

The Swedish gasoline tax - A battlefield between the people and the elite?

A cultural performative analysis of the antagonisms in the Swedish gasoline tax debate.

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Abstract:

The focus of this thesis is the debate regarding gasoline taxes in Sweden which is an example of a polarised sustainability debate. The aim is to get an in-depth understanding of the antagonisms of the debate by looking into how the pro and contra sides create and maintain cultural legitimacy and societal resonance through discursive struggles. Moreover, this thesis explores the framing struggles performed at the public stages, such as the mass media and social media, by actors trying to shape attitudes and collective sensemaking concerning the gasoline tax. The cultural performative framework developed by Geels & Verhees (2011) is tested by its applicability to this debate while analysing the pro and contra-sides through the lens of the five dimensions suggested by the framework. The empirical material for analysing the debate mainly consists of a selection of 100 articles published in Swedish newspapers. Findings from the media analysis demonstrate that the debate circles around a *climate change frame* used on the pro-side and an *injustice frame* used on the contra-side. I argue that the increasing support for framings against the gasoline tax can be understood through the relatively high actor credibility of the contra-side, the perceived centrality by its followers, the connection with its audiences' everyday lives, and an increasing macro-cultural resonance of the used framings. One way that the contra-side creates cultural resonance is by amplifying that *the climate change framing* is used by *the elites* and *the injustice framing* is presented by *the people*. This rhetoric has populist tendencies and parallels can be drawn to a changing political landscape in Sweden. This thesis thus presents a cultural perspective that is often overlooked in research concerned with transition journeys, even though attitudes towards mitigation efforts such as the gasoline tax are highly dependent on the current culture.

Keywords: Gasoline tax; Sweden; Environmental politics; Framing; Cultural legitimacy; Populism.

Word count (thesis): 11 905

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Table of contents

1 Introduction	1
1.1 Antagonisms explained by cultural factors	1
1.2 Aim and research question.....	3
1.3 Structure of thesis.....	4
2 Setting the Scene	4
2.1 The Swedish government and climate political goals.....	4
2.2 A brief history of the gasoline tax in Sweden.....	4
2.3 Injustices and regional differences	5
2.4 The Swedish political landscape	6
2.5 Populism and the right-wing	8
3 Theoretical framing	9
3.1 Discourse and framing	9
3.2 The Cultural Performative Approach	10
4 Methodology	11
4.1 Applying the Cultural Performative Approach	11
4.2 Mapping of actors and frames.....	11
4.3 Media Analysis.....	12
4.4 Limitations	13
5 Findings	14
5.1 Actor credibility	14
5.1.1 <i>Pro</i>	14
5.1.2 <i>Contra</i>	16
5.2. Empirical fit.....	17
5.2.1. <i>Pro</i>	17
5.2.2. <i>Contra</i>	18
5.3 Centrality	19
5.3.1 <i>Pro and Contra</i>	19

5.4 Experiential commensurability	20
5.4.1 Pro	20
5.4.2 Contra	21
5.5 Macro-cultural resonance	22
5.5.1 Pro	22
5.5.2 Contra	23
5.6 Summary	25
7 Analysis and discussion	27
7.1 <i>The Elite vs the People</i>	27
7.2 Climate justice	28
7.3 Solutions?	29
7.4 The Cultural Performative Approach as a lens for looking towards the future	30
8. Conclusion.....	30
9. References	31
10 Appendices.....	40
10.1 Appendix 1- Articles used for media analysis.....	40
10.2 Appendix 2- The most common themes and arguments found in media analysis.....	44

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1. Diagram of changing support for political parties.....	6
Figure 2. Diagram of demographic variables in political parties' voter base.....	8
Table 1. The five dimensions of the Cultural Performative Approach.....	11
Figure 3. Post and comments from Bensinupproret 2.0 Facebook page.....	15
Figure 4. Diagram of party leader trust rate.....	16
Figure 5. Post from Bensinupproret 2.0 Facebook page.....	24

List of abbreviations

C	the Centre Party
KD	the Christian Democrats
L	the Liberal Party
M	the Moderate Party
MP	the Green Party
S	the Social Democratic Party
SD	the Sweden Democrats
V	the Left Party

1 Introduction

1.1 Antagonisms explained by cultural factors

Tensions around gasoline taxes is an issue that has been frequently reported on in the Swedish media during the past year. The Swedish gasoline tax is facing much resistance. Approximately 55% of the population think it should be lowered (Novus, 2020) and Bensinupproret 2.0, a movement formed in opposition to high fuel prices, has well over half a million members in their Facebook group (Bensinupproret 2.0, n.d.a). Even though a vast majority of Swedes think that it is important to act on climate change (Gullers Group, 2018), mitigation efforts such as the gasoline tax currently has little resonance in the public opinion. The resistance against the gasoline tax is little researched, considering it could potentially threaten the ambitious goals and targets that Sweden has set up for a sustainable transition and a net zero-emission society (Swedish Government, 2017).

This thesis contributes to sustainability science by studying incentive structures (Kates et al., 2001) such as the gasoline tax. This to explore whether it is a viable tool in Sweden's sustainability transition journey, considering the wide resistance it is facing. The viability of the tax is dependent on public opinion, which is true for most ambitious sustainability measures (Kjellén, 2007). Moreover, public opinion is based on individuals' attitudes towards gasoline taxes which are shaped by various factors such as; political ideologies, perceived effectiveness, fairness of the measures, and individual motivations, for example, economical concerns (Jagers, Martinsson & Matti, 2019). Contextual and societal variables also determine attitudes where the degree of political polarisation, economic conditions, and political trust rates have shown effects on attitudes towards gasoline taxes (Jagers et al., 2019).

Attitudes have shown to matter in challenging the sustainability transition journey in the French case of the Yellow Vests. The protests of the Yellow Vests started as a resistance movement against raised gasoline taxes, but came to include questions about minimum wage, purchasing power and empowerment for citizens who had previously felt disregarded. The political affiliations of the participants in the movement are scattered. A majority does, however, have a hostile approach towards politicians (Grossman, 2019). These anti-elite attitudes have come to characterise the movement as an uprising against *the elite* with French President Macron as a standing figure (Chamorel, 2019). Even though the sustainability discourse has historically had a high legitimacy in France, a divergence has emerged between the urban elite and the people living in the urban fringe or on the countryside (Chamorel, 2019). An increasing polarisation between the use of *a climate*

change frame and a *social justice frame* has also been analysed. This divergence and polarisation could ultimately undermine the sustainability transition in France (Martin, 2019).

The Swedish case looks different from the French, although parallels can be drawn. The Bensusupproret 2.0 movement is not as widely known or as extensive as the Yellow Vests, but there are similarities in that both movements take a strong stand against increased fuel prices. According to Håkan Thörn, professor in sociology at Gothenburg University (Rasper, 2019), the commonalities also lie with the rural/urban antagonism and the economical perspective of *the injustice framing* used by Bensusupproret. The difference consists of the more peaceful methods¹ used in the Swedish case, which could be explained by the differences in political culture between Sweden and France (Rasper, 2019).

The starting point of this investigation is that the antagonisms, or conflicts, of the gasoline tax debate in Sweden needs more research, both concerning who the main actors are as well as the appeal of the used framings and arguments towards people in Sweden. Acceptance or appeal is affected by a range of factors, including culture (Adger et al., 2013). In this case I choose to define culture as the symbolic forms that are publicly available, through which individuals in a community can experience and express meaning (Keesing, 1965). This thesis will specifically focus on the Swedish political culture in relation to climate change policy support, which is characterised by an acceptance of political steering, a strong welfare state, and values such as cooperation and altruism. These features of a “Scandinavian political culture” have been shown to have positive effects on the acceptability of carbon taxes (Harring, Jagers & Matti, 2019).

Populism is based on cultural identity rather than economic class. It thereby attacks the cultural power structures rather than the economic power structures (Boyte, 2012). Something which is seen in the French case considering the attack of *the elite* (Chamorel, 2019). Aspects of a changing political landscape in Sweden will thereby be considered in this thesis to get a fuller understanding of the political and cultural repertoire upon which the debate builds on. This along with other features that might explain how both sides of the debate create appealing arguments and framings that influence public opinion. A deeper understanding of how the pro and contra-sides create resonance and cultural legitimacy can contribute to wider knowledge about the antagonisms and how both sides generate and maintain support as well as their mobilizing potential (Benford & Snow, 2000).

¹ Demonstrations by the Yellow vests often progressed into violent events (Chamorel, 2019), in comparison with demonstrations by Bensusupproret 2.0 where violence has yet to occur.

1.2 Aim and research question

The aim of this thesis is to get an in-depth understanding of the antagonisms between the pro and contra-sides of the gasoline tax debate in Sweden and how these competing sides create resonance. This will be achieved by looking into the underlying discursive struggle of the debate and how it is connected with cultural factors. This since cultural factors are of considerable importance in understanding the acceptability of climate change measures (Geels & Verhees, 2019). To generate acceptability, actors involved in the discursive struggles must create cultural legitimacy and a wider social resonance. Cultural legitimacy is in turn created by promoting framings that are desirable in a given socially constructed context (Suchman, 1995). In other words, the two different sides of the debate struggle to influence public opinion in the matter of gasoline taxes by creating framings that have resonance and legitimacy in the Swedish context.

This thesis aims to answer: How do the pro and contra-sides in the Swedish gasoline tax debate respectively create and maintain cultural legitimacy and societal resonance?

The strategy for investigating this question will be to use the Cultural Performative Approach proposed by Geels & Verhees (2011) to understand the cultural dimensions of framing struggles. A cultural analysis of this sort may help to demonstrate the various standpoints in the debate and their connections to broader social divisions. This study thereby aims to fill a gap that research on sustainability transition is only beginning to pay attention to (Köhler et al., 2019), and that studies concerned with attitudes towards gasoline taxes have not fully considered.

The approach is based on a review authored by Benford & Snow (2000) which Geels & Verhees (2011) have further developed. It is, moreover, based on insights from discourse theory and cultural sociology, aiming to understand the creation of legitimacy in social movements and transition journeys. Geels & Verhees (2011) demonstrated the usefulness of this approach by analysing the changing discourse of nuclear energy in the Netherlands from 1945 to 1988, building the case as a historical comparison.

The Cultural Performative Approach has primarily been applied to analyse historical cultural *changes* in transition journeys (Köhler et al. 2019). This thesis, however, will test the usefulness of the approach to a contemporary case, focusing on current discourse struggles where the *change* aspect will rather be used to look towards the future, and what can be done to affect the resonance of the gasoline tax in Sweden.

