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# Cultural Racism without Race

## An Exploratory Insight into the Discrimination and Self-Perception of the Sweden Democrats

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# CULTURAL RACISM WITHOUT RACE:
# AN EXPLORATORY INSIGHT INTO THE DISCRIMINATION AND SELF-PERCEPTION OF THE SWEDEN DEMOCRATS

Abstract:
This study presents a fresh, humanistic perspective into the worldview of a rarely studied group: The Sweden Democrats. Having entered the Swedish Parliament in 2010, the Sweden Democrats are a controversial nationalist-populist party, and they are currently the only major party in Sweden rejecting the country's famed multiculturalism model. The Sweden Democrats, and other Swedes who are openly critical of their country's immigration and multiculturalism policies, are often stigmatized as 'racists' by a number of actors across Swedish society. This essay interprets such stigmatization, as well as other processes of exclusion, as forms of discrimination.

Through analyzing the first-hand experiences of these 'immigration-critical' Swedes, this study explores who they perceive as actors of discrimination, as well as the specific processes through which these actors enact discrimination. By adopting theoretical and methodological approaches from previous studies of 'cultural racism' while avoiding appeals to 'race', this paper posits the existence of a 'cultural racism without race' in Sweden towards those holding an 'immigration-critical' standpoint.

The term posited for this relatively unexplored form of discrimination is 'intra-cultural ethnicism,' where interpretations of national identity and one's role in the world take center stage. This study contends that opposing interpretations of 'Swedishness' by the two groups lead to incongruous 'parallel subjective realities', hindering effective public debate on Sweden's immigration policies.

The study offers an exploratory first step towards understanding how immigration-critical Swedes perceive themselves in relation to their social context. The underlying motivation is that the subjective reality constructions of these Swedes, and those of nationalist-populist party sympathizers in other countries, must be understood and addressed before they are to be merely stigmatized. In the case of Sweden, bridging the gap between the incongruous 'parallel realities' of the pro-multiculturalist and immigration-critical Swedes is a necessary condition for effective debate on issues of immigration and multiculturalism.

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# Chapter I: Introduction

**Figure 1: Editorial cartoon placing Sjöbo in the same context as Nazi concentration camps, *Arbetet*, August 23, 1989**[1]

## Preface: The events at Sjöbo

This editorial cartoon depicts a Swedish artist's interpretation of a series of events that occurred in Sjöbo, a small municipality located in Southern Sweden, in 1988. In the late summer of 1984, a number of refugee groups arrived unexpectedly at the ports of Trelleborg and Ystad, cities located south of Sjöbo, and requested asylum status. The local authorities of Trelleborg and Ystad did not have sufficient accommodation for the refugees, and the public's reaction towards taking in the refugees was fairly negative. Rumors such as organized refugee smuggling began to spread, and as a result neo-Nazi and racist organizations saw a rise in support. These organizations held public demonstrations against the refugees and carried out attacks against them, including casting incendiary bombs into the local refugee camps.[2]

Although previously uncharacteristic in Sweden, intense debates concerning the form and content of Sweden's immigration policy flooded the local and national media, mostly critiquing the economic cost of the refugee policy.[3] In 1986, the Swedish government instituted an immigration reform entitled the '*Hela Sverige Strategin'* [All of Sweden Strategy], which assigned immigrants to certain municipalities. The '*Hela Sverige Strategin*' was intended to "counteract the concentration of immigrants in large cities,"[4]

[1] Allan Pred, "Somebody Else, Somewhere Else: Racisms, Racialized Spaced and the Popular Geographical Imagination in Sweden", *Antipode* 29:4 (1997): 404.
[2] Integrationsverket, *Populism and a Mistrust of Foreigners: Sweden in Europe* (Norrköping: Integrationsverket , 2007), 64.
[3] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 65.
[4] A.J. Heinö, *Integration or Assimilation: An Assessment of the Swedish Integration Debate*, (Stockhom: TIMBRO, 2011), 12-13.

and in the years following the arrival of the refugees, the Swedish Integration Board (SIV) repeatedly requested that Sjöbo follow the '*Hela Sverige Strategin'* by taking in around thirty of the refugees. Sjöbo's local politicians repeatedly denied the requests through a series of council decisions, with the result usually decided by only one or two votes. In 1987, the municipal government of Sjöbo decided (by a one vote margin) to put forth a referendum to the people which posed a yes/no/abstain option to the following question: "Should the Sjöbo local authority comply with the SIV request to accept refugees/asylum seekers?"[5]

The 'Sjöbo referendum' sparked an unprecedented response by the mass media, who "in virtual unison buil[t] up a hysteria-like climate, demonizing Sjöbo and its residents as a 'danger to society.'"[6] Despite the backing of the mass media, as well as the expressed support of artists, authors, and other prominent figures, the referendum failed with 65% of the voters choosing 'no'.[7] Studies carried out after the referendum concluded that there was no strong link between the 'no' vote and racism towards the refugees, with approximately only one in ten Sjöbo residents voting 'no' for racist reasons.[8] The two main arguments given in favor of the 'no' vote were criticism of Sweden's immigration policy and expressing solidarity with the local politicians.[9] Regarding the latter, some Sjöbo residents voted 'no' on account of the media's portrayal of them, and as one 'no' voter put it: "[I voted 'no' because of] the mass media's many assaults on Sjöbo…I thought their propaganda was unfair."[10]

The 'demonization of Sjöbo' continued well after the vote on the referendum in September 1988; *Arbetet* printed the above political cartoon in August 1989. The historical sensitivity of the cartoon provokes the question: are the two scenarios *really* within the realm of comparability? The image equates the denial of accommodation for thirty asylum seekers in Sjöbo with the systematic mass extermination of millions of minorities during the Holocaust. The Swedish flag, a world-renown symbol of tolerance and peace, flies adjacent to the most infamous symbol of intolerance and war – the Nazi swastika. The word 'Sjöbo,' a quaint farming town in Southern Sweden, stands out in bold alongside

[5] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 66.
[6] Allan Pred, "Somebody Else," 402.
[7] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 66.
[8] Frkylund, Björn and Tomas Peterson. *'Vi Mot Dom': Det Dubbla Främlingsskapet i Sjöbo.* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1989), 134.
[9] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 66.
[10] Fryklund and Peterson, *Vi mot dom*, 146.

some of the history's most notorious killing centers. Although certainly not representative of every Swede's interpretation of the Sjöbo referendum, the artist's comparison in the cartoon demonstrates the extent to which real or perceived anti-immigration sentiments can be scrutinized as 'racist' in Sweden.

Two decades after the events at Sjöbo, a political event on a much larger scale would spark a public debate where discourses of racism took center stage. In 2010, Sweden witnessed its first nationalist-populist party, *Sverigedemokraterna* [hereafter referred to as the Sweden Democrats or the abbreviation SD], enter the Swedish Parliament with 5.7% of the popular vote. The Sweden Democrats campaign on a platform mainly comprised of reigning in immigration policy as well as advocating more assimilationist integration measures, for example requiring knowledge of the Swedish language as a prerequisite for citizenship.[11] Reminiscent of the national response to the Sjöbo referendum, the public reaction to SD's success has been largely negative, in some cases hostile. The connection between disagreement with Sweden's immigration policies and accusations of racism has rarely been more prominent since their election to parliament.

Due to their openly critical stance on immigration and multiculturalism, members of SD have been labeled 'racists' and are considered by many Swedes to secretly sympathize with the National Socialist ideology of the mid-twentieth century. As a result of these accusations, SD members and those who sympathize with the party's position on immigration and multiculturalism experience what they perceive as discrimination by a variety of actors in Swedish society. Cynics of Sweden's multiculturalism model contend that they are ostracized in society through a number of exclusionary practices, affecting both their private and public lives. This study seeks to explore the first-accounts of these Swedes in order to gain insight into how they perceive their own position in the multiculturalism debate, which is highly charged both politically and morally.

## Research Question:

This study posits the existence of an 'intra-cultural ethnicism' directed against Swedes who are openly critical their country's current immigration and multiculturalism policies. These 'immigration-critical Swedes', although generally regarded as part of the ethnic majority, are part of a cultural minority on account of their critical position on immigration and multiculturalism. Their skepticism towards Sweden's multiculturalism model runs

[11] Sverigedemokraterna, "Principprogram 2011," https://sverigedemokraterna.se/files/2012/03/principprogram_A5_web.pdf

contrast to the widely held pro-multiculturalism stance shared by most of the country – a phenomenon they contend is the product of a top-down 'shaping' process by powerful social actors. The resulting social and political climate is inimical to opposing or alternate viewpoints to the public consensus, and a number of immigration-critical Swedes perceive themselves as unfairly marginalized and discriminated against on account of their opinions on immigration and multiculturalism.

The aim of this essay is to offer an in-depth analysis of the perspectives of these Swedes, in order to uncover *how* discrimination is performed against them and *by whom.* The research question to be explored throughout the essay has three distinct, yet interrelated, parts. First, who are the actors perceived as the drivers of discrimination against immigration-critical Swedes? Secondly, what are the general and specific processes of exclusion enacted by these actors through their respective mediums in society? Finally, how do the discriminatory actors and the processes exhibited by them contribute to the notion of an 'intra-cultural ethnicism' directed against immigration-critical Swedes?

## Theory and Methodology

### Cultural Racism

Racism and discriminatory practices directed against non-European immigrants and Muslims has been well-explored and mapped in European research studies since the 1970s, beginning most notably with Barker's theory of a 'new' or 'cultural' racism emerging in Europe.[12] Cultural racism, succinctly put, is "negative ethnic stereotyping [that] leads to racist effects,"[13] such as social exclusion or violence. Unlike traditional racism, which constructs a 'self' and 'other' group using biological features (such as skin color) as the main signifier of group difference, cultural racism constructs groups from perceived ideological differences such as culture, religion, or 'way of life' in general. Some academics have referred to this phenomenon as the "culturalization of races",[14] since cultural racism's rhetoric focuses around the "irreducibility of cultural differences"[15] among *ethnicities* as opposed to the outright conflict among *races.* Therefore, cultural 'racism' is somewhat of a misnomer and will also be referred to as ethnicism throughout this essay.

[12] Martin Barker, *The New Racism* (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1982), 18.
[13] Allan Pred, *Even in Sweden: Racisms, Racialized Spaces, and the Popular Geographical Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 66.
[14] Philomena Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991), 14.
[15] Pred, *Even in Sweden,* 66.

Through an increasing number of research projects and academic studies relating to ethnicism, Sweden has been shown not to be immune to the racism and xenophobia directed towards ethnic minorities, despite the country's reputation as a "paradise of social enlightenment."[16] Over the past decade or so, a number of state-funded research projects and academic studies provide evidence for the existence of 'cultural racism' towards immigrants as the most common form of discrimination in Sweden.[17] These studies affirm that Swedish cultural racism is "formulated in terms of stereotypical assumptions concerning the cultures of immigrants and the cultures of Swedes, often as completely different and incompatible."[18] Implicit in this discourse of 'cultural difference' is a hierarchy wherein differences in the culture of an 'other' (immigrant) group serve to bolster sentiments of superiority of the 'self' (Swedish) group.[19]

As with traditional biological racism, ethnicism involves a dominant 'self' group attempting to control a subordinated 'other' group, and both forms of discrimination are viewed as a system of "group power or dominance."[20] Implicit in this system of power is a hierarchy wherein the dominant group refers to its 'self' as civilized and superior in reference to the 'other' group, who are perceived as uncivilized and inferior. [21] In short, the superior 'self' is defined in relation to what the inferior 'other' is not.

The Swedish states' official policy of multiculturalism, while on the one hand celebrating the diversity of cultures within the country, tends to create ethnic cleavages by defining Swedish culture in relation to cultures of *invandrarna*, the Swedish word for immigrants. '*Invandrarna*' are often portrayed by the mass media and political rhetoric as a 'threat' or 'problem' to society, and an ethnic hierarchy resulting in structural inequalities for *invandrarna* has been identified in: "stereotypes in the media and educational materials, among politicians and political rhetoric, in wage differences, employment rates, health and housing."[22] The efforts in researching discrimination against immigrants in Sweden are well-directed and crucial to aiding their successful integration into Swedish society;

[16] Pred, *Even in Sweden,* 6.
[17] Statens Offentliga Utredningar (SOU), *Det Blågula Glashuset – Strukturell Diskriminering i Sverige* (Stockholm: SOU, 2005), 42.
[18] SOU, *Det Blågula Glashuset*, 42-43.
[19] Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, *Racism: Second Edition* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), 104.
[20] Teun van Dijk, *Elite Discourse and* Racism (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993), 21.
[21] Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter, *Mapping the Language of Racism: Discourse and the Legitimation of Exploitation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 19.
[22] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 49.

however, this type of discrimination is not the topic of this study. This study posits the existence of an intra-cultural hierarchy, where Swedes who are against the multiculturalist model are stigmatized and discriminated against for their viewpoints on immigration and integration.

## Multiculturalism

The individuals involved in this study are part of a 'minority' in Sweden, but not on account of biological signifiers such as skin color or gender. Their shared characteristic is an ideological one: their critical stance towards immigration and multiculturalism in Sweden, and they will therefore be referred to as 'immigration-critical Swedes.' Critical is understood not merely in the negatively evaluative sense of the word but also its meaning of 'drawing into question' or 'challenging.' All the subjects in this study expressed that immigration is a positive and necessary element to Swedish society, but they challenge and disagree with the way immigration is viewed in conjunction with the multiculturalist model. Their critical opinion is directed not so much towards the individual immigrants themselves as much as the current attitudes towards multiculturalism by the political system, the media, and Swedish people in general. As one of the interviewees put it, "When we criticize immigrants, it's not the immigrants themselves…it's the politics that leads to this mass immigration."[23] The politics of immigration are intimately linked to multiculturalism, which sets out the guiding principles driving Sweden's immigrant policy.

Multiculturalism will be discussed as a descriptive concept, i.e. a "society's degree of diversity without setting a value on it",[24] as opposed to a set of specific political measures. As when explaining any ideology, in order to describe what the multiculturalism is, it useful to present multiculturalism dialectically against what it is rejects, namely nationalism:

[23] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.
[24] Heinö, *Integration or Assimilation,* 11.

