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## **Unintentionally Helping the Radical Right?**

*A Study on the Swedish Established Parties' Articulation on the  
Immigration Issue and the Electoral Support for the Swedish Radical Right*

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## **Abstract**

In recent years Sweden has witnessed an unprecedented electoral support for the radical right in domestic politics. Similar developments for radical right parties have in the last decades been observed around Western Europe, and scholars have tried to identify the reasons for this (arguably surprising) political trend. One possible explanation is presented by the legitimisation theory, which holds that when the political parties incorporate more of the issues typically associated with the radical right into their own party agenda in the hopes of regaining lost votes they simultaneously legitimise the controversial issues advocated by the radical right. Consequently, in contrast to its aim this political strategy may in fact unintentionally facilitate the growing support for the radical right. The findings of this study suggest that there are indications of a potential correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right in 1988-2018. Furthermore, the study provides descriptive information on how the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue has changed over time, and how the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue has differed from it. Together, the descriptive and statistical findings of this research are both useful and encouraging for future research on this highly contemporary issue in political science.

## Table of content

Introduction.....	5
Theoretical departure & previous research .....	7
The issue saliency theory .....	7
The legitimisation theory .....	9
Previous research.....	10
Conclusion and expectation formulation .....	12
Case motivation.....	12
Country - Sweden.....	12
Observations – 1988-2018 .....	13
Definitions .....	13
Radical right party.....	13
Established parties .....	15
Mainstream parties.....	16
The immigration issue.....	16
Method .....	16
The descriptive part .....	17
The statistical part .....	18
Operationalisation .....	21
Reliability & validity .....	22
Results for the descriptive part .....	25
The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue.....	25
Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue .....	27
Conclusion .....	29
Results for the statistical part.....	31
Model 1 ( <i>established parties, immigration, current</i> ) .....	32
Model 3 ( <i>established parties, immigration + integration, current</i> ) .....	33
Model 5 ( <i>mainstream parties, immigration, current</i> ).....	34
Model 7 ( <i>mainstream parties, immigration + integration, current</i> ) .....	35
Model 9 ( <i>The Moderate Party, immigration, current</i> ) .....	36
Model 11 ( <i>The Moderate Party, immigration + integration, current</i> ) .....	37

Conclusion .....	38
Ending discussion.....	40
References.....	43
Appendix .....	45
The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue.....	45
Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue .....	48
Electoral support for the radical right.....	50
Immigration .....	51
Unemployment.....	52

## Introduction

Politically a lot has happened in Sweden in the 2010's. The unprecedented growing electoral support for the Swedish radical right<sup>1</sup> - or more precisely the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*) – is one thing that clearly stands out as it has increasingly altered both the political game and the public debate. In the 2010 election the party received 5,9 % of the votes. The election became one historical milestone for the party as they passed the 4 % threshold and thus qualified into the Swedish parliament for the first time. In the following 2014 election the Sweden Democrats received 12,9 % of the votes (SCB), and after the 2018 election they became Sweden's third biggest party securing 17,5 % of the total votes (Valmyndigheten: a). To the perspective it is important to add that the Sweden Democrats was not the first radical right party to enter the Swedish parliament. In 1991 New Democracy (*Ny demokrati*) got 6,1 % of the votes (SCB), which sparked an “unexpected and fierce debate on the failure of immigrants to integrate into Swedish society” and on the facilitation of labour migration (Bale 2003, 80). However, in the following 1994 election New Democracy lost their parliamentary seats - and as history tells, they would never regain them (SCB). Yet, neither the Sweden Democrats nor New Democracy was the first Swedish radical right party. In the 1980's the separatist Skåne Party (*Skånepartiet*) managed to get some mandates in local municipalities in the Skåne region in southern Sweden. The Sjöbo Party (*Sjöbopartiet*) – originated from the same region and more explicitly xenophobic – also got some attention in the public debate. Nevertheless, in contrast to New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats, the Skåne Party and the Sjöbo Party were never close to getting any seats in the Swedish parliament. Thus, even though they might not be radical right pioneers, the Sweden Democrats clearly stand out in comparison to previous Swedish radical right parties in that they have stayed in parliament for over 8 years and during that time only experienced a growing electoral support<sup>2</sup>.

Yet, regardless whether the political success and influence of the radical right is considered an inevitable trend in Western European parliaments, a look at the Swedish case described above does arguably bid the question – why now and not sooner? Indeed, similar developments by the radical right dates back to the 1980's, and the formation of such parties goes back even further. For example, in 1972 Jean-Marie Le Pen formed the French National Front (*Front National*) party, and before that, in 1967, the British National Front party had been formed which, according to professor of politics Roger Eatwell, was a “pioneer exponent of anti-immigrant politics” (Eatwell 2000, 407-408). In 1973 the Danish Progress Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*) won 16 % of the votes in the election, having been formed by tax lawyer Mogens Glistrup only a year before that. Similarly, in 1973, the Norwegian Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*) was formed. After initial success both the Danish and Norwegian radical right parties experienced a severe decline in their electoral support in the following decades, but, as history tells, only to re-emerge again. In 1997 the Norwegian Progress Party won 15 % of the votes in the election, and three years later, in

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<sup>1</sup> A discussion and the for this study chosen definition of the “radical right” concept follows in the chapter “Definitions”.

<sup>2</sup> If only analysing election results.

2000, the Danish Peoples Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*), replacing its predecessor the Danish Progress Party, was rated the third most popular party. Additional examples of radical right parties in the 1990's are the Italian Northern League Party (*Lega Nord*) and the Flemish Block (*Vlaams Blok*) in Belgium (Eatwell 2000, 408-409). Together Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway constitute empirical Western European examples where centre-right parties at one or several times in 1993-2003 formed a coalition government with a radical right party (Bale 2003, 72). Thus, already by the turn of the new millennium radical right parties had increasingly become a "subject of considerable concern" (Eatwell 2000, 407-408), and in this wider Western European context the Swedish political developments of the 2010's are not revolutionary.

As one possible explanation for the "delay" of the radical rights' emergence onto the Swedish political scene Carl Dahlström and Peter Esaiasson – Swedish professors at the University of Gothenburg – have proposed "the established parties' decision not to articulate the immigration issue"<sup>3</sup> (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 25). Their argument is based on previous studies on Western European democracies where established parties in some cases have been observed to respond to the political success of the radical right by modifying and incorporating their issues into their own party programmes. Not uncommonly, these issues have a clear focus on immigration. Although the purpose of this co-opting strategy is to regain lost votes and disarm the radical right, some contemporary scholars argue that it can have the opposite effect and legitimise the issues advocated by the radical right and thus facilitate a change in party preferences for some of the voters. However, this theory – here referred to as the legitimisation theory – has yet to be tested on the Swedish case. While Dahlström & Esaiasson conclude that the Swedish established parties indeed have tended not to engage in the immigration issue over time (1970-2006), they do not test for a potential correlation with the electoral support for the Swedish radical right. Furthermore, as their study was published in 2009 the parliamentary elections of the 2010's are unaccounted for. Nevertheless, in a time when radical right parties are becoming rather a key player in domestic politics across Western Europe and scholars are beginning the identification of potential underlying mechanisms it is arguably of both high relevance and importance to explore and test such possible explanations. And, as argued in this introduction, the same relevance and importance can be ascribed to the Swedish case.

The aim of this study is therefore to begin to investigate the possibility of the legitimisation theory explaining (parts of) the variation in the electoral support for the radical right in Sweden in 1988-2018, with the wider purpose of contributing to the understanding of the contemporary political success of the radical right in Sweden. It will contain two parts – one descriptive, and one statistical – including the following three research questions.

1. *How has the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue changed in 1988-2018?*
2. *How has the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue differed from that of the Swedish established parties in 1998-2018?*

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<sup>3</sup> A definition of the concept is presented in the "Definitions" chapter.

3. *Are there indications of a potential correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right in 1988-2018?*

## **Theoretical departure & previous research**

In this following chapter two separate theories will be presented. While the already mentioned legitimisation theory is the most central theoretical component in this study its account will in this chapter be preceded by that of the issue salience theory which is regarded as a good complement of the former. The chapter also includes previous research related to those theories, and concludes with the formulation of what kind of result might be expected based on the content of this chapter.

### **The issue saliency theory**

In a study published in 1982 political scientist and founder of international Manifesto Research Project Ian Budge makes an account for what he calls “the salience theory of party competition and electoral response”. Other scholars have since argued in line with this issue saliency theory. According to Budge, it is through their public stands and appeals that political parties become the main source of issue cues for voters, and thus shape the context in which elections take place (Budge 1982, 149). This means that political parties, rather than primarily articulate how their policies distinguish from those of rivaling parties, tend to selectively emphasise particular issues they consider the most favourable. He notes that voters to a great extent tend to endorse a certain goal within an issue area. Furthermore, they usually perceive one party as the most likely candidate to successfully pursue that goal, and “if convinced by its saliency, they will vote for the party which owns the issue area” (Budge 1982, 149). Naturally, an issue area usually consists of several sub-issues. One reason why both party strategists and voters tend to group them together is to avoid having to re-evaluate all potential sub-issues in detail that may emerge in an election campaign. For example, an issue area like economy could consist of sub-issues like unemployment, balance of payments, and general prosperity. In his 1982 article Budge identifies several of these broad issue areas, but notes that only some of them “will assume prominence in an election campaign and produce net inflows or outflows of votes” given the voters’ “limited ability” to evaluate all broad issue areas (Budge 1982, 150-151). Pontus Odmalm – Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Edinburgh - has later argued that “the decline of traditional dividing lines, such as labour/capital or religious/secular, may open up for new cleavages to be established”. Indeed, as the traditional issues to disagree on become fewer, political parties may find themselves in need to engage in the competition over issue ownership, trying to set the agenda by selectively emphasising and drawing attention to (their) particular issues (Odmalm 2011, 1075-176).

A party's failed performance in a given issue area does, according to Budge, not necessarily translate into a net loss of votes that are gained by the rivalling party since there is still the option of casting a blank vote, and that of not voting at all. However, the failed performance in a given issue area by the (commonly) two mainstream parties could result in a net gain of votes for a third party (Budge 1982, 151). Thus, political parties are usually faced with "a trade-off between democratic responsibility and electoral ambition" argues Tim Bale, Professor of Politics at Queen Mary, University of London. Evidence from several Western European countries suggests that the urge of electoral ambition is usually stronger than that of democratic responsibility, especially in countries where the trend of "two-bloc electoral competition" is prevailing over other types of political party constellations (Bale 2003, 68). When new parties make it onto the political scene, establishing themselves as a serious competitor to other traditional parties, they do so, at least partly, by exploiting issues that are either new or previously forgotten, but nevertheless considered strategically appealing (Bale 2003, 69). New York University Professor of Politics Martin A. Schain has emphasised the fact that new political parties tend to receive attention not when they first are formed, but rather when their electoral success translates into a significant variation of support within the party system constituted by the already established parties. This could either be the result of voters changing their party preference in favour of the new party, or the mobilisation of new voters. However, the established parties may find themselves facing the problem of how to best recapture lost votes. This challenge will arguably be the most pressing for those parties feeling that the new party's gain was particularly at their expense (Schain 2006, 271-272). Not uncommonly they will begin to address issues typically owned by their political rivals. While the established parties' aim with this political move is to regain electoral support, the effect may however turn out to be quite the reverse. Indeed, by starting to address these "new" issues the older parties may unintentionally help to "shape preferences in a manner that may increase support for the new entrant at the expense of old parties" (Bale 2003, 69). Similarly, Budge had already in the 1980's argued that mentioning issues primarily emphasized by rivalling parties, even if only to criticize, may unintentionally help "push voters into another party" (Budge 1982, 149).

