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# Will the pipelines ever blow up?

A mixed methods study of attitudes towards political violence in the  
Swedish environmental movement

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# Abstract

Climate and environmental activists in Sweden have never been more confrontational than now. However, despite previous research on social movements giving reason to expect a radicalisation and turn to political violence within the environmental movement, such a development has so far not occurred. This thesis examines the views and attitudes towards political violence directed at inanimate objects and property in the Swedish environmental movement through a mixed-methods study using primary material gathered through a survey. A combination of statistics and text analysis are used to map the data. The results find confirmation of the main hypothesis that some within the Swedish environmental movement will have positive attitudes towards political violence against inanimate objects and property. Additionally, it is explored whether there are particular characteristics shared among participants who have positive attitudes towards political violence. Hypotheses that respondents who are male, young, socioeconomically middle class, have previously participated in activism and are well integrated into the movement, have more positive views of political violence are all tested finding varying support and providing a base for further research.

Keywords: Political violence, radicalisation, attitudes, environmental movement, Sweden

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# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Aim and research questions	3
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Environmental movement and protests in Sweden	5
<b>3. Previous research</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. Social movements, radicalisation and political violence	7
3.2. Radical environmentalism	9
3.2.1 Ecotage and “eco-terrorism”	10
3.3. The Swedish context	11
<b>4. Theory</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1. Political violence in democracies	13
4.1.1. Definition of political violence	14
4.2. Radicalisation of social movements	15
4.2.1. When repertoires of action change into involving political violence	15
4.2.2. Who is most likely radicalised into using political violence?	18
<b>5. Methods</b>	<b>23</b>
5.1. Choice of case	25
5.2. Operationalisation of variables	26
5.2.1. People engaged in the environmental movement	26
5.2.2. Radicalisation and attitudes towards political violence	29
5.3. Material: The survey	31
5.3.1. Challenges and limitations	32
5.3.2. Ethical considerations	33
<b>6. Results and analysis</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1. Demographic overview	35
6.2. Intra-movement views of violence	39
6.2.1 General attitudes	39
6.2.2. Support or participate?	44
6.2.3. Views of movement radicalisation	47
6.2.4. The deterring factors	50
6.3. Who are the radicals?	51
6.3.1. Gender	51
6.3.2. Age	53
6.3.3. Socioeconomic status	55
6.3.4. Prior participation in protest activities	57

6.3.5. Movement integration	58
<b>7. Discussion and conclusion</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>8. References</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix A: Survey questions</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Appendix B: Survey information to participants</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Appendix C: Survey information to approached organisations</b>	<b>93</b>

# 1. Introduction

Since the dawn of social movements there has been intra-movement conflicts over tactics, targets, and timetables for action. One of the most common and significant conflicts over tactics is that of whether political violence should be employed. (Alimi et al. 2012:10; Jämte et al. 2023: 1) In these cases, social movements often develop radical flanks who advocate and use political violence. Research on radicalisation and political violence within social movements has primarily focused on the cases where groups begin or escalate their use of political violence. For a more comprehensive understanding of these mechanisms, however, cases where social movements do not use political violence should be examined to a greater extent. (Goodwin 2012; Wennerhag 2017: 315) One movement that seems to have deliberately refrained from the use of political violence, and lacks significant radical flanks opposing this nonviolent approach, is the climate and environmental movement. (Rootes 2022:4) In Sweden, even the organisations perceived as the most radical within the movement have displayed an unbroken commitment to nonviolent civil disobedience – so far.

In 1913, following approximately half a century of unmet demands for votes for women, the British suffragettes executed on average 20 bombings and arson attacks per month. Compared to this, the ”contemporary climate activism seems rather mild”. (Fisher – Berglund – Davis 2023) In spite of the prevailing calmness and peacefulness of climate activism, the political climate is becoming increasingly hostile towards the protesting of environmental issues. Governments are increasing pressure on climate and environmental protesters. In Sweden, several political parties have pushed for harsher criminal classifications to be used against climate activists. Methods of protest in line with civil disobedience by activists from Swedish environmental organisations are more and more frequently classified and prosecuted as acts of sabotage. This despite criticism from lawyers that it is disproportionate and contravene long-standing legal practice. (Ruotsi – Lind 2023; Persson 2023; Riksdagen Interpellation 2023/24:74) However, if history has taught us anything about social movements, it is that repression might just as

well constitute the fertiliser which makes radicalisation blossom. (Tilly 2005; Hess – Martin 2006; Martin 2007; Lindekilde 2014; Peterson – Wahlström 2015; Zhu et al. 2022)

In addition to a surprising lack of radical flanks, the environment movement is distinguished by a virtually unique condition: a guarantee that the situation they are protesting will become increasingly worse. There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is a man-made threat. According to a 2021 survey, over 99,9% of studies agree climate change is mainly caused by humans. (Lynas et al. 2021) Recognition is also widespread regarding the existential threat of climate change and environmental degradation, as it is argued to likely constitute the most crucial and fatal challenge of humanity. (McKeever 2021; U.N. 2022) Ices are melting, forests burning, crops dying, sea levels rising – the ground, water and air thicken with waste and pollution. While these processes are decades in motion, the lack of political initiatives are conspicuous by their absence. Investments are continuously placed in the fossil fuel industry and other industries that drive environmental degradation and over exploitation. The temperature of climate and environment issues is quite literally rising, both globally and in regional and local settings. All over the world, people are becoming increasingly fearful, angry and desperate in the face of climate change and the ongoing climate and environmental crisis. To say that there is dissatisfaction and frustration among citizens who prioritise the environment concerning the system of liberal democracy and what it can actually accomplish in terms of change, is an understatement.

With this in mind, it is unlikely that the climate and environmental movement will fizzle out or suffer from significant decreases in protest activity common in other social movements that have not yet achieved their goals. Instead, it is believed that activists will grow more confrontational and radicalised as governments and the political system fail to respond to demands of meaningful climate and environmental policies. (Fisher – Berglund – Davis 2023; della Porta 2024) However, short of a few incidents where climate activists throw soup on paintings in museums or glue themselves to highways, actions perceived as confrontational or radical within the environmental movement seem

to be about as rare as governments' environmental policies. Globally, radical environmental protests involving political violence have hardly increased since the height of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in the 1990s. Instead, it has stagnated, decreased or remained non-existent. (Bartlett 2017; Wolfe 2022)

While still shying away from political violence, climate activists in Sweden have never been more confrontational than now – apart from perhaps a period 2007-2008 when a group calling themselves *Asfaltdjungelns indianer* (Indians of the Concrete jungle) executed nightly raids, releasing the air out of inner-city SUV tires in Stockholm. (Malm 2021: 79-84) Nevertheless, the more climate summits are added to the rearview mirror with nothing to show for it, the closer the point of reflection comes for the environmental movement to consider: *when do we escalate?*

## 1.1. Aim and research questions

In both Sweden and most of the global north, the general debate of what is considered *radical* climate and environmental activism is currently dominated by various forms of civil disobedience. This is not considered radical within this thesis, which instead defines radical as involving political violence directed at inanimate objects and property. Political violence against inanimate objects or property has – when directed at environmentally destructive industries or infrastructure – a direct impact by taking said industry out of business until whatever was damaged is replaced or rebuilt, at a cost. On a sufficiently large scale, such political violence could affect the financial profitability of continued investment in the fossil industry. This dimension is lacking in civil disobedience actions such as blocking roads or throwing soup on paintings. The latter are purely performative, its main goal to attract public and media attention for the issue. (Mohorčich 2023: 586-587). Emphasis within the environmental movement itself (e.g. Greenpeace 2020; Extinction Rebellion N.D.) and therefore also in research, is often put on this performative aspect.

Based on research on other social movements, there is much to suggest that we should be seeing, or expect to soon be seeing, increased use of radical methods by the



environmental movement, including political violence. The question is how these issues are viewed by activists and people currently engaged in the environmental movement. Do they see a radicalisation of the movement's methods as necessary or even inevitable? Do they remain strong believers of strategic pacifism and nonviolence? This thesis attempts to shed light on these questions by examining the views and attitudes towards political violence among people engaged in environmental organisations in Sweden. The thesis is based on the following research question and sub-question:

- *How do people engaged in the environmental movement view the use of political violence against inanimate objects and property?*
  - *Who within the environmental movement are most inclined to have positive attitudes towards political violence?*

A survey designed to examine these attitudes has been distributed to the target group through a selection of Swedish environmental organisations. All of the environmental organisations approached for internal distribution of the survey have nonviolence as their official position – a position their members have so far adhered to. The survey questions are designed to capture what the participants personally think of political violence – and by extension the principle of nonviolence. The aim of the thesis is to examine whether there exists support for more radical methods involving political violence within the Swedish environmental movement. Based on the theory of radicalisation of social movement organisations by Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2012; 2015) the hypothesis is that at least some of the participants will have positive attitudes towards political violence against inanimate objects and property.

Finally, the thesis explores whether there are particular characteristics shared among the participants that are more inclined to have positive attitudes towards the use of political violence directed at inanimate objects and property. The hypotheses that respondents who are: male, young, socioeconomically middle class, as well as have previously participated more in activism and are well integrated into the environmental movement, will have more positive views of political violence. These hypotheses are all tested.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Environmental movement and protests in Sweden

Some of Sweden's oldest and most established environmental organisations are Naturskyddsföreningen and Greenpeace. While Naturskyddsföreningen (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) is a Swedish organisation founded as early as 1909, Greenpeace is a global organisation founded in the United States during the 1970s and established in Sweden in 1983. (Naturskyddsföreningen N.D.; Nationalencyklopedin N.D.) However, the environmental movement has grown significantly in the last decade, not least through the establishment of several new organisations. In 2018, then fifteen year old climate activist Greta Tunberg received global attention for her school strike for the climate outside the Swedish parliament in Stockholm. This also gave rise to the now global organisation Fridays For Future. (Fridays For Future N.D.) The same year, the organisation Extinction Rebellion (XR) was established in Sweden just a few weeks after being founded in the United Kingdom. The organisation now has local groups throughout the whole country. (Extinction Rebellion N.D.) In 2022 the Swedish organisation Återställ Våtmarker (Restore wetlands) was established and has, due to their disruptive tactics, rapidly grown to one of the most popular – and unpopular – environmental organisations in Sweden. (Återställ Våtmarker N.D.; SVT 2023) There are also a large variety of smaller, often local, environmental organisations who in many cases protest specific environmental issues or policies, such as anti-mining or anti-lumbering organisations. (e.g. Skogsupproret N.D.; Gruvfritt Jokkmokk N.D.)

In recent years, protest methods such as civil disobedience have gained momentum in Sweden. The majority of civil disobedience actions are executed by newer organisations such as Extinction Rebellion and Återställ Våtmarker, but older organisations such as Greenpeace also employ such methods. (Persson 2023; Greenpeace 2020) In 2022 political parties began to have a harsher tone against climate activists where particularly the Sweden Democrats (SD) called them “saboteurs” and “destroyers of society”. Since then, sabotage has also become the criminal classification increasingly used for climate

and environmental protesters who, for example, block roads. This has been criticised by several lawyers. Prior to this, "ohörsamhet mot ordningsmakten" (disobedience to law and order) was the standard criminal classification when, for example, someone in a sit-in demonstration refused to move. Other criminal classification previously used include "egenmäktigt förfarande" (arbitrary proceeding) or "olaga intrång" (unlawful trespassing). The penalties for these actions range from fines to imprisonment of one year maximum. Sabotage on the other hand can result in imprisonment of up to four years. (Ruotsi – Lind 2023; Persson 2023; Riksdagen Interpellation 2023/24:74; BrB 1962:700)

# 3. Previous research

## 3.1. Social movements, radicalisation and political violence

Social movements is one of the most researched fields within political science. Broadly speaking, social movements contain four essential components subjected to research: 1) the agent of contention, 2) the means of contention, 3) the target of contention, and 4) the context of contention. (Alimi et al. 2015: 40-41) In relation to the *means* of contention, protest has long been seen as a resource of the powerless and considered the leading repertoire of action of social movements. (Lipsky 1968; della Porta 2024) The term "repertoire of action" or "repertoire of contention" originates from the works of Charles Tilly (1978; 2008). It refers to the collection of methods employed by social movement actors to influence politics and society, based on ideological and strategic considerations. Ideological considerations refer mainly to whether the method of protest matches the question protested. Strategic considerations focus on possible benefits, risks and costs associated with different repertoires of action. This can include, for example, effects on the group's internal dynamic or the perception of the movement by other actors, such as the public or political allies. (Tilly 1978; 2008; Alimi 2015; Wennerhag 2017: 295-296)

Research on repertoires of action has provided the base for several research areas and approaches within the field. One area where research on repertoires of action has had an essential influence is that of radicalisation and political violence. These are also the concepts most central to this thesis. The research of political violence can be divided into two overarching themes: the turn to violence, and the consequences of this turn. (Demetriou 2024) Both are strongly characterised by scholarly disagreement and can be considered to lack definitive answers.

The turn to violence has been the subject of research from a broad range of different angles. Scholars have examined factors at the macro level, such as relative deprivation (e.g. Brush 1996; Kunst – Obaidi 2020) or ideology (e.g. Robison et al. 2006; Webber et al. 2020). At the meso level, researched aspects have included, for example, movement

splintering (e.g. Mahoney 2020). Lastly, at a micro level, individual strategic (e.g. Pape 2003; 2005) and psychological (e.g. Moghaddam 2005) factors have been investigated. In recent years, studies which combine explanatory factors from two, or all three, of these levels have increased (e.g. Doosje et al. 2016; LaFree – Schwarzenbach 2021).

The consequences of a turn to political violence can involve that the movement's claims and demands become overshadowed by discussions around the means or decline in support. However, there are no general conclusions within the research as to whether and how the movement's possibility of success and goal attainment is affected. (Demetriou 2024: 4) Haines (1984; 1988; 2013), Tompkins (2015) and Belgioioso et al. (2021) illustrate how the existence of radical flanks – defined as groups within social movements which often use more extreme methods including political violence – can have several effects on the movement, both positive and negative. Additionally, a number of quantitative studies research the success rate of social movements in relation to the use of political violence. Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) created a dataset of social movement campaigns but received sharp criticism from other scholars (e.g. Kadivar – Ketchley 2018; Anisin 2020; Case 2021) for its skewed results in favour of nonviolence. When defined as *armed insurgency* – as in Chenoweth and Stephens research – much of what constitutes political violence is disregarded, resulting in a grave misinterpretation of how political violence affects social movements' success rates. Anisin (2020) re-coded the cases included in the dataset, distinguishing between armed insurgency and “unarmed violence”, with the latter ranging from rock throwing to molotov cocktails and property destruction or riots. Anisin shows that many of the successful cases classified as nonviolent by Chenoweth and Stephan actually involve unarmed violence, and campaigns employing unarmed violence were in fact more successful than those adopting nonviolence – 61% versus 48%. (Anisin 2020) Notably, this research area largely focuses on regime change, which is fundamentally different from the systematic changes needed when facing climate change and environmental destruction.

The effects of political violence in terms of sabotage and property destruction, remain unknown. (Mohorčich 2023:595) There is, however, a vast amount of moral and political

philosophical literature on justifications for the use of such political violence (e.g. Morreall 1976; Delmas 2018). Scholars have also examined the implications and role of sabotage or property destruction in specific social movements, such as the labour movement (e.g. Ågren 1996; Lossin 2021) or the environmental movement (e.g. Young 2001; Vanderheiden 2005; Malm 2021; Scheuerman 2022).

Finally, previous research examining specifically attitudes or support for political violence is limited. While there is some research that focus on attitudes or support for various forms of political violence among the public in different countries (e.g. Dyrstad – Hillesund 2020; Gøtzsche-Astrup 2021; Kleinfeld 2021; Armaly – Enders 2022), studies on intra-movement attitudes are even fewer. Jennings and Andersen (1995) research support among AIDS activists for confrontational protest tactics, however, their definition of confrontational is closer to what is now commonly referred to as civil disobedience than to political violence. Vergani et al. (2017) and Zhu et al. (2022) are two other studies which examine violence endorsing attitudes within social movements. However, both of these studies focus their attention on political violence in the form of riots and other reactive and disorganised forms of violence. There is no research on attitudes toward political violence in the terms it is defined in this thesis – nor is there any research with this focus in relation to the environmental movement.

### 3.2. Radical environmentalism

On the occasions when the term radical is used to describe actors in the contemporary climate and environmental movement, what is considered radical repertoires of action largely revolves around nonviolent tactics of civil disobedience. (Scherhauser et al. 2021; Fisher – Renaghan 2023) This is unsurprising considering the lack of contemporary examples of repertoires of action involving political violence within the movement. Most empirical cases, and therefore most research, of environmental activists using political violence date back to the 1990s and early 2000s (e.g. Taylor 1998, Vanderheiden 2005; Joosse 2012; Loadenthal 2014). The only recent example of an environmental organisation known for pushing the boundaries of what is considered radical climate or environmental action is the German organisation Ende Gelände. Although not employing

methods involving political violence, Ende Gelände forcefully occupies coal mines throughout Germany in targeted civil disobedience campaigns against energy infrastructures. This has made the organisation the object of several studies (e.g. Temper 2019; Scherhauser et al. 2021).

### 3.2.1 Ecotage and “eco-terrorism”

Political violence by the environmental movement has often not only been referred to as radical, but as eco-terrorism. The term “eco-terrorism” first appeared in the 1980s. It was coined by property rights advocate Ron Arnold, who had then just “proposed opening seventy million acres of federal wilderness to commercial development and motor traffic, which would have allowed mining in national parks, increased logging and oil production in Alaska, and expanded logging in old growth forests”. (Gallagher 2023: 30-31) Terrorism is not only an extremely politicised and value-laden term, it is also a pejorative label. (Demetriou 2024:1) For this reason, the term eco-terrorism will not be used in the thesis outside of the literature review. Furthermore, “if terrorism is to have any analytical substance, its core definition must be *the deliberate indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians for the purpose of instilling terror* or something very nearly like it”. (Malm 2021: 107) While the definition of terrorism is complex and can vary, a lack of separation between combatants and non-combatants, leading to harming or killing of the latter, should be held as one of its cornerstones. A defining characteristic lacking from all political violence within the environmental movement thus far.

Several researchers highlight the demonisation of climate and environment activists that using terms like eco-terrorism result in. Vanderheiden (2005) examines the extension of the conventional definition of terrorism to include attacks against inanimate objects. Focusing on the organisation Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in the United States, he discusses whether and under what circumstances ecotage (ecological-sabotage) can constitute a justified tactic of political resistance. Another more recent example is Gallagher (2023) who argue that environmental activists are unfairly and erroneously labelled as eco-terrorists, despite their actions resulting in no deaths. At the same time, oil and gas company executives escape such implications, along with “any criminal or civil

liability, despite the fact that their actions have devastated entire regions and killed thousands”. (2023: 27) In her article “*Will the Real Eco-Terrorists Please Stand Up?*” she goes on to examine if and how eco-terrorism laws could be used to convict fossil fuel corporations.

### 3.3. The Swedish context

Research on social movements in relation to political violence within Sweden is limited. Of the few existing studies, several are based on interviews and focused on radical left-wing movements (e.g. Peterson 2001; Jacobsson – Sörbom 2015; Jämte 2017). Some, however, raise similar questions as this thesis regarding how activists view the use of violence as a political tool. A similar study has also been made in relation to the Swedish animal rights movement. (Jacobsson – Lindblom 2016)

There is some research on *when* social movements use political violence. Jämte et al. (2023) have made a quantitative study of Radical Left-Libertarian Activism in Sweden over the years 1997–2016. Examining the conditions under which radical flanks are likely to use violent protest tactics, they separate the tactics by whether they entail an attack on property or an individual/group. A study with similar focus on when political violence occurs, although concerned only with severe violence directed at persons or groups, is provided by Bjørge and Ravndal (2020). Their research examines how, and why, the Swedish based pan-Nordic neo-Nazi movement the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) has restrained its use of political violence. In addition to this, there is a growing literature on so-called “violence-endorsing” extremism (våldsbejakande extremism), generally focusing on a combination of left-wing, right-wing and islamic extremism (e.g. Carlsson 2016; Korsell et al. 2020; Mondani et al. 2021).