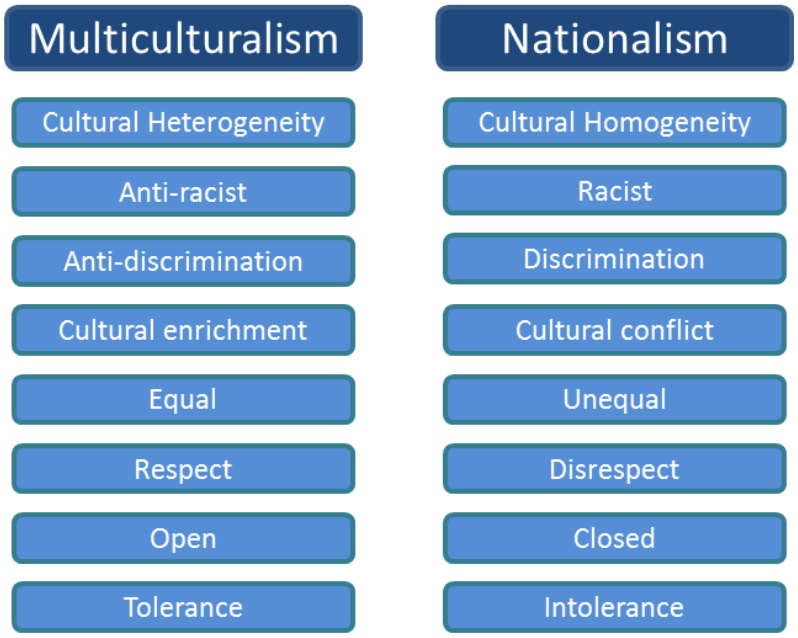



**Figure 2: Principles of Multiculturalism in relation to Nationalism**[25]

Concisely put, multiculturalism is an ideology that embraces cultural diversity as enriching for society, whereas any argument espousing cultural homogeneity is seen as damaging for society. Immigration is therefore seen as a necessary element of multiculturalism in order to keep society diverse. The immigration-critical Swedes believe that multiculturalism is an overwhelmingly dominant ideology that influences the thoughts and actions of politicians, journalists, and many other actors in Swedish society. When an ideology gains a dominant position that is pervasive in society, one can speak of the ideology as 'hegemonic', where the concept of hegemony is understood as described by Young:

> "Hegemony refers to how the conceptual and normative framework of the members of society is deeply influenced by premises and terms of discourse [here, ideology] that make it difficult to think critically about aspects of their social relations or alternative possibilities of institutionalization and action."[26]

In other words, a hegemonic ideology presents the members of a given society with a certain way of thinking, and subsequently talking about, issues related to that ideology. Operating within a 'conceptual and normative framework' limits one's ability to critically evaluate that ideology, since to do so would mean operating outside that framework *ipso facto.*

---

[25] Aje Carlbom, *The Imagined Versus the Real Other: Multiculturalism and the Representation of Muslims in Sweden* (Lund: Lund University Press, 2003), 45.
[26] Iris Marion Young, "Activist Challagenges to Deliberative Democracty," *Political Theory* 29:5 (2002): 685-686.

In regards to this paper, the immigration-critical Swedes contend that multiculturalism has reached a 'hegemonic' status in Sweden, a notion they consider an obstacle to the critical reflection of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism provides the individual Swede with an 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' way to understand and discuss issues of immigration and cultural difference. As an ideology dealing with human beings, multiculturalism carries with it a heavily loaded moral and ethical standard of 'acceptability', which allows some Swedes to believe that "all critical viewpoints [of multiculturalism] are something to fight against, tend towards racism, and are therefore morally reprehensible."[27]

The correlation between expressing anti-multiculturalist sentiments and being labeled a 'racist,' a term unquestionably loaded with negative moral connotations, is a central element to this essay. In Sweden, if one is perceived to be against any of the characteristics associated with multiculturalism, he or she can be regarded as thinking in an 'unacceptable' manner, which is often framed in terms of being a racist. According to one Swedish academic:

"[T]o say something which could be understood as negative toward multiculturalism, turns the speaker (according to the multiculturalist logic) into a racist. It is inconceivable to associate being a morally good person with being against multiculturalism. Such a person must either be evil (a racist) or a misguided victim of racist ideology."[28]

Those Swedes critical of multiculturalism, and the immigration policies associated with it, have historically been viewed as morally deranged sympathizers of racist movements. The Holocaust, perhaps history's most extreme and well-known manifestation of racism, is often portrayed as the antithesis of multiculturalism, and it is not uncommon that "criticism of [multiculturalism] is associated with the Holocaust and thus with Nazism."[29] The political cartoon presented at the beginning of this essay serves as an example of this par excellence. Although most 'no' voters of the Sjöbo referendum cited solidarity with local politicians and budget concerns as the motivation for their vote, the residents of Sjöbo became stigmatized as 'racists' and Nazi-sympathizers – a reputation that stays with the town to the present day.

[27] Carlbom, *The Imagined Versus the Real Other*, 47.
[28] Carlbom, *The Imagined Versus the Real Other*, 52.
[29] Carlbom, *The Imagined Versus the Real Other*, 47.

## Theoretical Approach

This study employs Van Dijk's model of racism as the point of departure for an analysis of discrimination, but since the subjects of the study are all white, the 'race' element of Van Dijk's model will be largely neglected. However, the discriminatory ideologies and practices inherent in Van Dijk's model are still applicable. Discrimination is understood a complex system with two main components: social cognition and social processes. Social cognitions are the cognitive functions (e.g. beliefs, attitudes, opinions) that create and sustain a discriminatory ideology, which in turn motivates social processes of discrimination (e.g. discriminatory acts, structural inequalities). The figure below maps the system of discrimination according to its different components and dimensions:

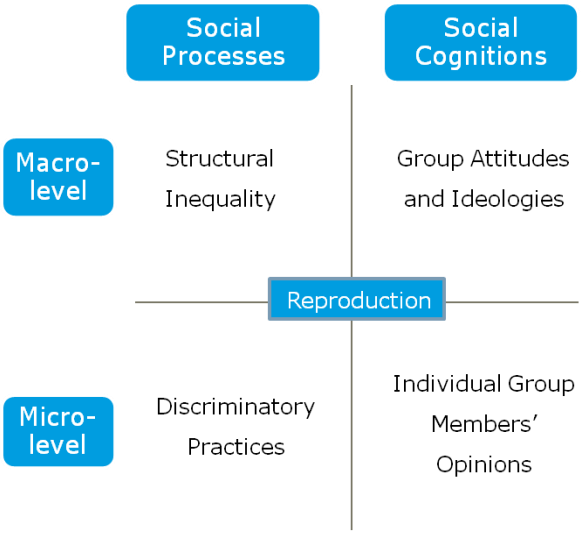



**Figure 3: The System of Discrimination**[30]

Discrimination's ideological component, social cognition, has both a macro- and micro-dimension. The values or beliefs constituting an ideology exist both in the minds of individuals (micro-level), as well as the shared representations that constitute a group ideology (macro-level). Discrimination's social processes are the consequence of discriminatory ideology actualized into practice. On the micro-level, individuals enact discriminatory practices, for example hate speech, harassment, and violence. Macro-level social processes consist of groups of individuals working together to produce structural inequalities through a wide range of mediums: e.g. public institutions, employment practices, and the media.

[30] Teun van Dijk, *Racism and the Press* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 36.

The interplay between each of these micro- and macro-dimensions is mutually enforcing, and Van Dijk refers to this interplay as 'reproduction,' defined as "the dialectical interaction of general principles [cognitions] and actual practices [processes] that underlie the historical continuity of a social system."[31] In other words, reproduction is the process wherein discrimination's cognitive and process components affect each other – cognitions produce processes and vice versa. Moreover, micro-level social cognitions and processes (re)produce macro-level social cognitions and processes and vice versa. Each of the quadrants in the above diagram affects or 'reproduces' another, and as a result the entire system is constantly in flux and susceptible to changes in every other quadrant.

## Methodology

In relation to the theoretical approach discussed above, this study will focus on the experiences of individual Swedes who have experienced discrimination on account of their critical stance towards the Sweden's current immigration policies and multiculturalism model. The methodology employed will be largely based on Essed's method used in her theory of 'everyday racism', which analyzes individuals' interpretations of the routine, day-to-day manifestations of racist ideologies and processes. Essed's study is influential on account of its detailed analysis of the qualitative accounts of black women in the Netherlands and USA, and while her analysis is heavily geared towards cultural racism, the skin color of the target groups in her study necessitates the incorporation of many biological theories of racism. Since the subjects being studied here are white, traditional methods of analyzing biological racism are downplayed. The discrimination that immigration-critical Swedes experience is the result of a cultural factor (a belief), and I will refer to discrimination against them as a form of 'intra-cultural ethnicism.' The ethnicism is 'intra-cultural' because the subjects of the study are part of the majority 'Swedish' culture in every aspect except for their opinions on multiculturalism.

The data analyzed will come mainly from qualitative semi-structured interviews, conducted in English, with two target groups of 'immigration-critical Swedes.' The first target group consists of local and national leaders of the Sweden Democrats. The second group is comprised of journalists, who have been fired from their jobs due to their writings on issues surrounding immigration and integration. The journalists of the second target group are not politically affiliated with SD; however, the interviewees from the target groups share three main factors worth mentioning. First, the interviewees are all white

[31] Van Dijk, *Racism and the* Press, 33.

middle to upper-middle class Swedes, and therefore racism or discrimination based on skin color or socio-economic status is ruled out. Secondly, all interviewees identified moments in their lives where they presented themselves as having experienced discrimination stemming from some aspect of Swedish society, either from a person or institution, on account of their immigration-critical standpoint. Thirdly, while the context and specific nature of each account differs, the interviewees share the opinion that their experiences are the result of hegemonic social and political attitudes towards multiculturalism in Sweden.

| Target Group | Name/Position | Position | Interview # |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Group 1: Sweden Democrats** | Kent Ekeroth | Parliamentarian, SD | 1 |
| | Lars-Johan Hallgren | Chairman, SD Malmö | 2 |
| | Krister Andersson | City Council, SD Malmö | 2 |
| | Hans-Olof Andersson | Chairman, SD Lund | 3 |
| | Michael Rosenberg | Chairman, SD Helsingborg | 4 |
| **Group 2: Journalists** | Ingrid Carlqvist | Journalist / Blogger | 5 |
| | Gunnar Sandelin | Journalist / Blogger | 6 |

**Figure 4: Interviewees**

In total, only seven interviewees participated in the study for a total of six interviews.[32] Although seemingly disadvantageous for an academic study, the small number of interviews has proved advantageous in supporting a thorough, in-depth analysis into a relatively unexplored topic. Moreover, the experiences of the interviewees, as well as their perspectives on contemporary Swedish society, were strikingly consistent. This suggests that even if more SD members or immigration-critical journalists had been interviewed, the conclusions would not be significantly affected.

Interviews have been chosen as the method for analysis with the assumption that the experiences of discrimination by the target groups are *structured* according to their own understanding of the larger Swedish socio-political context. Experiences at the micro-level can be seen as "the impact of knowledge of general (structural) phenomena on one's definition of reality."[33] In other words, micro-level perceptions of discrimination can be seen as influenced by one's own understanding of wider macro-level processes. By breaking down how these micro-level experiences are structured, one can come to understand how the interviewee perceives the socio-political climate; thus, this study deals with 'subjective reality constructions' as the basis for theoretical analysis.[34]

[32] N.B. Interview #2 involved two participants.
[33] Essed, *Everyday Racism,* 58.
[34] Essed, *Everyday Racism,* 56.

The perceived instances of discrimination experienced by the interviewees are by themselves enough to constitute a subjective reality for these individuals, and their understanding of the 'reality' of the socio-political climate surrounding immigration is used to explain instances of discrimination against them. Therefore, whether one disagrees or not with the interviewees' charges of discrimination – on a moral or political level – is irrelevant. The *perception* of discrimination constitutes a subjective reality for these individuals, and without understanding the interviewees' own understanding of this reality, the interviewee's moral and political opponents (i.e. 'anti-racists') cannot adequately address the rising number of 'xenophobic extremists.' The so-called 'racists' and 'anti-racists' operate in parallel subjective realities. One perceived outcome of this study is to offer a glimpse into how immigration-critical Swedes perceive their situation, so that those who enter into dialogue with them will be able to adequately understand their perspectives, bridging the gap between the two constructed realities.

The methods used in the study will be multidisciplinary and can be broken down according to four main strategies. First, a short historical overview of the Sweden Democrats and the prevailing attitudes towards them will be presented in order to provide the reader with the relevant context. Second, the data from the interviews will be introduced and a 'concrete mapping' of *who* the immigration-critical Swedes perceive as the actors of discrimination will be identified.[35] This method supposes that racism (in this case ethnicism) is manifest discursively,[36] and the talk and text of the interviewees is structured by their cognitive understanding of their own social situations.

Third, I will disseminate the strategies used by these 'discriminatory actors' according to the heuristic interpretations of the interviewees. Building on the first 'plank' of the methodology, the heuristic interpretation seeks to answer *how* the identified social actors enact discrimination. In short, what are the general and specific processes of exclusion as identified by the interviewees?

Fourth and finally, I will analyze concrete instances of discrimination relayed by the interviewees in a 'case study'. By reconstructing perceived instances discrimination towards immigration-critical Swedes via Essed's model of analyzing cultural racism

[35] On a practical note, the citations for the interviews will be provided in the footnotes, unless the author is explicitly mentioned in the text.
[36] Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1999), 175.

against immigrants, this stage of the methodology will explore how discrimination between the two groups compares. The underlying assumption is that if immigration-critical Swedes' experiences of discrimination are comparable to those of immigrants' experiences in cultural racism, then the discussion of an 'ethnicism' directed towards immigration-critical Swedes is valid.

# Chapter II: Analysis/Results

## Method One: Historical Overview

SD labels itself as 'socially conservative with a nationalist outlook.'[37] While the party supports Sweden's social democratic welfare system, it is currently the "only major party [in Sweden] completely rejecting multiculturalism."[38] The election of a nationalist populist party to the Swedish Parliament follows a trend seen in many other European countries. Austria's Freedom Party, France's National Front, the Danish People's Party, Norway's Progress Party – each currently maintains solid representation in their respective country's parliaments on account of their reactionary policies towards immigration, integration, and asylum. Many nationalist-populist parties in Europe formed roughly 20 years before SD's inception in 1988, but until recently the mere existence of a nationalist party in Sweden was unthinkable. The country has long held a reputation among intellectuals and progressives as "a paradise of social enlightenment, as an international champion of social justice, as the very model of solidarity and equality,"[39] and a conservative nationalist party in Sweden blots a stain on the country's largely progressive portrait.

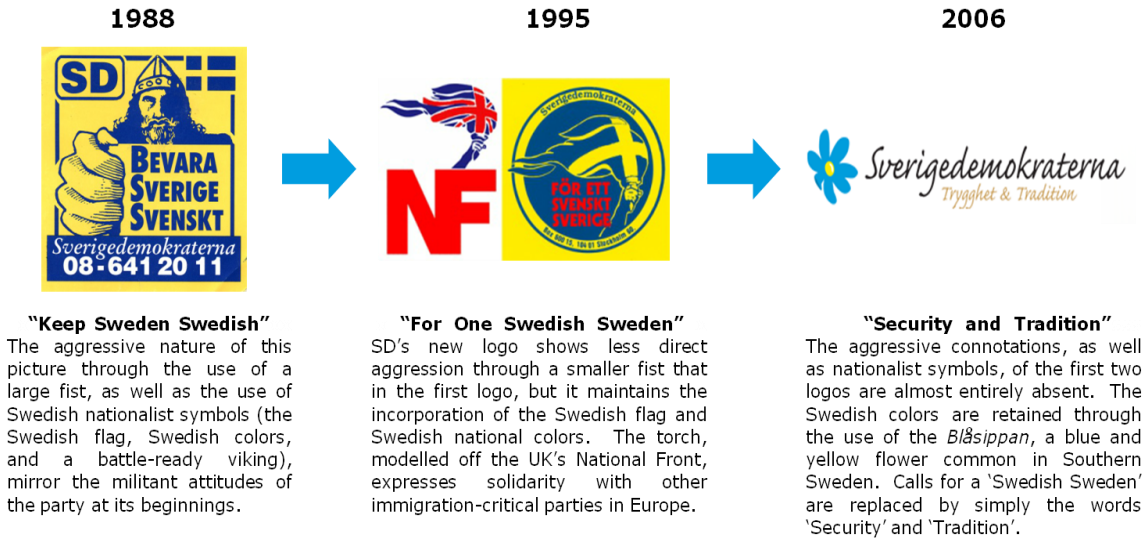
SD's early years are characterized, and rightly so, as an unorganized party built out of members with ties to the National Socialist Party and other extreme-right movements, such as the militant, anti-immigrant "Bevara Sverige Svenskt" [Keep Sweden Swedish] campaign usually associated with a young, skin-head subculture. The Sweden Democrats' first leader, Anders Klarström, previous to his election was openly involved in the Nazi-affiliated *Nordiska Rikspartiet,* and the party's first auditor, Gustag Eskström, was a

[37] Sveridemokraterna, Principprogram 2011.
[38] A.J. Heinö, "Democracy between Collectivism and Individualism: De-nationalization and Individualization in Swedish National Identity," *International Review of Sociology* 19:2 (2009), 305.
[39] Pred, *Even in Sweden*, 66.

