

Lund University
Department of Sociology

Perceptions of punishment: a mixed methods approach to
understanding differing levels of punitive attitudes

Author: Markus Tillman
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Supervisor: Britt-Marie Johansson

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to contribute to an increased knowledge of the punitive attitudes of Swedish 18-30 year olds, and more specifically which potential factors could possibly explain why people have the different levels of punitive attitude that they do as, well as how these factors impact people's level of punitive attitude. The variables that were chosen to be explored further were political ideology as well as social and moral cohesion. A mixed methods approach was utilized in order to collect the data, where the qualitative method consisted of interviews and the quantitative method consisted of an online survey. Theories from Heider, Maruna and King, as well as Boeckmann and Tyler were used to analyze the data. The study concludes that political ideology and social cohesion seem to have a small correlation with punitive attitudes, whereas moral cohesion does not. However, more research is needed in order to establish whether there are any actual correlations between punitive attitude and political ideology, and moral and social cohesion. The study also concludes that the correlation between political ideology and punitive attitudes could be a cause of different ideologies having different views of the causes of criminality, leading to different views of punishment and the purposes of it. It also concludes that the correlation between punitive attitude and moral and social cohesion could be explained by the perception that severe sanctions clarify and reinforce the moral and social norms and values of society to a greater extent than milder sanctions.

Keywords: punitive attitude, political ideology, moral cohesion, social cohesion, mixed methods

Popular abstract

This study is about Swedish 18-30 year olds' opinions on punishment, and, more specifically, which possible factors could explain why people have the opinions that they do, as well as how these factors actually impacts people's attitudes. The factors that were chosen to be explored were political ideology as well as moral and social cohesion. In order to examine this, both interviews and a survey were conducted. The analyzing of the data gathered was done through theories from Heider, Maruna and King, as well as Boeckmann and Tyler. The result of the study shows that political ideology and social cohesion seems to have a small impact on people's opinions on punishment, but the same can not be said for moral cohesion. Further studies are therefore needed to be able to determine whether there actually is a connection between these factors and people's opinions on punishment. The study also shows that the connection between political ideology and people's opinions on punishment could be because of that different political ideologies have different views on why people commit crimes, and this could lead to the different views of punishment. The study also shows that the connection between moral and social cohesion and people's opinions of punishment could be because harsh punishments are perceived as reinforcing the norms of society to a greater extent than mild punishments.

Foreword

I would like to thank my supervisor Britt-Marie Johansson for her inputs and help throughout the making of this paper. I would also like to thank all of my interviewees and survey respondents, thank you so much!

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1. Introduction

Criminal justice politics is one of the most heavily debated topics in society right now, with perhaps the most prevalent discussions concerning the range of punishment and the purpose of punishing. As the whole justice system is interlinked, the content of these particular discussions and the opinions that are the most prevalent have a huge impact on how policies governing the whole of criminal law are shaped (Frost 2009, p. 3). For instance, these discussions greatly influence the life of those who are caught up in the machinery of the legal system, e.g. through the amount of rehabilitative work that is being offered, and how much resources are being allocated to the justice system, e.g. by increasing the resources required to sustain an enlarged prison population. They also influence the size of the police force, e.g. by an increased workload caused by large-scale criminalizations, as well as a number of other areas of the justice system. Consequently, it is important to have as much and as detailed information as possible regarding the public's punitive attitudes, as these attitudes can have a large impact on society. However, studies concerning the Swedish public's punitive attitudes are quite scarce, as there is little to no research regarding what factors shape the public's punitive attitudes as well as how the public thinks and feels in regards to these factors. The existing studies on the punitive attitude of the Swedish people are instead focused on mapping and establishing the general view of the Swedish people (e.g. Lindén & Similä 1982, Eriksson & Åkerström 1994, Axberger 1996), rather than *why* they have these opinions. The aim of this study is therefore to bridge this knowledge gap, which will be done by examining possible factors for why Swedish people have the level of punitive attitudes that they do. This will be done by assessing the explanatory power of two variables that have been proven to have a great effect on people's punitive attitudes in USA, namely political ideology and the perception that there's a moral and social decline in society, in a Swedish context. These two variables will therefore be assessed by examining their impact on punitive attitudes in relation to Swedish 18-30 year olds, in order to determine if it is worthwhile to explore them further in regards to the entire population. Moreover, it is possible that these variables function in a different way in a Swedish context, which makes it important to examine them adequately. The variables will therefore also be explored through interviews in order to contribute to a greater understanding of why and how they impact punitive attitudes.

Furthermore, this study will be limited to examining people's opinions on penal policy in

regards to only violent and sexual offences. This choice was made based on the finding that people generally think of the most severe crimes and the most hardcore criminals when answering questions about penal policy (Gerber 2012, p. 32). It could therefore be misleading to present a paper on people's punitive attitudes in relation to all types of crimes, when in reality the majority will probably have had the most severe types of crimes and the most hardcore criminals in mind when answering the questions.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the information on the Swedish young adults' punitive attitudes in regards to violent and sexual offences, by exploring possible factors for these differing punitive attitudes, as well as try to get a better understanding of why and how these factors impact peoples' levels of punitive attitudes. This will be done through the answering of two questions, namely:

What possible factors could explain Swedish 18-30 year olds' opinions on penal policy in regards to sexual and violent offences?

and

In what way do these factors shape Swedish 18-30 year olds' opinions on penal policy in regards to sexual and violent offences?

1.1 Outline

The paper will start off with a brief definition of some of the concepts that are central to the study, followed by a chapter on theory and previous research, where I will present the previous studies that the variables that were chosen to be explored was extracted from, as well as the theoretical concepts that will be used to analyse the data. After that comes a chapter on method, where I will present the mixed methods approach as well as a review of how the material was collected and analysed for both the quantitative and the qualitative methods. After this comes the quantitative analysis, where I will present the statistical analyses that were conducted to determine the correlations between the chosen variables and punitive attitude, followed by the qualitative analysis, where I will present the results from the analysis of the qualitative data, and a comparison between the results

of the different methods. The paper will be concluded with a summary and a discussion of the paper as a whole.

2. Concepts

In this chapter I will briefly define some of the concepts that are central to this paper.

2.1 Punitive attitude

Punitive attitude is the generic term for peoples' opinions of punishment, but exactly how this concept is defined varies from study to study (Adrianssen & Aertsen 2015, p. 1). Initially, the definition of punitive attitude that was first decided on aimed to be as comprehensive and specific as possible, namely "an attitude towards the goals of punishment, specified forms of penal sanctions, the intensity of penal sanctions and specific sentencing policies" (ibid., p. 13). However, as there were issues with the variables supposed to be measuring punitive attitudes based on this definition, which will be explained further later, I instead decided to use a slightly more vague definition of punitive attitude, namely the support for using severe sentences for criminals.

2.2 Political ideology

The definition of political ideology that will be used in this paper is "a set of shared beliefs about how society should be structured and about the accepted means to achieve this order." (Gerber 2012, p. 40).

2.3 Social and moral cohesion

Social and moral cohesion are similar concepts that revolves around people of a society having similar values (Batchelor et al 2010, p. 2, Larsen 2014, p. 2). However, the major difference between these two concepts is that the most important part of social cohesion is not that the citizens share the exact same values, rather, the most important feature of social cohesion is the belief that you are able to trust the other members of society (Larsen 2014., p.

5). That is, social cohesion is more geared towards trust, whereas moral cohesion is more concerned with the overall shared values and ideals of a society (Batchelor et al 2010, p. 2, Larsen 2014, p. 2).

Thus, the definition of social cohesion that I have decided to use is based on the definition of the sociologist Christan Albrekt Larsen, who defines social cohesion as "the belief held by citizens of a given nation-state that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other" (Larsen 2014, p. 2). In turn, the definition of moral cohesion that is being used in this paper is based on the definition of Batchelor et al, which says that moral cohesion is the shared ideals and values of a society which guide people in their actions (2010, p. 2).

3. Previous research and theory

In this chapter I will present the previous studies that was used to single out the variables to be tested, namely social and moral cohesion as well as political ideology, and also the theories that will be used to analyze the qualitative and the quantitative data. These variables were chosen based on the knowledge we already have of factors that correlate with punitive attitudes, as a lot of international research has been conducted on this subject (Frost 2009, p. 6). The research involves several different variables, but some that are frequently explored include age, gender, education, ethnicity, and previous experiences of criminality, thus the correlation between these variables and punitive attitude are quite well-established (ibid., p. 6). As a result, I decided to explore factors that have been proven to have significant correlations with punitive attitudes, but that aren't as well-researched as these other variables just mentioned.

3.1 Previous research

3.1.1 Social and moral decline's impact on punitive attitudes

Based on the scientific discussions and research on what could be the reason for the punitive attitude of the average American, the criminologists James Unnever and Francis Cullen were able to distinguish between three different types of theories: "the escalating crime-distrust model, the moral decline model, and the racial animus model" (2010, p. 3). The first model

suggest that peoples' punitive attitudes are caused by a perceived increase in crime levels that is large enough to threaten to affect their everyday life negatively, as well as a lack of trust that the legal system and the government are able to protect them from these negative consequences (Unnever & Cullen 2010, p. 4). The second model argues that punitive attitudes can be explained by a perceived decline of social and moral cohesion (ibid. P. 6). Lastly, the third model suggests that punitive attitudes are a cause of a negative view of ethnic minorities, as the theory argues that people, to a large degree, picture criminals as young men from ethnic minorities, and actions towards criminals thus become a way of controlling these societal groups (ibid., p. 8-9).

Unnever and Cullen tried the strength of these three theories through multiple regression analysis, by appraising the theories' predictive power in regards to support for capital punishment as well as if people "would rather have criminals caught, convicted, and punished as opposed to policies that address the social problems that cause crime like bad schools, poverty, and joblessness." (ibid., p. 4). The results showed that both the moral decline model and the racial animus model had a strong predictive power (ibid. P. 20-21). Thus, Unnever and Cullen argue that the perception that the social and moral fabric of society is deteriorating, makes people support a mostly symbolic measure that they feel consolidate the morals of society which, through that, serves to appease their qualms (ibid.. p. 21).

As mentioned above, I decided to use Unnever and Cullen's study as the correlation between moral and social cohesion and punitive attitude isn't as well-researched as other variables such as gender and education, but it has exhibited a quite strong and significant correlation in multiple studies (Unnever and Cullen 2010, Tyler and Boeckmann 1997), which warrants further research.

The fact that the study was conducted in the US could possibly lead to different results when applied to a Swedish context. For instance, Sweden generally has a high level of social cohesion, especially in relation to the US (Larsen 2014, p. 8-9). This high level of social cohesion could mean that none of the study's participants will have the perception that there is a moral and social decline in society. This possibility would render the quantitative analysis of this variable unusable, as the statistical analysis requires multiple groups in order to be able to determine differences between them, which would of course not be possible if all of the respondents hold the opinion that Sweden generally has a high level of moral and

social cohesion. The qualitative analysis would then also be affected negatively, as such homogeneous perceptions would mean that there's a risk that the qualitative data gathering misses vital data that could help explain why and how the perception that there's a low level of social and moral cohesion has an impact on people's levels of punitive attitude. Generally, Sweden's high level of social cohesion could mean that this particular variable has a limited impact on Swedish people's punitive attitudes.

3.1.1 Ideology's impact on punitive attitudes

The American social psychologist John S. Carroll conducted two quantitative studies, one on probation officers and one on criminology and law students, regarding the relationship between ideology, personality, sentencing goals or penal philosophies, and about the causes of crime (Carroll et al. 1987, p. 1). They performed a factor analysis on the variables pertaining to these four themes to determine how the different variables and themes were related to one another, followed by multiple regression analyses (ibid., p. 3-4). The study showed that there was indeed a strong relationship between these themes (ibid, p. 8), and perhaps the most important finding, in regards to this thesis, concerns the strong link between ideology and sentencing goal. The results showed that conservatives were more likely to support retribution as a sentencing goal while also believing that the causes of crime are related to individual attributes, such as a lack of morals and a lack of self-control (ibid., p. 10). In contrast, liberals were more likely to support rehabilitation as a sentencing goal, and they also believed that structural and economic factors were the cause of criminal behaviour rather than blaming individual factors (ibid., p. 10).

