

Sweden's Immigration Crisis

Pelle Neroth Taylor
The Bruges Group

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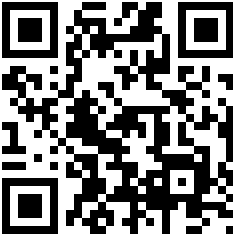
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A note to British readers about Swedish party names

The **Moderates** are Sweden's main liberal centre-right party, in power in coalition with three small centre-right parties, from 2006 to 2014.

The **Social Democrats** are Sweden's main centre left party, in power for most of the 20th century; also, since September 2014.

The **Sweden Democrats** are the anti-immigration party, who have grown meteorically since 2002. They sit with UKIP in the European Parliament. They label themselves "social conservatives", filling the vacuum left by the Moderates' gradual abandonment of Conservatism. Opponents call them Neofascist, or even Nazi.

About the Author

Pelle Neroth Taylor is a British journalist who divides his time between Sweden, Brussels and London. Educated at Westminster School and Bristol University, his work has appeared in the Sunday Times, Economist, Financial Times, New Scientist and the Lancet. He is the author of the first English-language biography of Sweden's Socialist Prime Minister, Olof Palme. There is a blog associated with this pamphlet, which relates the latest developments:

www.therealstockholmsyndrome.wordpress.com

Sweden's Immigration Crisis

It is the autumn of 2015, and Europe is facing a time of people movements. Sweden (even more than Germany) stands out in its unapologetic maintenance of open borders. Swedish politicians are, with steely determination, turning their country from a nation of apple-cheeked blonds into, well, what, a hybrid Muslim-European society?

Sweden's demographics are changing fast: in September 2015, a thousand refugees a day are coming, mostly from Muslim countries. That is the equivalent of 365,000 a year, almost the population of Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city.

I can't imagine there won't be some massive popular uprising, or something, from natives if the influx carries on like this for a long time. But let us continue the analysis to its conclusion. If immigration continues at this rate, Sweden (pop 9.6 million) will be four percent more foreign every year. Swedes will be 32% more foreign in eight years' time (8x4%). Added to 17% foreign born already here, Swedes will be a minority in their country in eight years.

That is right. Eight years. In eight years, Swedes will no longer be masters of their country or their future. Or maybe sooner, if nothing drastic is done. While it is true that September figures probably represent a late summer spike, arrivals may drop to the low hundreds in the winter months, and refugees do return home and are sometimes deported, the "thousand a day" figure doesn't take into account the immigration of relatives that often follows legally. That is, the refugees arriving this year, and staying, will, based on past statistics, in the years to come, be bringing two or three relatives over from their countries when they have got their permanent residence permits.

Many Swedes boast that their country is a beacon of enlightenment. Sweden's reputation in the developing world is excellent. As I write, a line of Syrian refugees is literally marching along a motorway siding in Denmark carrying signs "Sweden Yes", and "No Denmark". (Denmark having just announced it is tightening up its asylum benefits.)

It is partly Europe's fault. The Schengen treaty has abolished national borders, making it easy to get in. But it is not only the EU's fault. You could also say it is an

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illustration of Sweden's flawed democracy, something of which very few outsiders are aware: the country's political traditions of consensus, others say undemocratic conformism, which has rallied all-powerful opinion formers around a single position, which in turn has on this issue created a backlash – and extremely bad blood between sections of society. Once united behind the government stance to be generous, more and more people are just not buying the official story anymore. Families and friends are bitterly divided. One side reels out the government line: “We need to be an open and tolerant society, adapted to change”. Another side: “No, we don't want sharia law and overcrowding.”

A growing minority worried by developments are turning a once tiny, small, anti-immigrant party, the Sweden Democrats, into the most popular political movement in the country, bigger than any mainstream party, a movement whose very mention turns most mainstream Swedish journalists and politicians into a self-righteous frenzy against a party they believe to be racist.

With over a quarter of the population now supporting the Sweden Democrats (significantly more among men), it is clear supporters are not all racists and neo-Nazis. Rather, many of the party's supporters are normal people worried that the politicians seem to have no exit strategy, no plan for Sweden's future. How will this all end?

According to the latest UN estimates, world population growth is unlikely to stabilise at 9 billion this century and Africa is where the population is growing fastest. Even if the Syrian civil war ends, Sweden's broad definition of asylum reasons could easily maintain flows from other countries. For example, Eritrea. There is an entrenched dictatorship and long military service there, but no war. But since the Swedish migration board has started to define dictatorship and long military service as reasons for asylum, immigration from Eritrea has increased rapidly. The same for Afghanistan, which delivers far more refugees to Sweden than when the war was at its bloodiest.¹ Even if Sweden took in ten million under gradually broadened asylum rules, effectively abolishing Sweden as a protestant, high trust, European culture, it would alleviate only a fraction of the world's misery. Swedish mainstream politicians don't pay attention to and it is not clear if they even understand any of these arguments.

¹ <http://detgodasamhallet.com/2015/10/02/tino-sanandaji/#more-2513>

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Many European countries – the UK for one – are desperately thinking up ways to close their borders.

While immigration enthusiasts like the Karolinska Institute Professor Hans Rosling point out that the numbers of Syrian refugees are low arriving in Europe compared to the influx Lebanon and Turkey receive from the civil war in Syria, he catches the wrong end of the argument. The important thing to look at is the effect on Sweden. Europe is the wrong reference point, since it contains 700 million people, and many countries don't take in refugees at all. And the arrivals have to be set against the demographic changes that have already happened in Sweden.

A third of the population under the age of 44 is already of foreign background. (At least one parent born abroad.) Sweden has a greater proportion of inhabitants of non-EU origin than any other West European country.²

Of course, the immigrants benefit from finding this safe haven, this Tolkienian Rivendell against the miseries of the world. They are a lucky, minuscule minority of the world's miserable poor. But the benefits for Sweden are less clear. Refugees are not only leaving failed societies but to some extent bring their failed societies with them.

One UN Human Development Report research paper predicts that Sweden will, in 2030, be 35th on a list of 45 OECD countries in terms of human development, below Bulgaria, Libya and Argentina.³ Critics say this is a rogue result, and it was quickly removed from the UN's website. But it should nevertheless give pause for thought.

Immigration can be profitable to the host society, if the immigrants are highly skilled or bring complementary skills. But most of the incomers Sweden is getting are low-skilled people from Muslim cultures from failed, violent societies, Eritrea, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan.

Maybe these, too, will one day boost the economy. But, at the moment, Sweden does not need immigrants to feed its prosperity, in a way an earlier generation of immigrant guest workers from Finland and Italy were brought in to supply

² Eurostat Sweden at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/File:Non-national_population_by_group_of_citizenship_and_foreign-born_population_by_country_of_birth,_1_January_2013_YB14_II.png

³ http://www.rrojasdatabank.info/HDRP_2010_40.pdf. See table 10. Sweden is below Bulgaria, Argentina and Libya

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factories of a booming Sweden in the sixties. These low-skilled factory jobs are not around anymore. And Swedish native youth unemployment is high today.

In the sixties, there was full youth employment in Sweden and companies were screaming out for foreign labour. Foreign unemployment was very low. Today foreign unemployment is high, so, based on the lack of jobs, we can assume many of these refugee arrivals will be out of work for many years to come.

In Sweden, the threat of change is dealt with by the fact that mainstream politics tries to isolate, humiliate, ignore that substantial proportion of opinion that wants to limit immigration, and the party that stands for those values, the Sweden Democrats (SD).

A well-oiled media machine trots out its well-honed phrases about “racists” who oppose more immigration: “fishing in muddy waters”, “casting around for the racist vote”, “not respectful of everybody’s equal value”. Virtually everyone in Swedish public life sings from the same “humanistic hymn sheet”. Former ABBA member Bjorn Ulvaeus compares today’s immigration – heavily Muslim – to the virtuous Swedish emigration to America in the 19th century. “Sweden must show warmth and tolerance” was the title of his article.⁴

There is much to like about Sweden. Sweden symbolises to the extreme European modernity, technology and prosperity. The cities are well designed and full of public amenities – though the expanding immigrant suburbs do point the way to a more chaotic future. The Swedish countryside is extensive, unspoilt and really beautiful.

Sweden, though, while a democracy, of course, is known among its Scandinavian neighbours as a bit of a Big Brother society, the country where, in the quest towards becoming the world’s most modern society, the state has regimented and organised people’s lives, for their own good, for the longest, and where conformity of opinion has long been a characteristic of the political climate.

Andrew Brown, Britain’s best known Sweden expert, author of the Orwell prize-winning Sweden memoir *Fishing in Utopia*, writes about Swedish conformism:

The conformism of Sweden is something almost every visitor notices and complains about. But many foreigners suppose that it is imposed from above, on a duped or unwilling population. I don't think that was ever true.

⁴ <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/kulturdebatt/sverige-maste-visa-varme-och-tolerans/>

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He goes on to argue that democracy in Sweden has always meant everyone's equal submission to a common authority. And what is this authority? No longer God in this once most religious of countries, the new authority everyone must obey (established by the Social Democrats in their long 20th century Socialist rule) is the diktat of being modern.

Since Modernity in Sweden is now associated with multiculturalism, following Brown's persuasive line of argument, it is almost betrayal – a betrayal of the peculiar Swedish compact with Modernity – to object to this direction the authorities have settled upon. Multiculturalism is the future, deal with it, say the elites.

Dissent from the official line on immigration, has, at times, been severely repressed by the authorities, institutions and a compliant media. It is really quite extraordinary. There is no official tolerance for the views of the SD politicians and SD supporters who want to preserve the successful Sweden of the past and are sceptical of the social experiment going on. They get beaten up, catcalled, barred from restaurants. Their conferences are attacked by leftist thugs who throw gas canisters through windows. SD activists are thrown out of jobs. Their political opponents in council chambers around the land don't even shake hands with them, let alone collaborate with them politically.

The SD's email and bank accounts are hacked by vigilante hackers of the left and the revelations sold to the tabloids, which splash the stories of party members' private spending. Newspaper columnists call them racist scum.

The Sweden Democrats, when they get a word in, argue that it is strange that Swedish politicians prioritise Sweden's global moral responsibilities – a potentially infinite blank cheque – when, in most European definitions of democracy, politicians are servants of the national electoral will. They must serve that category of people who voted for them, not some notional global community. However, policymakers and influencers living in the all-white “elite districts” of central Stockholm are insulated from the effects of mass immigration and the costs in terms of pressure on schools, care, housing, policing, and the public purse.