*Waffen-SS* veteran.[40] The Swedish anti-racist magazine *Expo*, co-founded and edited by renowned Swedish novelist Stieg Larsson, has estimated that over 60% of SD's members between 1989-1995 had or currently have ties to various Nazi movements.[41]

Although the party was born out of a considerable base of extreme-rightists who were drawn to SD's nationalist rhetoric and platform, some scholars have asserted that SD "as a party" was "never Nazi or fascist."[42] In 1995, the SD's newly elected president Mikael Jansson launched a series of attempts to 'modernize' SD's image in order to garner political legitimacy – a movement that continues through the present. SD's modernization campaign began with the barring of extremists and prohibiting the wearing of uniforms at party manifestations in 1996.[43] In the 2000's, the new leadership of the so-called 'Skåne Gang,' made up of the party's leader Jimmie Åkesson and three other SD parliamentarians from Skåne (Sweden's southernmost municipality and where Sjöbo is located), began a more active purging of extremist members, as well as introducing the UN Declaration of Human Rights as an integral part of the party's dogma in 2003.[44] Many of these banned members split from the party and formed a number of smaller, more extreme parties such as *Svenskarnas* and *Nationaldemokraterna*.[45] As one former SD councilmen-turned-defector put it, SD has become "too wimpy" in their politics, and he decided to instead become active with *Svenskarnas*.[46] SD's modernization movement is perhaps best visualized by the transformation of their party's logo, traced in the diagram on the following page.

[40] Anders Widfedlt, "A Fourth Phase of the Extreme Right? Nordic immigration-critical parties in a comparative context," Nordeuropaforum 20:1-2 (2010), 29.
[41] Daniel Poohl, "Så ljuger SD om sin historia," *Expo,* March 6, 2011.
[42] Widfedlt, "A Fourth Phase of the Extreme Right," 30.
[43] Anders Hellström and Tom Nilsson, "'We are the Good Guys': Ideological Positioning of the Nationalist Party Sverigedemokraterna in Contemporary Swedish Politics," *Ethnicities* 10:55 (2010): 55
[44] Jens Rydgren, *From Tax Populism to Ethnic Nationalism*: *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Sweden* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 116.
[45] Rydgren, *Ethnic Nationalism,* 109.
[46] "Anders Leander går med i Svenskarnas parti," *Realisten* May 17, 2012.




**"Keep Sweden Swedish"**
The aggressive nature of this picture through the use of a large fist, as well as the use of Swedish nationalist symbols (the Swedish flag, Swedish colors, and a battle-ready viking), mirror the militant attitudes of the party at its beginnings.

**"For One Swedish Sweden"**
SD's new logo shows less direct aggression through a smaller fist that in the first logo, but it maintains the incorporation of the Swedish flag and Swedish national colors. The torch, modelled off the UK's National Front, expresses solidarity with other immigration-critical parties in Europe.

**"Security and Tradition"**
The aggressive connotations, as well as nationalist symbols, of the first two logos are almost entirely absent. The Swedish colors are retained through the use of the *Blåsippan*, a blue and yellow flower common in Southern Sweden. Calls for a 'Swedish Sweden' are replaced by simply the words 'Security' and 'Tradition'.

**Figure 5: The Sweden Democrats Logo History**[47]

The degree of 'success' of SD's modernization campaign is difficult to quantify. On the one hand, their votes have at least doubled in every election since 1995. Their results are as follows: .4% (1998), 1.4% (2002), 2.9% (2006), 5.7% (2010).[48] Current polls show them at 8.7%, suggesting that they are tentatively poised to be the third largest party in Sweden after the next election in 2014.[49] On the other hand, their success comes much later their European counterparts, who have entered their respective parliaments since the late 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, SD's rising political and media exposure has successfully pushed immigration and integration issues onto the public sphere, as evidenced by the increased 'politicization' and debate around questions of identity, migration, and integration since the 2000s.[50]

Despite SD's attempts to shake its immigrant-hostile and neo-Nazi image through a less aggressive public image, SD is still considered by many in Swedish society as a pack of "wolves in sheep's clothing."[51] Academia, the media, and politicians have all helped sustain and promulgate SD's reputation as racists. Some scholars have described SD as a "racist national party that has been formed within the framework of the traditional fascist

[47] Sources: Expo.se, Sverigedemokraterna.se
[48] "Historical Statistics of Election Results," Statistics Sweden. http://www.scb.se/Pages/ProductTables____12287.aspx
[49] Anna Holmqvist, "SD har gått om MP - är tredje största parti," *Aftonbladet*, June 4, 2012.
[50] Heinö, "Democracy between Collectivism and Individualism," 305.
[51] Anders Westgårdh, "Bevara Sverige Svenskt - kör ut dem!" *Aftonbladet*, September 21, 2010

movement."[52] The media, similar to its reaction to the events in Sjöbo, has also played an influential role in 'demonizing' SD and contributing to their reputation as racists. Although the examples are many, the chief editor of Uppsala's regional newspaper sums up the general sentiment of the media bluntly in her article entitled: "They are racists."[53] Politicians from across the political spectrum openly express their negative views towards SD. From the right, Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt stated after the 2010 parliamentary elections that his government will "handle the [SD] situation" by "not cooperating with the Sweden Democrats."[54] From the left, Social Democratic Party leader Mona Sahlin mentioned that thoughts of "racism, xenophobia, and the Sweden Democrats" keep her awake at night.[55]

Aside from and influenced by these institutional channels, Swedish society's perception of SD is largely negative. SD's most recent logo is extremely similar to that of a minor party in Sweden (Högerpartiet de konservativa), who sued SD for 'the damages for the harm that our trademark has suffered as a result of the Sweden Democrats' use of the same."[56] Högerpartiet's response would have perhaps been the same towards any party who adopted their logo, but seeking damages of 'thousands, perhaps millions of Swedish kroner' suggests that SD were viewed as an exceptionally negative case. The Patent and Trademark Office later ruled that SD had not infringed upon any legal regulations. Along a micro-oriented level, one individual who was unknowingly elected as a SD to his city council told reporters: "Someone wrote my name on that list [the ballet] in order to defame me."[57] The 'defamation' involved with being associated as a member of SD is incomparable to being associated with other major parties in Sweden.

Many members of SD feel the current image of their party is unjust in a democratic society. They accuse powerful social actors of creating an ideological hegemony of multiculturalism that pits both macro- and micro-level actors against them on account of their immigration-critical standpoint. This ideological difference on immigration can be

[52] Mikael Ekman and Stieg Larsson, *Sverigedemokraterna – den nationella rörelsen* (Stockholm: Ordfront Förlag, 2001), 8
[53] Maria Ripenberg, "Sverigedemokraternas rasistiska kampanj," *Uppsala Nya Tidning,* August 27, 2010.
[54] Linda Hjertén and Robert Triches, "Vi kommer inte att samarbeta med SD," *Aftonbladet,* September 20, 2010.
[55] Hans Olsson and Ewa Stenberg, "Hon vägrar flörta med rasisterna," *Dagens Nyheter,* June 7, 2010.
[56] *Pressmeddelande från Högerpartiet de konservativa, 2006-07-12.*
[57] "Sverigedemokrat mot sin vilja," *Sydsvenskan*, September 28, 2010.

manifest into discriminatory action, such that people who share SD's immigration-critical view are subjected to exclusion in society. SD members contend that the political system is corrupt and collectively marginalizing them, the media is unfairly misrepresenting them, and the public is 'drugged' by political and media-driven propaganda. Furthermore, SD claims that negative sentiments towards them is sometimes manifest into action, and in 2007 the Swedish Secret Police (Säpo) reported that the Sweden Democrats were by far the political party whose members were most subject to threats, violence, and vandalism.[58] The next phase of the methodology will map precisely who are the actors perceived as responsible for carrying out such treatment against immigration-critical Swedes.

## Method Two: Concrete Mapping

Discrimination, although motivated by ideology, is most evident to those who experience it through the *actions* of certain actors. Therefore the following data comes from the interviews, which were analyzed according to references to social processes enacted by the perceived actors of discrimination. In line with the theoretical model, the social processes were divided into macro-level structures producing and sustaining a structural inequality, and micro-level instances of discriminatory acts. The actors identified, as well as the number of references of discriminatory social processes enacted by them, are disseminated below in the following figure:

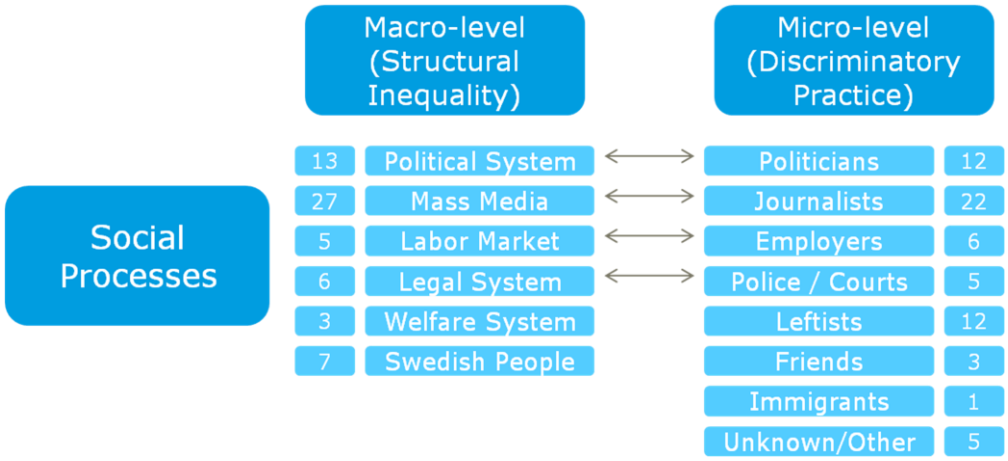



**Figure 6: Mapping of Discriminatory Actors according to Frequency Mentioned**

The numbers in Figure 6 should be viewed more for the sake of indication as opposed to strict comparison. That is to say, the value in the figure is not in the exact numbers so much as the repeated identification of similar actors across interviewees and target groups.

[58] "Säpo: Hot och våld mot sd ökar," *Expressen,* August 16, 2007.

The intent of the semi-structured interviews was to elucidate the sources of discrimination voluntarily from the interviewees, and one can assume the number of experiences reported is probably conservative. The interviews were conducted over different amounts of time (ranging from 45 minutes to 2 hours), and the content of the interviews often took different directions. The high number of mentions to the 'media', for example, can be partially explained by the fact that one of the target groups involved journalists who were critical towards the media's portrayal of immigration and integration.

At the macro-level, the political system and the mass media were seen as the main actors in establishing a structural inequality where immigration-critical Swedes were perceived as disadvantaged or underrepresented in politics and the media. The labor market as a whole was sometimes perceived as not welcoming to immigration-critical Swedes, and laws of the legal system were cited as creating legal inequality between immigrants and Swedes in general. The welfare system also was perceived as having certain structural advantages for immigrants, an idea that can be associated with what others have called 'welfare chauvinism,' which focuses on the polarization of 'givers' and 'takers' within a welfare system.[59] Finally, the perceived ideological disposition of Swedish society was listed as creating inequality for immigration-critical Swedes, since they believe their opinions are stifled by, for example, cultural norms of political correctness or fear of stigmatization. In general, the interviewees viewed the current state of Swedish society as heavily shaped and controlled by the other macro-structures, especially the political system and mass media.

The micro-level processes consist of discriminatory acts and are divided according to the person committing the act. Politicians were often accused of ignoring or disassociating themselves from the immigration-critical Swedes, and journalists were perceived as unfairly portraying them in the media. Instances relating to employment discrimination, such as through firing or withholding a position, are listed under 'employers.' Legal discrimination by court rulings or police handlings are included under 'police/courts', and instance of harassment by left-wing gangs, friends, and immigrants are listed under their perspective categories.

Before delving into the general and specific processes the discriminatory actors employ, it is important to explain further how the actors are perceived in relation to one another. Although the actors have been divided into distinct categories according to their relevant

[59] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 42.

spheres in society, the interviewees often viewed the actors as working together as a 'system' in order to produce and sustain exclusionary practices. In short, the shared sentiment among the interviewees is that powerful social actors, such as politicians and journalists, work in concert to produce a normative framework for how to think about and discuss multiculturalism. The 'ideological hegemony' created by this framework has trickled down to the average Swede, who reproduces the hegemony by incorporating it into his or her set of beliefs. Policies, regulations, and institutions further strengthen the hegemony by putting those who are immigration-critical at a disadvantage relative to other, pro-multiculturalism Swedes and immigrants. The following sections present how the actors were portrayed as collectively contributing to the hegemony of multiculturalism.

### The Converged Political System

Viewing the various political parties within a political system as 'the same' is a characteristic element of populist parties, in which nationalist immigration-critical parties such as SD are usually grouped. Populist parties often portray the established parties as exhibiting a "strong convergence,"[60] resulting in an anti-system rhetoric[61] where the 'established parties' are viewed collectively as a macro-level political system that is seen as 'broken' or 'corrupt.' One SD member alludes to how the Swedish political parties have converged and lost their value principles:

"There are very bad problems in Sweden caused by the 'Old Parties'. When you are talking about the 'Old Parties,' I can talk about them in one lump. They are so much like each other, so I call them the 'Old Parties', all seven of them together, and SD on the other side. It's a difference in multiculturalism and the analysis of society…The other parties are not value-based anymore, I don't know what they're based on. Some have this drugged liberalism, others have absolutely nothing. They have become businesses."[62]

The use of the word 'old' suggests H. Andersson believes the established parties are outdated and out-of-touch with the current state of Swedish society. He further describes the 'Old Parties' as having lost their ideological foundation and morally bankrupt, running as "businesses" with the guiding principle being a "persistence of power." Supporting this notion of the political system as a business, K. Andersson suggests that the monetary gain and perks associated with being an established politician weigh heavily on the politicians' decisions, perhaps moreso than following one's personal political values: "If you have

[60] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 50.
[61] Paul Taggart, *The New Populism and the New Politics: New Protest Parties in Sweden in a Comparative Perspective* (London: MacMillian Press, 1996), 33.
[62] Interview with Hans-Olof Andersson.

been in the Riksdag for say, 15 years, you *do* want to keep that position because the money is very good…and all the perks."

