

Missing Links: Politics and the Misrecognition of the Sweden Democrats

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ABSTRACT: This article critiques prevailing approaches to the study of the Sweden Democrats political party. It argues that political agendas motivate academic and journalistic commentators to adopt a limited definition of the party in their analyses. More specifically, the article examines a recurring question in studies of the party, namely, to what extent it can be linked to openly race ideological and other right-wing extremist forces in Swedish society. It shows that while ideological connections between the party and other radical nationalists are weak, sociocultural connections are strong. Concluding that these connections are overlooked by scholars because they are less politically incriminating, the article calls for a paradigm shift in the study of the Sweden Democrats, one that addresses the party as the dynamic movement it is.

RÉSUMÉ : Cet article critique les approches dominantes à l'étude du parti politique des démocrates suédois. Il soutient que les agendas politiques motivent les commentateurs universitaires et journalistiques à adopter une définition limitée du parti dans leurs analyses. Plus précisément, l'article examine une question récurrente dans les études sur le parti, à savoir dans quelle mesure il peut être lié aux forces idéologiques raciales et autres forces extrémistes de droite dans la société suédoise. Il montre que bien que des liens idéologiques entre le parti et d'autres nationalistes radicaux soient faibles, les liens socioculturels sont forts. En concluant que ces liens sont négligés par les chercheurs parce qu'ils sont moins politiquement incriminants, l'article appelle à un changement de paradigme dans l'étude des démocrates suédois, qui aborde le parti comme le mouvement dynamique qu'il est.

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Minns du den tid som jag själv aldrig sett,
då folket var lyckligt, då folket var ett?
Så säg mig nu, pappa, hur känns det i dag,
när du sitter i slagget av det som finns kvar?
När du växte upp, säg mig hur var det då,
var en flicka någonting som man fritt gav sig på?
Gick du på gatan och lyssnade smått,
utan att höra ett ord du förstått?
Var du nånsin tvungen att ensam gå hem
sen du rånats och slagits av främmande män?

[Remember the time that I never got to see,
when the people were happy, when the people were one?
So tell me now, father, how does it feel today,
as you sit in the wreckage of what once was?
When you grew up, tell me, how were things then,
did people go after girls as they pleased?
Did you ever walk down the street, listening faintly,
without hearing a single word you understood?
Were you ever forced to go home alone,
after having been robbed and beaten by foreign men?]

The song “Questions for Father [Frågor till far]” came out in 2002 on the singer-songwriter album *Frihetssånger*, which was the first of three full-length releases in a project called “Svensk ungdom,” or Swedish Youth. Swedish Youth wasn’t a band; every album had a new ensemble of musicians or songwriters. But the release *Frihetssånger* in general, and the song “Questions for Father” in particular, would be the project’s greatest success.

The records were produced by the Sweden-based Nordic Press which, during the first decade of the twenty-first century, was one of the Nordic regions’ most active publishing houses and retailer of radical nationalist music and literature (Wåg). Its leadership comprised leading activists from the race-ideological newspaper *Framtiden*, white power music magazine *Nordland*, as well as the now militant National Socialist Nordic Resistance Movement. The leadership of the Nordic Press hoped that their initiative could change approaches to resisting immigration to the North by giving that cause and its representatives a more refined and orderly profile than what was common during the neo-Nazi skinhead wave of the 1990s. Despite that, however, the dubious backgrounds of its leadership shined through via the literature they sold and the music they produced.

The album *Frihetssånger* includes lyrics by notorious Swedish Hitler sympathizer Sven-Olof Lindholm, and anti-Semitic themes punctuate newly

composed texts, like that of the song “Sweden has Fallen” [Sverige har fallit]. “Questions for Father,” by comparison, is relatively moderate in its themes. During the course of the song, the listener meets a young Swede who interrogates his father about his indifference during an alleged destruction of Swedish society during the latter half of the twentieth century. The questions portray a history where non-Swedes and advocates of multiculturalism appear as villains and where a new generation of Swedes stand before an opportunity to recreate what once was. The lyrics’ vague references—where “foreigners” and “the people” are described in general terms—meant that its message could easily be embraced by a Nordic nationalism that was at the time becoming increasingly varied in its ideology and methods. Despite that, “Questions for Father” never became a hit among the general public. Because of the Nordic Press’ background and polarizing ideology, the song spread only among those already tuned in to the utmost margins of the radical right and its shrouded cultural network.