As this study was also conducted in the US it is possible that the same kind of result will not be shown in a Swedish context, as the two countries are very different politically. Sweden is probably more left-wing oriented than the US, which raises questions of whether a study using an American view of political ideology can adequately be applied to a Swedish context. As for this particular study, Carroll et al. only mention conservatism and liberalism (1987), which is problematic in relation to a Swedish context as many Swedes identify as being socialists (Svensson 2019, p. 11). While being an obvious cause of concern, this might not have that big of an impact as it is quite likely that socialists will conform to the standpoint of the American liberal, as it is probable that socialists also will ascribe the causes of criminality

to societal causes. However, this matter points us to the issue of the different divisions of political ideologies in Sweden compared to USA, as liberals are considered to be left-wing in the US (Halpin & Agne 2009, p. 2) but right-wing in Sweden. This leads to uncertainty of what the responses of the people belonging to the Swedish right-wing will look like, as the right-wing in Sweden consists of both liberals and conservatives whereas the division between the two ideologies in the US is more distinct (ibid., p. 2). It is therefore possible that the people who identify as liberals in a Swedish context will have more 'conservative' punitive attitudes and understandings of the causes of criminality than liberals in an American context, as the division between conservatives and liberals in the US is more polarized than in Sweden (ibid., p. 2). It is however also possible that the people belonging to the political right in Sweden will ascribe criminality to societal factors to a greater degree than the political right in the US, because of Sweden's strong socialdemocratic heritage where criminality was ascribed to societal factors for most of the 1900's (Andersson & Nilsson 2016).

3.2 Theory

3.2.1 Relational model

According to the social psychologists Tom Tyler and Robert Boeckman, there are mainly two different theoretical ways of looking at rule breaking: the instrumental model and the relational (1997, p. 4-5). The instrumental model suggests that people are supporting the punishment of lawbreakers as a result of the fear that someone in their family or in their vicinity, or even themselves, might become a victim of these lawbreakers (ibid., p. 4-5). This fear is in turn a cause of peoples' perceptions of the crime levels in their community, as well as their perceptions of how effective the legal system is, or in other words, how high they perceive the risk of being the victim of a crime to be (ibid., P. 4). According to this theory, people generally view punishment as a way of controlling behaviour through the deterrence of non-wanted actions (ibid., p. 4).

The relational model is instead focusing on the moral aspect of the breaking of laws, as this theory argues that people view punishment as a way of consolidating the society's social and

moral norms and values, that are being violated by lawbreaking actions (ibid., p. 5). Lawbreaking and the ensuing reactions are thus connected to peoples' worries about the social conditions and the strength of these social ties (ibid., p. 5). Lawbreaking actions leads to the undermining of the social and moral cohesion of society, upon which the punishing of the lawbreakers remind people of the duty of adhering to society's rules while it also leads to the reinforcement of the societal values (ibid., p. 5). By allowing these infringements to go unpunished, it signals that society is unable to uphold and sustain it's laws and the social cohesion of it's members, while simultaneously signalling to the victim of the lawbreaking that they're not being valued by society at large or by the lawbreaker himself (ibid., p. 7). Thus, it is necessary for society, in order to preserve it's laws and status, as well as it's members' social identity, to provide the victims with the closure they need, or facilitate any other social response that can repair the damages that the lawbreaking has resulted in (ibid. P. 7).

Tyler and Boeckmann argue that the instrumental model has a very limited effect on peoples' punitive attitudes, whereas the relational model is able to explain the prevalence of such opinions to a much larger degree (ibid., p. 20). According to them, peoples' punitive attitudes are a direct result of them being worried about the reducing social bonds between people, and about the absence of a cohesive moral code (ibid, p. 21). Thus, people who perceive the moral and social fabric of society to be diminishing are also more likely to be in support of punitive actions (ibid., p. 21).

I will be using Tyler and Boeckmann's theory to analyze the qualitative and the quantitative data which relates to the variable social and moral cohesion.

3.2.2 Attribution theory

In his book "The psychology of interpersonal relations", the psychologist Fritz Heider put forward his theory on how people observe, analyze and understand human behaviour (1958). According to Heider, people experience the world around us through our perceptions (Heider 1958, p. 21). We then aim to make sense of these experiences by trying to understand the causes that brought about these particular experiences (ibid., p. 21-22). These explanations are based on the information that we gather from the many observations that we make, which

enables us to simplify the complex situations (ibid, p. 297). However, individual factors, such as needs, habits of thoughts, and personal preferences, do also often affect the way these situations are explained (ibid., p. 297). As for human behaviour, Heider argues that we mainly try to explain it by attributing actions to either internal or external causes (ibid., p. 56). When making an internal attribution we explain a person's actions by looking at the individual in question (ibid, p. 56). An internal attribution in regards to, for example, criminal actions could be to attribute them to a person's greed, anger or lack of self- control.

Conversely, by attributing a behaviour to external causes, we explain peoples' actions by looking at causes that exist outside of the individual (ibid, p. 56). Again using the example of criminal actions, an external attribution could, for example, be to explain it by looking at the individual's upbringing, the state of the economy or who they associate with.

Moreover, according to Heider, we tend to view our own shortcomings and mistakes as temporary and owing to external factors that we ourselves have no control over, whereas we attribute the exact same faults in others as a result of internal causes (ibid, p. 56, Maruna & King 2009, p. 2). Thus, we tend to interpret other peoples' negative actions and behaviour as being a part of their person, while simultaneously downplaying the effect of external causes (Heider 1958, p. 56, Maruna & King 2009, p. 2).

When we attribute someone's behaviour to internal causes, we also hold the individual responsible for his actions to a much larger degree than if the behaviour was attributed to external causes (ibid, p. 67-68). Behaviour that is caused by external factors are seen as something that the individual himself can't control, it merely happens to him and thus he can't be faulted for it (ibid, p. 68). However, if the behaviour is attributed to internal causes, that is, if the individual is performing the actions deliberately and on his own accord, then he will also be held accountable for it (ibid., p. 68).

The attribution theory has also progressed quite a bit since Heider first wrote his book (Maruna & King 2009, p. 3). Heider's division into internal and external causes has since been expanded and several new elements and aspects of attribution have been developed, for example global or specific, controllable or uncontrollable, and stable or unstable (ibid., p. 3-5). For this paper, controllable/uncontrollable is the most relevant new aspect of attribution theory. This specific element of attribution theory is about whether you attribute a particular cause an uncontrollable or controllable character, that is, if an individual could actually

impact whether or not something happened (Higgins and LaPointe 2012). Going back to the examples mentioned above regarding crime, a cause that is perceived as uncontrollable could be a mental illness that causes an individual to commit crimes. Conversely, a cause of criminality that is perceived as controllable could be anger issues.

According to criminological research, people's perceptions of the causes of crime, that is, whether they are a result of external or internal causes, is correlated to punitive attitudes (Maruna & King 2009, p. 2, Frost & Clear 2009, Carroll et al. 1987). People who perceive crime to be a result of internal causes, generally exhibit a more punitive view than individuals who believe it to be a cause of structures and other external factors (Maruna & King 2009, p. 2, Frost & Clear 2009, Carroll et al. 1987). This fact has also been extended to the realm of political ideology, as conservatives generally have a more punitive view than people on the left side of the political spectrum (Maruna & King 2009 p. 2, Carroll et al 1987, Frost 2010). People on the left generally view the main causes of crime as being external, such as poverty, whereas people on the right generally believe crime to be a cause of internal factors, such as greed (Maruna & King 2009, p. 2, Carroll et al 1987). In this paper I will be using mainly internal/external and controllable/uncontrollable to analyze the qualitative and the quantitative data regarding political ideology.

Finally, using attribution theory, Maruna and King present four different types of perspectives on the causes of criminality and the type of punitive attitude that is associated with each perspective (2009, p. 13). The first type, "offenders as victims of society", views criminal actions as being caused by external forces, and, consequently, believes that factors counteracting these forces can rehabilitate the criminal (ibid, p. 13). The second type, "offenders as permanently damaged by society", have the view, similarly to the first type, that criminality can be explained by external causes, but whereas the first group believes that rehabilitation is possible for all criminals, this group believes that some criminals are unlikely to change and therefore these individuals should be imprisoned for as long as possible in order to protect the rest of the society (ibid, p. 14). The third type, "offenders as people who made bad choices", holds the view that criminal actions occurs because people choose to take those type of actions, and, consequently, they believe that not committing crimes is also a choice (ibid, p. 14). As for the final type, "offenders as evil", similarly to the third type, these people hold the view that criminality is a choice, but they also believe that some people are incapable of not committing crimes, as such individuals are evil to their nature (ibid, p. 14).

Maruna and King argue that these different perspectives give rise to different levels of punitive attitudes, as the two first types holds the least punitive attitudes, whereas the two latter types are the most punitive.

4. Method

In this chapter I will describe the mixed methods approach, as well as the two methods, the collecting and the analyzing of the different data. I will then the explain the epistemological and ontological understandings that were used while writing this paper, before ending the chapter with the ethical considerations that were taken.

4.1 Mixed methods approach

The aim of this study is partly to explore possible factors that can explain why Swedish people between the ages of 18 to 30 have the level of punitive attitudes that they do, and partly to gather how they reflect about these factors in order to gain a better understanding of how these factors impacts one's level of punitive attitude. The first of these two questions is best answered by a quantitative approach, as the quantitative method enables for a large-scale data gathering and a comprehensive analysis of this data, through which it is possible to determine the level of correlation between punitive attitudes and these variables (Black 1999). The other question is best answered through the qualitative method, as it enables for the gathering of data that is more in depth, through which it is possible to gain a richer understanding of how these factors impact peoples' of punitive attitudes (Denscombe 2014, p. 186). In order to be able to incorporate both of these methods, I therefore chose to utilize a mixed method approach.

The gathering of the different kinds of data was simultaneous, as the intention of using a mixed method approach was for the methods to complement rather than to influence each other (Heap & Waters 2019, p. 97). As such, the two different methods and the data won't impact each other until after the data gathering, which is when I will compare and contrast the results of the different analysis in order to gain a deeper knowledge of how punitive attitudes are affected by peoples' perceptions of social and moral cohesion as well as political ideology (ibid., p. 118).

While the interviews and the survey were conducted in Swedish, every quote and question used and mentioned in this paper have been translated to English.

4.2 Quantitative method

The data was collected using an online survey, which was distributed using various social media, such as Facebook. The data consists of 300 responses about questions regarding punitive attitudes, political ideology, perceptions of moral and social cohesion, level of education, age and gender. These questions can be viewed in the in appendix at the end. Women made up the majority of the respondents, as roughly 60% were women. As to their highest level of education, three of the respondents had finished lower secondary school, 55 had finished upper secondary school, 8 had finished trade school, 116 had studied at a university, 105 had finished a bachelor's degree, and 13 had finished a master's degree. All of the respondents were between the age of 18-30, which was, as previously mentioned, the chosen sampling frame. The reason for this choice was that I did not have the required time or resources to conduct a representative study where the results can be generalized to the entire population (Heap and Waters 2019, p. 133), I therefore decided to utilize a convenience sampling in order to ensure that I gathered enough data to be able to draw some kind of conclusions from. Other non-representative samplings, such as purposive sampling and theoretical sampling, were not feasible either, as I did not have the luxury to be able to determine exactly who should answer the survey.

4.2.1 Dependent variable

Generally, measuring punitive attitudes in an accurate way seems to be difficult (Adriaenssen & Aertse 2015, p. 1). Studies using quantitative data to measure punitive attitudes exhibit harsher opinions to a bigger extent than studies using qualitative data (Frost 2010, p. 10). Some researchers argue that this trend is a sign that such punitive attitudes are not a true representation of peoples' actual opinions, whereas other researchers argue that such objections are a part of an ideological project to invalidate punitive attitudes (Pickett 2019, p. 2-3). Generally, measurements of punitive attitudes are also affected by a number of varying circumstances, such as the phrasing of the question or how much information is made

available for the respondent (Pickett 2019, p. 3, Adriaenssen & Aertse 2015, p. 4-5). Importantly, different studies and different researchers use different definitions of punitive attitude, meaning that exactly what is being measured changes drastically from study to study (Adriaenssen & Aertse 2015, p. 3-4).

Criminologists An Adriaenssen and Ivo Aertse argue that there are mainly four different ways through which punitive attitudes have been measured in different studies: peoples' opinions on what the the goal of punishment is (e.g. retribution, and rehabilitation), peoples' opinion on different forms of penal sanctions (e.g. death penalty, and imprisonment), peoples' opinions on the intensity of punishment (e.g. duration of punishment, and prison conditions), as well as peoples' opinions on sentencing policies (e.g. mandatory life sentence, and parole) (2015, p. 3-4). They argue that these four different types of measurements only partially measure punitive attitudes, as they fail to grasp the complexity of the concept on their own (ibid, p. 4). Instead, Adriaenssen and Aertse suggest that combining these four measurements into one index of punitive attitudes would ensure the validity of these measurements (ibid, p. 13). I decided to use their recommendation in order to ensure that the measurements are as valid and accurate as possible, but also because I wanted to have a continuous variable as dependent variables in order to be able to run a multiple regression analysis of the data.

