"The rise of populism in Europe can be traced through online behaviour..."

POPULISM IN EUROPE: SWEDEN

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DEM☺S

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Acknowledgements

A note on terminology

This paper is the second in a series of short country briefing papers released in 2012 about the online support of populist political parties and street-based groups in Europe. These papers are based on a data set of approximately 13,000 Facebook supporters of these 'nationalist populist' parties in 12 European countries, which was published in the Demos report, *The New Face of Digital Populism*, released in November 2011.[1]

Throughout this paper, we refer to two primary data sets by the following terminology:

· *Sweden Democrat (SD) Facebook supporters*: The primary data source used in this report is a survey of 567 Facebook supporters of the Sweden Democrat (SD) party, collected by Demos during July and August 2011. All references to SD supporters refer to this group unless otherwise stated.
· *PPAM*: In order to draw comparisons between SD Facebook supporters and the Facebook supporters of nationalist populist parties elsewhere in Europe, throughout this paper we refer to the data set collected for *The New Face of Digital Populism*. This includes 10,667 Facebook supporters of nationalist populist parties and movements in 11 Western European countries. We refer to these as populist parties and movements (PPAM) throughout.

We also draw on European-wide survey data from the Eurobarometer survey and the European Values Study. These studies are cited where relevant below.

Executive summary

Over the last decade, nationalist populist parties and movements have been growing in strength across Europe. These parties are defined by their opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, and concern for protecting national and European culture. On economic policy, they are often vocal critics of globalisation and the effects of international capitalism on workers' rights. This is combined with 'anti-establishment' rhetoric used to appeal to widespread disillusionment with mainstream political parties, the media and government. Often called 'populist extremist parties' or 'the new right', these parties do not fit easily into the traditional political divides.

In Sweden, the Sverigedemokraterna (or 'Sweden Democrats') have emerged from their neo-Nazi past to win 5.7 per cent of the vote (approximately 340,000 votes) in the 2010 elections, thus entering parliament for the first time with 20 deputies.

Like many far-right parties, the Sweden Democrat party has been particularly effective at mobilising young Swedes by using online communication to amplify its message, recruit new members and organise. Indeed, the online social media following on Facebook of the Sweden Democrats (16,660) is greater than its official membership list (estimated at 4,600).[2] This mixture of online and offline political activity is how millions of people relate to politics in the twenty-first century, particularly members of a younger, digital generation. This research aims to understand this new form of political engagement. The importance of Facebook and other social media websites to nascent political movements can no longer be underestimated.

This report presents the results of a survey of 567 responses from Facebook fans of the Sweden Democrats. It includes data on who they are, what they think, and what motivates them to shift from virtual to real-world activism.

Facebook was selected because it is the most widespread and popular social media website used in Sweden and by supporters of the Sweden Democrat party. At the time of collecting the data in summer 2011, there were three main Facebook interest groups related to the Sweden Democrats, with a total of 16,660 individual members. As of 14 February 2012, the Facebook page of Jimmie Åkesson, the leader of the Sweden Democrats, had over 23,000 'likes'. By contrast, Fredrik Reinfeldt, the current prime minister of Sweden, had only 2,832 'likes'.

For two months in summer 2011 we targeted adverts at individuals who were supporters of Sweden Democrat related groups on Facebook. On clicking the advert, individuals were redirected to a survey, which they were invited to complete. The survey and adverts were presented in Swedish, and were then translated back into English for the purposes of this report. The data were then weighted in order to improve the validity and accuracy of any inferences made about the online population. Although online recruitment in social research is widespread, self-select recruitment via social network sites brings novel challenges. Because this is an innovative research method with both strengths and weaknesses, we have included a methodology section in an annex to this report.

Results

It is important to stress that the Sweden Democrats' diverse support base cannot be adequately understood through Facebook alone, and many SD supporters are of course not on Facebook. This data set refers specifically to Sweden Democrat (SD) Facebook supporters—an important, but specific, sub-group of its support. It is with this important caveat that these results are presented.

These are the main results of our survey:

- *SD Facebook supporters are predominantly young and male.* Three-quarters of SD Facebook supporters are men, and almost two-thirds are between the ages of 16 and 20 years old. This makes them substantially younger than the average age of Facebook supporters of similar parties across Western Europe, where 32 per cent are between the ages of 16 and 20 years old.

- *SD Facebook supporters are active voters and, given their youthful profile, the SD's voter share could grow in the next election.* Nearly two-thirds (63%) of SD Facebook fans reported voting for SD at the 2010 election. This percentage is quite high considering the young age profile of their Facebook supporters, and suggests that their share of the vote could increase at the next election.

- *SD Facebook supporters are also active formal party members and demonstrators.* Nearly half (46 per cent) reported being formal members of the party, which is significantly higher than the proportion of Facebook supporters of similar parties across Western Europe (32 per cent). Moreover, a fifth reported attending a demonstration in the past six months, which is significantly higher than the figure for the Swedish population as a whole (only 5 per cent).

- *SD Facebook supporters are democrats who think politics is an effective way to respond to their concerns, and renounce violence.* Only 9 per cent agreed with the statement 'it does not matter who you vote for', the lowest of all parties we surveyed in Europe. More significant, 61 per cent agreed that politics is an effective way to respond to their concerns, which was a much higher proportion than the average who believe this among other similar European parties. Only 14 per cent of SD Facebook supporters agreed with the statement 'violence is acceptable to achieve the right outcome', which compares with the average score across our Europe data set of 26 per cent. It is important to stress that agreeing that violence is acceptable to ensure a certain outcome does not mean that SD Facebook fans are more prone actually to commit violence.

· *SD Facebook supporters are pessimistic about Sweden's future, but not about their own future.* An overwhelming majority of SD Facebook fans were pessimistic about Sweden's future: 81 per cent disagreed either a little or entirely with the statement 'Sweden is on the right track'. However, they were no more pessimistic about their own personal lives than the Swedish average.

· *SD Facebook supporters have low levels of personal and institutional trust.* Only 32 per cent of SD Facebook supporters agreed that other people could be trusted—far lower than the figure for the Swedish general public. SD supporters also scored lower on this measure compared with Scandinavian groups we surveyed. Trust in institutions was much lower among SD supporters than among the Swedish public, with the exception of the army—where SD supporters are more trusting than the average Swedish public—and political parties where SD supporters are equally trusting. Interestingly, however, higher trust in the justice system was correlated with being more likely to vote, being a formal party member and participating in a demonstration.