It is therefore remarkable that large portions of the Sweden Democrats’ (SD) grassroots and leadership know about the song: many know the words by heart. According to the party’s official ideology, it shouldn’t be that way. The Nordic Press, along with organizations like the National Democrats, National Socialist Front, and Info14 constituted the sphere of “ethnonationalist” (that which Swedish researchers often call race-ideological) forces with which the reformed, colourblind, “cultural nationalist” Sweden Democrats claim to have no relationship.¹

I encountered the song everywhere during the six years I have followed the Sweden Democrats as an ethnographer—in interviews, during informal conversations, and at private events. Chief ideologue Mattias Karlsson mentioned it as we discussed occasions when people in the party had been linked to white power music.

Karlsson: Eftersom det övriga samhället i en väldigt liten utsträckning sjunger om teman som skulle tilltala nationalisterna – historia, tradition, solidaritet, och så vidare – så kan jag säkert tänka mig att vissa kulturnationalister har lyssnat på enstaka låtar som man inte uppfattar som det mest radikala, där man sjunger om stolthet över landet eller någon del av vår historia. Då tänker man, “jag gillar inte bandet, men den här låten är faktiskt ganska bra.” ... Har du hört den här “Frågor till far”? Den är väldigt uppskattad. Det är inget uttalat nazistiskt budskap, och musiken är inte heller det här hårda, skrikiga.

Teitelbaum: Ja, ja. Vad tycker du om den – du har hört den, va?

Karlsson: Jag kände igen – hade jag hört den när jag var sexton hade jag nog tyckt att den var sjukt bra, för den beskriver ganska mycket känslan man hade när man var i den åldern.

(Interview, Mattias Karlsson, April 9, 2012)

[MK: Since the rest of society—in popular culture—so rarely sings about themes that can in any way speak to nationalists—history, tradition, solidarity—then I can absolutely imagine that certain cultural nationalists have listened to individual songs that you don't think are the most radical, but instead sing about pride for the country, or some part of history. They think like, "I don't like the band, but this song is actually pretty good." ... Have you heard that "Questions for Father" song? Lots of people like it. There is no blatant Nazi message, and the music isn't that hard, screaming type.

BT: Yes, yes. What do you think of it—you have heard it, right?

MK: I recognized – had I heard it when I was 16 I would have thought that it was really good, because it described quite a bit of the feeling you had when you were that age.]

Mattias' reasoning—which parallels what I often hear from his colleagues—is uncomplicated. The song itself doesn't conflict with the party's non-racist profile, and therefore Sweden Democrats who like it need not feel guilty. But he hesitated slightly when I asked him about his own feelings about "Questions for Father." He didn't want to admit that he liked the song, saying instead that he would have liked it under different circumstances. And his defensive stance—his reluctance to link himself with the song—speaks to a consciousness about lingering problems. Since the Nordic Press and its productions circulate in a marginalized, ethnonationalist subculture, how did Mattias and his fellow party members first come in contact with the song?

The reason that I as an ethnographer have focused on people's music habits isn't that I want to learn about songs and melodies per se. Rather, music functions as a window into individuals', groups', or cultures' worldviews and social positions. It shows—if often through winding and obscure pathways—how social actors relate to their surroundings and how they deal with challenges.

The case of the Sweden Democrats and "Questions for Father" introduces us to the dynamics behind one of the central questions in studies of the party today: the question of the Sweden Democrats relation to the wider radical nationalist world. The question has proven compelling to researchers for two decades, ever since the party's efforts during the middle of the 1990s to divorce themselves from the broader nationalist movement gave rise to a wave of exposé-style studies and reports highlighting failures of the party's alleged rejection and purging of "extremism." Today we see a growing division among academic and journalistic commentators grappling with the question, with voices like Henrik Arnstad who claim there is no fundamental difference between SD and open fascists and national socialists from the war-era and forward, and others like Anna-Lena Lodenius (2015) who argue that the party has transcended its extremist roots and now belongs definitively to the related but nonetheless distinct political family of so-called right-wing populists.