Out of the 14 issue areas identified by Budge five of them are believed to have the potential of producing a relatively high net gain of votes, primarily because their connection to everyday life is considered strong. One such issue area is labelled "ethnic" and consists of the following sub-issues: immigration and foreign workers, attitudes to minority groups and their advancement, discrimination, school and housing integration, and language questions (Budge 1982, 152-153). In a political system primarily dominated by two mainstream parties/blocs the "ethnic" issue area has been noted to generally provide a net gain of votes for the "bourgeois" party/bloc and a net loss of votes for the "socialist" party/bloc respectively (Budge 1982, 155). Empirics show that "the immigration issue" has become a rather new issue to compete over. Just as many of its "predecessors" it is a complex issue stretching across various policy fields such as economy, globalism, nationalism, tradition, citizenship, and so on. Hence, an advocated change in immigration policy can have different aims. If established parties were to engage in the immigration issue it would have to be done in a way not colliding with their traditional political issues. As Odmalm elaborates, "should immigration be discussed with reference to solidarity and a no-borders rhetoric, centre-left



parties will have to explain how the welfare state, and the collectively bargained wage levels, are to be upheld. Centre-right parties, on the other hand, will have to address how increasing immigration flows affect national unity and social order” (Odmalm 2011, 1077). Mainstream parties are thus often hesitant to engage with the immigration issue given these ideological tensions. Schain has in his research observed cases where a radical right party has entered the political scene and the established parties have tried to recapture lost votes by isolating the radical right party in parliament and ignoring their agenda. However, in countries like Germany, Belgium, and France the isolation strategy has not seemed to result in any notable success (Schain 2006, 271-272). In contrast, Roger Eatwell – Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Bath – argued some years before Schain that the likelihood of extremist parties breaking through will be higher as the mainstream parties “cluster around the centre and fail to pick up issues which are of growing voter appeal”. Anti-immigrant sentiment and hostility to the European Union are examples of such issues (Eatwell 2000, 422).

### **The legitimisation theory**

During the past decades radical right parties in Western Europe have been observed seeking to gain a more “respectable” image in order to succeed in securing a place in national government. A process not uncommonly characterized with difficulty (Bale 2003, 69). Once the radical right party begins to present a potential political threat, the mainstream parties tend to choose one of the following strategic reactions: ignore, isolate, co-opt, collaborate, or impose legal restrictions (Downs 2001, 24). Previous research analysing the electoral support for the radical right have observed the co-opting strategy as a common choice. However, this “essentially well-meaning strategy to temporarily defuse” the radical right can result in “an unfortunate by-product or negative externality” (Bale 2003, 74-75). More precisely, it may unintentionally help the radical right by increasing the salience of their agenda – “most notably, though not exclusively, on immigration, crime, and welfare abuse – thus rendering it both more respectable and more of a vote winner” (Bale 2003, 69).

Dahlström & Esaiasson emphasise that in understanding the success and failures of radical right parties it is “important to analyse if (and to what extent) the immigration issue has been articulated by established parties”. This is because the immigration issue is considered “the most probable issue bridging the legitimacy gap” and making radical right parties an “acceptable alternative for large voter groups” (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 7). Indeed, when it comes to changing party preference in favour of the radical right Eatwell points to three broad motives: “the desire to find a new sense of belonging; the belief that it is economically rational to support at least some extreme right policies; and the influence of community norms”. In comparison to the first two motives, peer influence stands out in that it does not necessarily lead to a vote for the “like-minded party”. Consequently, “peer influence can also be an important factor preventing individuals from voting for the party which is closest to their preferences” (Eatwell 2000, 423).

The underlying mechanism of this relatively new theory is thus thought to be a legitimising effect from mainstream parties including issues typically associated with the radical right

into their own political agenda. Given their position on the political scene it is argued that mainstream parties “can significantly increase the salience of issues” on which the radical right campaigned on for a long time and thereby convert the radical right into a “respectable option for voters” (Bale 2003, 76). This legitimising effect is believed capable to help explain the variation in performance of radical right parties across Western Europe (Bale 2003, 81).

## Previous research

### *Arzheimer & Carter (2006)*

University of Mainz Professor of Politics Kai Arzheimer and Keele University Research Director Elizabeth Carter hypothesise in their study published in 2006 that support for a radical right party will be higher in - or alternatively shortly after - periods of grand coalition governments compared to periods of “alternating government”. The perceived lack of other political alternatives during a grand coalition will make voters more inclined to support a radical right party (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 424). “On the one hand, it can be argued that parties of the extreme right will perform poorly at the polls where the major party of the mainstream right is more right wing since in such situations there will be less political space available to the party of the extreme right. On the other hand, a more right wing mainstream right party may boost the electoral scores of the party of the extreme right by legitimizing the issues around which the extreme right mobilizes”(Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 424). The findings of their study show that a radical right party is likely to do better as the right-wing mainstream party moves to the ideological right, thus indicating a possible legitimizing effect on the policies of the radical right (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 439).

### *Odmalm (2011)*

After having interviewed Swedish MPs and analysed party manifestos from 1991-2010, Odmalm concludes that the competition over issue ownership has indeed become a solid feature in the interaction between political parties and the electorate, and in the party competition over their votes (Odmalm 2011, 1077-1078). Sweden’s two mainstream parties, the Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*) and the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterna*), have throughout time been noted to “own” different issues and emphasise them accordingly. For example, in the respective election years the Moderate Party has centred on the economy (1991), taxes (1998), and employment (2006). Similarly the Social Democrats primarily engaged in employment (1991-1998) and taxes (2002) (Odmalm 2011, 1078). A perhaps even bigger display of this kind of party politics have been observed for the smaller established parties. The Liberals (*Liberalerna*) have emphasised the economy (1991), employment (1994), education (1998), immigration (2002), and went back to education (2006). As bloc politics has been the dominant way in Swedish politics, Odmalm argues that it can help to explain the incentive for the Liberals to engage in this “selective emphasis on non-economic issues” as a way to distinguish themselves from the Moderates and avoid unnecessary electoral overlap”. In contrast, the Greens (*Miljöpartiet*) and the Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*) have been rather consistent in advocating the environment and family policy/child care respectively in all elections (Odmalm 2011, 1080).

In the past, rather than being “proposed, debated and decided on” Swedish immigration policies were “handled through corporatist negotiations between the state and key social partners” and did not constitute a source of conflict between the Swedish political parties. However, Swedish public opinion has for a long time been predominantly in favour of restrictive policies on refugees and immigration, but the political parties remained more or less unresponsive to the electorate’s sentiments on that particular issue. However this trend of the past slowly started to change in the early 1990’s. The reason behind that change is believed to be a combination of the diminishing of the previous corporatist features of the formation of immigration policies, increased anti-immigrant sentiments, an increase of asylum applications, and the entering of New Democracy into the Swedish parliament in 1991. The mainstream parties responded by not moving away from the already existing established political consensus on immigration, and consequently denouncing the anti-immigrant stance of New Democracy since they, arguably, did not “identify the sufficient incentive to make a societal problem a political issue” (Odmalm 2011, 1073). Given the previously described complexity of the immigration issue stretching over various issue areas, mainstream parties are often hesitant to engage with the immigration issue because of ideological tensions. Hence, Odmalm concludes, the fact that immigration for a long time was a non-issue among the mainstream parties may have more to do with strategic deliberation for attracting more voters rather than “keeping the radical right out of the political spotlight” (Odmalm 2011, 1084).

*Dahlström & Esaiasson (2009)*

As mentioned in the introduction, the legitimising theory - that “by articulating the immigration issue, established parties make anti-immigrant parties an acceptable choice for potential voters” – has previously been tested on the Swedish case in a study by Dahlström & Esaiasson published in 2009. Together they argue that the incentives to move the political agenda closer to a radical right party is believed to be higher for mainstream right parties since they “traditionally own issues often emphasized by” radical right parties (like immigration, crime and welfare abuse), and since they are considered to have a “strategic interest” in potentially increasing the size of the right bloc in parliament (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 6). Within the study’s time frame, 1970-2006, Swedish citizens’ engagement in the immigration issue appears to be “relatively stable” except for the beginning of the 1990’s. “Immigration” was considered one of the top three most important problems facing the country both in 1992 and 1993. During these years Sweden experienced a comparatively large influx of refugees from the former Yugoslavia (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 14). However, Dahlström & Esaiasson argue that there has been a large and persistent “gap between policy preferences of voters and Swedish MPs in the immigration issue”, suggesting that the immigration issue indeed has an electoral potential. Looking at election manifestos from 1970 to 2006 Dahlström & Esaiasson note that the immigration issue has only constituted between 0-4 percent of the content. The highest scores are from 2002 and 2006 elections (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 15). Swedish established political parties have thus “deliberately chosen to not articulate the immigration issue in their vote-seeking activities” (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 24). Consequently, based on their own findings in combination with similar comparative research in Western European countries, Dahlström & Esaiasson conclude that “it is probable that the established parties’ decision not to

articulate the immigration issue has contributed to the general failures” of radical right parties in Sweden (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 25), acknowledging that the theory can account for some of the success of radical right parties in Western Europe (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 3).

## **Conclusion and expectation formulation**

In conclusion, the legitimisation theory suggests that radical right parties may come to enjoy a higher electoral support as other established parties begin to increasingly articulate the immigration issue in their own politics. These actions by the established parties are (unintentionally) yielding a much wanted legitimacy to the radical right party in the eyes of the electorate resulting in a shift in party preferences. The issue saliency theory is relevant in this context as it suggests that the political competition over issue ownership and its potential backlashes are not exclusively connected to radical right parties and the immigration issue. It thus strengthens the central argument of the fairly new legitimisation theory providing it with more credibility. As for the Swedish case the findings of Odmalm (2011) indicate that the competition over issue ownership for some time has indeed been a solid feature in Swedish party politics. Furthermore, Dahlström & Esaiasson (2009) show that there has been a low variation in both the electoral support for the radical right and the established parties’ articulation on the immigration issue in Sweden 1970-2006. In the light of this, the following two expectations can be formulated:

### *Expectation 1*

Based on the theories and previous research in this chapter, and knowing that the electoral support for the Swedish radical right has significantly increased in the recent decade, the first expectations is that there also has been an increase in the Swedish established parties’ articulation on the immigration issue.

### *Expectation 2*

If an increase in the Swedish established parties’ articulation on the immigration issue is observed, the second expectation is that there will be indications of a potential correlation between the Swedish established parties’ articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right.

## **Case motivation**

### **Country - Sweden**

While much of previous research on this topic has been cross-case analysis this study will for two reasons only examine one case. First, when applying a theory on several cases at least one of the observed results tend to prove an exception from the hypothesis’ prediction. Naturally, this can in turn motivate new research that in the end helps to specify the conditions in which a particular theory best explains the phenomenon of interest. The

variation in the radical right's electoral success in Western Europe has already been proved partly explicable through the legitimisation theory (Bale, 2003) (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006) (Dahlström & Esaiasson, 2009). However, as argued by Eatwell, a full explanation of the successes and failure of radical right parties requires a strong national perspective (Eatwell 2000, 418). Although this study does not aim to provide a "full explanation" of the electoral support for the radical right, it is arguably valuable to do a more extensive research on one case as a way of testing the theory's generalisability. Second - as typically is the case - time restriction for a research's execution tends to create a trade-off between the quantity of included cases and the reliability of the result. In this study the former has been prioritised over the latter.