· *The protection of Swedish culture and identity from perceived outside threats is the main concern of supporters.* Supporters cited immigration, Islamic extremism and multiculturalism as their top concerns. Over half believed that the European Union had resulted in a loss of control over national borders, and a loss of national identity. Significantly, younger supporters were more likely to cite disillusionment with mainstream parties as motivation for joining a SD Facebook group. The issue of multiculturalism in particular appears to motivate SD Facebook supporters to become formal party members and to attend demonstrations.

Implications

Our task in this report is to illuminate the phenomenon of online supporters of the SD and present the results objectively. We do not offer lengthy recommendations because formulating a response is a task for Swedish citizens and politicians. This is perhaps a more difficult task given the fluid and dynamic way many people now express their political preferences online, and the way social media allow for groups and individuals to network and mobilise faster than ever. We hope this research can inform that task.

It is clear that Swedish immigration policy is a key driver of support for the SD. However, findings from the Eurobarometer Survey suggest that this concern is not shared among the majority of the Swedish population. If mainstream politicians wish to appeal to the supporters of parties like the SD, they must be bold in articulating and defending the benefits of immigration and candid in what is expected of immigrants who come to Sweden. They must also learn to speak about the importance of identity without resorting to xenophobia and the demonisation of minorities.

The SD's supporter base is incredibly young, yet very active and motivated, and can mobilise in support of the group. Like many other young people across Europe, they use online channels as a form of political engagement, information and activism. The SD with its young membership and leadership has been good at relating to this form of political involvement. This is a challenge for other mainstream parties.

More generally, SD Facebook supporters believe that politics is an effective way to address their concerns. In many respects this is to be welcomed. Despite having low trust in a range of other important social institutions—such as the government, the press and religious institutions—SD supporters are almost equally as likely to trust political parties as the Swedish population in general. Evidence from the UK Citizenship Survey suggests that low levels of trust in social institutions are correlated with the likelihood of justifying violent extremism. Maintaining or restoring trust in political institutions is an extremely important challenge

for most of Western Europe. In our Europe wide survey, we found that those online supporters who are also involved in offline politics appear to be more democratic, have more faith in politics, and be more likely to disavow violence. While the causal relationship between these attitudes is not clear, this is still powerful evidence to suggest that encouraging more people to become actively involved in political and civic life is an important way forward.

1 Background

The Sweden Democrat party was formed in 1988 as part of the wider emergence of far-right and neo-Nazi parties in Sweden during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Originally a direct continuation of the older ethnonationalist group Bevara Sverige Svenskt (Keep Sweden Swedish), early leaders included individuals associated with other extreme and far-right groups. The party's formative years were marked by electoral failure. The election of Mikael Jansson as leader in 1995 saw the beginning of splits within the party between those who wished to transform SD into a 'respectable' party and those wishing to follow tactics more in line with the extra-parliamentary activism of the majority of Swedish neo-Nazis during the 1990s.[3]

In 1998 the SD general election campaign sought to downplay past links with the extreme right, with Jansson also banning the wearing of political uniforms at party meetings. SD also intensified efforts to forge alliances with other far-right populist parties in Scandinavia and across Europe in a bid to bolster its claim to be seen a serious movement. Despite the late 1990s being a time when public support for right-wing radicals was in a period of decline, SD did enjoy limited success at a local, municipal level by winning a total of eight council seats in 1998.[4]

In 1999, Nazism was officially renounced by Jansson, precipitating renewed internal tension culminating in a further breakaway in 2001 as the 'New Democrats' sought to re-form on a more 'traditional' platform.[5]

In 2002 the 'reformist' tendency found a model to emulate in the Danish far-right Dansk Folkeparti and its leader Pia Kjærsgaard, who entered government as a junior coalition partner in 2002.[6] Three years later, the SD's gradual shift

towards the political mainstream gathered new momentum as 26-year-old Jimmie Åkesson wrested the leadership from Jansson. A regional SD councillor and a former leader of the party's youth wing, Åkesson had grown to prominence within the party campaigning against the EU and mass immigration, in particular Muslim immigrants. The following year, the party gained 2.9 per cent of the vote at the general election, which although below the 4 per cent threshold necessary for parliamentary representation was still enough to entitle the party to receive state funding.[7]

The SDs had their electoral breakthrough in 2010, winning 5.7 per cent of the ballots cast (approximately 340,000 votes) and entering parliament for the first time with 20 deputies.[8] Åkesson's leadership and the shift in emphasis to Muslim immigrants were clearly effective, allowing SD to double the party's share of the vote. In response, the seven other parties represented in the Swedish parliament placed what amounted to a *cordon sanitaire* around the SD, with the centre-right coalition refusing to enter into power-sharing negotiations, preferring instead to rule as a minority government.[9]

Having entered parliament, the SD's agenda remains firmly centred on its opposition to immigration. One of Åkesson's first actions in Parliament was to walk out of the Riksdag's opening session in protest at a bishop's sermon about multiculturalism. In an interview with the BBC the following year Åkesson denounced Sweden's longstanding immigration policies as 'extreme' before accusing Muslims of living in 'parallel societies' and linking increased levels of criminality with immigrants.[10] Such arguments appear to have had some success, and despite the initial shock at SD's election to parliament, its poll ratings have remained steady.[11] Towards the end of 2011 and going into 2012, polls estimated support at anywhere between 4.5 per cent to almost 9 per cent, enough to maintain or even increase its Riksdag presence in a general election.[12]

Meanwhile, attempts to alter the party's image have continued, despite setbacks including praise for the party in the 'manifesto' written by Anders Breivik, the perpetrator of the July 2011 terrorist attacks in Norway.[13] In November 2011 moves began to change the party's official programme from 'democratic, nationalist' to 'social conservative' as part of an ideological evolution designed to place more emphasis on values and less on race.[14] A women's wing (SD-Kvinnor) has been added alongside the longstanding youth wing (SD-Ungdom) as well as a YouTube channel (SD Webb TV). Other moves into social media include a party Twitter feed, as well as one maintained by Åkesson, which has over 6,000 followers. The party is also active on Facebook—the leader's page has over 23,000 'likes' and one entitled 'Sweden Democrats in parliament—yes please!' has over 40,000 'likes'. In addition to these pages, multiple smaller ones—several representing local SD-supporting groups—have been created. This attempt to establish an online presence is indicative of SD's wider effort to transform itself into a modern party and an established political force able to build on the success it achieved in 2010 and to influence policy at a national level.