Swedish politicians are also able to co-opt American political ideas about the correct makeup of society that have been imported into Europe since the end of the Cold War. This trend is shared in other European cultures, but in Sweden wannabe Americanism seems particularly strong. But why should the United

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States be a model for Europe that we have to compulsorily impose? Each to his own. America is a multicultural, mass immigration society, dynamic and successful, but with a lot of racism, violence and a weak welfare state. Sweden's homogeneity (formerly) was the key factor behind its successful high tax welfare state. America has often been praised for its successes. But the old Swedish homogeneous society model worked too, why abandon it?

Another development, possibly related to American influence, but also to European and global economic and political trends, is the growing detachment of the elite from the nation state they inhabit. Again, you see it elsewhere in Europe but the Swedish elite manifest it strongly. The Swedish elite, ambitious but well aware they have lived in a geographically and historically peripheral country, have traditionally always looked abroad, to larger political entities, for inspiration. Thanks to decades of pacifist political indoctrination and centuries of peace, Sweden's education system indoctrinates against all forms of nationalism; there seems to be a failure to understand, judging by contributions to the debate, the importance of the nation state as the institutional guarantor of freedom and prosperity, even of the elites.

There is a lack of a feedback system too: Stockholm, more than London, is an extremely segregated city. Those who advocate loudest for it are the least affected by immigration's negative sides; they literally don't experience the effects of their policies, because they live in the posh Östermalm or Södermalm districts, not Husby and Rinkeby, two suburbs where women experience regular harassment if they try to pursue western lifestyles and where cars are torched every weekend. Politicians' careers flourish if they mouth pro-immigration attitudes. (Or rather, their careers are doomed by the persecutory media if they don't.) In other words, they privatise the benefits of advocating high levels of immigration. In contrast, the costs of immigration are socialised: the hardworking Swedish taxpayer and the rural communities that receive tens of thousands of asylum seekers.

Immigration sceptics would argue that politicians are not the only self-interested actors when arguing for "humanitarian immigration". A lot of decisionmakers and journalists are arguably fervent idealists; the belief that Sweden must be filled up with refugees is an emotionally powerful conviction, replacing the hole left by Socialism for Swedes of a left wing persuasion. It has been said the pro-business Swedish right wants to undermine the powerful unions that still exist in Sweden by bringing in cheap and flexible foreign labour. With employment rates among

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immigrants as low as they are – and union mandated entry level salaries still high – that hasn't happened yet. It may yet do so.

What do Swedish feminists think? Sweden's advanced level of feminism makes many women sympathise with immigrants as the next group of outsiders deserving of the leg up. Women were let into the tent a generation ago. Now the world's poor deserve the same "gift". Part of the same project. If the project of extending rights to ever wider groups is not continued, then women's rights will somehow fall back.

Never mind that Swedish women are a far more digestible population group to bring into the tent. And that many of the immigrants from the Middle East carry with them social values inimical to Swedish feminism. And it could be argued that the prominence of Swedish women in public life has lent public debate about immigration a certain feminine naiveté.

The Lutheran Church is a very powerful force in favour of more immigration. The church was the greater shaper of Swedish culture and norms, in coalition with the state, before the welfare state. The church still has informal influence, especially as it has aligned itself with trendy issues of the day, like gay and transgender rights. Theological notions about the individual's equality before God seem to have seeped into normal political dialogue. That is why the debate, such as it is, focuses on all people on the planet's abstract "equal value".

There is a strong Rawlsian flavour to the debate. (John Rawls was the leading American philosopher of liberal equality in the last century). Given the statistical probability that you had of being born into impoverished Africa or Asia, what kind of global society would you have designed, given that you didn't know where you would be born? Presumably one where equalities such as exist between the rest and the West were minimised or, at the very least, a West that would keep its doors open to immigration from poor countries. The argument that citizenship of a state is a kind of club membership, with rights and duties, and a social contract between the generations, where outsiders can't just barge in and live-off benefits, seems less than generous than the quasi-Christian slogan "Everybody is equal" that justifies open immigration policies and is a debate killer in Sweden. You say "how much does immigration cost" or "Will it not affect social cohesion". Or "there are no jobs, no housing, for the immigrants". The average Swedish intellectual says. "Are you saying Afghans are not human beings"?

Sweden is inevitably going to become another, more Islamic, country, even if

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immigration were completely halted, as immigrants attain positions of influence and get to promote their culture and religion, and have children, more children on average, than natives. Just how much of a hybrid Sweden society will it be, in 20 or 30 years' time is a matter of conjecture. Many adult native Swedes, though, if they could free themselves from the state's political pressure on their beliefs, would admit they would like to shed very little of their current identity and lifestyle for this hybrid society. What today's generation of children, heavily influenced by social engineering in schools, will think in 20 years' time is, of course, another matter. It may be economically and socially sustainable, it may not be sustainable – some sceptics say the new arrivals will never become the highly educated labour force Sweden needs to prosper – but it will be a different Sweden, for sure.

Sweden is an outsider in the Scandinavian context, compared to the more familiar national psychologies of Norway and Denmark, countries which conduct their political debates in terms a British person would understand. Denmark and Norway have, or have had, nationalist parties in government, working hard to limit or turn back the transformation of their once homogenous countries. Finland never had many immigrants in the first place.

Politicians in the other Scandinavian countries are not best pleased by Sweden's humanitarians. They worry about a flood of New Swedes, with newly acquired Swedish passports, settling in their countries under the Scandinavian passport union, and drawing benefits, or providing a terror threat. The justice minister of the Danish Social Democrat government said that if Sweden sent over "welfare tourists" they would have to talk to Swedes about it. She added that the Danish left-wing government wouldn't allow anything like this at home.

In return, the Swedish media sometimes write as if the rest of Scandinavia, indeed, the whole of Europe, has turned "fascist". But it is possible to argue that it is Sweden – or rather the Swedish political class – that has become extremist. When the whole of the rest of the world is wrong, perhaps it is you who are wrong?

Refugees on the move

The official Swedish propaganda in favour of immigration, from newspapers, public announcements, state television, public bodies is as utterly relentless as you would expect from an organised, disciplined society like Sweden's. The town of Malmö used to have an army museum, one of Sweden's biggest such collections. I went there as a child to see uniforms, weapons, cannons that once belonged to the Malmö Hussars, the Crown Prince's regiment. An elegantly restrained former military storage building built in the classicist 18th century style, the museum was one of those places where you could feel a sense of pride in Sweden's history.

That has gone now. Malmö, population 300,000, was once a working class city of manufacturing industries centred on Europe's largest shipyard. The city council was socially conservative, pro-unions, left wing. These days, the industries have gone, Malmö has become Sweden's multicultural melting pot – and the council has a firmly New Left flavour. That means a strong concern for gender studies, homosexual rights, and refugee concerns. Malmö city council has mothballed the military exhibits and now uses the space for “refugee experiences”.

The refugee experience comprised a series of tableaux with texts, maps and photos, rather sketchily described accounts of the adventures and travails of perhaps five or so young men from different compass points of the third world, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa, before arriving in Sweden. The emphasis in the photos was on the men's vulnerability, youth, sensitivity. Women are a powerful political force in Sweden and their capacity for empathy has to be appealed to.

However, it is, to anyone versed in current affairs, an exhibit breath-taking in its naiveté, or perhaps breath-taking in its cynicism, on the assumption of Swedish people's naiveté. One longed for a serious discussion on an issue like this: to what extent is Islamism a deformation of Islam? The Oxford economist and advisor to African governments Paul Collier says it costs just ten thousand dollars and ownership of a satellite phone to start a war in Africa. The ten thousand dollars arms young men with Kalashnikovs. The satellite phone is used to contact western mineral companies in order to offer the terms for letting through minerals in the

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areas the rebellion occupies. It is difficult for many young Africans to farm or work in accountancy. The only skill they know is war. What is to say the “munificent Sweden” rumour hasn’t spread like wildfire in areas racked by civil war? Here is a country where you don’t earn just two dollars a day with the promise of more, but sixty pounds in unemployment benefit plus racketeering and drugs opportunities. The exhibition, if it had been honest, would have explained how it costs thousands of dollars in smugglers’ fees to get a refugee to Europe.

That means it is not the poorest or neediest who come; many refugees have smartphones, modern clothes, and demands about the standards they expect upon their arrival. Perhaps there is an investment from those involved back home; perhaps their extended families invest in these young men, sometimes called “anchor boys” because of the relatives they will one day bring over? How many are secret ISIS recruits? James Clapper, head of the CIA, recently said that the ongoing exodus of large numbers of people from the Middle East was a golden opportunity for ISIS to spread its fighters to other countries.

Why is this not talked about? Why is the persecution of Christians, the failure of Islam to modernise, not talked about either? Books like Robert Reilly’s *Closing of the Muslim Mind* explains the victory of one Sunni school in the tenth century means most Muslims see God as a pure expression of power and will, not even bound by his own laws. This denial of cause and effect in the natural world – everything comes from God as the first cause – could just explain why Arab cultures are at the bottom of every measure of human progress: literacy, education, healthcare, productivity, patents and so on.

There have been no reportages that I have seen in my extensive research of the mainstream Swedish press about the chaos in the Mediterranean, the nitty-gritty of the travel process. Generally there is little interest in Sweden in the culture, background and often dirty circumstances by which migrants came to Sweden. Ignorance of Islam is total, even, or perhaps especially, among the intellectual left.

Museum exhibitions are one way to try and persuade the public to accept the current high refugee levels. Official government websites are another. One such site is “Hello Sweden”, which puts a heroic focus on the immigrants’ journeys. The website contains thrilling accounts of walking in the Turkish mountains, taking dinghies to the Greek islands, paying people smugglers, breaking into the cargo sections of long distance TIR lorries that ply the European motorway routes. Running from the Italian police. Dodging the ticket inspectors on European

trains – until they get to the promised land, Sweden.

Exhibits like these go hand in hand with mainstream journalism which glorifies asylum seekers' journeys as heroic.

Is that a balanced approach to the question that is so central to Sweden's future. What is really going on, though?

The left-wing activist Merit Wäger has set up a whistleblowers' blog which acts as a clearing site for officials working for the migration board who want to tell of abuses but don't want their names in print: a kind of Wikileaks from the inside of the Swedish asylum processing machine. Wäger's heart is with refugees, but she is not blind to the realities of the corruption in the process.

So what stories do migration board officials tell in confidence? How Syrians long term resident in other European or Middle Eastern countries try their luck in Sweden by going there and claiming to have come straight from the civil war. Or people who apply for a work visa – relatively easily – fly in, change their approach and apply for asylum. How some use Swedish passports to get into the Schengen area and claim they have lost their original, home country passport when they get to Sweden.

