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OF HUMANITIES
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The vision of the monopoly

**An idea analysis of Systembolaget's campaign material through
the decades**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the evolution of the Swedish state-owned company Systembolaget's idea and message from 1970 to 2020 through advertising campaign material from each decade. The findings are then compared to Gösta Esping-Andersen's welfare state model in *Three worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, changes in alcohol policy during that time period and the social marketing theory. To analyze the various campaigns, a combination of an idea and an argument analysis with adapted questions and value statements was employed. The findings in this thesis show that the idea of Systembolaget has remained mostly unchanged since its founding in 1955, but it has been communicated in different ways. The first three campaigns' arguments were primarily logos-based, whereas the last three campaigns' key qualities were ethos and pathos. The way Systembolaget through social marketing conveys its message correlates greatly to the Social democratic model of welfare states, especially when you look at alcohol issues as a health problem. The Swedish state operates through Systembolaget and its campaigns to decrease the harmful consumption of alcohol and therefore it not being an economic burden for the tax-funded health care.

Keywords: Systembolaget; Alcohol policy; Social Marketing; Welfare state; Qualitative idea analysis; Advertising campaigns

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1. INTRODUCTION

Alcohol is a beverage enjoyed by many people all over the world; many countries and regions have their own alcoholic drinks, and alcohol is frequently present when there is a reason to celebrate. However, regardless of the festive approach to alcohol consumption, alcohol is an addictive substance with many negative side effects. Alcohol abuse is a public health concern in many countries, and Sweden is no foreign to the subject. According to the Swedish institution, Folkhälsomyndigheten, 31% of adults in Sweden in 2020 stated that they have a negative consumption of alcohol (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2022).

Alcohol policy is a topic that every country in the world approaches differently, but many claim that Sweden's regulations and attitudes regarding alcohol differ greatly from the rest of the world, particularly from our neighboring countries around Europe. Sweden has had a stringent policy on the selling of alcohol as part of its welfare policy for the past 100 years and still has a monopoly on the sale of alcohol in the shape of Systembolaget. Systembolaget is a company that operates on behalf of the Swedish government and has worked closely with the government since its founding in 1955 to promote the well-being of the Swedish population. Since its inception, Systembolaget has utilized various forms of media to reach out to the public and urge responsible or limited alcohol consumption in order to reduce the adverse effects of alcohol consumption.

According to Systembolaget, the reason they use commercials as a communication tool is to inform people about them as a corporation, why they exist, and the risks associated with alcohol consumption (Systembolagets kundtjänst, 2017). Because of the way Systembolaget justifies their advertising, it would be fascinating to investigate how they have communicated their idea and message through the years, as well as whether the message and their purpose of advertising has changed. This thesis intends to examine Systembolaget's campaign material from each decade between 1970s to 2020 to see if the ideas correspond to the changes in alcohol policies of each decade. The research will be conducted using a combination of an idea- and argument analysis, and to offer a contextualization of the idea and alcohol policy, a theory of welfare states by Gösta Esping-Andersen is presented.

2. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the advancement and development of the Swedish government-backed company Systembolaget's concept and idea through its campaign materials from the 1970s to the present. The aim is to look at campaign material from different decades to see how and whether the purpose of Systembolaget has changed over time, how they convey their beliefs in the material and how this might connect to Swedish alcohol policy. In this thesis I claim that Systembolaget's ideas could be seen as those of the Swedish state, given Systembolaget's purpose is to serve as an extension of the state.

The questions this thesis will try to answer is the following:

- How has the Swedish state in the shape of Systembolaget argued their goals and views on alcohol through social marketing?
- How has Systembolaget's ideas altered and/or developed over the years as evidenced by its campaign material, and how do these ideas connect to changes in alcohol policy?
- In what ways do the Swedish state's ideas and ambitions towards alcohol through the material correspond Esping-Andersen's welfare capitalism theory?

3. BACKGROUND

It is necessary to provide both historical and contemporary context of alcohol in Sweden in order to analyze and assess the ideas of Systembolaget through their public marketing material throughout the previous decades.

3.1. Historical overview of alcohol consumption in Sweden

Sweden has a long history with alcohol, and this thesis will focus on the last 120 years of that history. The primary beverage favored by the Swedish population around the turn of the twentieth century was 'brännvin', and the excessive consumption of this "Swedish vodka" was becoming a problem in Sweden. Some regulations to reduce alcohol consumption were introduced in 1905 and these included, among other things, time limits on the sale of alcohol, the requirement that establishments selling alcohol have clean drinking water available, and the prohibition of selling alcohol to anyone under the age of 15 (Johansson, 2008, p. 63). At the same time, beer consumption was increasing, but the 'brännvin' consumption was declining. Furthermore, total consumption of alcohol was declining, and public drinking became stigmatized (ibid. p. 122). With these changes came the rise of the absolutist sobriety

movement, and a drive for tougher regulations on alcohol sales. Between 1915 and 1920, the so-called *motbokssystemet* (liquor ration passbook system) was tested in Stockholm before being implemented across the country. The system's main goal was to keep people from drinking too much alcohol, and in order to get a liquor ration book, you had to meet certain criteria. A man could be eligible for a book at the age of 25, but if he was married, he could be as young as 21 in order to be eligible. A woman who was married to a man with a liquor ration book was ineligible, and unmarried women received a smaller allotment than men. Rations could vary, and upper-class males frequently received the maximum allowable ration; rations typically ranged from half a liter to four liters per month. Alcohol was also rationed in restaurants and could only be ordered at particular hours of the day with the requirement of a prepared meal. The liquor passbook system worked mostly on a registration basis, with varied information regarding family circumstances, income, and sobriety notes being recorded to help determine an individual's entitlement to purchase and ration alcohol (Alkoholpolitiska Kommissionen, 1994).

The liquor passbook system was in place until 1955, but it had been criticized for decades. Even though total alcohol consumption reduced throughout WWII, the number of intoxication violations increased. A governmental sobriety committee was formed in 1944 to investigate possible reforms in Swedish alcohol policy in order to address this issue. According to the sobriety committee, the regulating system had failed, so it was repealed in 1955 and replaced with a shift in alcohol policy. The emphasis was no longer on restricting access and maintaining rigorous control over individuals' drinking habits, but rather on expanded freedom and personal responsibility. In conjunction with the elimination of the restriction system, the legal age to purchase alcohol was changed to 21 years old, regardless of gender, and the sale of alcohol was delegated to a nation-wide company (Johansson, 2008, p. 319-334). Systembolaget first opened its doors in October of 1955. During the 1950s and 1960s, Swedish alcohol policy aimed to persuade people to drink wine and other low-alcohol beverages instead of 'brännvin' and spirits, and Systembolaget launched an advertising campaign dubbed *Operation Vin* (Operation Wine) in 1957. The campaign was, in combination with an increased tourism to Mediterranean countries, successful, as spirits sales declined (Centrum för näringslivshistoria, u.d.).

3.2. Alcohol policy 1970–2020

In the 1970s and the 80s, the alcohol policy shifted back to a more restrictive one than the decades before and the government appointed different committees and investigations to

examine solutions to the alcohol problems. Alkoholpolitiska Utredningen (the Alcohol Policy Inquiry) was established in 1965 to investigate the consequences effects of the reforms made in 1954. They came to several conclusions and recommendations for the alcohol policy, one of which being that alcohol consumption should not be a part of any child's upbringing. The APU served as a government advisory organ, and several changes occurred during its tenure, including the legal age changing twice, first from 21 to 20 years old in 1969 and then from 20 to 18 years old in 1974. When the legal age changed in 1969, the age limit for buying alcohol became the same as the legal age. However, in 1974, the APU stated that they did not recommend changing the age limit on alcohol to 18 years due to older people in friend groups often buying alcohol for their younger friends. Thus, lowering the age limit would make alcohol more accessible to younger people (Johansson, 2008, p. 368-374).