1.3 Structure of thesis

Following *Setting the Scene* (2), which aims to present a wider understanding of important societal conditions and an outlook of the debate, *Theoretical framing* (3) will introduce the Cultural Performative Approach and discursive framing, which is further developed in *Methodology* (4). In *Findings* (5) the different dimensions of the debate will be unpacked and discussed in relation to the pro or contra-side respectively, and further on, the *Discussion* (6) will explain and connect the findings, before the main outcomes of the study are given in *Conclusion* (7).

2 Setting the Scene

2.1 The Swedish government and climate political goals

By setting up the ambitious goal of a net zero-emission society by the year 2045, the Swedish government aims to be a leader in climate change transitions. To reach this, sub-goals concerning different sectors have been adopted. For instance, domestic transports, not including domestic flights, should decrease their emissions by at least 70% by 2030 compared with 2010 levels (Swedish Government, 2018).

Audits performed by The Swedish Climate Council, an independent audit organ set up by the government, show that the goals will not be reached without additional political measures (Bonde et al. 2019). According to the council, a transformation of domestic transportation is vital in the sustainability transition and a carbon tax is, at this time, a central control measure by which this can be done. A recommendation that the gasoline tax should be changed in its design and slowly go from a tax on fuel to a tax on mileage or kilometre has been made. This would entail GPS tracking on cars and different costs per kilometre depending on the vehicle, time, and place, which would make the control measure more sophisticated and counteract regional injustices. Different costs for driving in the countryside and urban centres are one suggested solution by the Council (Bonde et al. 2019).

2.2 A brief history of the gasoline tax in Sweden

In 1990, Sweden was one of the first countries to introduce a carbon tax on gasoline (Lachapelle, 2009). Since 1995 the tax is raised every year according to the consumer price index (CPI), and since 2017 there is an additional annual raise of 2% for GDP growth (Martinsson & Fridahl, 2018). The tax also includes a value-added tax (VAT) of 25%² (Swedish Government, 2019a). The current tax is calculated to be around 60% of the total price paid by the consumer (Holmström, 2020), something

² The VAT tax is based on the total price, gasoline tax included (Swedish Government, 2019a).

that is considered exceptionally high by some. In comparison however, the tax is close to the OECD average, and only 80% of the Dutch tax, which is the world's highest (OECD, 2018). In recent years there have been marginal changes to the tax that are not relevant to this study.

The tax on fuel (i.e. gasoline and diesel), popularly called the gasoline tax, is in fact a combination of a carbon and energy tax that is paid by the litre. In this thesis I will refer to this combination as gasoline tax since it is the most common term in the public debate. It should be noted that the word carbon tax has more positive connotations due to the perceived effect on emissions in comparison to the word gasoline tax that is more negatively associated with high fuel prices (Löfgren & Nordblom, 2009).

According to the Swedish government the purpose of the tax is to increase the conversion pressure towards a fossil-free vehicle fleet (Transport administration [Trafikverket], 2016). The main frame used to legitimize the gasoline tax is thereby *the climate change frame*. The carbon tax, which constitutes one part of the gasoline tax, is motivated by an internationally accepted principle that the polluter should pay, and is viewed as a climate policy base for the non-trading sector³. The carbon tax is thereby made to internalise externalities, which means that the negative environmental cost of emissions is paid for by those who emit them (Martinsson & Fridahl, 2018). Studies show that a carbon tax directed at transports can have positive effects on mitigation in the long run (IPCC, 2014; Goulder & Schein, 2013; Nerudová et al., 2018). Institutions such as the OECD recommends carbon pricing to be "at the centre of government efforts to tackle climate change" since it is more cost-efficient than other policies, especially when it comes to road transports (OECD, 2013).

2.3 Injustices and regional differences

The gasoline tax is argued to be an effective tool in acting on climate change, but it also stirs conflict and resistance. Studies from various countries show that environmental policies receive more support if they are progressive, meaning that they are based on people's ability to pay (Drews & Van den Bergh, 2016; Hammar & Jagers, 2007). The overall progressiveness or degree of (in)justice concerning the tax can be measured by looking into whether high-income earners pay more gasoline tax in relation to their income than low-income earners. Although this notion has been studied the results are non-conclusive. Whereas Brännlund & Nordström (2004) concluded that the Swedish gasoline tax was regressive, Ahola, Carlsson & Sterner (2009) found it to be neutral, yet easily changed to be progressive by altering the use of the tax revenues. On the argument that regional differences matter, Tafesse & Gren (2019) concluded that the costs for gasoline taxes are regressive in relation to

³ The non-trading sector is the sector that is not incorporated in the EU (ETS) (Martinsson & Fridahl, 2018).

disposable income. They based this on the fact that inhabitants in municipalities with urban centres, such as Stockholm, pay less than people in municipalities with low disposable income and population density.

In the Swedish gasoline tax debate, these regional differences are of importance since the urban-rural divide is often referred to in the argumentation by the Bensinupprøret 2.0 movement and other actors. It should be noted that urbanisation in Sweden is increasing, and a majority of GNP is produced in the cities. Moreover, the unemployment rates are not higher in rural municipalities but there are economic concerns since these municipalities often struggle with a decreasing tax-paying population (Gunnartz et al., 2017).

2.4 The Swedish political landscape

The antagonisms between the two sides of the gasoline tax debate has become a very political issue where a majority of the Swedish political parties take a strong stance (Koskelainen, 2019).

In Sweden, there are eight parties in the parliament (listed biggest to smallest in the number of seats); The Social Democratic Party (S), The Moderate Party (M), The Sweden Democrats (SD), The Centre Party (C), The Left Party (V), The Christian Democrats (KD), The Liberal Party (L), and The Green Party (MP) (Swedish Parliament, 2020). Since 2007 the political landscape has changed drastically, with the two biggest parties S and M losing votes to SD, as can be seen in Figure 1.

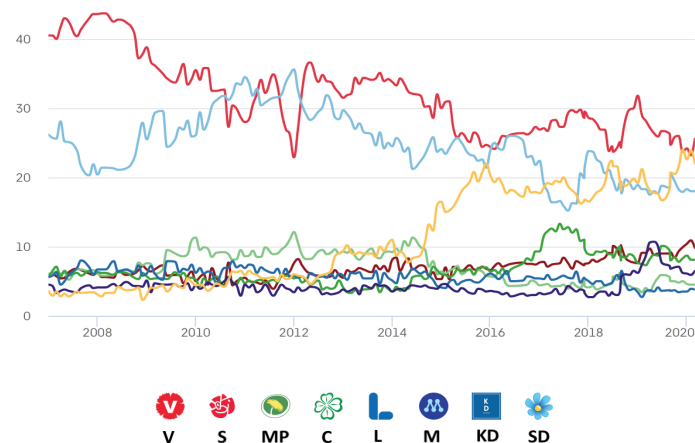


Figure 1: Diagram of changing support for political parties. Showing how the support has changed during the past ten years which displays an increasing support for SD (yellow) and decreasing support for M (light blue) and S (clear red) (SVT, 2020).

SD has achieved increasing balancing power, which has resulted in new alliances. This became apparent after the election in 2018, where the long-standing alliance between M, KD, L, and C was

dismantled due to the parties' stands on cooperating with the nationalistic SD. In January 2019 an agreement between L, C, S, and MP, called the January Agreement, was constructed to appoint the Social Democratic leader Stefan Löfven as prime minister (Swedish Government, 2019b). The forming of a new government also led to a new opposition with V to the left and M, KD and SD to the right.

Socio-economic class has since long been a determinant for how people vote in Sweden, with the working-class traditionally voting to the left. There has thereby been a strong division between left-wing parties (S and V) and right-wing parties (M, KD, L, and C) (Sannerstedt, 2015). The fragmentations still lie within the left-right-division rather than GAL-TAN⁴, although all parties have taken a more central oriented position in economic terms in the last decades (Oskarsson & Demker, 2015). It could be argued that the GAL-TAN scale's importance is increasing with the entrance of SD (Aylott & Bolin, 2019). MP and SD are considered ideological opposites to each other when viewed through a GAL-TAN spectrum (Bergström, Johansson, Oskarsson & Oskarsson, 2015). The resistance against the gasoline tax, which adheres to other dimensions than the economic left/right scale, is a good example of this divide since it specifically lifts green/alternative values contra traditional/nationalistic values (Bergström et al., 2015).

SD is a part of the right-wing opposition, even though their political standpoint is more central-right in terms of taxes, welfare, and privatisation. They mainly differ from the other parties in questions of migration, although they have worked hard towards toning down negative attitudes that could be perceived as racist (Sannerstedt, 2015). Studies have shown that SD voters tend to have stable incomes and a relatively positive outlook on the future. What sets them apart, however, is that they usually are negative to immigration, have a critical attitude towards politicians and *elites*, the media, and Swedish democracy (Sannerstedt, 2015). Most of the SD voters are men living outside of cities, in stark contrast to MP voters who are largely female and live in cities (SVT,2020), as can be seen in Figure 2.

⁴ GAL (Green, alternative, liberal) -TAN (traditional, authoritarian, nationalist) scale structured after cultural and social values as defined by Hooghe, Marks & Wilson (2002).

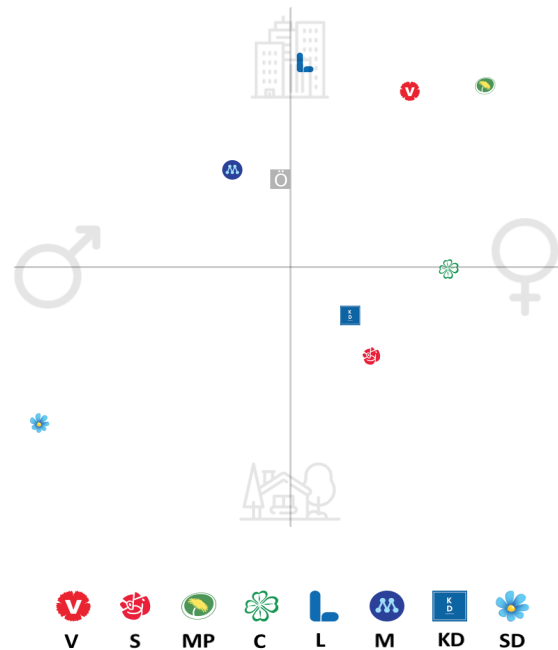


Figure 2. Diagram of demographic variables in political parties' voter base. More men than women to the left, more women than men to the right. Overrepresentation by voters in the cities on top and in the countryside at the bottom. (SVT, 2020)

2.5 Populism and the right-wing

The main feature of populism is that it builds on attacks on the (perceived) *establishment* from the (perceived) *ordinary* people (Fraune & Knodt, 2018; Derks, 2006). Populism appears on both sides of the political spectrum, but there has been a growth of right-wing parties in Europe that are referred to as extreme, radical and, populist (Sannerstedt, 2015). The rise of these parties has been shown to depend on countries' employment rates, social benefits, and level of migration, along with many different contextual factors such as populist views (Arzheimer, 2009). An example of where these views have been prominent is in Brexit, which has been called a "mutiny against the elite" along with the Yellow Vest movement (Huber, 2020).