Sweden figures as one of the cases in several comparative studies on environmental movements and organisations (e.g. Jamison et al. 1990; Svensson – Wahlström 2023). Research specifically on the Swedish environmental movement, however, is limited and largely centres around the movement's early process of institutionalisation and the role played by specific organisations, such as Naturskyddsföreningen (e.g. Thörn – Svenberg



2016; 2017). Apart from the works of Boström (2001; 2004) shortly after the turn of the century, the research on intra-movement elements – such as collective identity, practices and attitudes – in the context of the Swedish environmental movement is virtually non-existent. As such the intersection of the research areas of the Swedish environmental movement and political violence remains unexplored.

# 4. Theory

## 4.1. Political violence in democracies

Social movements largely rely on non-institutional forms of political action. This can include everything from petitions and demonstration marches to various forms of political violence. Importantly, the distinction between institutional and non-institutional politics is not always clear cut, for example, when social movements eventually transform into political parties or political representatives take part in a social movement. (Kitschelt 2006; Giugni – Grasso 2015: 339; Wennerhag 2017: 294) Political violence, however, remains firmly within the realm of non-institutional politics. Furthermore, while many nonviolent non-institutional forms of political action – such as strikes and demonstration marches – have become increasingly normalised and socially acceptable, political violence is often viewed with scepticism or even outrage. (della Porta – Diani 2006: 26-29; Delmas 2018: 48)

Since the dawn of the modern state, violence has been monopolised by the state. According to Blok (2001), this monopoly has led to people developing strong and usually negative feelings towards not only using but also witnessing violence. All violence apart from that executed by state authorities is viewed as illegitimate, disturbing public order (Blok 2001: 103) and can thus even be perceived as a threat to democracy. However, in several of the world's most significant social movements, at least parts of the movements have used political violence. Such examples include no less than the great freedom and equality movements of the 19th and 20th centuries – the civil rights movement (e.g. Haines 1984; 1988; 2013), the movement for women's suffrage (e.g. Bearman 2005; Edwards 2014; McCammon et al. 2015) and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa (e.g. Mandela 1994; Seidman 2001; Bueckert 2019). Common for these movements is that, regardless of their inclusion of political violence, they can hardly be accused of posing a threat to democracy. On the contrary, the very goal and outcome of these movements have been to extend democratic rights to those previously left out, thereby expanding and strengthening democracy.

The most common and accepted exception to the state monopoly of violence is self defence. Apart from being an accepted moral principle, the right to self-defence is considered a founding pillar within both national and international law. (U.N. Charter 1945, art. 51; BrB 1962:700) The idea of self defence is not uncommon in relation to political violence by social movements, not least within independence and decolonisation movements. (Fanon 2021 [1961]; Delmas: 61-62, 103-104) It has also resonated particularly well with the environmental movement. The argument is that as “governments fail to fulfil their fundamental duties (e.g. reduce the effects of climate change) citizens have the right not to obey”. (Scherhauser et al. 2021: 3) The authority and legitimacy that democratic governments derive from their population can in a sense be withdrawn when failing to represent its interests.

#### 4.1.1. Definition of political violence

The reference to social movements as either violent or nonviolent give a false interpretation of the concept of violence as dichotomous. This view obscures the wide spectrum of variations, in both forms and degrees, that violence includes. Numerous distinctions can be made within the realm of what can, and should, be considered political violence. To mention a few, political violence can be: armed or unarmed (e.g. Kadivar – Ketchley 2018; Anisin 2020), organised or disorganised (e.g. della Porta 1995) and directed at persons or objects and property (e.g. della Porta 1995; Case 2021). In an attempt to capture some of the variations, della Porta (1995: 4) created a typology of two central dimensions of political violence. The first dimension relates to the degree of violence and is divided into “low-level” and “high-level” violence. Low-level violence is conceptualised as less severe acts of violence as well as violence primarily directed at objects and property. High-level violence on the other hand refers to grave acts of violence directed at persons. The second dimension relates to whether the violence is organised or spontaneous. (della Porta 1995: 4)

This thesis examines only organised low-level political violence. The definition of political violence used in the thesis is a narrowed version of the definition provided by

Bosi and Malthaner (2015). They define political violence as "a heterogeneous repertoire of actions oriented at inflicting physical, psychological, and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change" (2015:439). The thesis definition, however, includes only political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, such as machinery or infrastructure complicit in or contributing to environmental destruction. All kinds of political violence directed at persons or animals fall outside of the definition used in this thesis.

## 4.2. Radicalisation of social movements

Within the field of social movements research, radicalisation is commonly defined as the process where groups within a social movement begin or escalate their use of political violence. This organisational process of moving from nonviolent repertoires of action to violent ones is also how the concept of radicalisation is understood and used in this thesis. (Alimi et al. 2015: 11-14; Bosi – della Porta 2022) It should be noted that this is not the only possible definition of "radical" and "radicalisation" within the field. Another definition refers to the demands, rather than the methods of achieving them. In these cases, the movements' radical flanks strive for more far-reaching or extreme changes. It is not unusual that the definitions overlap and that radical flanks that want more extreme system changes also are prepared to use more confrontative and extreme repertoires of action. These often, but not necessarily, include some form of political violence. (Haines, 1984: 31; 2013; Alimi et al. 2012: 7; Jämte et al. 2023: 1-2)

### 4.2.1. When repertoires of action change into involving political violence

In response to the cases where movement radicalisation is absent despite the existence of root causes such as deep perceptions of deprivation, or ideologies which tolerate or embrace political violence, Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2015) have developed a framework focused on relational dynamics. To research the emergence of political violence, they argue it is "important to focus on changes in patterns of relational dynamics *within* and *among* the major parties and actors involved in episodes of

contentious politics”. (2015:38) In their framework Alimi et al. separate the process of radicalisation into two separate phases: 1) the emergence of violence, referred to as early radicalisation, and 2) the escalation of violence, referred to as stepped-up radicalisation. The repertoire of action during the early radicalisation phase – the phase of primary relevance for this thesis – can involve both nonviolent legal and illegal actions alongside acts of political violence against state targets and property. The phase of stepped-up radicalisation is characterised above all by violence against persons. (2015:12)

According to Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2012; 2015) there are three main interactions and corresponding mechanisms which are central to when social movement groups or organisations are radicalised to include political violence in their repertoire of action. While all are usually at play during different stages of the radicalisation process, they do not necessarily carry the same weight in every case. Moreover, they are particularly consequential in the early radicalisation phase. (2015:16, 50) First is the interaction between the social movement and its political environment. This refers to the entire political system and includes both political adversaries and potential allies. Alimi et al. argue that there is a possibility of radicalisation when a movement's previous access to political opportunities drastically decreases. They present the example of when previous allies among established political parties sever ties with either specific groups within the social movement, or the entire movement. Other examples of developments which can alter a movement's space of action are a change of government or the introduction of new legislation. These changes reposition the movement either favourably or unfavourably, adding additional constraints or new possibilities. (2012:10; 2015: 42–43) Second are the interactions within the social movement itself. Specifically competition between different groups or organisations within the movement. This can be over, for example, members, resources or the broader opportunity to set the agenda for the movement as a whole. Competition is often the strongest between radical and moderate groups and at times when the movement's popularity and intensity of the protests subsides. Finally, the third of these robust and consequential interactions is the one between the social movement and law enforcement. The concepts of protest policing and repression are essential here. Harsh repressive measures against activists and the movement as a whole by law

enforcement can lead to factions engaging in even more confrontational tactics. Alimi et al. refer to this as *outbidding*. They highlight that clashes between movement activists and police often result in a spiral of escalation by both sides. (Alimi et al. 2015: 39–46)

This theory of *when* social movements are radicalised by Alimi et al. (2012; 2015) is suitable for the thesis as all three of the central interactions can be argued as present in the selected case of Sweden. In 2022, the Social Democratic and Green coalition government was replaced by a coalition of conservative parties (M, KD, and L) with support from the right-wing party Swedish Democrats. The new government has been criticised by a majority of Sweden's environmental organisations as disastrous, with some calling it the worst Swedish government for the climate ever. (Sveriges Natur 2023; Greenpeace 2023; bet. 2023/24: MJU15; von Malmborg 2024) The change of government has drastically decreased the political opportunities and influence of the environmental movement. This became abundantly clear, for example, in relation to the government's national climate meeting in June 2023, in which only three out of the 274 invited parties represented environmental organisations – and then only in the passive capacity of audience. (Expressen 2023; Extinction Rebellion 2023) At the same time, several new climate and environmental organisations have been established in recent years. These all compete over the same public space and opportunities raising awareness for different questions. (e.g. Extinction Rebellion N.D.; Fridays For Future N.D.; Återställ Våtmarker N.D.) Finally the political climate for environmental protesting has become more hostile than before and activists are increasingly arrested and charged with criminal classifications entailing higher penalties. (Ruotsi – Lind 2023; Persson 2023; Riksdagen Interpellation 2023/24:74) Based on this the hypothesis for the thesis main research question is that at least some engaged in the Swedish environmental movement will have positive attitudes towards political violence against inanimate objects and property.

*H1: Some of the participants will have positive attitudes towards political violence.*

While Alimi et al. (2015) include both violence against persons and objects/property in their definition and theoretical framework, this thesis will apply the framework only on

organised low-level violence. As no acts of political violence have actually been perpetrated yet within the Swedish environmental movement, the focus is of the early radicalisation phase and the framework is thereby deemed both relevant and suitable. The step towards low-level violence is also estimated to be logically lower than that towards high-level violence. Furthermore, the explanatory model of radicalisation put forward by Alimi et al. (2015) builds on previous research of various repertoires of action within the field. For this reason, it would be possible as well as interesting to apply the approach for investigating why the use of political violence does not arise, and for investigating instances of low-level violence – as is the case in this thesis. This is a potential of the framework also raised by Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi themselves as they demonstrate its applicability for examining cases of non-radicalisation and de-radicalisation as well. (Alimi et al. 2015: 219-268)

#### 4.2.2. Who is most likely radicalised into using political violence?

Individuals who end up participating in methods involving political violence are usually already active members within the social movement. (Oberschall 1973: 125; McAdam 1986; della Porta 1995: 166–170; Alimi et al. 2012:20) When researching political violence and radicalisation it therefore becomes relevant to focus the investigation on preexisting movement organisations. Consequently, it is important to examine who the active members and participants of particular social movements are, how they have become active, and how they differ from the general population average. A comparison between the general social composition of the movement and the social composition of those within the movement that are a part of, or more inclined to become a part of, radical flanks can provide additional understanding of the radicalisation of social movements. (Wennerhag 2017: 303, 310)

Chermak and Gruenewald (2015) examine several socio-demographic characteristics of violent extremists affiliated with the far-Right, far-Left or Al Qaeda in the United States. Their definition of far-Left also explicitly includes environmental and animal rights extremists, increasing its relevance for this thesis. (2015:133) Three of the characteristics

are estimated to be particularly interesting for this study while at the same time feasible to include in the survey: 1) gender, 2) age, and 3) education level.

Violent extremism is predominantly male dominated which is unsurprising as these groups are known to “exploit male sentiments of emasculation and loss of power and appeal to ideas of manhood in their recruitment efforts”. (Dier – Baldwin 2022:1) These sentiments are expected to be less significant in relation to environmental extremism. This is backed up by Chermak and Gruenewald (2015) results. They found that 69.5% of left-wing extremists were male, a lot less than the 92.6% for right-wing and 99.4% for Al Qaeda. (2015:144) They also highlight that “women are significantly more likely to be active in eco- or animal rights extremism”. (2015:151) Nevertheless, both the 69.5% for far-leftists and the 89.5% for extremists in general constitute a clear majority.

*H2:1 Participants who identify as male will have more positive attitudes toward political violence.*

In relation to age Chermak and Gruenewald found all are violent extremists to be relatively young, the average being in the late 20s. (2015: 152) Chermak and Gruenewald also refer to other studies, for example Russell and Miller (1978) who find the average age for urban terrorists to be between 22 and 25. Although not specifying an exact number, della Porta also find age to be an important factor in relation to political violence, stating “youth is perhaps the only characteristic all ‘terrorists’ share”. (della Porta 1995: 185)

*H2:2 Participants who are young, particularly in their 20s, will have more positive attitudes towards political violence.*

Socioeconomic status is a term for a person's social and economic position in society. The three most common ways of measuring this is through education, income, and occupation. (Baker 2014) Chermak and Gruenewald examine education level and find that left-wing extremists are the most educated of the three, with 76.5% having some kind



of college degree. (2015:144) This is consistent with what is known about participants in the environmental movement in general, as usually having higher education and income (Gillham 2008) Additionally, socioeconomic status is shown to be relevant for protest participation where individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely than other people to engage in such activities. (Goldman-Hasbun – Corrigan-Brown 2024: 3)

*H2:3 Participants who are of a higher socioeconomic status will have more positive attitudes toward political violence.*

Both age and socioeconomic status are also important aspects in biographical availability, which refers to the "absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation". (McAdam 1986: 70) Age, parenthood and employment are some of the most common proxies. Socioeconomic status – like employment – relates to biographical availability primarily through discretionary income. (Beyerlein – Bergstrand 2022) Biographical availability is offered as an (at least partial) explanation as to why groups who use high cost/risk activism or political violence often consist of a majority of people who are young and/or middle to upper middle class. However, the explanatory power is disputed.

Looking at recruitment, McAdam (1986) presents definitions for what he refers to as "low risk/cost activism" and "high risk/cost activism". Cost here refers to "expenditures of time, money, and energy that are required of a person engaged in any particular form of activism". (1986: 67) Risk, on the other hand, refers to the anticipated dangers of participating in a certain form of activism. These can take the form of legal, physical, social, financial or other consequences. Cost and risk do not necessarily coincide, meaning a particular form of activism can be both low cost and high risk — or high cost and low risk — at the same time. (McAdam 1986: 64-67) While McAdam does not explicitly mention political violence, placing it among his conceptualisations of low and high cost/risk activism provides no challenge. Activism involving illegal acts, such as political violence, involve higher costs for those who wish to remain undetected. Apart from entailing possible legal consequences, political violence is viewed as controversial.

Even in instances where exclusively directed at inanimate objects and property, the use of political violence can bring negative social reactions. Participants could risk jeopardising both personal relationships, social status and livelihood. In addition to this there is also a risk of being subjected to physical violence, either from law enforcement or political opponents. Political violence as defined in this thesis includes several types of actions which vary in cost, and to some extent risk — all, however, are relatively high compared to nonviolent activism.

McAdam outlined a theoretical model for recruitment to high risk/cost activism. He concluded that participants in high-cost/risk activism are expected to: a) have a history of activism, b) be deeply committed to the ideology and goals of the movement, c) be integrated into activist networks, and d) be relatively free of personal constraints. (McAdam 1986: 71) Some of these aspects are both interesting and relevant to examine in relation to attitudes as well as participation. For example, McAdam shows high cost/risk activism often grows out of "prior involvement in less intense forms of movement participation". (1986: 81-82) Examining this in relation to attitudes would provide additional knowledge of the workings of said correlation, such as if the prior protest activities serve merely as practice and confidence building or if people develop and change their views the more they participate in movement activism.

*H2:4 Participants who have previously participated more in other forms of protest will have more positive attitudes toward political violence.*

Engagement in political violence is linked to pre-existing social ties and "forged with other activists during shared experiences of collective action". (Bosi – della Porta 2022:2) These social connections and relationships are likely to affect views and attitudes just as they affect participation. The access to social networks involving other movement activists is an aspect also raised by other social movement scholars (e.g. Schussman — Soules 2005). Such access not only significantly increases the likelihood of being approached for recruitment, but greater contact with other activists will also likely influence a person's knowledge, views and opinions of questions relating to the

movement. This ties well into McAdam's (1986) reasoning on prior activism participation and integration in activist social networks where he argues activists become more integrated into the movement through participation in activities such as marches and sit-ins where there is more face-to-face contact with other activists. Furthermore, the relevance of these aspects are backed up by della Porta's (1995) study of left-wing radical groups in Italy and Germany which concluded activists usually had both previous experience of illegal or violent repertoires of actions and access to relevant social networks. She also found that activists, prior to their recruitment into radical groups, often had been active several years in the broader social movement. (della Porta 1995: 166–170)

*H2:5 Participants who are more integrated into the environmental movement will have more positive attitudes toward political violence.*

The framework presented here is a combination of basic socio-demographic and differentiating characteristics for general protest participation and for primarily high-level violent extremism participation. This is because there is no clear framework for examining intra-movement attitudes towards political violence. The research on such characteristics among those developing violent radicalisation is extremely limited. In the absence of previous research and evidence-based knowledge of certain variables and methods within a field, it is natural to seek knowledge from neighbouring fields. (Sturup – Långström 2017: 143-146) Nevertheless, there is a natural question as to whether these theories would be viable for investigating attitudes as well as participation. There is, however, little reason to believe that the variables raised in this theory section would leave attitudes unaffected. Using them to investigate attitudes specifically and separately may give new information of the role said variable holds in the process of radicalisation. It tests the explanatory power of whether, for example, socioeconomic status only enables or prevents persons from acting on their attitudes and political opinions or if they in fact influence the attitudes as well. Furthermore, efforts have been made in the design of the survey questions to provide a possibility for distinction between respondents' inclination to support and to participate.

## 5. Methods

This thesis aims to increase the knowledge and understanding of attitudes towards political violence among people engaged in the Swedish environmental movement. This is conducted through a mixed-methods research design using primary material gathered through a survey. The survey has been distributed to the target group through their involvement in various Swedish climate and environmental organisations. The thesis then examines how the survey participants view political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, as well as whether there are particular characteristics shared among the participants that are more inclined to have positive attitudes towards the use of such methods.

The gathered material is the basis for a statistical analysis using R and Excel. As the thesis relies on original data, collected independently and specifically for this thesis, emphasis is put on descriptive and summary statistics to outline the data's central tendencies. Because this is original data unexplored by other scholars, there are no prior data points or control groups to make comparisons with. Before the data can be used for specific comparisons or investigations of variable relationships, it needs to be properly mapped. This is the focus of the thesis. However, in examining the sub-question of *who* within the movement would be most inclined to have positive attitudes towards political violence, the thesis begins testing for possible correlations. The survey responses are coded into an *attitude score* which is then used in a regression analysis to investigate any possible correlations with the characteristics provided as likely related to positive attitudes by the theory. Finally, the statistical analysis is complemented by a text analysis of written survey answers to provide an overall picture of the participants' views and attitudes of political violence. Since not all survey questions had the added option of text answers (for an overview of which did see Appendix A) and not all participants used them, there have been no difficulty reading and individually categorising each comment into main themes. What is then included in the thesis results and analysis section is the themes that were raised by more than four respondents, for each specific question.

To best capture the intended target group – people engaged in the Swedish environmental movement – a number of organisations fitting the operationalisation detailed below were contacted to aid in the distribution of the survey to persons involved in their organisation. The survey was formatted as a public survey and distributed internally through an open link by the contacted organisations. This was done to reach the target group as efficiently as possible and to ensure the best chances for a sufficient number of responses, as well as functioning as a privacy precaution. For practical and privacy reasons, I have had no access to information about how many persons within the approached organisations have gained access to the survey and thus have no possibility to calculate the survey's response rate. This is a noteworthy limitation but constituted a necessary trade-off in order to be able to carry out the study.

The survey received 52 responses. These form a varying sample group across all parameters measuring socio-demographic characteristics and indicators of movement engagement. A full description of the demographic composition of the survey respondents is presented in section 6.1. The survey's response period was set to three weeks, between the 5th and the 26th of April 2024. The time frame was dictated by the scope of the thesis in an attempt to balance the possibility of receiving the maximum amount of responses while leaving enough time for analysing the results. The thesis provides an overview and mapping of attitudes around political violence within the Swedish climate and environmental movement in 2024. In order to clearly and properly examine a radicalisation process, or a shift in attitudes within the movement, the study would need to be redone several additional times. This could be done with intervals of two, five or even 10 years. It is important such studies would follow the same format with the same survey questions. However, it is not necessary that the same people answer as the focus is on whether the movement as a whole is radicalised, not necessarily specific individuals within it.