2 Who are Sweden Democrat Facebook supporters?

This chapter presents the socio-economic, age and gender data of SD Facebook supporters. Where possible, we present this information in the context of broader Swedish society and make comparisons to similar groups in Western Europe as presented in the Demos report *The New Face of Digital Populism*.[15]

Demographics and geography

Using Facebook's own publicly available advertising tool (see methodology in the annex for details) it is possible to identify the age and gender of all Swedish users of Facebook, in addition to deriving the basic demographic information of Facebook members who express a preference for the SD or join a SD-related Facebook group. This allows us to put SD supporters in the context of the broader Swedish Facebook user population.

Across the country as a whole, Swedish Facebook users display a near even gender split (49 per cent male and 51 per cent female), but among SD's Facebook supporters, 74 per cent are male and 26 per cent are female (n=16,660). This gender imbalance towards males is shared with similar far-right groups or populist parties and movements (PPAMs) across Western Europe.

SD's Facebook supporters also tend to be young. In fact, they were the youngest of all the members of PPAMs we have surveyed: 63 per cent were between 16 and 20 years old, compared with an average of 32 per cent between 16 and 20 years old among PPAMs (table 1). The youth of SD supporters is particularly noteworthy given that Swedish Facebook users in general tend to be older than in the other countries surveyed — 54 per cent are over 30 compared with

a pan-European average of 49 per cent. In contrast, each of the other Scandinavian countries had a below PPAM average of 16–20-year-olds: Norway (13 per cent), Finland (21 per cent) and Denmark (24 per cent). Norway also had the oldest supporters of any country surveyed—64 per cent were over 30.

Table 1   **Age of SD Facebook supporters (n=16,660) (national statistics in brackets)**

Age group	SD total (Sweden total) (%)	Western Europe PPAMs (European total) (%)
16–20	63 (18)	32 (19)
21–25	14 (16)	19 (17)
26–30	6 (12)	12 (14)
31–40	9 (21)	17 (21)
41–50	4 (16)	12 (15)
51+	5 (17)	8 (13)

We cannot precisely pinpoint where SD Facebook supporters are located, but we asked survey respondents what was the nearest large city to their location within 50km. Just under a third of respondents responded Göteborg, another 30 per cent cited Stockholm, while a fifth cited Malmö and 13 per cent Uppsala.

Education and employment

We asked online supporters at what institution they gained their highest level of educational attainment and whether they were employed or not (table 2). Given the youth of SD Facebook supporters, it is not surprising that the SD had the highest proportion of respondents with only a school qualification (82 per cent) compared with a pan European PPAM figure of 45 per cent. Similarly, it is not surprising that SD university attendance (12 per cent) is to be significantly

lower than the PPAM average (26 per cent). SD supporters are far more likely than the average PPAM supporter to be students (45 per cent vs 30 per cent).

Table 2   **Highest educational attainment of SD Facebook supporters (n=567)**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 25 (%)	Over 25 (%)	Total (%)
Grundskolan (compulsory school)	16	21	20	12	18
Gymnasiet (high school)	66	60	70	45	64
Högskolan or universitet (college or university)	12	12	8	26	12
Yrkeskvalifikationer (professional qualification)	5	7	2	17	6

At 11 per cent, the SD unemployment rate was significantly lower than the unemployment rate for members of PPAMs in other Scandinavian countries—Norway (16 per cent), Denmark (17 per cent) and Finland (19 per cent)—despite the countries having similar or lower national unemployment rates. This figure is again most likely influenced by the disproportionately young profile of SD Facebook supporters. It is worth noting that among those over 30 years old, 15 per cent of SD Facebook supporters were unemployed (table 3).

Table 3   **Employment status of SD Facebook supporters (n=567)**
(national statistics in brackets)

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Employed	42	43	35	73	42
Unemployed	11	13	10	15	11 (7) [16]
Student	46	42	54	3	45

Membership and involvement

To determine the extent to which SD Facebook supporters are involved in offline activity, we asked respondents a number of questions about their involvement with the party, including whether they voted for SD, were formal members of SD and had participated in any SD-related demonstrations or street protests. Almost half of SD Facebook supporters reported being formal members, while 62 per cent reported voting for SD and a fifth claimed to have taken part in a march or demonstration in the last six months (table 4).

Table 4   **Offline involvement of SD Facebook supporters (n=567)**
(national statistics in brackets)

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Formal members of SD	43	53	45	47	46
Voted for SD in the last election	61	66	57	89	62 (5.7)[17]
Taken part in a march or demo in last 6–12 months	19	22	21	14	20 (5)[18]

The percentage of SD Facebook supporters who reported voting for SD is slightly lower than the PPAM average of 67 per cent. However, as can be seen in table 4, the very high proportion of respondents over the age of 30 who voted for the SD (89 per cent) indicates the potential for voting levels to rise as younger members mature. Indeed, the higher proportion of supporters under the age of 20 suggests that many would not have reached the voting age at the time of the last parliamentary election in 2010.

SD Facebook supporters are also slightly less likely to have taken part in a demonstration than the average PPAM supporter (20 per cent vs 26 per cent). However, they are considerably more likely to have done so than the Swedish public in general, which according to the 2010 European Social Survey suggests only 5 per cent have done so in the past 12 months (table 4).

The young age profile of SD Facebook supporters does not appear to prevent them from becoming formal party members. With nearly half (46 per cent) reporting formal party membership, SD Facebook supporters are significantly more likely to be formal members than the PPAM average of 32 per cent. Only the English Defence League had a higher percentage (76 per cent) of formal members among Facebook supporters.

3 Social and political concerns

We asked SD Facebook supporters a number of questions about their social and political views, trust in politics and political institutions, and views about the future for themselves and their country. Where the information is available, we have drawn comparisons with national averages based on either the Eurobarometer Survey (in autumn 2011) or the European Values Study 2010, in order to make more meaningful inferences.[19] We also draw out comparisons with supporters of PPAMs.

Top two biggest concerns
When asked to rank their top two social and political concerns, taken from a list of 18 current issues, the most common responses from SD Facebook supporters were immigration and Islamic extremism (table 5). This mirrors the top two concerns of the average PPAM supporter, although it is notable that concern over immigration and Islamic extremism is more pronounced among SD supporters: 49 per cent of SD Facebook supporters cited immigration compared with 37 per cent of supporters of other PPAMs, and 32 per cent of SD Facebook supporters cited Islamic extremism compared with 25 per cent of supporters of other PPAMs. Around half of SD Facebook supporters cited immigration as a top concern, compared with only 3 per cent of the total Swedish population.