Populism is a symptom of growing dissatisfaction with democracy and anti-elitist views, since people have lost trust in the political institutions' willingness to listen and act on individual's needs (Berman, 2019). These views largely correspond with the attitudes of SD voters (Sannerstedt, 2015). In the Swedish case Oscarsson & Demker (2015) argue that this is not due to increasing anti-immigrant attitudes, but rather a weakening alignment between the Social Democrats and the working class. This since there is a depleted left-right polarisation in economic terms where all parties are more central oriented, which has left room for an underlying dimension of authoritarianism versus libertarianism (Oscarsson & Demker, 2015).

The anti-elite and populist tendencies are problematic for efficient climate policies since these attitudes have been seen to create resistance against carbon taxes (Hammar & Jagers, 2006). Even though climate change policies are usually not the most important question for right-wing voters, these views have made climate change policies change from an issue with political consensus to one with an antagonistic dilemma (Fraune & Knodt, 2018).

3 Theoretical framing

3.1 Discourse and framing

Discourses are ensembles of ideas and concepts that are produced and reproduced to give meaning to social and physical realities (Hajer & Uitermark, 2008). Discourses are influenced by framing struggles and discourses enable or constrain how actors can frame issues (Geels & Verhees, 2011). Framings does thereby not happen in a vacuum but depends on the current culture and discourses (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Frames are tools that can be used to codify collective sense-making within a specific culture (Swidler, 1986) and will thereby be used in this thesis to codify how both sides of the gasoline debate create resonance and cultural legitimacy. Cultural legitimacy is moreover created by lifting framings that have desirability in given socially constructed contexts (Suchman, 1995). Scholars describe the use of framings as a selection process of different aspects in order to promote certain problem definitions, interpretation, and moral evaluations. Framings are thereby used to create resonance and cultural legitimacy among certain audiences by enhancing particular interpretations of a problem (Entman, 1993). Those who “win” the framing struggles are those who create the most resonant frames (Benford & Snow, 2000).

As will be further developed in *Findings*, both sides of the debate use master frames. For a frame to function as a master frame it has to be broad, inclusive, and have a wide cultural resonance (Benford & Snow, 2000). *Injustice framings* are common as master frames since they cover a range of problems and speak to a variety of social groups, thereby having a wide mobilizing capacity (Gerhards & Rucht, 1992). Moreover, *Injustice framings* commonly identify a victim and amplify their victimization and define a villain by putting the blame somewhere (Benford & Snow, 2000).

If enough cultural legitimacy and thereby salience is created, frames can influence public opinion and discourses. It is this influence over the discourse that the actors in the debate are trying to affect

(Geels & Verhees, 2011). Since the current government is using climate change to legitimize the gasoline tax, it can still be considered the dominant discourse that the contra-side consisting of relative outsiders are trying to affect with an emerging discourse.

3.2 The Cultural Performative Approach

The Cultural Performative Approach is a concrete conceptual tool that can be applied to add knowledge on how cultural legitimacy and resonance is created by the claims-makers on both sides (Geels & Verhees, 2011). Further, it can be used to understand which repertoires of cultural meaning that discursive struggles build upon to create resonance. Geels & Verhees (2011) sets out to answer how cultural legitimacy is created during technical innovation journeys, through a historical case study of the Dutch nuclear energy debate. By doing this they aim to develop the cultural aspects and the role of the wider society, which they argue has been overlooked in research on innovation journeys. More specifically they connect the role of cultural legitimacy, which is widely recognised as important for all stages of innovation journeys, with discursive- and framing struggles. Their approach for investigation is looking at the public stages such as the mass media and political debates, where the collective sensemaking takes place and where the actors that are involved in discursive struggles perform. This is why the approach is called the Cultural Performative Approach (Geels & Verhees, 2011).

The gasoline tax is going through the uncertain process that innovation journeys are characterised by and can thereby be further explored by the Cultural Performative Approach. I apply the approach by analysing the debate according to the five dimensions developed by Geels & Verhees (2011), which will inform on how the cultural legitimacy and resonance is created by the two opposing sides (Benford & Snow, 2000).

One of the five dimensions of the approach is directed towards understanding who the actors in the debate are and what their perceived credibility is (*Actor credibility*). The other dimensions are more of an overview and contextualisation of the frames and arguments used by the opposing sides. *Empirical fit* looks at the evidence that is used in the argumentations while the *Centrality* dimension expands on who the issue concerns and to what degree. The last two dimensions aim at deepening the understanding towards how the frames are connected to individuals' everyday realities (*Experiential commensurability*) and what deep cultural repertoires the frames connect to (*Macro-cultural resonance*), in this case how the frames relate to features of the Swedish cultural and political landscape (Geels & Verhees, 2011). An overview of the dimensions can be seen below in Table 1.

Table 1. The five dimensions of the Cultural Performative Approach (Geels and & Verhees, p.914).

- **Actor credibility:** the status or perceived expertise of the social groups advocating particular frames.
- **Empirical fit:** the perceived correspondence between the frame and real-world events (the more 'evidence' a frame/discourse can claim, the higher its empirical fit).
- **Centrality:** the perceived importance of the topic or debate to particular audiences (relative to other topics or debates).
- **Experiential commensurability:** the resonance between the frame and the everyday experiences of audiences (if frames are very abstract and have little bearing on people's daily life, experiential commensurability is low).
- **Macro-cultural resonance:** the fit between frames and cultural repertoires (deep structures).

4 Methodology

4.1 Applying the Cultural Performative Approach

As stated above the five dimensions of the approach is used to analyse the cultural dimensions of the antagonisms in the Swedish gasoline tax debate. The framework will not be applied as a historical comparison like it has been done in previous studies (Geels & Verhees, 2011; Martin, 2019). By analysing both the pro and contra-side after what has been published in the public media the last year (2019-2020), I intend to get a current and in-depth perspective of the two sides. Presenting both sides of the debate is relevant since the cultural legitimacy and resonance that they present in their framings are relative to each other (Geels & Verhees, 2011).

In this study I will thus examine the Swedish debate on gasoline to find links between the framings used and what seems to be causing the antagonisms. A qualitative exploratory case study is suitable for discovering such links (Yin, 2017), and the aim of this study is not only to provide a descriptive case but also seek to discover the narrative that causes the antagonisms (Abbott, 1992).

4.2 Mapping of actors and frames

The basis of my study is a media analysis where the actors and frames of the debate are examined by reading and coding published debate articles regarding gasoline taxes. To further develop my findings, a wide variety of sources such as scientific- and newspaper- articles, published interviews with politicians, official reports and polls, interest and activist groups statements, accounts from political

parties, and material from Facebook groups are used. In terms of scientific articles, I considered most articles written on the Swedish gasoline tax, where Hammar & Jagers et al. (2006; 2007; 2009) has done prominent research on attitudes concerning the tax. Regarding official polls, the SOM (Society, Opinion, Media) -Institute (Bergström et al., 2015) and The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Gullers Group, 2018) have done a thorough work in mapping the changing political landscape and the attitudes concerning the tax.

My analysis is thus based on what has been written by actors arguing for and against the gasoline tax in debate articles, which complemented with other sources contextualise these findings. The discussion is based on what I found to be the most recurrent themes and aspects in the material, which is thereafter developed further to get a deeper understanding of the different connections and links.

4.3 Media Analysis

The complexities of this debate are substantial and ongoing on many different levels. The focus of this study is the debate on the public stages, as suggested by Geels & Verhees when using the Cultural Performative Approach (2011). The public stage, such as mass media, is an arena where collective sensemaking takes place and where actors that are involved in discursive struggles perform (Newig, 2004), making it appropriate for this study. The qualitative media analysis is informed by Altheide & Schneider (2012) who suggest how exploration, organisation, and interpretation of data should best be handled in such an analysis.

The purpose of the qualitative media analysis is to seek out what main frames and arguments are used by the pro and contra-sides as well as what actors are behind them, which is vital information for most of the five dimensions of the analysis. The selection of empirical material was done by using Media Retriever, a database of medial news, printed- and web articles and TV and radio sources. The number of articles was limited by using the search words; Debate (Debatt), Gasoline uprising (Bensinuppror), and Gasoline tax (Bensinskatt). The word debate was used to only retrieve debate articles where opinions and arguments (frames) were revealed. The search was also limited to the Swedish web and from 2019-01-01 to 2020-02-05. This was done to limit the scope and because the word Bensinupproret is barely mentioned before the second quarter of 2019. The search resulted in about 100 articles from both regional and national newspapers representing all political standpoints, see Appendix 1. Since coherent themes could be mapped out, the material can be considered sufficient. By coding these articles using the Nvivo coding programme, six main arguments used on the pro-side and five main arguments used on the contra-side became apparent, see Appendix 2. The coding was

performed by reviewing all articles, which also revealed authors arguing pro and against the gasoline tax. Thereafter identification of sub-themes and more detailed arguments could be identified through this hands-on construction of data. Most of the data collected from the articles are in the form of quotes, which I have used in my analysis to constitute examples. All of the material is in Swedish and translated by myself.

Having the main frames and authors laid out, the use of other sources helped to further my analysis. The strength of this systematic qualitative media analysis is that the amount of analysed debate articles has made me fairly confident that I have knowledge of the most central aspects and frames used in the debate.

My method for this study also includes an observational study by joining the Bensinupproret 2.0 Facebook group in December 2019 and reading most of their Facebook posts (Bensinupproret 2.0, n.d.b). The Bensinupproret 2.0 movement has a strong presence on Facebook where group members discuss challenges linked to a high price on fuel, plan for demonstrations, and share debate articles. This observation was done to get an understanding of what is posted and commented on and made it possible to get a more unfiltered perspective, in contrast to only looking at formal debate articles published in newspapers. The weakness with this non-systematic approach is, however, that my own bias in what caught my attention cannot be ruled out (Altmann, 1974).

4.4 Limitations

There is a component of novelty to this research since the debate is current and its directions are constantly shifting, which implies limitations and opportunities to discover something new. The framework has not yet been used in a case like this. Previous cases have been in the form of historical comparisons which brings a deeper understanding of the process of creating of meaning, since this is built up during long periods (Geels & Verhees, 2011). The lack of the historical component was to some degree compensated for by looking at the shifts in the political landscape of Sweden.

There are limitations concerning the limited amount of research that has yet been done on this case. Even though there is a lot to find on carbon tax in general and the Yellow Vest movement in France, it does not fully translate to the Swedish case, which made some studies obsolete to this thesis. Moreover, due to space limitations not all actors and frames that I found in my media analysis will be depicted. For simplicity reasons the actors on both the pro and contra-side will be grouped and generalised, however, political actors are working with social movements in complex entanglements. This leaves a chance that some actors may feel underrepresented.