In 1975 the World Health Organization published a report called *Alcohol Control Policies in Public Health* which established the so-called total consumption model, in 1984 Sweden adopted a health policy document from WHO with the primary goal of lowering alcohol consumption by at least 25% by the year 2000. This document and the total consumption model laid the foundation of Swedish alcohol policy (ibid. p. 396-397). The goals of the 1977 alcohol policy reform were to limit total alcohol consumption and aiming to achieve this goal through social political initiatives such as informative campaigns and a restriction on the availability of alcohol.

At the end of the 1970s a coordinating organ called SAMO was appointed to consider actions to decrease the consumption of alcohol. In 1981 the Swedish government, advised by SAMO, tried to have Systembolaget closed on Saturdays, and dealing to people under the age of 20 would now become illegal. They stated that one of the most serious issues with alcohol is the illicit distribution of alcohol to minors, as well as a lack in age verification when people purchased alcohol. During the 80s, the consumption of alcohol among young people increased and the measures to decrease it became a major aspect of the alcohol policy. From July 1982 the opening hours of Systembolaget were restricted and they now were required to have closed on Saturdays (ibid. p. 400-405).

During the 1990s, a major part of the debate on alcohol policy consisted of the entrance to the European Union and how a membership would affect Swedish alcohol policy. In 1991 a parliamentary commission with the main focus to evaluate the current alcohol policy in Sweden called Alkoholpolitiska Kommissionen (Alcohol Political Commission) was established, and their objectives were among other things: to emphasize that there is a need to

work towards upbringings without alcohol, decreasing the drinking among young people, clearly work against alcohol consumption and for abstinence in particularly dangerous situations etcetera. They also criticized the total consumption model and detailed it by including a more nuanced version with more targeted efforts with alcohol. One primary assignment for the commission was also to evaluate a future of Swedish alcohol policy as a member of the EU. Even if the monopoly on alcohol lasted after the entrance, some changes were obligatory to make according to EU-stipulations (Johansson, 2008, pp. 417-422). Systembolaget reopened on Saturdays, laws and regulations on alcohol advertisements were put in place and the most significant development was the introduction of open borders. Vin & Sprit lost its monopoly on import- and export of alcohol and Systembolaget lost its monopoly to sell alcohol to holders of a serving license. Sweden was allowed a transition period with the import rules in EU, but in January 2004 Swedish citizens were allowed to import the same amount of alcohol as in other members of the EU. The open borders caused a greater influx of alcohol from neighboring countries and the alcohol consumption was increasing. An investigation to examine the effects of the open borders called *Alkoholinförselutredningen* was started in 2004 and it suggested that Sweden should try to influence the EU to take on a common strategy to reduce the harmful drinking, that the message of Systembolaget would be more highlighted and to lower the tax rate on alcohol by 40% to decrease the private import of alcohol. However, these suggestions did not have any notable effect on alcohol policy (ibid. p. 424-433).

There have been no significant changes in alcohol policy in the last two decades, however, in 2011, 2016 and 2022 the Swedish government has presented a collected strategy for alcohol-, narcotics-, doping-, and tobacco politics where they outline the government's objectives. In these reports the main goal is "a society free from narcotics and doping, with decreased medicinal and social damages caused by alcohol and with a decreased tobacco use (Regeringen, Regeringens skrivelse: En samlad strategi för alkohol-, narkotika-, dopings-, och tobakspolitiken 2016-2020, 2016). The strategy from 2011 presents seven goals including protection of children and young people, preventative work, and guidelines for the collaboration with other countries both in EU and internationally (Regeringen, 2011). In the 2016 strategy the message is the same but with the added perspective of equality (Regeringen, 2016). In the 2022 strategy the main goal is still the same, but it is widened to include gambling of money (Regeringen, 2022). In the latter two Systembolaget is argued as a key

player in how to achieve the goals presented, and that it is important to cherish and safeguard the monopoly that Systembolaget has on alcohol sales.

3.3. Alcohol in Sweden today

According to The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN), the total alcohol consumption of pure alcohol per person over the age of 15 was 8,46 liters in 2020 (Trolldal & Åström, 2021, p. 13). Alcohol is only sold to those over the age of 20, but people over the age of 18 can be served alcohol in restaurants or bars, as well as purchase 'folköl' (folk beer) at regular grocery stores with a maximum alcohol content of 3.5% (Systembolaget, u.d.)

Wine is the most popular alcoholic beverage in Sweden today, accounting for 45.1% of all alcoholic beverage sales in 2020. Strong beer was the second most popular in 2020, accounting for 31.1%. Spirits were the third most popular, accounting for 16.9% of sales (Trolldal & Åström, 2021, p. 27). According to CAN, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant influence on Swedish alcohol sales, including a reduction in travel imports and reduced alcohol sales in restaurants due to restrictions. Although Systembolaget's sales increased during 2020, total alcohol consumption decreased by 6% (ibid., p. 34)

When compared to other European countries in a report from CAN, the Swedish people scores high for strengthening happy sensations and socially driven reasons for drinking alcoholic beverages, as well as a propensity to drink to "get drunk". The report from CAN also discussed how the Swedish public views the country's strict alcohol regulations. According to the findings, women are more likely than males to support restrictive regulations, while younger age groups are more likely to oppose them than older age groups. Despite some conflicting attitudes towards stringent alcohol policies, the majority of the Swedish public considers them favorably, with some support for even stronger regulations (Ramstedt et al., 2018, pp. 8-11).

3.4. Systembolaget

According to their website, Systembolaget's goal is to educate people about the dangers of alcohol, promote responsible alcohol sales, and provide excellent service. Systembolaget has been granted exclusive rights to sell strong beer, spirits, and wine in Sweden, but without private profit motives. Furthermore, the parliament determines Systembolaget's business hours in order to limit the availability of alcohol (Systembolaget, Vårt Uppdrag, u.d.).

Because of the Swedish state's significant engagement in Systembolaget, this thesis will explore Systembolaget's ideas as the Swedish state's ideas.

The reasons for the current way of selling alcohol in Sweden is presented on the website of Systembolaget. They state that the purpose of Sweden's alcohol policy is to reduce overall alcohol intake due to the link between higher alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm (Systembolaget, Vårt Uppdrag, u.d.). as reported by CAN, Systembolaget sold 6.47 liters of alcohol per person over the age of 15 in 2020. Systembolaget is where the largest proportion of alcohol is procured in Sweden, followed by restaurants, which supply 0.59 liters per person over the age of 15 (Trolldal & Åström, 2021, p. 15).

4. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There has been a wide variety of studies made on the subject of alcohol policy in Sweden and Systembolaget, however not with the characteristics of this thesis. Below some relevant studies will be presented.

4.1. Change and stability? Trends in alcohol consumption, harms and policy: Sweden 1990-2010

Mats Ramstedt's article (2010) summarizes the evolution of the Swedish alcohol scene during the last two decades. The study was created in response to significant changes in alcohol policy and consumption over the last 20 years, and the questions presented are: How did trends in consumption, availability and harm develop? What were the policy responses and how did the retail monopoly manage during these new conditions? How did other social and demographic factors of possible relevance to alcohol consumption develop?

According to Ramstedt, alcohol use has climbed by 20%, with several variables contributing to this. Since joining the European Union, alcohol has become more affordable, and there have been more options to import cheaper alcohol from other EU countries. The study found no evident patterns in terms of social and demographic changes, and even though consumption grew, markers of alcohol-related harms did not increase during the time period studied. Sweden has spent more money per capita on policy adjustments and preventative measures than any other European country due to political concerns about the consumption trend. (Ramstedt, 2010).