With no previous research on the attitudes and views of political violence within the environmental movement, neither in Sweden nor globally, the interdisciplinary relevance of the thesis is strong. The global nature of the environmental movement as well as the

increasing extent to which climate and environmental issues and environmental activism affects society contribute to a strong societal relevance. However, as the thesis examines the specific case of the climate and environmental movement in Sweden, it makes no claims to generalisability. Some of the organisations approached for this study exist in other countries, but the thesis does not make any claims regarding attitudes within those other contexts. Similar studies of other cases and contexts are therefore encouraged to widen the knowledge in the field.

## 5.1. Choice of case

Research on radicalisation and political violence within social movements has primarily focused on cases where groups begin to or already use political violence. (Goodwin 2012; Wennerhag 2017: 315) The thesis aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these mechanisms by examining the Swedish environmental movement which so far does not use political violence. Sweden has in recent years had a fairly large mobilisation around climate and environmental issues. This has been both manifested and reinforced by what can only be described as the Greta Tunberg effect. In spite of this, Sweden is a case where protests have remained exclusively nonviolent. Additionally, the choice of the Swedish environmental movement has largely depended on methodological access. As a student at a Swedish University, there has been no difficulty reaching out to Swedish environmental organisations for their aid in distributing the survey to the intended target group. Nor is there any language barrier limiting the research, particularly with regard to the framing and choice of wording for the survey questions and the interpretation and analysis of the written survey answers.

According to McAdam (1986), engaging in social movements focused on relatively uncontroversial issues can be categorised as both low cost and low risk activism. Engaging in activist methods involving political violence, on the other hand, is both high risk and relatively high cost. With more than 99,9% of climate researchers agreeing on the causes of climate change, climate and environmental issues are no longer seen as controversial political issues in most societal contexts. Although there are still some societal groups and even political parties – particularly on the right-wing of the political

spectrum – which border on so-called climate denial, the climate and environmental debate has gone mainstream. (Jylhä et al. 2020; Lynas et al. 2021; IFFS 2021; SVT 2022) By selecting a social movement such as the environmental movement which in itself is neither high cost nor high risk, the goal is to be able to better reassure the participants reflections on participating in high cost/risk activism refers exclusively to the methods employed, in the case of this thesis – political violence. It is possible, or even likely, that social movements which are in themselves more high cost and high risk already have repelled those not willing or able to participate in high cost/risk activism. In that case the entire sample of participants would in a sense already be recruited to high cost/risk activism but without the focus being on the variable of interest in this study, political violence.

## 5.2. Operationalisation of variables

### 5.2.1. People engaged in the environmental movement

Social movements are complicated research objects. Scholars struggle to define and operationalise what exactly constitutes a social movement, and consequently who is actually a part of it. A common, and according to some deeply flawed approach, is to clearly distinguish between persons as unambiguously in or out of a movement. This approach is criticised for portraying and maintaining a false dichotomy of movement participation. McAdam is one of the scholars emphasising this view as an oversimplification of both the nature of participation and recruitment process for social movements. He argues that participation in a social movement is not as clear-cut as for example membership in a formal organisation. As an alternative, McAdam argues for shifting the research focus to those participating in a specific movement event or action, such as a demonstration or campaign. (1986: 66-67) Unfortunately this option is not possible for this thesis as there are no empirical examples of campaigns involving political violence, and if there were, the participants would in all likelihood be difficult to reach. One possible solution would have been to approach activists that carry out civil disobedience actions and provide them with the survey. However, that would have

entailed much work in "hunting down" participants for the study which was not reasonable under the current scope.

While it is impossible to say that all persons engaged in the environmental movement are also involved in a movement organisation, it is possible to say that the persons involved in movement organisations are engaged in the environmental movement. Although it is possible to have ties to the environmental movement in other ways than through climate and environmental organisations, people engaged in a movement organisation obviously have strong ties to the movement. Research on political violence in social movements show that people participating in such actions are already integrated in the movement. (Wennerhag 2017: 291, 308) It has also been established that "mobilization does not occur through recruitment of large numbers of isolated and solitary individuals. It occurs as a result of recruiting blocs of people who are already highly organized and participants". (Oberschall 1973: 125) For these reasons *people engaged in the Swedish climate and environmental movement*, are in the thesis operationalised as being organised within or otherwise involved in a Swedish climate or environmental organisation. The operationalisation of accessing these people through their involvement in Swedish organisations provides a sample of the intended group, however, there is no guarantee it represents the movement as a whole.

The climate and environmental organisations defined as being a part of the *Swedish environmental movement* are non-profit, non-governmental organisations aimed at raising and protesting climate and environmental issues. The organisations are established and operating within Sweden. A rough threshold of a few hundred members has been set for several reasons. Firstly because it is difficult to distinguish as information about members is not public for most organisations. Secondly, as the survey method relies on a fairly high quantity of responses a relatively wide net was cast to ensure maximum amounts of responses. It should also be noted that the organisations were under no obligation to aid in the distribution of the survey and due to the relatively sensitive subject of the questions several of the approached organisations were estimated to decline. For confidentiality reasons the names of which organisations approved distribution of the survey is not



disclosed in the thesis. However, adhering to the above mentioned definition the following twelve climate and environmental organisations were approached: Naturskyddsföreningen, Greenpeace Sverige, Fridays For Future Sverige, Extinction Rebellion Sverige, Återställ Våtmarker, Ta Tillbaka Framtiden, Skogsupproret, Skydda Skogen, Klimataktion, Pull The Plug, Gruvfritt Jokkmokk, Take Concrete Action.

The thesis' first variable refers to people's holding of views and attitudes. For an explorative and descriptive research question such as the one in this thesis it is impossible to entirely disentangle the different variables from each other. When used for answering the sub-question and testing the associated hypotheses, however, the variable becomes somewhat clearer as it can also be divided into sub-variables such as gender and age. The sub-variables are based on the relevant aspects and characteristics raised in the theory and can be summarised as following: 1) gender, 2) age, 3) socioeconomic status, 4) prior participation in protest and 5) movement integration.

While the sub-variables of gender and age are relatively straightforward, some of the others need additional elaboration. For simplicity, socioeconomic status is operationalised as how the participants themselves perceive their socioeconomic status. It also avoids the inclusion of too many personal questions in a survey estimated to have a limited number of respondents, assuring it would prove no risk to their anonymity. Prior participation in protest is operationalised by the means of a points system of previous participation in protest activities for climate and environmental issues. A numerical value is assigned to each of the activity options in the survey, reflecting its intensity relative to the other forms of activism. Signing a petition is assigned a point of one, participation in a demonstration march two points, sit-ins a score of three and acts of sabotage a score of four. Respondents using the survey's "Other, specify" option have had their written answers analysed and assigned a score within this range as well. Each respondent subsequently receives a final *activity score* consisting of the sum of the point totals for all the activities. Finally, movement integration is operationalised through three of the survey questions which are combined into a numerical *integration score*. The included

survey questions refer to the respondents *length of involvement, extent of organisational commitments* and *prior protest participation* within the environmental movement.

### 5.2.2. Radicalisation and attitudes towards political violence

Radicalisation is defined as the process of a social movement initiating or escalating their use of political violence. The thesis therefore equates radical protest methods with protest methods which involve political violence. As shown in the theory section, there is an awareness of the many variations of forms and degrees included in the concept of political violence. For this reason, the thesis definition of political violence has been narrowed down and is operationalised as physical acts of violence directed at inanimate objects or property. All kinds of violence purposefully directed at persons or animals fall outside of this definition. This has been clearly communicated and emphasised in all information provided to the participants in the survey.

The survey questions refer to several different forms and degrees of political violence. All are organised (not spontaneous such as in the case of riots) and low-grade (only directed towards inanimate objects or property). However, there can still exist variations of forms and degrees, such as between flattening SUV tires and sabotaging the construction of a mine. As the participants' attitudes to political violence is of interest, the study will allow the variable to be relatively fluid. Particularly the last question, which refers to specific scenarios where the participants are asked to indicate on a scale how legitimate they perceive the method in each scenario to be, is designed to capture if there is a variation present. The responses to this question show if the participants perceive a variation in forms and degrees of political violence within the definition outlined in the study to be relevant for its legitimacy.

The most central form of violence and radical protest within this definition is sabotage. The definition of sabotage follows the definitions raised in the literature on so-called ecotage, as acts of economic sabotage of inanimate objects considered to be complicit in environmental destruction. (Vanderheiden 2005) The definition used in this thesis also connects with the definition of sabotage as put forward in the Swedish criminal code. In

chapter 13, paragraph 4 (BrB 1962:700) it is stated that sabotage cover acts which destroy or damage property of considerable importance for the state. State reliance on the fossil fuel industry assures most ecotage would fall within this description. The paragraph also refers to actions which seriously disturbs or hinders public transport, communication or similar public utility or of facilities for the public supply of water, light, heat or power. This excludes for example civil disobedience roadblocks, as the purpose is not to disrupt or destroy infrastructure, but to attract attention, the disruption being a means to achieve this. A case of targeted and purposeful roadblock, of say a road of particular significance for environmental destruction (such as roads trafficed only by lumbertrucks), would however be regarded as sabotage.

The thesis' second variable: attitudes and views of political violence is operationalised as what the survey respondents themselves express that they are. All survey questions apart from those gathering data on socio-demographic characteristics – such as gender, age and movement involvement – are designed to allow the participants to characterise and quantify their attitudes and views of political violence. For a more comprehensive overall picture, participants' in-text responses will also be considered and analysed.

For the purpose of giving an overall view of the survey results as well as for the statistical regression analysis, used to answer the sub-question and test H2:4 and H2:5, the variable is further operationalised by the means of an *attitude score*. The attitude score consists of a points system that is compiled to indicate each participant's overall attitudes on a scale from negative to positive. It includes the answers of all questions containing information on the participants current attitudes towards political violence (included are GEN1, GEN2, GEN4, GEN5, GEN6, GEN7, GEN8, and GEN13 + SPEC1, SPEC2, SPEC3 and SPEC4 – see Appendix A for the questions associated with each code). A numerical value has been assigned to each response option in the survey.. The points for each response range between -5 for clearly negative and 5 for clearly positive responses. Neutral answers are assigned a score of 0. The participants' final attitude score consists of the sum of the point totals for all the responses. In total a participant can receive a maximum of 49 and a minimum of -49 points.

### 5.3. Material: The survey

The material consists of data and written responses collected through a survey. The survey questions centre around the participants view and attitudes towards political violence against inanimate objects and property, as well as which methods the participants consider legitimate and effective for protesting climate and environmental issues in Sweden. The questions attempt to capture how people engaged in the Swedish environmental movement view different methods of political protest, particularly radical methods involving political violence such as sabotage directed against environmentally destructive industries. For transparency all the survey questions in full can be found in both English translation and original language of the survey in Appendix A.

The questions are designed as multiple choice to increase the likelihood of respondents following through once starting the survey. A majority of the questions, however, also have an additional text option to elaborate on an answer in more detail. Participants were informed that written elaborations were not mandatory but encouraged. In total the survey consists of 20 questions. The first 10 questions are designed to detect demographic differences within the sample group. These include questions of gender, age and prior social movement engagements. The next 10 questions are designed to detect variations in attitudes towards methods involving political violence. Two questions provide a yes or no option, two provide the option of a numeric scale (from 1 to 10) and one provides a three choice option (one of which is neutral). The remaining five questions are purposely designed to provide no neutral alternatives. This is done to nudge the participants to reflect and make a decision on what they actually think. There are however a “Don't know” and a “Don't want to answer” option, this is to make sure the statistics will not be cluttered by responses which do not in fact fit in the given alternatives. The “don't want to answer” option also provides the opportunity to distinguish if participants in fact do not know how they feel or if they for some other reason do not want to disclose the information.

Prior to finalising the survey, a pilot was executed. This was done to detect, for example, if the language was suitable, whether any questions were unclear, if additional concepts

needed to be defined or the answer-options needed to be rephrased or complemented. The pilot consisted of 12 participants of various genders and social engagement. All pilot participants were, however, of a similar age and academic-level background, though in different fields. While not involving the same sample demographic as expected for the final survey, the pilot provided helpful insights to what could be improved.

### 5.3.1. Challenges and limitations

As with every other methodological option, there are constant and ongoing discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of survey based research. Not least considering the implications of the wording, framing and order of survey questions. The effects this may have on the responses to their questions is something which must be considered in the making of the survey. (John 2018: 256) A consideration which, as mentioned above, has been made in this thesis as well. Wording and framing of questions of extra high importance in a survey compared to, for example semi-structured interviews where questions and concepts can be clarified or rephrased if need be. To avoid any misunderstandings between participants and the researcher, and thus strengthen the validity of the study, it is therefore necessary and important to be very clear with definitions of central concepts. The following terms and concepts were provided with definitions in the survey: *engaged*, *social movement*, *radical*, *political violence*, *legitimate*, and *social/contact network*. See Appendix A for the exact definitions provided.

As with other survey based studies there are difficulties in knowing whether everyone has answered truthfully. Since no incentives or rewards have been produced for participation in the survey or for giving any specific response this risk is assessed to be small, but not nonexistent. The same goes for whether some have been careless in filling in the answers. Moreover, as the thesis examines the overall picture and central tendencies of the data, lone errors are deemed to have limited impact.

The thesis has strived for greatest transparency possible on all stages of the process to ensure maximum reliability. Survey questions, as well as the information about the study

provided to both participants and approached organisations are included in full – and in both the original language of Swedish and English translation – in Appendix A, B and C. As already mentioned, a central but necessary weakness relates to the confidentiality of which environmental organisations approved internal distribution of the survey, making the operationalisation of people engaged in the Swedish environmental movement more difficult to replicate. This was a necessary balance given the study's dependence on the organisations to get the survey out to the intended target group. Despite the confidentiality some organisations were as expected reluctant to aid the study. In addition to, and in this case related to, this there is always the risk that response rates to surveys may be low. It is however important to remember that no perfect dataset exists. (John 2018: 256)

### 5.3.2. Ethical considerations

Surveys, like interviews and other non-observational methods, entail certain ethical principles. During the process I have aimed to be as explicit and transparent regarding the study as possible. Particularly with regard to the aims and objectives of the study, the implications of participation in the survey, as well as the publicity of the thesis. Respondents, as well as the organisations through which I have reached the respondents, have been informed about how to contact me for questions regarding the study or their participation. Informed consent is applied and survey respondents have been informed of relevant information about the study and what it means to participate. This includes information about the purpose of the study, who is behind the study, why the person was contacted, what it means to participate as well as how the data is protected. For a view of the exact information provided to respondents see Appendix B. Following this information the respondents were also asked clearly to show that they consent to participating in the study by pressing the green “I consent” button before accessing the survey questions on the next page.

Ethical considerations have been made with respect to the anonymity and privacy of the participants. All data has been handled with care and in accordance with the GDPR. In consideration of the relative sensitivity of the subject, survey respondents are anonymous

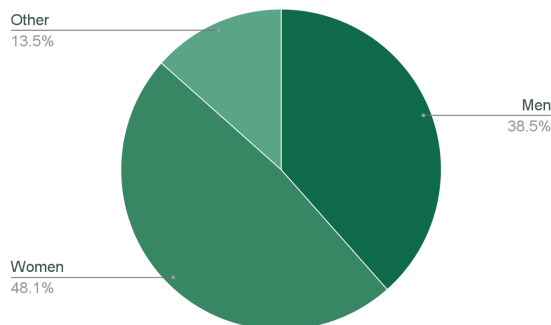
and measures were taken to guarantee it is not possible to identify who has given each answer. For example, the survey was formatted as a public survey and distributed internally through an open link by the contacted organisations. That way neither I nor anyone at any of the organisations have access to information of who or how many at each organisation responded to the survey. Furthermore, questions relating to any information that could contribute to an eventual identification of a person, such as age and gender, were limited to an absolute minimum to fulfil the purposes of the study.

# 6. Results and analysis

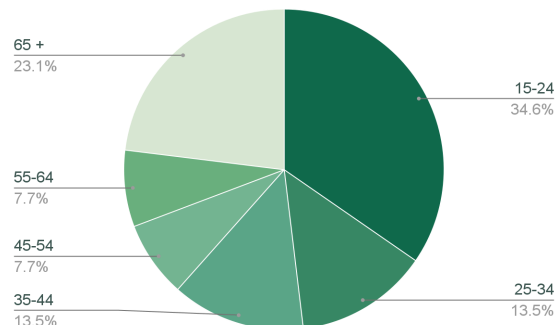
## 6.1. Demographic overview

Demographics show the characteristics of a population, or in this case a sample group. A viewing and analysis of the responses to the survey questions designed to provide parameters for these characteristics, i.e. the questions about the participant and their social and political involvement, show survey respondents to be a heterogeneous and diverse group. Almost half of the respondents identify as women, 39% as men and 14% as “Other”. *See Figure 1.* The survey was completed by people from all age groups, but contains two dominant groups: people between 15 and 24 years of age, and people over 65 years of age. *See Figure 2.* While the survey has been answered by respondents from all socioeconomic groups except “Upper class”, there is a dominating group for perceived socioeconomic status as well. Survey participants who characterise themselves as middle class are in clear majority – making up just over 40% of the sample group. In addition to this the groups of lower or upper middle class make up approximately 20% each. *See Figure 3.*