K. Andersson went on to say that some politicians perpetuate the status quo by acting against their own opinions and instead acting in accordance with the established norms of the party, in order to keep their position of power. According to the SD representatives from Malmö, the party guidelines of the 'Old Parties' are so rigid that any questioning of immigration results in demotion or alienation from the party:

"Hallgren: There are also them [politicians] who have it [issue of immigration] like number one, but they still stay in their…
K. Andersson: Within their party guidelines.
Hallgren: Yes, because in the other parties this question is uh,
K. Andersson: It's basically a non-question.
Hallgren: Non-speakable, non-speakable. They can't have, uh, inside their respective parties bring up this question because they are directly pushed down. And maybe after the next, uh, for the next election they won't be on the [ballot] lists and they won't get any assignments after the election if they are showing that they want to, for example, reduce the immigration. So they get punished."[63]

The macro-level political system is presented here as 'silencing' the concerns of its politicians, regardless of the specific party, to the extent that those who question their party's immigration policy are subject to penalties. From the above excerpt, it can be derived that for these interviewees, the ideology of multiculturalism is so ingrained in the established parties' guidelines that criticism of can be met with punishment.

This type of rhetoric is likely to be expected from small party politicians, but the notion of a converged political system has been echoed by the journalists interviewed as well.

"Now I don't think it's a question about Left/Right anymore, I think all the Swedish politicians, they're in some, uh, you know, *kökkenmödding* we say…it's a mixture in the middle. And they're mixed up and doing the same things. It's just, you know, tiny, tiny differences."[64]

Not only does Carlqvist perceive the political system as converged, she expresses that the political parties are all 'mixed up,' suggesting a lack of direction or a clearly defined set of values. She claims SD is outside of the system, and although she does not agree with many of their policies, she argues that the issues they force onto political and public debate can be considered a "hope for Sweden":

[63] Interview with Lars-Johan Hallgren and Krister Andersson.
[64] Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist.

"And that's what I think is so horrible with Sweden right now, that we have lost contact with reality, all the parties, *except* the Sweden Democrats. And I don't think that they are such a really good party, I think they have a lot of crazy ideas, especially on criminal law and so on, and I don't like their ideas. But I think that they are, the um, hope for Sweden because when they came in people started to talk and lift the floor about these things [immigration and integration]."[65]

The perceptions of the interviewees suggest that immigration-critical Swedes see themselves unrepresented in a political system that stifles issues of immigration. They therefore consider themselves at a structural disadvantage in politics, since their views on immigration are excluded in political rhetoric. Whereas SD see the various parties in the Swedish political system as an allied coalition against them, the journalists see the political system as hindrance to transparent and open public debate about issues of immigration, integration, and multiculturalism. The two groups share the common perception that their immigration-political standpoint is unequally represented in the macro-level political structure.

### The Indoctrinated Media

The interviewees often portrayed journalists as being overwhelmingly in support of left-wing parties and multiculturalism; however, the interviewees argued that the journalists' line of thinking is influenced heavily by the schools that train them. According to the interviewees, journalists are pressured to follow a pro-multiculturalist ideology in order to pass school and obtain work. The result is a mainstream media where "everybody thinks alike" and there is "little difference between Swedish Journalists."[66]

Hallgren: "About immigration and integration there is only, uh, one point of view from the media. Only one.
Me: And why is that, do you think?
Hallgren: I think it has much to do with the education of journalists and reporters. They are…indoctrinated at those schools. You can't pass through a school to be a journalist if you are, for example, a Sweden Democrat, it's impossible. You will be, uh…
K. Andersson: If you managed to, you know, pass through, you will never get a job, never.
Hallgren: You will be frozen out by the other pupils and you will be badly treated by the teachers and so on, it's impossible. And if you graduate you wouldn't get a job anywhere."[67]

The 'indoctrination' of the journalists does not end once they attain a job. Both of the journalists interviewed mentioned pressures from their peers and superiors about how to think about and cover topics dealing with immigration. Sandelin mentions how editors press an agenda of 'protecting' immigrants:

[65] Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist.
[66] Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist.
[67] Interview with Lars-Johan Hallgren and Krister Andersson.

"This is an underlying statement from the editors: that it is a danger that by presenting unpleasant facts you can stimulate racism and xenophobia among the viewers, therefore you have to protect the weakest part, who are always the immigrants/asylum seekers."[68]

Carlqvist echoed this notion, arguing that journalists work together to create a positive view of immigration in order to avoid stimulating racism among easily swayed readers. This creates a moral dichotomy where journalists view themselves as morally 'good' and 'above' the general public, who are perceived as susceptible to morally 'bad' actions such as racist practices:

"[Journalists] think that their main topic now is to control the people 'cause they think that most Swedish people are bloodthirsty racists. If you don't keep them controlled they think they will start to, you know, shoot immigrants, Muslim people, black people and that is naturally so untrue of course. That is so not the case, but the journalists have made up this picture in their mind, and they think that they're the good ones. They're the guys on white horses trying to save the world."[69]

One method of 'control' mentioned was blurring a black criminal's face and editing his or her skin to be pink, whereas white criminals' faces and skin tone were left undistorted. "They don't tell you [to do it]," claimed Carlqvist, "it's just that you learn from others." Implied in this peer-pressure is that the questioning of or nonconformance with such practices can result in losing one's position:

"Journalists I am talking to…they know that with their jobs it's impossible [to publish articles critical of immigration and multiculturalism]. They can be critical to some extent: interview young people in suburbs, immigrants, and so on. They can paint a picture, but they can't voice their own opinion. They are very, not scared, but careful to comment on what they write, even on Facebook on those topics."[70]

Whether the 'indoctrination' of journalists is a valid accusation or not, the scenarios described above suggest a strong pro-multiculturalism culture among journalists solidified by peer-pressure and job security. Much like their perception of the political system, the interviewees' grouping of 'journalists' into a single group represents how the interviewees perceive the media as a system expressing convergence on issues of multiculturalism and immigration. For them, the political system and media system are not separate entities but rather two sides of the same coin. Actors working in the two systems are perceived as part of an intellectual 'elite' that is out of touch with reality and avoiding transparent dialogue with the people.

[68] Interview with Gunnar Sandelin.
[69] Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist.
[70] Interview with Gunnar Sandelin.

### The 'Elites'

All but one of the interviewees mentioned made reference to an affluent left-wing, intellectual elite who construct the ideological hegemony surrounding multiculturalism. The elite is mainly described as being headed by politicians and the media, but other members in Swedish society are influenced, directly or indirectly, by the elites. The left-wing extremists who are accused of carrying out most of the violence against the immigration-critical Swedes, for example, are portrayed as directly employed as low-ranking members of the elites' political parties. Indirectly, the elites shape regulations and laws to support multiculturalism, and they use various outlets such as the media, popular culture, and employment policies to foster a pro-multiculturalist environment.

"It's a whole left-wing agenda and it's spiraling out of control in this country. It's a surreal thing like an Orwellian-Kafka-like mentality, that a small elite has no connection to reality whatsoever. They sit there with their theories that sound so wonderfully good…that no general person in society accepts…and it has to do with the left-wingers in the '68 Movements' in Europe. They encourage their members to become politicians, teachers, and journalists, and that's what happened. So we have a very strong divide between the political and media elite and the general public in Sweden."[71]

While Ekeroth's account may seem far-fetched, the other interviewees offered more down-to-earth accounts supporting the notion of an 'elite' out of touch with the general Swedish public. Rosenberg mentioned how some of the politicians he has encountered are part of a higher 'social class' that do not share the same experiences as the average Swede. "Normally, politicians have an education, and sometimes they have never worked. They have just been politicians all the time, and they lose contact with the people… I mean, it's social classes."[72] This disparage between social classes is echoed by Sandelin, who argues that "the people who have built up this view [of multiculturalism] are upper-middle class; they are not confronted with the multicultural ghetto."[73] Carlqvist expresses this class schism as parallel realities when she says, "We have two realities. We have the one where the Prime Minister says, yes [multiculturalism] is our challenge and we must do it, and then you have the real reality where people in [immigrant-dense areas] say it's not possible, we can't do it." In each instance, the interviewees present a situation where politicians and other upper-middle class Swedes are perceived to be unaffected by multiculturalism and are thereby living in a 'false' reality.

[71] Interview with Kent Ekeroth.
[72] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.
[73] Interview with Gunnar Sandelin.

Whether framed in terms of subjective realities, class differences, or intellectual elites, the central concept shared by these immigration-critical Swedes is the same: Swedish society maintains a strong intolerance to anti-multicultural sentiments. The political system and the media are perceived as one macro-level superstructure that has successfully produced an ideological hegemony that is reproduced in the minds of Swedish elites and commoners alike. These individuals, in turn, underpin and sustain the macro-level system. The interviewees contend that when this system is challenged by an immigration-critical standpoint, the result is discrimination from the actors making up the system. The next section explores exactly *how* these actors enact discrimination against immigration-critical Swedes through general and specific processes of exclusion.

## Method Three: General and Specific Process of Exclusion

The processes of exclusion have been divided into the three general categories used in Essed's model: marginalization, problematization, and containment. Essed defines these processes as: "(a) marginalization (a form of oppression), (b) containment (a form of repression), and problematization (ideological constructions legitimizing exclusion and repression of opposition)."[74] These three "main forces" of discrimination "mutually stimulate and sustain each other,"[75] and each can be broken down into a number of specific sub-processes. The general and specific processes of exclusion are presented in detail on the following page.

[74] Essed, *Everyday Racism*, 10.
[75] Essed, *Everyday Racism*, 114.

| General Processes | | Specific Processes | Interview Number | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| **Marginalization** | Cognitive Detachment | Disassociation on moral grounds | X | X | | X | X | X |
| | | 'Elite' out of touch with socio-economic reality | X | X | X | X | X | |
| | | Undervaluation | | X | X | | X | X |
| | Physical Detachment | Ignoring | | X | | X | | |
| | | Withdrawing from social contact | | X | | | X | X |
| | Denying Equal Participation | Fired from job | X | X | | | X | X |
| | | Nonrecognition | | | | X | X | |
| | | Refusing articles about SD | | | | X | X | X |
| | | Refusing to interview SD | | | | | X | |
| | | Unfair media coverage | X | X | X | | X | |
| | | Denial to union | X | X | X | X | | |
| | | Using funds for protection | | X | | X | | |
| | | Refusal to accept authority/qualification | | | X | | | X |
| | | Refusal to debate | | | X | | | |
| **Problematization** | Denigration of Perspective | To attribute as not humanistic/demonize | | X | | X | X | X |
| | | Claim to 'think wrong' | X | X | | X | X | |
| | | Define as racist | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | Define as fascist | | | | X | X | |
| | | Define as Nazi | | | | X | X | |
| | | Define as prejudiced | | | | | X | |
| | Socio-cultural Denigration | Stigmatization | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | Criminalization | | | X | X | | |
| | | Define as uncivilized | | | X | | | |
| | | Attribute low economic standing | | | | | X | |
| | | Attribute unintelligence | | | X | | X | |
| **Containment** | Denial of discrimination | Referring to 'other reason' for action | X | | | | | X |
| | | Lack of response by police | | | X | | | |
| | | Unfair ruling by court | | | X | | | X |
| | | Calling others racist to shift blame | | | | | X | |
| | | Denial of 'mass immigration' | X | X | | | X | |
| | | Not confronted with multiculturalism | X | X | | X | | X |
| | Pacification | Control view of public | X | X | | X | X | X |
| | | Indoctrination of media | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | | Misuse of tax funds | | X | | X | | |
| | | Refusal to research immigration | | X | | X | | |
| | | Not talking about SD success | X | X | | | X | |
| | | Manipulating statistics | X | X | | | | |
| | | Lack of debate between government and people | | | | X | X | |
| | | Covering-up real situation | X | X | | X | X | |
| | Management of ethnic difference | Denial of Swedish culture | | | | X | X | |
| | | Viewing other cultures as superior | | | | X | X | X |
| | | Use of unfair anti-discrimination laws | | | | X | X | |
| | | Better government incentives for immigrants | X | X | | | | |
| | | Denial of ethnic difference | | | | X | | |
| | Intimidation | Violence | X | X | X | | X | |
| | | Vandalism | X | X | X | | | |
| | | Verbal threats | | X | X | | X | |
| | | Rudeness | | X | X | X | X | |
| | | Targeting women | | X | X | | | |
| | Retaliation | Launching anti-racism campaign | | | | X | X | |

**Figure 7: General and Specific Processes of Exclusion by Interview**

## Marginalization

Marginalization refers to the process in which a sense of 'otherness' is perpetuated,[76] and this process may occur cognitively or through social processes. Processes of ideological marginalization, or 'cognitive detachment,' often exhibited moral undertones, where the actors polarized 'good' multiculturalists from the 'bad' immigration-critical Swedes. At the micro-level, Sandelin claimed that "journalists want to see themselves as good people, and therefore they have to demonize the Sweden Democrats and paint them as racists."[77] The self-reflexive moral superiority exhibited by the journalists implies an 'undervaluation' of the 'bad' immigration-critical Swede, a notion Hallgren connects to accusations of racism by the media:

"And then they do this connection, if you are uh, thinking that we are taking too many immigrants into the country, there is this line of thought that uh, the media want you to think that if you, uh, doesn't want more people coming to Sweden then you think they are lesser people or are worth lesser than yourself. Then you are racist, and if you are racist then you are Nazi. They have built up this train of thought."[78]

'Cognitive detachment' can also be manifest as 'physical detachment,' where the main strategies employed by the actors were 'ignoring' or 'withdrawing from social contact.' One SD city council leader mentioned that he felt judged by other politicians on account of his party affiliation:

"They don't want to shake my hand, some of the leaders, because they think that I am a racist…They don't know us [SD], and they hate us. I also noticed the higher you get, it is stronger. If I talk to people here in the city council, they are wary [of me]. If I meet people in the Riksdag…and they see the flower, 'Aw, shit,' they just go. They will be very nice and very polite, and then 'Oh you are a Sweden Democrat? Shit.' What have I done?"[79]

The marginalization experienced by Rosenberg at the local and national level suggests that he perceives detachment as a function of the political system as a whole and not just the actions of individual party leaders. Similarly, the plurality of the word 'leaders,' without the explicit mention of a particular party, supports the notion that Rosenberg feels discrimination towards his party is shared by politicians across the political spectrum. 'Physical detachment' was also exhibited by friends and colleagues, affecting the private lives of the interviewees:

[76] Essed, *Everyday Racism*, 112.
[77] Interview with Gunnar Sandelin.
[78] Interview with Lars-Johan Hallgren.
[79] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.