It is also significant that the average SD Facebook fan is much more concerned about multiculturalism than the average PPAM supporter (26 per cent compared with 12 per cent). This is probably because the issue of multiculturalism figures strongly in SD party literature and rhetoric.

Table 5   **Top two biggest concerns of SD Facebook supporters (n=567) (national statistics in brackets)[20]**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Immigration	49	46	49	44	48 (3)
Islamic extremism	33	30	31	35	32 (N/A)
Multiculturalism	26	26	26	24	26 (N/A)
Crime	22	27	24	21	24 (9)
Unemployment	17	25	20	13	19 (16)

Politics and voting

We also asked SD Facebook supporters questions to ascertain their views about the effectiveness of democracy in order to gauge the level of disillusionment they feel with mainstream political channels. Overall, the findings are surprising, with SD Facebook supporters generally positive about voting and the effectiveness of politics.

Only 9 per cent of SD Facebook supporters agreed with the statement 'it does not matter who you vote for' (table 6), which compares with a PPAM average of 16 per cent. This is in keeping with a Scandinavian trend to register below-average levels of agreement on this measure: Norway (13 per cent), Denmark (10 per cent) and Finland (6 per cent).

More significant, however, was the high percentage of SD Facebook supporters who agreed with the statement that 'politics is an effective way to respond to my concerns' (table 7): 61 per cent of SD Facebook supporters agreed with the statement compared with just 35 per cent of supporters of other PPAMs. Again this was in keeping with their Scandinavian neighbours, all of whom displayed above average levels of confidence: Norway (70 per cent), Denmark (41 per cent) and Finland (55 per cent).

Table 6   **Extent to which SD Facebook supporters agree that it does not matter who you vote for (n=567)**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Agree entirely	6	4	5	6	5
Agree a little	4	4	4	5	4
Disagree a little	8	4	7	9	7
Disagree entirely	76	85	80	72	78

Table 7   **Extent to which SD Facebook supporters agree that politics is an effective way to respond to their concerns (n=567)**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Agree entirely	25	31	25	32	27
Agree a little	37	27	35	29	34
Disagree a little	14	16	14	14	14
Disagree entirely	10	7	9	9	9

Only 14 per cent of SD Facebook supporters agreed with the statement 'violence is acceptable to achieve the right outcome', nearly half the average score of supporters of other PPAMs (26 per cent). Only supporters of the German group Die Freiheit had a smaller percentage of supporters agreeing with the statement at 12 per cent. Once again, this reflects a general trend among all Scandinavian countries for fewer people to agree that violence is acceptable: Norway (14 per cent), Denmark (15 per cent) and Finland (21 per cent). Moreover, as can be seen in table 8, there are only marginal (if any) differences in the response to this question based on gender or age.

Before proceeding it is important to stress that the results of this question should not be misinterpreted. Agreeing that violence is acceptable to ensure a certain outcome does not mean that SD Facebook supporters are more prone actually to commit violence. There are unfortunately no baseline data on this question for Swedish or European general populations, making inferences about the relevance of the responses difficult.

Table 8 **Extent to which SD Facebook supporters agree that violence is acceptable to achieve the right outcome (n=567)**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Agree entirely	5	2	4	5	4
Agree a little	10	7	9	10	10
Disagree a little	20	16	20	12	19
Disagree entirely	57	72	61	64	61

Personal and national optimism

As might be expected, an overwhelming majority of SD Facebook supporters were pessimistic about Sweden's future: 81 per cent disagreed either a little or entirely with the statement 'Sweden is on the right track'. Comparing this to a similar question asked in the Eurobarometer Survey, we can conclude that SD Facebook supporters (and most likely their supporters in general) are much more pessimistic about Sweden's future than the average Swedish person. That said, SD Facebook supporters display slightly higher levels of optimism for their country than the average for PPAM supporters (14 per cent positive compared with only 10 per cent). This higher optimism for their country was also evident among respondents in other Scandinavian countries: Norway (12 per cent), Denmark (27 per cent) and Finland (16 per cent).

When asked whether they thought their own life would be better or worse in 12 months time (table 9), SD supporters were more optimistic than the PPAM average (38 per cent compared with 27 per cent replying that it would be better). Again, this reflected the trend of there being greater personal optimism among Scandinavian respondents than among the average for PPAM respondents, as their responses were all either at or above the average PPAM score. However, SD Facebook supporters displayed similar levels of personal optimism to the Swedish general public (38 per cent vs 40 per cent being optimistic).

Table 9 **Whether SD Facebook supporters think their personal lives will get better or worse in the next 12 months (n=567) (national statistics in brackets)[21]**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Better	37	41	39	30	38 (40)
Worse	19	20	18	24	19 (5)
Same	43	39	42	43	42 (55)

Attitudes toward the European Union

Consistent with the majority of respondents from PPAMs in other European countries, SD Facebook supporters are much more likely to have negative opinions of the EU. When asked what the EU means to them, the most common responses from SD supporters were 'waste of money', 'not enough control at the external borders' and 'loss of cultural and national identity' (table 10), which are similar to the average responses of supporters of other PPAMs when asked this question.

Table 10   **Attitudes of SD Facebook supporters towards the European Union (n=567) (national statistics in brackets)[22]**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Under 30 (%)	Over 30 (%)	Total (%)
Waste of money	65	57	61	72	63 (36)
Not enough control at external borders	56	63	58	60	58 (17)
Loss of cultural and national identity[23]	59	53	56	62	57 (9)
More crime	43	44	43	44	43 (16)
Freedom to travel, work and study[24]	37	32	35	37	36 (69)

Trust in institutions and people

Trust in other people, as well as social institutions, is generally considered as an important indicator of social capital in democratic societies. Similar to respondents from other PPAMs in Europe, SD Facebook supporters display very low levels of trust towards social and political institutions compared with their national compatriots (table 11). SD supporters were less trusting than the Swedish public of all public institutions except the army, which is a trend that appears common across online supporters of many PPAMs. Interestingly, however,

despite their disillusionment with mainstream politics, SD Facebook supporters had similar levels of trust in political parties as the Swedish public in general. This is another indication, taken in conjunction with the data regarding voting and the efficacy of politics above, that suggests SD supporters combine disillusionment with mainstream politics and institutions with an embedded commitment and belief in democratic political channels for obtaining power.