I measured peoples' opinions on *the goal of punishment* through six questions, namely "The main purpose of punishment is to rehabilitate criminals", "The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals", "The main purpose of punishment is to give the victim satisfaction", "The main purpose of punishment is to deter people from committing crimes", "The main purpose of punishment is to show that criminal actions are not acceptable", and "The main purpose of punishment is to physically stop criminals from committing more crimes". Peoples' opinions on the *forms of penal sanctions* were measured through two questions, "Sweden should utilize more non-custodian sanctions, such as electronic ankle bracelet and community service" and "Capital punishment should be utilized for some sexual and violent offences". Peoples' opinions on the *intensity of punishment* were measured through three questions, namely "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners", "More people should be punished for sexual and violent offences than what is the cause today", and "The punishments for violent and sexual offences are too mild". Finally, peoples' opinions on the *sentencing policies* were measured through three questions, "Life sentences should be

mandatory for some types of violent and sexual crimes”, ”The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher”, and ”Prisoners should not be given parole”. All of the questions had five possible answers, ”Disagree”, ”Partly disagree”, ”Neither”, ”Partly agree” and ”Agree”.

Unfortunately, while attempting to construct an index using these variables, the reliability analysis test showed that such an index was not possible, as it had a Cronbach’s Alpha value of .450, indicating that the different variables don’t measure the same phenomenon and thus don’t fit in an index together (Pallant 2003, p. 97). In order to come up with an appropriate index, I tried excluding variables and using different combinations of variables, but I was not able to achieve an index with an acceptable value. I then tried to create four different indexes based on these four different types of measuring punitive attitudes, but even these indexes had a too low value to be feasible as an index. In order to determine the relationship between the variables and achieve an acceptable index I conducted a factor analysis (Hair et al. 2014, p. 92), but, again, the tests that was conducted showed that the variables measure too different phenomena to be able to function in an index together.

As a result, I decided to choose one variable from each of these four ways of measuring punitive attitudes and treat it as a representative for each of these ways, and run four different models using each of these variables as the dependent variable. I therefore chose ”The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals” from the variables measuring the goal of punishment, Sweden should utilize more non-custodian sanctions, such as electronic ankle bracelet and community service” from the variables measuring the forms of penal sanctions, ”Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners” from the variables measuring the intensity of punishment, and ”The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher” from the variables measuring the sentencing policies.

4.2.2 Independent variables

As mentioned, the study assessed two variables, namely perceptions of the social and moral cohesion of society, and political ideology. The former was divided into two parts, moral cohesion and social cohesion. The measurement of moral cohesion was based on the definition of moral cohesion that was previously stated, that is, moral cohesion is the shared

ideals and values of a society which guide people in their actions. As a result, moral cohesion was measured through the two questions "I have similar values as most others in Sweden" and "In Sweden there's a consensus on what is right and wrong", which I argue covers both the aspect of moral cohesion concerning shared values as well as the part concerning the guidance of people's actions.

The measurement of social cohesion was also based on the definition of social cohesion that was stated earlier, that is "the belief held by citizens of a given nation-state that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other" (Larsen 2014, p. 2). The most common measurement of social cohesion is through the question whether most people, in general, can be trusted or not, which captures the most essential part of social cohesion (Larsen 2014, p. 6). In order to not rely on just one question as a measurement of social cohesion, I also used two similar questions that the European Social Survey uses in their measurement of social trust (ESS 2018). Thus, social cohesion was measured through the three questions "I feel like I can trust most people in Sweden", "Most people in Sweden only think about themselves" and "Most people in Sweden try to be as fair as possible". As with the measurement of punitive attitudes, all of the questions measuring social and moral cohesion had five possible answers, "Disagree", "Partly disagree", "Neither", "Partly agree" and "Agree".

However, similarly to the index of punitive attitude, none of the indexes of social cohesion or moral cohesion had an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha value. When creating an index using only a few variables it can be difficult to achieve a high Cronbach's Alpha value, which could explain the low value (Pallant 2003, p. 97). In such cases it is more appropriate to instead look at the mean of the inter-item correlation, but even then the value still fell short of the recommended minimum value of .2 (ibid., p. 97). As with the previous issues with the index, I decided to choose one question from each of these two measurements as the variable to be run in the models, namely "I feel like I can trust most people in Sweden" and "In Sweden there's a consensus on what is right and wrong". "I feel like I can trust most people in Sweden" was chosen as it measures the most important aspect of social cohesion, namely trust (Larsen 2014, p. 6), and "In Sweden there's a consensus on what is right and wrong" was chosen as it captures the moral aspect of moral cohesion to a greater extent than the other question which is more concerned with the overall values of society.

The final independent variable, political ideology, was measured through the question "Based on the Swedish political climate, which alternative fits your political stance the best?", where the alternatives were "Left", "Leaning towards left", "Don't know/No answer", "Leaning towards right" and "Right". This particular measurement was chosen as it lets the participants themselves decide which side of the Swedish political spectrum fits them the best, ensuring that the results are as accurate as possible.

The data regarding gender and education that was collected will also be included in the models as control variables. Control variables are used to check for potentially contributing variables other than the chosen variables being explored, in this case social and moral cohesion and political ideology's impact on punitive attitudes (Black 1999, p. 44). Gender and education were chosen as control variables, as research shows that men and lower educated people tend to have a more punitive view on punishment (Frost 2010, p. 6)

4.2.3 Statistical analysis

Initially, bivariate analyses of the variables were conducted using cross-tabs for all of the dependent and the independent variables, in order to partly be able to determine the strength of the correlation between the variables and partly to check for significant correlations between them. However, as cross-tabs are unable to show the direction of the relationship, as well as how the independent variables interact and affect each other (Heap & Waters 2019, p. 185-186), multivariate analyses were needed to fill this gap.

The original plan was to use multiple linear regression analysis, but as this requires a continuous dependent variable (Pallant 2003, p. 148) it was not possible considering the issues with the index of punitive attitude. Instead, logistic regression analysis was run to explore the correlations between the independent variables and punitive attitude. Logistic regression is a multivariate analysis that determines the impact that the chosen independent variables has on the probability of an outcome, i.e. the dependent variable (Pallant 2003, p. 168). Thus, the logistics regression models that I ran showed how the independent variables, political ideology and perceptions of social and moral cohesion, affected the chance that the dependent variable, punitive attitudes, occurred.

Only three different models were run, as the variables measuring peoples' opinions on the forms of penal sanctions, "Sweden should utilize more non-custodian sanctions, such as electronic ankle bracelet and community service" and "Capital punishment should be utilized for some sexual and violent offences", both had a too skewed distribution of number of answers for each category to be able to be used in a logistic regression (Pallant 2003, p. 169). Thus, the logistic regression analyses were conducted using "The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals", "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners", and "The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher" as the dependent variables, and political ideology, perceptions of social cohesion and perceptions of moral cohesion as the independent variables.

4.2.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability alludes to the possibility of reproducing the results of a study (Black 1999, p. 195). As anyone is able to redo this study simply by reusing the questionnaire responsible for measuring the variables, the study can be said to have a high reliability in regards to this particular aspect. However, the study is not reliable in regards to the chosen sampling method, that is, a convenient sample, as this means that the sample is not representative for the entire population. Thus, if the study was to be conducted again, it is very likely that the results would differ, at least to some extent, as the make up of the respondents would be entirely different.

The concept of validity is made up of mainly three aspects: *external validity*, which revolves around whether the results of a study are able to be generalized onto a broader population, *internal validity*, which is about whether it is possible to determine if there actually is a casual relationship between the variables being explored, and *construct validity*, which relates to whether the measured variables adequately mirror the concept they are supposed to measure (Heap & Waters 2019, p. 211-214). Regarding the external validity of the study, it seems to be quite low as a result of the non-probability sampling, which means that the results of the study can't be generalized onto the entire population. The results of the study can only be said to be true for the 300 who responded to the survey. Moreover, the study seems to have a reasonable high level of internal validity, as the study controls for the

variables gender and education, which are two variables that have been proven to have a great effect on people's levels of punitive attitude (Frost 2010, p. 6). This means that it is possible to rule out the possibility that these two variables are what really shape the level of punitive attitude, meaning that it is possible to determine more confidently that the study actually explore the correlations between political ideology and social and moral cohesion and punitive attitude. However, the study also seem to have a low level of construct validity, as I have experienced issues regarding all of the indexes I attempted to create, indicating that the variables don't measure the exact same phenomena. This is highly problematic as it is therefore not possible to determine that the study actually measures what it is supposed to measure.

4.3 Qualitative method

The data for answering the second research question was gathered through interviews, as they enable for the gathering of more in-depth data that can help illuminate and disentangle complex issues, thereby achieving a deeper understanding of the issue at hand (Denscombe 2014, p. 186). As such, interviews are a fitting choice of method, as the aim of the second research question is to achieve a greater knowledge of how political ideology and peoples' perceptions of social and moral cohesion is connected to punitive attitudes. Based on similar grounds, the choice also fell on conducting semi-structured interviews, as they enable the interviewee to expand beyond the interview guide and bring up the perspectives and angles that they feel is key to their understanding of the issue, which ought to generate the most rich and thorough going data as possible (ibid, p. 186). There's a risk that the interviews would miss out on important key points and perspectives if I had tried to micromanage what questions are asked and what aspects brought up. As such, I had prepared a number of questions that were put forward to all of the participants, but I also allowed them to explore the subject on their own accord. The questions were related to three themes: their opinions on punishment, their opinions on the nature of human behaviour, and their perceptions of the social and moral cohesion of society. These three themes mirrors the dependent variable and the independent variables, as part of the aim of the study was to gain a greater knowledge of why and how these variables impact people's levels of punitive attitudes. The questions regarding their opinions on punishment mirrored, to an extent, the corresponding questions in the survey, as this was a good starting point of the interview as they, together with the follow-

up questions, gauged the interviewees opinions on punishment and their reasoning behind these opinions. The questions regarding their opinions on the nature of human behaviour were related to whether they believed human behaviour to be a result of factors you can't control, such as upbringing and structures, or rather that humans are autonomous, and whether their view of this had any impact on their perception of criminality and punishment. These questions were chosen because Carroll et al.'s study (1987) showed that people's understandings of the causes of criminality correlates with their level of punitive attitude, and exploring these kind of questions would therefore give insight of why this is. Finally, the questions in regards to the last theme were related to their perceptions of the state of the social and moral cohesion in society and what they attributed these levels of social and moral cohesion to. The purpose of these questions was to make the interviewees reflect and explain their point of views in relation to Unnever and Cullen's claim that the perception of a low social and moral cohesion in society leads to more punitive attitudes (2010). These questions can also be viewed in the appendix at the end.

The participants were recruited through a snowball sampling combined with a purposive sampling (ibid., p. 41-42). The snowball sampling was used to get in touch with potential interviewees, and the purposive sampling was used to determine which potential participants were selected. I based the purposive sampling on theoretical reasons, as I wanted to ensure that the interviews resulted in as much diverse information as possible. Therefore, the interviewees were selected based on gender, level of education, age and self-identified political ideology. This information about the potential interviewees was initially gathered from the people who recommended them, and it was later confirmed or refuted by the individual in question. Gender and level of education are generally two variables that impact people's punitive attitudes to a large degree, which is why they were chosen as selection criteria (Frost 2010, p. 6). Political ideology was chosen as it is one of the factors this paper is studying, and therefore it was important to ensure that all sides of the Swedish political spectrum was included. Similarly, as the study focuses on Swedish people between the age of 18-30, the interviewees were also selected based on this variable.

The qualitative data consists of 10 interviews, which lasted between 30-60 minutes and were conducted face-to-face in the home of the interviewee. The interviewees consisted of 10 different individuals, of which five were men and five were women. As to their highest level of education, five of them had studied at a university, three women and two men, two of them

had studied at a trade school, one man and one woman, and the rest had not studied after finishing the upper secondary school. The oldest participants was 27 years old and the youngest was 22 years old, with an average age of 25.4 years. Based on the Swedish political spectrum, four of them self-identified as being left, three women and one man, three self-identified as being right, one woman and two men, and three self-identified as being undecided and agreeing with the right and left in relation to different issues.

After the data was gathered, I analyzed it by using value coding, as this type of coding aim to illuminate the interviewees' values, attitudes and beliefs regarding the discussed issue (Saldana 2013, p.110-112), which is very fitting for this particular research question as this is exactly what I aimed to divulge by using the qualitative method. Based on these initial codings it was possible to distinguish some recurring codings, which were subsequently divided into larger categories. Pattern coding, that is, the combining of multiple initial codings (Saldana 2013, p. 210), was then used to compile these categories into themes. The themes that I was able to make out were the purpose of punishment and causes of criminality.

4.3.1 Credibility and dependability

Credibility alludes to the trustworthiness and the accuracy of the data (Denscombe 2014, p. 297). The credibility of the data in this paper can be proven mainly through the use of triangulation, as I have also collected quantitative data that can be compared to the qualitative data to see if they correspond (ibid., p. 297), which they do to a large extent. The credibility of the data can be further validated by the copious amount of time I have spent on collecting and analyzing the data and the continuous scrutinizing of it, which speaks for it's authenticity as any discrepancies in the data would have been spotted (ibid., p. 298).