"Some of them [journalists], they can't eat lunch with me, for fear of being seen with me. They come to my house and so on, and this is not only journalists. I think it's a really difficult situation. This is like dissidents from former Eastern Europe. I have lost friends I've known for thirty or forty years. They say they don't understand my values and they ask me why I am doing this [publishing immigration-critical articles]. If you are suspected to be associated with SD or if you say thing positive about them, you are looked at like an insect from some people."[80]

A third sub-process of marginalization, 'denial of equal participation,' was perceived at both micro- and macro-levels. Members of SD expressed concern about unequal political participation on account of being excluded from participation with the other parties. A number of leaders of other political parties in Sweden, including the Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, have repeatedly expressed their refusal to participate with SD. Rosenberg expressed political 'nonrecognition' at the local level:

"Let's say we have a delegation in Copenhagen. It's supposed to be one representative from the majority and one from the opposition. It is never us who gets to go, because they [the other politicians] will just say 'no.' Even if you sit on the city council, they have that thinking still."[81]

The media was also perceived as a main actor in denying SD the opportunity to equal participation in the public debate about immigration. At the macro-level, Ekeroth describes the media coverage of SD as a "disaster," and he goes on to say that "there is not a single media outlet in Sweden, be it television or newspapers, that is not openly against us." Rosenberg offered a more humanistic portrayal of the media, claiming that the media's bias often reflected the political orientation of the editor. Still, Rosenberg mentioned that most newspapers are against SD and gave the specific example of what the former editor of the *Helsingborgs Dagblat* told him: "He said to us, 'you will never have anything in this paper as long as I am here.' So we could write anything we wanted but he would never publish it."[82]

'Denial of equal participation' was also expressed in terms of opportunities in the labor market. Four interviewees were 'fired from a job' on account of their political affiliation or writings about immigration, and the other three knew someone personally who had been fired for similar reasons. Many interviewees expressed that these micro-level manifestations of discrimination were single examples of a larger macro-level structural

[80] Interview with Gunnar Sandelin.
[81] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.
[82] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.

phenomenon (expressed as the 'labor market' in Figure 6). In the private sector, Rosenberg noted that employers often claim they have hired someone for a temporary or contract job when a known Sweden Democrat applies. K. Andersson was denied from joining The Swedish Transport Union (*Transportarbetareförbundet*), which bars SD members from entering the union since "The Sweden Democrats have defined themselves clearly with a racist viewpoint."[83]

Hallgren stated a scenario that reinforces the theme of discrimination as stemming from powerful 'elites.' Hallgren was working in Southern Sweden as a salesman for a firm whose parent company was based in Stockholm.

"[The CEO] found out that I was a Sweden Democrat, so he talked to my boss, and said 'You have to fire that person.' He didn't want it, but it was orders from his boss. So he told me that if 'If you quit yourself, I will write a letter and also the CEO would write a letter [of recommendation]' so I could get another job. But if I didn't quit voluntarily, then they would write no letter or a letter that said I was a bad employee and no one should hire me."[84]

Hallgren suggests that the CEO of the parent company used his authority to order Hallgren's termination against the wishes of his local boss. The coercion used by the CEO, i.e. the letter of recommendation, demonstrates an instance of discrimination where an 'elite' in the private sector exercises his power to marginalize an individual based solely on his political affiliation.

In the public sector, especially positions associated with the welfare system, immigration-critical Swedes find their views on immigration a deterrent to their employability in the labor market. Rosenberg relayed that some of SD's members and voters attempt to hide their connection to the party by not 'going public' and letting others know about their affiliation with SD:

"If you work in social welfare for example, I am convinced that those people would not be public as an SD, because it's a very left-wing attitude there. You cannot like people. You cannot like children. You cannot like people even if you want to help them. If you are a racist it doesn't work, in their political world so to speak. If you want to be a social welfare worker, you are screwed if you are an SD."[85]

[83] Transportarbetareförbundet, "...Om Sveridemokraterna," http://www.transport.se/Transport-tycker1/Om-Sverigedemokraterna/
[84] Interview with Lars-Johan Hallgren.
[85] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.

## Problematization

The above quotation is one of many examples clearly demonstrating the close relationship between marginalization and problematization. SD members do not 'go public' with their political affiliation in order to avoid being 'problematized' as racists, thereby avoiding potential marginalization in the workplace or in their social lives. Problematization is a cognitive process exhibited by a dominant group that serves to rationalize and (re)produce social processes of exclusion, e.g. marginalization. The two specific processes of problematization identified were 'perspective/personality denigration' and 'socio-cultural denigration.' The former can be described as problematization of the individual and his/her personal disposition, whereas the latter refers to problematization of the group 'immigration-critical Swedes' as a whole.

'Perspective/personality denigration' refers to when the interviewees felt oppressed by being portrayed as having a 'wrong' perspective. The valuation supposed by this type of denigration is highly normative, that is, the actors' use of this discriminatory process positions immigration-Swedes outside the accepted norms of society and categorizes them as deviants. As K. Andersson put it, "There is a culture in this country regarding consensus. We are not allowed to voice too many objections to anything and if you do you tend to be labeled as a trouble maker, a dissident, and so on." Not being allowed to voice one's opinion was perceived as symptomatic of Swedish society's attitudes towards multiculturalism, where the macro-level institutions' 'silencing' of the immigration issue is normalized and reproduced by the mindsets of individual Swedes. The result is a clearly set boundary of political correctness, which, if breached, results in the problematization of the individual as a 'racist.' "If you say things that are not politically correct," claims Carlqvist, "they [journalists] will start telling you 'we can't talk to you because you are racist.'" Ekeroth echoes a similar sentiment when he hints to the consequences of acting in a politically incorrect manner: "It's hard to stand up and say something [against multiculturalism] because you will be stigmatized, you will be burned, people will look at you suspiciously."

Like in Ekeroth's quote above, often in the interviews the actors employing problematization were not specifically described, suggesting this process of discrimination was pervasive across Swedish society:

"Afraid, [people] are afraid…People don't want to identify themselves as a Sweden Democrat. They don't even want to vote for us because, 'Oh, then I voted Sweden Democrat and I can't do that because everyone, uh, everyone say[s] they are racists.'"[86]

"Everyone" highlights the extent to which Hallgren perceives perspective/personality denigration as a central tenant of Swedish society. Similarly, Rosenberg uses an ambiguous 'they' to describe who is problematizing the Sweden Democrats, "They use this stamp, you know, on your forehead – racist – and then you are screwed." Often times, the ambiguous 'they' was a reference to the 'system' as a whole, without reference to any specific actor.

Aside from being problematized on account of their ideological perspectives, immigration-critical Swedes were affixed with negatively evaluated social and cultural characteristics in a process referred to as 'socio-cultural denigration.' Socio-cultural denigration is a method of stigmatization that does not concern an individual's way of thinking but rather his or her relative position in society. Usually, this process of problematization is directed towards a 'group' as opposed to an individual. For example, attributing a low economic standing to sympathizers of SD is one method cited by Carlqvist: "The people say now, 'Well Sweden Democrats, it's you know guys with no education, poor guys, white trash". Whereas having 'no education' or being 'poor' can be more or less proven in relation to comparison with others, 'white trash' is a cultural stigma with connotations reaching farther than just economic status or education level. Another example of socio-cultural denigration is 'criminalization' and defining SD sympathizers as 'uncivilized.' In relation to a court proceeding against SD, H. Andersson stated that "all those people in the court and judges and prosecutors thought that all SD were criminal, stupid, barbarian."

The media was also perceived as 'stigmatizing' and 'criminalizing' SD members by attempting to cast them in a negative light. According to Rosenberg:

"If you drink and drive, it's not a good thing to do but if you do it, they will normally write 'Sweden Democrat' and then your name. But if you are a Social Democrat, they might write, if they write at all, a 'politician'. We have always felt more or less that the media is trying to put the racist stamp or trying to show that you are more of a bad person."[87]

Rosenberg here suggests the media is actively working to construct an image of SD members as morally corrupt, either by 'stigmatizing' them as racists or associating the

[86] Interview with Lars-John Hallgren.
[87] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.

party name with criminality. In addition, Rosenberg thinks the media is selectively choosing information to reveal about politicians from pro-multiculturalism parties in order to protect their image.

### Containment

Containment refers to the social processes of suppression that sustain marginalization and problematization. Five sub-processes of suppression were identified. The first is 'denial of discrimination' towards immigration-critical Swedes. Whereas some interviewees who were fired from jobs were told it was because of their party affiliation, others were given another reason often perceived as 'false' by the interviewees. Ekeroth, for example, claimed that at first his superiors told him he was fired for his political involvement in SD, but then his superiors "came up with another reason, a false reason," which was blogging during work hours. According to Sandelin, who was fired from *Dagens Nyheter* for his article[88] calling for investigations into the cost of immigration, "He [the employer] said it wasn't because of the topic, it was because of the way I wrote it and didn't exemplify why." Sandelin challenged his firing to the Swedish Justice Chancellor, who "didn't do a thing," suggesting that Sandelin also feels the legal system denied an instance of discrimination.

Second, 'pacification' of the public was perceived as a main driver of containment. Generally, the interviewees charged various actors, most notably politicians and the media, with attempting to 'control' the public through a variety of active and passive sub-methods. Actively, these actors were charged with manipulating statistics by "filtrating" and "avoiding" information,[89] thereby covering-up the 'real' situation. Hallgren talked about a situation in the town of Eslöv where the local politicians there claimed immigration had generated a positive cash flow. According to him, however, the Eslöv politicians were "hiding numbers" by placing 7 million SEK in interpreter costs associated with immigration under "administrative costs." Hallgren considered this but one example of the government's "misleading" the public in order to deter them from questioning the costs of immigration.

Politicians were also accused of attempting to use tax funds to influence the publics' perception of multiculturalism. At the local level, Rosenberg recounts this situation:

[88] Gunnar Sandelin,"Journalisterna mörklägger sanningen om invandrarna," *Dagens Nyheter*, November 28, 2010.
[89] Interview with Lars-Johan Hallgren.

"They try to change peoples' thinking. Like in this city [Helsingborg], in one of the political *nämbd* [councils], they had this document that we were supposed to change people in Helsingborg's view [about multiculturalism], how they think and feel about everybody's right to keep their culture. So if you use tax money here in town and try to convince them that it's good that immigrants keep their own culture, [you're suggesting] Swedes have to learn the 'right' way. And we [SD] have not accepted that one because we say that's a kind of political changing, and our tax money is not allowed to be used for those things."[90]

Politicians and the media were seen as passively controlling the public's view of multiculturalism by "not having dialogue with the people"[91] and refusing to research the costs of immigration:

"They don't want to show that number, because then the people will react and say, 'What is this? This is horrible.' So they don't want to count it. Every politician today knows exactly what everything costs...but in this case they don't want to know…They do everything to hide this cost."[92]

The third specific process of containment, closely associated with 'pacification', is the 'management of ethnic difference'. Discriminatory actors were accused of 'denying Swedish culture' and instating 'unfair anti-discrimination laws' that favor other ethnic groups over Swedes:

"If someone says something to somebody about their heritage, you can go to court. If I say to like my step-father, he's from Pakistan, if I use the word *svartskalla* [blackhead][93], I can go to court. But if someone from another place says something about me, as a Swede, he cannot be charged, because you have no Swedes. You have all the ethnical groups in the world, but you don't have any Swedes, as an ethnical group. And that is also from the government's way of thinking and trying to change the people."[94]

The idea that Swedes do not exist as an ethnic group was perceived as a result of politicians' portrayal of Swedish culture:

"I think that many Swedish people are really upset and hurt that so many politicians are trashing Swedish culture…You know, the Prime Minister said that there is no such thing as Swedish culture, just barbarian stuff, and Mona Sahlin, the immigration minister, she said once…to a Turkish newspaper...'We Swedes are so envious of you because don't have anything. We have just, you know, midsummer and those stupid things.'"[95]

[90] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.
[91] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.
[92] Interview with Lars-Johan Hallgren.
[93] A derogatory slang word used for immigrants, in reference to a dark hair color.
[94] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.
[95] Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist.

The fourth sub-process, 'intimidation', is the most tangible process of exclusion. Intimidation includes physical attacks, such as 'violence' and 'vandalism', as well as verbal speech, for example 'verbal threats' and 'rudeness'. The main actors accused of carrying out physical attacks were left-wing extremists. According to Ekeroth, the left-wing extremists "call themselves different names, they have…different organizations but the same people in them." H. Andersson, one of the "specialists" in SD following the actions of the left-wingers, stated that they should be understood as a "network", and he believes they are "perfectly built into the Social Democrats [and] Vänstrepartiet."

Finally, 'retaliation' is a reactionary process where a counter-movement is launched as a demonstration against immigration-critical Swedes. Two days after the Sweden Democrats were voted into Parliament, the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* launched a campaign with the slogan "*Vi Gillar Olika"* [We Like Difference].[96] The badge used for the campaign, a hand signaling 'stop' (pictured below), was borrowed from the 1980s anti-racist movement "*Rör Inte Min Kompis*" [Don't Touch My Friend].

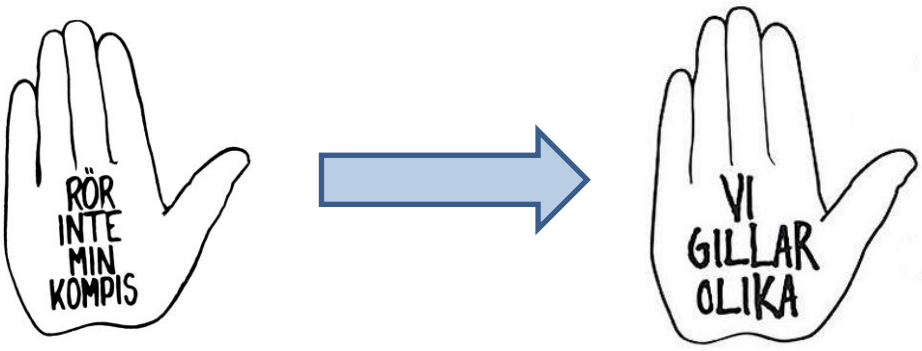



**Figure 8: 'Vi Gillar Olika' Logo[97]**

Carlqvist, who worked for *Aftonbladet* at the time, considered *Vi Gillar Olika* as not a protest against racism but a protest against democracy. She asked one of the editors about the campaign:

"And he said that it was very successful. Yeah, successful, you know, you got many likes on Facebook, but have you considered what you are really saying? The biggest newspaper is saying that it is against democracy. We have a party that's been voted into the parliament and you say that you protest against this? What is that? He looked at me like I was horrible."[98]

[96] Jan Helin, "Därför gillar vi olika," *Aftonbladet,* September 19, 2010.
[97] Source: http://www.aftonbladet.se/vigillarolika/
[98] Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist.

The above examples demonstrate how processes of marginalization, problematization, and containment work alongside and with one another to create and sustain the exclusion of immigration-critical Swedes. Having views contradictory to the normative multiculturalist ideology, these Swedes feel discriminated against by a number of different actors in their society. The next method, the case study, will 'reconstruct' concrete examples of discrimination in order to gain a first-hand perspective into how exactly immigration-critical Swedes experience discrimination.