**Figure 1: Gender distribution**

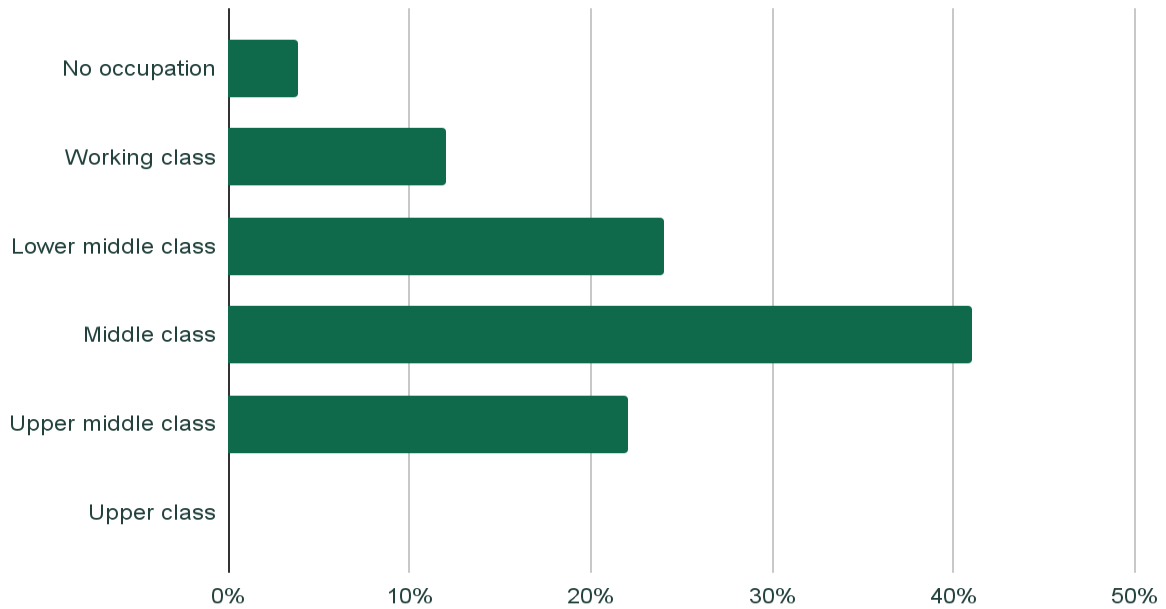


**Figure 2: Age distribution**



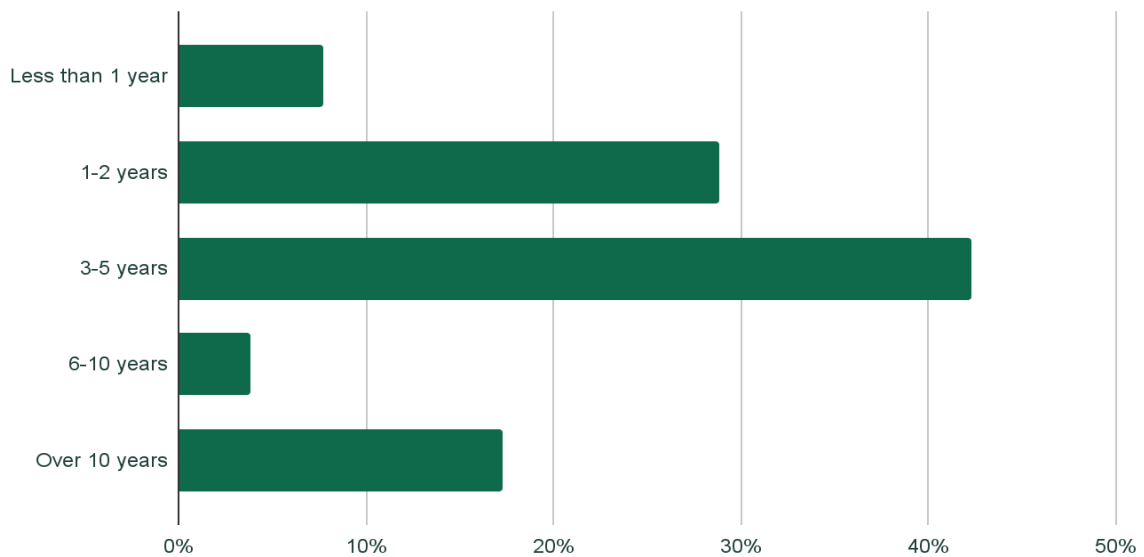


**Figure 3: Perceived socioeconomic status**



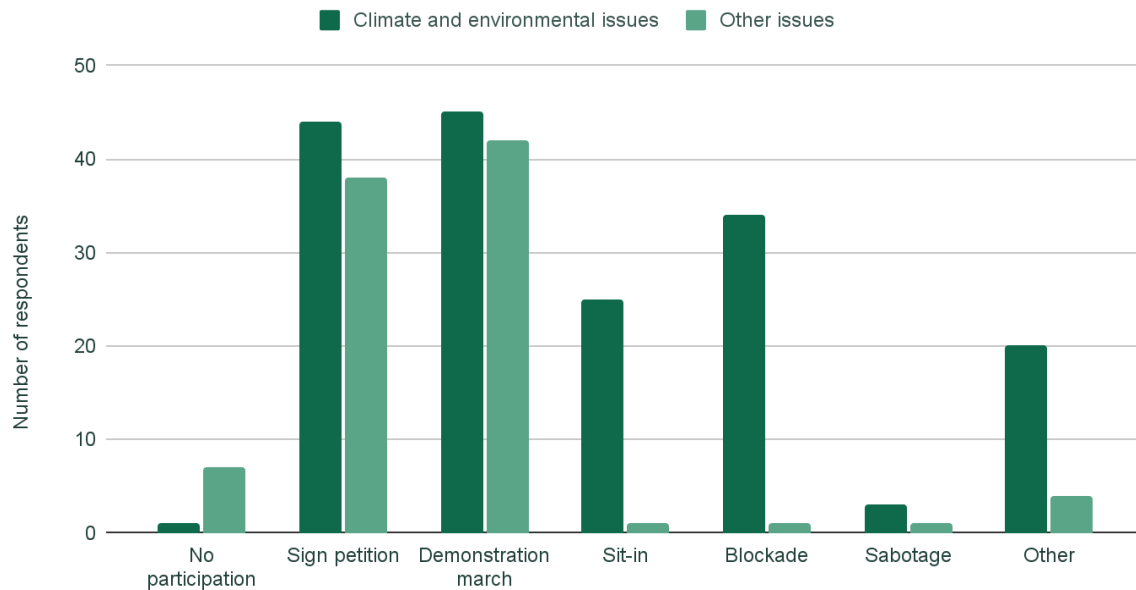
The longevity of involvement in the environmental movement also varies among the survey participants. While 17% have been involved (defined in the survey as *e.g. member of a climate or environmental organisation, participating in protests*) in the environmental movement for over 10 years, most have only been so for 3-5 years or less. See Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Length of involvement in the environmental movement**



When it comes to prior participation in any forms of protest for climate or environmental issues a clear majority has participated in more than one form. More than half have participated in forms of protest that would fall within so-called civil disobedience, such as sit-ins or blockades of roads or buildings. Only one respondent has participated in no previous protest actions for the climate or environment. Asked about prior participation in protests for other political issues the number of respondents who have not participated in any forms are higher, around 14%. Those who had participated had usually done so by either signing a petition or attending a demonstration march. *See Figure 5.*

**Figure 5: Prior participation in protest among the respondents**

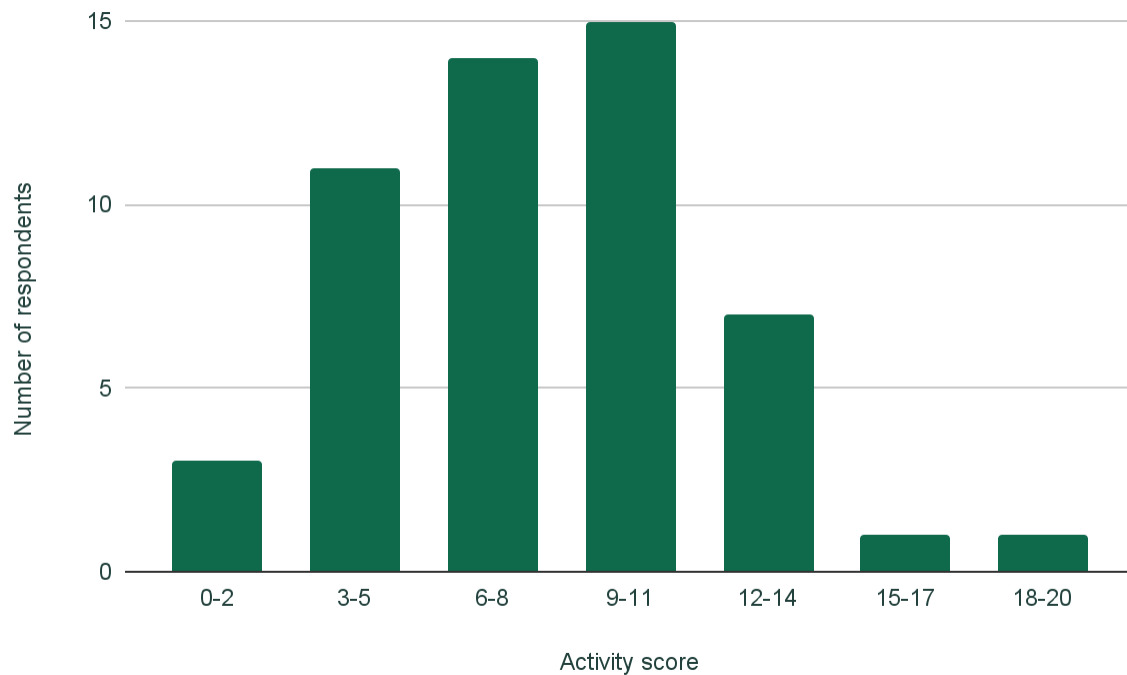


In relation to this, just over half of the participants characterise themselves as having been part of another social movement (defined in the survey as *a more or less organised group with the goal of achieving some form of social or political change*). These include, for example, the women's movement, labour movement, LGBTQ-movement, peace movement, animal-rights movement and party-political youth associations. While 34% of the respondents are only organised within one climate or environmental organisation, the remaining 64% are part of between two and five organisations. No one is part of more than five climate or environmental organisations. Asked to include organisational

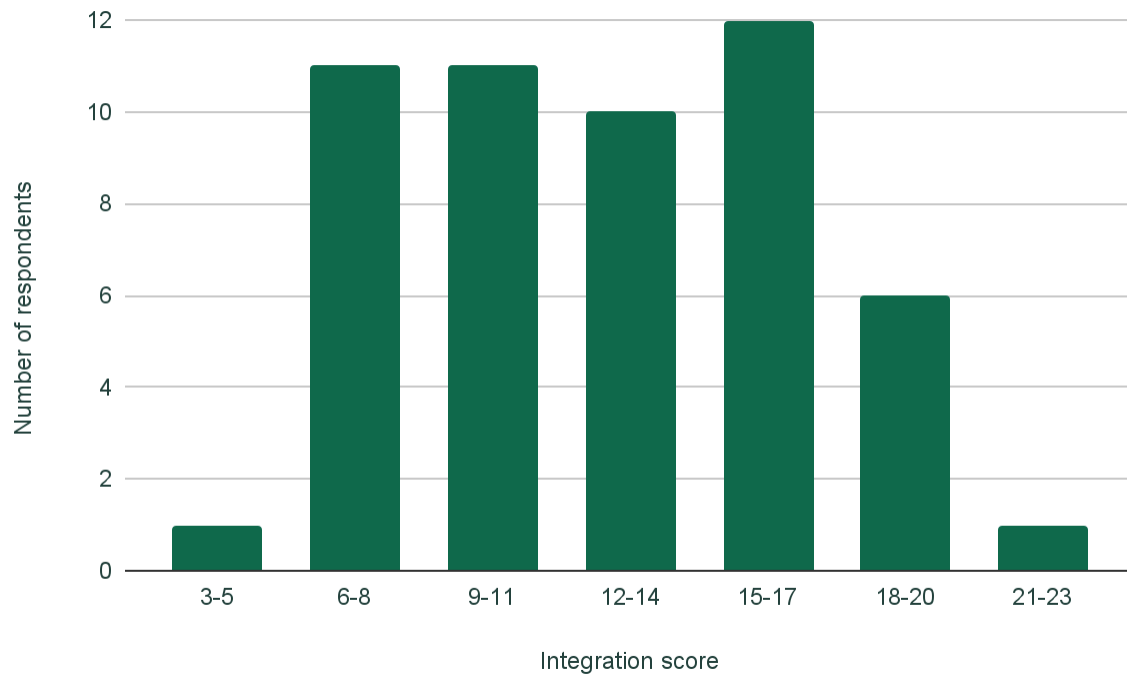
commitments outside the environmental movement (e.g. in relation to other social movements), the Figures rise to where only 14% are part of one organisation. While the majority remains within the two to five organisations group, approximately 17% of the respondents are part of more than five organisations in total.

Finally, the spread of activity scores and integration scores across all participants are presented in Figure 6 and 7. Both are relatively normally distributed around the middle. The figures show the number of respondents with an activity or integration score within each bar. For example, 15 respondents have an activity score between 9 and 11.

**Figure 6: Activity-score distribution**



**Figure 7: Integration-score distribution**

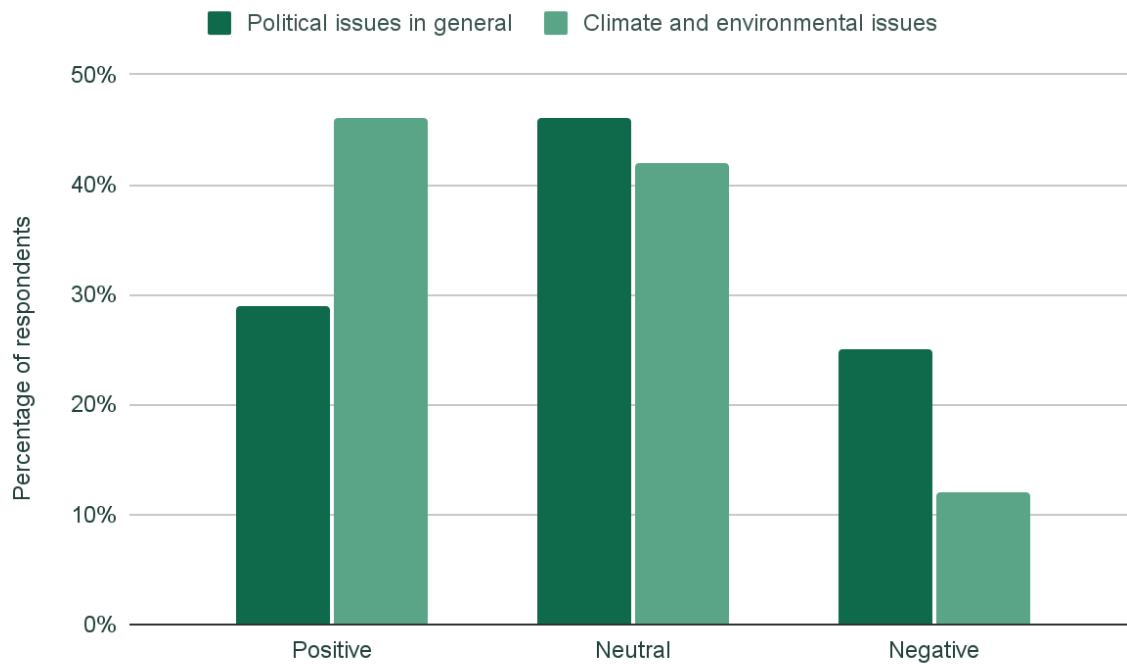


## 6.2. Intra-movement views of violence

### 6.2.1 General attitudes

The thesis' first hypothesis (H1: Some of the participants will have positive attitudes towards political violence) is immediately confirmed by the survey results. Several of the survey participants characterise their general view of political violence against inanimate objects and property as positive. *See Figure 8*. Even more participants are positive towards political violence in the specific context of the environmental movement and for protesting climate and environmental issues. In fact, in the context of the environmental movement, "Positive" is the answer option most used by respondents to characterise their attitude – constituting 46% compared to 42% neutral and only 12% negative.

**Figure 8: Attitudes towards the use of political violence to protest political issues**

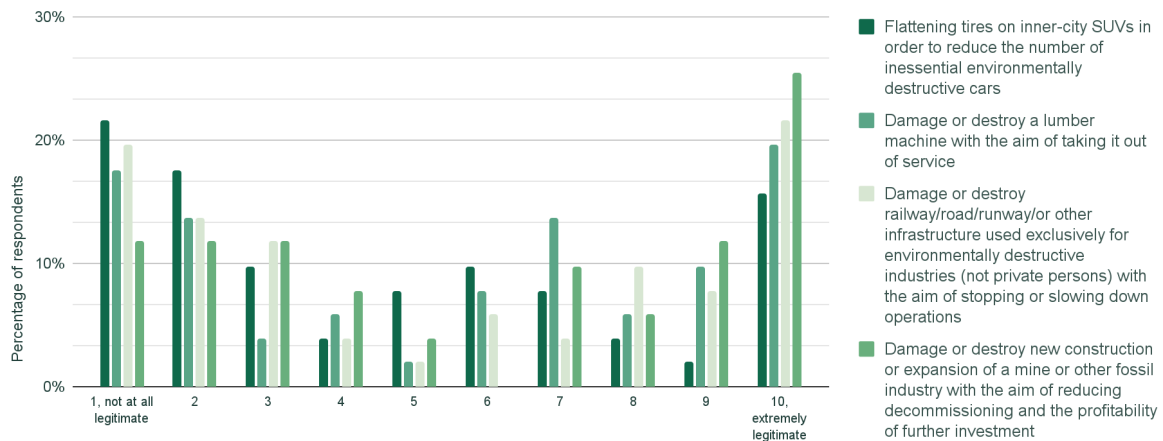


Examination of the text responses to the question shows four main themes in the elaborations and motivations given by the respondents for their views. These four themes are all closely related and can be summarised as follows: 1) dependence on context, 2) dependence on efficiency, 3) moral neutrality, and 4) ends justifying means. The first theme regards comments made to the significance of the specific context of actions involving political violence in determining attitudes towards it. Respondents claim their attitudes are contingent on contextual factors such as appropriate frames and narratives around the action, as well as what purpose it is thought to serve. Several express a belief that if done right, direct action and methods such as property destruction could prove an important asset for the environmental movement. Additionally, the very context of the climate crisis is considered so urgent that respondents declare themselves to be inclined to support more radical methods than they otherwise would have. Secondly, the respondents' attitudes towards political violence are largely dependent on whether it would be strategic and effective or not. This ties well into the third main theme of moral neutrality. Several express a view of political violence against inanimate objects or property as not inherently or morally wrong, but rather dependent on the context and/or

potential result in specific situations. Related to this is also the fourth and final main theme, the view that the end justifies the means. Participants who have made comments along these lines also make extra mention that their view only applies as long as no persons or animals are harmed.

When asked to rate the legitimacy of specific scenarios of methods involving political violence against inanimate objects and property the responses were generally well distributed along the edges for all four scenarios. *See Figure 9.* This is slightly surprising as scaled answer options in surveys allow for responses along the more neutral middle. Responses centred around the edges suggest the majority of respondents have strong and clear opinions with regard to the specific scenarios. It also suggests that there is significant intra-movement polarisation around these issues, with two more or less equally strong camps firmly for or firmly against the use of methods involving political violence.

**Figure 9: Attitude towards political violence in specific scenarios**



The last scenario, referring to the “Damage or destruction of new construction or expansion of a mine or other fossil industry with the aim of reducing decommissioning and the profitability of further investment”, received both the least responses rating it “1,

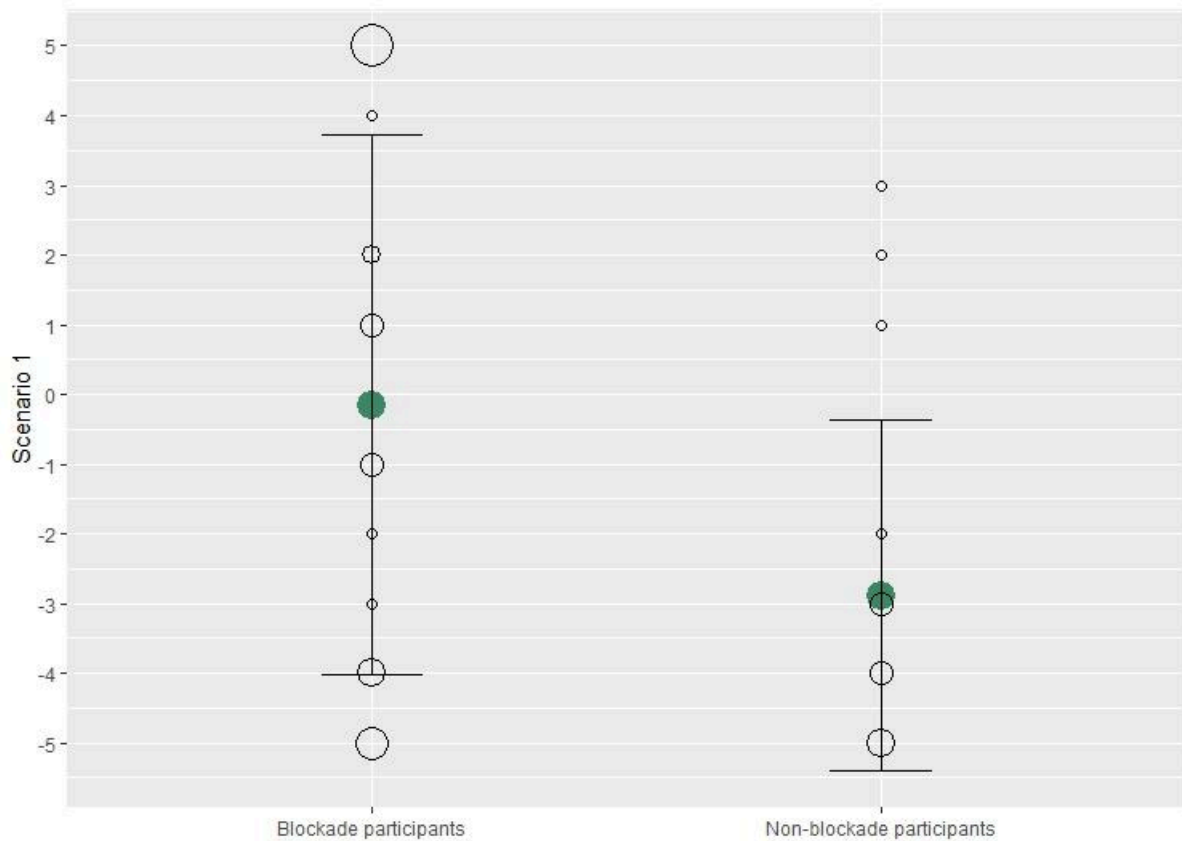
not at all legitimate” and the most responses rating it “10, extremely legitimate”. This is also relatively surprising as this is the scenario likely entailing the most severe acts of political violence of those mentioned in the survey. In contrast, the scenario receiving the least “10, extremely legitimate” and most “1, not at all legitimate” ratings were the significantly less severe act of “Flattening tires on inner-city SUVs in order to reduce the number of inessential environmentally destructive cars”. Based on this, the target of a specific act of political violence seems to affect the participants' attitudes more than how severe the act is in terms of what form or degree of violence it entails. This supports Demetriou's (2024) claim that one should not assume tactics to be “more objectionable to a public the closer they are to violence”. (2024:5)

Although Mohorčich (2023) shows there can be systematic environmental changes achieved by targeting individual property, this seems like something the respondents are less inclined to view as legitimate or positive based on these four survey questions. Mohorčich specifically raises the example of privately owned cars, presenting how sabotage would have both direct effects (e.g. a sabotaged car cannot be driven that day), and broader indirect effects which originates in the logic that “as things become more expensive and annoying, people do them less – sabotage or the credible threat of sabotage represent additional costs to car ownership and use”. (2023: 593) Privately owned cars naturally also make up a large part of those being affected by the civil disobedience roadblocks regularly employed by the environmental movement in Sweden. Yet, when it comes to the use of political violence, these cars do not constitute a preferred target.