Even though it has been analysed before (Dahlström & Esaiasson, 2003) (Odmalm, 2011), Sweden presents an interesting case since previous research was done before the radical right really became a consistent player on the Swedish political scene. Indeed, at the time of previous research Sweden had only experienced one parliamentary term including a radical right party (New Democracy 1991-1994) and barely witnessed the rise of the Sweden Democrats. Consequently, after the (arguably unexpected) increasing electoral support for the Sweden Democrats in the 2010's it is still relevant to examine whether the Swedish political parties' articulation on the immigration issue can explain the variation in the electoral support for the Swedish radical right, and this study hopes to contribute to that end. Furthermore, the possibility of processing political documents and news articles in the original language is an additional, but not determinant, reason for selecting Sweden.

## **Observations – 1988-2018**

As for the selection of observations this study will examine the 31 year long period of 1988-2018 including 9 parliamentary elections (1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018). Even though the electoral support for New Democracy cannot compare to that of the Sweden Democrats it is still worth including. Likewise, in order to better capture a potential effect of the Swedish parties' articulation on the immigration issue the lower time fence is set to the 1988 election.

## **Definitions**

### **Radical right party**

While most scholars studying the immigration issue in party politics and its appeal to voters undoubtedly seem to refer to the same kind of political actor, the terminology used can somewhat differ. Scholars referred to in this study talk of "the radical right" (Minkenberg, 2001) (Odmalm, 2011) (Schain, 2006), "the extreme right" (Bale, 2003) (Eatwell, 2000), "right-wing extremist parties" (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006), and "anti-immigrant parties" (Dahlström & Esaiasson, 2009).

Eatwell notes that while “many party families are characterised by common names – such as “communist”, “green”, or “socialist” – the “extreme right” is more of an extended family. It is not uncommon for these parties claiming to represent neither a left nor a right political position. Similarly, many parties prefer to “hide their exact paternity”, and the party platforms can change significantly over time based on “tactical concerns or changing circumstances” (Eatwell 2000, 4010). Together these examples constitute typical classificatory obstacles. In media terms like “extreme right”, “ultra-right”, “radical right”, and “far right” are frequently used more or less as synonyms. Some of those terms have throughout recent decades replaced one another in academics, for example “extreme right” replacing “radical right” in the 1960’s and 1970’s. “Extreme right” have typically been defined as “hostility to democracy; racism; support for the strong state; and nationalism” – characteristics which are not necessarily met by the “extreme right” parties of today. For example is “anti-parliamentarian”, rather than “anti-democratic”, perhaps a more accurate description of the current Western European “extreme parties” official profile (Eatwell 2000, 411). Some scholars have previously distinguished between “old” and “new” extreme right parties based on links to fascism. But, this too has its weaknesses in categorising parties where such bonds are not entirely clear. However, one factor that seems to be mutual for all in this “party family” is nationalism – “often expressed through a demonisation of the “other” as much as by a precise definition of the sacred homeland”. According to Eatwell it is this very emphasis on nationalism that “helps explain why parties with apparently dissimilar economic policies can be grouped in the same party family” where the central debate usually is focused on the interests of the “true” community (Eatwell 2000, 412-413).

“Radical right” appears to be the most commonly used label in the referred literature, and in two out of those three independent studies New Democracy and/or the Sweden Democrats are used as examples. “Radical right” thus seems an appropriate term for this particular study. However, while “radical right” has been used by several scholars, none provide an explicit definition. According to Michael Minkenberg – Professor of Politics at European University Viadrina - “the radical right” can be conceptualized as “a radical reaction to fundamental social and cultural changes in post-war Western societies. The key definitional criterion is an ideological core of ultra-nationalism derived from an anti-universal, anti-democratic myth of the national community, in combination with an authoritarian understanding of politics and a pronounced populist style” (Minkenberg 2001, 3). “Because of the radical right’s claim to represent ordinary people against an allegedly corrupt political class, their nationalistic counter-discourse cannot be too far from traditional concepts of nationhood that are available as cultural symbols to large segments of the public. As a result, the radical right dramatises the vulnerability of the nation in times of a real or presumed crisis. Frequently, this framing results in a radicalisation of the racist or ethno-centrist discourse which tends to cross the boundaries of legitimate political discourse and action defined by the dominant concepts of nationhood” (Minkenberg 2001, 5).

New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats may not entirely meet Minkenberg’s “key definitional criterion”. While these parties (especially the Sweden Democrats) seem to base their political discourse on an ideological core of (ultra)nationalism it is, arguably, not

derived from an anti-universal, anti-democratic myth of the national community. Similarly, both New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats have in turn claimed to be the only “real” opposition party to the establishment as they “dare” to engage in the “obvious” political solutions for the problems the established parties continually “fail to address”. However, neither party have profiled themselves with an authoritarian understanding of politics. Nevertheless, it is still possible to identify some mutual characteristics of Minkenberg’s account and New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats. Both parties tend to, in times of a real or presumed crisis, emphasise a rather dramatised vulnerability of the nation using an ethno-centrist political discourse built around traditional cultural symbols and customs in clear contrast to that of the other established parties. Since the Sweden Democrats have managed to stay on the Swedish political scene for much longer than New Democracy ever did these characteristics may be easier to identify in their political discourse. However, in this study those characteristics will together constitute the definition of a “radical right party” and is considered to be satisfactory met by both New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats.

### **Established parties**

As a way to differentiate the radical right parties from other political parties, the term “established parties” is consistently used throughout this study. It refers to the political parties that have attained seats in the national parliament. Of course, one of the interests behind this study is the fact that radical right parties have started to make their way into national parliaments across Western Europe. Therefore, further necessary characteristics for an “established party” is that it has been on the political stage for a relatively long period of time (radical right parties are typically regarded as newcomers), and thus established itself as a consistent political actor in the eyes of the electorate and other parties. In addition, “established parties” are (although it is perhaps not suggested by the name itself) ideologically considered to be located within an illusionary political norm of what is traditionally regarded as acceptable – in contrast to the rhetoric and advocated policies of the radical right. Consequently, in this study the following political parties are qualified as Swedish established parties:

- The Centre Party (*Centerpartiet*)
- The Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*)
- The Green Party (*Miljöpartiet*)
- The Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*)
- The Liberals (*Liberalerna*) – previously the Liberal People’s Party (*Folkpartiet liberalerna*)
- The Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*)
- The Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterna*)

## Mainstream parties

“Mainstream parties” are in this study understood as those parties usually called upon to form a (coalition-) government, and consequently (given that relatively likely prospect) adapt their politics in order to suite the broader electorate. It is typically argued that “mainstream parties” had their beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century centring on social cleavages like class and religion. Following the end of the Second World War these parties became increasingly “less concerned with ideological purism than with vote-maximisation” and have moved towards the ideological centre ground (Eatwell 2000, 414). In this study the following are qualified as Swedish mainstream parties:

- The Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*)
- The Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterna*)

## The immigration issue

Based on the research referred to in this study it does not become entirely clear what exact aspects of the radical right’s agenda that the political parties are believed to have legitimised. More precisely, Dahlström & Esaiasson (2009) use the term “immigration issue” but do not provide any definition of it. Similarly, when Bale (2003) talk of “immigration”, and Odmalm (2011) of “immigration policies”, it arguably leaves room for variation in how to accurately interpret it. Therefore, this study will use two different definitions of the “immigration issue”.

- *The immigration issue – immigration*  
This definition includes the political aspects of immigration to Sweden by immigrants/refugees of another nationality.
- *The immigration issue – immigration + integration*  
This definition includes the political aspects of immigration to Sweden by immigrants/refugees of another nationality. It also includes the integration of those immigrants/refugees (and typically also their descendants) and non-immigrants/refugees. It is important to note that integration by definition not necessarily is the same as assimilation.

## Method

In order to answer the three research questions presented in the introduction this study aims to collect both descriptive and statistical information on the Swedish case. For this reason the investigation and presentation of the results will be separated into one descriptive part and one statistical part. After having described the content of these two, this chapter



will proceed with an account of the operationalisation of each variable including a brief discussion on their respective reliability and validity.

### **The descriptive part**

1. *How has the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue changed in 1988-2018?*

This question will be answered by single-handedly collecting data from the election manifestos of the respective Swedish established parties from the 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018 election, and will be performed in such a way so that the result for the two separate definitions of the immigration issue (immigration vs. immigration + integration) can be presented.

While the articulation on the immigration issue by the Swedish established parties is of main concern in this study, it is worth acknowledging that the articulation on the immigration issue by other societal actors may also affect the voters. For example, Eatwell notes how the political agenda was previously almost entirely set by the parties themselves in the classic party system model. However, the parties' agenda setting role is in decline and is partly being replaced by that of the media (Eatwell 2000, 417). It is thus not only the established parties that can express emphasis on the immigration issue. Whether the media's articulation has a legitimising effect benefitting the radical right is yet unclear, and it is not the aim of this study to provide an answer to that question. Still, it is interesting to see how the (printed) media has changed its' articulation on the immigration issue over time, and how it differs from that of the Swedish established parties, as such information could prove valuable in a continued effort to gain understanding of the Swedish case. Therefore, the descriptive part will also include single-handedly collected data on the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue 1998-2018 in order to answer the second research question:

2. *How has the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue differed from that of the Swedish established parties in 1998-2018?*

Just as for the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue, the collection of data for will be done in such a way so that it allows for the separate presentation of the result for the two definitions of the immigration issue. However, the material availability for this variable does unfortunately not allow for the collection of data from before 1998.<sup>4</sup> Since this study aims to investigate the time period 1988-2018 but data for Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue is only available for 1998-2018 a missing value problem emerges, and therefore the collected data will not be included in the statistical part.

In addition to answering the first two research questions of this study, the purpose of the descriptive part is the single-handedly compilation of data concerning the engagement in the immigration issue by two big societal actors – political parties, and printed media – in

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<sup>4</sup> More information on the collection of data for this variable can be found in the operationalisation section.

Sweden during the last decades. As this has not been done before the hope is that the result from the descriptive part may prove useful for further research concerning similar issues. Thus, even though the data on the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue will not be used in this study's statistical part due to a problem of missing values, it will nevertheless be presented along with the descriptive findings of this study as it is regarded to have a high value of its own.

### **The statistical part**

3. *Are there indications of a potential correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right in 1988-2018?*

The statistical part will centre on the third research question of this study, and introduce the dependent variable – electoral support of the Swedish radical right – that will build on the respective election result for New Democracy and/or the Sweden Democrats in the 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018 election. As previously indicated, descriptive data on the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue will be used in this statistical part, but in order to derive a more accurate answer to the second research question there is a need to include some control variables that could potentially affect the variation in the electoral support of the Swedish radical right. This study will use two such variables that are suggested by the scholars in the referred to literature - immigration and unemployment

First, given the attractiveness of anti-immigrant politics and other closely linked issues, like welfare generosity, and law and order, Eatwell theorises that support for the extreme right will increase with growing nation-wide concerns about immigration (Eatwell 2000, 420). However, he notes it is unclear to what extent such a growing concern is related to the (physical) presence of immigrants since it has been observed that extreme right parties can be strong in areas with relatively few immigrants (Eatwell 2000, 421). As radical right parties tend to put considerable emphasis on the issue of “immigration from non-EU countries and the supposed competition between the immigrants and the indigenous population” Arzheimer & Carter expect that an increased immigration rate will have a positive effect on the support for the radical right (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 425). Their findings on the other hand indicate no significant evidence looking at Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, and Norway 1984-2001 (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 434).