## Method Four: Case Study

An interviewee's relaying of a discriminatory event is essentially his or her telling of a 'story' where he or she argues that a situation was not 'normal' on account of a discriminatory thought or action. The 'normality' of an event is subject to the interpretation of the interviewee, who uses his or her own knowledge of societal norms to judge whether an act is 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable.' The case study will analyze perceived 'unacceptable' acts of behavior by 'reconstructing' how one interviewee interprets a series of discriminatory events. The intention here is to analyze events in the lives of immigration-critical Swedes using Essed's model of 'everyday racism,' in order to assess whether or not immigration-critical Swedes construct experiences of discrimination similar to that of 'blacks' experiencing traditionally accepted forms of racism.

In order to determine whether or not an event is 'unacceptable' and thus discriminatory, a person interprets a given situation via two main 'heuristic methods'[99]:

(a) Inference from beliefs, expectations, and knowledge
(b) Comparisons for (in)consistency and consensus

Through method (a), a person's social cognitions are employed to make inferences about whether the motivations behind an event are acceptable (non-discriminatory) or unacceptable (discriminatory). On the other hand, through method (b) a person compares the given event to other social processes in order to determine the acceptability of an action.

In a similar approach to narrative analysis, Essed breaks down the recounting of racist event into five 'reconstructive categories' to which the heuristic methods are applied: context, complication, evaluation, argumentation, and decision. The **context** is the information necessary for the setting of the story, including the participating actors, time,

[99] Essed, *Everyday Racism,* 127.

place, and social circumstances for the event. **Complication** is a normative category that identifies a deviation from a 'good' or 'acceptable' societal norm as a 'bad' or 'unacceptable' event. **Evaluation** is an explanatory category that evaluates whether or not a complication, or 'unacceptable' event, is racist or non-racist. Important to note is that the evaluation may be verbally expressed (e.g. "This happened because he was racist"), or the evaluation may be implicit in the complication. The **Argumentation** category includes statements that support particular evaluations. Argumentation is enacted via the two heuristic methods of interpretation, i.e. inference and comparison, for either consistency/consensus or inconsistency. To employ the heuristic methods for consistency/consensus is to use other situations generally perceived as racist to *support* the given scenario as racially motivated. On the other hand, to use the heuristic methods for inconsistency draws a dialectical distinction wherein an event inconsistent with expected behavior *distinguishes* an event as racist. Finally, the category of **Decision** represents the interviewee's plans, expectations, or actions that occur as a result of his or her interpretation (i.e. reconstruction) of the given scenario. Figure 9 is adapted from Essed's model of reconstruction categories and the heuristic strategies that accompany them.

| Type of Category | Content of Category | Form of Heuristic | Supporting References |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Context** | Description of time, place, actors, situation | N/A | N/A |
| **Complication** | Description and interpretation of actions | Comparison | Norms, values about acceptable/ unacceptable behavior |
| **Evaluation** | Significance or value of actions | Inference | Beliefs, expectations, social knowledge about one's situation… |
| **Argumentation** | Statements in support of evaluation | Inference | …and discrimination/ domination |
| | | Comparison for consistency | Experiences of other I-C Swedes |
| | | | Experiences of other Swedes |
| | | | Other actions of same actor |
| | | Comparison for consensus | Interpretations/evaluations of others |
| | | | Interpretations/evaluations of the actor |
| | | Comparison for inconsistency | Experiences of I-C Swedes |
| | | | Experiences of Swedes |
| **Decision** | Intentions and/or actions | N/A | Expectations about the goals of particular response |

**Figure 9: Categories of Reconstruction**

Important to note is that when reconstructing an instance of racism/discrimination, the categories do not necessarily follow sequentially as they have been stated here, and therefore may be rearranged. Further, in many instances not all five categories are used, although usually context, complication, and decision are likely to be found.

Although the data gathered through this study suggests numerous instances of discrimination towards immigration-critical Swedes, the following case study has been divided into four stories by the same interviewee, Hans-Olof Andersson, and was chosen for a three main reasons. First, the case study presents discrimination as coming from a wide variety of actors on both the macro- and micro-level, demonstrating examples from multiple parts of the 'system' of discrimination. Second, Hans-Olof recounts instances of discrimination directed specifically towards him personally, as well as instances of discrimination towards SD in general. The latter supports the notion that other SD members have shared similar experiences or at least are susceptible to comparable instances. Third, Hans-Olof experiences each of the general processes of exclusion. Finally, Hans-Olof's reconstructions provide a coherent narrative to which Essed's model is rather smoothly adopted.

**Case 1**

*(1a) Context:* In October 2006, SD held a political *utbildningsmöte* (training course) in the city hall of the southern Swedish town of Eslöv. The course was a primer for local SD party leaders on the responsibilities and functions of a city council politician.

*(2a) Complication:* "We were attacked brutally by 30-40 people dressed in black, just attacked us. They broke the windows, threw in small chemical bombs…and they attacked us brutally and kicked and destroyed, and it was absolutely terrible." Here, the actions committed by the 'people dressed in black' are perceived as 'deviant' and outside expected norms of peaceful political assembly. Moreover, the use of the word 'just' above implies S3 interpreted the attack as senseless and irrational behavior by the perpetrators.

*(3) Evaluation:* Implicit in complication. The 'people dressed in black' who committed the attack were believed by Hans-Olof to be left-wing extremists. These extremists are generally against any form of fascism, Nazism, or racism, and therefore it can be induced that the attack took place because SD was believed to be associated with one or more of these ideologies.

*(2b) Complication:* "No one was ever arrested or convicted, nothing." Hans-Olof assumes that the standard norm would be for the police to arrest or convict perpetrators of an attack.

*(3b) Evaluation:* Implicit in complication and argumentation. Bringing up that no one was arrested is not merely an objective statement. Hans-Olof's inclusion of the above statement in the story, as well as the word 'nothing' stated at the end of it for added emphasis, implies a subjective valuation – namely that the police did not make any arrests for some reason. The evaluation is further supported in argumentation by the heuristic methods below.

*(4) Argumentation*

*(4a) Inference believed to be true from generalized belief:* "TV4 was there and they filmed it. And of course 30-40 young people, it would not be difficult for the police to find out who they were, they had of course talked about it before on the internet and mobile phones." Hans-Olof believes that the police had the means to make arrests, and therefore his interpretation of the situation is that the police did not make any arrests for some reason.

*(4b) Comparison with other personal experience for consensus:* "Policemen have told me that they're not allowed to investigate…high police officers. Lots of us were called in [following the attack] to give reports, and he [one high police officer] told me sitting there, and other SD as well, he said 'I've been ordered not to solve this.'" Hans-Olof uses a personal experience associated with the event to support his belief that the police did not act in an expected manner, and he does this through relaying a 'confirming statement' from the police officer to support his hypothesis. The inclusion of the police officer's rank as 'high' suggests that his orders came from someone in a position even higher than his (suggesting, for example, a central police authority in Stockholm), supporting the notion of an 'elite' influencing the 'system of propaganda.'

*(4b') Inference believed to be true from socialized belief: "*He [the high police officer] was about to retire, so he could say anything he wanted." Hans-Olof infers that because the police officer's situation of being close to retirement, he had the opportunity to speak freely. Through this statement, Hans-Olof also infers that other employed police officers would not be willing to 'reveal the truth' in order to protect their job security.

(5) *Decision:* A personal decision was never relayed by the interviewee. Although Hans-Olof attended the meeting, the story is not so much an act of discrimination against him personally as much as it is against the party as a whole.

**Case 2:**

*(1) Context*: Following the attack, one of the SD members at the meeting recognized an attacker, who had formerly been a candidate in another party's election and therefore often in the media. The SD member then wrote on the SD website that he had recognized this person as an attacker.

*(2a, 2b) Complication – Complication*: "This guy [the attacker] goes to the court and files for defamation for character. It was so absurd. The court ruled in his favor." This can be interpreted as two separate complications that are linked to the same case. Hans-Olof considers the attacker's filing for defamation unacceptable and 'absurd' since he believes the attacker had committed a wrong in the first place. Second, the court's ruling in the attacker's favor is interpreted as an unacceptable action by the court system.

*(2b') Clarification of complication:* "Our politicians had no prior convictions and were convicted themselves for putting the name up of one of the people who attacked us."

*(3) Evaluation:* "This is because it was in 2006." The reason given for the court's decision was the time period in which the ruling took place. The connotation here is that the public perception of SD was very negative at this time, when SD was just beginning to have moderate success in the election figures.

*(4) Argumentation*

*(4a) Comparison with other personal experiences for inconsistency:* "I've been in 200 trials; I know somehow how the courts work." Hans-Olof draws upon his personal experience to suggest the court's ruling is inconsistent with other trials, since this case involved SD, an immigration-critical party.

*(4b) Inference believed to be true from socialized belief:* "In 2006 all those people those people in the court and judges and prosecutors thought that all SD were criminal, stupid, barbarians." In Hans-Olof's opinion (an opinion most likely shared by other SD members), SD was judged unfairly by a specific group of actors, i.e. those in the court system, on account of the party's reputation.

*(5a) Decision* "We were trampled by the system." Hans-Olof's conclusion to this event is that SD was 'trampled,' connoting powerlessness, by a 'system', i.e. a group of actors working in concert. In this case, the system refers to the legal system. The decision suggests Hans-Olof felt SD was dominated by a powerful group of actors, a characteristic feature in studies of racism.

**Case 3**

*(1) Context:* In 2006/2007, SD members from the municipality of Skåne were trying to book a venue to hold their yearly meeting through the municipal government. Hans-Olof called a municipality employee to request a room in one of the town halls.

*(2) Complication:* "I asked her what she had open for that date, and her conclusion was that 'you can sit in the park outside.'"

*(2') Clarification of complication:* "The rules for people working there [at a municipality] are that they should be super-correct with all politicians." The treatment Hans-Olof received by the employee does not fit the social norm of expected behavior.

*(3) Evaluation:* In response to being asked why these instances occur, Hans-Olof replied, "It's a massive system of propaganda, to stay in power for the people in power. That's it. The people in power want to keep their positions and have all their wages and have a good time." The 'propaganda' he refers to is the idea that SD members are to be viewed as 'racists' and consequently incompetent politicians. Hans-Olof believes that the employee's actions were a result of her buying into propaganda instead of following the standard protocol of treating all politicians 'super-correctly.'

This quote has two dimensions, both micro and macro. At the micro-level, Hans-Olof implies that the employee acted rudely in accordance with the expected behavior according to the propaganda of the political system, and by solidifying her position as 'one of them', she might attain greater job security. At the macro-level, Hans-Olof believes the other politicians in the political system work together to maintain their position in power, so that they can keep their power and salaries.

*(4) Argumentation*

*(4a) Inference believed to be true from socialized belief:* Hans-Olof argues that Sweden has a long tradition where people "work together, compromise, and obey." He claims that while this has traditionally worked very well for Sweden, "there comes a terrible problem with this…everyone in power tries to agree against those who are little and small." In the context of this case, Hans-Olof argues rudeness of the employee stems from this tradition. In other words, he perceives the employee as 'working together' with the majority and 'obeying' their propaganda without using her own cognitive reason.

*(5) Decision:* "I then phoned her supervisor and he was more formal…and we got a good place to use at the end of it."

**Case 4:**

*(1) Context:* Hans-Olof claims that when he became involved with SD in 2005, a 'private information network' built of left-wing activists began observing him and following him at night. One week before the parliamentary elections in 2006, SD was preparing to mail campaign brochures to every household in Sweden, and it was the first time SD was to put forth such an wide-scale effort. Hans-Olof was sitting at his desk and making some final preparations for the mailing of the brochures.

*(2a, 5a, 2b) Complication-Decision-Complication:* "I hear a thump on my apartment door 5 meters behind me…like a movie, I smell a very foul stench, a chemical stench [from a chemical bomb]. I rise from my desk, walk to the door, open it, and they sprayed a big swastika on the door, and with it was sprayed 'racist äckel' (roughly translated as 'racism scum').

*(5b) Decision:* "I grab the keys, put them in my pocket, I don't even put on my shoes and walk out the door." Hans-Olof sees four people outside: an attendant talking to an old man and two 'swabbish' looking young people walking twenty meters away. He catches up to them and walks beside them "for a long time."

*(3) Evaluation:* "They [left-wing activists] did more to me than they did against [other SD members], and that was because I had a reputation for building stuff in this town, having cultural events in Lund." Hans-Olof believes the reason he was attacked is, paradoxically, his good-standing in society. This line of thinking presupposes that respected, well-established members of society who join SD will be attacked more than derelicts, since having respected people in a political party grants the party a degree of legitimacy. Those activists opposed to SD's development, then, attack members they worry can influence others into changing the public image of the party, supporting the interviewees' claims that challenge to the multicultural standpoint can result in intimidation.

*(4) Argumentation*

*(4a) Inference from social knowledge about one's situation:* Hans-Olof believes his former profession as a musician makes him an especially attractive target for left wing activists, since he has close contacts with cultural 'elite' personalities who are generally regarded as left-wing. He believes he was singled out for an attack because "[The left-wing activists] know my capacity and my integrity and my contacts in higher places in

society. They were in absolute fear when they saw me getting active with this [SD] I think."

*(4b) Comparison with other personal experiences for consistency:* Hans-Olof said that prior to this event, the outer door of his apartment complex had been spray-painted with two black flags, the symbol of a left-wing activist organization known as Antifascistisk Action (AFA). The point of this earlier, less violent attack was to "build up" intimidation.

*(4c) Inference from socialized belief about the attackers:* "They looked at me in astonishment. They couldn't believe I was a human being – that I could talk to them, that I was real. You know, all this is built upon dehumanization…Their greatest fear is to get to know someone they hate." Hans-Olof argues that the left-wing activists carry out attacks on, as opposed to debates with, their targets in order to keep an impersonal relationship with them.

*(4d) Inference from generalized belief:* "When you get to know someone you hate, it isn't possible to hate the person anymore. You can dislike their opinions, but you can't hate the person." If the activists get to know the person they are targeting, Hans-Olof believes they won't be able to 'hate' the person enough to carry out the attacks, a notion that undermines their political movement.

*(4e) Inference from generalized belief of the attackers' motivations:* "They're political movement, the extreme left, isn't built upon [debate]. It's built upon violence, attacking, and just repeating the Marxist dogma."

*(5b, 2c) Decision-Complication:* "I reported it to the police, showed them photos, described the people very, very well, but nothing happens. I estimate that of all the violence reported against SD, between .5 and 1% of reported crimes lead to convictions."