A similar schism would likely emerge among researchers considering “Questions for Father” and its popularity among Sweden Democrats. For some, party members’ knowledge of and interest in obscure ethnonationalist bands would provide an example of how the Sweden Democrats’ public profile conceals links to more extreme politics—that through taste and preferences these party members are revealing their true ideological positions. However, researchers poised to endorse the party’s own account of their past and present would be likely to interpret the case of “Questions for Father” as a relic from the party’s earlier relationship with nationalist movements from the 1990s, and not as a sign of deeper ideological sympathies. But Mattias Karlsson’s own explanation points us toward a more nuanced approach. According to him, the song’s popularity across various nationalist circles depends on ideological commonalities but also on a common social identity rooted in youth and a marginal status relative to Sweden’s mainstream culture. It is an explanation that demands our attention, if only because it challenges us to expand our definition of the Sweden Democrats and think of its representatives as more than just incarnations of politics and ideology.

In this article, I explore the Sweden Democrats’ ideological profile as it relates to other, more radical nationalist forces in Sweden. I see an inherent value in this discussion since I, like Mattias Karlsson, find that sociocultural factors can fundamentally shape the party’s continued association with nationalist movements at large. However, my goal with this article goes beyond that. By exploring this discussion I intend to offer a critical assessment of earlier studies of the Sweden Democrats. My message is that we as scholars must dare to speak about the party as being more than a political phenomenon. I say “dare” because—if we want to expand our focus beyond the Sweden Democrats’ positions, policy proposals, and intellectual history—we will need to relinquish a tacit objective that drives a significant portion of our work, namely, the objective of counteracting the party’s political advance. In order to better understand the Sweden Democrats as the dynamic and multifaceted movement it is, we must abandon the reigning research paradigm where what counts as academically compelling regarding the party is first and foremost that which can hasten its decline.

An article aspiring to a critical assessment of a field of study must include a word about the author. I am an active scholar of the Sweden Democrats and naturally I consider others’ research from the perspective of my own agenda. As an American academic trained in the humanities and ethnography, I have a different background than many who write about SD, and that professional and disciplinary orientation forms my impression of the field as it stands today. I have a strong preference for studies based on personal contact and dialogue with insiders. In my own works on radical nationalism in the North (e.g. Teitelbaum 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017), I have advocated both comprehensive ethnography and de-escalation of political critique in research. My reasons for this stance are

multiple. In agreement with the bulk of today's sociologists and anthropologists, I assume that studies of contemporary sociocultural phenomena will be both more ethically defensible and more revealing when scholars strive toward respectful, collaborative exchanges with the people they study. Not only does personal contact provide access to more research data, it also increases the likelihood that the scholar's accounts will take shape via critical assessment of those who are and will always be the foremost experts on the subject: insiders themselves.

The extent to which such research is already taking place is debatable. Studies of the Sweden Democrats today are conducted primarily by academics as well as an unusually large number of journalists and independent writers, and the goals of research seem to shift based on authorship. Academics, for example, tend to study the party from a distance—by examining various texts or voter statistics—as well as by using the party as a case study to engage with broader academic discussions of politics and xenophobia in contemporary Europe. Journalists and independent writers tend instead toward research models that resemble ethnography in which accounts of the party are based on contact with its members.

Should the journalistic research be treated as equal to the academic? Undoubtedly, popular works would benefit from academic review, and some misleading claims in the public conversation about the party today derive from amateur scholars whose writing was never evaluated by other experts. Nonetheless, these works are responsible for the bulk of our information on the people, organizations, symbolism, and internal politics surrounding the Sweden Democrats. Texts by journalists like Stieg Larsson and Mikael Ekman or Pontus Mattsson serve as references for contemporary academic researchers.² However, little research combines academic standards and engagement with relevant scholarly debates with comprehensive ethnographic fieldwork,³ and it is such research that is needed to better explain the Sweden Democrats' relationship to other nationalist actors in the country.