5 Findings

As previously mentioned my *Findings* are organised after the dimensions of the Cultural Performative Approach and the two different sides of the debate, pro and contra.

5.1 Actor credibility

Actor credibility points to the perceived credibility, by the audience, of actors proclaiming the frame, and is connected to the status and perceived expertise or knowledge of the actor. A well-established fact in social psychology is that the credibility of actors determines their persuasiveness (Benford & Snow, 2000; Geels & Verhees, 2011).

5.1.1 Pro

The media analysis showed that the Swedish political parties are strong actors in the debate since a majority of the articles were authored by party representatives. The parties most prevalent in arguing pro the tax is MP and S along with their youth organisations.

All parties in government are somewhat for a high gasoline tax whereas only MP gives a straight answer and proclaims that the tax should be even higher. V is positive to a gasoline tax, although they point to the flaws of the current tax design considering it hits the rural population and low-income earners (Koskelainen, 2019). The low general support for the tax could indicate why the parties, except for MP, are hesitant on giving direct answers to whether it is too low or too high.

MP is the party that is most villainized for the gasoline tax in the Bensinupproret 2.0 Facebook group. Other parties, such as S, are also mentioned in posts and comments, but mostly in connection to their collaboration with MP as can be seen below in Figure 3.

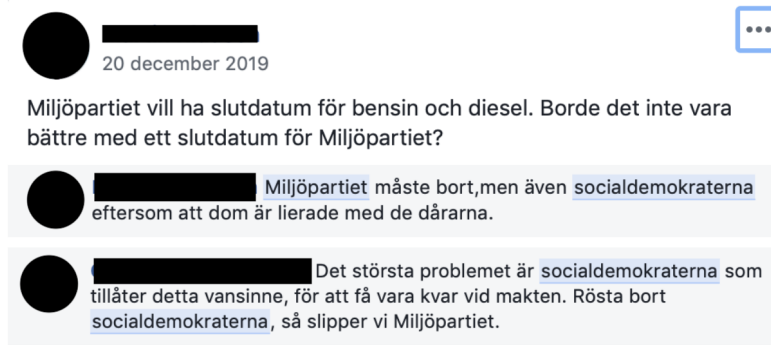


Figure 3: Post and comments from Bensusupproret 2.0 Facebook page (Bensusupproret 2.0, n.d.b).

Translation:

- “MP wants an end date for gasoline and diesel. Would it not be better with an end date for MP?”
- “MP must be gone, but also S since they are allied with those fools”
- “The biggest problem is S that allows this madness to maintain in power. Vote out S and we will get rid of MP”

There are few NGOs that advocate for the gasoline tax. One Facebook group called Bensusupproret 3.0 started as an anti-reaction to Bensusupproret 2.0, but it only contains around one thousand members and will thereby not be considered further here (Bensusupproret 3.0, n.d.). If considering the underlying proclaimed purpose of the tax, which is action against climate change and a strategy to reach a fossil-free transportation fleet by 2030 (Transport administration, 2016), other actors could be taken into account. For example, Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, and Greenpeace are pressuring leaders to act on climate change, however, none of these actors are publicly engaged with the question of the gasoline tax specifically and will thereby not affect actor credibility in any notable manner. The lack of engagement on this specific issue by established environmental actors could be connected to the critique commonly used against the CO₂ tax, which argues that it is not attacking the root cause of the problem or supports a truly sustainable transportation system (Hammar & Jagers, 2009).

MP, the main actor pro the gasoline tax as it is designed today, has negative inclinations for actor credibility. This is partly because MP has a generally low support of 4,5% which is just above the minimum amount needed to be a part of the parliament (SVT, 2020). Their leaders also have among the lowest trust rates of all party leaders as can be seen below in Figure 4.

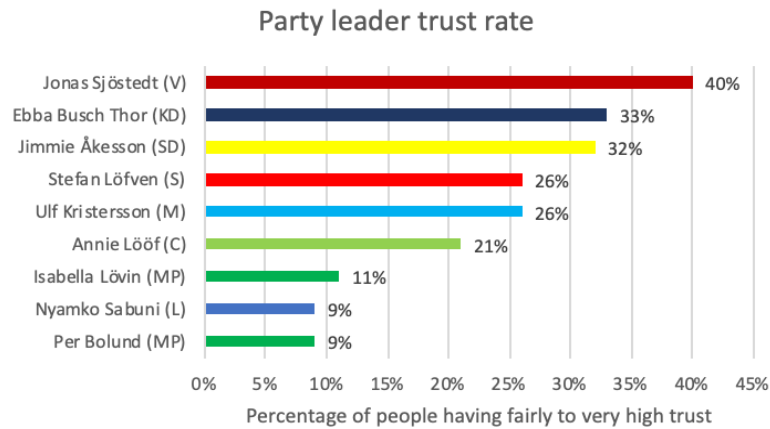


Figure 4: Party leader trust rate. Percentage of people having fairly to very high trust. Adapted from: Novus (2020).

5.1.2 Contra

According to my media analysis the political parties most prominent in arguing against the gasoline tax are the parties in opposition: SD, KD, and M and their youth organisations. This is also supported by statements by their press departments, where all three of them are decidedly against the gasoline tax (Koskelainen, 2019). SD is the most dominant actor in the debate, with the youth organisations of KD (KDU) and M (MUF) as close seconds. As seen in Figure 4, SD's party leader Jimmy Åkesson has a relatively high credibility, even though trust rates at the time of the survey were historically low for all leaders (Novus, 2020).

Political parties and interest organisations of the traditional left such as, S and V, along with the environmental think tank Gröna-folkhemmen and the trade union IF Metall can also be argued to be engaged in the debate on the contra-side. Even though these actors are not directly against the tax they have arguments concerning the unfairness and design of the tax and are thereby users of the *injustice frame*. For example, it is argued by the Swedish Minister of Finance, Magdalena Andersson (S), that the tax should be compensated with travel deductions to become fair (Andersson, 2019c). Another example is IF metal who argue that the gasoline tax is misdirected since it requires action from ordinary citizens instead of politicians (IF Metall, 2019).

There are actors who are against the tax that do not have a clear political position as well, such as the Swedish Environmental Institute, a research institute financed by the state, farmers, and professors, who argue that the tax is a faulty priority. Bensinupproret is one of these organisations since they claim to be politically independent. The informal leaders behind Bensinupproret are very prevalent in both their webpage and Facebook page, although they are not well known outside of this sphere and

do not possess any perceived expertise (Bensinupproret 2.0 (n.d.a). The leaders of the movement do thereby not affect the actor credibility of this group as a whole positively.

In general, there are more interest groups engaging in arguments against the gasoline tax than in support of it. The same goes for the number of private individuals who write debate articles on the tax. Even though all the above organisations have diverse actor credibility, they build resonance towards a large variety of individuals and can thereby in sum strengthen the dimensions of actor credibility.

5.2 Empirical fit

Credibility is increased when the used frames are connected to evidence and real-world events. Empirical fit builds on perceived correspondence between frames and evidence (Geels & Verhees, 2011; Benford & Snow, 2000).

5.2.1 Pro

The frame concerning the urgency to act on climate change can be considered the master frame used on the pro-side and is connected to all other frames that are used. *The climate change frame* is supported by the goal of a fossil-free transportation fleet by 2030, which all parties except SD agree upon (Koskelainen, 2019). It is also supported by international principles and spoken for by recognized scholars and institutions as previously mentioned. Along with this, there is a basis for arguing that the gasoline tax has been a contributing factor for the decrease in emissions during the last three decades (Bonde et al., 2019; Ministry of environment and energy, 2005; Andersson, 2019a). The credibility of the tax could thereby be considered high in relation to the empirical fit.

The actors arguing pro the tax have solid arguments for why it is not unjust in its design. For example, they claim that the increase of energy efficiency has made it cheaper than ever before to drive (Nilsson, 2019), which can be verified (Bonde et al., 2019). They also argue that there are better ways of reaching equality than removing the gasoline tax for everyone, which would favour those who can already afford it. Keeping this in mind they argue that a better solution would be to work for general welfare and compensation for those that are hit hardest (Olsson Mogren & Strelert, 2019; Bolund & Lövin, 2019).

What might lower the empirical fit is that not all advocates for the gasoline tax agree on its exact design. It is still widely debated what type of government grants and deductions there should be to compensate those who are hit hard, or if there should be a kilometre tax instead. This implies that

there are faults in the design of the tax. Even though discrediting the design of the tax might lower the empirical fit, a recognition that people are affected negatively may be of importance for credibility.

5.2.2 *Contra*

The frame most commonly used by the contra-side is *the injustice frame*, which could also be considered the master frame (Benford & Snow, 2000). This frame builds its resonance on the rural and urban dichotomy by claiming that the gasoline tax hits hard against the rural population and low-income earners. Arguments like “It is unfair that [people doing ordinary chores] should pay the bill when the government wants an expensive and ineffective symbol politics... It is tax punishment from far away” (Brussel & Dousa, 2019 (SD politicians)) are common elements in the debate. Studies have, as discussed earlier, proved the tax to be non-progressive and these claims can thereby be considered as having a high empirical fit.

Arguments that the tax hits hard against certain groups, such as the rural population, are used by Bensinupproret 2.0 when they claim that “ordinary people” pay the price for the gasoline tax. The organisation fears that public investments in for example public transport would enhance inequalities in contrast to lowering the gasoline tax (Bensinupproret 2.0 n.d.a). They thereby suggest alternative measures to the tax, for example, that there should be a shift towards more biofuels produced in Sweden. The perceived empirical fit of these claims seems to be considered high by Bensinupproret's followers seeing that the issue of, for example, biofuels is commonly raised in the Bensinupproret 2.0 Facebook-group (Bensinupproret 2.0, n.d.b). These claims are nonetheless not backed up by empirical evidence or real-world examples.

Since arguments of inequality are traditionally used by the leftist parties they might have a lower empirical credibility when used by the contra-side. For ideological reasons they cannot be backed up by solutions such as welfare investments. For example, arguments like “How can SD call themselves rural friendly while giving less money to the rural municipalities in their budget” have been made by representatives from V (Fredholm, Gilbert Westholm & Örnberg, 2019).

The arguments used on the contra-side have a relatively low empirical fit in comparison to those on the pro-side. The rhetoric used, however, seem to build resonance connected to other dimensions as will be explored further.

5.3 Centrality

Centrality builds salience and is connected to the perceived importance of a debate and topic towards specific targets of mobilization, i.e. how central or essential the issue is to particular audiences in relation to other issues (Benford & Snow, 2000; Geels & Verhees, 2011).

5.3.1 *Pro and Contra*

The interest in climate change seems to be larger than ever before considering that the media coverage around the issue has doubled since 2014 (Vi-skogen, 2019) and major Swedish environmental organisations report an increased attention and support to their causes (Giva Sverige, 2018).