**Evaluation**

The case studies present reconstructed scenarios of Hans-Olof's life that he perceives as extraordinary and outside of standard societal norms (i.e. complications). His evaluations of these scenarios suggest that his immigration-critical viewpoint, made public through his association with the Sweden Democrats, is directly or indirectly the reason underpinning the complications. Each of the cases presented marks an event that Hans-Olof interprets as an instance of discrimination. Case 1 concerns an attack directed towards SD as a whole, and Cases 3 and 4 are instances of discrimination against Hans personally on account of his affiliation with SD. Case 2 is not a direct act of discrimination against the party; however,

the ruling of the court is interpreted as unfair and direct result of discriminatory ideologies of those involved with the legal proceedings. The figure below summarizes the processes of exclusion experienced by Hans-Olof:

| Mechanisms of Discrimination: Case 1-4 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Case Number** | **General Process** | **Specific Processes** | **Actor** | **Case Reference** |
| **Case 1** | Containment | Intimidation (Violence/Vandalism) | Left-wing extremists | (2a) |
| | Containment | Denial of discrimination (Lack of response by police) | Police | (2b), (4b) |
| **Case 2** | Containment | Denial of discrimination (Unfair ruling) | Court | (2b) |
| | Problematization | Socio-Cultural Denigration (Criminalization/Attribution of unintelligence) | Legal system | (4b) |
| **Case 3** | Marginalization | Obstacles to equal participation (Refusal to accept authority) | Municipal employee | (2) |
| | Containment | Intimidation (Rudeness) | Municipal employee | (2) |
| | Marginalization | Obstacles to equal participation (Undervaluation) | Political System | (2) |
| **Case 4** | Containment | Intimidation (Vandalism) | Left-wing extremists | (2a), (2b) |
| | Problematization | Denigration of Perspective (Demonization) | Left-wing extremists | (4c) |
| | Containment | Denial of discrimination (Lack of response by police) | Police | (2c) |

**Figure 10: Case Study Evaluation Results**

Although the actors charged with carrying out discrimination have been divided into separate groups (Column 4), Hans-Olof interprets the discrimination as stemming from a 'system'. The assumption here is that multiple actors from various facets of society are working together to create and promulgate the exclusion of SD through marginalization, problematization, and containment. The municipal employee in Case 3, for example, is seen as acting in accordance the propaganda built by a 'massive system'. The police officer in Case 1 does not carry out a further investigation into the attack because he was ordered not to solve the case, a notion that suggests other actors with higher authority have an agenda against SD. The left-wing extremists carrying out the attacks in Cases 1 and 4 are perceived as "hooligans" whose actions are directed by "smart people behind the hooligans." These 'smart people' are assumed to be associated with the major left-wing parties. The actors involved in the case study, then, are seen as appendages of a larger system working towards excluding those who hold an immigration-critical standpoint.

# Chapter III: Discussion

The previous sections of this study have explored *who* the interviewees perceive as actors of discrimination as well as *how* these actors carry out processes of exclusion against them. The discriminatory actors, although operating within different facets of Swedish society, are understood by the interviewees to share a vehement rejection of their critical views on multiculturalism. An 'elite', driven primarily by a converged political system and an indoctrinated media, have been accused of attempting to control the Swedish public's perceptions and attitudes towards multiculturalism and immigration. The result is a commonly shared 'conceptual and normative framework' about how to think and talk about cultural difference, a framework that is produced at the macro-level and reproduced by individuals at the micro-level. In turn, the individuals at the micro-level reinforce and affirm the macro-level structures, resulting in a fluid 'system' where multiculturalism is a hegemonic ideology underpinning social cognition and social processes in Swedish society.

Whether these perceptions accurately describe the current state of affairs in Sweden is not the focus of this study. Instead, the study has sought to relay the subjective reality constructions of the interviewees, chosen based on their shared skepticism of multiculturalism, which I have deemed 'immigration-critical'. To the interviewees, whether or not their perception of the world is objectively the correct one is not relevant – they *believe* their perception reflects reality.

Although the truth of their statements may be contested, the Sweden Democrats' worldview is appealing to an increasing number of Swedish voters. If the growing number of immigration-critical Swedes (or, at least, those who are publicly immigration-critical) is to be curtailed, influential societal actors must first understand, and then subsequently address, the issues that form the subjective reality constructions for these immigration-critical Swedes. If this is not accomplished swiftly and successfully, the two competing viewpoints – pro-multiculturalism and immigration-critical – will continue to operate in 'parallel realities.'

As the artist's representation of the Sjöbo referendum at the beginning of the paper demonstrates, actions perceived as motivated by an immigration-critical ideology may be construed and depicted as racism. The presentation of the interview data has similarly shown how the interviewees have been labeled 'racists' on account of their immigration-

critical opinions. The interviewees have experienced the effects of exclusionary practices, which I have categorized into three general processes: marginalization, problematization, and containment. From loss of employment to media slander to vandalism of their homes, the effects of these exclusionary practices are a tangible and reoccurring theme in their lives. In order to put the accounts of the interviewees in context, it is helpful to visit previous research dealing with treatment of SD and their public image.

## The Discriminatory Actors Revisited

The study data has suggested that although the perceived instances of discrimination come from a number of actors in Swedish society, the actors have been described as various appendages of a 'system' oppressive towards immigration-critical Swedes. An 'elite', comprised mainly of politicians and journalists, is interpreted to be the head of the system, which influences less powerful actors in Swedish society through 'propaganda'. This type of rhetoric is characteristic of populist parties and has been routinely employed throughout SD's development. However, "comparative research on nationalist or populist parties [has paid] very little attention to SD,"[100] and therefore only a meager amount of material is available concerning how members of the SD perceive their situation within a larger Swedish societal context. While one benefit of the methodology used in this study has been to offer insight into SD member's reality constructions, a weakness of the methodology is the ability to cross-reference and validate the claims made by interviewees. As already mentioned, though, the objective validity of the claims is not as important as their perceived 'truth value' to the interviewees. Nevertheless, some previous studies provide a benchmark of validation for some the claims made by the subjects of this study.

The SD members in this study expressed that they experienced marginalization in the Swedish political arena, both on a personal and organizational level. According to a study about SD published by Sweden's now-defunct Integration Agency:

> "Some of the Swedish parliamentarians we talked to said that they made use of an expressed strategy that was designed to marginalize and ignore the right-wing populist parliamentarians in order to avoid giving them any scope in the political debate."[101]

While this quote does not lend evidence to support an all-inclusive effort by other politicians to marginalize SD members, the notion that at least some politicians have

[100] Hellström and Nilsson, "We are the Good Guys," 56.
[101] Integrationsverket, *Populism and Mistrust*, 50.

implemented a 'strategy' of marginalization strengthens the interviewees' claims of political exclusion.

Furthermore, Hellström and Nilsson have pointed out a number of rhetorical figures used against SD. One rhetorical figure used by 'established parties' is "SD is not like us in any way, shape, or form."[102] This strategy draws a divisive line between the major political parties and SD, clearly demonstrating a process of marginalization by the established political system. Another rhetorical figure exhibiting marginalization and problematization is the notion of "SD as a political clown," where "in a variety of articles, SD representatives are ridiculed and portrayed as laymen, ignorant of the basics of political work."[103] The use of 'articles' suggests the media are the main actor utilizing this figure, although the claims of the interviewees suggest this stereotype is employed by other members of society as well.

Two other, interconnected rhetorical figures of problematization identified were representing SD as a "devil in disguise" and "guilty-by-association."[104] These strategies attempt to equate SD's political platform with a Nationalist Socialist ideology that is commonly viewed as "undemocratic, racist, and violent."[105] The actors charged with promulgating these views were both politicians and the media, often working together through the publishing of editorial articles written by politicians. Additionally, interviewees from both the SD and journalist groups expressed the media's refusal to publish articles written by SD or articles that could in some way be linked to a SD-sympathetic position.

Hellström et al.'s interpretation of the media's role in the portrayal of SD is, at the very least, as a means of facilitation for anti-SD sentiments. They write:

"The news reporting on SD has, according to the journalist and author Niklas Orrenius, often been based on negative presuppositions about the party and its followers. Others would disagree, but it is evident that the print media has provided an arena for mainstream antipathies towards the party."[106]

[102] Hellström and Nilsson, "We are the Good Guys," 65.
[103] Hellström and Nilsson, "We are the Good Guys," 63.
[104] Hellström and Nilsson, "We are the Good Guys," 64.
[105] Hellström and Nilsson, "We are the Good Guys," 64.
[106] Anders Hellström et al., "Nationalism vs. Nationalism: The Challenge of the Sweden Democrats in the Swedish Public Debate," *Government and Opposition* 47:2 (2012): 204.

This quote suggests that while the media may not actively discriminate against SD, the media serves as a channel where anti-SD sentiments may be expressed, possibly resulting in the party's exclusion by the media's base – the Swedish public.

Both the media and political system's processes of exclusion towards SD have been, to an extent, validated by previous studies. However, these processes are situated within a democratic system, leading SD members to frame their exclusion in terms of an 'elite' versus the 'people', not 'antagonists' versus 'protagonists.' SD members have dichotomized themselves as a minority that is unfairly treated by the political system and the media, together taken to be an intellectual and moral 'elite.'

The question remains as to what extent these acknowledged processes of exclusion can be considered discrimination. Two major difficulties are encountered when answering this question. First, many of the actors perceived as discriminating against SD employ the moral argument that their action is legitimized by SD's undemocratic and 'racist' worldview:

"Opponents of SD sometimes attempt to justify dubious democratic means of counteracting SD views by portraying its party representatives as unable to be accommodated in an open and democratic society: since they are racists, and probably enemies of democracy, they do not deserve the same respect as others…This strategy of shaming of SD risks reinforcing the perception of politics as elitist."[107]

This begs the question: Is it ethical to exclude a democratically-elected party through democratic means? While the answer is apparently yes, the 'dubious' processes of exclusion employed by the actors seem to suggest a certain degree of foul play is used for their own gain, at least according to the interviewees. The research data attempted to highlight some of these 'dubious' means, such as 'controlling the public', 'dehumanizing', and 'stigmatizing as racist.' To reiterate, it is not the objective validity of these accusations that counts but rather the state of affairs as interpreted by the interviewees.

The second difficulty in determining whether the presented data can be considered discrimination has to do with the dominant understanding of discrimination as almost exclusively part of a 'race relations' paradigm. One hypothesis derived from the data is that if SD members were 'black' or 'immigrants' (and some certainly are), one could classify the type of aforementioned treatment against them as instances of cultural racism. The case studies, using Essed's model of cultural racism, reconstructed interpreted

[107] Hellström et al., "Nationalism vs. Nationalism," 202.

instances of discrimination against an immigration-critical Swede and detected processes of exclusion similar to Essed's findings. Since the type of 'discrimination' posited is enacted by-and-large against members of the dominant 'white' group, though, traditional theories of 'cultural racism' such as Essed's are not entirely applicable. Nevertheless, this study contends that if 'race' and other discourses of color are left out of the analysis, immigration-critical Swedes can be considered as subjected to an 'ethnicized' form of discrimination.

## Ethnicization: Of the Majority, By the Majority

The type of discrimination discussed in this study tests the limits of a 'racism without races' and focuses on a purely ideological debate between pro-multiculturalist and immigration-critical Swedes. The discrimination discussed is posited as a form of 'ethnicism' where the subjected group is constructed without racial significance – in short, a 'cultural racism without race.' Most studies of 'cultural racism' or 'ethnicism' tend to focus on cultural discrimination situated within a racialized paradigm between a dominant 'white' group and subordinate 'black' or 'ethnic' group. Take, for example, the following excerpt from a Swedish state-issued research report on structural discrimination against immigrants as a type of 'cultural racism':

> "Structural discrimination creates a system of superior [dominant] and subordinate relations between ('white') Swedes and racialized persons, mainly with an immigrant background…
> Discrimination can be triggered by a variety of things; a name, an accent or physical appearance, to more general perceptions concerning 'immigrants' being different; having another 'culture, constituting a threat, lacking competence, not fitting in. Individuals tend to be equated with and are deal with on the bases of an ascribed ethnicity, in order words discrimination reflects an inability to see people as individuals."[108]

Nothing is incorrect about the above statement, but the allusion to 'white'-centrism tilts the emphasis of the study heavily towards a 'race' relations paradigm as opposed to a study of 'cultural' relations. The author explicitly mentions that 'white' Swedes are the dominant group, and the subordinate group is racialized according to traits characteristic of an 'immigrant-background.' Not describing what an immigrant-background entails, the author instead defines 'immigrant-background' in relation to what it is supposedly not, i.e. the normative Swedish 'white'. In this type of approach, "The non-Swedish is reduced to a homogenous mass, defined solely by exactly its lack of Swedishness,"[109] a notion that is intimately linked to skin color. Even though the author states that an 'ascribed ethnicity'

[108] SOU, *Det Blågula Glashuset,* 48-49.
[109] Heinö, *Integration or Assimilation,* 37.

can be constructed from 'general perceptions,' the implication made is that the subordinate group is decidedly marked by their racialized feature as non-white – *not* their 'general perceptions'.

Both the discriminatory actors and the interviewees in this study are members of the so-called 'Euro(White)centrist' group, and therefore 'ethnicization', not 'racialization,' is seen as the primary process of group construction. The categorization of the dominant and subordinate groups is not defined by 'white'-centrism but another, purely ideological centrism. The centrism associated with this form of ethnicism could be referred to as 'multicultural-centrism,' where principles of multiculturalism dictate the acceptable societal norm. Those individuals ascribing to the multicultural norm may 'ethnicize' those who identify with its ideological opposite – nationalism – into a group that is perceived as morally and culturally inferior. This process of ethnicization is dialectical and auto-referential, meaning that the affixed negative valuations to the subjected group create and bolster positive valuations of the dominant group.

The criteria used for group differentiation is the multiculturalism ideology, which has a normative framework for how to think and talk about cultural difference. The presentation of multiculturalism in the Introduction highlighted how this framework is associated with moral connotations of 'good' multiculturalism and 'bad' nationalism. Hellström et al. show how the divide between SD and their opponents is both ideological and loaded with moral content:

"The divide between the SD and its opponents…brings to the surface a set of moral principles that separate 'them' (the SD and 'bad' nationalists that mobilize around a nationalist response the political establishment) from 'us' (the mainstream parties that ascribe to a set of moral principles that serve to preserve Sweden as a democratic state and national community)."[110]

According to the interviewees, those who hold a critical opinion of multiculturalism are subject to having their viewpoints 'ethnicized' into a negatively evaluated category – 'racist' – resulting in possible discrimination through the processes of exclusion. To use words from the Swedish state's study, the dominant group enacts discrimination 'triggered by' general perceptions of the subordinate group as 'being different' (through

[110] Hellström et al.,"Nationalism vs. Nationalism," 191.

marginalizing), 'constituting a threat' (through problematizing), and 'lacking competence' (through defining the norms of competence via containment).

In the Swedish-state's study, these types discrimination towards the racialized minority are deemed forms of 'cultural racism.' The analyses from this paper suggest that members of the 'white' group experience similar types of discrimination from other members of the 'white' majority, but objective inquiries into this type of discrimination largely go unnoticed. Against immigrants, discrimination is to be condemned as an evolutionary expression of 'racism'; against members of the majority group, similar treatment is often unquestioned. The way the Swedish study is structured sustains his status quo. In positioning discrimination within a 'race relations' paradigm, members of the 'white' majority are barred from being detected as victims of discrimination, since they do not belong to the racialized minority.