4.2. Minimizing alcohol harm: A systematic social marketing review (2000-2014)

This study conducted by Krzysztof Kubacki, Sharyn Rundle-Thiele, Bo Pang and Nuray Buyucek (2015) aims to identify the role and use of key elements of social marketing between 2000 and 2014. The study was made through a systematic literature search where they examined nine databases and found 23 interventions aiming to reduce the alcohol consumption to identify. The identified interventions were mainly from English-speaking countries and every intervention were conducted in developed, democratic and industrialized countries. Each intervention was analyzed to define the target audience and the most frequent target audience were university students. The interventions were assessed against six benchmark criteria presented by Andreasen, these include (1) behavioral objective, (2) segmentation, (3) formative research, (4) exchange, (5) marketing mix and lastly, (6) competition. The study found that social marketing strategies were largely effective. The strategies created positive effects through changing policies and behavior to achieve short- or long-term changes, as well as attaining long-term change with attitude, raising awareness and behavioral intention. Even though the study found that social marketing has a positive effect on behavior, the authors argue that there is still room for improvement when applying social marketing, social marketing should in the future include all of the six benchmark criteria for the social marketing to be more effective and influence behavior (Kubacki, Rundle-Thiele, Pang, & Buyucek, 2015).

4.3. Faran finns i glaset: Campaigns against alcohol abuse during the early 20th century in Sweden

The report by Jenny Björkman is based on earlier studies and describes the different ways in which the Swedish state took responsibility in the alcohol situation through analyzing informational campaigns from the early 20th century. Since the 19th century, the state has provided economical support for the sobriety movement, in the beginning it focused on the abuse and misuse of alcohol in the society. The economic support went to informational campaigns which argued the risks of alcohol and often used scare tactics to keep young people from alcohol. Often used in the information campaigns was pictures of cirrhosis of the liver and fatty hearts caused by alcohol. A way to educate about the harms of alcohol was in schools, they came to function as a state information channel and sobriety was the goal. The report findings are that the Swedish state has through the campaigns during the later 19th century and early 20th century tried to affect the lives of the population. With the increased democratization of Sweden, the responsibility of the state to inform about alcohol was

strengthened, but the information changed overtime. It shifted from individual-centered information campaigns to a greater focus on the societal-centered campaigns. It encouraged sobriety not for the individual's sake, but for the sake of the society as a whole. Björkman finishes the analysis by connecting the increased commitment and enlightenment on the subject to Nikolas Roses ideas of the modern liberal state where freedom is interconnected with more restrictions (Björkman, 2002).

5. MATERIAL

This thesis aims to investigate and analyze various campaigns from Systembolaget's past. The main material can be accessed on the Systembolaget history webpage which contains a wide range of archived campaigns. The material used is accessed from *Historien om Systembolaget* (The History of Systembolaget), a website created by Centrum för Näringslivshistoria (Centre for Business History) as well as the official Youtube-channel of Systembolaget. The following are the six advertising campaigns analyzed in this thesis:

5.1. 1970-Spola Kröken

Spola Kröken- Man dricker litet mindre och mår mycket bättre, which means 'Stop the drinking-you drink a little less and feel much better' was a Systembolaget advertising campaign that ran from 1971 to 1988. The goal of the campaign was to reduce alcohol consumption by encouraging individuals to have a healthier attitude toward alcohol and to consume in moderation. Several Swedish celebrities, including skier Ingemar Stenmark, artist Cornelis Vreeswijk, and athlete Linda Haglund, took part in the campaign, which was organized in partnership with the sports movement, the music industry, and the Swedish Military. In Swedish history, *Spola Kröken* was a highly influential communication effort, the slogan appeared on t-shirts, billboards and on the plastic bags sold by Systembolaget, and after a few years, 9 out of 10 swedes recognized the campaign (Centrum för näringslivshistoria, u.d.).

5.2. 1980-Stoppa Langningen

Stoppa Langningen which means 'Stop the dealing of alcohol' and was an advertising campaign during the 1980s made of posters and pictures to raise awareness of and prevent the illegal dealing of alcohol to young people under the age of 20. The website created by Systembolaget presents various posters from the 1980s that all fall under the umbrella of *Stoppa Langningen* but with different subcategories such as "Köp inte ut till någon under 20" ('Don't buy alcohol to someone under the age of 20') and "När det gäller alkohol fungerar

tonåringar fortfarande som barn” (‘When it comes to alcohol, teenagers still behave as children’). The different posters were released and advertised during the 1980s in collaboration with the Ministry of social affairs (Johansson, 2008, p. 410). The material comprises of images and pictures that encourages adults to not sell or buy alcoholic beverages to minors in various ways (Historien om Systembolaget). In this thesis, a selection of a few posters will be analyzed.

5.3. 1990-Leg under 25

Leg under 25 which translates to ‘Identification under 25’ was a 1990s campaign that pushed people under the age of 25 to always present identification when buying alcohol. The campaign consists of posters and commercial ads that underline how difficult it is to guess someone’s age simply by looking at them. The campaign lasted for several years, and the aim was not solely to urge the public to always show identification when buying alcohol, but also to educate and inform the employees at Systembolaget. In a brochure addressed to the employees released a few years after the campaign, Systembolaget describes the campaign and the results from it. One of the results being that a large part of the customers show identification even without being asked. The brochure emphasizes the importance of the age verification, and the responsibility of the employee to follow through with the controls, as well as gives the employees tips on how to act in different situations concerning identification control (Systembolaget, 2004).

5.4. 2000-Brev till Barroso

Brev till Barroso which translates to ‘Letter to Barroso’ was a 2005 advertising campaign that was a part of a larger initiative in the 2000s where the objective was to strengthen the relationship between Systembolaget as a company and its customers while also educating the public about the company’s societal goal. The campaign was advertised through magazines as big chunks of texts. The letter addressed to José Manuel Barroso who was the then President of the European Commission and in connection with Systembolaget’s 50th anniversary received the most attention. The letter appeared in the Financial Times on November 25, 2005, and a Swedish explanation of the commercial appeared in many Swedish newspapers and magazines one day later. This campaign, particularly the letter to Mr. Barroso, drew widespread attention from European news outlets, and reporting of alcohol-related harm in European media intensified in the months that followed. According to Systembolaget and the advertising agency Forsman & Bodenfors, the campaign strengthened support for the alcohol monopoly among the Swedish public (Centrum för näringslivshistoria, u.d.).

5.5. 2010-Experten

Experten which translates to ‘The expert’ was an advertising campaign consisting of video advertisements where the objective of the videos was to acknowledge the differences between Swedish and American ways of marketing and selling alcohol as well as inform the masses of the benefits of the Swedish model. Jeff Perry is portrayed as an American marketing expert and the videos consists of him trying to implement American marketing practices at Systembolaget. According to Resumé, this campaign raised support for the Swedish alcohol monopoly by 14% when *Experten* won first prize in an advertising competition. The main goal of this campaign and the message it delivered further motivated the monopoly’s existence, as well as its mission, which is the cornerstone of the entire organization. (Lundin, 2016).

5.6. 2020-Barndom utan baksmälla

Barndom utan baksmälla which translates to ‘Childhood without hangover’ is an advertising campaign with videos promoting appropriate drinking in the presence of children specifically. The campaign was a collaboration between Systembolaget, their subsidiary IQ¹, Bris², Maskrosbarn³, Trygga Barnen⁴ and World Childhood Foundation⁵. Aside from the several videos, the campaign consists of a website and a Facebook-page where they, among other things, give advice on how to help children who have been harmed by alcohol in various ways, share statistics about children who grow up with parents who have alcohol problems, and share stories from people who have experienced this in their childhood (*Barndom utan baksmälla*, 2020).