The trade in stolen Swedish passports, one of the world's most valuable documents, and allowing residence in any European Union country, is a real problem. No other passport is so accepted without fuss in other rich countries as the Swedish one. No passport has so few visa requirements to travel to other countries as the Swedish one. However, there is a lot of fraud. Two hundred and fifty thousand Swedish passports have been reported missing, and many fall into the wrong hands.⁵ According to an activist with links to migration board officials, who dares not appear under their own name, many of these passports have been used one, two or five times for people to get to Sweden. Sometimes stolen passports are used. Sometimes the original passport holder is in on the scam. One man has managed to get 12 new Swedish passports in six months. Sometimes passports are forged.

One whistleblower policeman called Göran Larsson was interviewed by an alternative news blog and said Sweden is the European coordination centre for people smugglers' activities. There may be 100 networks extant, but he and his

⁵ See Arnstberg and Sandelin (2012)

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colleagues were told to close down their investigations into the area, even though they had managed to put over a dozen people behind bars, and exposed entire workshops for forged passports. The investigative team were told their efforts were “too expensive” by the police leadership, even though the cost was really no higher than policing two high-risk football matches. With all these stolen passports floating around and possibly going to ISIS “Sweden is a security risk to Europe”, Larsson said. He added that he was close to retirement and didn't fear damage to his career; other police were scared of losing their jobs.⁶

Once their journeys are over, the asylum seekers have to be housed while their claim is assessed. Nearly all make their claim to the migration board without their home country passports, which refugee smugglers tell them to throw away or at least withhold from the authorities, lest it harm their asylum chances.⁷

The Swedish government has bought or rented space in a large number of hotels, hostels, motels, leisure centres, schools, former spa centres, health sanatoria and so on. There have even been calls from officials working with immigrants to expropriate Swedish people's much loved summer houses in order to deal with the crisis. So far, the government has reckoned such a move as politically impossible.

With six thousand refugees arriving a week, the pressure is tenfold of what it was a decade ago. Think about those numbers for a small country like Sweden. A lot of refugees are placed in small towns with a population of a few hundred. Every week, a couple of small communities are seeing their populations doubled.

Begging has become a regular feature of the street scene in small Swedish towns. So has the sight of recently arrived African refugees, six or seven children in tow, walking around the streets, looking extremely out of place among the wooden houses and parked Volvos. A more and more common feature of country roads has been the sight of refugee arrivals stumbling along the side of the road en route to their out-of-town lodgings, be it a hostel or country hotel. According to an international YouGov poll, Swedes are the most tolerant people in Europe towards immigration. But has the Swedish government drained the “world's largest tolerance surplus” account?

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za-fM8AOoVM&feature=youtu.be>,
<http://www.dagenssamhalle.se/debatt/maenniskosmugglare-tillats-haerja-fritt-i-sverige-10845>

⁷ See Larsson, <http://www.dagenssamhalle.se/debatt/maenniskosmugglare-tillats-haerja-fritt-i-sverige-10845>

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The government does not completely compensate local councils for the extra costs of school, healthcare and other infrastructure and wear and tear costs wrought by new arrivals. Locals do that through higher taxes. Forty percent of the population saw higher local taxes in 2014. In contrast, the private entrepreneurs whom the government subcontracts to look after refugees are the big winners. One company of “asylum barons” made a fifty percent profit on each refugee housed.⁸

Most refugees as individuals are peaceful, hardworking and want to get on life. But a minority can make life difficult. Some of them don't like the food they get on arrival. “I wouldn't feed this to my dog,” one man told the news website hbl.fi, as he poked his finger in a risotto of turkey.⁹ Frustration, trauma, boredom, perhaps a lack of respect for the host country. They set off fire alarms, smash windows, cause arson incidents. Conflicts between different ethnic groups do happen, and at asylum centres groups are separated so they don't sleep in the same room.

I visited one of the asylum reception centres recently. It was a former hospital, once built as a TB sanatorium, some 10 km from the nearest town. A large, heavy Germanic-looking pile in the middle of a forest called Stora Ekeberg, it was another world: most Swedish interiors, whether railway station waiting rooms or homes, are spotless and, in December, lit up by Christmas lights. But the entrance hall to this place was poorly lit in fluorescent tube light; the smell was of cabbage and stale sweat, like some third-rate hotel in the former Soviet Union. Refugees, mostly Syrians and Eritreans, in tracksuit bottoms and string vests, moped down the long, bare corridors, their flip-flops snapping against the floor tiles. There were no signs of cosiness at all; the place was really run down.

There were carelessly handwritten signs in Arabic and English to the prayer room. We interviewed a doctor who had fled the war in Syria. Unshaven and dejected looking, with a child playing around his legs, he explained he had waited in the reception centre for five months. He was expecting to be given a house by the Swedish authorities. It was impossible not to feel sorry for him, or for the few others we spoke to, but that pity was mingled with a sense of irritation at his blithe sense of entitlement to what the Swedish taxpayer was expected to provide. Perhaps his English wasn't good enough to convey the complexities of his situation, and he really wanted to pay his way.

⁸ <http://www.helahalsingland.se/halsingland/hudiksvall/tjanar-miljoner-pa-bostader-at-flyktingar>

⁹ <http://hbl.fi/nyheter/2015-10-01/772637/korngryn-och-kalkon-foll-inte-pa-flyktinglapp>

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Once the lice, the boredom, the cabbage smell have been left behind, once immigrants get their permanent right to remain, many recent immigrants leave the rural areas where they might have stayed for six months to a year and settle in places where there are already sizeable diasporas in place, meaning towns like Sodertälje, or the suburbs (not the prosperous city centres) of Stockholm, Gothenburg or Malmö. If they don't get their own flat, they squeeze into flats inhabited by compatriots, sometimes many to a room.

There are housing shortages in Sweden's popular areas, such as not seen for decades. One documentary interviewed Samir, 25, who was staying at an asylum reception centre in a former mental hospital. "I have heard that the Swedish government wants to take in 50 or 100,000 refugees. Didn't they think first? The ones who wanted all these refugees, were they not aware of the housing shortages? Don't they talk to each other? Haven't they used their brains?"

The refugees tend not to go the places that arguably do need repopulating, the vast wastes of Lapland and the underpopulated forest counties of Dalarna, Småland and Värmland. But there are no jobs in those forest communities and it is hard to see that, should a large number of immigrants settle in these places, Sweden would not become a country of ethnic enclaves living in these little populated parts of Sweden. So they settle in the big towns, into ghettos. Some get jobs, some spend years in "Swedish for Immigrants" courses, while lifting benefits. Some join official back-to-work schemes, but these have a very low success rate, and corruption abounds: set up by their countrymen, these "career coaching" companies sign up refugees to their rosters, put them up to a fake job with a bogus third party firm that is run by a friend, and charges the Swedish state lots of money. Everyone splits the proceeds. The ex-refugee still doesn't have a real job.

Take Malmö. Sweden's most ethnically mixed city. It is true that, at the first glance, it doesn't look like the dystopia of American right-wing news broadcasts about the arrival of "Eurabia". Malmö has become synonymous internationally with Marseille as a bogeyman of failed multiculturalism. The centre is prosperous, internationalist, lively. There is a university feel to the many "global" young people who sit in cafes and busy about.

If you travel some minutes to the agreeable Möllevången area, it is hipster heaven, with cafes and bars, but already, the decline in prosperity compared to the centre of town is very evident. Lots of run down ethnic-run shops of a kind that was never seen in Sweden before. A few minutes' drive further and you get

to the high-rise suburb of Rosengård. Rosengård is the epitome of the segregated suburb of which there are now dozens in Sweden. There is no chic attached to it, and not a native Swede in sight.

Women of Middle Eastern origin find the restrictive honour culture of their home countries remanifested in the Swedish “suburbs” (often a synonym for immigrant areas) such as Rosengård.

Swedish left-wing commentators, often women, don't take their fears seriously. The founder of the network “Neither whore nor repressed”, Iranian-Swedish woman Amineh Kakabaveh, argued recently that these honour cultures did not only discriminate against women, but created jihadist warriors. She said that in the Swedish suburbs the climate is becoming ever more “hostile to women”. “Women are no longer welcome in certain cafes. Young girls can no longer hang out after dinner in certain places. Women cannot dress as they wish.”

Kakabaveh reported that the mother of two Seve Saleh, who has lived in Sweden for 13 years, says her Swedish suburb “more and more resembles Afghanistan”... “Islamists and fundamentalists say to young people they have to put veils on, that Swedish food is *haram* (dirty) and that they have to read the Koran. Muslim women with different lifestyles get constant reminders about how to live – even the food shop they are buying from. Men with long beards and white tunics look down on women without veils.” One woman known to Kakabaveh, Helin Gul, was told off for not wearing a veil with the words that they who don't follow the laws of Allah “deserve to die”. These cries for help from Islamic women networks against Islamic oppression of them are often treated dismissively by Swedish elite feminists in media and politics who, absurdly, sometimes call the Muslim women rising up against their oppression “Islamophobes”.

The best antidote to the creation of these cultural ghettos is integration into the Swedish workplace. The biggest problem with the Swedish immigration experiment is arguably that it takes immigrants a long time to get into employment: employment rate gaps between natives and immigrants are the largest in the developed world, according to the OECD: 51% of non-European immigrants are in work compared to 82% of natives.¹⁰ In contrast, in the UK, male immigrants

¹⁰ <http://www.tino.us/2013/12/skakande-ny-rapport-fran-scb-om-integration/> on employment gaps see <http://www.exponerat.net/sverige-har-lagst-sysselsattningsgrad-for-utomeuropeiska-invandrare-inom-eu/>

have higher employment levels than natives. The integration of women into the workplace is a liberation for them, but the gaps in employment for them are even larger than for men. There is no better curb on anti-immigrant racism than the sight of people who are obviously immigrants working hard.