When examining how the respondents have rated the first scenario in relation to previous participation in blockade actions to protest environmental issues, it is clear this group of respondents are almost perfectly symmetrically distributed over the entire spectrum. This is also shown by the high standard deviation and means that a respondent having participated in blockade activism seems to have no impact on how they have rated scenario 1. *See Figure 10*. Since blockade is defined in the survey as also including, for example, blockades of buildings or industries it is not possible to draw a clear conclusion from this. Even so, roadblocks are the most common form of blockade within Sweden's

environmental movement so this is likely the blockade activity most of these 34 respondents have participated in. (Persson 2023) When looking at the distribution of the non-blockad participants' responses, it is apparent that few who have not participated in blockade actions view the first scenario as legitimate.

**Figure 10: Scatter plot of respondents' attitudes towards scenario 1 by participation in blockade activism**

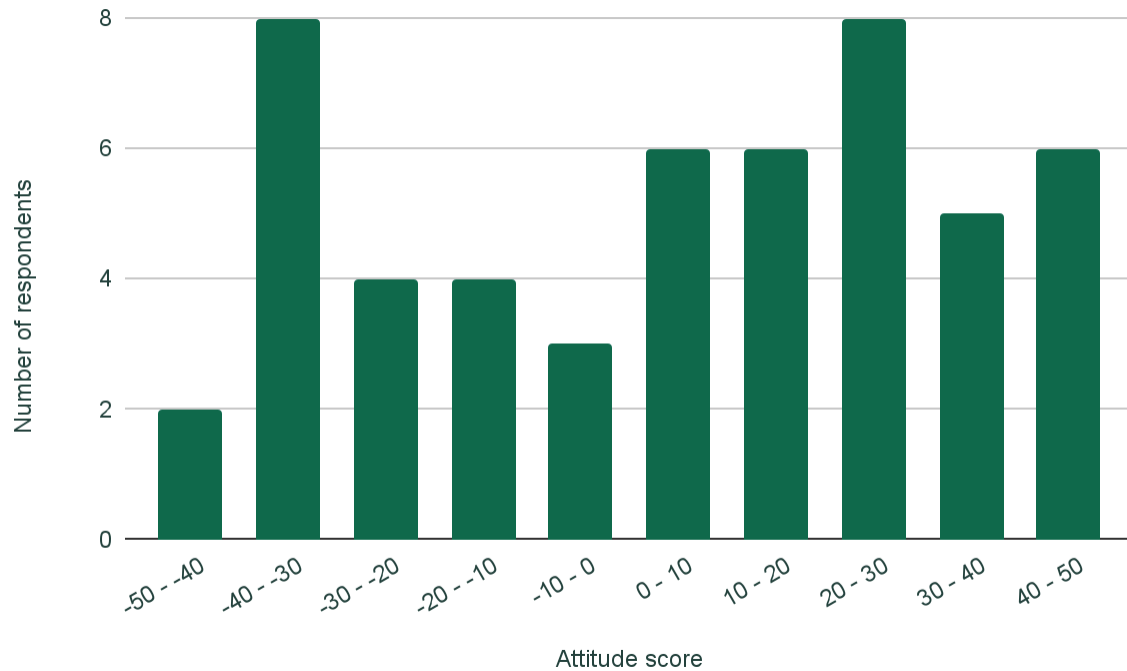


NOTE – Average (green dot) and standard deviation (black lines) shown for each group. Size of circles indicates the number of respondents for each value.

Overall the survey participants' attitudes are well distributed across the entire spectrum of attitude scores. *Figure 11* shows the number of respondents with an attitude score within each bar, for example eight respondents have an attitude score between -40 and -30, and another eight respondents have an attitude score between 20 and 30. Furthermore, it shows there to be more participants with positive attitude scores than negative.



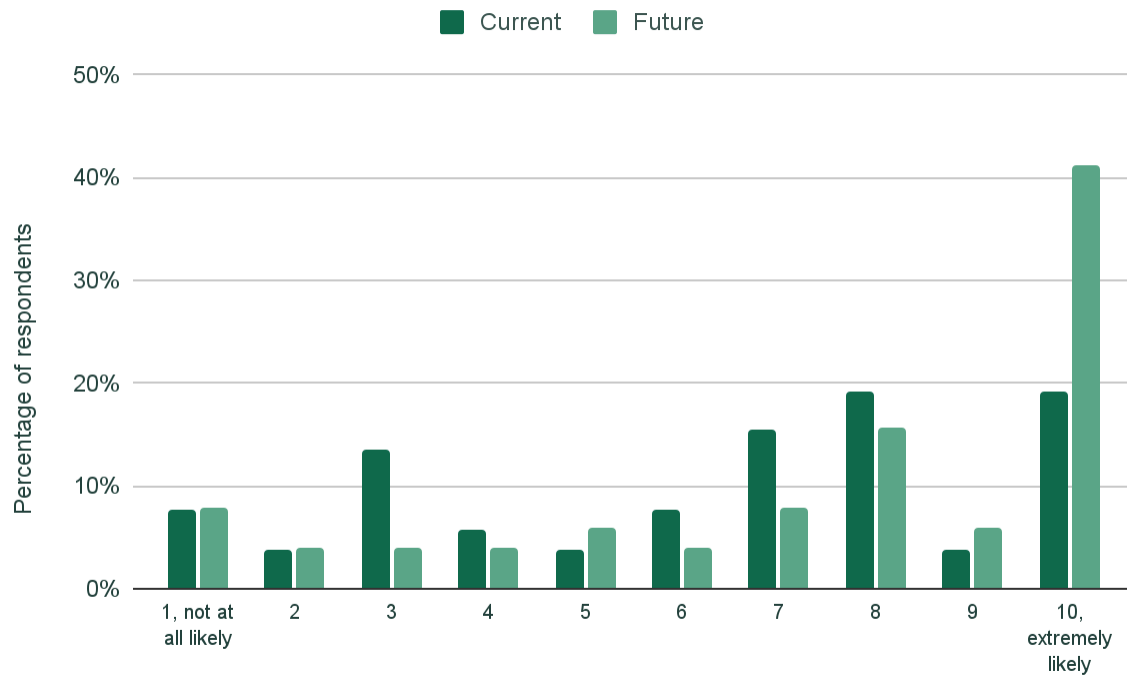
**Figure 11: Attitude-score distribution**



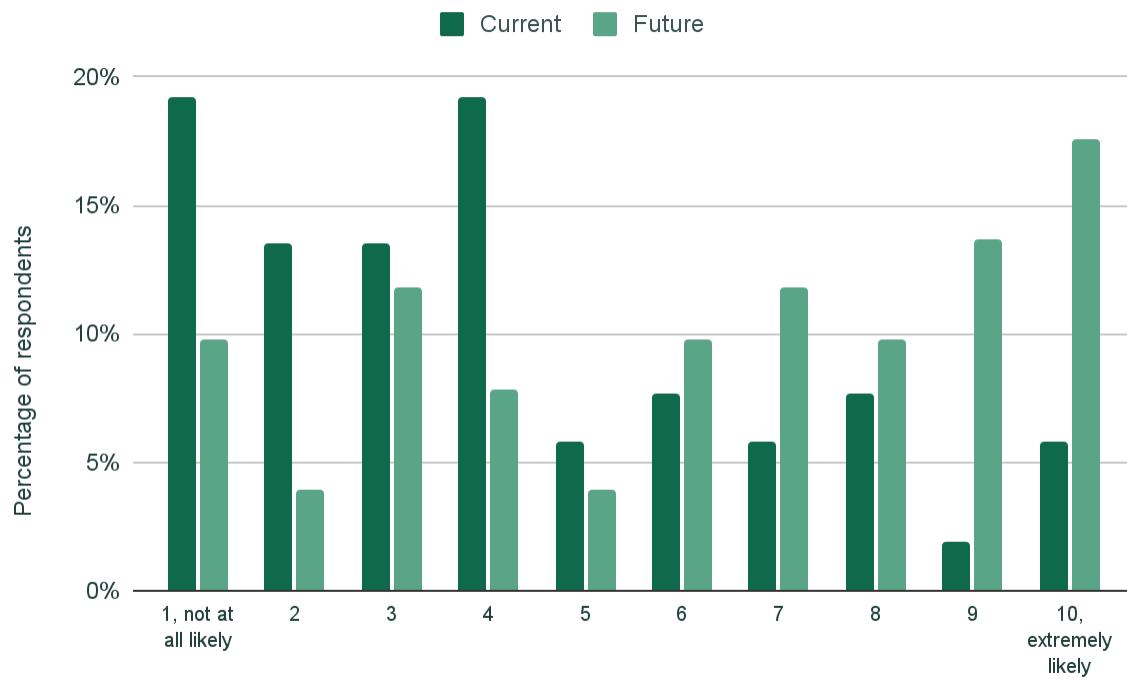
### 6.2.2. Support or participate?

Although there is evidently support for methods involving political violence against inanimate objects and property, few of the respondents characterise themselves as being likely to participate in such activities at the moment. Asked to rate how inclined they were to support (defined in the survey as *taking a verbal stance for*) or participate in (defined in the survey as *personally be involved in the execution*) political violence, the responses differed significantly. See Figure 12 and 13. Many rated their likelihood of support as high, the answer options “8” and “10, extremely likely” both receiving approximately 20% each. When asked instead for the likelihood of participation, the number of responses in the four highest ratings was more than halved. A total of 65% of the respondents then placed themselves within one of the four lowest ratings.

**Figure 12: Likelihood of support for political violence**



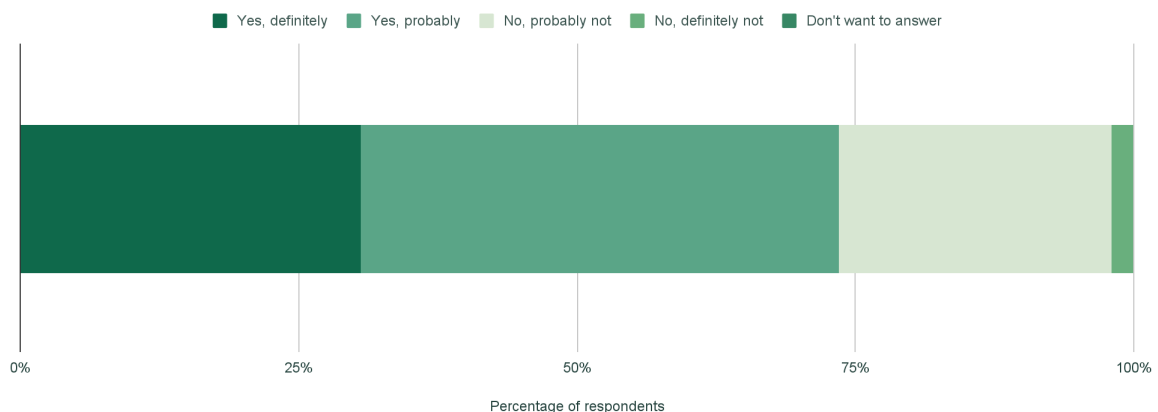
**Figure 13: Likelihood of participation in political violence**



When the questions were rephrased as referring to in the future if the climate and environment continue on its current trajectory, the numbers started to climb up. A significantly larger number of participants then responded that they would be likely to both support and participate in protest activities involving political violence. Over 40% responded they were extremely likely to support it and 75% placed themselves somewhere within the range of supportive (ratings 6 to 10). *See Figure 12.* The likelihood of participation also saw a dramatic shift towards the higher rating when referring to the future. The four lowest ratings were together only chosen by 33% of the respondents, this in comparison to the clear majority of 65% for current likelihood. The rating for future likelihood chosen by the most respondents, 18% to be precise, was instead “10, extremely likely”. *See Figure 13.* However, it should be noted that it remains unclear how far away the different survey participants view this future to be.

Asked if anything could make the respondents consider personally participating in methods involving political violence against inanimate objects or property to protest climate and environmental issues, a strong majority responded either “Yes, definitely” or “Yes, probably”. *See Figure 14.* The responses in these two categories made up 73% of the total responses. This is somewhat higher than the 63% who rated their likelihood of future participation as a “6” or higher. Only one person responded “No, definitely not”.

**Figure 14: Possibility of anything causing an attitude change**



Respondents were also asked to elaborate on what could prompt their participation. The comments show three clear themes, the first and most mentioned theme related to the

new Swedish government. Several respondents made comments in line with Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi's (2012; 2015) theory on the interactions between the movement and political environment, claiming the new governments nonexistent climate and environmental politics may drive them to engage in more radical methods of protest. The next distinguishable theme again refers to the possible efficiency. Respondents comment they could be made to consider personally participating in methods involving political violence if it was proven to be an effective way of protesting climate and environmental issues. Lastly, the third and final theme can be summarised as biographical availability. The comments relating to this theme are connected to McAdam's (1986) concept of biographical availability, i.e. the absence of personal constraints. The comments relating to this theme raised aspects such as having young children or a living situation with tight margins.

### 6.2.3. Views of movement radicalisation

Only 37% of the respondents believe the environmental movement's current methods to be effective in achieving the desired and necessary changes for the climate and environment. Examination of the survey questions text responses show four main themes. Firstly, it makes it clear that virtually all participants agree that the environmental movement as a whole cannot be assessed as "effective" at the moment. Secondly, a significant majority do not believe that it is the methods that are at fault. These comments articulate other movement issues, such as too few being engaged and participating in the current actions, and splintering in the movement – which, for example, is said to have poor cooperation between different movement organisations and a lack of clearly directed social criticism.

Thirdly, respondents argue the movements current methods have in fact had results in affecting the political debate and raising awareness for climate and environmental issues of the broader Swedish public. Nevertheless, these comments also contain reflection regarding, for example, that affecting the public debate is not enough to achieve actual environmental change in terms of emissions and biodiversity – especially since the majority of the Swedish public remain passive regardless of the amount of attention

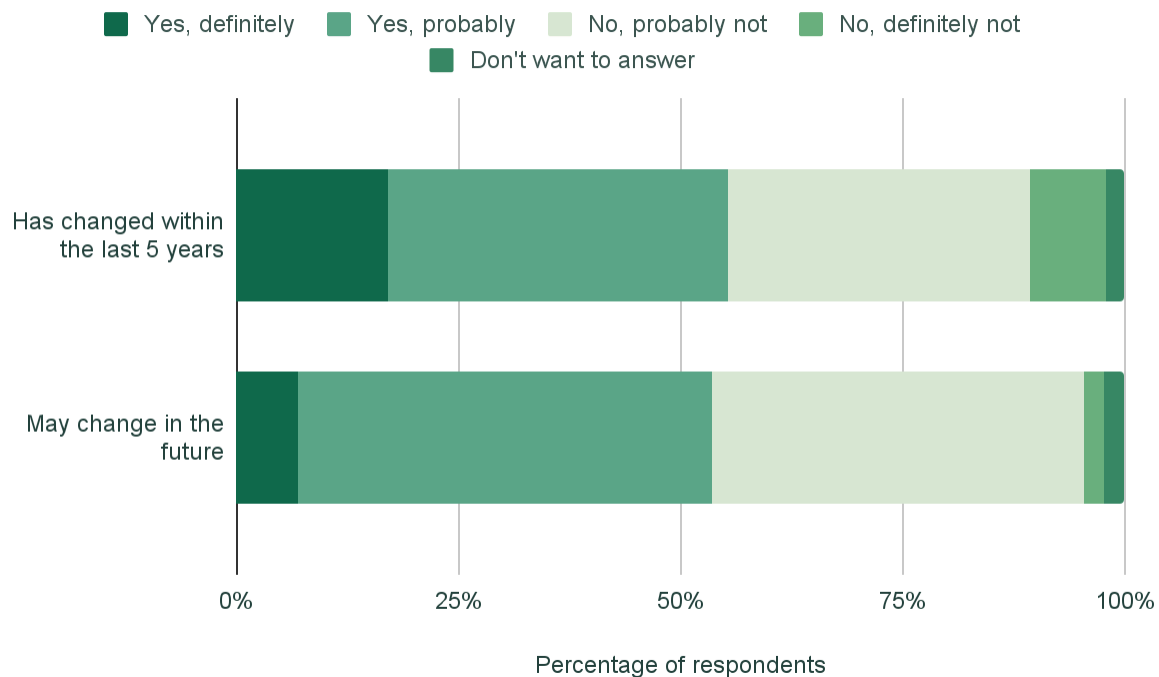
directed towards issues by activists. Finally, several participants argue for a need for more radical methods. This theme includes statements such as that it is time to stop asking and start demanding, as well as calls for more aggressive approaches to protest to be incorporated to a larger extent. One participant in particular commented that they have been on the lookout and waiting for initiatives within the movement for more radical methods, this indicates a clear willingness to see and be a part of a radicalisation of the Swedish environmental movement. However, they also commented that, since such a strategy does not seem to appear they have instead ceased to actively participate in movement actions. This indicated that at least some of the movement members that express a wish to see a radicalisation of the movement instead may end up leaving it. Such developments are hardly conducive to radicalisation.

In terms of legitimacy there is broad support for the methods currently in use by the environmental movement, including acts of civil disobedience. While 6% responded they believe the current methods are too radical, 20% responded they are not radical enough. The large majority, however, responded they believe the current methods to be legitimate. At the same time, several of these also elaborated on their responses saying there is room for, and even need for, more radical methods such as sabotage and property destruction alongside with the current methods. This support for more radical methods to complement, and in some instances replace, current methods constitutes one of the main themes of the comments for this survey question. Two other thematic groupings were also distinguishable: 1) the participants who argue all current methods to be legitimate and which some explicitly include illegal acts and civil disobedience actions, and 2) those who argue that it depends – for example, on the organisation.

Slightly more than half – 55% of the participants – respond that they have definitely or probably changed their opinion within the last five years regarding whether political violence against inanimate objects or property should be viewed as legitimate to protest climate and environmental issues. *See Figure 15.* Examination of the written responses show the comments can be divided into two main thematic groupings: those who claim to have maintained the view of political violence as legitimate throughout their entire

involvement in the movement, and those who claim to have been radicalised during their time in the movement. The respondents who claim to have been radicalised over time attribute their change in attitude to being made aware of how serious and acute the climate crisis actually is and the extent of neglect by institutional politics regarding the climate and environmental issues.