Dependability, in turn, alludes to whether the outcome of the analysis is a result of a correct research design and reading of the data or rather a result of wrongful research procedures and a wrongful interpretation of the data (ibid., p. 298). This can be proven by being transparent in regards to the method, the analysis and the overall decision making (ibid., p. 298). I contend that the qualitative part of this paper is dependable, as I argue that I have made the correct decisions in both designing the research plan, collecting the data and subsequently analyzing it, and also that I have provided sufficient information on the choices that were

made to enable for a scrutinizing of this research.

4.4 Research philosophy

The main debate of theory of science has often revolved around ideas on positivism and objectivism versus ideas on interpretism and constructionism (Heap & Waters 2019, p. 86). Positivism and objectivism are often linked to the quantitative method, as all of these ideas argue that it's possible to objectively measure and empirically test the social world (ibid., p. 82-84, 88-90). Conversely, qualitative method is often linked to interpretism and constructionism, as all of these ideas assert that "the social world is a creation of human actions within in and is in a constant state of revision and re-construction" (ibid., p. 89). However, advocates of a mixed methods approach to research instead choose to move past such divisions, as they argue that, contrary to what the proponents of positivism and interpretism believe, scientific studies accommodate multiple epistemological stances and multiple ontological understandings (ibid., p. 87, 90). The most common epistemology that utilizes these suppositions is pragmatism (ibid., p. 87), which is what I have decided to emanate my study from.

Pragmatists contend that there is no one scientific method that is able to generate irrefutable knowledge (ibid., p. 87). Instead, pragmatists advocate that the researcher utilizes the method and the epistemological stance that has the best fit for each new situation, rather than slavishly adhering to a interpretivistic or positivistic epistemology and the methods that generally is seen as belonging to each epistemology (ibid., p. 88). As qualitative and quantitative method each comes with certain pros and cons, they are best suited for different types of research questions and should also be combined in order to make up for each others weaknesses, and, through that, generate the most accurate answer possible to the research question at hand (ibid., p. 87-88). The research question is thus the most important part for a pragmatist, and, practically, what matters the most is the fit of the method in relation to the research question, rather than the research philosophical suppositions that belongs to that specific method (Denscombe 2014, p. 158). Consequently, pragmatists reject the division and separation of objectivism and construction, rationalism and empiricism, as well as quantitative and qualitative research (ibid., p. 158).

Connected to the pragmatist view of epistemology is the ontology of multiple realities, which contends that there is no correct ontological understanding of the world, instead there are multiple ways of understanding reality and they are all equally valid (mixed methods p 90). This ontological perspective thus goes beyond the dualism of objectivism and constructionism, and instead argue that we always have an incomplete perspective of the world that is always equally valid to other potential perspectives (ibid., p. 90). Thus, knowledge is always temporary and constantly changing (ibid., p. 90). What we hold as knowledge today is not necessarily what we will hold as knowledge tomorrow. Based on this assumption, pragmatists reject the idea that a specific method, and the epistemological and ontological suppositions behind that method, is able to generate true knowledge (ibid., p. 90). This leads us back to the main proposition of pragmatists, namely that the research question and the situation at hand is what determines which method is the most fitting (ibid., p. 90).

Thus, based on this view of epistemology and ontology, I have been able to conduct this study that combines both quantitative and qualitative method as well as the suppositions on epistemology and ontology that follows these two methods.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The main ethical concern of this study is connected to political ideology, as some could find questions and discussions regarding this subject to be uncomfortable. Especially so for the participants of the qualitative part, as they were chosen partly based on their political ideology and therefore I had to ask them directly. However, as I only asked about their general standpoint, it is possible that the potential interviewees were more comfortable than if I had asked about specific political parties. Other more common ethical concerns that were prevalent in regards to this study was anonymity and confidentiality, which were both ensured for all of the participants in this study.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, I will first present the quantitative analysis, along with a brief account of the

interviewees, followed by the qualitative analysis, before ending with a concluding conjoint analysis.

5.1 Quantitative analysis

5.1.1 Bivariate analysis

In order to determine the strength of the correlations between the different dependent variables and the independent variables, as well as to determine the significance of these correlations, I first conducted cross-tabs between the measurements of punitive attitude, political ideology and social and moral cohesion. The results are presented in three different tables, one for each measurement of punitive attitude:

The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals

Variable	Cramer's V	Significance
Political ideology	.133	.176
Social cohesion	.140	.101
Moral cohesion	.112	.520

Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners

Variable	Cramer's V	Significance
Political ideology	.222	.000
Social cohesion	.163	.012
Moral cohesion	.123	.328

The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher

Variable	Cramer's V	Significance
Political ideology	.187	.000
Social cohesion	.145	.070

Moral cohesion	.145	.067
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According to the bivariate analyses, there is generally a relatively small correlation between political ideology, and social and moral cohesion, as the Cramer's V values all fall between .112 and .222 (Heap and Waters 2019, p. 191). There are also only three bivariate analyses that were significant, namely political ideology and "The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher", political ideology and "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners", as well as social cohesion and "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners". Thus, we are able to determine that there is indeed a guaranteed correlation between these two independent variables and the two different measurements of punitive attitude. However, the same can not be said for the remaining models, as the insignificant values indicate that we can not reject the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between them. In order to explore whether such correlations actually exist, as well as to determine the direction of the relationships between the independent variables and punitive attitude and how these variables affect each other, multivariate analyses in the form of logistic regression will be conducted.

5.1.2 Logistic regression

Logistic regression is a fitting statistical test to run when one's dependent variable is of a qualitative nature, which all of the variables that were chosen to represent the different ways of measuring punitive attitude are. However, as the dependent variable in a logistic regression model have to be dichotomous, I first had to recode the categories of the variables. I recoded the answers "Agree" and "Partly Agree" as 1, and "Disagree" and "Partly disagree" as 0 for all of the dependent variables, meaning that the logistic regression will show how the independent variables impact the probability of having punitive attitudes. The independent variables are also required to be dichotomous in a logistic regression model, so I recoded the answers "Agree" and "Partly Agree" as 1, and "Disagree" and "Partly disagree" as 0 for the variables "In Sweden there's a consensus on what is right and wrong" and "I feel like I can trust most people in Sweden", and the answers "Left" and "Leaning towards left" as 1, and the answers "Right" and "Leaning towards right" as 0 for the political ideology variable. The neutral answers for the variables, "Don't know/no answer" for the political ideology variable

and "Neither" for the rest of the variables, were coded as missing as to not interfere with the results. Thus, the independent variables in the logistic regression show how a leftwing political ideology, a perception that there's a high degree of social cohesion in society and a perception that there's a high degree of moral cohesion in society impact the probability of having punitive attitudes.

I ran three logistic regression models, one for each of the chosen dependent variables, namely, "The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals" which will be referred to as "Retribution", "The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher" which will be referred to as "Reoffenders", and "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners" which will be referred to as "Too comfortable", using all of above mentioned independent variables, which are now coded as "Left", "Trust" and "Moral cohesion".

Model	Cox and Schnell, and Nagelkerke	Number of correctly predicted cases	Hosmer-Lemeshow's Goodness of fit test	Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients
Retribution	.112 – .151	58% / 67.4%	.844	.001
Reoffenders	.04 – 0.057	70.3% / 70.3%	.483	.177
Too comfortable	.012 – 0.015	51.3% / 51.3%	.641	.871

The values of Cox and Schnell as well Nagelkerke show that none of the models explains much of the variance of the dependent variables, as the second model regarding , which is the model that explains the largest part of the variance, only explain between 11.2% and 15.1%, indicating a poor model fit (Hair et al 2014, p. 324). The models showed a scant increase in the number of correctly predicted cases, or none at all, where the first model , which had the biggest increase, only managed to correctly predict 9.4% more cases than the null model, once again indicating a poor fit (ibid., p. 324). Moreover, the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients showed that only one of the models had a significant value, meaning the fit of the models were generally poor. However, all of the models had a good fit according to the

Hosmer-Lemeshow’s Goodness of fit test, at they all had a value above .05. Even though this particular test is the most reliable test of model fitness (Pallant 2003, p. 176), it is possible to determine that the models, except for the ”Retribution” model, have a poor fit, as this is what all of the other tests showed. However, as the only significant variable in the ”Retribution model” was the control variable education, indicating that this particular variable could be the cause of the significance of the model, I therefore ran the model without education in it in order to determine whether this was the case. In this new model, the variables only explained between 2.6% and 3.6% of the variance, while the Omnibus test showed that the model was insignificant, indicating that it was indeed the education variable that caused the ”Retribution” model to show significant values. Moreover, in order to ensure that the insignificant results were not caused by multicollinearity, which logistic regression is sensitive to, I therefore controlled the independent variables correlation to each other by conducting a multiple regression analysis to check the collinearity statistics, but no multicollinearity between the variables was detected (Pallant 2003, p. 169, 171).

Variable	B	Odds ratio.	Significance	Confidence interval
Retribution				
Trust	.576	1.779	.075	.944 – 3.352
Left	-.285	.752	.394	.391 – 1.448
Moral	.086	1.090	.817	.525-2.263
Reoffenders				
Trust	-.458	.633	.164	.332-1.206
Left	-.577	.562	.088	.290-1.090
Moral	.048	1.050	.900	.494-2.232
Too comfortable				
Trust	-.022	.979	.946	.519-1.823
Left	-.328	.721	.326	.374-1.387
Moral	.258	1.294	.482	.631-2.656

As to the individual impact of the independent variables, the variable ”Left” had a negative

correlation with the dependent variable for all of the models, indicating that being left leads to a less punitive attitude overall. This is a find that we expected to observe, as the previous research also show that people belonging to the political left generally have a less punitive attitude than their counterparts. However, the odds ratio of the variable in the different models show that the effect that political ideology has on punitive attitude is not that great. These values are .752 for the first model, .562 for the second model, and .721 for the third model, meaning that belonging to the political left decreases the probability of having punitive attitudes with only 24.8%, 43.8% and 27.9% respectively.

As for the variable "Moral cohesion", in all of the models this variable showed a positive correlation with the dependent variable, indicating that the perception that there's a high level of moral cohesion in society correlates with a more punitive attitude. As previous studies have shown the opposite relationship between perceptions of moral cohesion and punitive attitudes, this finding was not expected. However, similarly to the previous variable, the odds ratio values show that whether a person perceives there to be a high or low level of moral cohesion in society does not have that big of an impact on their punitive attitudes. The odds ratio value is 1.090 for the first model, 1.050 for the second model, and 1.294 for the third model, meaning that the perception that there's a high level of moral cohesion in society increases the probability of having punitive attitudes with only 9%, 5% and 29.4% respectively.

While Tyler and Boeckmann argue that the perception that there is an absence of a cohesive moral code leads to having more punitive attitudes (1997), these results show the opposite. It is possible that these different results could be a cause of differences in methodical approaches, as the way I measured both punitive attitudes and moral cohesion differ from the measurements of both Unnever and Cullen as well as Tyler and Boeckmann (2010, 1997). These differences in measurements could mean that my measurement of moral cohesion lacks a vital aspect that is responsible for explaining the relationship between moral cohesion and punitive attitudes. However, this notion does not seem that likely, as moral cohesion ought to exhibit a correlation with punitive attitudes no matter how you measure it, as it otherwise would contradict their theory, seeing as then only their particular way of measuring moral cohesion would be correlated to punitive attitudes and not moral cohesion in itself.

Moreover, the difference in the results could also be explained by the issues with measuring

punitive attitudes that this study has had. As the index meant to measure punitive attitudes wasn't reliable, it possible that our dependent variables don't measure punitive attitudes at all, but rather something else. This could possibly explain the results, as that would mean the measurements do not represent what they are meant to represent. Again, this does not seem that likely, as both the variables political ideology and social cohesion exhibited the correlations that were expected of them, which is something that would have been improbable had the dependent variables not measured punitive attitudes. On the other hand, as will be seen later, social cohesion did show a positive correlation in one of the three models, indicating that there are some differences in regards to what the dependent variables actually measure.

The differing results could also indicate that those who perceive that there's a high moral cohesion in society aim to maintain that level of moral cohesion by proactively advocating for harsher legal consequences, which could explain why the moral cohesion variable exhibit a contrasting result than what would be expected. However, such a notion would clearly go against Tyler and Boeckmann's theory which says that those who perceive there to be a decline hold the most punitive attitude, not the other way around (1997). If this result is to be believed, this could in turn be a cause of a potential difference in general level of moral cohesion between Sweden and USA.

