussels, Swedish politicians have engaged in what can almost be likened to self-torture, taking bad legislation from the EU and making it even worse. Several examples can be cited, such as the weapons directive, the reduction obligation and the extreme climate policy. We want to conduct a review of the implementation of EU law in Sweden and ensure that we do not go beyond what is required in any case, if it is harmful to Sweden and the Swedish people.

Standing up for Sweden's interests in the EU

More and more often, the EU is exceeding its powers in violation of the EU treaties. Sweden must start actively defending Swedish interests and bring cases before the European Court of Justice whenever the European Commission exceeds its legal powers and encroaches on national self-determination.

Decision-making power must be returned to national parliaments

The EU taking power over forestry policy or going into debt to distribute subsidies is not power given to the Union by the Member States. The Sweden Democrats want to see strict application of the principle of conferred powers, according to which the EU does not have decision-making power that the Member States have not ceded to the supranational level. The EU should not take on tasks that are better solved at national or local level. The principle of proportionality must also be strictly applied.

We go the polls:

- Returning power from the EU to the nation state
- Increasing transparency in the EU
- Introducing referendum requirements for decisions that shift power from Sweden to Brussels
- Remove EU membership from the Constitution

A realistic environment and climate policy

In recent decades, environmental policy has come to be characterised by virtue-signalling, emotion and pure alarmism. Sweden and Europe need a cost-effective environmental and climate policy with robust impact assessments that take into account that all climate policy requires popular support. It must be possible to combine the policy with prosperity, reasonable social costs and competitiveness.

Today, EU countries account for 7% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and this share has decreased significantly in recent decades. Europe's ability to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions globally depends on whether it can set an example for the rest of the world. This is not the case today, where radical climate policies are combined with stagnant growth. There is an imminent risk that radical climate policies will lead to high costs for households while jobs, growth and emissions are shifted to other countries without benefit for global climate work.

Through the Fit for 55 climate pact, Brussels wants to reform the European economy in the ground, with unforeseeable consequences. There are plans to restore huge areas of land to how they looked before. At the same time as we need to continue with sustainable Swedish forestry to transition to a fossil-free economy, EU policy is aimed at sabotaging the opportunities for viable Swedish forestry.

The EU's Fit for 55 climate pact requires member states to drastically reduce their emissions by 2050. The road to this goal is lined with several interim targets and a long series of legal acts where, for example, new sales of cars with internal combustion engines will be banned as early as 2035 and Sweden's emissions will be reduced the most of all countries by 2030. The climate pact is a radical agreement that, if Sweden is to comply with it, risks leading to higher fuel prices, increased Swedish EU contributions and the introduction of EU taxes.

The Sweden Democrats have an ambitious climate policy and want to see a phasing out of fossil fuels, but this must be done in a balanced way so that we make a real contribution to reducing emissions and do not simply transfer wealth and emissions to other continents. That's why we want to tear up the EU's climate pact. A prerequisite for the rest of the world to follow the EU and work for a green transition is that the EU manages to maintain competitiveness and growth so that households' living standards are not negatively affected.

In Sweden, the Tidö Agreement has given us a new direction towards an effective and popularly supported environmental and climate policy. We wish to take this work forward to the European Parliament and abolish the environmentalist policy at EU level as well. The EU must stop opposing nuclear power and instead work strategically to develop regulations that promote research. In this way, the EU can help to stimulate more nuclear power in Europe and the world.

We go the polls:

- A people-centred policy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Reforming the EU climate pact
- A European strategy for more nuclear power

Protecting the interests of Swedish farmers

All over Europe, farmers are protesting against the excessive amount of rules and requirements imposed by the EU on agriculture, the protests can be seen as a cry for help from the sector that is perhaps most important to the people of Europe and Brussels needs to take this seriously. Instead, Brussels is painting agriculture and primary production of food as an environmentally hazardous activity that require ever tighter regulations. Regulations that will eventually affect Europe's ability to feed its population, an increased need for imports from third countries and, not least, the price of food will rise sharply for European consumers.