An Ideological Context?

Most attempts to uncover links between parties like SD and more radical actors in Europe look for ideological common denominators. Notable studies of this kind include Mudde as well as Harrison and Bruter.⁴ Undoubtedly, however, the most famous theory comes from historian Roger Griffin, who claims that many anti-immigrant forces in Europe share a fascist ideology. Griffin defines fascism as a mythic form of popular ultra-nationalism focused on the dream of a people's rebirth, or "palingenesis" (1993, 41). That ideology requires no particular form of methodology, and therefore its expression varies based on political

context. Fascism, according to Griffin, is a diachronic rather than a historical phenomenon.

Increased receptiveness to criticism of modern society during the first half of the twentieth century allowed fascism to grow into revolutionary, large-scale, populist movements that later led to the Second World War. But after Hitler's and Mussolini's fall, the ideology needed to adjust to a new political reality where liberal democracy emerged as the dominant political model in the west. Griffin and later researchers (e.g. Shekhovstov 437; Bar-On) identify three forms of fascism in post-fascist Europe: the democratic, the revolutionary, and the metapolitical. Democratic fascists moved away from their predecessors' militancy and created instead political parties aspiring to attract voters. While the democratic abandoned radicalism, the other neofascist form—the revolutionary—abandoned hope of creating a mass-movement. These militant groups or street gangs retained their visions of a revolution and restricted themselves therefore to non-democratic activism. The third, metapolitical form, inspired by the French New Right, claims that neither democratic nor militant measures stand a chance of changing society in their foreseeable future. Therefore, these fascists devote themselves to cultural and intellectual initiatives with the goal of cultivating a larger audience receptive to their ideas. The Griffin school claims thus that the will to create an alternative modernity via national rebirth can manifest through democratic parliamentarianism, violence, or cultural campaigning. That analysis unites diverse actors who share a core ideology and distinguishes them based on their "political style" (Griffin 2006).

Despite the fact that Griffin claims to speak for a "new consensus" among researchers of fascism, he has always had his critics (e.g. Gregor; De Grand). Most of those question his definition of fascism and claim that he lacks empirical justification for his arguments. Further, critics also claim that Griffin includes too many political movements under the heading "fascism." But his theory, where a core ideology expresses itself in three different forms—democratic, revolutionary, and metapolitical—offers a means for us to analyze the relationships between diverse political actors on the right throughout Europe.

In Sweden we have seen how organized opposition to immigration, fascist or not, follows this three-part model. Militant groups like the Swedish (now Nordic) Resistance Movement are a prototypical example of the revolutionary approach and its methodology. The identitarian circle that operates online through sites like Motpol, Nordisk.nu, and the publishing house Arktos, advocate a metapolitical agenda. And as for democratic activism? There have been political parties with a similar ideology as the Swedish Resistance Movement, including the Nordic Reich Party and National Socialist Front. But if we want to include the Sweden Democrats in our analysis we must drop the expectation for ideological continuity among the forces in question.

Cultural and Ethnonationalism

In contrast with the claims of Henrik Arnstad's sensationalized book and newspaper articles, the Sweden Democrats' ideology is not one envisioning "palingenetic" rebirth. HübINETTE and Lundström offer a more accurate account of the party's agenda when they identify nostalgia, rather than a nostalgia-inspired futurism, as its core. Notions that the Sweden Democrats can be classified as fascists according to Griffin's theory are baseless. Nonetheless, there are ideological commonalities among SD, identitarians, and race revolutionaries. Scholars like Deland, Hertzberg, and Hvitfeldt claim that these actors often forge a we-and-them opposition that places "the people" and domestic minorities against each other. Most blame media and politicians for the growth of such domestic minorities and disapprove of international forces like the EU, global capitalism, and progressive social movements like feminism (6-10).