The variable "Social cohesion" exhibits different directions of the relationship with the dependent variable depending on which measure of punitive attitude is being used as the dependent variable. In regards to the second and the third model, "Social cohesion" has a negative correlation, indicating that a higher social trust leads to a less punitive attitude, whereas the relationship is the opposite in the first model. This result partly conforms to the previous research, as the variable in two of the three models exhibit a negative correlation between perceptions that society has a high degree of social cohesion and punitive attitudes. Again, the odds ratio values do show that these correlations are not that strong, as the three models have odds ratio values of 1.779, .633 and .979 respectively, meaning that the perception that there's a high level of social cohesion in society increases the probability of having the opinion that the main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals by 77.9%, and decreases the probability of having the opinions that the punishment for reoffending should be harsher and that life in prison is too comfortable by 36.7% and 2.1% respectively.

As with the moral cohesion variable, the differing result of the social cohesion variable could be a cause of measurement issues. As the direction of the relationship of the variable is the same in two out of the three models, it indicates that the divergent dependent variable's measurement differs from the other two. As previously mentioned, how one formulates the questions in relation to measurements of punitive attitude has a great influence over how people respond to the question (Pickett 2019, p. 3, Adriaenssen & Aertse 2015, p. 4-5). Based on this insight, it is possible that the dependent variable in the "Retribution" model measures punitive attitudes in a better way than the other two dependent variables, as this particular variable is very clearly connected to punitive attitudes when compared to the other two. Agreeing with the question "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners" doesn't necessarily mean that you think that criminals should have it worse in order to be punished more, rather it could simply mean that you think that prisons spend too much money on a needlessly lavish environment. Similarly, agreeing to the question "The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher" doesn't necessarily mean that you think that they should be punished more, rather it could also mean that you think that reoffenders are in need of more rehabilitative work which they will get through prolonged sentences. On the other hand, the question "The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals" doesn't leave quite as much leeway in regards to different interpretations, meaning that the responses to this particular question is probably more clear and telling than the answers to the other two questions. This could explain why the social cohesion variable differs between the different models, as the measurements of the dependent variables vary.

As to which direction of the relationship between punitive attitude and social cohesion is the correct one is up for debate. If we suppose that the direction of the relationship shown in the "Retribution" model is true, then that would indicate that the perception that there's a high level of social cohesion in society is correlated to holding a more punitive attitude. This correlation would then conform to the possible explanation for the relationship between punitive attitude and a high level of moral cohesion that was presented above, namely that people advocate for more severe punishments in order to proactively maintain the high level of social and moral cohesion. However, this would contradict both Tyler and Boeckmann's theory as well as the study of Unnever and Cullen. While it is possible that this paper would find a different result because it's being conducted in a different context, the relatively uncertain results of this quantitative analysis makes it difficult to reject the previous research that has been conducted in regards to the impact of moral and social cohesion on punitive

attitudes.

Moreover, there was no variable that showed a statistical significance, that is, a p-value under 0.05, as the variable "Left" in the second model was closest to being significant with a p-value of .076. Thus, none of the variables made a significant contribution to the models. The notion that none of the variables are significant is further strengthened when looking at the confidence intervals of the variables, as the interval of all of the variables contain the value 1, meaning that it can not be determined whether or not the true odds ratio value is 1, which would mean that there is no difference in probability for any of the variables (Pallant 2010, p. 178)

5.1.3 Concluding remarks

The poor fit, together with the fact that none of the variables were significant in any of the models, as well as the fact that the confidence intervals of all of the variables showed that it was not possible to determine whether the variables actually increased or decreased the probability to have punitive attitudes, means that I am not able to reject the null hypothesis that there are no correlations between the variables political ideology and perceptions of social and moral cohesion and punitive attitudes. Thereby it becomes difficult to determine whether the poor fit, the insignificant variables and the small effect sizes actually are a cause of there being no correlation between these variables, or if it really is a result of other factors such as sample size (Thiese et al. 2016, p. 2). As some researchers contend that logistic regression analyses require at least 400 respondents in order to "adequately support estimation of the logistic model." (Hair et al 2014, p. 318), the insignificant results could therefore be a result of our small sample size. Furthermore, a larger sample size leads to a greater chance of discovering the significant relationships that actually exist, while also making the measures more precise (Thiese et al. 2016, p. 3). The sample size of only 300 could therefore mean that the logistic regression analyses that were conducted were not run optimally which could distort the results. Additionally it could also mean that the tests were not able to discover the significant relationships that were present in the data, as well as that the measurements of the relationships were not that precise which could result in a failure to find all the differences between the different groups (ibid., p. 3). Moreover, the small effect sizes could also lead to the insignificant results, as, generally, the larger the differences between the groups are, the

smaller the p-values are (ibid., p. 4).

However, as the bivariate analyses showed that political ideology had a significant, but small, correlation with the respondents answers to "The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher" as well as with their answers to "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners", it is possible to determine that there's at least some sort of correlation between these variables. The same is true for perceptions of social cohesion and the dependent variable "Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners", despite the results of the logistic regression showing that all of these variables were insignificant and that no correlation could be ensured.

However, as for the variable moral cohesion, which showed insignificant results and small effect sizes in both the bivariate and multivariate analyses, it seems like there is no particular correlation between it and punitive attitudes. Nevertheless, these results are anything but clear, meaning that further tests must be conducted in order to determine the strength of the relationship between these variables and whether such correlations even exist.

5.2 Qualitative analysis

Before I present the qualitative analysis, I will briefly describe the interviewees in regards to their age, gender, education level and political belonging. The interviewees consists of the following 10 anonymized people:

Mimmi, a 27 year old woman whose highest level of education consists of three years at university and who identifies as belonging to the political left,

Adrian, a 22 year old man whose highest level of education consists of one year at university and who identifies as belonging to the political left,

Sarah, a 26 year old woman whose highest level of education consists of two years at trade school and who identifies as belonging to the political left,

Alicia, a 26 year old woman whose highest level of education consists of three years at university and who identifies as belonging to the political left,

Henry, a 25 year old man whose highest level of education consists of finishing upper secondary school and who identifies as belonging to the political right,

Robert, a 25 year old man whose highest level of education consists of three years at university and who identifies as belonging to the political right,

Ella, a 27 year old woman whose highest level of education consists of three years at university and who identifies as belonging to the political right,
Kristian, a 25 year old man whose highest level of education consists of two years at trade school and who identifies as not belonging to either side of the political spectrum
James, a 25 year old man whose highest level of education consists of finishing upper secondary school and who identifies as not belonging to either side of the political spectrum,
and Lucy, a 27 year old woman whose highest level of education consists of finishing upper secondary school and who identifies as not belonging to either side of the political spectrum

5.2.1 Political ideology and the causes of crime

The question whether criminal behaviour is caused by internal or external factors does not seem to be dichotomous, as all of the interviewees mentioned how external factors, such as structures, background and upbringing, impacts and shapes peoples' lives, while simultaneously believing that what really matters is internal causes, as, ultimately, people are autonomous. Thus, it seems that there is some nuance to Heider's division of internal or external causes, that is, it seems to be a spectrum rather than an either-or situation. An example of this compatibility of external and internal causes is Mimmi's answer to the question of if she'd say that people are free to make decisions of their own accord, or if people's decisions are affected by structures and circumstances that they have no control over:

"I think that both are true. Of course, everyone is affected by all the structures, cultures, your upbringing and background. It affects people a lot, but you always have a choice in every situation. While you end up in different situations depending on what your background is and such, and I think that you can't always impact what kind of situations you end up in, but while in that situation, you have a pretty good chance of affecting what you do."

Mimmi's answer demonstrates clearly how she perceives that both external and internal causes affects our choices. External causes shape our lives to a large degree, but in the end, what ultimately matters are our own choices, that is, the internal causes. Another example of this relationship is Kristian's answer to the same question:

"No but as I said, it turned out well for me and I know that it turned out worse for others. And I know that they had similar choices that I did. You can't say "my parents are foreign", "I was treated badly at home", I mean I also have foreign parents and I was also treated badly at home, but I still made a choice. I've heard of people that were treated badly, who grew up in bad neighbourhoods, yes it affects your brain, some are more vulnerable than others, but you still have a choice. You have the possibility to choose."

Kristian means that just because someone has external factors in their life that pushes them towards criminality, such as a bad upbringing, that is not an excuse to commit crimes. The choice is still yours. However, earlier in the interview, Kristian attributed external causes a larger influence than in the just mentioned example, as he claimed that growing up in a bad neighbourhood is one of the main reasons for why one commits criminal actions, and that educating people was the best way of counteracting criminal behaviour. These two quotes adequately exemplifies what the other interviewees also said, that is, that external causes is perceived to have a large impact on why someone commits criminal actions, but that this impact is not deemed to be strong enough to completely nullify the autonomy if the individual.

One of the most notifiable differences that could be gathered from the material was that those who identified themselves as belonging to the political right in Sweden, all brought up Sweden's well developed social security programs as a reason as to why crimes are ultimately a cause of internal factors. They argued that the many social actions and well developed institutions, such as free education and crime prevention programs, counteracted the external causes that pushes people towards criminality, meaning that criminal activities in the end only is a matter of choice and thus a result of internal causes. An example of this is Robert's answer about whether his opinion that no one chooses to be an alcoholic could be applied to criminals as well:

"Well I still believe there's a difference between a disease and...Sure, I haven't myself been exposed in that way, lived in bad neighbourhood and stuff like that, but I still think that in Sweden you still have a pretty good chance, that's what I believe and think."

Sweden's well-funded social security is thus perceived as a counteracting force to the external causes, meaning that only internal causes are left to explain criminal behaviour. To

further illuminate this thought-process, we can apply the division of controllable/uncontrollable to Heider's theory that people are not blamed for their actions if they are attributed to external causes (1958, p. 56). In a similar fashion, it seems that behaviour that is attributed to uncontrollable causes, for example if criminal actions were just a result of external causes, doesn't lead to any blame being put on the individual. Conversely, internal causes of criminal behaviour are perceived as controllable, as the only reason for an individual to commit crimes is because they themselves chose to, and the individual is then also blamed for their actions. Applying this reasoning to the quotes above, Sweden's extended social security could be viewed as an external controllable factor, as you can receive help as long as you apply for it or want it, which then would counteract the uncontrollable external causes that leads to criminality, which they do admit exist. The internal causes would then be seen as the only remaining cause of criminal behaviour, as these other controllable and uncontrollable external causes effectively cancels each other out, or it could be seen as if the criminals made an active choice of not receiving or wanting this controllable external help that was available for them. The first alternative seems to be supported by Robert's example above, while the second alternative seems to be present in the following quote by Henry about whether his criminal friend should be punished for selling drugs even though he only started dealing when he was 12 at the threat of violence:

"Absolutely, I would say it's like this: in our society, the perception that I have of our society, there is a lot of help to receive. My friend believes that he can't do anything else in society, it's his only way of making money, that he will never be able to get an education and so on. So he's still making an active choice by continuing to do it. Of course he should be offered help, but if he chooses to not accept that help, to not believe in that help, then of course he should be punished for it."

According to Henry, his friend made an active choice by not accepting the help that was being offered, meaning that his continued criminal career is, even if it didn't start that way, an active choice and thus a result of internal causes. Henry feels that his friend easily could have utilized the Swedish social security and discontinued his criminal career, but choice not to. This neutralizes the crime inducing external causes that Henry still perceive to be real, as he earlier in the interview, while talking about his drug dealing friend, said:

"So yes, I would say that your surroundings, society in general and your upbringing affects

you and the actions that you take, for example crime, absolutely.”

What makes Henry feel like it's okay to punish criminals, like his friend, is the fact that he views their actions as a free choice that they intended to make and did so out of their own accord. This is something that was also very present in the answers of the interviewees who identified themselves as belonging to the political left. However, it seems like they only mention the internal factors as the definitive cause of criminal behaviour as a way of justifying the existence of punishment, even though they believe that external uncontrollable causes are a major reason for why criminals commits crimes. This kind of reasoning is apparent in this following exchange with Lucy about her view on punishment as a way of giving redress to the victim:

”Me: So it's also about helping the perpetrator?”

Lucy: To an extent, if there is some underlying cause for why you would do it. Because people rarely do something just to do it, rather it could be because you have a weird fetish or a broken childhood or something like that, so you can get the opportunity to talk to someone. So yes, in a way so that they can get help

Me: But if their actions are a result of, as you say, a broken childhood or whatever it may be, then isn't it a little strange to punish them if it's not their own fault so to speak?

Lucy: It could be, to an extent, but it's still something that the person does and it is the action in itself that should be punished I think. You have still done wrong, even if we take pity on you because you have been abused since you were a kid. Sure, you'll get the help you need and you get to talk about it, but at the same time you need to learn that...like you should get a punishment for what you've done, because, like, you've done it. You've put someone through that.”