This is a deeply worrying trend that the Sweden Democrats want to reverse. We need to listen to the farming community and immediately create the conditions for profitable farming; an industry without profitability will not be able to adapt to increased animal welfare or make the investments that are desirable for the climate and the environment. The European Commission's proposal to introduce a nature restoration law also risks having devastating consequences for both forestry and agriculture. One of the proposals is that Brussels wants Sweden to stop using both forest and agricultural land altogether and instead leave it fallow. We cannot accept this; it has never been more important to protect Swedish and European food production.

Our international situation shows time and time again the importance of having strong domestic primary production in order to be able to feed our population in the event of war or crisis. That is why we also see the EU's requirement for 25 per cent of land to be farmed organically, and a sharp reduction in the use of plant protection products, as problematic. Both of these proposals reduce profitability and production, which increases the price for consumers. The EU should not engage in this type of regulation, it inhibits Europe's ability to cope with war or crisis while it is counterproductive for the climate, an increased need for imports from third countries has a negative impact on the climate.

Agriculture must stop being portrayed as environmental villains; on the contrary, they are heroes. We want to see greatly improved competitive conditions in the EU's internal market for Swedish farmers; it must pay to produce food. An important competitive factor for Swedish farmers is animal welfare requirements. In Sweden, we have high standards of animal welfare, which we want to safeguard and will work to ensure that the requirements in the rest of the EU are tightened. We want to work to create confidence in the future and growth in agriculture, which, in addition to providing a secure supply of food, creating jobs and favouring biodiversity, is also a prerequisite for a living countryside and Swedish cultural heritage.

We go the polls:

- Strengthening the competitiveness of Swedish farmers in the internal market
- Work for regulatory simplification, farmers should produce food, not administer
- Oppose any proposal that risks reducing European food production
- Swedish animal welfare to guide EU animal welfare policy

Keep Brussels away from the Swedish forest

Forests cover two thirds of Sweden's surface and half of them are owned by 300,000 private individuals. Sweden is unique in the EU with such a large proportion of privately owned forests, and the fact that forests are privately owned in the way that is common in Sweden is not the norm in the EU, which means that we must particularly monitor and protect property rights.

The Swedish forest is one of the basic industries that built our country. More than 70,000 people work in the forestry and timber industry and export revenues amount to SEK 190 billion annually. It is therefore very important to protect the forestry industry from EU interference.

Swedish forestry has a high level of environmental awareness, we actively manage our forests and ensure that felled forests are replaced by new plantations, which has a positive effect on the EU's climate footprint. Forests are not actually covered by EU treaties, but through LULUCF, which regulates our commitments on net emissions and removals of greenhouse gases from land use, and other acts within the climate pact, the EU wants to heavily regulate and reduce Swedish forestry. In addition to devastating impact on jobs and the economy, this is counterproductive.

Swedish forests are a key factor in the EU's green transition, raw materials from the forest are needed to replace fossil materials, which creates more climate benefits than leaving the forest standing. In addition, reduced felling in Sweden will lead to increased import needs and it is rarely good for the climate to choose something that is not produced in Sweden. Nor can we allow the EU to violate Swedish property rights, which are constitutionally protected, and we currently see many examples of landowners being squeezed when they are denied felling. This is unacceptable.

We go the polls:

- Renegotiate Sweden's LULUCF commitments
- Work to restore forests as a national concern
- Protecting property rights and Swedish forest owners' right to manage their forests

Preserving Swedish hunting tradition

Sweden has a long hunting tradition, and geographical conditions with large distances and sparse game mean that we have unique hunting methods where hunting goes hand in hand with nature conservation, dog and outdoor activities. Hunters fulfil an important social function; they are actively involved in wildlife management for the sake of the animals, which is combined with ethical wildlife management. The importance of hunters became particularly clear during the outbreak of African swine fever, when their efforts were crucial to the successful control of the disease. In addition, Sweden has thousands of municipal hunters and the NVR's search hunters who are available every day of the year to conduct protective hunting and track and kill injured animals. This is a public service that many people take for granted, but which requires an enormous, almost entirely voluntary, commitment from hunters.