¹ IQ is an independent subsidiary to Systembolaget who creates campaigns and other material to promote a smarter approach and outlook on alcohol consumption. Their vision is a society where alcohol is consumed with care and health in mind. (IQ. *Om IQ*. <https://www.iq.se/om-iq/>)

² Bris, which stands for ‘Barnens rätt i samhället’ (‘The children’s rights in society’), is a children’s right organization who fight for a better society for children (Bris. *Aktuellt på Bris- Barnens rätt i samhället*. <https://www.bris.se/om-bris/aktuellt/>)

³ Maskrosbarn is a children’s right organization who since 2005 has worked to improve the living standards of children with a parent/parents who suffer from addiction issues, alcohol abuse issues or mental illnesses (Maskrosbarn. *Maskrosbarn barnrättsorganisation*. <https://maskrosbarn.org/om-oss/>)

⁴ Trygga barnen is an organization who aims to support children and young people who has grown up in a family where a member of the family has problems with addiction (Tryggabarnen. *Om Trygga Barnen*. <https://tryggabarnen.org/om-trygga-barnen?adlt=strict&toWww=1&redig=2021849D5D2047E7B701E580BF1DE349>)

⁵ World Childhood Foundation works to protect children from sexual abuse and violence through providing support to local organizations help vulnerable children and families (World Childhood Foundation. *About Childhood*. <https://childhood.org/about-childhood/>)

5.7. Selection and limitations

The campaign material used in this thesis was chosen based on two principles. First, a selection of choosing one specific campaign released during each decade from the 1970s to 2020s and second, the campaigns picked are those with sufficient information available and the ones that drew notice when they were first launched. This selection is also based on Systembolaget's promotion of these campaigns on the website www.systembolagetshistoria.se as influential and important campaigns in the company's history. In this thesis a selection of some material from each campaign has been made, the choice of material from each campaign are posters and videos that represents the campaign itself and that I have deemed as good examples of the general idea of the campaign.

The limitations that have had to be made in this thesis considering the material is primarily that Systembolaget has released a numerous amount of campaigns during the time period studied in this thesis, and it is not possible to include all of these in the study. It is also not possible to include all the material from each campaign since it would have been far too extensive and detailed for this study. Therefore, it is important to explain how the selection has been made. One could also do a more detailed description and analysis of the semiotics of the campaign material; however, this is deemed not as relevant in this particular study.

6. METHOD

To examine the development and growth of how Systembolaget promotes itself and their mission through its campaign material, I opted to analyze a campaign from each decade between the 1970s and the 2020s. Because of the time period and technology advancements during these decades, the campaigns chosen include both of traditional and digital media such as posters and advertising videos. The thesis' aim is to examine Systembolaget's idea evolution and how they have justified their objective and idea throughout the campaign materials. A Qualitative Explaining Idea Analysis was used to investigate the research question, along with some argument analytical aspects to analyze the material.

The Explaining Idea Analysis will help to answer how the idea evolved and how it correlates to changes in alcohol policy, while the Argument Analysis will aid to examine how Systembolaget communicates their idea and message. It is vital to compare the campaign materials in order to form a judgement on the development of the idea expressed by them.

During the analysis part of the thesis, the results from the analysis of the campaigns and alcohol policy will be examined in correlation to Esping-Andersen's Social Democratic model and the changes in Swedish alcohol policy.

6.1. Qualitative idea analysis

An idea analysis is based on analyzing concepts indirectly through various human acts such as speech, writing or other sources of communication. An idea analysis can be used to explain and/or understand different people's worldviews and aspirations. Göran Bergström and Per-Anders Svärd emphasize on how to analyze text-based materials in this chapter, but they also mention that this method is applicable to other types of materials as well (Bergström & Svärd, 2018, p. 138). The majority of the materials used in this study will be of visual characteristics, such as posters and advertising videos but the flexibility of the method allows it to be applied to this material as well.

An idea analysis can be descriptive, idea critical or explaining. The objective of a descriptive analysis is to describe the ideas being researched and how they connect to one another in the material. The concepts of idea critical analysis are based on evaluating and taking a stance on the ideas discussed in the material as well as determining whether they are good or bad. The objective of the explanatory analysis is to look at concepts in a larger framework and try to relate their origins in a larger societal context (ibid. p. 140-144). This thesis will use an explaining idea analysis to examine the ideas offered in the material and how they relate with one another, as well as how they came to be in a larger societal context. An explaining idea analysis' major goal is to investigate the reasons for the ideas' occurrence and/or impact. The researcher places the concepts in a larger framework in order to identify connections between the genesis of the ideas and societal events and structures. The ideas are studied as components of a larger sequence of events, and to do so, the researcher must look beyond the study's main material and seek out other sources or methodologies. It is also crucial for the researcher to give a credible account of the historical context and connections to the ideas (ibid. p. 142).

You can analyze the ideological content and ideas of a certain institution by looking for different kinds of statements in the text. These include: value statements which express ideals, preferences, and can manifest basic values and concrete goals; descriptive statements which express how different situations, people, goals, and relationships are; and finally, prescriptive statements which express what actions are appropriate in the situation (ibid., p. 146). There

are two methods to do this: on a basic level or on an operational level, but due to the restrictions of this thesis, the basic level will be used. An operational level idea analysis focuses on identifying and accounting for ideological content in the material by examining the statements found. The content will be analyzed in this thesis using the table below, which was adapted from an analytical chart created by Mats Lindberg (ibid., p. 147).

Value statements (V)	Descriptive statements (D)	Prescriptive statement (P)
What are the expressed goals and values of Systembolaget in the material?	Based on the material, how does Systembolaget view the alcohol situation?	How does Systembolaget encourage the Swedish population to view and act with alcohol?

These three questions form the foundation for the analysis of the material, however because the material is visual and does not always convey the meaning or the message right away, certain latent messages will be presented and analyzed.

A qualitative idea analysis has the advantage of not only describing the relationships between distinct thoughts, but also providing a model for contextualizing the ideas in a larger framework. It is also a versatile research strategy because of the different degrees of values and goals that can be selected. Because the analysis is largely descriptive, a discussion in which the researcher ties the findings to the study question is required (ibid. p. 165-166).

6.2. Argument analysis

An argument analysis is a useful method for identifying, describing, and evaluating various types of arguments. It stems from rhetorical practice, and logos, ethos and pathos are three fundamental elements. The element of the text or information that tries to persuade the audience to apply their common sense is known as logos. Ethos is the character or personality that the speaker is attempting to project itself as in order to gain the audience's trust. Pathos is when the speaker tries to elicit powerful emotions in the audience. At least two aims can be served by an argumentative analysis: descriptive and valuing. The basic purpose of a descriptive argument analysis is to reconstruct the arguments and relations discovered in the material. In a valuing argument analysis, the researcher performs a descriptive analysis first, then assesses how effective the arguments are at delivering their message (Boréus, 2018, p. 94). In this thesis, solely the descriptive argument analysis will be used to analyze the

arguments presented in the campaign material. An argumentative analysis can be used to examine entire speeches or other types of material, but it can also be applicable in conjunction with another research method to identify the arguments before moving on to another type of analysis (ibid. p. 95). The latter will be used in this thesis as the argument analysis is a helpful tool to create an idea analysis and examine the campaign material from the research question. Some important concepts in an argument analysis are argumentation, claims, theses, arguments, and premises. Because of the simplified version of an argument analysis used here, the focal points in this study are the argumentation and thesis. Argumentation can be divided into three categories: descriptive fact-based argumentation, normative question-based argumentation or argumentation concerning how a person should act (practical argumentation). The thesis is the central claim in the material that is argued for or against a certain topic in the material (ibid. p. 100-105).

Every campaign will be evaluated using three questions to examine the core thesis, its characteristics, and the argumentation used. The questions are as stated below:

- What is the expressed thesis of the campaign?
- What category of argumentation does this campaign apply to?
- Which appeal is being used, Ethos, Logos or Pathos?

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

7.1. Three models of welfare capitalism

In the book *Three worlds of welfare capitalism*, author Gösta Esping-Andersen describes a theory of the three models of welfare state regimes which includes the liberal, the conservative (or corporatist) and lastly the social democratic. Esping-Andersen bases his research about welfare regime states upon three principles: decommodification (pensions, sickness insurance and unemployment benefits), social stratification (how welfare states maintain or break down social stratification) and the private-public mix (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 3-4).