She means that controllable internal causes, that is, to commit a crime "just to do it", are rarely the reason for why you commit crimes, rather the explanation can be found in external uncontrollable causes. Yet the blame is assigned to the individual, which makes punishing them feasible. As Heider argues, and as we just mentioned, it is simply not possible to hold

someone accountable for their behaviour if uncontrollable and external factors are the cause of that behaviour. In order to justify punishing someone for their actions, there needs to be a controllable cause involved. This is very notifiable in Alicia's answer to the question if her view on the causes of human behaviour, that is, that external uncontrollable factors are the underlying cause for criminal behaviour but the individual is ultimately responsible for their actions, has affected her view of punishment:

"I guess it does. Because that's one of the reasons why I believe that punishment is feasible, because you have to be able to stand for what you have done. You have to be able to get a consequence for what you've done. If you only thought that the person himself has no responsibility for their actions, then it's society's fault that you commit a crime or done what you have done, and then it's also harder to punish I think. Why would we punish an individual who has fallen victim of society's structures and not been able to resist? If so, then I think that it's harder to justify and harder to be able to have punishment"

Alicia holds that, logically, if internal factors were **not** the cause of criminality, it would not be possible to punish individuals. You can't punish someone for something that is not their own doing. However, punishment is in itself something that is perceived as a given and as something unquestionable, or as James says: "I mean we've always punished, like when you punish a child by taking away their videogames, that's what the psychology has always been like". In order to be able to preserve the concept of punishment, even if you do believe that criminal behaviour is explained by uncontrollable external factors, it is necessary to ascribe autonomy to the individual. This is also something that we will see more clearly later in the analysis regarding rehabilitation.

In summary, it seems like that even though people belonging to the political right, left and the middle all attribute criminal behaviour to both external and internal causes, the reasoning behind it differs. The people on the right argued that internal causes are the main reason for criminal behaviour, either by insisting that the vast Swedish social security system counteract the uncontrollable external factors that pushes people towards criminality, that they do admit exist, or by arguing that criminals choose not to accept the help from the controllable external factors in the shape of the social security system and thus make the autonomous decision to walk the path of criminality. On the other hand, the people on the left seem to uphold the uncontrollable external factors as the largest cause of criminality, but yet they still ascribe

internal causes as the ultimate reason for criminal actions, in order to make the notion of punishment feasible. The people identifying as being politically undecided do not seem to have any distinctive opinion, rather, they just conform to either the reasoning of the political left or right.

5.2.2 Political ideology and rehabilitation

Generally, people belonging to the political right seem to support rehabilitation to a lesser degree than their counterparts, as all of the leftists brought up rehabilitation as the main purpose or one of the main purposes of punishment, whereas the rightists generally mentioned other purposes of punishment and in the few times they did bring it up it was in connection to very specific criminals and as a secondary goal rather than the primary. Thus, it seems like rehabilitation is of more importance to leftists' views on punishment than rightists'. An example of the elevated position of rehabilitation in the leftists' outlook on punishment is Adrians answer to the question whether reoffenders and first time offenders should receive the same punishment for the same crime:

"When it comes to punishing there has to be a purpose behind it, because people will get sent to jail and cost a lot of money and all of that, so there has to be a purpose with sending them away. There's no point in just putting their lives on pause and then when they get back out they resume their way of life that put them in jail in the first time"

According to Adrian, this purpose he speaks of is to make sure that criminals wont commit new crimes, which is made possible through rehabilitation. Prison time alone wont change people, it'll only postpone their criminal behaviour for later. Contrary to this leftist viewpoint, the rightists generally put forward other purposes of punishing, which is clearly exemplified in Henry's answer on what the main goal of punishing is:

"That you're given a punishment for your actions really. Essentially, you have done something that you shouldn't have done and you will atone for it. I have heard the idea that you should become a better person or that you should be rehabilitated in prison, and while that may be a part of the purpose too, in my world, the purpose is to punish people who have done something bad in society"

The main purpose of punishment is, according to Henry, retribution and to make things right by punishing unacceptable actions, rather than to punish as a way to improve the situation for the criminal and to convert them to a law-abiding life. In the few cases where rehabilitation is mentioned as one of the purposes of punishing, it is always talked about as a sanction that is not needed for everyone and therefore only should be used in a limited number of cases, which is exemplified by Ella's answer to the question whether rehabilitation is a better option than increasing the severity of the punishment when it comes to making sure criminals don't reoffend:

"Absolutely, I'd say both yes and no, for some maybe. But I think that many will just take advantage of it and see it as a nice little rest before they get out and do the same things they did again"

Rehabilitation seems to be equated with a less severe form of punishment, leading to criminals taking advantage of the idea of rehabilitation in order to receive a more lenient sanction so that they may go back to committing crimes. Ella's answer indicates that rehabilitation is only fitting for a select few, i.e. those who won't take advantage of it, and also that rehabilitation is not that effective in altering criminals' future behaviour. These two beliefs can in turn be connected to the previous analysis regarding internal and external causes, as it makes sense for rightists to uphold the notion that rehabilitation has no greater effect on criminals' future actions because criminal behaviour is attributed to controllable, internal causes. Rehabilitation, which is an external factor, therefore has no great impact on future actions as there are the result of internal causes. However, the fact that rehabilitation is perceived as fitting for some criminals indicates that rightists believe that there are in fact some criminals who commit crimes because of uncontrollable, external causes. Though unlike leftists, who argue that uncontrollable external causes of a **social** character pushes people towards criminality, the rightists contend that the only external and uncontrollable causes that leads to criminality are of a **physical** nature. This reasoning is clearly visible in Robert's answer to the question if there is a difference between committing crimes because of a mental illness versus committing crimes because of, for example, anger:

"Yes I do think so, I believe that. Because if you have a severe mental diagnosis then that's something you have no control over. As a healthy, functioning individual in society I have a

responsibility and I am aware of it...I mean society is kind of team I guess, we have to try to move in the same direction. But if someone is in a bad condition, mentally, then that person doesn't have that reasoning, I don't think. I mean, if you're crazy then you're crazy."

A mental illness is thus seen as a uncontrollable, external cause that actually makes people commit crimes. Mental illnesses are perceived as being personality altering to the extent that the individual no longer has full autonomy over their actions. Conversely, uncontrollable, external causes of a social nature is not considered to have as big of an impact on your personality as those of a physical nature, making it possible to maintain the opinion that, in the end, committing crimes is a choice of your own. Even if a rightist would agree that uncontrollable, external causes of a social nature does affect the individual, they would still argue that they don't affect you to the point that you lose your autonomy.

This is the main difference between rightists' and leftists' differing views on rehabilitation. Leftists argue that rehabilitation is an achievable and viable option for all criminals because external, uncontrollable causes, in the shape of, for example, upbringing, structures and poverty, is perceived as the main reason for why one commits crimes, thus making it a reasonable option to counteract these factors negative influence over the individual through rehabilitation. However, based on the previous analysis, leftists also seem to agree with the rightists that the uncontrollable, external factors of a social nature do not completely eradicate your autonomy, but I argue that this discussion on rehabilitation further strengthens my previous point regarding that leftists only maintain internal causes as the absolute reason for why one commits crimes in order to justify and make the act of punishing sensible. I argue that the support of rehabilitation generally proves that leftists don't really perceive internal causes as the ultimate reason for why the individual commits crimes, because the very thought that rehabilitation has a crime prevention ability presuppose that uncontrollable, external factors are the causes of crime. As Maruna and King established, if internal causes were the reason for why one commits crimes, then internal causes would also be the reason for why one doesn't commit crimes (2009, p. 13. If internal factors are what cause criminality, then rehabilitation has no use or function, as there is nothing to be rehabilitated. The fact that leftists emphasize rehabilitation as the main purpose of punishing as well as its' successfulness, indicates that internal causes are, in fact, not perceived as being the ultimate reason for why criminal actions are undertaken. However, what upholding internal factors as the cause of criminality does accomplish is to make it possible to assign blame for a type of

behaviour and thereby making it possible to punish for such behaviour.

Compared to Maruna and Kings study, where they presented four different types of outlooks on rehabilitation and punishment overall, this qualitative analysis exhibit a somewhat different result. The leftists can be said to subscribe to the perception that Maruna and King describe as "offenders as victims of society", i.e. the perception that external, uncontrollable causes are what causes criminality and, subsequently, also the ceasing of such behaviour (2009, p. 13). However, the perception that Maruna and King call "offenders as permanently damaged by society", i.e. that external, uncontrollable factors are what cause criminality but that some criminals are too far gone to be able to turn back from the way of criminality (ibid, p. 13), did not appear at all in the material . All of those who emphasized rehabilitation as a viable choice also argued that all criminals could be rehabilitated. Maruna and King wrote that those who view criminals as permanently damaged also propagate longer sentences in order to protect the public (ibid., p. 13). While many did in fact express the opinion that hardcore criminals should be handed longer sentences, the purpose was rather to give the criminals more time to be affected by the rehabilitation, which the prolonged sentences enabled. An example of this is James answer to the question if it was possible to combine harsher punishments and rehabilitation:

"Yeah, a harsher punishment doesn't necessarily mean that it has to inflict more harm to the criminals, it could also just be a longer sentence. Then you have more time for the rehabilitation too..."

As for the rightists, they can be said to subscribe to the third category, "Offenders as people who made bad choices", who believe that criminality is a cause of peoples' own choices, meaning that rehabilitation has no use as it's up to the individuals themselves whether or not they commit more crimes in the future (ibid., p. 14). However, you could also argue that the leftists belong to this group, at least to an extent, as they also argue that criminal behaviour in the end is a result of internal causes. But, as we have previously seen, this view only seems to be a way to justify the act of punishing, rather than being an actual conviction that they hold.

Regarding the fourth category, "Offenders as evil" (ibid, p. 14), there was no sign of anyone subscribing to this mindset. Some did describe hardcore criminals, such as murderers and rapists, as inhuman as a result of their actions, but there was no indication that they were

believed to be born evil. Rather, it was the action in itself that was regarded as detestable, not the person behind it.

Generally, it seems as if the rightists belong to the classical perspective, where criminality is explained solely through internal, controllable causes, whereas the leftists seem to belong to the positivistic perspective, where criminality is explained through uncontrollable external causes, which also seems to conform with the results of the previously conducted studies (Carroll et al. 1987, and Maruna and King 2009). This difference between the two political groups appears to explain why leftists propagated for rehabilitation as the main goal of punishment and why the rightists did not.

5.2.3 Moral and social fabric of society

Tyler and Boeckmann argue that the perception that there's a decline of the moral and social cohesion of society leads to more punitive attitudes (1997). However, it seems like none of the interviewees actually believe that there is a moral or social decline in society at large. Most of them seem to think that there's a strong and clear moral and social cohesion, and some even believe it to be stronger than ever. For example, Robert says that:

"You can see how people react during a crisis like it is right now with corona virus and quarantine and all that. People help each other out and show an enormous amount of social morals as people help those who can't go to the pharmacy or convenient stores because they belong to a risk group."

The fact that people help each other out during a crisis situation, where perhaps you could have expected the opposite, is according to Robert a clear evidence of how we have a clear and strong moral and social cohesion in society. This perception can also be seen in Henry's answer to the question whether he believes he can trust Swedish people in general:

"More than in other countries, for sure. I think that the Swedish society is better equipped than other societies in the world when it comes to what we believe is right and wrong. At least that's my perception. It seems like we have very good laws in general. We have a better education system to educate our youths than others for example, which maybe makes our

society more peaceful than others”.

Henry also argues that Sweden has a generally cohesive moral cohesion and that it is possible to trust people in general. He connects these facts to societal explanations, such as education and justice system, rather than lawbreaking, which perhaps would have been more likely according to the Tyler and Boeckmann’s theory. In most cases where the moral and social cohesion is connected to lawbreaking, it is done so to clarify that even though there are crimes being committed in Sweden, these actions are carried out by a small minority and therefore they have no greater impact on the general estimation of the moral and social cohesion in society. For example, to the question of whether she believes she can trust people in Sweden in general, Mimmi says:

”Yeah I believe so. In most the situations you choose to trust people because you want to be able to trust them, but also because I have never been proven wrong when trusting someone, and I think that if that was the case, that my trust did get broken, then it would affect my trust very much, but it hasn’t yet so. But I would absolutely not say that I am afraid of going out alone at nights, and that’s got to do with the trust I believe, that I think that there are very few people who would hurt someone for no reason...”

Another example of this is Sarah’s answer to the same question:

”But of course you’re a bit restrictive, but I still trust people anyway. I trust people because everyone deserves a second chance. But then you also know that there are some people in society that have psychiatric problems, they have addictions, they have debts they need to pay, they can have whatever, they can have to steal a phone to be able to afford something. I think that I carry that with me, that you keep an eye out, but I still choose to trust people. I think that the group of people that you can trust are much larger than the group of people you can’t trust.”