Second, Arzheimer & Carter further hypothesise that an increased unemployment rate will have a positive effect on the support for the radical right. This positive relation is also based on the “supposed competition between immigrants and the indigenous population” (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 425). Similarly, Bale has argued that immigrants can be perceived by parts of the electorate as a threat to their jobs (Bale 2003, 71). While the cross-country analysis of Arzheimer & Carter fail to provide any evidence of this it does, surprisingly, indicate a negative effect. As a possible explanation they propose that in times of high unemployment voters may prefer to turn back to “the more experienced mainstream parties” (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 439).

Consequently, the following four variables will be used in order to answer the third research question:

1. The electoral support of the Swedish radical right (Y)
2. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue (X1)
3. Immigration (X2)
4. Unemployment (X3)

By performing a regression analysis and analysing the different parameter estimates the third research question will be answered.

#### *Model specification*

In terms of the performance of the actual regression analysis some reflexion on its different components is necessary.

First, as this study's time frame includes nine parliamentary elections the regression analysis will include 9 observations for each of the four variables representing the 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018 elections. While data for two of the variables - electoral support for the Swedish radical right and the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue - only can be collected for the nine election years, data for the two control variables is available for all of the 31 included years. Still, even though observations are available for all of those years only nine observations can be included into the regression analysis. Consequently, in order to determine how to best handle the collected data for the concerned variables - immigration, and unemployment - it becomes necessary to reflect on one additional aspect of electoral behaviour. It could arguably be assumed that when the electorate cast their votes on election day they do so not merely taking into consideration the current socioeconomic situation but rather they take into account all that has transpired since the last election. The methodological solution to capture this electoral behaviour would be to estimate a mean value for the three variables concerned for the time between each election. However, it could just as easily be assumed that when the electorate cast their votes on election day they do so primarily based on the current socioeconomic situation not giving much importance to the past. If so, the methodological solution would be to only include observations for the respective election year. Naturally, individuals in the electorate may differ vastly in their reasoning behind a cast vote, and neither of the two described data compilation methods would fully capture the behaviour of the entire Swedish electorate. But, in an attempt to at least partly tackle this complexity this study will separately examine both.

Second, in the referred to literature on the legitimisation theory both the established parties and the mainstream parties are identified as central actors regarding the articulation on the immigration issue. Furthermore, as previously discussed in the definition section there are various way in which the immigration issue could be understood and defined. It is thus arguably of both interest and relevance to get a closer understanding of what political parties and definition of the immigration issue are the key components in the Swedish case.

To summarise, when setting the design for the regression analysis the aim is to do it in a way that provides answers to the following three questions, which I turn are all related to the third research question:

1. What party's/parties' articulation on the immigration issue indicates a potential correlation with the electoral support of the Swedish radical right?
2. What definition of the immigration issue indicates a potential correlation with the electoral support of the Swedish radical right?
3. What temporal aspect of the socioeconomic situation (here understood as the combination of the two control variables immigration, and unemployment) indicates a potential correlation with the electoral support of the Swedish radical right?

Consequently, it will not suffice to just perform one regression analysis. Instead, different models with small variations in its key components will have to be created. The following table accounts for the specifications of the respective 16 different regression models included in this study.

<b>Model number</b>	<b>Party category</b>	<b>Immigration issue</b>	<b>Socioeconomic situation</b>
1.	Established parties	Immigration	Current
2.	Established parties	Immigration	Since last election
3.	Established parties	Immigration + integration	Current
4.	Established parties	Immigration + integration	Since last election
5.	Mainstream parties	Immigration	Current
6.	Mainstream parties	Immigration	Since last election
7.	Mainstream parties	Immigration + integration	Current
8.	Mainstream parties	Immigration + Integration	Since last election
9.	The Moderate Party	Immigration	Current
10.	The Moderate Party	Immigration	Since last election
11.	The Moderate Party	Immigration + integration	Current
12.	The Moderate Party	Immigration + integration	Since last election
13.	The Social Democrats	Immigration	Current
14.	The Social Democrats	Immigration	Since last election
15.	The Social Democrats	Immigration + integration	Current
16.	The Social Democrats	Immigration + integration	Since last election

*Table 1. Model specifications for the 16 regression models.*

## Operationalisation

The following is an account of the respective operationalisation for the four variables included in this study's descriptive and statistical part.

### *Electoral support for the radical right (Y)*

This will be operationalised as the vote share in a national parliamentary election for New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats in 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018. Since both parties meet the criteria of a radical right party, and this study does not aim to investigate the electoral support for any specific party within the radical right party family, New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats are thus grouped together in the same variable. Data collected by Dahlström & Esaiasson (2009) and the Swedish Election Authority (*Valmyndigheten*) will be used for this variable.

### *The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue (X1)*

This will be operationalised as the proportion of the written content treating the immigration issue in a given election manifesto in 1988, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018. The first step in deriving that proportion is identifying all sentences that treat the immigration issue in a party's election manifesto. All the words in those identified sentences will be counted and divided by the total amount of words in that election manifesto. In this study no differentiation is done between sentences that exclusively treat the immigration issue and sentences that treat the immigration issue as well as other non-related issues. This is believed to be a better option than merely counting the words related to the immigration issue since relatively few words (if any at all) are exclusively related to it. When examining the effect of the Swedish mainstream parties the same method will be used only that the content of the Moderate Party's and Social Democrat's election manifestos will be analysed as one unit. The analysis of the effect by the Swedish established parties will follow the same structure. Data for this variable will be single-handedly collected from election manifestos provided by Swedish National Data Service (*Svensk nationell datatjänst*).

### *Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue (only included in the descriptive part)*

For this variable the following four papers have been chosen to represent Swedish printed media: Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet (morning newspapers), Aftonbladet, and Expressen (evening tabloids). While Sweden has a big number of (especially local-) newspapers these four have nationwide reach and are believed to be easily accessible for all voters independently of where they might live in the country. The chosen papers for this study (and many more) are accessible through Retriever's digital data base, which is the biggest media archive of the Nordic countries. In order to identify articles treating the immigration issue 60 dates (10 dates per month) will be randomly selected for each year and the published articles by the four chosen papers in those dates will be analysed. For each date the search will be further specified by limiting the articles to those containing at least one of the following words in the headline and/or the ingress:

Asyl* ( <i>asylum</i> )	Migra* ( <i>migration</i> )
Ensamkommande* ( <i>unaccompanied</i> )	Migre* ( <i>to migrate</i> )
Familjeåter* ( <i>family reunion</i> )	Mångkultur* ( <i>multicultural</i> )
Fly flyr flydde flytt ("to flee" conjugations)	Nyanländ* ( <i>newcomer</i> )
Flykting* ( <i>refugee</i> )	Segreg* ( <i>segregation/to segregate</i> )
Förberedelseklass* ( <i>preparatory class</i> )	Sfi* ( <i>Swedish for immigrants</i> )
Immigr* ( <i>to immigrate/immigrant</i> )	Uppehållstillstånd* ( <i>residence permit</i> )
Integra* ( <i>integration</i> )	Utrikesfödd* ( <i>foreign born</i> )
Integrer* ( <i>to intergate</i> )	Främlingsfientlig* ( <i>xenophobic</i> )
Invandr* ( <i>to immigrate/immigrant</i> )	Utländsk* ( <i>foreign</i> )

The asterix in the list above means that the search will include any word as long as what precede the asterix is included, and thus result in many more words than those articulated above. Within parenthesis is an approximate English translation serving as an indication of what kind of words are looked for. Additionally, in order to be included in the study as an article treating the immigration issue it must either (1) describe/record, (2) comment/criticise, (3) list political measures articulately connected to immigration and/or integration. Furthermore, the article must be related to a context concerning Sweden and/or the European Union. Having identified the number of published articles treating the immigration issue for all the randomly selected dates the estimated mean value of articles per year will be used as an indication of printed media's articulation on the immigration issue. The digital archive for the four papers does only stretch back to the late 1990's. Consequently, this study will only include the period 1998-2018 and analyse 1 241 randomly selected dates (not including any dates after the 2018 election on September 9<sup>th</sup>). The data for this variable will be single-handedly collected.

### *Immigration (X2)*

This will be operationalised as the number of residence permits granted in Sweden 1988-2018 to all foreign individuals except for guest students, adopted children, and individuals covered by the EEA agreement. The included data is taken from the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*).

### *Unemployment (X3)*

This will be operationalised as the unemployed share of the Swedish work force (age 16-64) for each year 1988-2018. Data for this variable is collected by the Swedish web-platform Ekonomifakta.se that in turn uses Statistics Sweden (*SCB*) as their source.

## **Reliability & validity**

### *Electoral support for the Swedish radical right (Y)*

Both the reliability and validity is considered high for this variable. Actual election results from particular election years and political parties are used as data for this variable. Therefore, as the election results for the Swedish radical right 1988-2018 are fixed values, the variable's reliability is also high. Since the variable is operationalised the same way in this study as a political party's electoral success usually is presented and understood – as the

quantity/share of votes in an election – it enjoys a high validity. That is, it measures what it is intended to measure.

*The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue (X1)*

While the reliability for this variable is considered as high, its validity is comparatively lower. The data for the different political parties' articulation on the immigration issue is not derived from samples of their respective election manifestos. Instead, the election manifestos from 1988–2018 have been analysed in their entirety using an articulated method. Furthermore, the two definitions of the immigration issue are accounted for. A duplication of this study would thus yield a very similar result, and therefore the reliability is regarded as high. However, it is far from certain that a political party's articulation on the immigration issue is in proportion to its articulation in an election manifesto, even if narrowed down to the time of the election campaign. For example, an election manifesto may address several issues in varying depth, but the political party does not necessarily choose to advocate them all in an election campaign prioritising a few selected issues. Also, even if a political party would have every intention of articulating their issues in proportion to the space they are given in their election manifestos, the agenda in party duels and party leader interviews are not fully set by the party itself, but rather is shaped by the public debate and the like. Consequently, even though the content in the respective political parties' election manifestos may serve as a good indication of their general articulation on certain issues, the way the political parties' articulation on the immigration issue is operationalised in this study does present somewhat of a validity problem. In addition, it should also be noted that the Moderate Party did not issue an own election manifesto for the 2006, 2010, and 2014 elections, but campaigned together with the Centre Party, the Christian Democrats, and the liberals as a way to present the voters with a serious opposition alternative, and it is their joint election manifestos that were analysed in this study. The consequence, however, is that it becomes harder to assess to what extent the included data for the Moderate Party's articulation on the immigration issue in the 2006, 2010, and 2014 election represents their actual stand on the matter. This too has a negative effect on the variable's validity.

*Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue (only included in the descriptive part)*

In contrast to the electoral support for the radical right and the political parties' articulation on the immigration issue statistical inference has been used for this variable. However, the reliability is still believed to be quite high as the 1 241 included dates have been randomly selected, the article search has been specified to include specific words, and the criteria for passing as an article treating the immigration issue are defined. Consequently, even if a duplicated version of this study would not get the exact same sample mean values ( $\bar{x}$ ) they would most likely produce the same estimated values for a confidence interval as those presented in table 3.a – 3.b. As for the validity, it could be argued to be quite high since the variable is based on two of Sweden's biggest morning newspapers and two evening tabloids. Yet, it is only a small share of the total Swedish printed media, and that in turn decreases the validity.

### *Immigration (X2)*

For the immigration variable both the reliability and the validity is high. The data collected by the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) and included in this study is not an estimation of the granted residence permits 1988-2018 but the actual quantity producing a high reliability. Just like the electoral support for the radical right, the number of granted residence permits is fixed, thus yielding a high validity to this variable.