Due to Sweden's political system Esping-Andersen (1990) defines the country to be a part of the social democratic regime, and he emphasizes that the social democratic model in Sweden is distinctly different than the rest of Europe. The liberal model is characterized by modest universal transfers and social insurance where focus lies on liberal work-ethic norms. The

assistance is frequently targeted at the low-income population and is usually associated with stigma. To tackle social problems in the liberal model, market solutions are the focal point both passively and actively. An example of a country included in this model is the USA. The conservative model is characterized by traditional family values and often-times religion, in which non-working wives are frequently excluded from assistance and state assistance is only used as a last resort when the family does not have the capacity for caring anymore. Examples of countries which are included in this model are France, Germany, and Italy. The social democratic model is primarily characterized by an emphasis on universalism⁶ and an aspiration of equality of the highest standards. The weight of duty for the well-being is lessened for the family of the individual in need because state assistance is provided preemptively, and thus creating a greater opportunity for independence. The countries included in this model is primarily the Scandinavian countries, like Sweden, Denmark, and Norway (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 27).

In the social democratic model, the state takes on more responsibility for the well-being of their population rather than focusing on market solutions or family traditions. With an increased socializing of the cost of childcare, the helpless and aged, this results in a heavy social burden for the state. Therefore, it creates a necessity for minimizing the state's social problems. According to Esping-Andersen (1990) the Swedish social democrats were pioneers for a universalism of 'middle-class' standards and it resulted in an upward-mobility for the average worker. The universalism is notable in Scandinavian countries as seen by the taxation (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 67-69). A part of the Swedish (Scandinavian) model with social policy can be seen in the alcohol policy where the goal is prosperity and well-being for the Swedish population by state interference. Another example of this is that the health care in Sweden is highly tax-funded and the government agency The National Board of Health and Welfare ensures social welfare, good health, and high-quality care for the whole population. The public spending on health care is about 11 per cent of GDP and only a small age of the health and medical costs consists of patient fees (Sweden.se, 2022). The higher spending on health care for everyone creates the imperative of ensuring good health in Sweden to minimize the health care spending. According to Esping-Andersen (1990, p. 69), the universalism spoke to the Socialists' comprehension of solidarity and the fundamental social

⁶ According to Esping-Andersen, universalism in welfare policy can be understood as the notion that social security and services should be provided to all individuals as a matter of social right, rather than through means-testing or systems that are segmented by occupation or income levels.

structure and by doing so it became a guiding principle characterized by equal benefits, status, and responsibilities of a citizen.

It is important to note that Esping-Andersen's theory only includes 18 OECD countries, and it has been argued that a broader spectrum of different countries is necessary to create typologies when defining welfare regime states since the small selection may cause bundles of countries in the same category which are vastly different in their practices. In this thesis it is argued that the theory still is valid because of how well-represented Sweden is in the book and because of the purpose of this thesis is to examine the Swedish model surrounding alcohol with Systembolaget as focus, and not to compare different countries and models of regime states against each other.

7.2. Social marketing

Marketing is a way for businesses to change or trigger individual people's behavior to gain something from them, whether it is them buying a house or a cup of coffee. In *Social Marketing: Rebels with a cause* authors Gerard Hastings and Christine Domegan argues that if marketing can change the behavior of so many people, it should not only have a place in the marketplace but be used for the benefit of for example public health (Hastings & Domegan, 2018, p. 4-6).

Kotler and Zaltman defined social marketing for the first time in 1971 as "the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research" (ibid. p. 9).

Social marketing is in other words a way to implement strategies from traditional marketing to benefit the population in different ways. The social marketers use these strategies and insights to influence our health and social behaviors to benefit society. An example of this is non-smoking campaigns, road safety campaigns and sustainability campaigns where the social marketing adjusts the message and method of outreach to fit different target groups' needs (ibid. p. 10).

According to Hastings and Domegan (2018), there are four main principles of social marketing: Client orientation, creative orientation, collective orientation, and competitive orientation. The client orientation includes that to change people's behavior it is crucial to understand them first, what their values and motivations are. Creative orientation focuses on finding creative and innovative solutions to problems. Collective orientation bases its focus on

the premise that the individual's behavior is heavily influenced by the people, policies and structures surrounding them, so it is important to take that into account. Competitive orientation is based on the fact that social marketing lies on voluntary choices which creates a certain competitive aspect, the focus is to instead create cooperation (ibid. p. 27-28).

8. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter a combination of the material and theoretical perspective will be introduced. The first campaign published by Systembolaget is from the 1970's.

8.1. 1970-Spola Kröken

The poster in Figure 1 features a simple sun illustration with the slogan:

'Solklart att vin är vettigare än sprit!' - 'Clear as the sun, wine makes more sense than spirits!'

and the campaign logo at the bottom. The meaning of the statement on this poster is clear; it claims that drinking wine rather than spirits is better for you and to subtly encourage the audience to choose the "healthier" option.



Figure 1

The poster in Figure 2 is of a man wrestling with a doll with the text bubble which states:

'Saknar du självförtroende så är det lätt att ta till kröken. Idrotten ger dig detta självförtroende, alltså kan du som idrottar spola kröken.' - 'If you lack confidence, it's simple to grasp the bottle. Sporting gives you this confidence, thus, you who participate in sports can avoid the bottle.'

The message in this poster is also relatively clear, the man is encouraging individuals who participate in sports to refrain from drinking because they do not require the confidence boost.

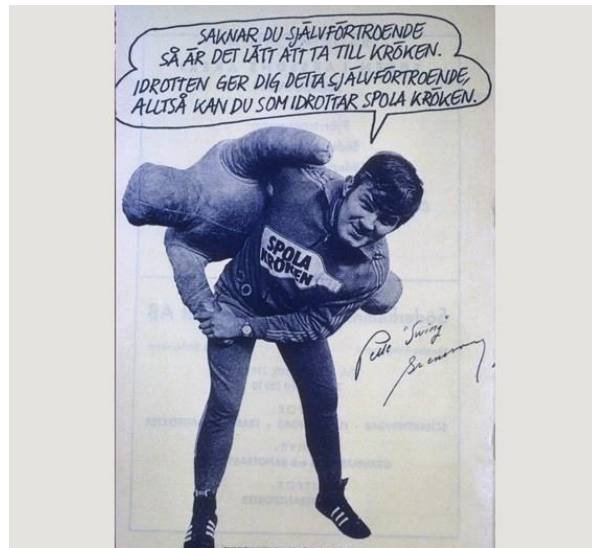


Figure 2

The poster in Figure 3 depicts two men, one of whom is clutching a flower, holding their arms around each other. The first text bubble features an illustration of a man pushing a wheelbarrow full of bottles and the text: 'Kommer du ihåg efter förra semestern?'- 'Do you recall after the last vacation?'

And the other man in the picture answers with: 'Du, den här sommaren ska vi ha det skönare!'- 'Hey, this summer we will have it better!'

The men are wearing t-shirts with the logo of the campaign on it and the meaning of this message is that the men recall the last summer vacation as being full of alcohol, but this summer they will abstain from it and have a better vacation.



Figure 3

The campaign's argumentation emphasizes and expresses the thesis that it is better to avoid consuming alcohol or limit the strong spirits consumption in various ways. The practical argumentation is the form of argumentation that the advertising leans to in terms of how it urges the audience to act with alcohol. The primary type of argumentation in the campaign is centered on logos. Systembolaget seeks to appeal to the common sense of the audience when it comes to drinking alcohol.

8.2. 1980-Stoppa Langningen

The poster in Figure 4 depicts two hands exchanging a plastic bag with bottles probably containing alcohol. The image is monochrome and the text states:

'Nu får man inte låna ut eller ge bort alkohol till den som är under 20 år' - 'Now you cannot lend or gift alcohol to people under the age of 20.'

The small writing on the white backdrop provides a description of the new law and how it will be applied from now on concerning gifting and lending alcohol to minors. In the bottom-left corner the logo from the campaign is situated.