Sweden must work to protect the interests of Swedish hunters. Hunting is a national matter and Brussels should not make decisions that affect Swedish hunting. We will therefore work to reduce the influence of Brussels, for example by lobbying for exceptions to the ban on lead in ammunition. It goes without saying that Swedish hunters should be able to practise shooting in large numbers.

We do not want to see any EU regulations on hunting weapons, ammunition, hunting rights or anything else that affects hunting. It is particularly important that how we choose to manage wolves and other species should once again be a Swedish matter.

We go the polls:

- Getting an exemption from the ban on lead ammunition
- Which species can be hunted and to what extent should be a national decision
- Work against supranational decisions that have an impact on Swedish hunting and Swedish hunters

Migration policy to be decided in Sweden

Migration to Europe and Sweden remains high and it is clear that the EU's borders are not working. We have seen how the EU allows people to literally trudge into Europe without being stopped. This has led to an insecure Europe where Brussels has lost control over who is within its borders.

Economic migrants abuse the EU's laxity by travelling through several safe countries until they reach the one that offers the best welfare. This can happen because internal border controls are almost non-existent. The lack of internal border controls in the EU also means that international theft rings and drug smugglers can move stolen goods and drugs with relative ease.

This must stop. We need to build more walls in Europe to control the external border. Frontex needs more support and powers to protect the border. Even within Europe, Member States must be given wider possibilities to introduce permanent internal border controls. The failure of the EU to fulfil one of its most fundamental tasks - holding the border - is unacceptable.

The external border must be respected

Over the past decade, the EU has been plagued by historic mass immigration from the Middle East and North Africa. While several Member States are on their knees economically, the EU is failing in one of its most basic tasks - guarding its borders. The Sweden Democrats want to give Frontex, the agency that guards the external border, more resources and increased powers. More walls need to be built along the land borders and boats need to patrol the Union's coasts to curb illegal migration. We want to see zero tolerance of illegal immigration and, where illegal immigrants reach the EU, they should be sent to asylum centres in third countries - where their application will be processed and they will be granted asylum if their application is successful - which would remove the incentive to enter Europe illegally.

Restrict the free movement of those who misbehave

Anyone who, through criminal offences or misconduct, has misbehaved in a Member State should be able to have their movement within the Union restricted. The Sweden Democrats will work to ensure that Member States are given the opportunity to restrict freedom of movement or introduce visa requirements for EU citizens who misbehave. Member States should also be able to more easily deny entry to third country nationals who have been granted a visa by another Member State, for example by increasing the exchange of information between Member States.

No to forced relocation of migrants

For years, the EU has been trying to pass legislation that would allow Brussels to force member states to accept migrants. Since their election loss in Sweden, the Social Democrats have continued to pursue a damaging migration policy in Brussels. To get member states to fall in line, countries that refuse to accept refugees could be forced to pay hundreds of millions in fines to the EU. Sweden has received a very large number of migrants over the past decade and the Sweden Democrats will fight against the unfair redistribution of migrants.

Establishing asylum centres outside the EU

The EU should work in partnership with third countries to establish asylum centres to which migrants without a right of residence in the EU are transferred. In the partner country, asylum seekers should have their case examined and, if their application is accepted, they should be granted protection. Those who have received deportation order should also be able to be transferred to centres outside Europe pending final enforcement. We also want the EU, in the context of its international work, to clearly work to force countries to accept their citizens by limiting aid, imposing sanctions and threatening to cancel trade agreements and other benefits if they do not cooperate.

We go the polls:

- Strengthening the EU's external border to counteract all forms of illegal immigration into the Union
- Establishing asylum centres outside EU borders
- Restrict the free movement of those who misbehave
- Countering the EU's ability to force individual Member States to accept migrants

Stop the Islamisation of Europe

As a result of mass immigration from Muslim countries, Islamism has root in Sweden and on the continent. Terrorist attacks follow one another, in many Muslim schools children are taught radical Islam, crowds celebrate Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel, and terrorist propaganda is openly displayed in mosques across Europe. For fear of being labelled xenophobic or Islamophobic, Europe's politicians have allowed Islamism to take root in society. The consequences are felt across the continent and affect all member states and their citizens.