Despite its prosperous centre, and renovated harbour area, Malmö offers a vision of what a future Sweden could look like: 58% of the city's population under 44 is of a non-Swedish background.¹¹ Some Swedes worry that the gang criminality so prevalent in Malmö's suburbs will become a problem in the rest of Sweden too, as the rest of Sweden becomes more ethnically mixed. Social trust levels in Malmö are the lowest in Sweden. There is a very high degree of welfare dependency, Crime levels are higher than the national average: there were three spectacular bomb attacks alone in December 2014, including the destruction of a court building.¹² A spate of 30 hand grenade attacks in July 2015 reached into even the wealthy suburbs.¹³ Malmö has experienced twice as many people injured in gun shootings, and more gun shot murders, than nearby Copenhagen, in Denmark, a city five times Malmö's size.¹⁴

The fragile process of assimilation is undermined by the continuous influx of new refugees. As research by the British academic Paul Collier has shown, continuous immigration makes assimilation harder. This is common sense: if an immigrant community in Sweden gets a continual transfusion of new arrivals from the Middle East who speak the old language and possess the old ways, that community is less likely to adapt to the host country. And that maybe the best way to help integration is to turn off the tap for a while. Yet to point out this obvious argument is a complete and total taboo in Sweden.

Malmö has not balanced its budget in years: it receives about 4 billion kronor in transfers from other, richer municipalities every year.¹⁵ Most of the immigrants in Malmö vote for the Social Democrat party. The Social Democrats were Sweden's virtually permanent ruling party for much of the twentieth century. Once strongly

¹¹ <https://affes.wordpress.com/2014/07/01/utlandsk-bakgrund-i-majoritet-i-malmo/>

¹² <http://www.expressen.se/kvallsposten/kraftig-explosion-vid-rattscentrum-i-malmo/>

¹³ <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/ny-sprangning-med-handgranat-i-malmo/>

¹⁴ <http://www.svt.se/nyheter/regionalt/vast/extrem-situation-jamfort-med-grannlanderna>

¹⁵ http://www.realtid.se/ArticlePages/201409/09/20140909140345_Realtid890/20140909140345_Realtid890.dbp.asp

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identified with the very essence of Swedishness, they were the party of Swedish workers' rights. These days the Social Democrats have become the "immigrant party", which safeguards the immigrants' benefits, and the white working class, while they haven't completely abandoned the Social Democrats, are more and more attracted to the third force represented by the immigration-sceptic Sweden Democrats. The media usually call them "populist", "far-rightist", "rightist", "immigration sceptical"; sometimes even "neo-fascist". Are they, though?

Just who are the Sweden Democrats?

An elegantly besuited 35-year-old man in square-framed black glasses and slicked back hair stands at the podium, sipping a glass of water and talking to his assistants. He has given up, for the moment, trying to complete his speech. So he decides to wait out the roaring and heckling in the alternative crowd of hostile, mostly young, people who have gathered behind his supporters. They shout “no racists on our streets”; stand with their backs turned to him.

He is on the most punishing tour of any politician in Sweden: 150 small towns like this one in the summer of 2014. His name is Jimmie Åkesson, born 1979, leader of the Sweden Democrats, and without a doubt one of the most hated men in Sweden. Only a slight tightening of the face behind his glasses indicates the enormous internal tension as he faces down audiences like this, day after day. His outnumbered supporters rally and eventually he is able to stop sipping water – perhaps to conceal his downturned expression, struggling with the moment – and he eventually is able to complete his speech. And then it's off to another small town.

Establishment hostility to the Sweden Democrats is compact. Journalists hate them, abuse them in the most vile terms. State television ignores them as much as legally possible within its remit of impartiality. No Swedish mainstream politician even dares whisper what has become a standard policy fare in the rest of Europe – limit immigration, a central Tory policy, for instance – and which is the Sweden Democrats' main policy plank. Spend the money on pensions, elderly care – and refugee assistance in the neighbourhood, where the assistance money goes much further.

Ten years ago the Sweden Democrats were nowhere. They had a couple of local council seats and that was it. Five years ago they entered the Swedish parliament, the *Riksdag*, for the first time. They had a decent 5.4% of the vote, which made them bigger than several mainstream parties of long standing and history.

Their main goal for the election of 2014 was to beat even that. Reach 15% of the vote and become the third biggest party in parliament and force the winner,

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either the leftist social democratic bloc or the conservative bloc, to ally with it to be able to form a government. In return for which the Sweden Democrats would get concessions on immigration policies. The party claims to have introduced a zero tolerance towards racism. Racism, they remind people, is very different from being sceptical about immigration.

In the early 1990s, though, it is true the party was much more radical. The then leadership cabal would march to the King Charles XII statue in Kungsträdgården Square in central Stockholm to put a wreath underneath his plinth on the anniversary of his death on 30 November 1718.

In the 1980s, the 18th century warrior king's statue in a central Stockholm square, with a finger pointing to the Russian east, became a focus for Nationalist and Neo-Nazi Swedes. There would often be trouble in the later part of the evening of his anniversary. Smashed bottles and conflicts with the police. While the then leading Sweden Democrats were never implicated in political violence, according to one writer who has chronicled the history of the party, they came from that sort of political milieu.

Early days

The party was formed in 1988 out of the more extremist *Bevara Sverige Svenskt* (Keep Sweden Swedish) movement. It cycled through several leaders in its early years and by 1992 the leader was called Anders Klarström, He had been the boss of the more openly Nazi Nordic National party (*Nordiska rikspartiet*) and been convicted for illegal threats made to a TV personality who had demonstrated publicly against Nazism. The internal publications of the movement celebrated so called White Power music and Viking Rock which had lyrics like “*Vad gör ni här era blattesvin*”. (What are you doing here you fucking Paki scum). They also sold books like *The Extent of Racial Mixture in the Holy Roman Empire* and *Beliefs and Spirituality in Heathen Scandinavia*.

In 1995 the party had a new leader, Mikael Jansson, who rejected bomber jackets and Nazi slogans. But Jansson himself reportedly retained “the old instincts” despite the suit-like exterior and in one information video could be seen clenching his fist and called for “Sweden to be Swedish”. Party representatives would appear at public meetings and call for thousands of Muslims to go home – immediately. The party was small and split, though. Different factions were at odds with each other. It was pursued vehemently by an organisation called Expo, Sweden’s equivalent of Searchlight. Stieg Larsson – best-selling thriller writer of the Lisbeth Salander stories – had a day job as a graphic designer for the Swedish press agency.

In his spare time, Stieg Larsson worked as a researcher/writer at Expo, and “outed” Sweden Democrats. His obsession with what he believed were secret undercurrents of Nazism everywhere you scratch the surface of modern Swedish life resurfaces in his books, such as *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

Change at the party was afoot, though. The leading figure here was a man called Jimmie Åkesson. Raised in the southern town of Sölvesborg in a working class family by a father who was a small businessman in the flooring business and a mother who cared for the elderly, Åkesson excelled at school. He joined the young Moderates, but soon found them too neoliberal to his taste, not interested enough in traditions. He liked the look of the Sweden Democrats without knowing much about their racist past, he claims. He joined them by fax.

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In 2005, then 26 and chair of Sweden Democrat youth organisation, Åkesson was elected leader of the whole party. Åkesson had the support of four fellow ex-students from his time studying at Lund University.

Racism was out, so was ethnic nationalism. They believed in a kind of civic nationalism. People of different backgrounds might become Swedes, no problem, provided they assimilated.

Åkesson's gang of four included future party secretary, party newspaper editor and chief policy adviser/press spokesman. They admired the Danish People's Party and the Austrian Freedom Party. The Freedom Party was admired because it had formed a government under its flamboyant and (as it turned out after his death in a car crash) gay leader Jörg Haider. The Danish party was slightly less successful, but a more appropriate model, since Denmark was closer to Sweden. It had entered parliament with 7.4% of the vote and was eventually to exercise a lot of influence on Denmark's restrictive immigration legislation.

One among the gang of four, future party secretary Björn Söder, told a student reporter their club did not believe in the multicultural society and just wanted to preserve "typically Swedish traditions". He denied they were fascist, or rather said they were no more fascist than the founder of the Swedish welfare state, a Social Democrat prime minister called Per Albin Hansson, whose 1930s metaphor of the egalitarian and communal "People's Home" (folkhemmet), where "no one is favoured and no one neglected", is the most enduring political symbol in modern Swedish history.

When Åkesson had outmanoeuvred the "paleofascist" Mikael Jansson, there was some troubleshooting. Private polling showed that 70% of the general public disliked the Sweden Democrats.

On Åkesson's accession, Operation Clean Up was launched. Offensive members were excluded. One senior Sweden Democrat, member of the old executive committee, was thrown out of the party for criticising the fact another party representative had an adopted daughter of Indian origin.

Åkesson ditched the old party symbol, the burning torch, replacing it with a small blue flower. There was a mainstream campaign pop song – to wash away the associations of white power music that haunted the party. They also had a new slogan, "Security and tradition". In the elections of 2006, they doubled their vote to 2.9% of the electorate. Not enough to breach the 4% barrier to get a seat in parliament.

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In 2010, they exceeded the parliamentary barrier and were in, and the party had a new ideological profile “social conservative”. Some Sweden Democrats pointed out that their immigration policy was no more restrictive than that of the British Conservatives, whose manifesto effectively called for a reduction in immigration from the hundreds to the tens of thousands.

However, many Swedes find everything the Sweden Democrats, even the new, moderate Sweden Democrats, claim to stand for very offensive. Party members have found themselves sacked from jobs, excluded from trade unions, their businesses not recommended on the customer grapevine. Their meetings have been attacked and broken up by left-wing activists. Their meetings banned from venues. Their politicians turned away from restaurants and bars when on their night out, as private persons. Their politicians have been beaten bloody. Even though they have been treated in a very discriminatory manner, they have had very little support from the Swedish Establishment.

In the spring of 2007 the Sweden Democrats had booked a conference centre in the town of Norrköping for their annual general meeting. They had booked well ahead, but a few weeks before the AGM was due the conference centre rang up and cancelled. The staff said there was a classical concert the same evening at the same venue.

Sweden Democrats also find themselves excluded from being active members of trade unions. For instance, Transport, the trade union of lorry drivers and transport workers, excluded seven active Sweden Democrats after being tipped off about one, an aspiring councillor, in a newspaper. Outright sackings have also occurred. For instance, an intern at the Swedish embassy in Tel Aviv was asked to leave when it emerged he was an active blogger for the Sweden Democrats.

Richard Jomshof, one of the Gang of Four, the editor of the SD Courier newspaper and a councillor for the Sweden Democrats in Karlskrona, was a teacher by profession. Social Science and History were his subjects, and he was apparently very good at it. A good listener, skilful, clever, always there for the pupils. In student polls, he was voted the best and most popular teacher at his school. But he always ended up being sacked.