**Figure 15: Current and future attitude change**



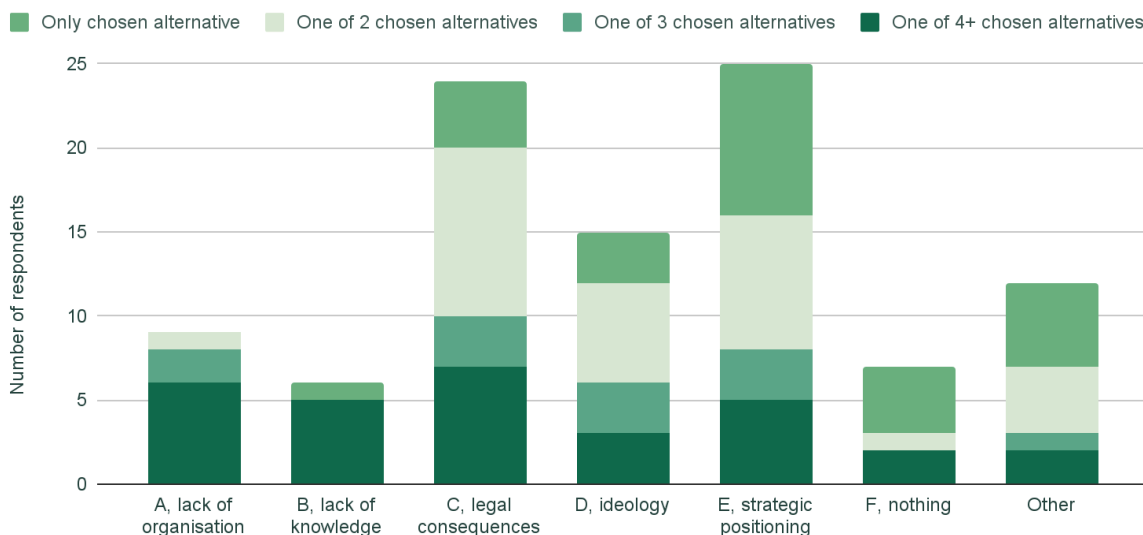
A similar outlook is presented for whether the respondents believe anything could make them change their mind now. The majority of participants are divided between “Yes, probably” and “No, probably not”, approximately 40% each. *See Figure 15.* The text answers for this question were spread out over several themes, but none of which were raised by four or more participants. The three themes raised by the most participants – three participants for each – were 1) that their attitude could be changed by an increasingly worse climate and environmental crisis, 2) that nothing could change their attitude from being positive, and 3) that they're open minded but it would depend on the specific situation. Additionally, it should be added that five participants for the first of these questions, and nine for the second, chose the “Don’t know” answer option.

Lastly, an even 75% of the respondents have in some regard been present during a discussion of methods involving political violence against inanimate objects or property within their social network (defined in the survey as *family, friends, other activists, others organised within the same organisations etc.*). Comments by the participants show these discussions have been present both within movement organisations and outside of movement contexts, for example with non-activist friends or family. Respondents also comment these discussions have remained purely theoretical.

#### 6.2.4. The deterring factors

While 14% of the participants have responded they have either considered or participated in methods involving political violence against inanimate objects and property to protest climate and environmental issues, an overwhelming majority have provided at least one reason as to why they have not. *See Figure 16.* Asked to indicate their *main reasons* for not considering or participating in political violence, most filled in two or more of the answer options. Examining Figure 16, it becomes clear this is also the case for some of the participants in the “F, nothing” category. While just over half who selected this alternative did so as their only response, the remaining chose it as one of two or more alternatives.

**Figure 16: Disincentives to participation in political violence**



The reasons given by the most respondents are fear of legal consequences and strategic positioning. Strategic positioning is also the option selected by most of those who only chose one alternative. In contrast, option “A, lack of organisation” and “B, lack of knowledge” were only chosen in combinations with other answer options. Of the 12 participants selecting the “Other” response, several raise aspects which tie into McAdam’s (1986) theory of biographical availability. These include for example age, parenthood, lack of secure income or a flexible time schedule, as well as fear of social repercussions such as being met with hate. The remaining either commented they have simply not had the opportunity, lacked suitable targets or not thought it necessary.

### 6.3. Who are the radicals?

This section begins the test for correlations between attitudes towards political violence and the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample group to unwrap if there are any differences. Since there is an awareness of the very limited possibilities for significant or generalisable results with a relatively small sample group such as this, the following bivariate analyses and regressions serve mainly as a test probe for future research.

#### 6.3.1. Gender

Research by Chermak and Gruenewald (2015) show political violence to be a male dominated phenomena. With this in mind men should be expected to have positive attitudes towards political violence against inanimate objects and property. The results confirm that the average attitude for participants identifying as men is positive, albeit only slightly, the mean value being 5.5. *See Table 1.* However, there are several participants identifying as both women and “Other” which hold significantly more positive views – as can be seen in the Figure 15 and from their respective maximum values in Table 1. While the standard deviation of 22 for men is relatively high, indicating a relatively large spread across the entire spectrum of attitudes, it is actually the lowest in comparison to the other genders. Women are slightly more negative in their average attitude, as can be seen from the negative mean value of -2.2. However, women are also the most spread out throughout the entire spectrum of the attitude score, as can be seen from the high standard deviation of 30. This means that a participant identifying

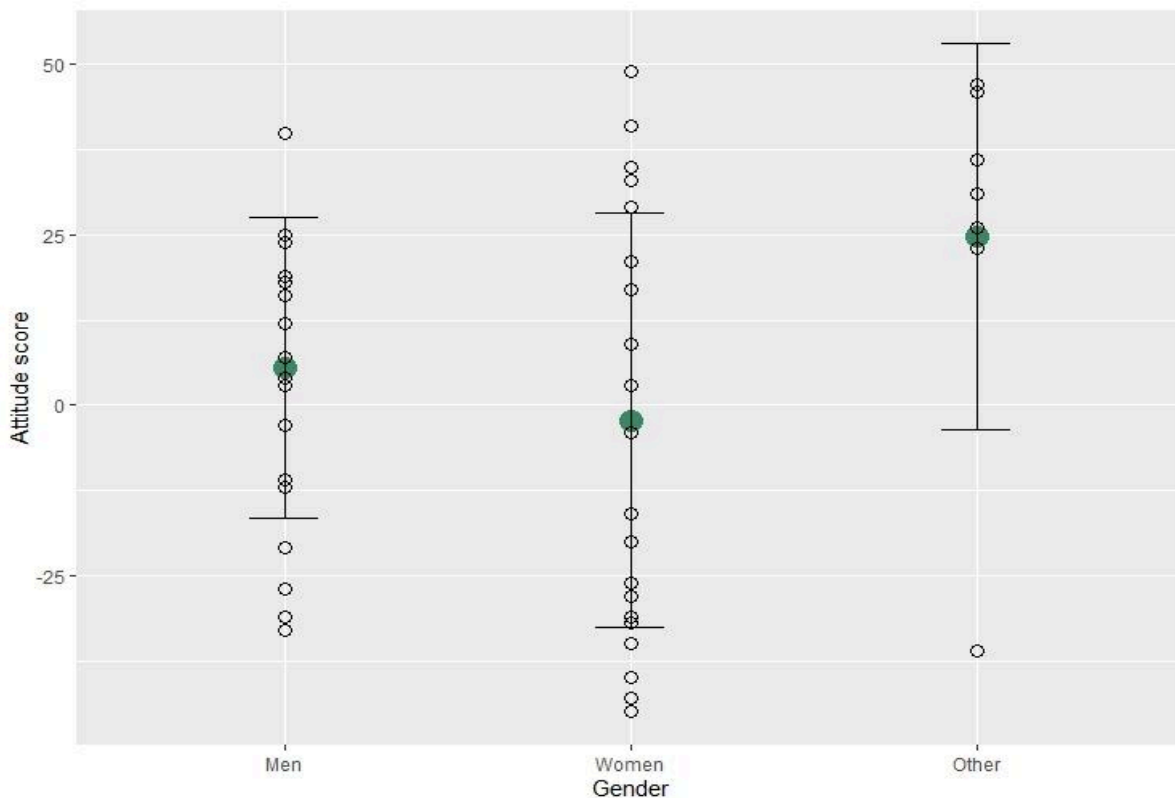


as a woman gives no indication of where her attitudes lie on the scale. See Figure 17. Finally, those who categorised themselves as “Other” are significantly more positive than both men and women – with an average as high as 25. The standard deviation of 28 indicates a similarly high spread as among women. Although, it should also be noted that the group identifying as “Other” consists of significantly fewer people. Consequently, H2:1 (participants who identify as male will have more positive attitudes toward political violence) can be neither clearly confirmed nor denied.

**Table 1: Attitude score by gender**

	<u>N</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
<u>Men</u>	20	-33	40	5.5	22
<u>Women</u>	25	-45	49	-2.2	30
<u>Other</u>	7	-36	47	25	28

**Figure 17: Scatter plot of all participants' attitude scores by gender**



NOTE – Average (green dot) and standard deviation (black lines) shown for each group.

### 6.3.2. Age

According to previous research on political violence the age groups that should have the most positive attitudes are those that are relatively young. This is partly confirmed when examining the results of the attitude score across the various age groups. The group with the highest average, and thus the most positive general attitude, are those between the ages of 15 and 24. *See Table 2.* The average for this age group is an attitude score of 21. With the 49 being the maximum score possible for the attitude score, this is a high average. The scatter plot in Figure 18 also shows that both the 15-24 and 25-34 age groups have significantly negative outliers which pulls down their average slightly. In the following age group of those between 25-34, however, there is a significant dip down to 8 – slightly positive, almost neutral – before the average goes back up to around 20 again for the 35-44 age group. The standard deviation for the two first age groups are roughly the same – 23 for the ages 15-24 and 22 for the ages 25-34. For the age group 35-44, the standard deviation is 29 – almost as high as that for participants identifying as women. Such a high standard deviation means the distribution of values are well spread out across the variable of attitudes. This in turn means that belonging to the 35-44 age group is likely not relevant for attitudes towards political violence despite a high average.

It should be noted that the next two age groups contain only four participants each. For those between the ages of 45 and 54 the average attitude score is as low as -27, suggesting a very negative general attitude towards political violence. A maximum value of -4 shows that no participant in the age group holds a positive attitude score. The average for 55-64 is also negative, although not quite as much at -8. Finally, for the ages over 65 the average attitude is again quite negative, at -17. Furthermore, the participants with the highest attitude scores, indicating those with the most positive views, within the final two age groups are both still lower – at 16 and 17 – than the average 15-24 year old.

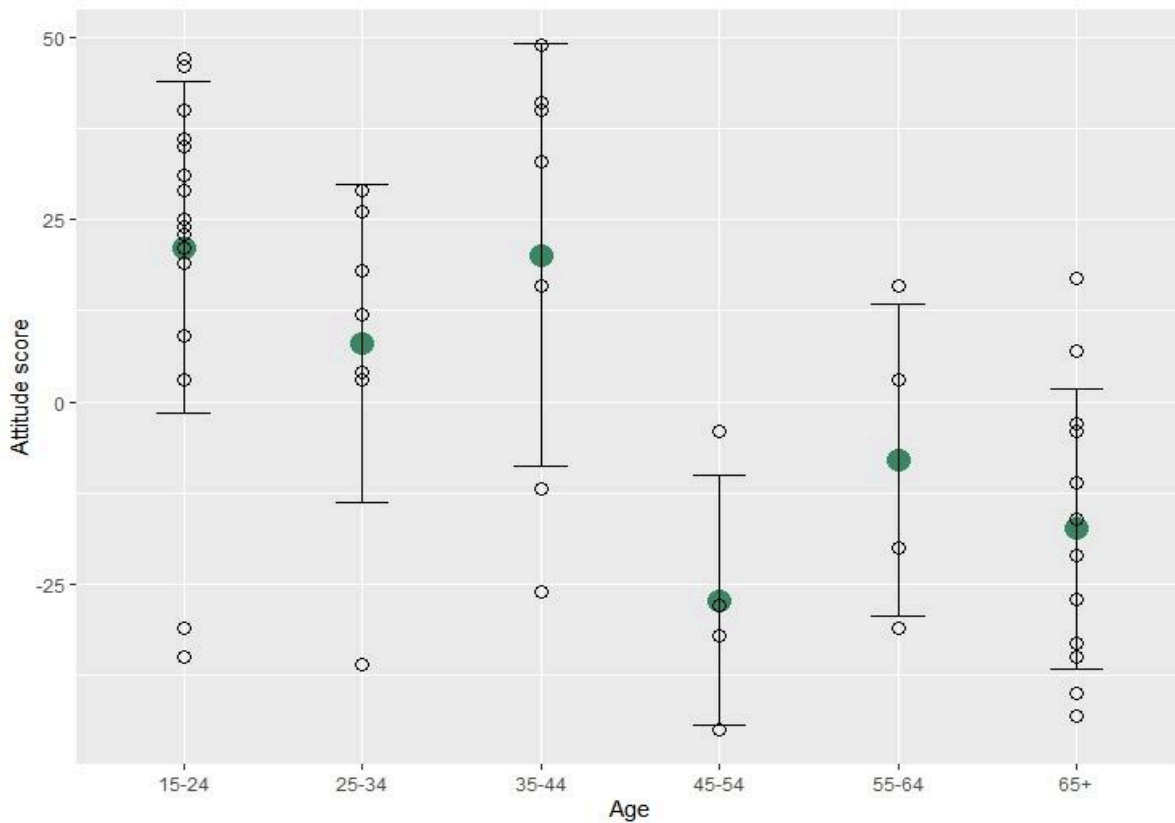
In summary, if emphasis is put on the specific age span of mid to late 20s put forward by Chermak and Gruenewald (2015) H2:2 (participants who are young will have more positive attitudes toward political violence) finds some support in the results. However, when employing a more fluid definition of young, it is clear that the three younger age

groups (15-24, 25-34 and 35-44) are significantly more positive than the older age groups (45-54, 55-64 and 65+).

**Table 2: Attitude score by age**

	<u>N</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
<u>15-24</u>	18	-35	47	21	23
<u>25-34</u>	7	-36	29	8	22
<u>35-44</u>	7	-26	49	20	29
<u>45-54</u>	4	-45	-4	-27	17
<u>55-64</u>	4	-31	16	-8	21
<u>65+</u>	12	-43	17	-17	19

**Figure 18: Scatter plot of all participants' attitude scores by age**



NOTE – Average (green dot) and standard deviation (black lines) shown for each group.

### 6.3.3. Socioeconomic status

Previous research suggests that people with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to be part of protest actions and radicalised movement groups. In the context of this thesis, this raises the question of whether higher socioeconomic statuses are more likely to participate in political violence simply because they are the ones who have the time, affordance and possibility to do so – or if they also have stronger sympathies for such activities. These results indicate the first. Not only are the two highest socioeconomic status groups – middle class and upper middle class – the groups with the lowest average, indicating more negative attitudes, but the middle class group is the only group with a negative mean value (-14) for the attitude score. *See Table 3 and Figure 19.* Inspection of Figure 19 shows several respondents in the middle class group actually have quite high attitude scores – around 20. A clear majority, however, remain negative.

In comparison, the two lowest socioeconomic statuses – no occupation and working class – have positive mean values of 12 and 26 respectively. Examination of Figure 19 shows all respondents in these two groups have a positive attitude score. This indicates that they all have an attitude towards political violence against inanimate objects and property that is somewhere between neutral and positive. The mean value of 26 for the working class group is the highest average of all groups tested, including 15-24 year olds. The standard deviation of 19 is also lower than most other groups, indicating respondents in the working class group are less spread out than others across the spectrum of attitudes. The average attitude for participants classifying themselves as lower middle class is also positive and at 19, not much lower than that for the working class. Additionally, the lower middle class has a slightly higher standard deviation of 27. However, in Figure 19 it is possible to distinguish that all but two of the participants in the lower middle class group are in fact within positive attitude scores – most quite high. The few negative participants in the group, on the other hand, are very negative – scoring below -25.

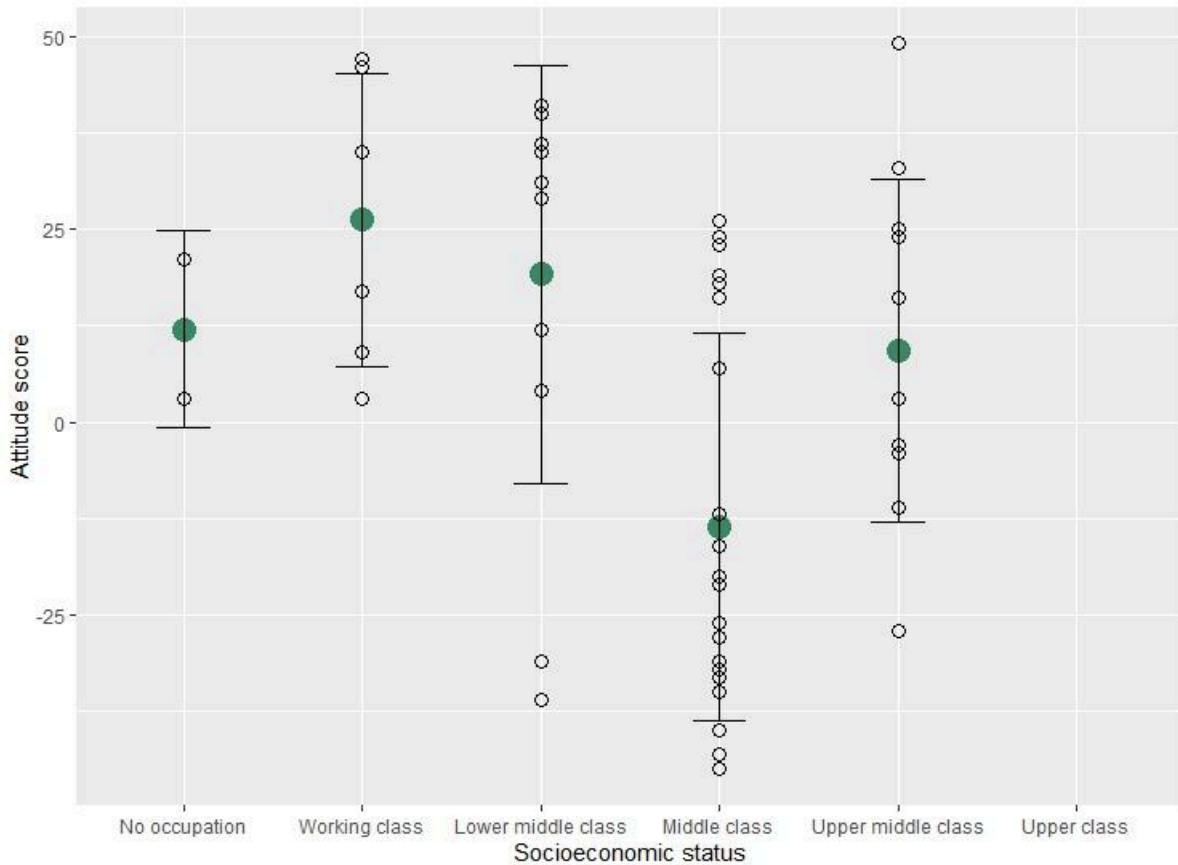
Consequently, H2:3 (participants who are of a higher socioeconomic status will have more positive attitudes toward political violence) is rejected. The reason for this can only be speculated and would provide an interesting area for future research. For example, it is

possible the strong focus on political violence directed at property resonates less with people with higher socioeconomic status as they themselves are likely to have more private property than those of lower socioeconomic status.