For the Sweden Democrats, it is self-evident that Islamisation must be countered at all levels. All Member States have a responsibility to actively counter Islamism in Europe, and all funding of Islamism and terrorist sympathising organisations must cease immediately. We want the EU to take a clear stand against Islamism and all its devastating consequences for the European people. As Islamism is not compatible with Western values, it is important that the EU takes action against Islamism on all fronts.

All over Europe, foreign Islamists are allowed to preach their hatred. The Sweden Democrats have stepped up their efforts to combat Islamists through the Time Programme, but more needs to be done in the EU. No Islamists should be able to move to the Union to propagate Islamism. The EU should make clearer demands on Member States to expel radical Islamists and work proactively to ensure that known extremists from Muslim countries are banned from entering the Union.

We go the polls:

- Working actively against the Islamisation of Europe
- Islamists should not be allowed to travel or move to the EU for the purpose of practising Islamism or propaganda
- Stop the funding of Islamists in the EU

Build a safe Europe

The Sweden Democrats see strong advantages in strong intergovernmental cooperation within the EU to combat cross-border crime and terrorism more effectively. However, closer cooperation must never result in supranational police responsibility, with EU police storming Swedish homes. Only Swedish police should have police powers on Swedish soil. Legal certainty must never be jeopardised for Swedish citizens, and the division of responsibilities and mandates must be clear and inviolable.

The Sweden Democrats are the party in Sweden with the most ambitious crime policy in terms of resource allocation and legislative proposals. This makes the Sweden Democrats a guarantor of the best crime-fighting work within the EU, but also of the fact that the EU should not be given more power than is necessary to achieve a good result in the cross-border fight against organised crime and terrorism.

Islamist regimes have organised the financing of radical preachers and terrorist sympathisers across Europe. All member states have a shared responsibility to ensure that Islamism is kept out of our continent. We want to intensify the fight against terrorist financing and make it difficult to give money to terrorists in our Europe. In addition, all forms of EU funding and assistance to terrorist sympathisers should be or organisations associated with radical Islamists must stop immediately. Both the EU and many of the Member States have, in various ways, financed, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist organisations, and this must stop.

A hard line against authoritarian states such as Russia, Iran and China

The EU and Sweden are in a serious security situation. Authoritarian states and dictatorships are best dealt with by a resolute foreign policy and clear signals where there can be no doubt about Sweden's position. Since our external border has not been secured and our defences have been downgraded, hybrid warfare has been normalised and our position weakened.

Full-scale war has returned to Europe and migrants are being used as weapons against the West by cynical regimes. The Sweden Democrats succeeded in persuading the European Parliament to classify Russia as a terrorist state after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, enabling the use of confiscated funds to support Ukraine's defence struggle and reconstruction of the country. The Sweden Democrats' support for Ukraine is unwavering. The regime in Russia, Iran and the Chinese Communist Party, as well as any other authoritarian forces that threaten the rules-based world order, should never be rewarded with a policy of appeasement.

Counter-terrorism

The terrorist attack on Drottninggatan, on Charlie Hebdo in France and on the Swedes shot dead in Brussels are three examples of how Islamists have literally killed us. Time and again, Islamist terror attacks have been made possible by our liberal immigration and crime policies. The Sweden Democrats want to put a stop to this. No terrorist group or terrorist should be able to live undisturbed in Europe. The EU has an important role as a coordinating body for cross-border counter-terrorism, a cooperation we very much need to develop.