Table 11   **Extent to which SD Facebook supporters and the Swedish general public trust institutions (n=567)**

Institution	Tend to trust		Tend not to trust	
	SD (%)	Swedish public (%)[25]	SD (%)	Swedish public (%)
Government	19	61	75	37
European Union	13	43	80	51
Trade unions	30	55	60	38
Army	69	63	23	28
Police	61	82	34	17
Justice and legal system	28	73	65	25
Religious institutions	6	28	86	65
Political parties	26	30	65	67
The press	7	45	86	54

SD Facebook supporters have slightly lower levels of general trust in other people than the average or PPAM supporters (32 per cent vs 33 per cent). This stands in contrast to trust levels of respondents in other Scandinavian countries, all of whom had above average levels of trust in other people: Norway (54 per cent); Denmark (38 per cent); and Finland (41 per cent).

Moreover, it is noteworthy that SD supporters aged 51+ showed significantly higher levels of trust than their younger counterparts (albeit there were only very few individuals in that age category) (table 12).

Table 12   **Extent to which SD Facebook supporters agree that people can be trusted (n=567) (national statistics in brackets)** [26]

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Age 16–30 (%)	Age 31–50 (%)	Age 51+ (%)	Total (%)
In general most people can be trusted	34	28	32 (68)	32 (74)	47 (64)	32 (68)
In general most people cannot be trusted	50	63	53 (33)	57 (26)	37 (36)	53 (32)

4 Why do people support the Sweden Democrats online?

While the preceding chapter provides some indication of why SD Facebook supporters are drawn to the party, we also asked respondents to explain what motivates their support in their own words. This chapter presents our findings regarding respondents' answers to an open-response question asking why they supported the SD. Out of the 567 total survey responses, 340 responded to this question.

Table 13 provides a breakdown of the different categories that we used to code and classify the responses that we received. Responses could be placed in multiple categories if deemed relevant. The three most common responses were identification with the party's values, their anti-immigration stance and disillusionment with mainstream political parties. We discuss the six most frequently cited categories below, and give examples of some of the responses SD supporters gave.

Group values

Respondents who were classified in this category cited, in general terms, the values, principles, norms, beliefs, aspirations or ideas of the SD as reasons for supporting the party. Just about half of those who responded to this question cited SD's values. Women were more likely to refer to SD's values as a reason for supporting them, but there were no significant differences relating to age.

Table 13   **Why people supported SD (n=340)**

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Age 16–20 (%)	Age 21–25 (%)	Age 26–30 (%)	Age 31–40 (%)	Age 41–50 (%)	Age 51+ (%)	Total (%)
Group values	47	55	48	52	43	55	55	48	49
Anti-immigration	34	42	39	27	47	30	32	26	36
Disillusionment	10	17	12	17	9	2	10	10	12
Identity	13	2	10	13	4	11	16	10	10
Integrity	6	4	5	9	6	2	8	6	5
Anti-Islam	5	3	3	5	9	9	3	16	5
Other	3	1	2	5	2	4	3	0	3
Anti-EU	1	2	1	2	6	0	0	4	1
Economic	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
Anti-Semite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Roma	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Some of the respondents noted the unique position of SD, highlighting a mix of left-wing and right-wing views:

Because I like the ideology behind the party and that it does not exist in any similar parties in Sweden that stands any chance in the parliament.[27]

What first caught my interest for SD was the will to lower the abortion limit. The family politic. I have always found it difficult to feel at home with any party; I am in some ways both red and blue. SD is probably the party that represents my values in very many questions, even that we need to be able to take care of those who already live here before we can fill up with more.[28]

Anti-immigration

Respondents were classified in this category if they explicitly mentioned immigration when explaining why they supported SD. Over a third of those who responded to the question cited immigration as a motivation. This figure was higher among SD supporters (36 per cent) than supporters of any other PPAM. The PPAM average was 18 per cent; the PPAM group with the next highest number of members citing immigration as a motivation for joining the equivalent Facebook group was Belgium's Vlamms Belang (29 per cent). The proportion of people who were hostile to immigration in other Scandinavian countries varied: Norway (9 per cent), Finland (11 per cent), Denmark (26 per cent) and Sweden (36 per cent).

Interestingly, women were more likely to cite immigration as a motivation for supporting SD, as were those in the 16–20 and 26–30 age groups, with the latter being the most likely group to cite immigration (47 per cent).

Some examples of responses from people in this category include:

I'm not willing to help anyone other than genuine refugees.[29]

Mass immigration and cuts in the welfare state. Sweden is going under. We have no democracy anymore. Women's issues—with religious freedom, women's rights are compromised and this is accepted by politicians. Integration into Swedish society is a must. Swedishness must be celebrated, not oppressed in order for immigrants to fit in here. This means that politicians must respect Swedish culture, which they don't. How are immigrants supposed to respect or accept the culture when politicians don't?[30]

My ancestry is from Eastern Europe but my parents taught me that you go with the practice of the place you move to and respect the country and integrate. Suddenly other parties want something completely different. It doesn't work in the long run. I want to live in Sweden, not a multicultural fiasco.[31]

Disillusionment

Respondents were placed in the disillusionment category when they said they supported SD because of their disenchantment with major political institutions, the political elite or the general direction of their country.

Although this is the third most cited reason given by SD supporters for supporting the party, at 12 per cent the proportion of SD supporters in this category is lower than that for the average PPAM respondent (14 per cent). Significantly, younger respondents were more likely to cite disillusionment as a motivation for supporting SD (17 per cent of 21–25-year-olds, and 12 per cent of 16–20-year-olds).

Many respondents in this category spoke about their disillusionment over other parties' approach to immigration and often excused them of living in a 'fantasy world':

It is the only party that addresses the problems with mass immigration.[32]

Obviously because the majority of today's politicians are incompetent.[33]

Because they are the only sane politicians who have a view of reality and do not live in their little f*cking fantasy world.[34]

Identity

Respondents were classified in the identity category when they referred to a love of Sweden, commitment to the preservation of traditional Swedish national and cultural values, or representation of the interests of 'real' Swedes when asked about their reasons for supporting SD.

Interestingly, identity among SD supporters appears to be less of a self-reported motivating factor than for the average PPAM supporter (10 per cent vs 18 per cent). On average, the joint second highest response when respondents from PPAMs were asked why they supported SD was for reasons of identity.

Some examples of responses in this category include:

Because Sweden has to remain Swedish. With Swedish tradition and a Swedish people.[35]

Because I love Sweden.[36]

Because Sweden is on its way to stop existing… there is nothing Swedish left. We are more multicultural than any other [country] that exists. I want my country to be remembered as Sweden and not a mixed bag.[37]

Integrity and anti-Islam

There were 5 per cent of respondents in each of the integrity and the anti-Islam categories.