The leader of the organisation for headteachers told one newspaper that it was illegal to discriminate against candidates on grounds of their political views, provided this did not affect their ability to do their jobs. (Needless to say, plenty of individuals who vote for the Swedish far-left become history teachers in Sweden

all the time, no problem.) Despite the judgement, Jomshof clearly continued to be sacked. It was hard to prove: employers blamed a lack of work, the end of contracts.

The most alarming type of incident the Sweden Democrats regularly faced was the violence to which they were subjected. In October 2006, a hundred or so newly elected council representatives from the Sweden Democrats had gathered at the Citizens' House in the town of Eslöv. The meeting had barely started when a brick crashed through the window. One senior Sweden Democrat sustained an injury to the arm. This was followed by shouts and more broken windows. Empty paint cans, bottles, stuff from a nearby building site all came flying in. Gathered on the rainy evening asphalt outside were masked men, wearing the hooded gear associated with members of AFA, the revolutionary front of young men "dedicated to combating racism". AFA pulled back, its members jumped on the train to Malmö. Two policemen were actually present at the meeting. However, outnumbered maybe 30 to 1, they did not intervene.

At another meeting, outside the town of Växjö, 20 Sweden Democrats were attacked by masked men who broke the window and sprayed tear gas and pepper spray into the venue. When the participants staggered out of the building, they were set upon with iron bars, sticks and other implements. Eighteen persons were injured. Several went to hospital. Several cars were destroyed but by the time the police arrived, all the masked men had vanished.

The district chair of one county returned to his flat one day to find an axe stuck into his door. His windows were regularly broken and his facades spray-painted with threatening warnings to leave the party – which he did. Erik Almqvist, one of the party's main speakers, found himself attacked by bottles and spit whenever he spoke in public. His flat door was often covered in graffiti and one morning, on his way to a meeting, he found his door had been superglued shut.

Who were the Sweden Democrats supporters in the first decade of the 2000s? The right-wing neo-Nazi activists had only even been a minority, now they were even fewer of them since Åkesson's clean up campaigns. Gothenburg University did a study of Sweden Democrat voters and found they were, in these early days, disaffected, mostly male, individuals from the working class. Sixty-three percent of voters identified themselves as workers. That was a higher proportion than either of the traditional workers' parties, the Social Democrats (54%) and the former Communist Left party (50%). Salaries were below the national average, albeit not by much. Many Sweden Democrat supporters lived in small towns.

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They were suspicious of homosexual rights to adopt children, wanted harsher punishments for criminals, and some restrictions on abortion limits. More spent on defence. Basically they were the conservative working class. In Britain, these voters would easily find a home in the Tory party.

There was big scepticism against the EU and, of course, immigration. Contempt for politicians and the political class was very high: only 11% of the party's voters trusted politicians, compared to half the voting public at large.

The social scientists at Gothenburg University kept in touch with SD voters in a so-called electronic panel, where 3,500 voters gave answers to questions posed by the researchers related to recent events. Prof Henrik Oscarsson described SD's voters as feeling they were in a "culture war" with the rest of Sweden.

The values and debates that took place in Dagens Nyheter, the left-liberal paper of the Stockholm middle class, or on Swedish state radio, or on TV news, did not reach out to this voting group. They were in a different cultural climate zone. Why were these well-paid journalists, politicians and celebrities crying on TV over the deportation of refugees who had thrown away their passports and lied to the authorities when they came to Sweden? Why was the question of homosexual marriage seen as the most important domestic question in the country, week after week, when unemployment was rising, benefits were being cut and companies were outsourcing? The elite inhabited a different moral universe.

The middle classes liked cosmopolitanism: it offered exciting foreign career possibilities abroad, and interesting new cuisines at home. But the conservative working classes were "the losers of the modern world" as workers' jobs left the country, said Prof Henrik Oscarsson at Gothenburg University.

The Sweden Democrats continued to reach out beyond their base, to other losers in Swedish society: the poor, the unemployed, and especially the elderly. In the election campaign of 2010, the media continued to discriminate against the party, symbolised by the refusal of a commercial TV channel to screen a Sweden Democrat advertisement.

"All politics is about prioritisations", a speaker intones as two bureaucrats, the pensions administrator and immigration administrator, sit side by side. The state budget clock stops running. An elderly woman on a walking frame competes with a group of women in burkas pushing prams, who rush ahead and win. The message: there is only so much money to go around, and if you want the money to go to Sweden's pensioners and not immigrants, vote for the Sweden Democrats.

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However, the TV company's chief executive said: "the advertisement contravenes the democracy paragraph in the radio and TV regulations." He added, sententiously: "The decision was not very difficult to make."¹⁶

At an annual political fair of lobbyists, journalists and politicians, a priest, Lennart Koskinen, tried to shut the party's tent gathering down because it was situated across from the Swedish church tent and he thought people would be confused by the proximity of the two organisations' locations. He was moved off the premises and the police later confirmed that the Sweden Democrats did, in fact, have permission to be where they were. On other occasions, the Swedish church, rather pretentiously, rings church bells – usually done only at the outbreak of a world war – in towns where the Sweden Democrats hold their gatherings.

At the election in September 2010, Sweden Democrats entered parliament for the first time. At 5.7% it was a doubling of the result of 2006. At the opening of parliament, accompanied by a service in the Storkyrkan big church in the old town, Stockholm's bishop, Eva Brunne, made a strong statement against treating people differently that had the Sweden Democrats' newly elected parliamentarians – in knee breech national dress – walk out in protest.

After the election of September 2010, the Moderate-led coalition under Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt stayed on in government. The Sweden Democrats' success had deprived the government of a majority, but Reinfeldt struck deals with the left-wing opposition, completely cutting the Sweden Democrats, who would have held the balance of power in normal circumstances, out of any influence.

On immigration, Reinfeldt struck a deal with the Green Party and made immigration rules even more generous than before. Illegals – people who had been set for deportation but hadn't returned – were now given free health and dental care, effectively an admission they could stay.

In an interview with *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* newspaper in 2011, Prime Minister Reinfeldt admitted he had a black ancestor – a circus artist who performed in Stockholm at the turn of the last century. It is clear, from the interview and other bits of evidence, that destroying the Sweden Democrats after their election success and entry into parliament in 2010 became something of a personal crusade for

¹⁶ <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/valet-2010/tv4-stoppar-sds-reklamfilm/>

Reinfeldt. He told his interviewer:

“The Sweden Democrats argue that there is an ‘us’ who have to be protected against ‘them.’ Before they can become part of the ‘us,’ they have to cross high barriers and pass tough entry tests. And to show the immigrants they are not as good as we are and are not to be trusted, their entry is only temporary and if they misbehave they are out. That is the core message of the Sweden Democrats.”¹⁷

“Sweden is a product of mixing. I think that is the beautiful thing about Sweden. I am a product of this.”

Reinfeldt had been a staunch believer in open borders since the late 1990s when he chaired the Moderates’ youth organisation. It was an article of faith among many libertarians of his ilk that borders held back national and personal economic growth.

Reinfeldt’s hatred notwithstanding, the Sweden Democrats continued to grow in the polls between 2010 and 2014, helped by active blog “alternative” newspapers that took pride in reporting what the mainstream papers did not.

There were Moderate voices pushing for stricter immigration rules, but Reinfeldt slapped them down. He publicly upbraided his Minister of Immigration, Tobias Billström, when he tentatively suggested that discussing the volume of immigration – now running at such record levels they couldn’t be integrated into society on time – might be a good idea following discussions in the Moderate Working Group.

Reinfeldt said: “The Moderate Working Group does not talk in this way. Immigration enriches Sweden and a responsible party like the Moderates wants to be a voice of balance.” A few weeks later, when Billström hinted that many refugees who “went missing” were hiding among their countrymen, Reinfeldt made another public comment about his immigration minister:

“He has crossed the line a few times and it is bothersome that he has done so on several occasions. But I have made it clear to Tobias Billström that the way to restore faith in him is by keeping to the humane route in politics and that he works hard to restore his credibility.”

¹⁷ <http://www.sydsvenskan.se/sverige/sd-far-reinfeldt-att-se-rott/>

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With occasional demonstrations of the lash like the attack on Billström, Reinfeldt kept the Moderates disciplined: even though many on the right of the party worried about immigration, in public the party was pretty united behind Reinfeldt. But as a result they fell back in the opinion polls. Meanwhile, some negative media reports began to filter in from abroad. The New York Times, in an article headlined “Fraying Tolerance”, wrote that the reception given to the Sweden Democrats had tarnished the country’s reputation:

“A 2012 police study found that nearly half of the Sweden Democrat party’s politicians reported threats or assaults in 2011. Some had been beaten with iron bars, some had bombs detonated in their cars, and some had cans of tear gas emptied into their mouths in front of their children. Mainstream responses to such behaviour have been weak. In speeches, interviews and op-eds, politicians and commentators have either dismissed the party’s allegations as disingenuous attempts to paint themselves as victims or, worse, offered veiled endorsements of the attacks. When asked to comment on the assault on a young Sweden Democrat politician, the... prime minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, answered with a cliché equivocation: “I condemn all forms of violence and harassment, but ...” and suggested that those who supported “a hateful way of looking at relationships” should expect “things like this.”

Issues that favour the Sweden Democrats

Yet the Sweden Democrats had a strong set of cards in their hand for the election of 2014. Schools, violence, the economy, the visible change of the demographics on the streets, the local communes bursting to breaking point with refugees. Fear of Islam, especially with the rise of ISIS in the Middle East. The perception that violence and crime were on the increase.

There was the decline in educational standards, as young immigrants from countries such as Afghanistan and Eritrea, with little or no schooling, joined the class rooms. Worsening schools are a worrying sign your society is going to be in trouble 10-20 years down the line. The signs are that mass immigration has damaged Swedish school standards. According to the economic organisation OECD's PISA tests – standardised tests of all member states' 15-year-olds' capacities at maths, reading and natural science – Sweden has seen the biggest falls in standards of any country since the last survey in 2009. The biggest drop in maths and natural science, and second biggest drop in reading skills apart from Malaysia. There were big falls in 2006 and 2009 too. As recently as 2003, Sweden was a well above average performer.

Sweden now scores well below northern and west European rivals like Switzerland, Holland, UK, Germany and Finland and in a cluster that includes Portugal, Hungary, Chile and Slovakia. Closer to bottom-performing Peru than top-performing China.¹⁸

The Labour Environment Board, an official body, reported a 40% increase in school violence between 2012 and 2014, according to a report on Swedish Radio.¹⁹

Selective examples should always be taken with a pinch of salt, and the 40% rise may well reflect a greater propensity to complain rather than a genuine rise. Still, the example is worth quoting. A pupil organisation representative, called Persia, was interviewed on the radio programme. She said: "Every day. I mean every day.