We go the polls:

- To immediately stop all financing of terrorist activities
- Developing cooperation on the EU's cross-border fight against terrorism
- Making it difficult to be a terrorist in the EU in every way possible

Stop the EU's greediness

Protecting Swedish snus

The history of Swedish snus goes back hundreds of years. In Sweden, we use snus instead of smoking, which has proven to have a decisive effect on Swedish public health and means that Sweden has the lowest number of tobacco-related deaths per capita in Europe. But Swedish snus is under constant threat. Brussels is actively working to deny Europeans healthier alternatives to tobacco smoking and is currently pushing the issue of banning white snus. We think this is completely wrong. We want to stop the plans to ban white snus and actively work to remove the EU's export ban on snus within the Union.

Protect our vintage cars

Through the End of Life Directive, the EU is attacking anyone interested in vintage cars. The proposed legislation would require the scrapping of all cars that the EU deems unfit for use. A large part of Swedish car culture is based on the care and restoration of old vehicles, which are often taken from being in very poor condition to becoming cultural treasures. If the Commission's proposal goes through, it will in practice mean that all older cars that could have been restored will have to be scrapped instead. The Sweden Democrats believe that Brussels should stay away from Swedish motoring culture. We will always stand up for the right of Swedish motorists to exercise their interest.

Renegotiate the Working Time Directive to restore 24-hour shifts

Labour market policy is supposed to be a national matter, but during the mandate period the EU Working Time Directive has caused problems for Swedish firefighters, ambulance drivers and other shift workers. This unnecessary detailed regulation has affected both workers who want longer continuous leave to make family life work and people with disabilities who need continuity and predictable days with the same staff.

It goes without saying that workers should have ample opportunity to recover after a shift. But there is no reason why the EU should have the power to micromanage workers' schedules in countries where these issues are negotiated between trade union and employer organisations.

The Sweden Democrats will work to renegotiate the labour directive to take back control over the working hours of firefighters and care workers and leave these matters entirely to the social partners to decide.

We go the polls:

- Protect Swedish snus production and the right of all Europeans to use snus
- That Swedish motorists can continue to pursue their hobby
- Fight to return power over working hours to Sweden and the social partners



3. Eco's 14 characteristics of fascism applied to the Sweden Democrats' manifestos

Cult of tradition:

As pointed out in the study of the lexical field used by the SD in their two election manifestos (2.1.3), they present themselves as defenders of a historical and cultural heritage:

“Previous generations of Swedes have built a society that was long among the best in the world.”

(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

This emphasis on a mythical idealised past contrasting with the ‘decadent’ present is characteristic:

“But gradually, progressive [advances] has been replaced by tolerance of the intolerant.”

(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

Sweden's cultural tradition being based on a dual syncretic heritage of Nordic traditions from the Middle Ages²⁰ and Christianity, this first **very present** characteristic echoes perfectly Eco's statement that the meeting of Saint Augustine and Stonehenge is a symptom of Ur-fascism; 1/14.

Rejection of enlightenment/modernism

We only have to go back to the single image in the two manifestos to see a certain rejection of modernity (2.1.1, fig. 1), but it is in their discourse that the SD best express their anti-liberal rhetoric even more clearly. The last quote also marks the rejection of modern values of tolerance and pluralism in favour of a conservative and closed vision of Swedish society. We can therefore consider that this characteristic is **partially present**; 1.5/14.

Cult of action for action

On security and migration issues in particular, the SD show a desire for strong, immediate and repressive action, without prolonged debate, corresponding to the fascist valorisation of action for action's sake. This is illustrated by simplistic and sometimes symbolic responses to social complexity:

“zero tolerance”

(SDM 2022, p.5, Crime and punishment)

“The SD want to change criminal policy in favour of locking up and deporting criminals who create insecurity and commit crimes.”

(SDM 2022, p.5, Crime and punishment)

The speeches meet the criteria of this third characteristic; **present**, 2.5/14.

²⁰ Viking culture.

Disagreement = treason

The SD viciously attack the other Swedish political parties and the European institutions. The former are responsible, guilty, for the ills of Swedish society:

“...the wounds that both Social Democratic and centre-right governments have inflicted on Swedish society.”