The integrity category covers supporters who claimed to admire SD's straight-talking and honest approach and those who believed party supporters were consistent in their convictions. This category differed from the disillusionment category in that it required respondents to speak of SD in a positive light, instead of merely displaying a lack of faith in other political parties. This is a typical response from a respondent in this category:

Because they are the only party in Sweden that addresses questions that no one else addresses.[38]

It is self-evident that the responses we categorised as anti-Islam explicitly mentioned Muslims in a derogatory way. In many instances, these responses could be cross-referenced with the anti-immigration category. These are two examples of responses in this category:

I want Sweden to remain Swedish for as long as possible. The mosques are for f*ck's sake built on top of each other these days.[39]

I want my old Sweden back like before 1985 when we put our own first and not the ideology Islam, which is evil and slowly destroys our Swedish country and deprives us Swedes of our identity, our culture and our history.[40]

5   What is the relationship between online and offline activism?

In *The New Face of Digital Populism* we ran a series of analyses to determine what background and attitudinal characteristics were more likely to inspire online activists to get involved in the 'real world' through voting, becoming a formal party member, or attending a street demonstration or protest. For this report we ran the same analysis using cross tabulations with SD Facebook supporters. As mentioned in chapter 2, 63 per cent of SD Facebook supporters reported voting for the SD, 46 per cent reported being formal members, and 20 per cent reported participating in a demonstration in the six months before the survey.

From Facebook to the voting booth

Respondents who voted for SD were slightly more likely to be female than those who did not. Meanwhile, non-voters were significantly more likely to be students and under the age of 30.

Voters were less likely than non-voters to cite immigration as a top two concern, but more likely to cite multiculturalism and European integration. Voters were also more likely than non-voters to distrust the EU and the press, and more likely to trust the justice and legal system and the army.

From Facebook to card-carrying party member

Respondents who reported themselves to be formal party members were again slightly more likely to be female than non-members, but there were no age differences between party members and non-members. Formal party members were also less likely to be unemployed.

Formal members were more likely than non-members to cite multiculturalism as a top concern. However, non-members were more likely to cite immigration, rising prices and the economic situation. Formal party members were also more likely than non-members to trust the police, the justice and legal system, trade unions and political parties. However, formal members were more likely to distrust the EU.

From Facebook to the streets

As with members and voters, demonstrators were marginally more likely to be female than non-demonstrators, which distinguishes SD supporters from other PPAM supporters considered thus far. Demonstrators also tended to be younger than non-demonstrators. Interestingly, demonstrators were more than twice as likely to have attended college or university as non-demonstrators.

Demonstrators were more likely to cite the environment, European integration and multiculturalism as a top concern. Non-demonstrators were more likely to cite immigration and Islamic extremism. Demonstrators were more likely to trust political parties and the justice and legal system, and more likely to distrust the police and the army.

Annex: Methodology

The methodology employed for the collection and analysis of this data is set out in detail in *The New Face of Digital Populism*.[41] We therefore limit this section to SD specific issues.

For *The New Face of Digital Populism* we collected data from Facebook supporters of nationalist populist political parties or street-based movements drawn mainly across Western Europe. We ran a Facebook advert targeted at supporters of all parties and/or party leaders' Facebook pages over the summer of 2011. Each advert invited Facebook supporters of the group in question to click on a link, which redirected them to our online survey.

Our campaign ran over a three-month period, with no single advert being available for more than six weeks. On clicking the advert, participants were redirected to a digital survey page hosted by the website Survey Monkey, which set out the details and purpose of the survey along with an invitation to take part. The size of target population varied from country to country, depending on the size of the Facebook membership of the group in question. Table 14 gives the details of the data collected for the survey on SD.

The 'unique impressions' column lists the number of unique occasions the advert was displayed on the target audience's Facebook sidebar. The click per impressions ratio was relatively stable, at around 1 per cent. The click to survey completion ratio was around 30 per cent. This non-response rate may be the result of some respondents deciding not to take part in the survey on reading the consent form. Our method to correct for non-response rates is discussed in the full methodology given in *The New Face of Digital Populism*. The size of the final data set was lower than the number of surveys completed because we removed incomplete surveys.

Table 14   Data collected for survey on Sweden Democrats

	Sweden Democrat Party
Date of survey	Jul–Aug 2011
No of specific Facebook interest groups targeted	3
Size of population targeted	16,660
No of unique impressions	2,191,724
Total Facebook link clicks	1,954
Total survey responses	620
Final data set	567

Data analysis and limitations

We decided to use Facebook principally because the site is a popular mode of communication for supporters of many of the groups and parties we surveyed.

In order to increase the predictive validity of our results, we applied a post-stratification weight, using the known demographics of the online population to correct the sample's balance of gender and age in line with the makeup of the group as a whole. To do this, we gathered background data on the composition of SD's Facebook group membership using Facebook's advertising tool (which is freely available for any user to access). We gave each participant a weighted value on the basis of the prevalence of their demographic profile (age and gender) in the population at large. Although we achieved demographic representativeness — which can correct for systematic age or gender related bias — it is possible certain attitudinal self-selection biases exist, because this was a self-select survey. It is with this caveat that the results are presented.

While the use of a post-stratification weight is an improvement on the use of unweighted data, it cannot

be automatically claimed as a reliable basis for making inferences about the offline group. The use of social network surveys is subject to a well-known technical and methodological critique focusing on the nature of self-entry interest classification on Facebook, the lack of content reliability on social networking sites, and the lack of internet access and usage in the broader population, all of which are capable of biasing the results of the survey.

Therefore, we take care not to claim, at any point in the text, that our sample represents or reflects the official views of the group, or indeed of its offline membership.

Throughout the paper, we compare the SD results to the pan-European study results presented in *The New Face of Digital Populism*.

In chapter 2, the gender and age of each of the groups in question were collected directly from the publicly available Facebook group level data using the advertising tool mentioned above. This provides the most accurate results on the Facebook membership for each group. Results related to education, employment and involvement in the group are based on our weighted results.

In chapter 3 we give weighted results and provide comparative data where they are available from the 2010/11 Eurobarometer or European Values Survey. Where the questions are not worded identically, or there were additional answer options, this is expressly identified.

Chapter 4 is based on the analysis of an open text question about why individuals joined the group in question. This open question allowed respondents to answer as they wished. A Swedish translator coded the responses. We reviewed the content of the responses and created nine categories for the responses, together with a category 'other'. Responses could fall into multiple categories. We removed data relating to respondents who were not supporters of SD.