Figure 4

The poster in Figure 5 depicts a candle against a dark background with a drop of what appears to be alcohol hovering over it. The text states:

'Du släcker väl inte ljuset för lussefirarna?' - 'You won't turn off the light for the St. Lucia celebrators, will you?' and below that: 'Det är ett brott både att skaffa och ge bort sprit, vin och starköl till den som är under 20 år'- 'It's a crime to both get and gift spirits, wine and strong beer to those under the age of 20.'



Figure 5

With the dark setting and underlying tone, the campaign material from this campaign has a darker and negative tone than past advertising campaigns launched by Systembolaget. The wording in Figure 4 is quite clear, and it provides all information needed to comprehend the change in alcohol policy. In the poster in Figure 5 the message is to not buy alcohol to anyone

younger than 20 years old in relation to the 'lussefirande' (celebration of St. Lucia on the 13th of December).

The campaign's stated thesis is that alcohol should not be sold or gifted to anyone under the age of 20, and it is communicated in many ways throughout the campaign. The category of argumentation in this campaign are defined by a combination of descriptive and practical arguments. Systembolaget informs the public through the campaign on the importance of not buying, dealing, or gifting alcohol to young people and the legislation around it, as well as encouraging the public on how to act. In this sense the campaign lends towards a usage of logos in their argumentation style.

8.3. 1990-Leg under 25

The poster in Figure 6 depicts the same man, Magnus, with two different hairstyles and the text states:

'Magnus 18 eller 25?' – 'Magnus 18 or 25?' And below that it states

'Under 25? Visa alltid leg när du beställer. Magnus är 20 år. Personalen' - 'Under 25? Always show identification when you order. Magnus is 20 years old. Personnel.' At the bottom of the poster the logo for the campaign is situated.



Figure 6

The poster in Figure 7 is depicting a young woman and the text:

'Blommig 70:a, något ung?' - 'Floral 70, somewhat young?' followed by:

'Det är inte så lätt för oss att se hur gammal du är. Är du under 25, visa gärna leg innan du handlar. Tack för att du hjälper oss. Personalen på Systembolaget.'- 'It is not that easy for us to see how old you are. If you are under 25 years of age, please show identification before you shop. Thank you for helping us. Personnel at Systembolaget.'



Figure 7

These campaigns clearly shows that it is hard to know someone's age just by their looks and urges people to show identification when buying alcohol. It does so in a playful way with an almost game-like way of getting the message across and putting the audience in the Systembolaget employees' shoes.

The argumentation used in this campaign expresses the thesis that it is not easy for someone to know the age of a person solely based on their looks and emphasizes the importance of showing identification when buying alcohol. The category of argumentation falls within the practical argumentation and the campaign utilizes the logos characteristics of the argument when encouraging the public to bring identification when they buy alcohol.

8.4. 2000-Brev till Barroso

The image in Figure 8 shows the advertisement from Swedish newspapers, the advertisement in the Financial Times is solely the 'yellowed' part of the picture. The letter states "Dear Mr. Barroso. Here's why you should seriously consider cutting down on drinking:". The letter highlights how severe the situation in Europe of alcohol related harm is and claims that Swedish consumption has increased because of people buying alcohol in neighboring

countries and importing it here. The letter goes on to discuss the benefits of the Swedish model before urging Mr. Barroso to read the report that was produced with the World Health Organization which outlines ways to reduce the problem.



Figure 8

The Swedish text (the white part of the poster in Figure 8) which was published in several Swedish newspapers and magazines explains the letter and the reasoning behind it. The reasoning being that since Swedish alcohol policy is affected by what is decided in the EU, they want to influence the decision-making and figured that the 50th anniversary of Systembolaget was a relevant time to try.

The campaign also included a website with a video addressed towards Mr. Barroso that explains the key points in the WHO report. This video gained so much attention from the Swedish public that Systembolaget later issued a statement (see Figure 9) where they explained that they had received requests for Swedish subtitles on the video. They also announced that the video now is available with Swedish subtitles.



Figure 9

The argumentation expresses the thesis that the problem with alcohol has worsened since Sweden's entrance into the EU, and that Systembolaget wishes to influence the decisions made in Brussels. The category of the argumentation is descriptive-based because it depicts how the alcohol-situation is currently, and the arguments made in the campaign has ethos characteristics since it is attempting to convey the characteristic and goals of Systembolaget.

8.5. 2010-Experten

The video begins with an employee at Systembolaget demonstrating the book of Jeff Perry called *Retail Rules*. The staff are eager to see what improvements the expert can contribute with to the store, but they quickly realize that they do not share his visions. He states things like:

'The range is too wide, minimize selection, increase profits!'

'You should have special offers!'

'Your endcaps, according to market research it is the best location in the store for sales, and well, yours are empty.'

'And impulse buy at checkout!... As you see there's a lot we could do to increase profits, and that is what it's all about right?'

The employee then responds that this is not the case, which makes Jeff laugh, followed by a plain backdrop with the text stating:

'Det svenska sättet att sälja alkohol är lite annorlunda. Men det räddar ungefär 2000 liv varje år. Läs mer på varforsystembolaget.se'- 'The Swedish way of selling alcohol is a little different. But it saves approximately 2000 lives a year. Read more at varforsystembolaget.se.'

The video is a humorous way of conveying the message that Systembolaget behaves differently than other countries, in this case the United States, by mocking the extravagant and profit-driven marketing methods used in the United States and simultaneously explaining that the Swedish version saves lives every year.



Figure 10

The argumentation in this campaign emphasizes how Systembolaget differs from other countries in that it saves lives every year. The argumentation falls into the descriptive category since it describes how Systembolaget differs from other alcohol retailers around the world, and it employs an ethos characteristic in which the campaign argues for the unique characteristics of Systembolaget as a retailer.

8.6. 2020 "Barndom utan baksmälla"

The first video depicts a young boy petting what seems to be his neighbor's dog in the hallway of an apartment complex. The boy asks what the dog likes to eat, to which the neighbor responds that she likes to eat a little bit of everything and then invites the boy to visit the dog at any time. "Really?", the boy exclaims, thrilled. During the conversation one can hear that there is some rumbling in the background and there is a text onscreen stating 'Många

barn far illa av vuxnas drickande. Du kan göra skillnad bara genom att finnas där.’ ’A lot of children are harmed by adults’ drinking habits. You can make a difference just by being there).’ followed by the logo ‘Barndom utan baksmälla’.

The underlying meaning behind the video appears to be that the boy’s parents are having a party and he flees the apartment to instead find his neighbor who seems to understand the circumstances and therefore welcomes him to visit the dog whenever to be helpful.



Figure 11

The video (see Figure 12) depicts a young child in a car going home from some sports training and at first the child and their teammate is talking about their coaches, but then what appears to be the teammates mother interrupts and says:

’Det är klart att du ska åka med oss! Du får bara säga till var du vill bli släppt någonstans’ -
’Of course you can get a ride from us! Just let me know where you want to be dropped off.’

On screen you can see the same text as in the video above: ‘Många barn far illa av vuxnas drickande. Du kan göra skillnad bara genom att finnas där’ followed by the logo ‘Barndom utan baksmälla’. The latent meaning appears to be that the child’s parents are affected by alcohol in some way that they are not able to drive the child home from practice and the child therefore needs a ride home from a friend. The friend’s mom is helpful and shows that she’s there.



Figure 12

The argumentation in this campaign expresses the thesis that every child has the right to a safe and alcohol-free upbringing. The argumentation falls under the practical argumentation where it encourages the audience to act when noticing a child who is suffering because of alcohol and help them. The characteristic of the argumentation in this campaign is mostly pathos in which Systembolaget with these videos with underlying messages tries to elicit emotions in the audience to compel people to act, but also logos in terms of how adults should interact with children who are affected by alcohol.

8.7. Table 1: Idea Analysis

The following table shows the idea analysis of the campaign material presented above.