Both Sarah and Mimmi say that criminal behaviour don’t affect their general perception, because those that you are able to trust make up a much larger percent of the population than those who commit crimes and therefore can’t be trusted. Whereas their general perception of the social and moral cohesion in society is unaffected by the criminality, their answers do still show that the criminal behaviour has an impact on their level of trust. This seems to confirm

Tyler and Boeckmann's theory's assumption that lawbreaking actions do lead to the undermining of the moral and social cohesion in society, as Sarah and Mimmi feel that norm breaking behaviour, like criminality, decrease their trust in the people that take such actions. However, it does seem like these lawbreaking actions have to be on a certain level strictly quantitatively speaking, in order for them to affect the perception of the general level of social and moral cohesion. If these lawbreaking actions are perceived to be on too small of a level quantitatively, they seem to not have that great of an effect on the overall view of the moral and social cohesion. This notion seems to be further strengthened by the fact that the social and moral decline is primarily connected to impoverished neighbourhoods rather than to society as a whole. An example of this Sarah's answer to the question of what she thinks is the reason for why criminal actions are committed:

"That it's not fair. That there's no equality in society. And a lot of crimes are committed because of that. That people in socioeconomically vulnerable neighbourhoods have different conditions and criminality can then be their only way of getting the same level as everyone else, for example regarding money"

Sarah says that there is a moral decline which is connected to socioeconomically vulnerable neighbourhoods, but that this decline is not present in the other parts of society that are not as impoverished. This is also a view mirrored by Kristian, as he, in response to the question on how society can combat the increase in crime that he feels has taken place, says:

"I was recently told by an older person at my job, that before all the foreign people moved to Norrby, mostly finnish alcoholics used to live there, so they have like been replaced by other vulnerable people. Those who live there feel like they've been treated badly by society. They can't get a job, they feel like Swedish names are automatically ahead of them when they're searching for jobs. So this view that "fuck it, I might as well just do crimes" stems from there".

Again, this perceived moral decline is connected to impoverished neighbourhoods that seem to act like a hotbed for norm breaking behaviour, such as alcoholism and criminality, which is something that can't be found in other parts of society. In other words, people who live, for example, outside of the cities are not less trustworthy or have worse morals just because people in an impoverished neighbour in the city commits crimes. In order for lawbreaking

behaviour to have an impact on peoples' perceptions of the general level of social and moral cohesion, such behaviour needs to be perceived as being widespread and not just confined to a few impoverished neighbourhoods. Thus, the instrumental theory's assumption that punitive attitudes are connected to perceived crime levels seems to be hold true even for the relational model (Tyler and Boeckmann 1987, p. 4). However, it needs to be said that there are most likely people in Sweden who perceive the amount of crime to be on the same level as the interviewed, but still believe there to be a moral and social decline. But perceptions of moral and social decline seem to be connected to perceptions of crime levels at least in these interviews.

As none of the interviewees seem to think that there's a decline of the moral and social cohesion of society, their differences in punitiveness can therefore not be said to be affected by this. However, almost all of them mentioned that one of the main purposes of punishment is that it's supposed to function as a marker of what is right and wrong, indicating that Tyler and Boeckmann's theory does have some merit to it. For example, Mimmi says that:

"Yeah I would absolutely say that [that punishing criminals signals what is right and wrong]. Despite what I said earlier about the fact that criminals don't plan to get caught, you still have to have some sort of punishment in order to show that it is forbidden to do it, and then it would be strange to not have a sanction for it, so there has to be some kind of punishment to show that it's not okay..."

Mimmi says that even if she doesn't believe that punishment has a deterring effect, it is still necessary to have them in order to make clear what kind of behaviour is accepted and what isn't. The fact that there is a sanction connected to an action clarifies that it is wrong. Another example of this way of thinking is Henry who says that:

"We have a society and the society is built on laws, and if someone commits a crime then the society have to signal that you will get a punishment for it, that's what I would say"

In other words, it is the sanction that shows that what you did was wrong. Criminal actions violate the laws of the society, i.e. the social and moral norms and values that society is built on, and in order to clarify and consolidate these, it is necessary to punish criminal actions. These two examples show that there is some truth to Tyler and Boeckmann's assumption that

punishments are perceived as a way to reinforce social and moral cohesion by clarifying what is acceptable and what isn't (1997)

The interviews also indicate that there is a connection between norm reinforcement and the crime victim's redress. For example, on the question of what she believes that punishing as a way to signal what is right and wrong accomplishes, Sara answers that:

"I believe that it, partly, sends out a message to the rest of the society, that we do not accept this behaviour in our society. And it's also on so many different levels. It is partly for the public, to mark that this isn't okay and we're doing something actively about it. Partly for the victim, that, yeah it's not okay, we don't accept this, this person will get their punishment, for example by going to prison..."

Sarah means that, besides clarifying what type of behaviour is wrong and right by there being a sanction connected to non-acceptable behaviours, we also clarify what is wrong and right by giving the victim some sort of redress by punishing the perpetrator. The following answer from Alicia, to the question what she believes the main purpose of punishing is, further exemplifies this:

"Then I also think it's for the person that the crime was committed on, to make that person able to feel that they have the society at their side, that the other person has done something wrong, that if I have been the victim of something then the other person will also be given something that they don't find so amusing, like going to prison".

Alicia argue that through the punishment of lawbreakers we show the victim, and also the society at large, what is right and wrong. By giving redress to the victim, we clarify and consolidate the social and moral norms and values. The victim's redress and the sanction connected to the non-acceptable behaviours are two sides of the same coin, as the victim receives some sort of redress by the punishing of the perpetrator, which is also readily apparent in Tyler and Boeckmann's theory (1997, p. 7). However, what's interesting is how the redress of the victim is perceived as being connected to having sanctions that are proportionate to the crime, which is something that wasn't mentioned in connection to marking what is right and wrong. An example of how the redress of the victim is connected to proportionate sanctions is the following answer from James on the question of what he

means by 'justice':

"Redress for the victim, I would say. The punishment shouldn't function as retribution, it should be appropriate for all the concerned parties, really. But at the same time, if you think about the punishment of the Norrby case, it wasn't fair for the victims, but it was good for the young adults really"

James says that redress of the victim and justice are synonymous, while also maintaining that the redress of the victim does not come from retribution. Rather, punishments should be decided based on the good of all the involved parties, as he perceives the punishment as something that is negative for the perpetrator. "The Norrby case" that James is referring to is about a criminal case where several young adults assaulted an elderly man, and in the end only one of the prosecuted was sentenced to community service and the rest was acquitted. James doesn't think the punishment was fair, i.e. that the victim received redress, as the punishment was too lenient. He perceives that the punishment shouldn't be harsh enough to be perceived as retribution, but at the same time it should be harsh enough in order to secure the victim with redress, i.e. that the sanction should be proportionate to the crime. Another example of this is Sarah's answer to the question of what the purpose of punishing is:

"I think that there's a few reasons. In partly, it's probably for the sake of the victim I think...Then I also think that you should do more with the time they spend in prison. So more rehabilitation and maybe not just doing your time. Of course they should get a punishment that is proportionate to what they have done, but the time that they spend shouldn't just be for killing time, rather there should be active treatment and more like that".

Sarah contend that rehabilitation should be one of the goals of punishing, but that we also punish for the sake of the victim, which again is connected to proportionate sanctions. Both of these quotes indicate that the redress of the victim is perceived to be attached to proportionate sanctions, i.e. that the severity of the punishment matches the severity of the crime. Therefore, more severe crimes require more severe sanctions, in order to give redress to the victim. This is something that is clearly visible in Henry's reasoning about different levels of sanctions for different crimes:

"Say for example that you are in prison for doing drugs. For me it is wrong to do drugs, but you haven't actually harmed anyone else by doing drugs yourself...so it is a crime, but it is a crime that you have done to yourself, you know. If you have stolen a car and you serve time for that, it's a crime but you haven't injured someone in the process...Then when we talk about rape, murder, there you have injured someone. You have taken someone's life. For me, right there, that's when you cross the line...And I think that then you should serve the harshest punishment possible. So it differs from crime to crime"

Henry says that crimes such as drug use and car theft aren't that serious, seeing as they are not that harmful to others. Drug use only affects yourself and car theft harms no one, meaning that the sanctions following these types of crimes don't have to be that severe. However, Henry thinks that crimes like rape and murder are so serious and brings with them so harmful consequences that it is necessary to have a severe legal consequence connected to these crimes in order to make things right and give the victims the redress they need. Thus, it is necessary to have a sanction that is fitting in relation to the crime in order for the victim to receive their redress, and for the society to be able to repair the damages caused by the lawbreaking. Another example of how the severity of the punishment is perceived to be connected to the consolidating and reinforcement of the moral and social cohesion can be seen in Robert's reasoning regarding his perception of the range of punishment for violent offences:

"Well I often compare crimes when I think about laws and punishment and all of that, and in Sweden it considered worse to evade your taxes than to kill someone. Manslaughter and murder, people take those crimes very easily compared to other things."

Robert perceives that Sweden as a society does not take murder and manslaughter that seriously, as he means that the level of punishment for these crimes are too low. Robert perceives that the severity of the punishment for these crimes mirrors how serious society at large views these actions, that is, not quite as serious as he thinks the crimes are. The sanction must thus be perceived as being adequate enough in relation to the severity of the crime for the punishment to be perceived as reinforcing the societal values. If the sanctions are perceived as too low it risks signaling that the society doesn't see these norm breaking

actions as something serious. To exemplify this, we can compare the lawbreaking actions of cannabis use and assault. Cannabis use is connected to a sanction, most often a fine, because it goes against the societal norm to not use cannabis, but fines are considered an adequate legal consequence as the severity of this norm breaking behaviour isn't perceived as being that serious. It is a crime, but it is not a cornerstone of the Swedish moral and social values and norms. However, fines would not have been an acceptable legal consequence for assault, seeing as this norm breaking behaviour is viewed as more serious than cannabis use. The norm that you shouldn't cause someone else physical harm occupies a so much higher position in the Swedish moral system than the norm that you shouldn't use cannabis, meaning that it is necessary that the legal consequence must mirror the severity of breaking against this norm. If we would have had the same sanction for cannabis and assault, that would signal that we think that these two norms occupy the same overall position in the hierarchy of moral and social norms. By having a more severe punishment for assault than for cannabis use, we clarify that the norm that we don't cause other people physical harm is more important than the norm that we don't use cannabis, and by having a more severe punishment for assault the reinforcement of this norm is also stronger than the reinforcement of the norm that we don't use cannabis.

Thus, it does not only require that a certain action is connected to a sanction in order to clarify and reinforce society's social and moral values, it also requires that the severity of the sanction is perceived to be in proportion to the severity of the crime. This could be the reason for why people that perceive that the moral and social fabric of society is diminishing also have more punitive attitudes, as the more severe the punishment of a lawbreaking action is, the more severe society seem to view this lawbreaking action.

In summary, it seems like even though none of the interviewees perceived a decline in the moral and social cohesion of society, there is still support for Tyler and Boeckmann's assumption that rulebreaking actions do lead to the undermining of the social and moral cohesion of society (1997), as people who commits rulebreaking actions were perceived as less trustworthy. Almost all of the interviewees also mentioned that one of the main purposes of punishing is to signal what is right and wrong, and that that giving redress to the victims also functions as a marker for what is right and wrong, which seems to conform to Tyler and Boeckmann's theory (1997). These results also conform with Unnever and Cullen's study that, similarly to Tyler and Boeckmann's theory, show that a perceived decline of moral and

social cohesion is correlated to punitive attitudes and the desire to strengthen society's norms through the act of punishing (2010). However, something that was brought up during the interviews which was not mentioned by Tyler and Boeckmann, was the fact that the lawbreaking actions have to reach a certain level quantitatively in order for them to affect the general perception of the level of social and moral cohesion of society, or such actions will be perceived as being confined to only those socioeconomically vulnerable neighbourhoods where they are more occurring. Thus, simply perceiving that there is a moral and social decline does not suffice, rather, in order to affect peoples' perceptions, the decline has to be viewed as being prevalent in society as a whole. Another aspect that isn't mentioned in their theory, is that it seems that in order for the act of punishing to be functioning as a way of clarifying and consolidating the moral and social values and norms of society, it is necessary that the sanction is perceived as being proportionate to the crime. If the sanctions of a crime is perceived as too mild, it signals that the society does not take that crime, or the values and norms that it violates, as seriously, and, consequently, the sanction isn't perceived as clarifying and consolidating the norms to a great extent.