In 2018, 86% of Swedes thought it was pretty to very important to do something about climate change (Gullers Group, 2018). Even though the support seems high, if compared to the perceived importance of action on other societal issues such as crime, healthcare, and integration, action on climate change has the lowest perceived importance (Gullers Group, 2018). There is also a difference between wanting action on climate change and having an acceptance for all methods of action. According to Gullers Group (2018) people are more positive to lifestyle changes such as lower power consumption than policies imposed by the state, which includes a gasoline tax. People with higher education and high confidence in authorities as well as people ideologically to the left are usually more positive to such measures (Bergström et.al. 2014).

People ideologically to the left are also more worried about the effects of climate change (Jagers et al., 2019). The Swedish case shows that 99% of V voters and 85% of MP voters claim to be worried about climate change, in comparison to voters of SD, where only 39% are worried (Andersson, 2019b). It is also V and MP voters that are the most positive to the gasoline tax (Rosén, 2019). SD's voters are the most negative where 90% wants lower gasoline prices and for M and KD the same number is 80% (Rosén, 2019).

Young, educated and people living in cities are more prone to making behavioural changes to act on climate change than others (Andersson, 2019b; Gullers Group, 2018). Men, elderly, people who drive, and to a marginal degree people living in small towns are more negative to gasoline taxes specifically (Gullers Group, 2018). It is furthermore men, middle-aged people and frequent car users that have the highest car mileages, and are the most negative to climate measures (Rosqvist & Hiselius, 2019)

The socio-demographic variables that are overrepresented in the groups worried about climate change and positive towards gasoline taxes coincide with the over representations of groups in the political parties' voters base. As seen in Figure 2 political parties set to the left have more female voters living in cities who are also more worried about climate change and to a wider extent positive towards the gasoline tax. It is hard to decipher the causal links (Rosqvist & Hiselius, 2019) although some studies point to people's political sympathies as the best displayer of divergence in climate-related issues (Rosén, 2019). This coincides with the findings from my media analysis which shows a clear link between political affiliations and attitudes towards the gasoline tax. Even though there is not an underlying ideology in these sympathies that necessarily connects with environmental concerns (Nawrotzki, 2012), studies have shown that an explanation might lie with right-wing considerations about limiting governmental interference and the perceived importance of economic growth (Harring & Sohlberg, 2017). If environmental measures do not interfere with economic growth or are compensated for by other tax reliefs, attitudes from right-wing sympathisers are usually more positive (Jagers, Martinsson & Matti, 2019).

5.4 Experiential commensurability

Experiential commensurability is the generation of resonance between framings and the personal everyday experiences of individuals and audiences. If the frames are abstract and distant from what the audience is experiencing, the degree of experiential commensurability and thereby salience is low. This also goes if the activity is perceived as imposed from above rather than self-defined (Benford & Snow, 2000; Geels & Verhees, 2011).

5.4.1 Pro

The main frame of climate change mitigation can be considered abstract to people in Sweden since the possible effects of climate change are relatively far away in time. It could be argued that the frame used encapsulates the question of environmental justice that is a global issue and thereby even harder to connect to Swedish individuals' everyday lives (Zannakis, 2009). Considering this, Sweden still has a relatively high level of green awareness and acceptance towards climate change measures such as taxes if compared to other countries, maybe because of the generally extensive customization to high taxes (Hammar & Jagers, 2009). Despite this, Swedes in general are not to a large extent positive towards any of the action measures suggested in the Gullers Group (2018) study, which suggests a knowledge and action gap and some difficulties in the application to everyday life. Due to this difficulty and the abstractness of *the climate change frame*, experiential commensurability can be considered low.

Efforts to better connect the effects of the gasoline tax to people's everyday lives are made by actors in favour of the gasoline tax. MP politicians for example use relatable comparisons when saying that “A removal of the tax would increase emissions with as much as 150 000 flights to New York or the total amount of emissions of three small Swedish towns” (Skog & Tovatt, 2019).

5.4.2 *Contra*

The abstractness of *the climate change frame* makes for low experiential commensurability in comparison to the very concrete effects that the gasoline tax can have on people's everyday lives and economies (Jagers & Martinsson, 2019), as proclaimed by *the injustice frame*. It has been shown that it is rather individuals' economic interests in lower gasoline prices rather than the adherence to a fairness principle that drives the disapproval of the tax (Hammar & Jagers, 2007). Attitudes being dependent on economic incentives also become apparent when Swedes were asked whether they could imagine paying more for public investments such as public transport, that would enhance people's alternatives to the car, and the payment of gasoline tax. In this case, objections towards the tax diminished since people did not want to pay more for these alternatives in exchange for a lower gasoline tax (Hammar & Jagers, 2009). This also relates to the findings of my media analysis, which suggests that the contra-side does not quite deliver alternatives to the tax that tackles the problem of injustice. Except for KD, that proposes a kilometre tax, the actors mostly disregard the tax altogether.

An important variable for experiential commensurability is also whether the tax is perceived as imposed or not. As previously discussed, MP is targeted as the main actor pro the tax, and they have relatively little public support which is mostly concentrated in the urban centres (SVT, 2020). By framing the tax as imposed by *the urban political elite*, the experiential commensurability is lowered. Here are two examples of how this phenomenon is framed by SD politicians in debate articles: “MP has no anchoring on the countryside, thereby they don't have votes to lose which can explain their nonchalant attitude [towards the tax and the rural population]” (Sjöstedt & Kinnunen, 2019): And, “The government pursues an aggressive and comprehensive policy of fragmentation. Low-income earners should not finance an almost religious climate policy that puts cities against the countryside and the well-off against the poor” (Filmer & Kinnunen, 2019).

5.5 Macro-cultural resonance

Saliency is built through macro-cultural resonance by the connection between framings and underlying cultural repertoires. Macro-cultural resonance aims to look at to what extent the frames resonate with culture, myths, and inherent ideology (Geels & Verhees, 2011; Benford & Snow, 2000).

5.5.1 Pro

The cultural resonance of climate change in the Swedish society can be considered high since it is something that a majority of Swedes are concerned about (Andersson, 2019b; Gullers Group 2018). In general, relatively few articles in my media analysis are directed towards questioning *the climate change frame* and whether there should be some action on climate change or not. This points towards the legitimacy that *the climate change frame* carries in the Swedish society.

As previously stated the Swedish political culture is characterised by acceptance to political steering, a strong welfare state and values such as cooperation and altruism, which has shown to have positive effects on attitudes towards carbon taxes (Harring et al., 2019). The Swedish line of environmental policy has historically been represented by continuity and consistency with relative agreement across the traditional political block boundaries in the question of environment and sustainability (Åkerfeldt & Hammar, 2015; Kjellén, 2007). An enabling factor for an ambitious sustainability agenda is the grounding in public opinion, which general educational levels and informational efforts can contribute to. This has, for example, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency had an important role in (Kjellén, 2007). Sweden has a history of social democratic politics, which is an important element in anchoring environmental policies as well. For example, a state is more likely to increase environmental policies if generous welfare spending is continuous (Lim & Duit, 2018).

The thought of Sweden as a pioneer country and a good example for others in sustainability issues is recurring in many official statements (Kjellén, 2007). This notion has seemingly trickled down into a large portion of the population where Swedes have somewhat adopted it as an identity. Sweden's role in the international arena of fighting climate change goes against expectations of self-interest since the general interpretation of the problem is that it will cause more harm in other countries. This is legitimized by the view that there can be a “win-win” trajectory where environmental considerations can go together with economic benefits as well as the importance of taking responsibility for climate change as a moral issue (Zannakis, 2009). The “win-win” discourse is useful to counter the “growth/jobs versus environment” discourse (Lim & Duit, 2018), which is prevalent on the contra-side.

Rhetorics concerning the “win-win” trajectory can be seen on the pro-side. For example, the leaders of MP proclaim that “You reap what you sow. The government is sowing for a modern, sustainable

and strong Sweden where everyone will benefit from the sustainable transition“ (Bolund & Lövin, 2019) while arguing for the gasoline tax. The morale of the gasoline tax is discussed in debate articles as well. For example, the youth organisation of MP (Green youth) condemns the youth organisation of KD (KDU) for claiming that the tax is “morally unjust, while not caring about whether it is morally justified that Swedes live as if there were 4,2 earths at the expense of future generations “(Boden & Sarlin, 2019).

5.5.2 *Contra*

Sweden seems to experience a trend towards increasing polarisation of the political landscape that follows a similar international trend (Rosén, 2019). Polarisation is a symptom of the creation of dichotomies of the type “we against them”, that creates order in complex environments (Geels & Verhees, 2011) such as the issue of climate change and gasoline tax. The fact that V and SD, who are considered opposites and argued to be “extreme”, have increasing support are proof of this polarisation (Rosén, 2019; Odmalm & Hepburn, 2017). In my media analysis I found that political parties both to the left and right are calling each other “extreme parties”. An example of the rhetoric used is that MP is pointed out as extreme because “they have set out to ban motoring in Sweden” (Sjöstedt & Kinnunen, 2019) while SD is pointed out as extreme because they are acclaimed climate deniers (Fredholm, Westholm & Örnberg, 2019).

The traditional left/right-wing economic division does not seem to fully explain the polarisation as it has in the past. The Swedish right-wing parties are, for example, using left-wing rhetoric concerning injustice in the question of the gasoline price. This is how the liberal association Skattebetalarna puts it in a debate article:

Leading representatives of Sweden’s biggest bourgeois party are writing fire speeches worthy of the left party... arguing that the government allows ordinary people to pay outrageous gasoline taxes to have tax reliefs directed towards the rich. No wonder that the voters get confused (Ekström, 2019).

Change is happening in the Swedish political landscape although it might be too early to say which direction it is taking. The support for S is historically low and traditional S voters that are union members in for example Landsorganisationen (LO) are to a considerable degree lost to SD (Anderberg, Mattsson & Nordenskiöld, 2019). These unions are also more reluctant towards progressive climate policies than other unions working in other sectors (Lim & Duit, 2018).

In a report by LO, the increasing economical inequalities in Sweden are given as an explanation to why propositions of higher gasoline prices are becoming provocations for many people. They see the increasing inequalities in Sweden as what is lowering the willingness to cooperate (Almqvist, Lindgren & Vedin, 2019).

The willingness to cooperate is also connected to voters' attitudes towards the "establishment" and democracy. SD is by some considered a populist party (Oscarsson & Demker, 2015) which can be connected to the frames and language used on the contra-side in the gasoline debate. As previously seen and will be further discussed, the use of the dichotomies between the urban and rural and *the elite* versus *the people* are common elements connected to populist tendencies (Huber, 2020). Another theme with connections to populist tendencies is what I call the nostalgia frame.