**Table 3: Attitude score by socioeconomic status**

	<u>N</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
<u>No occupation</u>	2	3	21	12	13
<u>Working class</u>	6	3	47	26	19
<u>Lower middle class</u>	12	-36	41	19	27
<u>Middle class</u>	21	-45	26	-14	25
<u>Upper middle class</u>	11	-27	49	9	22
<u>Upper class</u>	0	-	-	-	-

**Figure 19: Scatterplot of all participants' attitude scores by socioeconomic status**



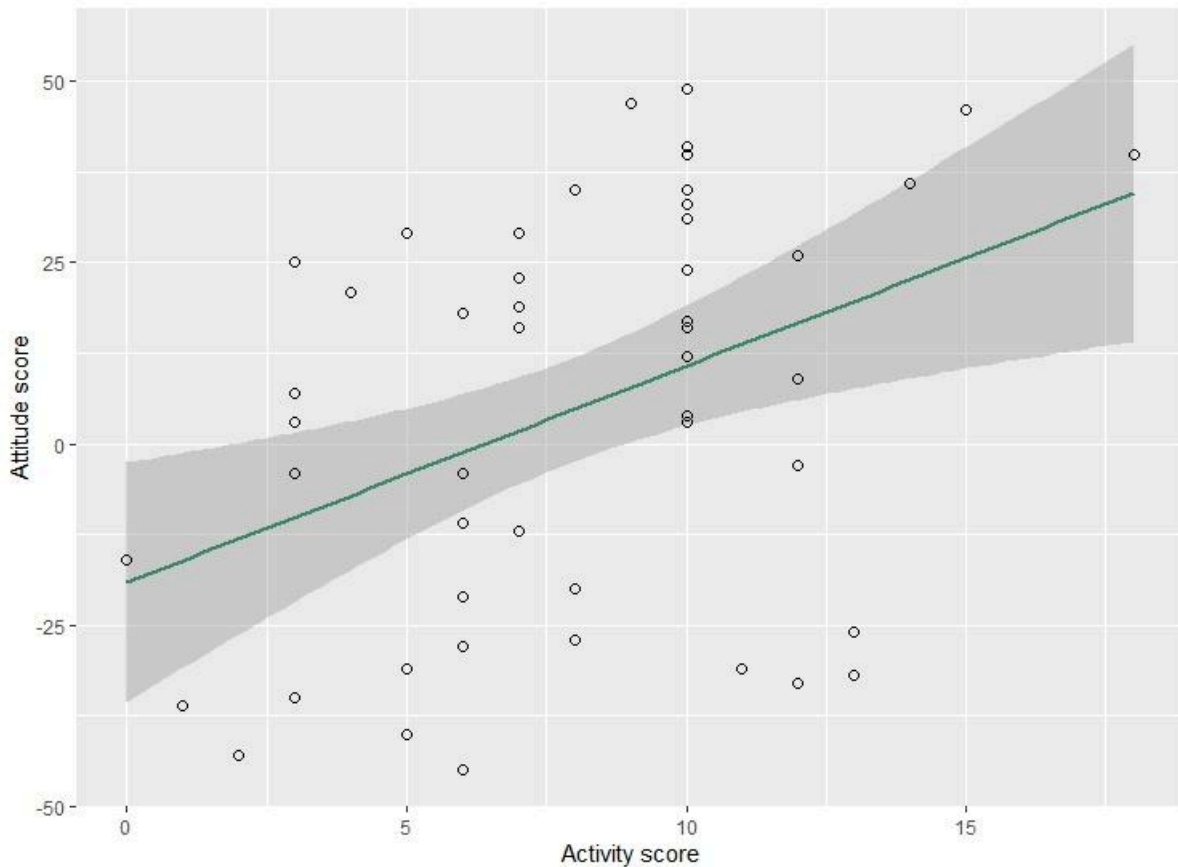
NOTE – Average (green dot) and standard deviation (black lines) shown for each group.

#### 6.3.4. Prior participation in protest activities

McAdam (1986) shows how participation in high cost/risk activism is often preceded by participation in other forms of protest. A regression analysis of the participants activity score and attitude score tests whether this is also true for attitudes. The result is presented in Figure 20. All regression values are shown in Table 4. The regressions p-value is  $<0.01^{**}$ , meaning there is reason to believe it is statistically significant. The correlation coefficient shows there is moderate support for a positive correlation between the variables, i.e. an increase in activity score correlates with an increase in attitude score. The regression line in Figure 20 has a regression coefficient – the slope of the regression line – of 2.98. However, the confidence interval – the grey band surrounding the regression line – indicates an uncertainty of the robustness of the regression coefficient, showing the possible variations of the regression line within  $<0.05^{*}$  statistical

significance. Consequently, the test of H2:4 (participants who have previously participated more in other forms of protest will have more positive attitudes toward political violence) finds moderate support when made with such a limited number of data points.

**Figure 20: Scatter plot of all participants' attitude scores by activity score.**



NOTE – Fitted with linear regression line (green line). Grey band shows the 95% confidence interval. Regression coefficient and additional values summarised in Table 4. p 0.0026 (\*\*)

### 6.3.5. Movement integration

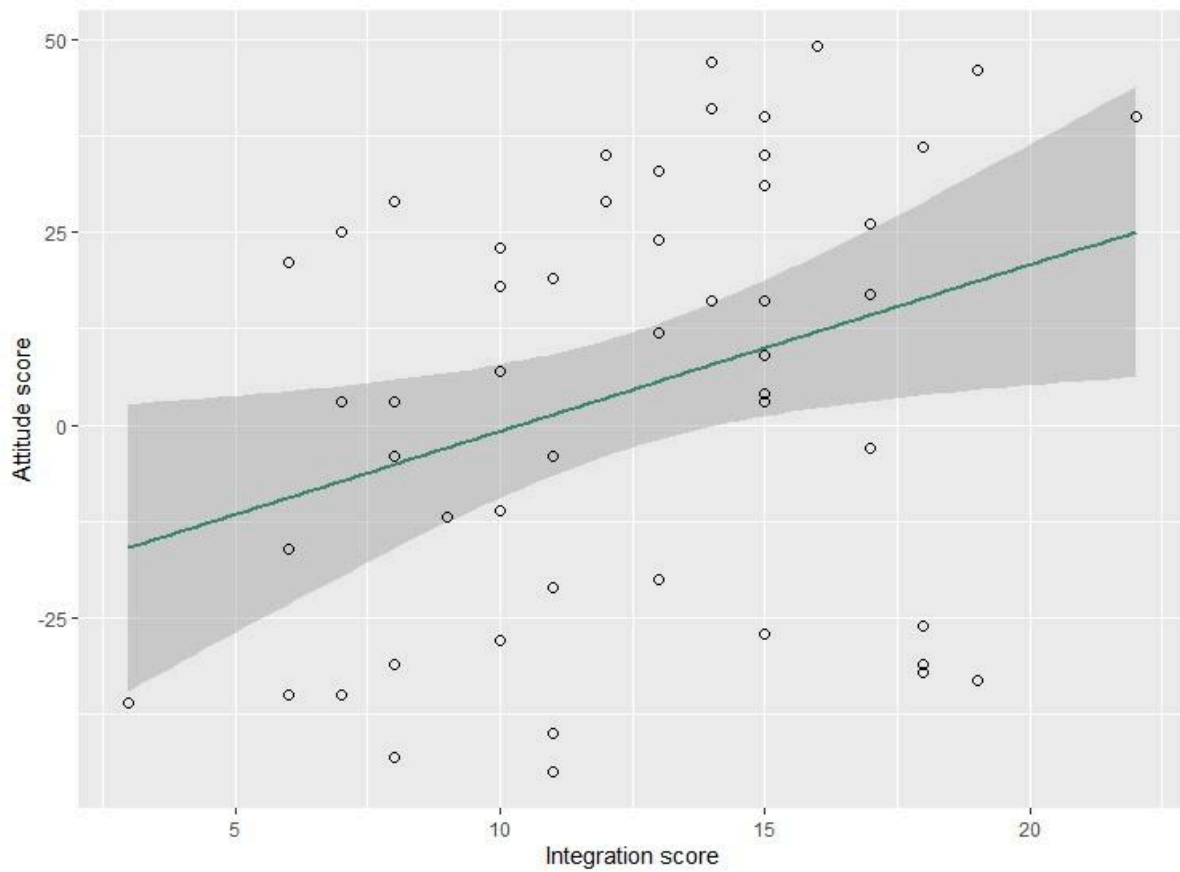
Based on della Porta's (1995) and McAdam's (1986) research which show the relevance of movement involvement and integration into activist social networks for participation, the hypothesis is formed that this will also be the case for attitudes. This hypothesis is tested through a regression analysis of the participants integration score and attitude score. The result is presented in Figure 21 and all regression values are shown in Table 4.

The regressions p-value is  $<0.05^*$ , meaning it is just within the span of what can be considered statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.32 shows there is low support for a correlation between the variables. Like for prior protest participation this correlation is positive meaning an increase in integration score would correlate with an increase in attitude score. The regression line in Figure 21 has a regression coefficient of 2.15. Similarly to the regression for prior protest participation above, the confidence interval show that for the number of values in the data, a linear regression line would be possible anywhere within that area while remaining at a 95%, or  $<0.05^*$ , certainty of statistical significance. Finally, the test of H2:5 (participants who are more integrated into the environmental movement will have more positive attitudes toward political violence) finds limited support when made with such a limited number of data points.

There could be many reasons for this low correlation. For example, there could be not enough variation in integration within the sample group, or the survey question did not sufficiently capture the existing variations. In a more large-scale survey it is possible this could be remedied with more explicit questions, for example about the nature of connections to other activists, without affecting the privacy of the participants. Another possibility could be that, while McAdam (1986: 77-79) talks about high cost/risk activists usually being more “organised” in the movement, this may just not be the case for political violence as the illegal nature of acts could require networks to be less official and traceable.



**Figure 21: Scatter plot of all participants' attitude scores by integration score.**



NOTE – Fitted with linear regression line (green line). Grey band shows the 95% confidence interval. Regression coefficient and additional values summarised in Table 4. p 0.02 (\*)

**Table 4: OLS regression results for attitude score**

	<u>Regression coefficient</u>	<u>Standard deviation error</u>	<u>Correlation coefficient (Pearson)</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>p-value</u>
<u>Activity score</u>	2.98	0.94	0.41	3.17	0.0026 **
<u>Integration score</u>	2.15	0.90	0.32	2.39	0.02 *

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

This thesis has aimed to increase the knowledge and understanding of attitudes towards political violence among people engaged in the Swedish environmental movement. This was done through a mixed-methods research design using primary material gathered through a survey. The thesis examined how the survey respondents view political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, as well as whether there is a particular demographic among the respondents which is more inclined to have positive attitudes towards the use of methods involving political violence.

The main findings include, firstly, support for the thesis hypothesis based on the theory of Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2012; 2015) and aimed at answering the main research question of *how people engaged in the environmental movement view the use of political violence against inanimate objects and property*. The hypothesis that some of the participants will have positive attitudes towards political violence (H1) is clearly confirmed. Based on the results of the survey sample group there is a substantial share within the Swedish environmental movement that holds positive views of political violence against inanimate objects and property.

While the results do not confirm that there are positive attitudes towards political violence for the specific reasons raised by Alimi et al., that is not the objective of the thesis. The research question makes no claim to answer *why* any particular views or attitudes are present or not, only that they are present. There is, however, indications in the results, primarily in relation to the text answers, which support these aspects of the theory as well. Several of the survey questions, particularly those referring to a change of attitude, received written elaborations where the respondents themselves claimed their views to be related to or affected by the interactions identified by the theory. The interaction especially prominent in this case is that between the movement and political environment, with several references being made to a deterioration after the change of government in 2022.

The second main finding is that, while many are positive, almost as many are negative. In combination with the participants tendency to favour answer options along the extremes of the scales over more neutral alternatives, this indicates a distinct division within the environmental movement over the attitude towards methods involving political violence. Although, just as the reasons for the positive attitudes should be taken into consideration, so should the reasons for the negative attitudes. One of the predominating motivations given for negative attitudes towards political violence is strategic. Many are, like the leadership of the organisations they are involved with, so convinced of the strategic advantage of refraining from political violence that we may never find out its accuracy. Studies using the only empirical example of systematic use of political violence against inanimate objects and property in the context of the environmental movement – the ELF – are unsuitable to draw border conclusions. A society and criminal system like the United States in the 1990s are hardly fit to make generalisations for neither the climate and environmental situation in 2024 nor the extremely different societal context of Sweden. The effects of political violence in terms of widespread sabotage and destruction of property are unknown. Unfortunately, they will remain so until social movement scholars have new empirical data to research.

The third and final main finding in relation to the thesis main research question is that there is a significant gap between the attitudes towards supporting political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, and readiness for participation. In examining the results it becomes apparent that while a majority of the respondents characterise themselves as positive, very few indicate a willingness to turn these attitudes into actions. More claim to consider bridging this gap between support and participation when referring to an unspecified future. It is clear that people engaged in the environmental movement are already asking themselves when it's time to escalate, only so far the answer for the overwhelming majority is — not quite yet.

Regarding the thesis sub-question of *who within the environmental movement are inclined to have positive attitudes towards the use of political violence directed at inanimate objects and property*, the results have been mixed. Based on a collection of

theories of socio-demographic characteristics and movement involvement conducive to participation in both environmental activism in general and higher-level political violence, five hypotheses (H2:1, H2:2, H2:3, H2:4 and H2:5) were formulated to test for similar correlations with attitudes to lower-level political violence. Due to the limitations of a relatively small sample group the formulation and testing of the five hypotheses mainly served the purpose of exploring this new data for possible relationships between variables of interest for further research.

The key findings in relation to the thesis subquestion are as follows: H2:1 inconclusive, H2:2 moderate support, H2:3 rejected, H2:4 moderate support, and H2:5 low support. The two hypotheses which found moderate support in the results are the ones referring to age and prior protest participation. The thesis found that younger respondents, as well as respondents who had previously participated in more protest activities had a tendency towards more positive views for political violence. However, to be able to make definitive statements about these possible correlations further research would be required, preferably with a larger sample group. Additionally, the hypothesis referring to socioeconomic status which was rejected by the results also provides possible insights. If the thesis finding that there is no correlation between the variables of socioeconomic status and attitudes are solid this would indicate that the overrepresentation of those with higher socioeconomic status in participation, might actually only be a matter of practical and financial possibilities to take on additional costs and risks – since apparently more or less anyone can hold the opinion that political violence is legitimate and should be practised to a higher degree within the movement.

Finally, there are a number of other possibilities for future research which could be recommended based on this study. For example, similar studies where distinctions are made between movement organisations would be interesting to examine whether attitudes vary across different organisations. Furthermore, the results of the thesis shows research with a distinction between targets for movement action would be both interesting and relevant. These two could be combined to examine the effect of abstract or concrete movement targets on attitudes for political violence against inanimate objects and

property. Based on the results presented in the thesis a difference could be expected between climate organisations targeting abstract phenomena such as the 1.5°C threshold and more local environmental organisations with concrete and physical goals and targets, such as stopping the construction of a mine. Although the thesis has added to the picture of political violence, there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding of “how and when the willingness to engage in violence is translated into violent behavior”. (Alimi et al. 2015: 8) We now know there are those with positive views of political violence within the Swedish environmental movement. This brings us to the logical next question – what's holding them back? An indication of possible aspects of interests can be distinguished from the result of this thesis, particularly the section on deterring factors, and would be a fruitful focus for further research.

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## Appendix A: Survey questions

In original language of survey - Swedish:

<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
Frågor om deltagarna och deras sociala och politiska engagemang				
DEMO1	Kön	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man</li> <li>• Kvinna</li> <li>• Annat</li> </ul>	Nej
DEMO2	Ålder	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15-24</li> <li>• 25-34</li> <li>• 35-44</li> <li>• 45-54</li> <li>• 55-64</li> <li>• 65+</li> </ul>	Nej
DEMO3	Upplevd socioekonomisk klass?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ej sysselsatt</li> <li>• Arbetarklass</li> <li>• Lägre medelklass</li> <li>• Medelklass</li> <li>• Övre medelklass</li> <li>• Överklass</li> </ul>	Nej
DEMO4	Hur länge har du varit engagerad i klimat- och miljörelsen?	<i>engagerad = t.ex. medlem i miljöorganisation, deltagit i demonstrationer/ protester</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindre än 1 år</li> <li>• 1-2 år</li> <li>• 3-5 år</li> <li>• 6-10 år</li> <li>• Över 10 år</li> </ul>	Nej
DEMO5	Har du deltagit i någon form av protest för miljön/klimatet?  Om ja: Vilken eller vilka protest-metoder deltog du i?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ja</li> <li>• Nej</li> </ul> <p>Om ja:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Namninsamling</li> <li>• Demonstrationsmarsch</li> <li>• Sit-in</li> <li>• Blockad (av väg eller byggnad etc.)</li> <li>• Sabotage</li> <li>• Annat, *specificera*</li> </ul>	Ja - specificera alternativ
DEMO6	Har du deltagit i någon form av protest för andra politiska frågor?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ja</li> <li>• Nej</li> </ul>	Ja - specificera alternativ

<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
	Om ja: Vilken eller vilka protest-metoder deltog du i?		Om ja: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Namninsamling</li> <li>• Demonstrationsmarsch</li> <li>• Sit-in</li> <li>• Blockad (av väg eller byggnad etc.)</li> <li>• Sabotage</li> <li>• Annat, *specificera*</li> </ul>	
DEMO7	Har du tidigare varit engagerad i någon annan social rörelse?  Om ja: Vilken/vilka?	<i>social rörelse = mer eller mindre organiserad grupp med mål att uppnå någon form av social eller politisk förändring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ja</li> <li>• Nej</li> </ul> Om ja: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kvinnorörelsen</li> <li>• Hbtqi- rörelsen</li> <li>• Arbeterrörelsen</li> <li>• Fredsrörelsen</li> <li>• Annat, *specificera*</li> </ul>	Ja - specificera alternativ
DEMO8	Hur många organisationer är du medlem eller på annat sätt organiserad i inom miljörelsen?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inga</li> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2-5</li> <li>• Över 5</li> </ul>	Nej
DEMO9	Hur många organisationer är du medlem eller på annat sätt organiserad i totalt?	<i>(även inkluderat andra sociala rörelser, fackföreningar etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inga</li> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2-5</li> <li>• Över 5</li> </ul>	Nej
<p>Generella frågor om deltagarnas syn på <i>politiskt våld</i></p> <p><i>politiskt våld = handlingar inriktade på att tillfoga individer och/eller egendom fysisk, psykisk eller symbolisk skada, i syfte att påverka eller motstå politisk, social och/eller kulturell förändring (Bosi — Malthaner 2015:439). Denna uppsats undersöker endast politiskt våld riktade mot materiella objekt och egendom, exempelvis maskiner eller infrastruktur som är delaktig eller bidragande till miljöförstöring. Alla typer av politiskt våld som riktas mot människor eller djur är exkluderade ur den definition som används i denna uppsats.</i></p>				
GEN1	Hur ser du på användandet av metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom för att protestera viktiga samhällsfrågor generellt?	Flera betydande sociala rörelser har haft radikala flanker/grupper som använt sig av metoder vilka har innefattat olika grader och	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positiv</li> <li>• Neutral</li> <li>• Negativ</li> </ul>	Ja - gemensam med GEN2

<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
		former av politiskt våld, t.ex. medborgarrättsrörelsen i USA och kvinnorrättsrörelsen i Storbritannien. <i>radikal = användande av extremare, mer radikala metoder; däribland politiskt våld</i>		
GEN2	Hur ser du på användandet av metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom för att protestera klimat- och miljöfrågor?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Positiv</li> <li>● Neutral</li> <li>● Negativ</li> </ul>	Ja - gemensam med GEN2
GEN3	Tycker du att den svenska miljörelsens nuvarande metoder är effektiva för att uppnå nödvändig och önskad förändring för klimatet och miljön?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ja</li> <li>● Nej</li> </ul>	Ja
GEN4	Tycker du att den svenska miljörelsens nuvarande metoder är <i>legitima</i> ?	<i>legitim = moraliskt berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i> <i>radikal = användande av extremare, mer radikala metoder; däribland politiskt våld</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ja</li> <li>● Nej, för radikala</li> <li>● Nej, inte tillräckligt radikala</li> </ul>	Ja
GEN5	Hur benägen är du att stötta metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom i nuläget?	<i>stötta = ta verbalt ställningstagande för</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, inte alls benägen</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> </ul>	Nej

<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10, väldigt benägen</li> </ul>	
GEN6	Hur benägen är du att delta i metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom i nuläget?	<i>delta i = själv vara delaktig i utförandet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1, inte alls benägen</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> <li>• 6</li> <li>• 7</li> <li>• 8</li> <li>• 9</li> <li>• 10, väldigt benägen</li> </ul>	Nej
GEN7	Hur benägen är du att stötta metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom i framtiden om utvecklingen för klimat och miljö fortsätter i nuvarande riktning?	<i>stötta = ta verbalt ställningstagande för</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1, inte alls benägen</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> <li>• 6</li> <li>• 7</li> <li>• 8</li> <li>• 9</li> <li>• 10, väldigt benägen</li> </ul>	Nej
GEN8	Hur benägen är du att delta i metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom i framtiden om utvecklingen för klimat och miljö fortsätter i nuvarande riktning?	<i>delta i = själv vara delaktig i utförandet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1, inte alls benägen</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> <li>• 6</li> <li>• 7</li> <li>• 8</li> <li>• 9</li> <li>• 10, väldigt benägen</li> </ul>	Nej
GEN9	Har du inom ditt kontaktnät närvarat vid någon diskussion kring användandet av metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom?	<i>kontaktnät = familj, vänskapskrets, andra aktivister, andra organiserade inom samma organisationer etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ja</li> <li>• Nej</li> </ul>	Ja
GEN10	Har du de senaste 5 åren	<i>legitim = moraliskt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ja, absolut</li> <li>• Ja, förmodligen</li> </ul>	Ja