(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

The latter are implicitly branded traitors when migration issues are raised:

“For years, the EU has been trying to pass legislation that would allow Brussels to force member states to accept migrants.”

(SDM 2024, p.11, Migration policy to be decided in Sweden)

As the amalgam between disagreement and betrayal is only implicit, it can be seen here as **emerging**; 3/14.

Fear of difference

For Eco, disagreement is also a sign of diversity and fascism feeds fear against difference, cementing the construction of an identity-based ‘we’; the ‘people’, excluding migrants ‘the others’ and cosmopolitan elites; ‘them’.

Otherness is thus criminalised in both discourses:

“Despite the fact that the cost of integration policy measures and investments in schools, welfare and housing in segregated areas has been considerable, the policy has failed to such an extent that second-generation immigrants are more likely [to] commit crimes than their parents and constitute the recruitment base for gangs.”

(SDM 2022, p.6, Gang-related crime)

“Terrorist attacks follow one another, in many Muslim schools children are taught radical Islam, crowds celebrate Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel, and terrorist propaganda is openly displayed in mosques across Europe.”

(SDM 2024, p.12, Stop the Islamisation of Europe)

Fear of difference is **at the heart** of the SD' discourse; 4/14.

Appeal to frustrated middle classes

The **key electoral strategy** deployed is also largely based on the frustration of the middle classes at the deterioration of the *Folkhemmet* (See Introduction, p.8) built during the 20th century. This anger is used against governments that *“has been about putting interests other than those of Sweden and its citizens first”* (SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction).

In 2024, the SD extended their fear of economic decline argument by linking it to the policies pursued by the EU:

“All over Europe, farmers are protesting against the excessive amount of rules and requirements imposed by the EU on agriculture”

(SDM 2024, p.7, Protecting the interests of Swedish farmers)

5/14.

Obsession with conspiracy

To the democratic confiscation carried out by the ‘unelected bureaucrats’ in Brussels, the SD are adding a plan, a hidden agenda: the creation of a federal superstate:

“We must show the bureaucrats in Brussels that we are serious when we say that our country should never become a tax province that finances mismanaged countries in a European federal state.”

(SDM 2024, p.3, Introduction)

On the domestic front, without being explicitly mentioned, the theory of the Great Replacement, so dear to the European far-right, infuses the whole discourse on migration policy, whose laxity and excessive tolerance are denounced.

Implicit but real, the conspiracy hatched by the European or national elites; ‘them’, against the people; ‘us’, is **very present**; 6/14.

Enemy both strong and weak

In the manifestos, the declared enemies, be they the cosmopolitan elite, the European bureaucrats or simply the other parties that have betrayed, are, through a rhetorical shift typical of fascist discourse, both strong and weak. Strong in the sense that they are organised and jeopardise traditional Sweden and the model inherited from previous generations, and weak in the sense that simplistic measures are proposed, denying the complexity of the issues, be they economic, climatic or migratory, to fix them. Once again, the best illustration of this is the proposed treatment of criminality issues. In response to gangs that have become too powerful, SDs’ first proposal is to limit the rights of the weakest:

“Shootings, bombings and robberies have become commonplace from north to south and increasingly the lives of innocent and ordinary people.” (strong)

“Stop asylum immigration and pause quota refugee reception and focus on return” (weak)
(SDM 2022, p.6, Gang-related crime)

Characteristic **well present** (7/14).

Pacifism = complicity

On the same subject, as with the policies of the EU, entered into by force with the complicity of the S, the manifestos criticise the soft policies pursued by the traditional parties, noting a lack of force that could be likened to pacifism in the face of a dangerous enemy. The rhetoric employed easily leads the reader to conclude that the other Swedish parties are complicit (**8/14**):

“Gang violence [...] has been allowed to take hold through an overly tolerant integration policy.”