In chapter 5, we ran a cross tabulation analysis, in which we compared those Facebook supporters who claimed to be party members against those who did not; those Facebook supporters who had protested or marched in the previous six months

compared with those who had not; and those who reported voting for the SD compared with those who did not. The sample size was too small to undertake a logistic regression.

Ethical considerations

As this research focused on adolescents over the age of 16, no Criminal Records Bureau check was necessary; consequently, none was sought. Similarly, it was not necessary for us to obtain informed consent from participant parents or guardians as Social Research Association ethics guidelines suggest such clearance should not be sought and is not required where investigating participants aged over 16. We sought and gained individual informed consent from all participants, who agreed to a consent statement presented at the start of the survey—failure to sign acceptance of this statement prevented them from participating further in the research. Although we targeted the survey only at people aged over 16, a small number of individuals stated they were under 16 when responding to the question about age. We immediately deleted data relating to these people.

We stated on the Facebook advert that we were representing Demos, and were undertaking a survey of Facebook members of the group in question. On clicking the advertisement link, the participant was redirected to the survey landing page. On that page we pointed out that leaders of each group had been informed about the survey. Before running the survey, Demos emailed each of the groups in question to let them know about the survey. On the landing page we also stated that we would be letting the party in question know about the results before they were made public. Before release, we emailed the parties and groups in question with the results where they pertained to their members.

We did not brief participants fully on the study's aims before completing the survey in order to avoid the exhibition of demand characteristics. We provided only a broad overview of the research at the start of the survey, and gave more detailed information on the project's aims only after the last question had been completed. We provided the contact details of the lead researcher to all participants to cover the eventuality that they had questions not covered by the debrief notes, but few participants made use of it.

We told participants that they could withdraw from the research at any time before completion as part of a preface presented alongside the consent statement. Later we reminded them of this right when they completed the survey via a paragraph in the debrief notes, offering the possibility of immediate withdrawal via a check box. No participants opted to withdraw in this way.

We observed ethical and legal considerations relevant to the storage and handling of data; all data were kept digitally encoded in an anonymous format, and we didn't store any data capable of identifying any participants.

We prepared for the eventuality that the research uncovered information with serious security implications, particularly relating to participant support for violence; we took precautions to absolve the researcher of moral responsibility towards the disclosure of information to agents of the criminal justice system by ensuring that the survey did not ask for precise details of acts of violence or illegal political protest. In order to preserve participant confidentiality (the deliberate exclusion by data capture systems of IP addresses) we removed from the researcher the means to identify and incriminate individual participants.

Notes

1   J Bartlett, J Birdwell and M Littler, *The New Face of Digital Populism*, London: Demos, 2011, www.demos.co.uk/publications/thenewfaceofdigitalpopulism (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

2   'Sverigedemokraterna tappar medlemmar', *Vasabladet*, 25 Jun 2011, www.vasabladet.fi/story/?linkid=160256 (accessed 20 Feb 2012).

3   L Bakken, 'Fra kjelleren til Riksdagen', NRK, 25 Sep 2010, www.nrk.no/nyheter/verden/1.7304305 (accessed 20 Feb 2012).

4   See 'Partihistorik', Sverigedemokraterna, https://sverigedemokraterna.se/vart-parti/partihistorik/ (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

5   Rydgren, 'Radical right-wing populism in Sweden and Denmark', p 22.

6   B Kianzad, 'Liberal no more: the far-right gains in Sweden's election', *Time*, 20 Sep 2010, www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2020349,00.html (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

7   P O'Mahony and N Meo, 'Far-Right party poised to take first seats in Sweden's parliament', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Sep 2010, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/8011099/Far-Right-party-poised-to-take-first-seats-in-Swedens-parliament.html (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

8   'The Sweden Democrats: living with the far-right',
     The Economist, 10 Sep 2011, www.economist.com/
     node/21528665 (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

9   Ibid.

10   Ibid; 'Jimmie Akesson: Swedish immigration is "extreme"',
     Hardtalk interview, 25 Jan 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/
     programmes/hardtalk/9372832.stm (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

11   'Petzäll backed by Sweden Democrat rebels', *The Local*, 28
     Sep 2011, www.thelocal.se/36404/20110928/ (accessed 16
     Feb 2011); 'Sweden Democrat "members" site shut down',
     The Local, 24 Sep 2010, www.thelocal.se/29218/20100924/
     (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

12   'The Sweden Democrats: living with the far-right';
     D Jonasson, 'Sweden Democrats to become "social
     conservative"', *Stockholm News*, 15 Nov 2011,
     www.stockholmnews.com/more.aspx?NID=8049
     (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

13   'The Sweden Democrats: living with the far-right'.

14   Jonasson, 'Sweden Democrats to become "social
     conservative"'.

15   Bartlett et al, *The New Face of Digital Populism*.

16   OECD, *Labour Force Statistics*, Organisation for Economic
     Co-operation and Development, http://stats.oecd.org/
     index.aspx?queryid=251 (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

17   The Sweden Democrats gained 5.7% of the vote at the 2010
     election. See NSD, European Election Data, 'Sweden:
     parliamentary election 2010', Norwegian Social Science
     Data Services, http://eed.nsd.uib.no/webview/index.jsp?st
     udy=http%3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FSt
     udy%2FSEPA2010_Display&mode=cube&v=2&cube=http
     %3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FCube%2FSE
     PA2010_Display_C1&top=yes (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

18   The Demos survey figure provided is the percentage of
     respondents who answered 'yes' to the question: 'Have you
     taken part in a political march, protest, or demonstration
     in the last six months?' The European Social Survey
     (round 5) figure provided is the percentage of respondents
     who answered 'yes' to the question: 'During the last 12
     months, have you done any of the following? Have you
     taken part in a lawful public demonstration?'

19   European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 74*, 2010,
     http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb74/
     eb74_en.htm (accessed 18 Jan 2012).

20   Demos survey respondents were asked 'Please rank your
     three biggest concerns in order of importance from the
     list below.' They were able to provide a maximum of
     three responses. The Demos survey figure provided is
     the percentage of survey respondents who ranked the
     relevant concern as their first or second biggest concern.
     Eurobarometer (autumn 2011, split B) respondents were
     asked: 'And personally, what are the two most important
     issues you are facing at the moment?' They were able to
     provide a maximum of two responses. The Eurobarometer
     figure provided is the percentage of respondents who
     ranked the relevant concern as their first or second biggest
     concern. Demos survey respondents were able to select
     some options that were not available to Eurobarometer
     respondents and vice versa.