Within that ideological space there are widely divergent, even irreconcilable positions and agendas. We find the clearest difference in the different players' understandings of "the people" and "the Others." Those categories are conceptualized differently based on whether one advocates cultural or ethnonationalism; that is, whether one believes that a national community consists of learned values and habits or of biologically inherited traits. A cultural nationalist model affords minorities the possibility of becoming full-fledged citizens by distancing themselves from their original traditions and culture while embracing new behaviours and views. This possibility becomes an imperative in the eyes of nationalists as they seek the creation of a culturally homogeneous population within the boundaries of the nation-state. Ethnonationalists, in contrast, see "the people" as a collectivity one can only be born into, and therefore there is no means of fully incorporating outsiders. Attempts to integrate foreigners thus appear hopeless, leading not to an expansion of the community—as would be the case with cultural nationalism—but rather a corruption of the people's essence.

Despite the rich body of literature questioning and criticizing cultural nationalism's functional distance from ethnonationalism (e.g. El-Tayeb; Lentini and Titley; Weber), and despite the ability for cultural nationalism to function as a politically correct façade for race ideology, the difference between cultural and ethnonationalism is a social reality among opponents of immigration in Sweden today. It impacts the organizations that activists join and the social circles they move in, and it is often used as an excuse to expel unwanted members of a party. And even if official positions do not always represent the views of all members, those positions nonetheless attract people who believe in and will advance their corresponding agendas.

Approaches to dealing with immigrants' segregation can reveal an individual's or group's true regard for cultural nationalism. Theoretically, cultural nationalists ought to see segregation as a problem, one that can easily be addressed without

needing to deport minorities. Their answer to “ghettoization” is assimilation. Everything that leads minorities to shed their previous cultural affiliations and blend into the community of Swedes is desirable. Ethnonationalists, in contrast, see assimilation as both an impossibility as well as a direct threat to the preservation of biological communities. For them, segregation is a temporary solution, a strategy to prevent the national people’s corruption via the introduction of foreign elements. It is for that reason no surprise that some ethnonationalists advocate measures resembling multiculturalism—assimilationism’s opposite—such as the establishment of sharia law zones in Europe, continued use of the veil among Europe’s Muslim women, ethnically segregated schools, as well as a separation of identity and national citizenship. This stance is growing in popularity among nationalist movements throughout Europe, and scholars have labeled it “heterophilia” (Taguieff), “the new racism” (Gordon and Klug; Berbrier), “differential racism” (Balibar) and “multi-fascism” (Fleischer).⁵

In Sweden, the Sweden Democrats are the foremost champions of cultural nationalism, or “open Swedishness” as they call it,⁶ while nearly all other anti-immigrant organizations are ethnonationalist.⁷ The Sweden Democrats’ position creates a political agenda that is irreconcilable with ethnonationalist forces. The party’s cultural politics, for example, aim to encourage immigrants to embrace Swedish traditions and values. Some party members advocate a better geographic dispersion of ethnic minorities in the country so that those minorities may more easily form a Swedish identity.⁸ SD is a threat to ethnonationalists as long as it pursues its assimilation agenda—a greater threat, in fact, than those forces agitating for existing minority groups to promote and preserve their cultural traditions and differences.

In sum, there are deep ideological and political divergences between the Sweden Democrats and more radical nationalists, first and foremost regarding the integration of immigrants. Associating these actors with each other is less intuitive when considering their ideological and political agendas. In other words, if we want to understand what it is that unites organized opponents of immigration in Sweden, we have to look beyond methods of activism as well as ideology.

Cultural Connections

While these actors do not always share basic ideals and strategies, they are united in other areas. This is especially true when you consider cultural habits, personal histories, and social identity. Analysis from those perspectives uncovers a collectivity that stretches across ideological boundaries. That collectivity includes activists in the ethnonationalist sphere as well as a large portion of leading figures in cultural nationalism. Regardless of whether they belong to a moderate political party or a National Socialist militant group, most inside of this collectivity are

young or middle-aged men, most of whom have experienced violent confrontation with left-wing activists and anti-fascists. This appears, not only among leading National Socialist, identitarian, and autonomous ethnonationalist figures like Björn Björkvist, Magnus Söderman, Daniel Friberg, and Vávra Suk (Teitelbaum 2013), but also among leading Sweden Democrats like Jimmie Åkesson, Erik Almqvist, Björn Söder, and Mattias Karlsson (Orrenius). The ideological differences between them are not reflected in conflicts with their opponents on the far left, as the similarities of their experiences show.