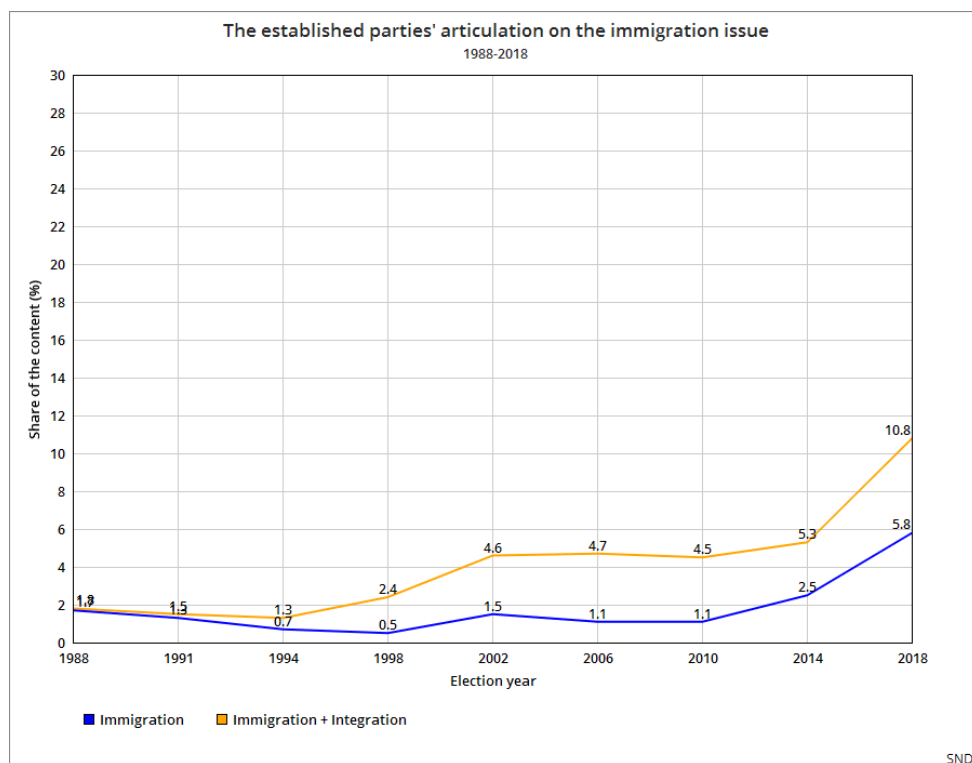
### *Unemployment (X3)*

The data for this variable is collected by Ekonomifakta who in turn uses Statistics Sweden (*SCB*) as their source. While the data most likely is attained through statistical inference the source is regarded as experienced in measuring unemployment. Therefore, both the reliability and validity are considered good.

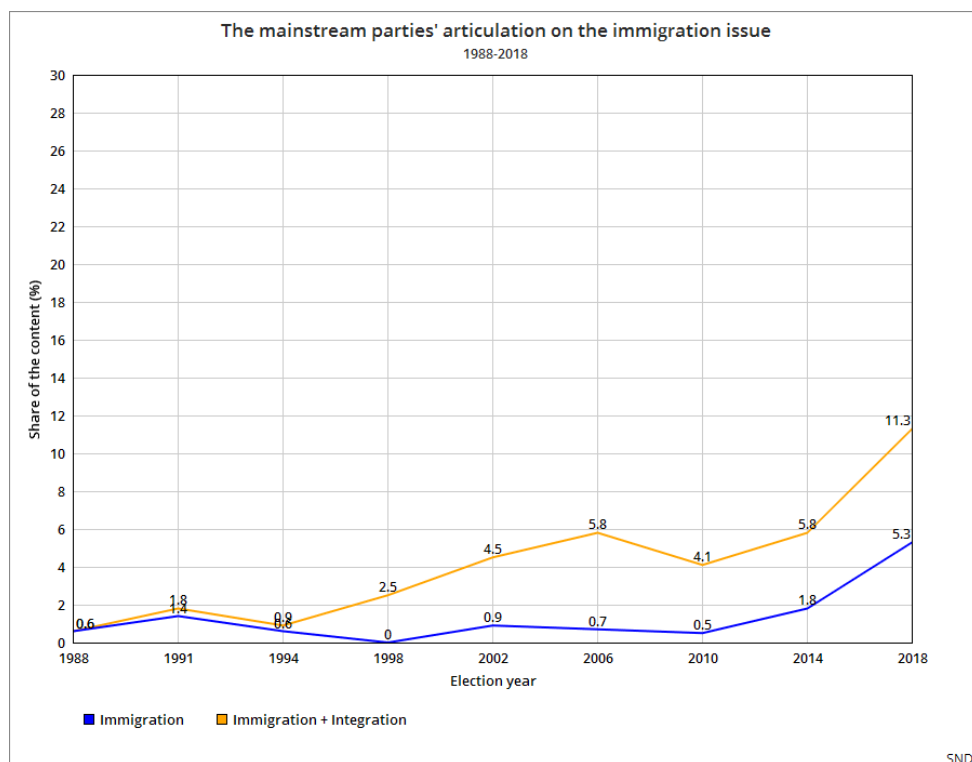


## Results for the descriptive part

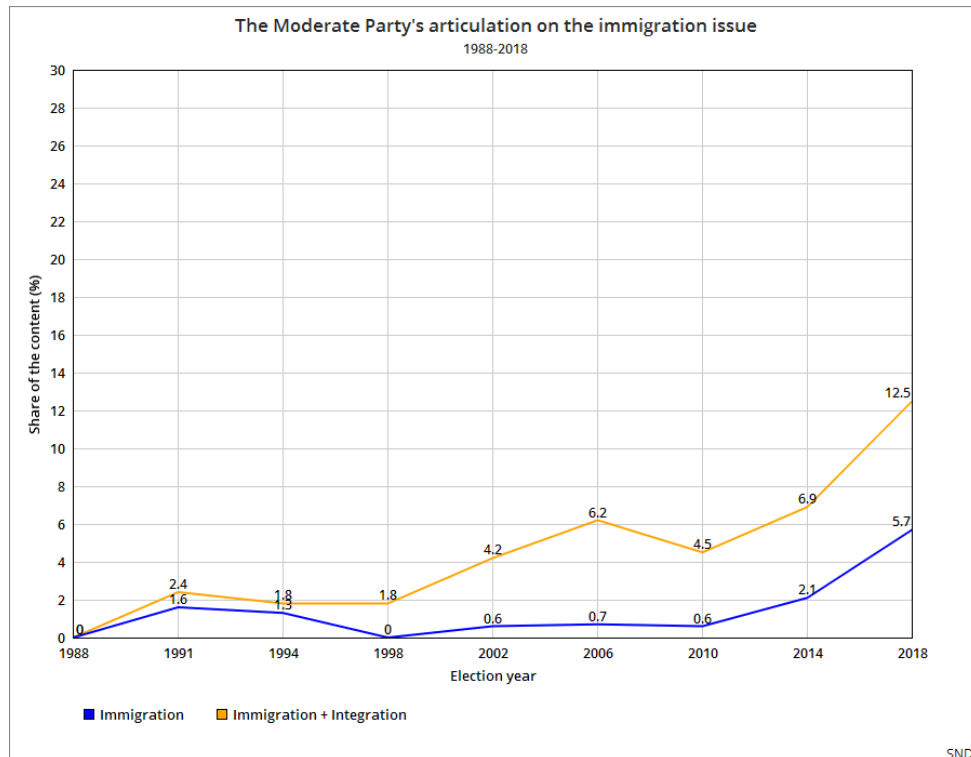
### The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue



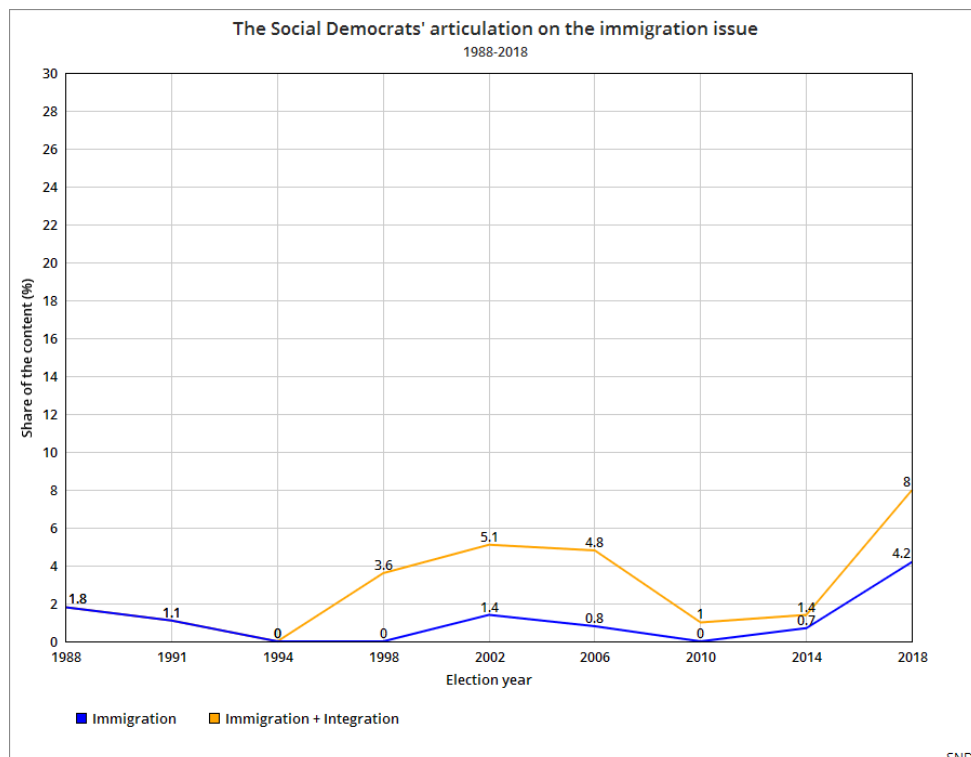
Graph 1.1 The established parties' articulation on the immigration issue 1988-2018



Graph 1.2 The mainstream parties' articulation on the immigration issue 1988-2018