5.3 Conjoint analysis

The main finding of the qualitative analysis is that political ideology affects peoples' degrees of punitive attitudes through the leftwing politics' and the rightwing politics' different understandings of the causes of criminality. The main difference is in how much importance the different political ideologies attribute to external and uncontrollable causes when explaining criminal behaviour, as the rightists generally downplay the impact of these types of factors, whereas the leftists generally emphasize them. This relationship is also, partly, exhibited in the quantitative analysis, as two of the bivariate analyses showed that, even though the correlation was small, there were significant correlations between political ideology and two of the different measurements of punitive attitude. Even though political ideology had no significance in any of the three logistic regression models, there was a consistency to the direction of the relationship, indicating that there is something worth exploring further. Although the effect sizes in both the bivariate and logistic regression analyses were rather small, and although the confidence interval in all of the models meant that it wasn't possible to determine whether there actually was any real correlation, I still maintain that, on the basis of the qualitative analysis, previous research and the significant

bivariate analyses, there probably exists some sort of correlation between political ideology and punitive attitudes.

As for the social and moral cohesion of society, the qualitative analysis shows that it does seem to affect punitive attitudes, as the interviewees perceived that lawbreaking actions leads to an undermining of the moral and social norms and values of society, and as the punishment was seen as a way to clarify and consolidate the norms of society, indicating that people who worry about the decline of the social and moral cohesion also express more punitive attitudes. This is because severe legal consequences to lawbreaking behaviour are perceived as sending out stronger signals of society's grave view of the lawbreaking actions than what milder sanctions do. However, this was only partly mirrored in the quantitative analysis, as there was only one bivariate analysis that exhibited a significant but small correlation between social cohesion and punitive attitudes. In two of the logistic regression models, the variable social cohesion exhibited a negative correlation with punitive attitudes, which is a direction that is mirrored in the qualitative analysis, but, just like with political ideology, these outcomes were anything but clear and guaranteed, as a result of the poor model fit, the insignificance and the questionable confidence intervals. Overall, I am cautiously optimistic that there actually exists a correlation between social cohesion and punitive attitudes, on account of the qualitative analysis, the previous research and the significant bivariate analysis. However, this correlation does not seem that strong.

As for the moral cohesion, again, according to the qualitative analysis, there seems to be some support for there being some sort of correlation between moral cohesion and punitive attitude. But the quantitative analysis showed that moral cohesion actually was positively correlated to punitive attitude, which is the opposite of what was expected on account of the previous research, and this variable also had doubtful results, keeping the poor model fit, the insignificance, the small effect sizes and the confidence intervals in mind. Therefore, I dare not claim there actually exists a correlation between moral cohesion and punitive attitude. Instead, it is necessary to explore this relationship further in order to establish whether there actually is a correlation between these two variables. This holds true also for the correlations between punitive attitudes, political ideology and social cohesion, as the quantitative analyses were anything but convincing.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to contribute to an increased knowledge of possible explanations for why people have the level of punitive attitudes that they do, as well as how these explanations actually affect people's punitive attitudes. This was done through the answering of two research questions, namely "What possible factors could explain Swedish 18-30 year olds' opinions on penal policy in regards to sexual and violent offences?" And "In what way do these factors shape Swedish 18-30 year olds' opinions on penal policy in regards to sexual and violent offences?"

The former of the two questions was answered through a quantitative method, but unfortunately the analysis determined that it was difficult to draw any reliable conclusions from the data. The logistic regression showed that the variables political ideology, social cohesion and moral cohesion had no significance in any of the models, that the effect sizes were small, and that, based on the confidence intervals, it wasn't possible to determine if there were any correlations at all. As for political ideology, it did show a consistent direction of relationship as well as two significant correlations in the bivariate analysis, indicating that there is a weak correlation between political ideology and punitive attitudes. Similarly, social cohesion showed the expected direction of relationship in two of the three models, as well as a significant correlation in one of the bivariate analysis, suggesting there might be a correlation of some sort between perceptions of the level of social cohesion and punitive attitudes. However, this does not hold true for the moral cohesion variable as, on top of the uncertain results mentioned above, it did not show the expected direction of relationship as well as having no significance in any of the bivariate analyses. Consequently, it is possible to determine that social cohesion and political ideology are two potential explanations for people's levels of punitive attitude, but, as the impact these two variables had was quite small, it is probable that other variables explain why people have the level of punitive attitude that they do in a much better way. Thus, the quantitative analysis found a partial support for Carrolls research results that political ideology affects people's punitive attitudes (1987), and a partial support for Unnever and Cullens research results that people's perceptions of the level of social and moral cohesion in society correlates with their level of punitive attitude (1987), at least for the part concerning social cohesion.

Further research for all of these variables are necessary in order to ensure whether or not correlations between them and punitive attitude actually exist. The main focus of the future research on this issue should be to define and measure punitive attitudes in the most accurate way possible, this to make sure that the results are as certain as possible. Punitive attitude is, as mentioned, a concept that is difficult to measure as a result of it being so multi-faceted (Adriaenssen & Aertsen 2015). Even though this paper encountered issues when attempting to use Adriaenssen & Aertsen 's definition and measurement of punitive attitude, I would still recommend using such a definition as it so encompassing in its approach (2015). However, in order to ensure that using such a definition is practically possible, any future research using their definition would have to be more meticulous when choosing and formulating the questions measuring punitive attitude than I was, and they would also have to gradually determine which questions to use by checking their compatibility in order to make sure that the final variables of the index actually measure that same phenomenon. This was something that the punitive index of this paper did not do, leading to some of the doubtful results of the quantitative analyses. Rather than having one definite measurement of punitive attitude, the analysis was conducted using three different measurements, which, according to the reliability tests of the index, did not measure the same phenomenon. This resulted in, for instance, the social cohesion variable changing direction in one of the three models, as well as fluctuating effect sizes and odds ratio values depending on what measurement was being used as the dependent variable. If the dependent variable would have been a cohesive and encompassing index instead, these just mentioned differences would have been non-existent, and it would also have resulted in more reliable results, as the statistical analyses would have tested the correlation between the independent variables and punitive attitude, rather than just three minor fractions of punitive attitude.

Moreover, any future study would also have to improve the measurements of moral and social cohesion, as the reliability test of the variables making up the indexes of social and moral cohesion showed that the variables, again, did not measure the same phenomena. As a result of this, I was forced to use only one of the questions of each of these independent variables as the measurement of social and moral cohesion, opening up for a number of issues related to reliability and validity. It is very possible that the results of the quantitative analyses for both of these variables would have been different, had the indexes been acceptable to use.

The second research question was answered through the qualitative method, and the analysis of the data relating to political ideology seemed to a large extent to conform to the research of Carroll et al (1987), which claimed that people on the right are not supportive of retribution as a goal of punishment as well as more likely to attribute the causes of criminality to individual explanations, whereas people on the left are more likely to support rehabilitation and to ascribe criminal behaviour to societal explanations. The analysis showed that rightists generally argued that internal causes are the main reason behind criminality, as they contended that the uncontrollable, external factors do not impact peoples' lives to the extent that they lose their autonomy. Conversely, the people on the left argued that uncontrollable, external factors are the main reason for why people commit criminal actions, while also maintaining that, in the end, what really matters is internal causes, which I argued was in order to make the notion of punishment feasible. Thus, political ideology is correlated to punitive attitudes as different ideologies have different views of the causes of criminality, i.e. internal causes or external causes, which, in turn, leads to different views of punishment and the goals of it.

As for the analysis relating to moral and social cohesion, this also seemed to conform to the previous research on this area, as it generally aligned with Unnever and Cullens research results, namely that a perceived decline of moral and social cohesion is correlated to punitive attitudes and the desire to strengthen society's norms through the act of punishing. The interviewees appeared to view people who commit rulebreaking actions as less trustworthy, while almost all of the interviewees also mentioned that one of the most important goals of punishment was to act as a marker for what is right and wrong. However, the analysis also showed that in order for lawbreaking actions to affect the general perception of the level of social and moral cohesion of society, they need to be of a certain level quantitatively. It also showed that it is necessary that the legal consequences of a criminal behaviour are perceived as severe enough in relation to the crime, or it risks signaling that the violations of the societal norms and values related to this action are not perceived as being that big of a deal. This, together with the fact that the punishing of criminal actions is perceived as a way to clarify and reinforce society's moral and social norms and values, means that people who perceive there to be a moral and social decline also occupy more punitive attitudes, as severe sanctions are perceived as actually clarifying and consolidating the norms compared to milder sanctions.

The most interesting of the results of the qualitative analysis is that the people belonging to the left seem to uphold internal causes as the ultimate reason for why individuals commit criminal actions as a way of justifying the act of punishment. Attributing criminality to internal causes makes it possible to assign the blame of the action to the individual, which, in turn, makes punishing them a feasible option. Punishing criminals is only feasible if criminality is perceived as something that a person does out of their own accord, as it makes no sense to punish an individual for an action that wasn't their fault or of their own doing. This finding can in turn be connected to the notion that punishing criminals is necessary in order to clarify and reinforce the social and moral norms and values of society, as it could explain why leftists generally maintain that internal causes are the ultimate reason for why criminals commit crimes even though they, as I argue, don't believe so themselves. This is because punishment is considered as a necessity as a result of society's need to clarify and reinforce the societal norms, meaning that punishment is something that, no matter what, has to be considered feasible. The act of punishing becomes justifiable through the assigning of blame onto the individual, meaning that the causes of crime has to be explained by individual factors rather than external factors. If external factors were the cause of criminality, it would be impossible to blame the individual, as their actions wasn't out of their own doing, meaning that punishment would no longer be justifiable and we would no longer be able to clarify and reinforce society's norms through it. An example of this sort of thinking, which was also brought up in the analysis, is Lucy who argued that even if a person commits criminal actions as a result of external factors, and thus can't really be blamed for the action, they should still be punished because it is the action in itself that deserves to be punished. This shows that the actual purpose of punishing is to clarify what is and what isn't acceptable and reinforce these norms. However, this notion becomes so much more difficult to justify if one also perceives that external, uncontrollable factors are the main reason for why one commits criminal actions, as the blame then lies with society rather than with the individual. This could potentially be the reason for the leftists conflicted reasoning in regards to the nature of the causes of criminality.

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Appendix

Survey

”Your opinions on the punishments for violent and sexual offences.

This survey is a part of my final paper at the master program in sociology at Lunds University, and it is about Swedish 18-30 year olds’ view on the punishments for violent and sexual offences. In this survey you will mainly be asked to take a stand on assertions regarding crime and punishment, but there will also be questions about, for example, political ideology and morals. All of these questions is about what YOU feel and think in regard to the subject in question. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. If you have any questions regarding this survey you can reach me at kri15mti@student.lu.se. Thank you so much for your participation!”

Gender

Man

Woman

Other alternative

No answer

What’s your highest level of education?

Lower secondary school

Upper secondary school

Trade school

University studies

Bachelor’s degree

Master’s degree

Phd

The main purpose of punishment is to rehabilitate criminals

Disagree

Partly disagree

Neither

Partly agree

Agree

The main purpose of punishment is to punish criminals

Disagree

Partly disagree

Neither

Partly agree

Agree

The main purpose of punishment is to give the victim satisfaction

Disagree

Partly disagree

Neither

Partly agree

Agree

The main purpose of punishment is to deter people from committing crimes

Disagree

Partly disagree

Neither

Partly agree

Agree

The main purpose of punishment is to show that criminal actions are not acceptable

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

The main purpose of punishment is to physically stop criminals from committing more crimes

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Sweden should utilize more non-custodian sanctions, such as electronic ankle bracelet and community service

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Capital punishment should be utilized for some sexual and violent offences

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Life in prison is too comfortable for the prisoners

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

More people should be punished for sexual and violent offences than what is the cause today

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

The punishments for violent and sexual offences are too mild

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Life sentences should be mandatory for some types of violent and sexual crimes

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

The punishments for repeat offenders should be harsher

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Prisoners should not be given parole

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Based on the Swedish political climate, which alternative fits your political stance the best?

Left
Leaning towards left
Don't know/No answer
Leaning towards right
Right

I have similar values as most others in Sweden

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

In Sweden there's a consensus on what is right and wrong

Disagree
Partly disagree

Neither
Partly agree
Agree

I feel like I can trust most people in Sweden

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Most people in Sweden only think about themselves

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Most people in Sweden try to be as fair as possible

Disagree
Partly disagree
Neither
Partly agree
Agree

Interview guide

What do you think about the range of punishment for violent offences, such as assault, murder and the like?

What do you think about the range of punishment for sexual offences, such as rape and sexual abuse?

Do you think first time offenders and reoffenders should be treated differently legally?

What would you say is the purpose of punishing?

What do you think about the life in prison for the criminals?

Do you think that enough violent and sexual criminals get sentenced in Sweden?

How serious would you say that the crime issue in Sweden is? What would you say has led to this? How do improve the situation?

Do you feel like you can trust people in general in Sweden?

What do you think about the morals of people in general in Sweden?

Would you rather say that humans are free to make their own decisions, or that we are affected by structures and circumstances that we can't control?

Would you say that your view of human behaviour has impacted how you view violent and sexual criminals and punishment?