Violent confrontations with the radical left also contribute to a shared positionality among insiders, namely, that the public is hostile toward them and their cause. In particular, they claim that established media deliberately mischaracterizes and demonizes them and their politics, and for that reason many nationalists consume each other's media. Online newspapers like *Avpixlat*, *Fria Tider*, *Nya Tider* (previously *Nationell Idag*)—even the National Socialist *Nationell.nu*—are followed by diverse ideologues, and articles are frequently shared through social media. Counter-jihad (and Jewish) politicians like Kent Ekeröth spread articles from *Nya Tider*—a newspaper whose editorial board includes both ethnonationalists as well as individuals who argue in favour of historical revisions regarding the Holocaust. At the same time, National Socialist-oriented voices—like Magnus Söderman of the think-tank *Motgift*—refer to the SD-associated site *Avpixlat*.

Because of shared media platforms and participation in each other's chat forums, many maintain insider language. Words like “ZOG,” “oikofobi,” “batikhäxa,” and “metapolitik”⁹ are meaningless for average Swedes but are understood by most of those inside of anti-immigrant organizations, even if they themselves do not use these words. That body of internal cultural expression extends beyond language. As I wrote in the beginning of this article, many are familiar with a certain type of music, including songs by Viking rock band *Ultima Thule* and more tempered pieces by the project *Svensk Ungdom*. As with vocabulary, all do not listen to this music, but their familiarity with it testifies to their unusual relationship with a subculture. Similar experiences of violence, the experience of social exclusion, and participation in eccentric cultural expressions are in many cases common among this group of people. Many were involved in the 1990s skinhead wave, either as participants themselves or through friends. To return to the list of key figures mentioned earlier, we can see that Björn Björkvist, Magnus Söderman, Daniel Friberg, Vávra Suk, Jimmie Åkesson, and Mattias Karlsson all have a background in the skinhead wave in one way or another.¹⁰ Now that all of these activists have distanced themselves from that subculture, we see that they strive for a similar type of replacement identity, one based on maturity and professionalism (Teitelbaum 2017).

Commonalities among anti-immigrant organizations in Sweden today are based not only on ideology but also on members' cultural and social identities,

which have their roots in 1990s youth culture and which are also in constant flux. If we define these actors by their cultural and social profile in addition to their ideology, we gain an analytical tool to better identify different anti-immigrant activists and more effectively distinguish them from others.

An Open Field

The phenomena I am describing are not absent in contemporary research. Studies of extra-parliamentary radical nationalism often focus on organizations' and individuals' cultural behaviours (Löw; Brown; Miller-Idriss; Simi and Futrell), and scholars of parliamentary activism likewise comment frequently on right-wing party cultures.¹¹ The existence of cultural and social connections between different nationalist groups are also well known to commentators. Deland, Hertzberg, and Hvitfeldt write that, despite ideological differences, Sweden Democrats and more radical activists can meet in the same chat forum or at the same concert of "racist music" (6). Ekman and Poohl imply that culture and ideology can manifest as distinct phenomena in nationalist movements when these authors claim that the Sweden Democrats' efforts to distance themselves from National Socialists deal more with style than ideas (149-50). Lodenius operates with the same assumption when she writes that today's SD is "a changed party with the same ideology" (2015, 22). Despite observations like these, there is very little literature focusing on the Sweden Democrats' sociocultural dimension, and I see two reasons for this. The first is that contemporary research on SD is politically driven. At times that politicization emerges in exaggerated declarations about the party's threat to liberal democracy. During recent years, we have seen an inflation in the charges levelled against the party. At the same time, the Sweden Democrats' political transformations render their ideological profile on paper and in action more ambiguous. Henrik Arnstad's warm reception in the media shows that attention and public celebration await those who manage to escalate the level of accusations directed toward the party.