On the contra-side many frames are based on emotion rather than empirical evidence, most commonly used on the Bensinupproret web page and their Facebook page. The most prevalent of these frames is the nostalgia frame. This frame is interesting considering that it has a strong connection to rising populism and nationalism which adheres to SD's message of the decline of "golden ages" and social processes of decay (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2019). For example, statements in debate articles such as: "The car is one of our most important household appliances and a prerequisite for... society to work. Sweden has always needed the car and so it will remain" (Ystedt, 2019).

Bensinupproret is also using this rhetoric while arguing that Sweden is a changed country compared to 30 years ago and the car is thereby more necessary today (Bensinupproret 2.0, n.d.a). On their Facebook page pictures like the one below, Figure 5, which has the message of: "Do you remember back when the car was marketed as a freedom to people" (Bensinupproret 2.0, n.d.b) are common.



Figure 5: Post from Bensinupproret 2.0 Facebook group. Translation: Government, absorb this picture. Do you remember? ... Do you remember the times when the car was marketed as a vehicle of freedom and a possibility to connect people! Bensinupproret 2.0 (n.d.b).

This rhetoric concerning the necessity of the car to have freedom shows that we live in a fossil dependent culture, where freedom to live one's own life is connected with various things, including affordable energy (Huber, 2013). In an individualistic neoliberal culture, where following “The American dream” is based on cheap fossil-fuel livelihoods (Huber, 2013), energy populists can be argued to adhere to their right to live a “prosperous and free life” with cheap energy. The populist view is thus connected perceived rights and ideals.

5.6 Summary

The debate on gasoline taxes reflects a political struggle. It is only one political party, MP, that takes a clear stand pro the tax. They have little legitimacy among the general public and therefore the **actor credibility** is limited. Actor credibility on the contra-side can be considered higher since many organisations are involved and all three parties in right-wing opposition take a strong stand against. The leftist parties also support the frame of injustice which increases the actor credibility and empirical fit.

The pro-side can be considered to have a relatively high **empirical fit**. The contra-side on the other hand uses arguments of high political controversy, which makes the empirical fit dependent on

individuals' political sympathies. Arguments such as that the current climate policies are inefficient, and that focus should be put on biofuels lack empirical evidence. *The injustice frame* claiming that some people are hit harder than others has a high degree of empirical fit. However, the contra-side's proposed solutions lack in consideration of said inequalities, which might lower the degree of empirical fit.

The degree of **centrality** concerning climate change can be considered high seeing that it concerns a majority of Swedes. The precise measure of high gasoline taxes does, however, not engage on the same level. This stands in contrast to the level of engagement on the contra-side where framings of injustice bring a strong conviction that increases the centrality dimension. Concerning who this issue engages there is a clear divide between the political beliefs and socio-demographic variables of the sympathisers on different sides.

Because the causal link between high gasoline taxes and lowered emissions is at best unclear it can be difficult to see the direct link between *the climate change frame* and the gasoline tax. Due to the abstract nature of climate change itself, the **experiential commensurability** can already be considered low. *The injustice frame*, on the other hand, whether appealing to individuals' self-interest or sense of fairness, has a much closer link to people's everyday experiences since it concerns their private economies. Adding the sense of the tax being imposed, the frames used on the contra-side can be considered to have higher experiential commensurability compared to the pro-side.

The **Macro-cultural resonance** of *the climate change frame* can be regarded as high in Swedish society as it has been supported by educational and informational efforts and has created an identity of Sweden as a sustainability pioneer. Taking action is framed as both a win-win trajectory and a matter of responsibility and morale. The strong foothold of social democracy has also helped to form the sustainability programme. The contra-side has resonance with the right-wing parties even though they are using traditionally left-wing rhetoric by arguing against injustices. Populism is on the rise in Sweden and the contra-side has adopted some populist rhetoric.

The contra-side has a relatively high actor credibility, centrality, and experiential commensurability along with an accumulating macro-cultural resonance and thereby increasing cultural legitimacy and resonance.

7 Analysis and discussion

All variables discussed by Jagers et al. (2019) that affect attitudes towards gasoline taxes can to some degree be found in the Swedish case. This thesis thus adds to the understanding of what cultural dimensions matter in this specific case and what framing struggles can be seen. I will argue that the weakness of the pro-side does not lie with the legitimacy or credibility of *the climate change frame* but is rather a symptom of a political struggle. The polarisation of the debate between the political blocks suggests that the antagonism is best determined by aspects of a political culture rather than socio-demographic variables as claimed by Hornsey et al. (2016). It should however be noted that the socio-demographic factors such as gender and residency correlate with political sympathies.

7.1 *The Elite vs the People*

Amplifying a victimization is a common tool that many movements use in framing struggles (Benford & Snow, 2000). The contra-side heavily uses *the injustice frame* to victimize the rural population. It can, however, be argued that the dominance of the urban over the rural is a hegemonic structure that the media reproduces (Jansson, 2013). For example, findings by Nilsson & Lundgren, (2018), suggests that non-governmental bills concerning Swedish rural politics were written to gain sympathies for the party and politicians proposing the bills rather than a real concern for the issue. A common theme was also an emotional and nostalgic rhetoric of a living countryside that is closely connected to populist tendencies (Nilsson & Lundgren, 2018). Parallels can thereby be drawn to the nostalgia framing used on the contra-side to represent, as Huber (2020) proclaims, the idealised world before the corruption by *the elite* which is used for a populist purpose.

It is also common for movements to villainize and put the blame for the problematic situation somewhere (Benford & Snow, 2000). Both sides of the debate use strong language to villainize and discredit the other part. In the reviewed debate articles SD were accused of being climate deniers and debaters from SD claimed MP to be climate extremists. I will argue that the tax is framed by the contra-side as imposed by *the political elite* since rhetoric such as that “MP is imposing the tax from above” and using climate change as a way for “symbol politics” against “ordinary people” is commonly used by the contra-side. I will further argue that these framings have populist tendencies which specifically favours a populist agenda. This is in accordance with conclusions drawn by Huber (2020) and Lockwood (2018). The framing of MP as *the political elite* and antagonist as well as SD being a prominent actor strengthens this inclination. Due to *the climate change frame’s* abstract, uncertain and complex nature and the frame’s connections with post materialistic concerns, i.e. concerns that come after the worries of everyday life, the populists can easily portray it as elitist driven. The Climate

change frame can thereby be used as a target for a populist backlash (Huber, 2020), which seems to be the case in the Swedish gasoline tax debate. By amplifying the aspect of climate change action as an elite-driven agenda it can be used to argue that this agenda has lost touch with the wants and needs of the “ordinary citizens” and thereby foster an attack towards cultural power structures following a populist trajectory. Moreover, the divergence between *the elite* and *the people* in the climate change debate has been analysed to serve a right-wing populist purpose since climate change action is not perceived to benefit jobs and social cohesion for *the people* (Lockwood, 2018).

The divergence between *the political elite* and *the people* has a great discursive value and is thereby important to understand how *the climate change frame* stands in relation to *the injustice frame*. As in the French case of the Yellow Vests, the Swedish debate has strong tendencies of amplification towards being *the climate change frame* versus *the injustice frame* and *the elite* versus *the people frame*. SD and MP as the main actors of the debate implies that the antagonisms are polarised along the cultural rather than structuralist lines, something that Lockwood (2019) argues is a more compelling explanation for most polarised sustainability debates. What can be concluded is that climate change policies, and the gasoline tax specifically, seem to have a polarising factor between *the public masses* and *the political elite* due to populist tendencies. However, this connection is often ignored and needs more research as already argued by various scholars (Fraune & Knodt, 2018; Lockwood, 2018; Huber, 2020).

7.2 Climate justice

With the parallels drawn to populist tendencies I do not wish to disregard the elitism in the climate change frame. Even though *the elite* might be driven by bringing awareness, the exclusion of *the public* will lead to anti-elitist views and a rejection of environmental policies, as argued by Huber (2020).

There are tendencies for climate advocates to belong to relative affluent minorities and the professional-class (Huber, 2019). The proposed environmental policies are thereby based on these advocates' perceived solutions that argue for a “politics of less” and austerity to limit emission-heavy consumption behaviour and fight climate change. A good example of this is the gasoline tax, which tries to put pressure on individuals to change their lifestyles, thereby going under the concept of lifestyle environmentalism. What has been overseen in lifestyle environmentalism is that not everyone in society has the same will or possibilities to change their consumption behaviour. The material concerns of the working-class whose wages have been in stagnation for decades may for example not be included in current environmentalism (Huber, 2019). This can be shown applicable in

the Swedish case through a quote from Kalle Sundin, founder of the think tank Green welfare state (Gröna folkhemmen).

For many the environmental movement is an excluding experience. There is little will from politicians to push for green reforms and that is why the focus ends up on individual's life choices. Since MP does not fit to the right or left they can work with this as a symbol question (Sundin, 2019).

The need for green reforms that considers equality and justice are acclaimed by scholars advocating for a "Just Transition". A Just Transition entails consideration for those people whose livelihoods are extra vulnerable to the effects of a sustainable transition or dependent on the fossil fuel economy (Newell & Mulvaney, 2013). A transition that benefits jobs and social cohesion for *the ordinary people* are thereby vital in a sustainable transition. This would entail not working with climate change as a "symbol question" but rather integrate the measures in all fields of politics, specifically politics that concerns jobs and welfare. Parallels can be drawn to how the concept of a Green New Deal is argued for by, for example, Klein (2019).

7.3 Solutions?

What can be learned from this analysis is that credibility matters little if it does not create resonance among the public. *The climate change frame* does not engage as much resonance as *the injustice frame* due to its elitist connotations. In other words, *the climate change frame* can raise public concern but thereby not mobilize strong public action or emotion (Wetts, 2020).

The changing Swedish political landscape is an important factor in how this debate will proceed as well as what the future holds for environmental policies in general. The credibility of the pro-side in the gasoline tax debate could be increased by, for example, more actors and political parties backing the gasoline tax or a more comprehensible connection between the gasoline tax and *the climate change frame*. Moreover, a change to a kilometre tax may be a solution since it somewhat responds to *the injustice frame* used by the contra-side, however it does not seem to be the injustice of this precise tax that is the problem, but rather an underlying and deeper feeling of injustice and distrust.

A study by Huber, Fesenfeldt & Bernauer (2020) showed that the populist discourse is not yet undermining support for carbon taxes directly. However, it is still argued that the underlying divergence of *the elite vs the people* makes scholars and governments need to seek other ways of communicating the importance of climate action. For example, by framing action on climate change as a way for *the elite* to respond to *the people's* wants and needs, instead of as an ignorance towards

them (Huber et al., 2020). Huber (2020) also suggests a bigger involvement of citizens in the decision-making process to tackle a populist backlash.