Campaign	(V) What are the expressed goals and values of Systembolaget in the material?	(D) Based on the material, how does Systembolaget view the alcohol situation?	(P) How does Systembolaget encourage the public to act with and view alcohol?
Spola Kröken	Do not drink if you practice sports. Decrease people's drinking.	People associate drinks with vacation and a confidence boost. The spirit consumption is too high.	Decrease your drinking. Choose wine instead of spirits. Do not view alcohol as something necessary.
Stoppa Langningen	Decrease the youth-drinking. Stop the illegal dealing of alcohol to young people.	There is a problem with youth-drinking and parents buying alcohol for their children.	Be educated on the laws of alcohol dealing. Don't buy alcohol to people under the age of 20.
Leg under 25	There is a strict age limit on buying alcohol.	Many young people can obtain alcohol because of their looks. Problem with youth-drinking.	Always show identification if under 25. Do not presume the age of someone based on looks.
Brev till Barroso	It is important for Sweden to influence the regulations of alcohol in the EU.	The alcohol situation has gotten worse in Sweden since the entrance in the EU. It is also a big problem in all of Europe.	The Swedish alcohol monopoly is positive for the public health. We are able to have influence on decision-making in the EU.
Experten	The lack of a profit interest of Systembolaget.	The monopoly makes the situation in Sweden with alcohol different than in other countries, like the USA.	Appreciate the efforts of Systembolaget to be different because it saves lives.
Barndom utan baksmälla	Decrease the drinking around children.	Many children are negatively affected by the presence of alcohol in Sweden.	Do not drink with children around. Be present and help the children affected by alcohol.

In every campaign, Systembolaget presents the idea of decreasing the consumption of, or abstaining from alcohol all together, even though the different campaigns are directed towards different target groups. The ways that Systembolaget presents its message is mostly positive and playful or humoristic with celebrities to bring attention, however there are two campaigns that are darker in nature and emphasizes the problem in a negative light.

8.8. Argument development

According to the argument analysis presented of each campaign in the results, Systembolaget in the majority of the campaigns utilizes either a practical or a descriptive-based argumentation where they try to encourage the public on how to act in different ways or describe the situation with alcohol or describe Systembolaget as a company. It is also worth noting that in the three earliest campaigns: *Spola Kröken*, *Stoppa Langningen* and *Leg under 25*, the arguments made by Systembolaget has strong logos characteristics where they encourage the audience on how to act and to utilize their common sense with alcohol. However, in later campaigns Ethos or Pathos are the strongest characteristics (and sometimes in combination with logos). From this development it seems as though Systembolaget in the later decades has a stronger focus on educating the audience on alcohol, Systembolaget as a company and utilizes underlying messages to stir up emotions with the audience to make them act in a certain way.

8.9. Idea development

When comparing the various campaigns, the ideas of Systembolaget has changed slightly from 1970 to today, but the main purpose and message has remained consistent. The focus on decreasing the alcohol consumption of the Swedish population and especially among people under the age of 20 is an expressed goals in several of the campaigns examined. The campaigns are frequently encouraging to the public, and informative about the dangers of alcohol consumption while also educating the audience about why Systembolaget manages alcohol sales differently than others.

In the first campaign, *Spola Kröken*, the campaign conveys the message of lessen or stop drinking all together, in *Stoppa Langningen* the campaign encourages adults to not buy of gift alcohol to people who are underage, in *Leg under 25* Systembolaget conveys the message that it is important to bring identification when buying alcohol since the age limit is strictly enforced. In all these three there is a strong emphasis on decreasing the alcohol consumption among the public, particularly among minors. However, in the last three campaigns, such as *Brev till Barroso*, the emphasis appears to be more educational. Systembolaget describes the

current scenario as well as Systembolaget's and the Swedish monopoly on alcohol's ambition. In *Experten* they compare themselves to a more traditional American way of marketing and selling alcohol and explaining that this different approach in fact, saves lives. In the latest campaign *Barndom utan baksmälla* a more indirect approach is made within the campaign videos. The underlying message of the children in focus is that their parents (or guardians) are influenced by alcohol in a way that is harming the child. In the other campaigns, with exception of *Stoppa Langningen*, humor or playfulness is a common theme, whereas in the latest campaign there is a darker, more serious tone in how Systembolaget conveys their message.

The general idea of Systembolaget is, in every campaign, clear. Alcohol is seen as a public health issue, and they present their goals to prevent alcohol related harm in different ways through the campaigns. They present that the non-profit selling of alcohol they conduct is the most vital part of the company and that it is important to educate the public of the harm that alcohol consumption may bring. Although the different campaigns express a specific goal of Systembolaget the general idea has been the same throughout history from the founding of Systembolaget in 1955.

8.10. Social marketing

The campaigns analyzed in this thesis uses traditional marketing practices with posters and campaign videos, slogans, and informative messages to sell the message of Systembolaget. It primarily uses a collective based orientation when conveying its message, where they understand that the decisions made by people are heavily influenced by their surroundings, policies, and structures around them. The social marketing of Systembolaget is characterized by that they use these traditional techniques and tools from marketing and attempts to "sell" a healthier lifestyle or better choices with alcohol. The campaigns are made and released as a means to benefit the society by decreasing the harmful consumption of alcohol in different scenarios.

8.11. Systembolaget on mission of the Swedish state

The many ideas and goals stated in the campaigns correlate quite a bit to Swedish alcohol policy and its changes over time, and as this thesis studies Systembolaget's thoughts and goals on alcohol as the Swedish state's ideas and aims, some of these correlations are interesting to note.

The more restrictive changes in the Swedish alcohol policy during the 70s and 80s might have been what prompted the launching of the *Spola Kröken* campaign. The previous campaign

Operation Vin had been encouraging the public on drinking wine instead of strong spirits and this had increased the consumption of wine more than in other European countries. *Spola Kröken* may be seen as a counterpoint to Operation Vin and a representation of the stricter policies on alcohol with Systembolaget's primary message now being to decrease the drinking and/or abstain from drinking completely.

In 1981 it became criminalized to buy alcohol to people under the age of 20, and the *Stoppa Langningen* campaign is closely linked to this fact. Because of the rise in juvenile drinking during the 1980s, the main aim was to reduce youth drinking in every way possible. It is possible that this is why this campaign presents its message in a more serious and somber manner than previous campaigns, such as *Spola Kröken* and *Operation Vin*.

Systembolaget's *Leg under 25* campaign emphasizes the significance of bringing identification while purchasing alcohol, which is closely connected with SAMO's findings that age limits for selling alcohol were not strictly enforced as they should have been. Due to the lack of age limits, it became a priority to encourage the public to provide identification and to educate their own staff about how difficult it is to determine a person's age purely based on appearances.

The campaign *Brev till Barroso* was published a decade after the Swedish entrance into the European Union. An important aspect when discussing a possible entrance before 1994 was if Sweden were allowed to keep the monopoly on alcohol sales, and after debates and discussion they came to a decision that Systembolaget would still have monopoly on selling alcohol, but the import monopoly they had before would disappear. The fear of giving in to EU-standards of import of alcohol was that the alcohol consumption would increase if the population had access to bring it in from other countries. In the campaign letter to Barroso Systembolaget states that the alcohol consumption has increased more than 30% in the last decade because of the private import of alcohol from neighboring countries. As stated above the alcohol consumption had increased due to the increase of private import of alcohol, and this campaign released a year after *Alkoholinförelutredningen* suggested that the Swedish government should try to have more influence on the decisions made in the EU. The campaign tries to convey the message of Systembolaget and argue for their ambition to influence the decision-making in the EU.