¹⁸ <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/sverige-samst-i-klassen/>

¹⁹ <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6100139>

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Every time I go out in the corridor during a break I see someone getting kicked. It happens every day so you get used to it.”

An article in Dagens Nyheter from a freelance journalist-turned-supply teacher describes the utter chaos in a school class in a high-rise, ethnically dominated suburb.

The school he describes may be familiar stuff to teachers in Detroit ghettos, but an unwelcome novelty for Sweden. The teacher feels panic attacks in his first week and wonders whether he should throw in the towel. He must be one of the few journalists, or ex-journalists, who has ever entered the reality of the demographic experiment whose virtues his profession constantly preaches. He observes:

“Situation is added to situation and mostly I am struck by the pupils’ attitude and lack of respect. The pupils’ lack of responsibility, the lack of rules from teachers. Outdoor clothes are worn during the lessons. People have hats and coats on. Pupils come and go when they feel like it. Chewing gum is chewed, pupils fight in class. There is loud music. Some pupils dance on the tables. Some of them stare into their mobiles. People leave gobbits of spit on the table. They scream. Bawl. They hurl swearwords.”

Another of the trump cards that the Sweden Democrats held before the election of 2014 was the growing doubts about the profitability of immigration.

Politicians in government on both sides of the North Sea have often talked up the positive economic effects of immigration. “We need them to look after our ageing populations” is the usual mantra. That claim has been contested, however. Experts in the UK such as Adair Turner, former FSA Chairman, have found pensioners working a little longer and economic measures to make it easy for young couples to set up a home and have children could easily solve the age ratio support problem.²⁰ In Britain, there has been a much more honest debate than in Sweden about immigration. Much more evidence-based and less ideological. An important document here is a House of Lords report on immigration – drawing on high level witness expertise from across the spectrum of British academic, business and political life – saying the economic benefits were minimal and that

²⁰ http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/p475_old_demo_pension-1652.pdf

the costs on social cohesion and pressures on housing and schools must be taken into consideration.²¹

It is completely impossible today for a similar assembly of Swedish experts to come with a similar report; equally impossible that Swedish politicians would commission such a thing. And yet, the unprofitability of immigration is even more likely to hold true in Sweden than Britain, given the greater proportion of immigrants out of work.

In Sweden, the employment gap between immigrants and natives is the highest in the OECD (the club of rich states). In Sweden the gap is 31 percent. In the UK 14%. The EU average is 12%. That means that Sweden has far more unproductive immigrants, immigrants not contributing to the tax take, than other countries.²²

Swedish politicians, rather than “importing people who will pay for an ageing population” are, more than in any other country in Europe, importing individuals who compete with this ageing population for welfare resources. Consumers of, rather than producers for, the welfare state. A recent Swedish think tank report has highlighted the 30% decline in elderly care over 20 years due to underfunding.²³

Top Swedish economist Assar Lindbeck, former chairman of the Economics Nobel prize committee, is one of few intellectual dissenters in Swedish public life, probably because he is very old and very famous. He blames the lack of focus in Swedish immigration policies on prioritising high skilled immigrants, the way almost every other developed country with a mass immigration policy, like Australia and Canada, does.

Coming from some of the most underdeveloped countries in the world, their skill levels are often very low. In Sweden, not only is the employment gap the largest in the OECD, so is the skills gap between natives and immigrants.²⁴

There it is, on page 291 of the 2013 Skills Outlook report: a 53 point gap between Swedish native and non-native reading skills, compared to a 22 point gap in Spain and a 21 point gap in England. And an average skills gap, across the OECD, of 29.

²¹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldselect/ldeconaf/82/82.pdf>

²² Eurostat news release STAT/14/119- 30 July 2014 Unemployment rate for non-EU citizens notably higher than for nationals in the EU28. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-14-119_en.htm

²³ <http://www.expressen.se/debatt/det-finns-manga-dyra-luckor-i-aldrevarden/>

²⁴ http://skills.oecd.org/OECD_Skills_Outlook_2013.pdf

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“An important background to the difficulties of integrating low educated immigrants into Swedish life is that institutions and rules in Sweden are not adapted to large volumes of poorly educated immigrants,” writes Lindbeck.²⁵ This sets Sweden apart from Canada and Australia, which don't hesitate to put the national self-interest first by having a points system to attract the highly skilled – and fierce border controls to keep out illegals.

Anyhow, the Swedish model is dependent on high labour participation by both sexes, and cultural willingness to do so. That is clearly changing: many immigrant cultures have a different concept of the role of women. They stay out of the labour market to raise traditional families and are a net drain on the state's resources.

According to the state statistics board, 48% of households on social benefits have immigrant backgrounds, even though they comprise just 17% of the population. A massive overrepresentation of immigrants.²⁶

What native Swedes – 83% of the population – get then is less than half, 43%, of a welfare budget that has already been shrinking due to tax cuts. The latest academic study on the cost of immigration, relying on data a decade old, from Swedish researcher Jan Ekberg, estimated immigration costing 2% of GDP annually. But levels of immigration were much lower then.

Crime and violence, the effects on the economy of immigration and the decline in schools are easy to understand. A larger philosophical issue, which is difficult to put into a sound bite, is the future of the European welfare state in a world of huge inequalities and rapid population growth. I have heard it said that the north-west European welfare state is the eighth wonder of the modern world, not natural at all, a careful construction dependent on a certain historical development, national feeling, and cultural and institutional setup. A welfare state is a social contract between the generations, so when Fredrik Reinfeldt said recently that Sweden was not a country for “those who have been here three or four generations” but those who came in the middle of their lives and made something of it, he misunderstood, or ignored, the basis of what holds Swedish society together.

²⁵ <http://www.nationalekonomi.se/sites/default/files/NEFfiler/41-4-al.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/19135/2013-6-19.pdf> p19 table Tabell F. Biståndsbelopp fördelade efter inrikes resp. utrikes födda hushåll 2012

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Homogeneity helps, so do high education levels. An understanding that rights must be followed by equivalent and equal duties to the collective, whose identity is underpinned by a shared sense of history, culture and language. Solidarity, trust, discipline, hard work, unselfishness, a working education system, have been the secrets to Sweden's success, the reason why it has been so modern and prosperous, if a bit disciplined and politically conformist.

And, yet of course, one understands immigrants' drive – the quest for a better life. So immigration is actually an interesting issue, raising a lot of questions relating to the modern political condition. How can global justice be reconciled with the national solidarity that has underpinned, so far, Europe's generous welfare states, of which Sweden's is still the most emblematic of all? Are transnational unions like the EU which allow people to move across borders good for the preservation of the underlying structures, the nation states, that are still much more important and indeed are necessary for transnational institutions to function? Are the political elites calling for open borders because they personally benefit from it, more than the taxpayer funded welfare community into which they were born?

Is globalisation a positive or negative force for the underprivileged? Or which groups of underprivileged are we talking about?

Nationalism has a bad reputation, especially to those with a vulgar or popular understanding of history. Fredrik Reinfeldt, prime minister during the recent large surge in immigration, recently called nationalism a “revolting disease” of Europe.²⁷ To me, the idea that nationalism is just about war, hatred and destruction is a banal interpretation of the term. But it is as if he is unaware of that quiet but proud national feeling that has held the Swedish state together throughout its long period of successful – and peaceful – development. (Sweden is one of the oldest nation states in Europe, founded in 970.)

Nationalism can have positive sides, and it doesn't necessarily have to link to war. It engages people's solidarity for strangers (in the same country), in the form of a willingness to pay taxes, and it is arguable that it is a peaceful nationalism that has underpinned the modern equality of Europe's nation states. Nation states are still the focus of people's loyalties, provide nearly all the institutions that maintain justice and prosperity, and remain the main locus for democratic politics.

²⁷ <http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/3490194.svd>

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Western states are also functioning units. They are kept together by more or less common values, values that are (in the West) *functioning* values. The Western nation state works. Globalisation undermines that, and immigration is part of the process of globalisation. Whatever is touted as the replacement had better work even better.

Swedish institutional hostility to rational debate

Immigration ought to be an issue that, far from being the preserve of racists, unites classic conservatives concerned with cohesion, quality of living, and economic growth, as well as the “old left” concerned about domestic underprivileged groups of natives suffering from the dismantling and reprioritisation of the welfare state. In fact, it ought to interest anyone with a rational interest in Sweden’s future.

Unfortunately the debate for a long time has not been carried out in the public domain at nearly the level of sophistication needed, either by the Sweden Democrats and their outlets on the web, let alone mainstream politicians and most of the media. The focus on the coverage has been on the rise of racism, the danger from the Sweden Democrats, their latest scandals, like mobile phone video footage of some senior Sweden Democrats insulting some immigrants, the “threat” of 21st century “Fascism”.

Less on the actual issues the Sweden Democrats raise which have given rise to their popularity with normal people, and would not have done if the mainstream parties had taken these issues seriously. To be fair, some newspapers, notably *Svenska Dagbladet* and lately *Expressen*, have begun to question mass immigration, or at least integration failures, but it is a recent conversion. And none of the mainstream parties even consider the possibility of limits.

Too often, journalists equate scepticism about immigration and anxieties over Sweden’s future with racism. And the Sweden Democrats with Nazis or Fascists.

This constant demonisation of the Sweden Democrats and their views is a big barrier to the immigration affecting Sweden being brought up as a subject for acceptable discussion. Swedish journalists have a lot to answer for. As many despairing people turning to blogs and alternative online media complain: the Swedish media – state TV the worst offender – overly glamorise immigration and multiculturalism, cover up its negative consequences, withhold inconvenient facts and create an emotional/intellectual climate about immigration where rational scepticism is somehow seen as “evil”.

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Women journalists sadly seem to be among the worst when it comes to the belief in “shutting the racists down”; in actuality shutting down rational debate about immigration. Elite women bully their less confident and educated sisters, and as a result women are the big remaining voting bloc resistant to the Sweden Democrats’ surge.

As we have seen, even the New York Times has drawn attention to the behaviour of the Swedish media. Sometimes it is relatively harmless: on the national day, the TV channel which has a singer sing the national anthem with different words. (Instead of “I want to live and die in Northern Lands, the impeccably politically correct “I want to live and die on Earth”. In Swedish, they rhyme.) Or the cartoon accompanying a newspaper editorial that puts a Swedish flag on a mosque to mark national day. Sometimes downright disinformation, as when the media report that 45% of the public are in favour of the question “Do you want fewer refugees arriving”, implying that 55% are in favour, leaving out the fact that only 29% were, the rest being don’t knows. So turning a majority against immigration into a majority in favour!