I would add the importance of the win-win rhetoric that is used to legitimize action in the Swedish case (Zannakis, 2009; Lim & Duit, 2018). Not that it should only be used as a compelling discourse but also used to develop policies to foster a transparent and just sustainable transition. As argued by Heffron & McCauley (2018), governments, companies and institutions are not to a wide extent integrating the concept of a just transition, that would tackle claims of injustices by including procedural, distributional, and restorative justice into the policies which could result in increasing public understanding and acceptance.

7.4 The Cultural Performative Approach as a lens for looking towards the future

I found the Cultural Performative framework to be useful in the chosen context since it assists in laying out most of the variables in the debate such as actors, main frames, and resonance to individuals and wider society. It is a useful tool to get a broad understanding of the most important cultural variables of the debate; a perspective that is lacking in current research about attitudes towards gasoline taxes in Sweden. A limitation of this framework is that it is hard to develop the dominant themes of argumentation. Another type of discourse analysis using coding of themes in argumentations would be preferable for a deeper analysis of discourses. This would however constrict the comparison of frames, actors, and audience that came through in this analysis. I would also argue that this approach is a viable tool in understanding the current cultural aspects of sustainability journeys and thereby deepen the knowledge of what can be done in the future to affect the resonance and cultural legitimacy of gasoline taxes in Sweden.

8. Conclusion

This thesis contributes to knowledge on how cultural legitimacy and resonance is created through framing in the context of the gasoline tax debate in Sweden. These cultural aspects have earlier been overlooked but shown to contribute to the understanding of the antagonisms.

The debate is particularly political where the political parties are major actors. The Green Party (MP) and the Sweden Democrats (SD) are ideologically far from each other, where MP represents green and alternative values and SD traditional and nationalistic values. These two parties have taken the lead in the debate pro and contra the gasoline tax, where MP mobilises *the climate change frame* to argue pro and SD *the injustice frame* to argue contra.

This polarisation has been shown to have implications for the resonance and cultural legitimacy on both sides. The contra-side has high actor credibility due to the number of different actors and high engagement among certain societal groups since *the injustice frame* appeals to the strong connection between the tax and people's economies. Even though *the climate change frame* has a large resonance in Swedish society it does not seem to create as much engagement and thereby not as strong mobilizing potential as *the injustice framings* used on the contra-side.

While looking into the wider societal context and the Swedish cultural repertoire, the resistance can be placed in a wider context. Similarly, to the French case of the Yellow Vests, the rhetoric's used to argue against the tax display populist tendencies. This seeing as *the injustice frame* is used to amplify the divergence between the (urban) *elite* and *the people*. The debate on gasoline tax in Sweden could thereby to some extent be argued to constitute a battlefield between *the people* and *the elite* which threatens to undermine the important sustainability measure that the gasoline tax signifies. More research is, however, needed on this polarising effect which I have argued could be countered with policies considering the concept of a Just Transition.

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10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1- Articles used for media analysis

Articles marked in red were not used in the media analysis due to weak connections with the debate on gasoline tax.

Lunds Universitetsbibliotek/ BIBSAM
Uttag 2020-02-05

Nyheter

Effektiv klimatpolitik behöver inte bli så dyr	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-12-20 21:00	5
Två ljus i staken, två krav i baken	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-12-08 20:14	8
Sänkt bensinskatt är ett stort klimatsvek	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-10-18 10:00	18
C: Minusutsläpp av koldioxid ska belönas	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-09-25 11:00	20
Varför ska hantverkare beskattas hårdare?	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-08-24 18:45	22
S måste ha en folklig klimatpolitik	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-06-30 17:31	24
Sänkt bensinskatt missar målet helt och hållet	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-06-24 13:30	26
Sänk bensinskatten - höj trängselavgifterna	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-06-18 20:00	28
Liberalerna ska vara ett grönblikt parti	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-06-11 20:00	31
Klimatpolitiken har gjort det billigare att köra bil	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-05-13 19:00	33
Partier strider om EU:s makt	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-05-12 09:37	36
Åkessons ilska: Kan du vara tyst nu? Sluta avbryta mig	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-05-05 19:31	41
Liten fågel slagträ i Australiens miljödebatt	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-05-05 17:44	46
Stoppa bidrag till rikas bilkörning	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-30 20:00	48
En EU-skatt hotar Sveriges inflytande	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-29 16:45	50
Liberalernas förslag är orealistiskt	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-29 14:57	52
Grön skatteväxling krävs för fossilfritt jordbruk	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-21 14:00	54
Nya L-toppen: Kärnkraften är viktig för klimatet	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-19 19:59	57
C-kritik av koldioxidskatt visar på feighet	🇸🇻 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-17 12:00	60



"Koldioxidskatten hotar klimatet"	📰 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-04-15 21:00	62
"Klimatfrågan måste in i miljölagstiftningen"	📰 Svenska Dagbladet Premium	2019-03-01 20:00	64
Gärna samarbete - men inte utan kärnkraften	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-12-02 15:45	66
Storstäderna vinnare vid sänkt bensinskatt	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-10-18 04:00	68
Symbolpolitisk hysteri att höja bensinpriset	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-09-13 04:00	70
Snart finns det inga "anständiga" partier	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-06-05 04:00	72
Debattbråk om kärnkraft - och dinosaurier	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-22 21:59	74
Medvetna lögnar om klimatet och Thunberg	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-22 17:00	76
Grön Ungdom föraktar vår svenska landsbygd	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-17 14:07	78
Ni är bilisternas allra värsta fiende, Muf	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-16 13:59	79
Partier strider om EU:s makt	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-12 09:37	81
Vänsterpartiets toppnamn går till attack mot MP	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-11 13:32	86
Liten fågel slagträ i Australiens miljödebatt	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-05 17:44	89
Kära liberaler - släpp fixeringen på kärnkraft	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-02 13:56	91
M, ert nej ger svenskar sämre möjligheter	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-05-02 10:59	93
Med S och M hamnar Sverige på EU:s läktare	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-04-29 04:00	95
Centern, er politik hade försämrat klimatkrisen	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-04-27 09:00	97
Alla har fel om klimatet - utom Centerpartiet	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-04-26 04:00	99
Ge folk på landet en bonus - för miljön	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-02-27 04:00	101
För många finns inget alternativ till bilen	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-02-21 10:12	103
Höjd bensinskatt är ett piskrapp för landsbygden	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-02-16 04:00	105
M-politiker lämnar sina uppdrag efter att ha hotat Lövin	📰 Aftonbladet	2019-02-12 10:32	107
Debatt: Bilen som slagträ i miljödebatten	📰 Vestmanlands Läns Tidning Premium	2020-02-05 08:20	108
Bilen behövs genom hela livet	📰 Norran	2020-02-02 18:51	110
Klimatet förhandlar inte om utsläpp	📰 Västerbottens-Kuriren Premium	2020-01-16 17:31	112
Det hållbara samhället - ett grönt Ekotopia eller en dystopisk klimatdiktatur?	📰 Sala Allehanda Premium	2020-01-10 21:01	114
Det hållbara samhället - ett grönt Ekotopia eller en dystopisk klimatdiktatur?	📰 Vestmanlands Läns Tidning Premium	2020-01-10 21:01	122
Det hållbara samhället - ett grönt Ekotopia eller en dystopisk klimatdiktatur?	📰 Bblat Premium	2020-01-10 21:01	130
Det hållbara samhället - ett grönt Ekotopia eller en dystopisk klimatdiktatur?	📰 Fagersta-Posten Premium	2020-01-10 21:01	138
Debatt: Försämrat reseavdrag slår hårt mot Sjuhärad	📰 Ulricehamns Tidning Plus	2019-12-31 06:00	146
Ekeröth (S): "Vi ska inte skrämman upp folk i onödan"	📰 Mariestads-Tidningen Plus	2019-12-30 05:00	148
Höghastighetståg är biljetten till framtiden	📰 Kvällsposten	2019-12-23 05:30	153
Peter Franke: Lita inte på klimatpopulisterna	📰 Allehanda.se Premium	2019-12-06 08:49	154
Lita inte på populisterna i klimatfrågan	📰 Värmlands Folkblad	2019-12-06 06:00	156
Per Svensson: Åkesson gjorde karriär på den alarmism som han...	📰 Dagens Nyheter - Login	2019-12-02 20:00	158
Framtidens skatter: En reform för tillväxt och enkelhet	📰 Timbro	2019-11-26 05:00	159
Muf: Regeringen måste sluta sätta käppar i turbinen för kärnkraften	📰 Altinget	2019-11-14 01:30	160
Debatt: MP saknar belägg för att bilismen ökar	📰 Vestmanlands Läns Tidning Premium	2019-11-07 14:00	161
Höj bensinskatten och öronmärk pengarna för att hjälpa bilberoende	📰 Tidningen Syre	2019-11-05 14:23	162
Nu startar ett uppror mot elskatten	📰 Västerbottens-Kuriren Premium	2019-10-31 10:42	163
Debatt: Alla som tankar tjänar på sänkt bränsleskatt - oavsett var man bor	📰 Arbetarbladet Premium	2019-10-31 05:50	165