21 Both Demos survey respondents and Eurobarometer (autumn 2011) respondents were asked the question: 'Will the next 12 months be better, worse or the same when it comes to your life generally?'

22 Both Demos survey respondents and Eurobarometer (autumn 2011) respondents were asked the question: 'What does the European Union mean to you personally?' Both sets of respondents were allowed to select multiple options.

23 The Demos survey figure provided is the percentage of respondents who selected the option 'loss of cultural and national identity'. The Eurobarometer (autumn 2011) figure provided is the percentage of respondents who selected the option 'loss of cultural identity'.

24 The Demos survey figure provided is the percentage of respondents who selected either the option 'freedom to travel' or the option 'study and work anywhere in the EU'. The Eurobarometer (autumn 2011) figure provided is the percentage of respondents who selected the option 'freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU'.

25 Demos survey respondents were asked: 'To what extent do you trust the following: [institution]?' Eurobarometer respondents were asked: 'For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust [institution].' In each case respondents selected either 'tend to trust' or 'tend not to trust'. The percentages cited for 'government', 'European Union', 'political parties' and 'the press' are derived from the Eurobarometer (autumn 2011). The percentages cited for all other institutions are derived from the Eurobarometer (autumn 2010) as they do not appear in the later survey.

26 Demos survey respondents were asked: 'To what extent do you agree with the following statement: in general, most people cannot be trusted.' Respondents were able to select any one of the following options: 'agree entirely', 'agree a little', 'disagree entirely', 'disagree a little' or 'neutral'. The Demos survey figures provided are the percentages of respondents who either selected 'disagree entirely' or 'disagree a little', or 'agree entirely' or 'agree a little'. The national statistics provided are drawn from the World Values Survey (www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSAnalizeQuestion.jsp). Respondents who took part in the World Values Survey asked: 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?' Respondents were able to select any one of the following options: 'most people can be trusted', 'cannot be too careful' or 'don't know'. The World Values Survey figures provided are the percentages of respondents who selected 'most people can be trusted and 'cannot be too careful'. The age group breakdown for the World Values Survey is as follows: 15–29, 30–49 and 50+. The age breakdown for the Demos survey is as stated above.

27 'Eftersom att jag gillar ideologin bakom partiet och att det inte finns några efterliknande partier i Sverige som har någon chans överhuvudtaget i riksdagen.'

28 'Det som först fångade mitt intresse för SD var viljan att sänka abortgränsen. Familjepolitiken. Jag har alltid haft svårt att finna mig hemma i något av blocken, jag är nog på sätt och vis både röd och blå. SD är nog det partiet som motsvarar mina egna värderingar i väldigt många frågor, även att vi måste kunna ta hand om dem som redan bor här innan vi kan fylla på med mer.'

29 'Jag är inte villig att hjälpa några andra än riktiga flyktingar.'

30 'Massinvandring och alla nedskärningar i välfärden. Sverige är på väg att gå under. Vi har ingen demokrati längre. Kvinnosaksfrågor. Med religionsfrihet, så kommer kvinnoförtryck. Och accepteras av politikerna. Detta är skrämmande. Kvinnans värde sjunker ju fler kvinnoförtryckare som kommer hit. Assimilering till den svenska kulturen är ett måste. Det svenska måste hyllas, inte föraktas... om invandrarna ska kunna finna sig till rätta här. Det kräver att politikerna respekterar den svenska kulturen. Det gör dom inte. Så hur sjutton ska invandrarna kunna acceptera och respektera det svenska? Det är omöjligt.'

31 'Min påbrå kommer från östeuropa men mina föräldrar lärde mig att man ska ta seden dit man kommer. Respektera det land man kommit till och smälta in. Plötsligt vill andra partier något helt annat. Det funkar inte i längden. Jag vill bo i Sverige inte ett multikultifjasko.'

32 'Det är det enda partiet som tar upp problematiken med massinvandringen.'

33 'Uppenbarligen därför att majoriteten av dagens politiker är inkompetenta.'

34 'För dom är dom ända vettiga av alla politker som har en verklighets syn och inte lever i sin lilla j*vla fantasi värld.'

35 För att Sverige måste förbli Svenskt... Med Svensk tradition och ett Svenskt folk.'

36 'Eftersom jag älskar Sverige.'

37 För att sverige är på väg att sluta existera... det finns ju inge svenskt kvar av sverige vi är mer mångkulturellt än nå annat som finns jag vill att mitt land ska minnas som sverige och inte nå blandat komplott.'

38 'Därför att det är det ända parti i Sverige som tar tag i frågor som inga andra tar tag i.'

39 'Jag vill att Sverige ska förbli svenskt så länge sommöjligt. Moskeérna byggs ju för fan på varann nu för tiden.'

40 'Jag vill ha mi gamla sverige åter som före 1985 då vi värnade våra egna i första hand och inte idiologin islam som är ondska och sakta försttör vår svenska land och tar ifrån oss svenskar vår identitet vår kultur vår historia.'

41 Bartlett et al, *The New Face of Digital Populism*.

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'Jimmie Akesson: Swedish immigration is "extreme"', Hardtalk interview, 25 Jan 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/hardtalk/9372832.stm (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

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NSD, European Election Data, 'Sweden: parliamentary election 2010', Norwegian Social Science Data Services, http://eed.nsd.uib.no/webview/index.jsp?study=http%3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FfStudy%2FSEPA2010_Display&mode=cube&v=2&cube=http%3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FfCube%2FSEPA2010_Display_C1&top=yes (accessed 16 Feb 2012).

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Nationalist populist parties and movements are growing in support throughout Europe. These groups are known for their opposition to immigration, their 'anti-establishment' views and their concern for protecting national culture. Their rise in popularity has gone hand-in-hand with the advent of social media, and they are adept at using new technology to amplify their message, recruit and organise.

In Sweden, the Sverigedemokraterna (or 'Sweden Democrats') emerged from the extremist far-right fringe to win 5.7 per cent of the vote in the 2010 elections, entering parliament for the first time. Despite setbacks including praise for the party in the 'manifesto' written by Anders Breivik, attempts to alter the party's image appear to have been broadly successful – it is currently polling anywhere between 4.5 and 9 per cent.

This report presents the results of a survey of Facebook fans of the Sweden Democrats. It includes data on who they are, what they think, and what motivates them to shift from virtual to real-world activism. It also compares them with other similar parties in Western Europe, shedding light on their growing online support, and the relationship between their online and offline activities. This report is the second in a series of country specific briefings about the online support of populist parties in 12 European countries, based on our survey of 13,000 Facebook fans of these groups.

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