Another piece of disinformation is when the press labels all immigrants – labour migrants as well as family reunification migrants – with the emotionally loaded word “refugees”. The press frequently agitates in extremely emotional terms, or quotes officials who do, about “needy people fleeing war and death” and “Sweden’s duties under the UN convention” even though quota refugees only account for a fraction of the people Sweden lets in, willy nilly. The rest come under the discretion of Swedish, not international or EU, law. Many migrants are not fleeing war, just poverty.

The major Swedish newspapers don’t allow reader comments. Newspaper columnists call the comment sections “the piss gutter of the internet”; this is a shame. Journalists would benefit from getting their views challenged.

When the anthropologist/journalist duo of Karl Olov Arnstberg and Gunnar Sandelin were researching their self-published book on the problems of immigration, mainstream journalists were afraid of being seen with them. “You have no idea how horrible the intellectual climate is in Sweden”, said one. Sandelin told one interviewer that he had journalistic colleagues working in state television or radio and for the big newspapers and several were famous names. “They tell me that don’t have the courage to say what they think of immigration at work, because then their careers are finished.”

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Swedish journalists are predominantly of the left; Prof Kent Asp of Gothenburg University has been researching the issue since 1979. Fifty-two percent of the employees of Swedish state radio and television are supporters of the leftist Green party, which gets about seven percent of the national vote and supports an extremely liberal immigration policy.²⁸

When a Swedish columnist tweeted a critical comment that Islamic countries dominate the terrorism lists, his newspaper not only failed to give him public support when he was overwhelmed by death threats from irate Muslims and had to go and live abroad, but actually sacked him.

Marcus Birro, the sacked columnist in question, wrote a devastating series of personal remarks on his blog about his former colleagues in the paper and their complete lack of support, even in private. "I am not in trouble...it is free speech that is in trouble."

Sweden was one of the few West European countries where there was very little support expressing freedom of speech by republishing the Mohammed cartoons in 2006. Indeed, a webpage that did was closed down by direct order of the foreign minister. In other European countries, for instance Germany, many newspapers republished the Mohammed cartoons out of solidarity with the Danish daily *Jyllandsposten*.

Angela Merkel honoured the Danish Mohammed cartoonist with a press freedom award, something that I can't imagine would happen in Sweden.

Swedish institutions follow the media. The law cracks down on anything that can be construed as "Nazi" or "racist". The persecution has reached absurd levels. For instance, when a second division ice hockey chairman posted a photo of a German WW2 plane with a Finnish swastika symbol from a recent airshow, he was sacked. Despite grovelling, and saying he was only historically interested, he was relieved of his post.²⁹ One guy was arrested and fined for wearing the joke "Hitler – European tour" T shirts (which used to be sold at Camden Market...). The trade unions sack members who are politically engaged in the Sweden Democrats. Museums put up huge "scare quote" explanations for art from the early twentieth century which doesn't agree with "contemporary democratic

²⁸ <http://www.dagensmedia.se/nyheter/print/dagspress/article3466697.ece>

²⁹ <http://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2015/10/02/naziskandal-hockeyordforande-avgar-efter-bild-pa-finsk-svastika>

moral values”. Hospital workers organise protests when the Sweden Democrats come on visits: “Step back Nazi swine”.

The Swedish Church refuses to say a word about Muslim destruction of Christian minorities in the Middle East for fear, presumably, it would give succour to the Sweden Democrats. The bishop of Stockholm calls for the conversion of churches into Muslim places of prayer.

The politically correct Nobel Foundation doesn't invite the head of the Sweden Democrats, Jimmie Åkesson, to the Nobel dinner, even though he is the party leader of a parliamentary party, because he does “not share” the “democratic set of values” the Foundation wants to be associated with. Never mind that the ambassadors of murder regimes like Eritrea are welcome to attend the dinner, according to usual diplomatic protocol. The publishing industry refuses to touch anything that is critical of immigration.

While bookstores give prominent display to books about feminism, suffering refugees, antiracism, promoting them by putting them face up rather than spine up in the bookshelves, they don't stock books discussing immigration at all, that I have seen in my admittedly casual survey of bookshops. In contrast, at Waterstones in the UK it is quite easy to find immigration sceptical books like Paul Collier's *Exodus*, Ed West's *The Diversity Illusion* and David Goodhart's *The British Dream: Successes and Failures of Post-war Immigration*.

Schools, other institutions such as publishers, newspapers, libraries, and universities also plug the multiculturalist line.

Universities have been criticised by the University of Malmö scholar Göran Adamson for pursuing an ideological, multiculturalist line and not allowing any critique of that line. He was relieved of his position, which he blames on his criticism, and he is now teaching at the University of Copenhagen, in neighbouring Denmark. When his book *Swedish Multiculturalism – a Critique from the Left* was published, he started getting harsh attacks from his university bosses. “The chiefs swore and cursed me. They didn't say anything about my book, all they said was that there was extensive criticism towards me from students and colleagues. I had problems collaborating and my teaching wasn't up to standard,” he said.³⁰

³⁰ <http://malmo.lokaltidningen.se/docent-malm%C3%B6-h%C3%B6gskola-%C3%A4r-v%C3%A4nsterpolitiserad-/20150701/artikler/712318815/>

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Adamson says his job now is at a “serious place of learning” in freer Denmark, where tuition isn’t at all so “left ideologised” as at Malmö University.

Elin Orjasater, a Norwegian researcher on immigration, complained, a propos mainstream Swedish politicians from both sides claiming blithely that immigration was profitable, that “politicians don’t know what they are talking about” because “Swedish social scientists don’t supply the relevant data.”³¹

She cited two researchers at the Norwegian Bureau of Statistics who complained, in an official report devoted to immigration in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, that “to compare immigration in Scandinavia is not possible because Swedish researchers either don’t have or are unwilling to present exact data.”³² It was difficult therefore to see the dependency levels of second generation immigrants and thus whether the Scandinavian welfare state could survive, Orjasater wrote.

She was attacked by Swedish economists and social scientists in a series of debate articles in the opinion section of Svenska Dagbladet, which prompted her to reply that “the truth is even worse, scientists don’t lack statistics but they don’t have any courage”. “I understand now that those who are informed about these questions have access to data on how difficult the situation is in Sweden but they have almost completely withheld the information from the public”.³³

She added that Swedes have data to work out what immigration costs but no one has worked out what non-European immigration would cost in a longer time perspective. “You can do it, but it hasn’t been done.” The latest estimation of the cost of immigration was Ekberg’s, done in 2006, based on ten-year-old data. Since then, the foreign-born population has increased by half a million, and it is even harder to find data.

The last time the Swedish authorities accounted for the overrepresentation in crime of immigrants was in 2005. Swedish prisons don’t have the right to assemble statistics regarding the country of birth of those in prison. “What are Swedish politicians trying to hide?” Orjasater wrote.³⁴

³¹ <http://www.svd.se/sverige-vet-inte-vad-invandringen-kostar>

³² *ibid*

³³ <http://www.svd.se/vad-ar-det-for-fel-pa-svensk-forskning>

³⁴ <http://www.svd.se/vad-ar-det-for-fel-pa-svensk-forskning>

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She pointed out that the statisticians who attacked her admitted that “only 54% of non-European immigrants are in work”. She complained: “Why isn’t this more widely known?”

Some people are free to speak their minds. Jonathan Friedman is an American anthropologist who has teaching posts at prestigious universities in the United States and France. Concurrently with these posts he took on a job teaching anthropology at the University of Lund in southern Sweden; his wife was Swedish and she wanted to live in her home country for a while.

“I believe it is a long tradition. In the US for instance, political correctness is a university phenomenon. In the public sphere and amongst common people, it is a joke. But Sweden has such a close connection between the various powerful groups, politicians, journalists, etc. – they socialise privately, they marry each other, they go to the same social events and parties. The political class is closed, isolated...This instils a certain amount of security and stability – but also insecurity, for whatever would happen if the bubble suddenly burst? Or their view of the world seriously challenged? The elite, in their isolation and due to their isolation, has become more and more scared of the people and what they might think and believe. Their opinion is that people, in general, are stupid. The Political Class has moved up and on and away from the people. It is cosmopolitan in its approach and views itself as more above the nation than part of it. Economically this is supported by the fact that precisely this class sees its salaries the fastest growing of all.”

Shortly after this article was published, Friedman published a chapter in an international anthology about immigration where he described Sweden as an “Orwellian consensus state”. He now works in Paris and the United States, and no longer works in Sweden.

Small town scepticism

What the opinion formers in favour of immigration – or who try to quash immigration criticism – have in common is that they are based in the big towns, chiefly Stockholm, where headscarves are few and far between in the nice residential areas.

But there is another, less fashion sensitive Sweden, which is less educated, and, despite being overwhelmed by the political correctness of the media, the universities, and the politicians, is quietly going to the Sweden Democrats because they see the changes before their eyes. I meet some of these individuals in the small town which I visit often, Skara.

Skara is a town of 10,000 people on the plains of Västergötland county. It is peaceful, not unprosperous, but the main industry, a meat processing plant, has closed down, as has most of the agricultural university. The average age of the population is quite high. Things happen slowly in Skara. Life closes down at 7pm. Summer evenings offer a utopia of long shadows, birdsong and children's laughter bouncing between the walls of the jolly yellow painted, detached wooden houses.

In the past four years, the ethnic makeup of Skara has changed markedly. Skara has its own asylum baron, Bert Karlsson, a celebrity in Sweden on account of his past as a Eurovision-winning record producer, who has opened asylum reception centres all over Sweden, plus of course Skara, which is his home town. It has earned him hundreds of millions of kronor. Even so, he takes time to gauge opinion every other morning at the local bakery coffee shop, hoping, believing perhaps, he will be thanked for bringing the cultures of Somalia and Afghanistan to Skara. I have seen people, truckers and other early workers, fold their papers and leave when he rolls in.

The main reception centre is the old tuberculosis hospital a few kilometres outside Skara. But finished processees get housed in flats, paid for by the local council with grants from central government, all over Skara. However, there are hardly any jobs going in Skara, even for the native young. If you sit in a café on the leafy main square, there are always several clusters of Somalis and Eritreans waiting around, sitting on park benches by the old Viking rune stone that sits

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under the trees. What are they going to do for the rest of their lives if not live on benefits? How are they going to get jobs? Every few minutes, a Somali woman in a black headdress comes into sight, often pushing a pram, sometimes with up to three or four children in tow. I have a local friend who is despairing when he calculates that these Somali children, when of marriageable age, will import spouses from Somalia and have three, four, five children of their own. And so on, in geometric progression.