*Graph 1.3 The Moderate Party's articulation on the immigration issue 1988-2018*

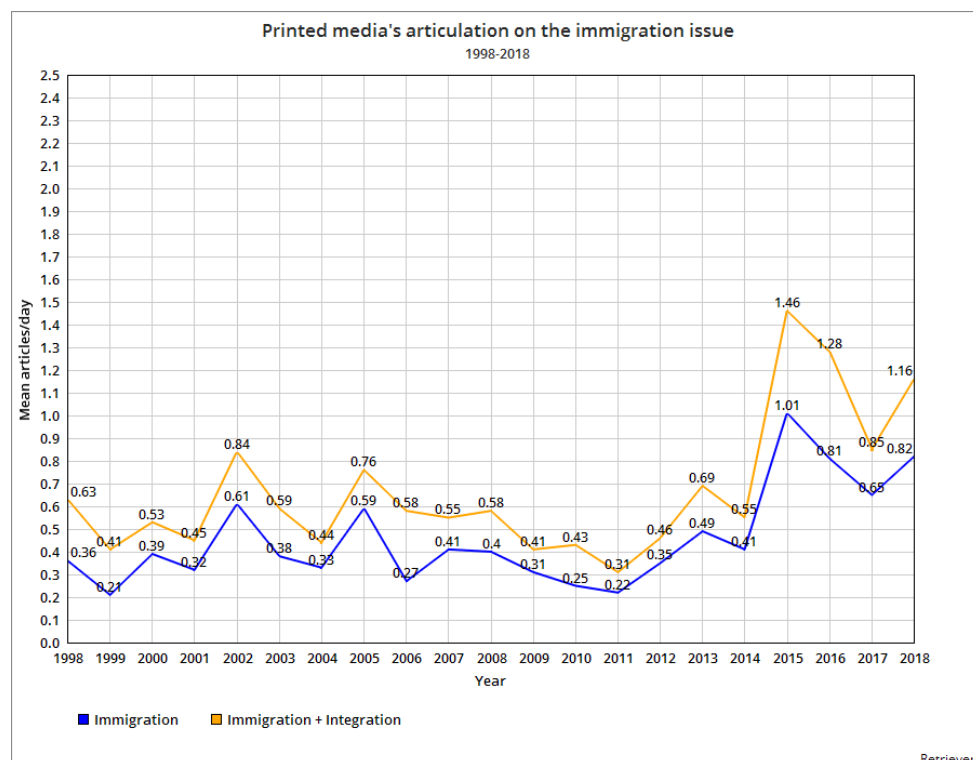


*Graph 1.4 The Social Democrats' articulation on the immigration issue 1988-2018*

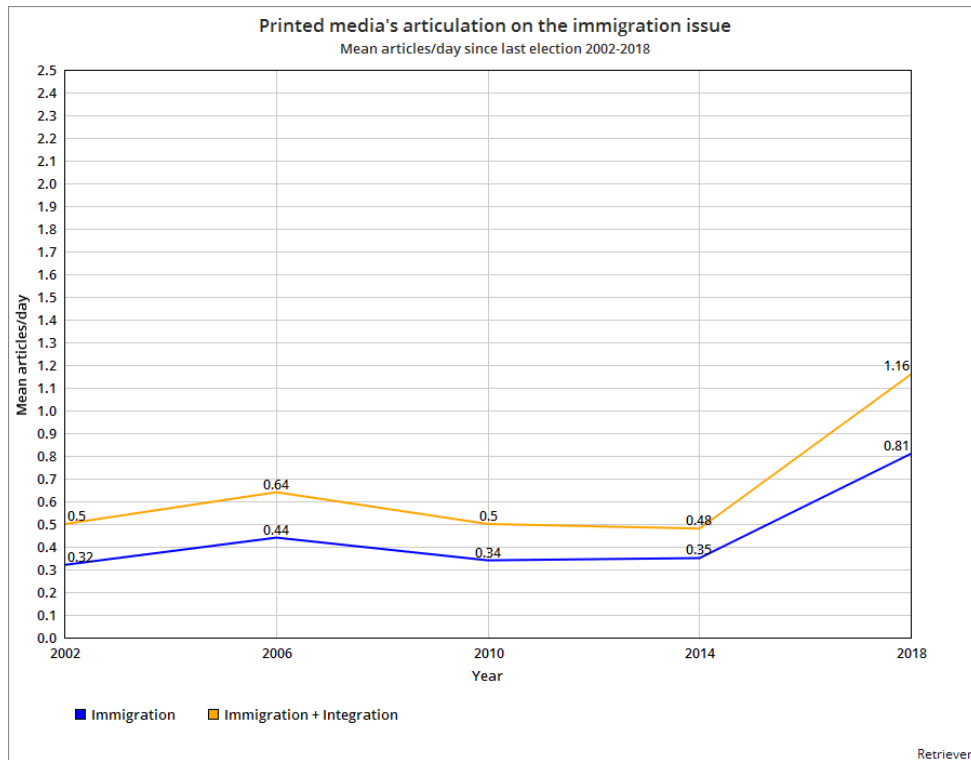
Graph 1.1 illustrates how much of the content of the Swedish established parties' election manifestos from 1988-2018 has treated the immigration issue. Graph 1.2 illustrates the same development but only for the content of the Swedish mainstream parties' election

manifestos. Graph 1.3 and 1.4 illustrate how much the Moderate Party and the Social Democrats have articulated the immigration issue in their respective election manifestos from 1988-2018. In all four graphs the blue line represents the immigration issue defined as immigration, and the yellow line as immigration + integration. If analysing the 2014 and 2018 election graph 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate how the mainstream parties articulated the immigration issue more than the established parties if defined as immigration + integration. In contrast, for the same two elections the established parties articulated the immigration issue more than the mainstream parties if defined as immigration. In 1998-2014 more than 50 % of the content of the established parties' election manifestos treating the immigration issue was exclusively about integration (graph 1.1). The same is true for the content of the mainstream parties' election manifestos from 1998-2018 (graph 1.2). Regardless of definition the Social Democrats articulated the immigration issue the least in comparison to the other party constellations in the 2014 election (graph 1.4). The highest observed value is the mainstream parties' articulation on the immigration issue in the 2018 election when defined as immigration + integration (graph 1.3). A more thorough presentation of the articulation on both definitions of the immigration issue by each individual Swedish established party can be found in the Appendix (Table A.1.1 – A.1.9).

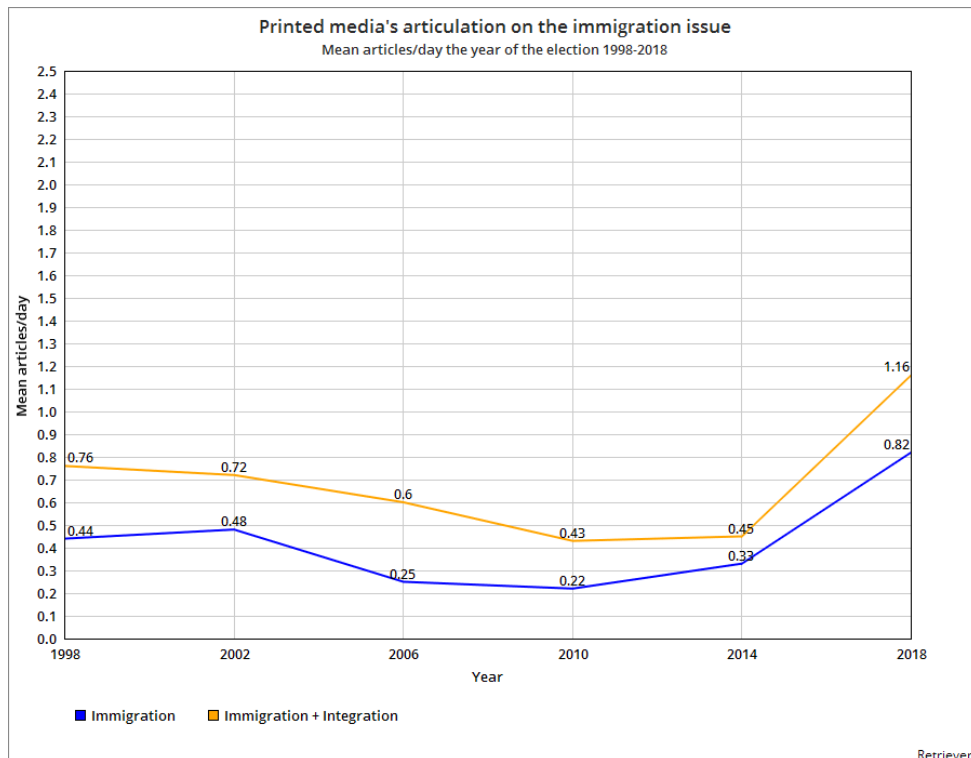
## Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue



Graph 2.1 Printed media's articulation on the immigration issue 1998-2018



*Graph 2.2 Printed media's articulation on the immigration issue. Mean articles/day since last election 2002-2018*



*Graph 2.3 Printed media's articulation on the immigration issue. Mean articles/day the year of the election 1998-2018*

Graph 2.1 illustrates the mean value for how many articles a day about the immigration issue were published in printed media 1998-2018. Graph 2.2 illustrates the mean value for how many articles a day about the immigration issue had been published since last election at the time of the 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018 election respectively. Graph 2.3 illustrates the mean value for how many articles a day about the immigration issue had been published during the respective election year 1998-2018. Since the data was single-handedly collected the data in graph 2.2 is from the exact dates between the elections, and the data in graph 2.3 from January 1<sup>st</sup> to the day of the election. The values in graph 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 are estimations of the true mean values ( $\bar{X}$ ) based on the mean values observed in the smaller samples of 60 randomly selected dates per year ( $\bar{x}$ ). Tables with the confidence interval at a 95% significance level for the data in graph 2.1 – 2.3 can be found in the Appendix (Table A.2.1 – A.2.3). In the three graphs the colour blue represents the immigration issue defined as immigration, and yellow as immigration + integration. For example, graph 2.2 indicate that at the time of the 2018 election 1,16 articles a day had been published about the immigration issue (defined as immigration + integration) since the time of the 2014 election. In contrast to the tendency for the content of the political parties' election manifestos more than 50 % of printed media's articulation on the immigration issue seems to be about immigration 1998-2018. The highest observed value for both definitions of the immigration issue is in 2015 (graph 2.1).

## Conclusion

The aim of this descriptive part has been to answer this study's first two research questions.

1. *How has the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue changed in 1988-2018?*

Regarding the first question the findings suggest that there has been an overall increase in the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 1988-2018. This is perhaps easiest observed by comparing the values for the 1988 election and the 2018 election in graph 1.1 – 1.4. Even though the relative increase, and occasional decrease, in this variable differ somewhat depending on party category and definition of the immigration issue, there are still mutual features that can describe the overall trend in this variable's variation. First, regardless of party category, defining the immigration issue as immigration + integration yields both the biggest relative variation and highest observed values. Second, regardless of party category, there was a relative decrease in the articulation on the immigration issue defined as immigration + integration in the 1994 election<sup>5</sup>. Third, if changing the definition of the immigration issue to (only) immigration, the 1998 election resulted in a relative decrease in the articulation on the immigration issue regardless of party category. Fourth, regardless of party category and definition of the immigration issue, the 2010 election showed a relative decrease in the parties' articulation on the immigration issue. Finally, and except for the Social Democrats, the 2014 and 2018 election showed the highest values of articulation on the immigration issue regardless of party category and

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<sup>5</sup> For the Social Democrats the 1994 election represented no actual decrease in comparison to the 1991 election, as indicated by graph 1.4.

definition of the immigration issue. For the 2018 election this is true even for the Social Democrats. Previously, in the theoretical chapter, the following expectation was formulated regarding the findings of the descriptive part:

#### *Expectation 1*

Based on the theories and previous research in this chapter, and knowing that the electoral support for the Swedish radical right has significantly increased in the recent decade the first expectations is that there also has been an increase in the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue.

After analysing the findings the conclusion is that they do meet the expectation. That is, there has been an increase in the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue.