<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
	ändrat uppfattning kring huruvida metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom bör ses som legitimt för att protestera klimat- och miljöfrågor?	<i>berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nej, troligtvis inte</li> <li>● Nej, absolut inte</li> <li>● Vill inte svara</li> <li>● Vet ej</li> </ul>	
GEN11	Skulle något kunna få dig att ändra uppfattning kring huruvida metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom bör ses som legitimt för att protestera klimat- och miljöfrågor?	<i>legitim = moraliskt berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ja, absolut</li> <li>● Ja, förmodligen</li> <li>● Nej, troligtvis inte</li> <li>● Nej, absolut inte</li> <li>● Vill inte svara</li> <li>● Vet ej</li> </ul>	Ja
GEN12	Vad är huvudorsaken till att du inte övervägt eller deltagit i metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom för att protestera klimat- och miljöfrågor?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A, brist på organisation och kontakt med likasinnade</li> <li>● B, brist på kunskap om hur</li> <li>● C, rädsla för juridiska konsekvenser</li> <li>● D, ideologiska åsikter</li> <li>● E, strategiskt ställningstagande</li> <li>● F, ingenting/det har jag</li> <li>● Annat, *specificera*</li> </ul>	Ja - specificera alternativ
GEN13	Skulle något kunna få dig att överväga att personligen delta i metoder som innefattar politiskt våld mot materiella objekt eller egendom för att protestera klimat- och miljöfrågor?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ja, absolut</li> <li>● Ja, förmodligen</li> <li>● Nej, troligtvis inte</li> <li>● Nej, absolut inte</li> <li>● Vill inte svara</li> <li>● Vet ej</li> </ul>	Ja
<p>Specifika frågor om deltagarnas syn på <i>politiskt våld</i></p> <p><i>politiskt våld = handlingar inriktade på att tillfoga individer och/eller egendom fysisk, psykisk eller symbolisk skada, i syfte att påverka eller motstå politisk, social och/eller kulturell förändring (Bosi —</i></p>				

<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
<p><i>Malthaner 2015:439). Denna uppsats undersöker endast politiskt våld riktade mot materiella objekt och egendom, exempelvis maskiner eller infrastruktur som är delaktig eller bidragande till miljöförstöring. Alla typer av politiskt våld som riktas mot människor eller djur är exkluderade ur den definition som används i denna uppsats.</i></p>				
SPEC1	<p>Hur legitim anser du att metoden i följande scenarier är?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Punktera däck på innerstads SUVar i syfte att minska antalet överflödiga miljöovänliga bilar</p>	<p><i>legitim = moraliskt berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, inte alls legitim</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, väldigt legitim</li> </ul>	Nej
SPEC2	<p>Hur legitim anser du att metoden i följande scenarier är?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Skada eller förstöra en skogsmaskin i syfte att ta den ur drift</p>	<p><i>legitim = moraliskt berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, inte alls legitim</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, väldigt legitim</li> </ul>	Nej
SPEC3	<p>Hur legitim anser du att metoden i följande scenarier är?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Skada eller förstöra järnväg/väg/landningsbana/eller annan infrastruktur som exklusivt används för industrier (ej privatpersoner) i syfte att stoppa eller bromsa verksamheten</p>	<p><i>legitim = moraliskt berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, inte alls legitim</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, väldigt legitim</li> </ul>	Nej
SPEC4	<p>Hur legitim anser du att metoden i följande scenarier är?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Skada eller förstöra nybygge eller utbyggnad av gruva eller</p>	<p><i>legitim = moraliskt berättigad, försvarbar, befogad. Anses rimlig och/eller proportionerlig.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, inte alls legitim</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> </ul>	Nej



<u>Kod</u>	<u>Fråga</u>	<u>Inkluderade definitioner</u>	<u>Svarsalternativ</u>	<u>Möjligt textsvar</u>
	annan fossil industri i syfte att minska eller ta verksamheten ur bruk samt minska lönsamheten för ny investering i industrin		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6</li> <li>• 7</li> <li>• 8</li> <li>• 9</li> <li>• 10, väldigt legitim</li> </ul>	

English translation:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
Questions about the participant and their social and political involvement				
DEMO1	Gender	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man</li> <li>• Woman</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	No
DEMO2	Age	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15-24</li> <li>• 25-34</li> <li>• 35-44</li> <li>• 45-54</li> <li>• 55-64</li> <li>• 65+</li> </ul>	No
DEMO3	Perceived socioeconomic status?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No occupation</li> <li>• Working class</li> <li>• Lower middle class</li> <li>• Middle class</li> <li>• Upper middle class</li> <li>• Upper class</li> </ul>	No
DEMO4	How long have you been involved in the climate and environmental movement?	<i>involved = e.g. member of an environmental organisation, participating in demonstrations/ protests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 1 year</li> <li>• 1-2 years</li> <li>• 3-5 years</li> <li>• 6-10 years</li> <li>• Over 10 years</li> </ul>	No
DEMO5	Have you participated in any form of protest for the climate/environment?  If yes: Which method of protest did	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p>_____</p> <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign petition</li> <li>• Demonstration</li> </ul>	Yes - specify option

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
	you participate in?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● march</li> <li>● Sit-in</li> <li>● Blockade</li> <li>● Sabotage</li> <li>● Other, *specify*</li> </ul>	
DEMO6	<p>Have you participated in any form of protest for other political issues?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>If yes: Which method of protest did you participate in?</p>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes</li> <li>● No</li> </ul> <p>_____</p> <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sign petition</li> <li>● Demonstration march</li> <li>● Sit-in</li> <li>● Blockade</li> <li>● Sabotage</li> <li>● Other, *specify*</li> </ul>	Yes - specify option
DEMO7	<p>Have you previously been involved in any other social movement?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>If yes: Which one/ones?</p>	<i>social movement = more or less loosely organised group with the goal of achieving some form of social or political change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes</li> <li>● No</li> </ul> <p>_____</p> <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women's movement</li> <li>● Lgbtq- movement</li> <li>● Labour movement</li> <li>● Peace movement</li> <li>● Other, *specify*</li> </ul>	Yes - specify option
DEMO8	How many organisations are you a member of or otherwise organised within in the environmental movement?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> <li>● 1</li> <li>● 2-5</li> <li>● Over 5</li> </ul>	No
DEMO9	How many organisations are you a member of or otherwise organised within in total?	<i>(including other social movements, labour unions etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> <li>● 1</li> <li>● 2-5</li> <li>● Over 5</li> </ul>	No
<p>General questions about the participant's views on <i>political violence</i></p> <p><i>political violence = actions inflicting physical, psychological, and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change (Bosi — Malthaner 2015:439). This thesis only examines political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, for example machinery or infrastructure complicit in or contributing to environmental destruction. All kinds of political violence directed at persons or animals fall outside of the definition employed in this thesis.</i></p>				

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
GEN1	How do you view the use of methods involving <i>political violence</i> against inanimate objects and property to protest political issues in general?	Several significant social movements have had radical flanks that have used methods involving political violence, e.g. the civil rights movement in the United States and the women's suffrage movement in the United Kingdom <i>radical = using more extreme, radical methods, including political violence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Positive</li> <li>● Neutral</li> <li>● Negative</li> </ul>	Yes - shared with GEN2
GEN2	How do you view the use of methods involving <i>political violence</i> against inanimate objects and property to protest climate and environmental issues?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Positive</li> <li>● Neutral</li> <li>● Negative</li> </ul>	Yes - shared with GEN1
GEN3	Do you think that the Swedish environmental movement's current methods are effective in achieving the necessary and desired change for the climate and the environment?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes</li> <li>● No</li> </ul>	Yes
GEN4	Do you think that the current methods of the Swedish environmental movement are <i>legitimate</i> ?	<i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted.</i> <i>Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i> <i>radical = using more extreme, radical methods, including political violence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes</li> <li>● No, too radical</li> <li>● No, not radical enough</li> </ul>	Yes
GEN5	How likely are you to <b>support</b> methods involving political violence against inanimate	<i>support = verbally take a stand for</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all likely</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> </ul>	No

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
	objects or property currently?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely likely</li> </ul>	
GEN6	How likely are you to <b>participate in</b> methods involving political violence against inanimate objects or property currently?	<i>participate in = be involved in the execution yourself</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all likely</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely likely</li> </ul>	No
GEN7	How likely are you to <b>support</b> methods involving political violence against inanimate objects or property in the future, if the climate and environment continues to develop in the current direction?	<i>support = verbally take a stand for</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all likely</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely likely</li> </ul>	No
GEN8	How likely are you to <b>participate in</b> methods involving political violence against inanimate objects or property in the future, if the climate and environment continues to develop in the current direction?	<i>participate in = be involved in the execution yourself</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all likely</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely likely</li> </ul>	No
GEN9	Have you, within your social network, been present at any discussion of the use of methods involving <i>political</i>	<i>social network = e.g. family, friends, other activists, others organised within the</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes</li> <li>● No</li> </ul>	Yes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
	<i>violence</i> against inanimate objects and property?	<i>same organisations, etc.</i>		
GEN10	Have you, in the last 5 years, changed your opinion about whether methods involving <i>political violence</i> against inanimate objects and property should be considered <i>legitimate</i> for protesting climate and environmental issues?	<i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted. Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes, definitely</li> <li>● Yes, probably</li> <li>● No, probably not</li> <li>● No, definitely not</li> <li>● Don't want to answer</li> <li>● Don't know</li> </ul>	Yes
GEN11	Could anything make you change your opinion about whether methods involving <i>political violence</i> against inanimate objects and property should be considered <i>legitimate</i> for protesting climate and environmental issues?	<i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted. Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes, definitely</li> <li>● Yes, probably</li> <li>● No, probably not</li> <li>● No, definitely not</li> <li>● Don't want to answer</li> <li>● Don't know</li> </ul>	Yes
GEN12	What is the main reason you have not considered or participated in methods involving <i>political violence</i> against inanimate objects or property to protest climate and environmental issues?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A, lack of organisation</li> <li>● B, lack of knowledge</li> <li>● C, legal consequences</li> <li>● D, ideology</li> <li>● E, strategic positioning</li> <li>● F, nothing</li> <li>● Other, *specify*</li> </ul>	Yes - specify option
GEN13	Could anything make you consider personally participating in methods involving <i>political violence</i> against inanimate objects or property to protest climate and environmental issues?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes, definitely</li> <li>● Yes, probably</li> <li>● No, probably not</li> <li>● No, definitely not</li> <li>● Don't want to answer</li> <li>● Don't know</li> </ul>	Yes
Specific questions about the participant's views on <i>political violence</i>				

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
<p><i>political violence = actions inflicting physical, psychological, and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change (Bosi — Malthaner 2015:439). This thesis only examines political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, for example machinery or infrastructure complicit in or contributing to environmental destruction. All kinds of political violence directed at persons or animals fall outside of the definition employed in this thesis.</i></p>				
SPEC1	<p>How legitimate would you consider the method in the following scenarios?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Flattening tires on inner-city SUVs in order to reduce the number of inessential environmentally destructive cars</p>	<p><i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted.</i></p> <p><i>Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all legitimate</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely legitimate</li> </ul>	No
SPEC2	<p>How legitimate would you consider the method in the following scenarios?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Damage or destroy a lumber machine with the aim of taking it out of service</p>	<p><i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted.</i></p> <p><i>Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all legitimate</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely legitimate</li> </ul>	No
SPEC3	<p>How legitimate would you consider the method in the following scenarios?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Damage or destroy railway/road/runway/or other infrastructure used exclusively for environmentally destructive industries (not private persons) with the aim of stopping or slowing down operations</p>	<p><i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted.</i></p> <p><i>Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all legitimate</li> <li>● 2</li> <li>● 3</li> <li>● 4</li> <li>● 5</li> <li>● 6</li> <li>● 7</li> <li>● 8</li> <li>● 9</li> <li>● 10, extremely legitimate</li> </ul>	No
SPEC4	<p>How legitimate would you consider the method in the following scenarios?</p>	<p><i>legitimate = morally justifiable, defensible, warranted.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1, not at all legitimate</li> <li>● 2</li> </ul>	No

<u>Code</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Included definitions</u>	<u>Answer options</u>	<u>Added option of text answer</u>
	<p>_____</p> <p>Damage or destroy new construction or expansion of a mine or other fossil industry with the aim of reducing decommissioning and the profitability of new investment in the industry</p>	<p><i>Considered to be reasonable and/or proportionate.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4</li> <li>• 5</li> <li>• 6</li> <li>• 7</li> <li>• 8</li> <li>• 9</li> <li>• 10, extremely legitimate</li> </ul>	

# Appendix B: Survey information to participants

In original language of survey - Swedish:

## **Nedan hittar du information om projektet!**

### **Vad handlar projektet om?**

Jag är student på Masterprogrammet i Statsvetenskap och skriver just nu på min masteruppsats som syftar till att undersöka åsikter och attityder kring protestmetoder innefattande politiskt våld mot icke-levande objekt eller egendom i syfte att störa eller förstöra miljöförstörande verksamhet eller infrastruktur. Enkäten består av frågor om ditt engagemang i miljörörelsen, din syn på olika protestmetoder, vad du anser vara radikalt, legitimt och effektivt.

*Politiskt våld* definieras som handlingar inriktade på att tillfoga individer och/eller egendom fysisk, psykisk eller symbolisk skada, i syfte att påverka eller motstå politisk, social och/eller kulturell förändring (Bosi — Malthaner 2015:439). Denna uppsats undersöker endast politiskt våld riktade mot materiella objekt och egendom, exempelvis maskiner eller infrastruktur som är delaktig eller bidragande till miljöförstöring. Alla typer av politiskt våld som riktas mot människor eller djur är exkluderade ur den definition som används i denna uppsats.

### **Deltagande i projektet**

Du har blivit inbjuden att delta eftersom du är engagerad i en svensk klimat- eller miljöorganisation.

Deltagandet är frivilligt och du kan när som helst sluta svara på frågeformuläret. Du som deltar gör detta anonymt och det kommer inte att vara möjligt att identifiera vem som har gett varje svar. Insamlad data kommer att hanteras varsamt och i enlighet med GDPR.

### **Vad behöver jag göra?**

Att fylla i frågeformuläret/enkäten tar cirka 10-15 minuter. Du ombeds vänligen att svara på frågorna så ärligt som möjligt, för att resultaten av studien ska vara närmare verkligheten. Frågorna är utformade som flervalsoalternativ men flera har även en textruta där möjlighet finns att motivera ett svar närmare med några rader, detta är inte obligatoriskt men uppmuntras.

### **Vad händer om jag har frågor?**

Om du har fler frågor om undersökningen eller om du vill veta mer om resultatet av studien kan du kontakta mig via e-post.

Harriet Tollmar Thempo, Statsvetenskapliga Institutionen vid Lunds Universitet  
ha6502to-s@student.lu.se

***Tack så mycket för ditt deltagande och hjälp! Ha en fin dag!***



English translation:

**Below you can find information about the project!**

**What is the project about?**

I am a student at the Master's Program in Political Science and I am currently writing my Master's thesis, which aims to investigate opinions and attitudes regarding protest methods including political violence against non-living objects or property with the aim of disrupting or destroying environmentally destructive activities or infrastructure. The survey consists of questions about your involvement in the environmental movement, your view of different methods of protest, what you consider to be radical, legitimate and effective.

Political violence is defined as actions inflicting physical, psychological, and symbolic damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change (Bosi — Malthaner 2015:439). This thesis only examines political violence directed at inanimate objects and property, for example machinery or infrastructure complicit in or contributing to environmental destruction. All kinds of political violence directed at persons or animals fall outside of the definition employed in this thesis.

**Participation in the project**

You have been invited to participate because you are involved in a Swedish climate- or environmental organisation.

Participation is voluntary and you can stop answering the questionnaire at any point. All participants are anonymous and it will not be possible to identify who has given each answer. The gathered data will be handled carefully and in accordance with the GDPR.

**What do I need to do?**

Filling out the survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. You are kindly asked to reply to the questions as honestly as possible, for the results of the study to be closer to reality. The questions are designed as multiple-choice options. However several questions also have a text box where it is possible to elaborate on an answer in more detail with a few lines, this is not mandatory but encouraged.

**What if I have questions?**

If you have any more questions about the survey or you would like to learn about the results of the study you can contact me via email.

Harriet Tollmar Thempo, Department of Political Science at Lund University  
ha6502to-s@student.lu.se

***Thank you very much for your participation and help! Have a great day!***

# Appendix C: Survey information to approached organisations

In original language - Swedish:

Ämnesrad: Bidra till forskning om protest-metoder inom miljörörelsen

## **Hej!**

Mitt namn är Harriet Tollmar Thempo, jag läser en master i statsvetenskap på Lunds universitet. Jag skriver nu under våren min Masteruppsats som ämnar via en enkätundersökning studera attityder och åsikter hos personer engagerade i miljöfrågan.

## **Varför kontaktar jag er?**

Ni är en av flera svenska organisationer fokuserade på klimat- och miljöfrågor som jag kontaktar i hopp om att ni kan tänka er att distribuera enkäten till era medlemmar.

Detta skulle vara till stor hjälp för att arbetet ska nå ut till den tänkta målgruppen så effektivt som möjligt samt säkerställa de bästa chanserna för tillräckligt många svar och skulle därför vara ovärderligt!

## **Vad handlar studien om?**

Studien handlar om hur personer engagerade i den svenska miljörörelsen ser på olika former av politisk protest, framförallt mer radikala metoder såsom sabotage riktat mot miljöförstörande industrier. Frågorna i enkäten kommer att fokusera på vilka metoder deltagarna anser är legitima, lämpliga och effektiva för att protestera och driva klimat- och miljöfrågor i Sverige.

## **Vad innebär detta?**

Om era medlemmar väljer att delta i studien via enkäten kommer de att göra det anonymt och som privatpersoner och inte som representanter för er organisation.

Eftersom studien berör ett för många känsligt ämne kommer all data att hanteras varsamt och i enlighet med GDPR.

Enkäten förväntas färdigställas och vara redo för utskick om omkring 3 veckor varpå jag återkommer ifall ni samtycker till att skicka ut den till era medlemmar.

Om ni har frågor angående studien eller annan praktisk information, tveka inte att höra av er!

Jag nås på min universitetsmail: [ha6502to-s@student.lu.se](mailto:ha6502to-s@student.lu.se)

Vänliga hälsningar,  
Harriet Tollmar Thempo

English translation:

Subject line: Contribute to research on protest methods within the environmental movement

**Hi!**

My name is Harriet Tollmar Thempo, I am studying a master's degree in political science at Lund University. I am currently writing my Master's thesis, which aims to, via a survey, study the attitudes and opinions of people engaged in environmental issues.

**Why am I contacting you?**

You are one of several Swedish organisations focused on climate and environmental issues that I am contacting in the hope that you will consider distributing the survey to your members.

This would greatly assist the work to reach the intended target group as effectively as possible as well as ensure the best chances of sufficient responses and would therefore be invaluable!

**What is the study about?**

The study is about how people involved in the Swedish environmental movement view various forms of political protest, above all more radical methods such as sabotage aimed at environmentally destructive industries. The questions in the survey will focus on which methods the participants consider to be legitimate, appropriate and effective for protesting climate and environmental issues in Sweden.

**What does this mean?**

If your members choose to participate in the study via the survey, they will do so anonymously and as private individuals and not as representatives of your organisation.

As the study concerns a subject perceived as sensitive for many, all data will be handled with care and in accordance with the GDPR.

The survey is expected to be completed and ready to be sent out in about 3 weeks, after which I will get back to you if you agree to send it out to your members.

If you have questions about the study or other practical information, don't hesitate to get in touch!

I can be reached at my university email: [ha6502to-s@student.lu.se](mailto:ha6502to-s@student.lu.se)

Sincerely,  
Harriet Tollmar Thempo