I meet local kindergarten teachers and garage mechanics, retired hairdressers and telecommunications engineers. One of the kindergarten teachers complains how the classes have doubled but there has been no increase in resources: so many municipalities like Skara with little clout in Stockholm are staggering under the refugee pressures. There is no money to go around in daycare education; it is all spent on the asylum industry. Many of the refugee kids they get are hard to integrate: they need extra care. She works extra hours but doesn't get paid for this. There is a ban on buying new equipment in the daycare system. She and others perceive the Sweden Democrats as appreciating their problems with unemployment and insecurity. The decline of Skara's atmosphere, the concerns that the young men who have just arrived from a war zone and loiter all day – what are they really up to?

Skara's people resent Stockholm. They ask why the elite are such hypocrites: they call for immigration, but they don't pay the price.

The election of 2014 and the future

It was this silent provincial mass, invisible to the trend spotters and ideology producers living in Stockholm, who produced the electoral earthquake in September 2014. The pollsters overpredicted the Sweden Democrats' success by several percentage points, and over predicted the success of the Greens, the journalists' favourite party. As the results came in on election night, several members of the Swedish state television panel looked stunned as region after region showed their support for the Sweden Democrats.

So the Sweden Democrats were the big winners, doubling their vote to 12.9%, toppling the government but leaving neither mainstream bloc with enough votes to form a majority government. "I am ashamed of my country," a woman from the losing Liberal People's Party told international reporters in a shivering voice.

The right-of-centre Moderates were the big losers under their quavering pro-immigration leader Fredrik Reinfeldt, who refused, before the election outcome, to promise any kind of deal with the immigration-sceptic Sweden Democrats. Here was a departure from what had happened elsewhere in Scandinavia. In both Norway and Denmark, the immigration sceptics had eaten into the support for the right of centre mainstream parties. In both countries, the right of centre had struck deals with immigration sceptics to either gain, or stay in, power.

Reinfeldt resigned as leader of his party the day after the poll and quit politics, as did his finance minister, Anders Borg. Both shortly after divorced their wives and found new, younger girlfriends. Borg's girlfriend is a former popstar and boss of an infidelity website.³⁵

"Betrayed their wives, betrayed their country", right-wing bloggers said sourly. The new prime minister was the Social Democrat leader Stefan Löfven.

³⁵ <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/anders-borg-skiljer-sig-hon-ar-nya-karleken/>
<http://www.aftonbladet.se/wendela/article12881944.ab>

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With 13% for the Sweden Democrats, Sweden now had a populist party of the size and dignity of virtually every other European country. However, what influence would the Sweden Democrats have in the new parliament? Not much, it would seem.

The Moderates had otherwise had a successful term in office. Economic growth was so-so, but the tax cuts were much appreciated by the middle class and gave a significant boost to the income of many. Anders Borg, the finance minister, won the *Financial Times's* finance minister of the year award for his Nordic lean model, which supposedly combined an efficient welfare state with tax cuts. Though more recently commentators have pointed out that his economic programme may not have been so successful after all for the country as a whole, even though it clearly produced winners in the higher incomes bracket. Sweden has the world's second highest private debt burden and GDP per capita growth has been stagnant for seven years, as economic commentator Andreas Cervenka points out.³⁶

The economics was definitely a positive though for the section of the population that usually votes for the right-of-centre bloc. But for an electorally significant minority, the third of Moderate supporters who deserted the party, the Moderates' very liberal stance on immigration, shared with the Social Democrats and every other party in the Swedish system except the Sweden Democrats, was just too off-putting.

Reinfeldt has, as we have seen, been a relentless champion of more immigration. However, the facts speak against him. In 1990, there were just three areas in Sweden which had the toxic three characteristics of high unemployment, poor education levels and poor schools results, and which not coincidentally had a large ethnic population. In 2002 the number of "outsider areas" had grown to 130 and in 2006 to 156. Look at a map of Sweden and you could see them spread like ink stains. Starting in the social housing areas of the biggest cities, now many smaller towns, with populations of 20 or 30,000, had their own "outsider areas", characterised by a culture of hopelessness, high unemployment, low education levels, and high immigration.³⁷

³⁶ <http://www.svd.se/lugnet-fore-stormen-i-lala-landet-sverige>

³⁷ <http://www.tino.us/2014/05/uppdatering-av-utanforskapets-karta-visar-fortsatt-okning-av-utanforskap-2006-2012/>

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The whole concept of “outsider areas” and the report on it had originally been diligently compiled by a clever young liberal MP from a Chilean background. Mauricio Rojas. And it arguably helped the Moderates and their coalition partners win the 2006 election.

However, there was a marked lack of support for updating his report to see how the right-of-centre coalition had managed (or actually mismanaged) immigration in its own subsequent eight years in power. One academic, the economist Tino Sanandaji, who did this, used the same demographic data approach as Rojas and found that the number of outsider areas had increased to 186.³⁸

³⁸ <http://www.tino.us/2014/05/uppdatering-av-utanforskapets-karta-visar-fortsatt-okning-av-utanforskap-2006-2012/>

New government

So, the Moderates fell back by about a third, from 30 to about 23 percent. The largest party was now the Social Democrats, who, with their allies in the Green party, now formed a minority coalition government.

Stefan Löfven, the new prime minister, refused, like Reinfeldt, to have anything to do with the Sweden Democrats, calling them extremist and “neofascist”. In December 2014, the two main blocs struck a deal that would exclude the Sweden Democrats from any influence in Swedish politics until 2018. This cartel of seven left and right-wing parties effectively turned the Sweden Democrats – with one eighth of parliamentary seats – into the only opposition party. A Danish newspaper called Sweden a “new kind of dictatorship”.

Nine months on, September 2015, the Sweden Democrats are the biggest party in the country. Löfven has seen his party – the historic, hegemonic Social Democrats, builders of 20th century Sweden – reduced to the second largest party in the polls. The Sweden Democrats are number one, having more than doubled from 12.9% in election to 27.3% in the YouGov poll of September 2015.

This is the first time the Social Democrats are not the largest party in an opinion survey in a hundred years. Mainstream media, apart from the freesheet tabloid Metro, failed to report it.

But reports in alternative blog media like the inability of police to remove migrant squatters from Swedes' beloved summer houses, or the random killing of a mother and her son by a failed asylum seeker inside an IKEA store, have helped boost the Sweden Democrats' support. Distrust of the media is becoming a more and more common phenomenon among normal people: Dagens Nyheter did not even name the Swedish mother and son duo killed; instead it ran a large article that the police had increased security around Sweden's asylum camps and warned of a “dark forces” backlash threatening asylum seekers. Such a lack of empathy with the innocent victims stuck in the craw of some. The prime minister should have made a speech. The Swedish media continue to demonise Putin, playing to ancient Swedish russophobia. It would be ironic if Putin, by helping to solve the Syria crisis, pulls Sweden's chestnuts out of the fire.

As of writing. November 2015, the Swedish government has given no indication

it has a strategy, or wants to have a serious strategy, to reduce the influx of a thousand people a day which is now mainly from countries that are not officially at war, but simply poor and deprived. As Germany looks set on tightening its benefit rules, sending another large group of migrants Sweden's way - which Sweden cannot prevent, being part of Schengen - the Swedish government's solution has been to restrict the number of automatically granted residence permits, but it will only take effect in a year's time and it has so many loopholes some commentators have said it is just window dressing. In the left wing media, the crisis mentality is low. Indeed, several left-wing journalists are calling for Sweden to grant asylum status to refugees at Sweden's Middle East embassies. Refugees would avoid having to make the perilous journey to northern Europe. But this move would be certain to increase numbers even further.

When the justice minister, in opening up prisons and military barracks at the beginning of October to cope with the refugee influx, said, "We weren't expecting this", he was bitterly attacked by the well-known blogger, Johan Westerholm. He wrote: "Those who two or three years ago tried to warn about this were simply frozen out of their parties or shut up by the threats from their colleagues not to 'sound like a Sweden Democrat'. The red card has been shoved in the face of everyone with the dubious taste to question the system's capacity." The government believed its own coverup and has been caught short by the problems. There has been a certain amount of schadenfreude among Sweden's neighbours, fed up with being lectured for years for being less virtuous than the Swedes.

Despite all this, amid calls that even janitors and canteen staff can't be Sweden Democrats and work in schools³⁹, street protests at Sweden's demographic changes have difficulty getting up steam⁴⁰. Organisers try to gather people for protests via Facebook and Twitter, but people don't turn up. "Many Swedes are terrified into silence," says Jomshof, the teacher-turned-party secretary who found it hard to get a job in his profession.

What are the lessons for Britain, facing an EU referendum, of this? The political scene in the two countries is quite different. The British writer Michael Booth, author of a recent best-selling guide to the Scandinavian nations, *The Almost*

³⁹ http://www.svd.se/svart-for-sdare-att-jobba-i-skolan_3958364

⁴⁰ <http://www.svd.se/manga-svenskar-har-skrants-till-tystnad>

SWEDEN'S IMMIGRATION CRISIS

Nearly Perfect People, found himself a little troubled by a Swedish historian's presumption that "We have decided not to talk about immigration [talk about immigration openly like Denmark does, that is]" as both the right thing to do and unexceptionable. "What is it 'they' – presumably Sweden's political and media elite – had decided not to do?" writes Booth. "They had decided not to allow the representatives of what at the last election turned out to be 6 percent of the population from participating in the public debate". Booth continues: "This has prompted gleeful accusations from the Danes that Sweden is in denial of its problems as well as being guilty of infringing on freedom of speech". He quotes a Danish newspaper editor, Anne Knudsen, who said: "In Sweden you have a surprising level of vindictiveness in public discourse. Of course, the Sweden Democrats are awful, but the mainstream really hates them; there is this hatred of people who don't share their tolerant opinions. I shouldn't say totalitarianism, but..."

Sweden has many things going for it, but may not be the democratic utopia many British people think – and, in a strange kind of poetic justice, may pay the price by quashing the freedom of speech of the "little people", and hiding the problems associated with immigration. The EU has played a part in Sweden's situation, in that the Schengen treaty has made the influx larger than would otherwise have been, and psychologically, membership of Europe has arguably loosened the psychological ties between the Swedish elite and their home country. But the EU is not the only culprit. The Swedish elite bears a large share of the responsibility.

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