An interesting aside to the discussion of 'race relations' is the interviewees' almost complete absence of references to immigrants as actors of discrimination. Discriminatory actions enacted by Swedes were mentioned at an overwhelmingly higher number than discrimination stemming from 'non-white' immigrants, which was only cited once. In some cases, immigrants were perceived as being more tolerant, both personally and politically, than members of the Swedish 'white' majority:

"Actually, the people who are immigrants and active with Vänsterpartiet and the Social Democrats are better than the ethnic Swedes, and I think it's because they see you as a person, and in the second-hand they see the party you represent…They separate the politics from the person…And even when I meet with people who are immigrants, I usually have the impression that they think like I do."[111]

The methodology of this study was structured to avoid employing a 'race-relations' paradigm, and instead focused on the ideological relations between pro-multiculturalist and immigration-critical Swedes. Interestingly, the ideological battle between pro-multiculturalists and immigration-critical Swedes does not take place between two different 'ethnic' cultures. Instead, the dividing line demarcating the groups is drawn *within* the same culture and is thus 'intra-cultural.' The immigration-critical Swedes identify almost entirely with the majority Swedish culture: they share the same language, they identify with the same traditions, and they even have similar phenotypical features. The main difference between the two groups of Swedes is their stance on multiculturalism,

[111] Interview with Michael Rosenberg.

and at the core of this schism is a deep-seeded ideological debate concerning national identity – the meaning of 'Swedishness.'

## National Identity: An Intra-cultural Disagreement

As biological racism studies from the 1960s and 1970s became increasingly focused on socio-cultural discrimination against immigrants, the connection between nationalism and racism has become ever more prominent. With increases in external factors such as globalization and immigration, Essed writes that "'ethnic' forms of oppression have emerged that are fed by strong (nationalistic) identification with the cultural heritage of the group."[112] One's national identity is of existential importance to human beings, for nationalism influences one's social cognitions about the world around him. In the words of Özkirimli, nationalism is "a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us."[113] Different interpretations of nationalism, then, can lead to different constructions of reality.

In Sweden, the ideological debate between pro-multiculturalists and immigration-critical Swedes is largely the result of an intra-cultural conflict between two different interpretations of nationalism. Sweden, unlike other European countries, lacks a history of public debate on the issue of national identity and consequently an established view of 'Swedishness.'[114] Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren has extensively studied the country's national identity and has identified a paradigm shift in recent years of what constitutes national identity for the Swedish people. Löfgren has described Swedish identity during the 1950s through the 1970s as a type of 'inverted patriotism,'[115] where paradoxically to be Swedish meant to be un-Swedish: embracing internationalism and casting aside the outdated nationalism that had sparked two major international conflicts.

However, in the 1990s a new discourse on Swedishness emerged, a discourse of 'ethnic reflexivity' as a by-product of multiculturalist policies.[116] In response to a new-found 'immigrant culture,' which began as a result of the formalization and institutionalization of ethnic minority cultures (through, for example, the Swedish state's grant programs to

[112] Essed, *Everyday Racism*, 13.
[113] Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 206.
[114] Heinö, *Integration or Assimilation,* 33 and 35.
[115] Orvar Löfgren, "The Disappearance and Return of the National: The Swedish Experience 1950-2000," in *Folklore, Heritage Politics, and Ethnic Diversity: A Festschrift for Barbro Klein*, ed. Pertti J. Anttonen et al (Botkyrka: Multicultural Center, 2000), 11.
[116] Löfgren, "Disappearance and Return," 11.

official ethnic associations), Swedish identity began to be constructed in contrast to the immigrant culture. To some Swedes, Swedishness meant to take on more traditionally 'nationalistic' characteristics: introversion, the closing of borders, and limited access for foreigners through assimilation policies.

Today, these two interpretations of Swedishness are only just beginning to reach the public forum, but beneath the debate lies a deep ideological chasm between the two interpretations. The Swedish Prime Minister, for example, has stated that "anyone who likes Sweden does not vote for the Sweden Democrats,"[117] clearly marking a divide between the two interpretations of nationalism. For some Swedes, Swedishness is the antithesis of nationalism; for others, Swedishness is defined along a more traditional 'nationalist' vein. Important to note is that, as Heinö has suggested, "multiculturalism is not necessarily linked with anti-nationalism…there might be chauvinist straits even in the most anti-nationalist rhetoric."[118] Therefore, although pro-multiculturalist Swedes may not necessarily be anti-nationalist, they hold a different interpretation of nationalism than that of the immigration-critical Swedes.

The data from the interviews suggests that immigration-critical Swedes see pro-multiculturalists as holding a different view of Swedishness, discursively expressed through what I have identified as the 'management of ethnic difference.' According to the immigration-critical Swedes, pro-multiculturalist Swedes denigrate or entirely deny the notion of Swedish culture. This cognitive view is reproduced structurally through what immigration-critical Swedes perceive as unfair anti-discrimination laws and a welfare system structured to favor immigrants over Swedes.

The possibility of different interpretations of nationalism stems from what Balibar has called "fictive ethnicities"[119], i.e. an ethnicity's ability to be socially constructed and thereby open to interpretation. Varying interpretations of nationalism can result in different 'ethnic' group formations and, consequently, excluded groups. Immigration-critical Swedes exclude immigrants through a form of 'ethnic-reflexivity', and pro-multiculturalists exclude nationalists on account of an ideological disagreement. The

[117] Alice Teodorescu, "Naivt att kalla SD-väljare onda," *Aftonbladet*, September 23, 2010.
[118] Heinö, 2008, 305
[119] Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), 49.

former has been referred to as 'cultural racism', while the latter is bereft of sufficient academic analysis.

Studies analyzing the rise of populist parties often conclude with the need for a more 'open' and 'transparent' debate on sensitive issues like immigration. However, the data from this study suggests that the two groups of Swedes, due to their different interpretations of nationalism, operate in parallel subjective realities that hinder effective political debate. Incongruent subjective realities lead to differing interpretations about the issues of immigration and multiculturalism, as well as deeper issues of national identity and one's role in the world. The sensitivity of such existential issues tends to produce an ethical smokescreen where moral accusations are leveled against one group according to the interpretations of the other. Heinö, warning of a debate heavily diluted with moral suppositions, frames this intra-cultural division well he writes:

"This debate must not be reduced to a question of good or bad. The volume is often deafeningly high. Those warning against the Islamification of Europe, who see a future governed by Sharia law, are shouting from one corner, while from another corner we hear warnings of the march of jackboots from people who believe they are witnessing a comeback of the 1930's."[120]

While the intra-cultural debate rages on, discrimination against immigrants continues as the frustrations of the immigration-critical Swedes draw them towards 'extremism.' At the same time, discrimination against the non-extreme immigration-critical Swedes continues, at least according to them. The processes of exclusion identified have suggested these immigration-critical Swedes are subjected to discriminatory acts similar to immigrants in traditional studies of 'cultural racism.' However, since this study is not embedded in a 'race relations' paradigm, I have chosen the term 'intra-cultural ethnicism' to describe the type of exclusion experienced by the immigration-critical Swedes. The following section draws into question the cohesiveness of the group I have referred to throughout this paper as 'immigration-critical', in order to examine to what extent one can refer to 'immigration-critical' as an ethnicity.

## Ethnicism?: Immigration-critical as Ethnicity

Ethnicism has been understood in this paper as 'ethnic stereotyping that leads to racist effects.' Racist effects, i.e. exclusionary practices against subordinated group-members, have been posited to exist in the experience of the interviewees through the three general

[120] Heinö, *Integration or Assimilation*, 10.

processes of exclusion. Stereotyping of the interviewees has also been demonstrated via their stigmatization as 'racists.' But can these so-called 'racists' be considered an ethnicity within the majority culture?

My aim is not to affirm that immigration-critical Swedes have the same group cohesiveness as most generally acknowledged ethnic minority groups; however, I do wish to suggest that those exhibiting an 'immigration-critical' standpoint in Sweden do exhibit ethnic-like qualities. Ethnicity, simply put, is identification with a group based upon one or more shared characteristics, which are made known through interaction with those who do not share the same characteristic. Eriksen alludes to this definition of ethnicity when he writes:

"Ethnicity occurs when cultural differences are made relevant through interaction…Indeed, a variety of criteria can be used as markers of cultural difference in inter-ethnic situations – phenotype (appearance or 'race'), language, religion, or even clothes."[121]

The last marker, 'clothes,' suggests that ethnicities can be defined according to almost any criteria, insofar as the cultural difference is 'made relevant through interaction'. In the case of immigration-critical Swedes, their skepticism of multiculturalism is made known and relevant through the interaction with individuals who they perceive as uncritically pro-multiculturalist.

Concerning ethnicity, Downing and Husband write, "Ethnicity is both a property of self-identification…and a collective phenomenon grounded in the interaction and political mobilization of the group: the ethnic group."[122] Concerning the latter, the Swedish Democrats have successfully demonstrated political mobilization of the immigration-critical standpoint by entering the Swedish Parliament, albeit with a relatively small number of votes. Since their focus is almost entirely centered upon criticizing immigration (as opposed to other political parties who campaign on a wider range of issues), SD's entrance into parliament can be construed as the political mobilization of immigration-critical Swedes.

A number of immigration-critical Swedes, though, do *not* identify as SD (for example the journalists interviewed), limiting the 'self-identification' element when speaking of

[121] T.H. Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues* (London: Pluto, 1995), 251.
[122] John Downing and Charles Husband, *Representing 'Race': Racisms, Ethnicities, and Media* (London: Sage, 2005), 14.

immigration-critical Swedes as an ethnicity. Immigration-critical Swedes, although perhaps most publicly expressed by membership with SD, do not have an all-inclusive banner to unite under. According to Downing and Husband though, "[T]he role of markers [of cultural difference] is to locate the boundary between the in-group and the out-group."[123] This boundary, for immigration-critical Swedes, is one's stance on multiculturalism and immigration. Even though the journalists interviewed do not identify as SD, they share the same immigration-critical standpoint, and therefore the boundary of cultural difference remains the same. The extent to which immigration-critical Swedes identify themselves as an 'ethnicity' is unclear in this study and perhaps a topic for future research; however, their shared immigration-critical standpoint constitutes, at the very least, a shared marker of cultural difference from their pro-multiculturalist Swedish counterparts.

I have chosen the term 'intra-cultural ethnicism' to describe the processes of exclusion relayed in the analysis. Even if immigration-critical Swedes do not constitute an ethnicity, though, the effects they experience are similar to those resulting from ethnicism. Essed writes:

"Ethnicism, which is inherently part of the processes of cultural or ethnic differentiation within a pluralist model [e.g. multiculturalism], represents a shift from 'race' hierarchies to 'ethnic' hierarchies and from race and class exploitation to ethnic marginalization through social, economic, and political disempowerment."[124]

Essed mentions a number of important points here worth mentioning. First, one characteristic of ethnicism is an 'ethnic hierarchy', which is usually covert and implicit as opposed to an overt and explicit 'racial hierarchy.' The keystone of the Swedish multiculturalist model is that all ethnicities are guaranteed the same equal rights as Swedish citizens; however, studies have shown that in public opinion not all ethnicities are viewed equally.[125] Although not included in these studies, immigration-critical Swedes would most likely rank low on the hierarchy, since they are interpreted by the Swedish majority as 'racist', 'immoral', and exhibiting virtues opposite to their interpretation of 'Swedishness.'

Secondly, Essed mentions that race and class exploitation is not a feature of 'ethnicism.' The immigration-critical Swedes are not defined by race or class (although they may be

[123] Downing and Husband, *Representing Race,* 15.
[124] Essed, *Everyday Racism*, 15.
[125] SOU, *Det Blågula Glashuset,* 49.

perceived to be associated with an uneducated and poor 'lower' class), and are therefore not excluded according to these criteria. Instead, they are excluded through Essed's third point: marginalization through social, economic, and political disempowerment. The data has identified disempowerment in each of mentioned spheres of society.

Socially, immigration-Swedes are marginalized by friends and members of the general public through by methods such as 'ignoring' (physical detachment), 'stigmatizing' (socio-cultural and perspective denigration) and 'intimidation' (rudeness, violence, and vandalism). Economically, immigration-critical Swedes have been 'denied equal participation' in the labor market and certain union benefits. Politically, members of SD have been ignored, stigmatized, and according to their accounts unfairly portrayed in the media.

In sum, whether or not immigration-critical Swedes identify collectively as an ethnicity does not discount the processes of exclusion that they experience on account of their immigration-critical standpoint. The data from this study suggests that even though the immigration-critical Swedes may not internally identify as an ethnicity, they are grouped together or 'ethnicized' externally by other members of the majority 'white' Swedish group. Often, this process of ethnicization includes a negative evaluation, evidenced by the process of 'problematization,' whereby immigration-critical Swedes are categorized and subsequently stereotyped as 'racists.' The ethnicization and negative valuation of immigration-critical Swedes, occurring intra-culturally from other members of the 'Swedish' majority, supports the validity of the term 'intra-cultural ethnicism.'

# Chapter IV: Conclusion

Sweden is currently undergoing perhaps the most transformative cultural change in the country's history. Through immigration, external influences are diversifying a nation renowned for its homogeneity. In response to these external factors, the very homogeneity of the Swedish people is being challenged internally. The once 'consensus-based' seams of Swedish society are starting to split into two ideologically opposed factions: those for and those against multiculturalism.

The increasing rise in support for the Sweden Democrats is perhaps the most concrete manifestation of this intra-cultural ideological schism, which is intimately connected to conflicting interpretations of Swedish national identity. This study has hypothesized that

differing interpretations of 'Swedishness' have resulted in incongruous reality constructions for the two groups. Never intersecting, these 'parallel realities' hinder the successful negotiation of the seemingly insurmountable political and social differences between them.

Instead of an 'open' and 'tolerant' debate on issues of immigration and multiculturalism in Sweden, the country has witnessed a moral dichotomization of 'good' pro-multiculturalist Swedes and 'bad' immigration-critical Swedes. Beginning with the events in Sjöbo and continuing with data from the present, this study has suggested that immigration-critical Swedes have been categorized and stereotyped as a 'racist' cultural minority within the 'white' Swedish majority. Processes of exclusion similar to those detected in other studies of 'cultural racism' have been identified in the treatment of immigration-critical Swedes, and therefore this study posits the existence of an 'intra-cultural ethnicism,' understood as a 'cultural racism without race,' currently taking place in Sweden.

This study has borrowed and tweaked approaches from earlier research on 'cultural racism,' but these studies are heavily situated within a 'race relations' paradigm where biological signifiers stand in the way of discussions of discrimination stemming from ideological differences. In addition to more data, the originality of the study's research question necessitates the development of new and innovative theoretical and methodological approaches in order to sufficiently address the subject matter.

Since so few academics have focused on the Sweden Democrats and their perception of the world around them, this study is meant to serve as an exploratory initiative towards a more comprehensive understanding of the self-perception of sympathizers with nationalist-populist parties. If the rising tide of xenophobia and right-wing extremism in Europe is to be stemmed, sympathizers of nationalist-populist parties must be *understood* and engaged instead of being merely stigmatized as 'racists.' The latter method can provide support for their subjectively constructed worldviews, and in some instances may lead to violent extremism, such as the recent Breivik massacre in Norway. Gaining insight into the perspectives of immigration-critical Swedes is an important and necessary first step towards engaging them on sensitive issues like immigration, integration and multiculturalism, and nationalism in Sweden. Without multiculturalists fully understanding the position of the immigration-critical Swedes (and vice versa), preconceived stereotypes and stigmas stand in the way of truly effective debate.

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