#### *2. How has the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue differed from that of the Swedish established parties in 1998-2018?*

As for the second question, it is arguably the most reasonable to compare the findings from the first research question with the data presented in graph 2.3. While data for the Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue is available for each year 1998-2018 (which is used in graph 2.1 – 2.2), it is in this comparison better to use data collected from the same moment in time – the respective election years. If executed in this way, the difference in articulation on the immigration issue by the Swedish printed media and Swedish established parties 1998-2018 can be summarised in three key points. First, the observed values for the articulation on the immigration issue (regardless of definition) are much higher for the established parties than for the printed media. The established parties' articulation also has a relatively wider range. For example, if defined as immigration + integration, the articulation on the immigration issue by the established parties range between 2,4 % - 10,8 %<sup>6</sup>, and 0,5 % - 5,8 % when defined as (only) immigration<sup>7</sup>. For the printed media their articulation has ranged between 0,76 % - 1,16 % and 0,44 % – 0,82 % for the respective definition of the immigration issue (graph 2.3). Second, if defining the immigration issue as immigration + integration it turns out that integration has been a much bigger part of the established parties' articulation compared to that of the printed media. In 1998-2010 integration made out over 60 % of the established parties' articulation on the immigration issue. During the same time period the share for the mainstream parties was around 80%. While integration was around 50% of the immigration issue articulated by the established and mainstream parties around the 2014 and 2018 election respectively, the share for the printed media was just around 30 %. Only in 2006 did the printed media report more about integration than immigration (almost 60 %). Third, the trend in the articulation on the immigration issue differs somewhat between the two societal actors. When defined as (only) immigration, both actors followed a quite similar trend in 1998-2018. But, if changing the definition to immigration + integration, the printed media showed a decreasing trend in

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<sup>6</sup> 2.5 % - 11,3 % for the mainstream parties.

<sup>7</sup> 0 % - 5,3 % for the mainstream parties.

1998-2006 while the established parties had an increasing trend during the same period. However, in 2006-2018 they had again a similar (increasing) trend.

## Results for the statistical part

After running a regression analysis on the 16 different regression models, significant results on a 95 % significance level were only produced by model 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. As shown in table 2 below, significant results have been found for both definitions of the immigration issue, but only when examining the current socioeconomic situation. No significant results were found when only examining The Social Democrats. The following section will provide a closer account of the results from the 6 different regression models (in numerical order) that produced significant results. The statistical results are presented in tables showing the regression coefficient for each of the three independent variables (immigration and unemployment being control variables) with the standard error in parenthesis. The tables also include the regression intercept, adjusted  $R^2$ , and the number of observations (N). As a robustness test, a new regression excluding the 2018 election has been run for each regression model that produced a significant result. Those results will also be included in the results table, and its consequences will be further discussed in the chapter's concluding section. In addition, a separate bivariate graph visualising the supposed correlation between the regression model's (main) independent variable and the dependent variable 1988-2018<sup>8</sup> will be included in the presentation allowing for the identification of potential outliers. The data used for the regression analysis can be found in the Appendix.

Model number	Party category	Immigration issue	Socioeconomic situation
1.	Established parties	Immigration	Current
2.	Established parties	Immigration	Since last election
3.	Established parties	Immigration + integration	Current
4.	Established parties	Immigration + integration	Since last election
5.	Mainstream parties	Immigration	Current
6.	Mainstream parties	Immigration	Since last election
7.	Mainstream parties	Immigration + integration	Current
8.	Mainstream parties	Immigration + Integration	Since last election
9.	The Moderate Party	Immigration	Current
10.	The Moderate Party	Immigration	Since last election
11.	The Moderate Party	Immigration + integration	Current
12.	The Moderate Party	Immigration + integration	Since last election
13.	The Social Democrats	Immigration	Current
14.	The Social Democrats	Immigration	Since last election
15.	The Social Democrats	Immigration + integration	Current
16.	The Social Democrats	Immigration + integration	Since last election

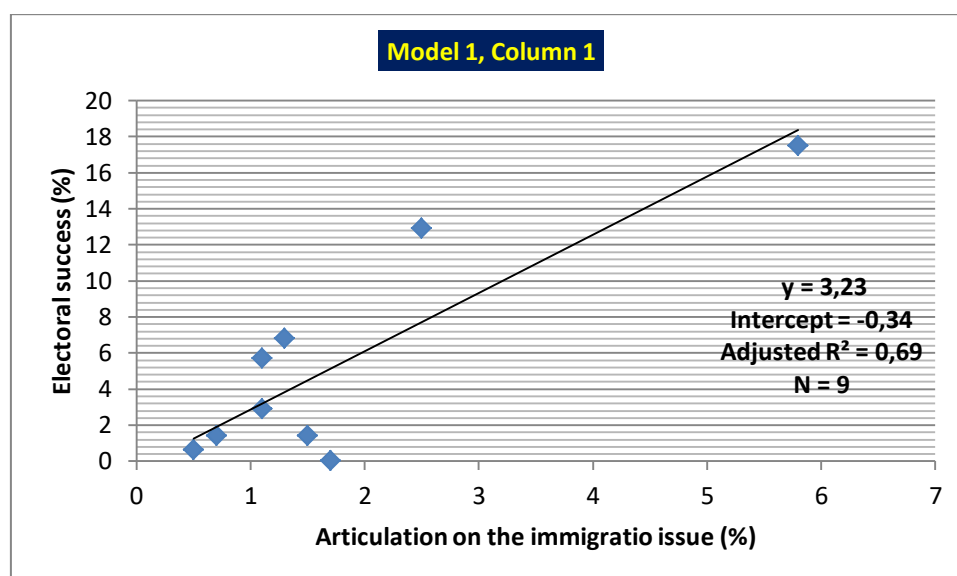
Table 2. Model specification for the 16 regression models highlighting those producing a significant result at a 95% significance level.

<sup>8</sup> The same result shown in column 1 of each table.

**Model 1 (*established parties, immigration, current*)**

Time period	1988 - 2018			1988 - 2014		
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
The established parties	3,23* (0,74)	2,76* (0,75)	2,84* (0,94)	4,68 (2,11)	3,97 (2,05)	5,23 (2,98)
Immigration		0,10 (0,07)	0,09 (0,10)		0,10 (0,07)	0,05 (0,12)
Unemployment			0,10 (0,60)			0,47 (0,76)
Intercept	-0,34	-4,51	-4,87	-2,12	-5,77	-8,39
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,69	0,74	0,69	0,36	0,43	0,35
N (elections)	9	9	9	8	8	8

Table 3. Statistical findings for regression model 1



Graph 3. The correlation between the established parties' articulation on the immigration issue (immigration) and the electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018 (Model 1, Column 1)

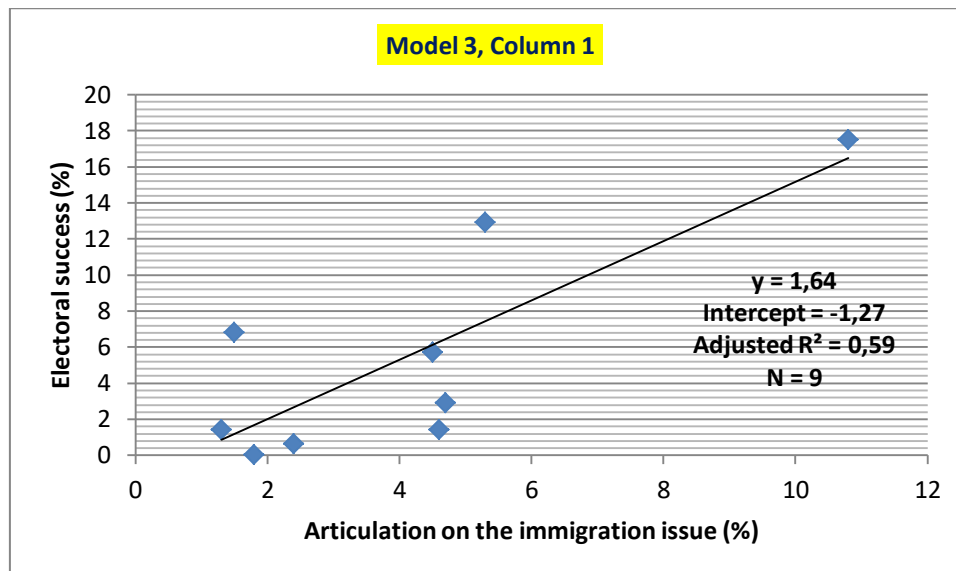
The first column in table 3 suggests that when the established parties increase their articulation on the immigration by 1 percentage point in their election manifestos the electoral support for the radical right increases by 3,23 percentage points with a standard error of 0,74 percentage points. 69 % of the variation in the dependent variable is according to the regression result explained by the variation in the independent variable. As indicated by column 2 and 3, the regression coefficient remains close to 3 percentage points as each of the two control variables are added with a slight increase in the standard error when all variables are included, but an unchanged adjusted R<sup>2</sup>. When excluding the 2018 election from the regression model the regression coefficient increases as do the standard error. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> on the other hand decreases almost by half. Nevertheless, none of those results are significant.



**Model 3 (established parties, immigration + integration, current)**

Time period	1988 - 2018			1988 - 2014		
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
The established parties	1,64* (0,47)	1,37* (0,46)	1,30* (0,46)	1,25 (0,94)	1,05 (0,88)	1,15 (0,91)
Immigration		0,12 (0,08)	0,17 (0,09)		0,12 (0,08)	0,16 (0,10)
Unemployment			-0,57 (0,55)			-0,53 (0,64)
Intercept	-1,27	-6,07	-3,94	-0,10	-5,01	-3,54
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,59	0,66	0,66	0,10	0,23	0,18
N (elections)	9	9	9	8	8	8

Table 4. Statistical findings for regression model 3



Graph 4. The correlation between the established parties' articulation on the immigration issue (immigration + integration) and the electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018 (Model 3, Column 1)

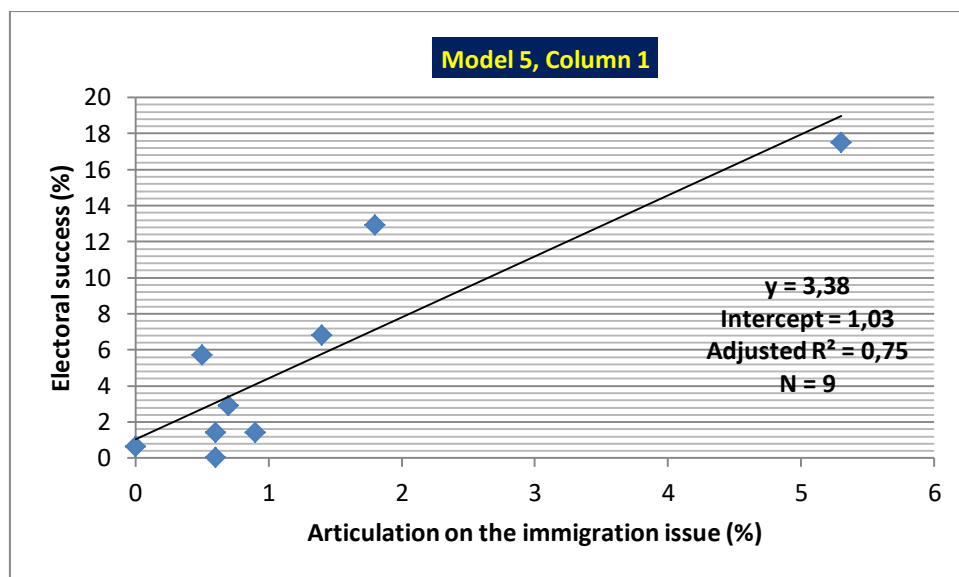
As seen in table 4, and visualised in graph 4, an increase in the established parties' articulation on the immigration issue by 1 percentage point leads to a 1,64 percentage point increase in the electoral support for the radical right. With a standard error of 0,47 percentage points the variation in electoral support for the radical right is according to the regression result 59 % explained by the variation in the established parties' articulation on the immigration issue. When adding the control variables the regression coefficient decreases to around 1,30 percentage points while the standard error only decreases by 0,01 percentage points. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value on the other hand increases somewhat to 66 %. The three last columns suggest that when excluding the 2018 election there will be a slight decrease in the regression coefficient, a comparatively bigger increase in the standard error,

and the adjusted  $R^2$  is reduced by around 70 %. Yet, none of the results in column 4-6 are significant.