Both *Experten* and *Barndom utan baksmälla* embodies the expressed goals and changes in policy on alcohol mentioned in the previous campaigns. An aspect of the mission of

Systembolaget from the Swedish state is to inform the public about alcohol and in *Experten* Systembolaget conveys the differences between Swedish and American ways of selling alcohol. It also backs up the reason for the differences by statistics that shows that the Swedish perspective on alcohol sales is in fact saving lives every year. In the same year as the campaign videos for *Experten* were launched, in 2015, the subsidiary company to Systembolaget, IQ, released a report on how the alcohol marketing had increased in the previous ten years, and that the advertising had become more encouraging to consume alcohol than before. In the report they also state that there is research on the correlation between alcohol advertisement and the consumption of alcohol, as well as conclude that alcohol advertising has negative effects on public health (Gripenberg, Elgán, & Jägerskog, 2015). The report may give some context as to why Systembolaget chose to focus on the marketing aspect, or lack thereof, in this campaign. The videos may have functioned as a counterpoint to the high amount of alcohol advertising.

Barndom utan baksmälla emphasizes another goal, which has not explicitly been expressed in previous campaigns, and that is that it can be harmful for children to be around alcohol. A year before *Barndom utan baksmälla* was launched, Centralförbundet för Alkohol och Narkotikaupplysning (CAN) released a report which examined the number of children who grew up with their parents' abusing alcohol. There had been some uncertainty of the numbers, therefore Systembolaget appointed CAN to investigate this. The results showed that around 20 % of children in Sweden at some point during their childhood had at least one parent with alcohol problems and that 15 % of children have been affected negatively in some way by growing up with a parent with alcohol problems (Ramstedt, 2019). That study demonstrated that there was a significant problem and that there was a need for a campaign to educate and encourage people to help in these situations and may make it easier to understand the chosen focus. It still falls under the umbrella of the goal presented in the strategies from the government about protection of children and young people.

A strong focus on keeping young people from drinking and the effect of alcohol is a vital part in Systembolaget's message and as well in the Swedish governments changes in policy and expressed goals. The campaigns are correlated to policy changes or how the political climate surrounding alcohol was at the time. When a problem is brought up, often discovered by different committees or investigations appointed by the government, Systembolaget acts with informational campaigns to educate the public in attempts to rectify and decrease the problem.

8.12. Welfare capitalism and the social democratic model

It is fascinating to examine the campaign material from the lens of the theory of Gösta Esping-Andersen since the social democratic and especially Swedish model differs vastly from other countries in the world, particularly in the EU. Sweden do not only differ from other countries in Europe in their alcohol policymaking, but the prominent level of faith in authorities and their recommendations was evident in the COVID-19 crisis where Sweden had a vastly different approach to the virus than most other countries in Europe. Instead of a mandatory lock-down, social distancing was mainly based in self-regulation and individual responsibility. Swedish authorities chose to not make lockdowns and restrictions obligatory but instead it was on advisory terms (Trägårdh & Özkirimli, 2020). Since 1955, developments in alcohol policy have tended more toward a focus on self-regulation rather than state-imposed prohibitions and bans. The biggest example of this is the abolishment of motbokssystemet where the registration and rations of alcohol disappeared and in later years when the focus on education has increased. The individual autonomy with preemptive measures, for example educating the population through advertising campaigns, to ensure public health is a key component in the social democratic model. One may also argue that the reason this works well with regulations and encouragement of individual responsibility with alcohol, is because of the high amount of trust swedes have in the government and institutions.

In a survey conveyed by Medieakademin called *Förtroendebarmetern* they assess the trust in various Swedish institutions and companies. According to the findings, 58 % of those asked expressed a high or fair level of trust in the Swedish state. There were also a 50% of high or fair level of trust in the government (Kantar Public & Medieakademin, 2022). According to Systembolaget 75,2% of the public supports Systembolaget and the monopoly in 2021 (Systembolaget, 2022). This demonstrates that approximately 50% of the population has a high trust in that those authorities and the state acts in good faith and with the best interest of the people in mind. The higher trust in authorities may explain why the Swedish population accepts and has accepted the alcohol monopoly and stricter restrictions on alcohol; the population sincerely believes that the government has their best interest and that their decisions are of goodwill.

With tax-funded health care accounting for one of the government's largest expenses, it is important to encourage the population to make healthy choices and to educate them on the harms of alcohol. A study made by Ramboll (2019) presented that the economic cost of

alcohol consumption in Sweden is approximately 103 billion SEK in one year. These costs include among others health care costs, premature deaths, costs of crime and impact on people's quality of life (Ramboll Management Consulting AB, 2019). As Esping-Andersen (1990) presents in *Three worlds of welfare capitalism* the social democratic model makes social welfare services accessible to the entire population and wants prosperity for everyone. In Sweden, the health care is a great example of how the state equalizes the playing field, and the high costs of alcohol on society as presented by Ramboll creates the imperative for the Swedish state to decrease the harmful consumption of alcohol. With state interference in the form of advertisement campaigns from Systembolaget and regulations on the sales of alcohol the Swedish state attempts at keeping down the cost of public health care.

In the strategies presented by the government in 2011, 2016 and 2022, the government emphasizes the importance of Systembolaget as a tool to achieve the goals of the alcohol policy in Sweden. This is because it limits the availability of alcohol and aims to educate about the harms of alcohol (Regeringen, 2022). The fact that the importance of Systembolaget as a part of the Swedish alcohol policy is argued by the government to educate about risks and control the consumption, could be considered an element of the welfare capitalism and the Social Democratic model. By eliminating the profit interests of alcohol and a great focus on educating the public on harm-reduction, the Swedish state operates in a way to improve overall health and prosperity among the population.

One of the fundamental elements of the Social Democratic model is a high sense of universalism, as evidenced by for example high tax rates to ensure the public's health and social well-being, regardless of individual economic opportunities. A study made by Paula Blomqvist and Joakim Palme (2020) presented that social programs in Sweden have, despite of certain policy changes during the last decades, remained universalistic and relatively inclusive. It also found that there is a high popularity of the universalistic principle among the Swedish population, where a big part of it supports of universally inclusive and publicly financed welfare programs (Blomqvist & Palme, 2020). The alcohol problem is a health and economical issue, and with the universalistic mindset and publicly financed welfare programs it is obvious that Systembolaget's ideas and message is a part of the social democratic model as presented by Esping-Andersen.

9. CONCLUSION

To conclude this thesis and summarize the analysis and results found:

Systembolaget has advocated the cause for Sweden's current alcohol monopoly and the benefits of the current system through social marketing; the major method of social marketing used is a collective-based social marketing system. Systembolaget has according to the argument analysis argued and presented their mission in a variety of ways and rhetoric tools, and the majority of the campaigns are primarily practical or descriptive in nature. *Spola Kröken*, *Stoppa Langningen*, and *Leg under 25* have strong logos characteristics that encourage the people to exercise their common sense and reduce alcohol intake. In *Brev till Barroso* and *Experten* the main qualities of the arguments made are ethos as they through the arguments try to manifest the company itself, and in the *Barndom utan Baksmälla* the main characteristic is pathos where they try to stir up emotions with the audience.

The idea of Systembolaget has remained similar throughout the decades: to decrease the alcohol consumption. In the three first campaigns the focus was mainly on decreasing the alcohol consumption among the public, and especially among young people. In the later decades, the focus has shifted to different areas, with a focus on educating people about Systembolaget's mission and encouraging adults to not drink among children, however these ideas fare still consistent with Systembolaget's declared mission. The ideas correlate greatly to the changes or the current debate in alcohol policy during the periods of the campaigns with for example *Stoppa Langningen* and the new illegality of gifting or purchasing alcohol to people under the age of 20 or to *Barndom utan baksmälla* where a report stating the problem of children to parents with alcohol problems was realized.

With the results one can clearly see the connection between Systembolaget's advertising campaigns and the Social Democratic model as presented by Esping Andersen (1990). There is a great focus on universalism and well-being of the population and the tax-funded health care creates an incentive for the Swedish state to educate the public on alcohol and increase the measures of harm-reduction with alcohol. This is done partly by creating these informational campaigns from Systembolaget to the public. The Swedish population also has a high trust in institutions and authorities, which in this thesis is one of the reasons as to why the alcohol monopoly has as high of a support from the public as it does.

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