(SDM 2022, p.6, Gang-related crime)

Contempt for the weak

Elitism is one of the typical characteristics of Ur-fascism as defined by Eco. Having seen the extent to which anti-elitism is a populist device much used by the SD (see 2.1.1., pp.25-26), it may seem difficult to find it in the manifestos of 2022 and 2024. The solution to this a priori

insoluble equation is given by Eco himself: “Every citizen belongs to the best people in the world” (Eco, 1995). This ‘popular elitism’ defined by Eco is used by the SD to sort out the ‘good citizens’ from the ‘socially excluded’, mainly immigrant populations.

“Swedish society and culture are fundamentally something to be proud of. Few countries have historically been able to match the Swedes' ability to combine individual freedom with great concern [for] each other. Previous generations of Swedes have built a society that was long among the best in the world. But gradually, progressive [advances] has been replaced by tolerance of the intolerant. Political concern for the different living conditions of Swedish citizens has been exchanged for consideration of all interests other than those of Sweden itself.”

(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

The contempt of the weakest can be described as **ambivalent (8.5/14)**.

Cult of the hero

As mentioned earlier, the cult of the hero does not correspond to the standards of discretion in Swedish society²¹. The construction of an ethos of the national saviour is therefore made in the name of the party and not of a leader. No candidate or party member appears by name in either manifesto (**8.5/14**). However, moving away from the two manifestos, it is interesting to note the extent to which the leader of the SD since 2005, Jimmie Åkesson, enjoys a position of support and ‘saviour status’ that far exceeds that of the leaders of other Swedish parties.

“The Sweden Democrats want to break the trend and move policy in a direction that can heal Sweden.”

(SDM 2022, p.4, Introduction)

Machismo/Armament

Although machismo is not entirely absent in Sweden, it is very marginal and tends to be expressed among the least educated or those from other cultures. Gender equality is a long-standing battle for the S, which has permeated Swedish society through the education system to the point where it is now an integral part of it. The SD have made this Swedish characteristic their own. Conversely, it has even been turned against immigrant populations, mainly from Afghanistan, the Balkans and the Mediterranean region, to denounce the archaism of their cultures. The same way, there is no trace of a pronounced taste for arming the country²², the manifestos of the SD include a form of fetishism of police and prison force:

“Increasing the availability of places in prisons in Sweden and abroad”

(SDM 2022, p.5, Crime and punishment)

“More walls need to be built along the land borders and boats need to patrol the Union's coasts to curb illegal migration.”

²¹ Jantelagen, Jante's law, exists in all the Nordic countries. It is a kind of code of conduct whose rules were written by Sandemose in his novel *En flyktning korsar sitt spår*, 1933. The author describes the inhabitants of the fictional town of Jante as not appreciating people who are out of the ordinary or those who believe themselves to be superior to others. According to Sandemose, the result of Jantelagen would be a uniform society marked by mediocrity, mistrust and jealousy, in contrast to that of the so-called ‘Latin’ peoples, who do not hesitate to show off or boast.

²² In the name of preserving Swedish sovereignty, Swedish neutrality, although variable in practice, was established as a principle under the reign of Bernadotte (Charles XIV) in 1818. Following Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, Sweden finally joined NATO on 7 March 2024, putting an end to 106 years of neutrality.

(SDM 2024, p.10, Migration policy to be decided in Sweden)

As a result, and particularly because of the shift towards a militarised rhetoric of safety, this characteristic is only **partially and indirectly present (9/14)**.

Selective populism

We have seen (2.1.1 pp. 25-26) that the SD propose a restrictive definition of the people. The exclusion of minorities and criticism of the policies of the legitimate social body is **fundamental** to their electoral manifestos **(10/14)**.

Newspeak

The two manifestos studied are rich in reductive shock formulas. They are present in the treatment of all the subjects dealt with. Let's take two examples, one on gender theories, the other on vintage cars:

“[...] *indoctrinate our children in a gigantic post-modern project*”
(SDM 2022, p.39, Youth issues)

“[...] *the EU is attacking anyone interested in vintage cars*”
(SDM 2024, p.14, Stop the EU's greediness)

Security neologisms such as « zero tolerance » (SDM 2024, p.10, Migration policy to be decided in Sweden) are **very present (11/14)**.