However, politicization normally does not relate to conclusions, but rather to lines of inquiry. Seldom have we seen investigations that do not explore the party's political potential. The literature is dominated instead by studies identifying social features that lead voters to support SD (Sannerstedt; Uvell and Carlsen; Rydgren and Ruth), exposing latent (and always treacherous) values and agendas in the party's agenda (Hellström and Nilsson; Norocel; Widfeldt), or that strive to develop means of counteracting the party's political advance (Thulin; Grönqvist; Hågård; Thorell; Arneback). Such studies are undoubtedly needed—especially if critical assessment of the party is to be based on scholarly research. But the fixation on these issues prevents academic discourse from grappling with the multifaceted phenomenon that is the Sweden Democrats.

The cultural, broadly extra-ideological connections between SD and the rest of nationalist Sweden receive relatively little attention because they are less politically useful. The lack of studies investigating the party's sociocultural dimension also stems from the fact that ethnographic fieldwork—the method best suited to such research—is almost never used in studies of the Sweden Democrats. In order to gain insights into party members' habits, thoughts, and lifestyles, researchers must dig deeper than the quantitative, deeper even than what is conveyed in formal interviews with those involved. But again, the field's political profile stands in the way. If one wants to observe another person at close range—with access to that person's public and private life—one must collaborate with the person (Lassiter). The prospects for achieving that kind of collaboration decline markedly when the project's goal is to undermine the object of study.

A less politically-engaged approach to research brings with it new challenges. By eliminating criticism, researchers may contribute to the normalization of the Sweden Democrats. The risk of having a positive impact on the party's political situation increases further when one develops personal contact with party members. Sympathy and friendship can emerge in contexts like these, which in turn can lead to scholars avoiding examination of sensitive but relevant issues. Negative consequences like these are difficult to avoid. But as long as ethnographic studies are part of a larger whole that includes critical research, we will gain a more vibrant and dynamic understanding of the Sweden Democrats.

NOTES

1. When a Swedish Television infiltration showed that representatives from the party's youth wing had sung other songs by Swedish Youth during a private party, it was regarded internally as an embarrassing scandal. Available online, accessed 3 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=2747308>.
2. Texts by Niklas Orrenius—both as newspaper articles and in books (e.g. 2010)—should have the same status.
3. Ethnographic methods have been used to a greater extent in studies of more radical, extra-parliamentary nationalist groups, e.g. Lööv; Fangen; Blee; Gardell; and Simi and Futrell.
4. Jungar and Jupskås offer an unusual but compelling variation of this model when they argue that organizations' names, in addition to ideology, can help to illuminate the existence of political community.
5. Groups associated with the identitarian movement and the French New Right have been the primary backers of these approaches. One example of the ethnonationalist critique of assimilation in Sweden appears in this podcast from the identitarian think tank Motpol, published on Youtube, 14 March 2015. Accessed 29 January 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuxGc56z2s0>.
6. Considering the party's official embrace of cultural nationalism, researchers should avoid uncritically using the term "ethnopluralism" (Rydgren 2002; 2006; Rydgren and

- Ruth; Palani) to describe their ideology. For more on the terms' meaning and history, see Teitelbaum (2013, 103-105).
7. I am of course aware that these ideologies vary greatly within the ethnonationalist sphere, but those divisions do not have the same social and strategic consequences as the ones I'm investigating here.
 8. These policy proposals have created controversy within the party. Maria Danielsson was criticized internally after she suggested that young students in Stockholm should be bussed to different neighbourhoods in the city in order to counteract segregation. Those who were most critical, including William Hahne and Gustav Kasselstrand, were expelled from the party in 2015 for ideological deviance.
 9. "ZOG" stands for "Zionist Occupation Government" and is based on a conception of a Jewish global conspiracy; "oikofobi," popularized by the British conservative philosopher Roger Scrutton, describes contempt for one's own culture and domestic traditions; "batikhäxa" is used as a derogatory term to describe women who criticize nationalist movements; and "metapolitik," as was described earlier in this article, describes a strategy of changing cultural values in society inspired by the French New Right.
 10. The division between "NS (National Socialist) skins" and "Thule skins" is crucial for future Sweden Democrats, who often assert that they only associated with the latter (Ekman and Poohl 150; Teitelbaum 2013, 67-72).
 11. Most studies of right-wing populist party cultures focus on France's National Front. Shields offers one cogent example.

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