Debatt: Slopa trafikförsäkringsskatten	📰 Vestmanlands Läns Tidning Premium	2019-10-30 13:15	167
Debatt: Sänkt bensinskatt hjälper främst storstadsbor	📰 Vestmanlands Läns Tidning Premium	2019-10-29 06:10	168
DEBATT: Sverige behöver bilen, och så kommer det att förbli - därför firar vi Bilens Dag	📰 Dalarnas Tidningar Premium	2019-10-28 08:00	169
Debatt: Vi firar bilens dag för att den är en förutsättning för att vardagen ska fungera	📰 Gefle Dagblad Premium	2019-10-28 05:00	171
Debatt: Klimatmål slår hårt mot länet	📰 Länstidningen Östersund Premium	2019-10-25 07:00	173
Bensinen blandas ut - ändå höjs skatten	📰 Expressen	2019-10-21 06:05	175
Debatt: Sänkt bensinskatt hjälper främst storstadsbor	📰 Arbetarbladet Premium	2019-10-18 16:02	176
Debatt: Sänkt bensinskatt hjälper främst storstadsbor	📰 Dala-Demokraten Premium	2019-10-16 06:38	177
Debatt: Sänkt bensinskatt hjälper främst storstadsbor	📰 Gefle Dagblad Premium	2019-10-11 15:20	178
Jonson (M) vill se krafttag mot störande biltrafik	📰 Arvika Nyheter Plus	2019-10-11 14:00	180
Smarta politiker bör hitta bra lösningar	📰 Smålandsposten	2019-10-11 05:30	183
Sänkt bensinskatt - mumma för storstadstilister	📰 Tidningen Syre	2019-10-02 15:26	184
DEBATT: "Alla kan inte cykla till jobbet"	📰 StockholmDirekt	2019-10-01 09:51	185
Insändare: Så dödar Centern glesbygden	📰 Länstidningen Östersund Premium	2019-09-20 08:57	187
"En klimatstrejk riktar kraven åt rätt håll"	📰 Dagens Arbete	2019-09-02 09:23	188
Klimatreformer måste vara förankrade hos medborgare	📰 Omni	2019-09-01 08:26	190
Klimatreformer måste vara förankrade hos medborgare	📰 fPlus	2019-09-01 08:24	191
Se grafiken här	📰 Sveriges Radio	2019-08-31 06:36	192
Forums tablå Almedalsveckan 2019	📰 SVT Nyheter	2019-08-29 14:10	193
DEBATT: "Trängselskatten i Stockholm behövs för att minska massbilismen"	📰 StockholmDirekt	2019-08-29 10:35	194
Bensinprotest: Utan bilen stannar Fagerhult	📰 Tidningen Vi	2019-08-26 16:15	196
DEBATT: "Slopa trängselskatten i Stockholm"	📰 StockholmDirekt	2019-08-22 11:17	202
Greta Thunberg: "Verkar som de är rädda för mig"	📰 Expressen	2019-07-23 11:41	204
Kanada har inte hittat klimatfrågans heliga graal	📰 Dagens Nyheter - Login	2019-07-17 21:00	205
Debatt: Rättvisare transportpolitik med kilometerskatt	📰 Länstidningen Östersund Premium	2019-07-16 11:06	206
Trots sänkt bensinskatt - Bensinupproret fortsätter: "Står här tills vi nått vårt mål"	📰 Nerikes Allehanda Premium	2019-07-13 16:13	208
DEBATT: Vi som värnar glesbygd på riktigt reagerar mot all skatt på avstånd	📰 Sundsvalls Tidning Premium	2019-07-03 06:00	210
Störst nytta för klimatet	📰 SVT Nyheter	2019-07-01 16:14	211
Bolund om bottenisfran: "Inte jättekonstig"	📰 Expressen	2019-06-30 13:42	212
Stora skillnader i synen på klimatrapporteringen	📰 Expressen	2019-06-29 19:26	213
DEBATT: Höjd bensinskatt är ett svek mot landsbygden	📰 Sundsvalls Tidning Premium	2019-06-29 05:30	214
Almedalen: Ulf Kristersson talar	📰 SVT Nyheter	2019-06-27 15:30	216
DEBATT: Man måste se skillnaden mellan storstad och landsbygd för att hela Sverige ska leva	📰 Sundsvalls Tidning Premium	2019-06-27 06:00	217
Bensinen borde inte kosta mer än 10 kr	📰 Expressen	2019-06-15 07:15	218
"Detta är mer orimligt än att vi advokater skulle få välja domare"	📰 Dagens Juridik	2019-06-13 12:06	219
Insändare: Dags för ett pensionsuppror	📰 Dala-Demokraten Premium	2019-06-11 09:35	220
Birger Ekerlid: När LT:s bensinuppror samlade 46 426 protester	📰 Länstidningen Östersund Premium	2019-06-08 08:00	221
Dags för ett pensionsuppror	📰 Dagens Arena	2019-06-07 13:17	223
Uppmanar till pensionsuppror	📰 Skillingaryd	2019-06-04 08:37	225
Nu röstar riksdagen - om höjd bensinskatt	📰 Byt Bil	2019-05-28 13:00	226



Sänk bensinskatt räddar inte landsbygden	📰 Norrtelje Tidning Premium	2019-05-27 17:48	227
Miljöpartiet är klimatpolitik utan rättvisa	📰 ETC	2019-05-24 13:30	229
Debatt: Därför är det rätt att säga att EU är odemokratiskt	📰 Dalarnas Tidningar Premium	2019-05-23 16:00	231
Debatt: Därför är det rätt att säga att EU är odemokratiskt	📰 Avesta Tidning Premium	2019-05-23 16:00	233
Debatt: Börja redan på söndag och bojkotta EU-valet	📰 Gefle Dagblad Premium	2019-05-22 12:00	235
Makteliten behöver en käftsmäll - bojkotta EU-valet	📰 Aktuellt Fokus	2019-05-22 10:37	237
Låt Niklas Svensson ta över bevakningen av EU-valet	📰 Breakit	2019-05-18 12:30	238
'Det känns som om politikerna har börjat i fel ände'	📰 Blekinge Läns Tidning Plus	2019-05-18 05:00	239
Björn Brånfelt: Litteratur är Sundsvalls grej - här är stans kulturstjärnor	📰 Sundsvalls Tidning Premium	2019-05-17 09:00	242
Slopat skattetillegg av diesel- och bensinskatt - men endast några månader	📰 Proffs	2019-05-16 14:31	244
Slopat skattetillegg av diesel- och bensinskatt begränsas till årsskiftet	📰 Riksdagen	2019-05-16 12:00	245
7 viktiga fakta om bensinen i Sverige	📰 Byt Bil	2019-05-09 15:00	246
Bensinuppror samlar 200 000 medlemmar - och växer: 'Kan explodera när som helst'	📰 Nyheter Idag	2019-05-09 13:57	247
DEBATT: Svar från S: Bensinprisets upp- och nedgång beror inte på bensinskatten	📰 Östersunds-Posten Premium	2019-05-09 06:40	248
Brinell-elev läxar upp politiker inför EU-valet: 'Ni måste förbereda ett bättre svar'	📰 Fagersta-Posten Premium	2019-05-08 11:45	250
Hutlösa bensinskatten handlar inte om miljön	📰 Expressen	2019-05-07 06:15	252
Skattereform för en ny svensk modell	📰 Moderaterna	2019-04-29 08:28	253
Moderaterna föreslår skattereform	📰 Dagens Opinion	2019-04-29 01:41	254
Sex utgångspunkter för en moderat skattereform	📰 Dagens Nyheter - Login	2019-04-28 21:00	255
SD:s vårbudget: Mer till psykiatrin, nej till flygskatt	📰 fPlus	2019-04-25 13:45	256
Debatt: Notre Dame och kampen för klimatet	📰 Fagersta-Posten Premium	2019-04-24 07:15	257
Notre-Dame och kampen för klimatet	📰 Norran	2019-04-19 16:33	259
Debatt: Notre Dame och kampen för klimatet	📰 Dala-Demokraten Premium	2019-04-19 09:39	261
Debatt: Daniel Lönn, SD, pratar i nattmössan!	📰 Dala-Demokraten Premium	2019-04-18 06:41	263
DEBATT: Notre Dame och kampen för klimatet: 'När det hettar till ordentligt, ger vi mandat till politiken'	📰 Hela Hälsingland Premium	2019-04-18 04:00	265
Fransk vär för klimatet	📰 Sveriges Radio P1	2019-03-29 19:26	267
Debatten på gatan har blivit Jupiters huvudvärk	📰 Sydsvenskan Premium	2019-03-25 11:22	268
Finansministern: Landsbygden ska kompenseras för höjd bensin...	📰 Dina Pengar	2019-03-02 18:03	269
'Farsartat när M och KD säger nej till sänkt skatt'	📰 Dagens Samhälle	2019-03-01 05:00	270
Våras det för basinkomsten?	📰 Tidningen Syre	2019-02-28 11:50	272
Svepet 20 februari 2019	📰 Land Lantbruk Plus	2019-02-20 08:42	273
Den orättvisa omställningen	📰 Sveriges Radio P1	2019-02-18 15:40	276
Skattebetalarna: M låter som V i fråga om värnskatten	📰 di.se	2019-02-18 10:55	277
Landsbygden riskerar att beskattas sönder	📰 Borås Tidning	2019-02-15 04:00	278
'Klimatpolitiken borde inte formas efter medelklassen'	📰 Svenska Dagbladet	2019-02-06 20:00	280
Birger Schlaug vill se gula västar i Sverige	📰 Proletären	2019-02-04 12:22	283
Den gröna skatteväxlingen är inte särskilt grön	📰 Tidningen Syre	2019-01-31 12:15	284
Visste du att du betalar 76% av din arbetsinkomst i skatt?	📰 Newsvoice	2019-01-28 09:39	285

10.2 Appendix 2- The most common themes and arguments found in media analysis

Argument:	Rationale:	Used by:
Pro		
“It is cheaper than ever to drive”	Less fuel is necessary with higher energy efficiency in cars. There are also ways like driving slower that can reduce the price.	-MP -Researcher
“The problem for the rural population is dismantled welfare, not gasoline tax”	The main tax reductions when removing the gasoline tax would go to urban and not rural areas, that is why the urban drivers would gain most. It is also the rural municipalities that need more income in the form of tax money which in some part would be lost if removing the revenues from gasoline tax. There are thereby better ways of getting equality than removing the gasoline tax, for example higher pensions so retired people can afford to drive. It is also the rural population that are highly affected by climate change. The problems of the rural population will not go away with lowered gasoline tax. The problem is in welfare not gasoline.	-MP -S -SSK -Debater
“We must not forget climate change which is the reason for the tax”	The main argument for gasoline tax is that it tackles emissions from the transport sector and a removal of it would result in increased emissions. We cannot compromise with climate change. How would emission be lower without the gasoline tax? The gasoline tax is according to the polluter should pay principle.	-S -SSK -MP -Green Youth (MP) - C
“The tax should be combined to become improved and fair”	Many of the Pro arguments are combined with solutions to improve the tax and make it fairer to the rural population. For example, changing the deductions of travel expenses, kilometre tax and more government grants is discussed.	-MP -SSK -S -Swedish environmental institute
“Gasoline tax is efficient and it is a source of income for the state”	The gasoline tax is the most effective tool to fight climate change. It is also a big source of revenue for the state. It is according to the polluter pays principle.	-MP -SSK -Green Youth -L

“The industry also needs to pay”	The tax is not necessarily bad, but it is misdirected since the industry does not pay what they should.	-MP -V
Contra		
“Is it really better for the climate?”	Electric cars also emit carbon. Driving is not going down which speaks for the tax not working so what is the point of having it?	-Vi-Skogen -Debater
“Gasoline is simply too expensive and why should we have to pay?”	High gasoline taxes are not good for Sweden as a country and the taxes paid in fuel and car fees are much higher than the costs they need to cover.	-Skattebetalarna -MUF -Bensinupporet -Debater
“The gasoline tax is a wrong priority”	Why are we punishing ordinary people when the big emitters like the industry pay so little?	-Farmer -Professor -S -IF metall
“The car is simply necessary”	People are dependent on their cars. They don't drive because they think it is fun, but because they have to.	-Motorbranschens riksförbund -SD -KDU -Debater
“The tax is unfair”	The gasoline tax hits hard against those who are dependent on cars and have little choice to live sustainably. This mostly concerns the rural population. The countryside is subsidising a richer urban population.	Transportföretagen -SD -MUF -S -The young left -Gröna folkhemmen