**Model 5 (mainstream parties, immigration, current)**

Time period	1988 - 2018			1988 - 2014		
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
The mainstream parties	3,38* (1,35)	2,96* (0,76)	3,02* (0,94)	6,40* (1,81)	5,67* (2,15)	8,48* (2,80)
Immigration		0,08 (0,07)	0,07 (0,10)		0,05 (0,07)	-0,06 (0,10)
Unemployment			0,07 (0,57)			0,83 (0,58)
Intercept	1,03	-2,30	-2,51	-1,22	-2,89	-5,84
Adjusted $R^2$	0,75	0,76	0,71	0,62	0,58	0,65
N (elections)	9	9	9	8	8	8

Table 5. Statistical findings for regression model 5



Graph 5. The correlation between the mainstream parties' articulation on the immigration issue (immigration) and the electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018 (Model 5, Column 1)

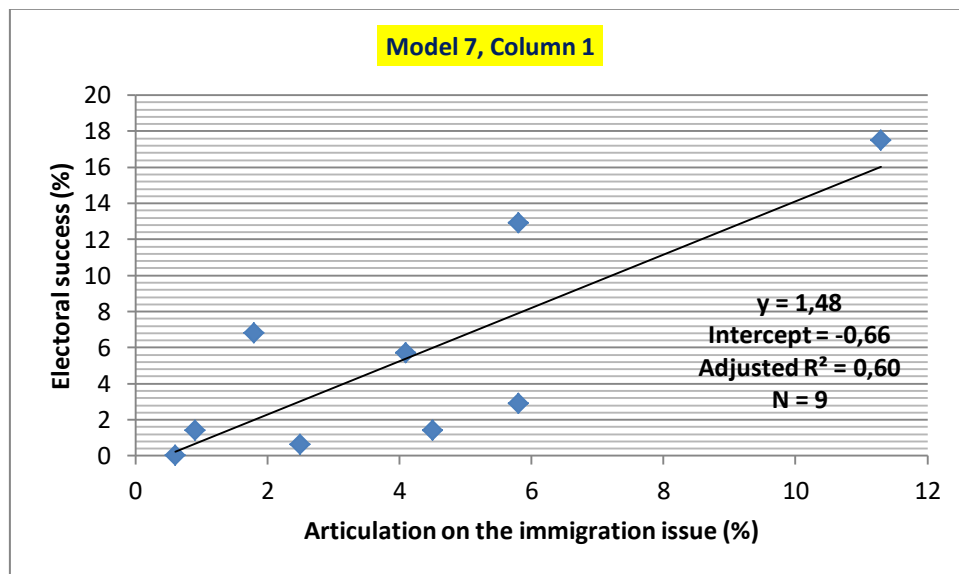
When it comes to the mainstream parties, the first column in table 5 suggest that when the mainstream parties increase their articulation on the immigration issue by 1 percentage point the electoral support for the radical right will in turn increase by 3,38 percentage points with a standard error of 1,35 units. This variation is according to the results 75 % explained by the variation in the independent variable. A slight decrease in the regression coefficient occurs when adding the control variables, but it will however remain around 3 percentage points. When both control variables are included the adjusted  $R^2$  falls from 75 % to 71 %. This adjusted  $R^2$  will further decrease to around 62 % if the 2018 election is excluded from the regression model. Column 4-6 also suggest that excluding the 2018

election also leads to a higher regression coefficient and standard error. For example, column 6 shows that when all control variables are included the regression coefficient becomes 8,48 with a standard error of 2,80. Nevertheless, regardless whether the 2018 election is excluded from the regression model it still produces significant results.

**Model 7 (mainstream parties, immigration + integration, current)**

Time period	1988 - 2018			1988 - 2014		
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
The mainstream parties	1,48* (0,41)	1,23* (0,42)	1,18* (0,42)	1,09 (0,72)	0,88 (0,70)	0,96 (0,73)
Immigration		0,11 (0,08)	0,16 (0,09)		0,11 (0,09)	0,15 (0,10)
Unemployment			-0,61 (0,55)			-0,54 (0,63)
Intercept	-0,66	-5,10	-2,87	0,42	-4,02	-2,44
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,60	0,65	0,66	0,15	0,24	0,21
N (elections)	9	9	9	8	8	8

Table 6. Statistical findings for regression model 7



Graph 6. The correlation between the mainstream parties' articulation on the immigration issue (immigration + integration) and the electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018 (Model 7, Column 1)

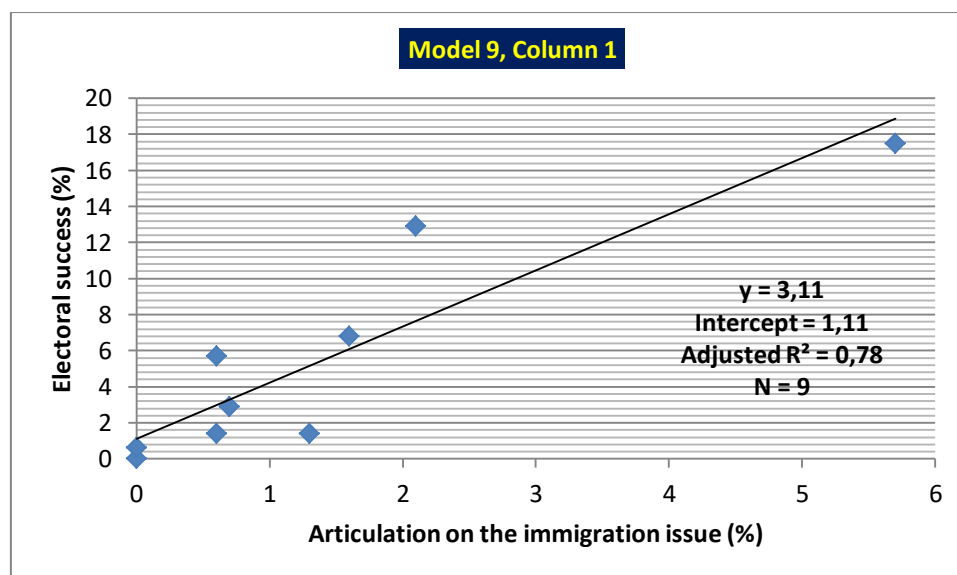
Table 6, column 1, suggests that an increase in the mainstream parties' articulation on the immigration issue by 1,48 percentage points leads to a 1,48 percentage point increase in the electoral support for the radical right with a standard error of 0,41 percentage points. The dependent variable's variation is according to the regression result 60 % explained by the variation in the independent variable. If the control variables are added the regression

coefficient decreases a bit but will stay slightly over 1 percentage point while the standard error is practically unchanged. The adjusted  $R^2$  increases though to 66 %. As the 2018 election is excluded from the regression model the regression coefficient decreases a bit more but stays close to 1 percentage point. The standard error, however, increases to around 0,73 percentage points while the adjusted  $R^2$  decreases to around 20 %. Yet, the exclusion of the 2018 election results in insignificant results.

#### Model 9 (*The Moderate Party, immigration, current*)

Time period	1988 - 2018			1988 - 2014		
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Moderate Party	3,11* (0,57)	2,94* (0,76)	2,86* (0,90)	4,78* (1,35)	5,73* (2,21)	5,93 (2,74)
Immigration		0,03 (0,08)	0,04 (0,10)		-0,05 (0,10)	-0,07 (0,14)
Unemployment			-0,13 (0,55)			0,09 (0,56)
Intercept	1,11	-0,04	0,30	-0,16	1,51	1,34
Adjusted $R^2$	0,78	0,75	0,71	0,62	0,58	0,47
N (elections)	9	9	9	8	8	8

Table 7. Statistical findings for regression model 9



Graph 7. The correlation between *The Moderate Party's* articulation on the immigration issue (immigration) and the electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018 (Model 9, Column 1)

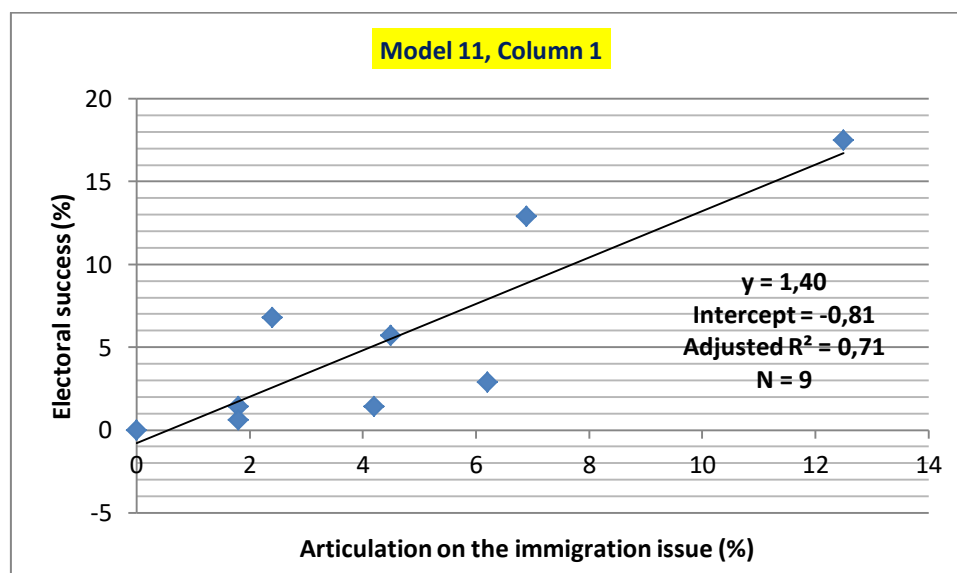
As shown in table 9, when only examining *The Moderate Party* the indication from the first column is that when they increase their articulation on the immigration issue by 1 percentage point the electoral support for the radical right will increase by 3,11 percentage points with a standard error of 0,57 percentage points. The variation in the electoral support

of the radical right is 78% explained by the variation in the independent variable. Adding the control variables leads to a slight increase in the standard error to between 0,76 – 0,90 percentage points while the regression coefficient decreases to 2,94 – 2,86 percentage points, as do the adjusted R<sup>2</sup>. If the 2018 election is excluded from the regression model the regression coefficient increases, as do the standard error while the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> decreases. The exclusion of the 2018 election does not necessarily alter the significance of the results. As seen in column 4 and 5, when examining The Moderate Party's articulation on the immigration issue alone and together with the first control variable – immigration – the results are still significant. However, when adding unemployment, that is the second control variable, there are no significant results.

**Model 11 (*The Moderate Party, immigration + integration, current*)**

Time period	1988 - 2018			1988 - 2014		
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Moderate Party	1,40* (0,31)	1,23* (0,38)	1,17* (0,38)	1,22 (0,56)	0,97 (0,64)	1,02 (0,66)
Immigration		0,07 (0,08)	0,11 (0,09)		0,08 (0,09)	0,11 (0,10)
Unemployment			-0,56 (0,52)			-0,51 (0,59)
Intercept	-0,81	-3,32	-1,37	-0,28	-2,88	-1,25
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,71	0,70	0,70	0,35	0,32	0,29
N (elections)	9	9	9	8	8	8

Table 8. Statistical findings for regression model 11



Graph 8. The correlation between the Moderate Party's articulation on the immigration issue (immigration + integration) and the electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018 (Model 11, Column 1)

The first column in table 11 suggests that when The Moderate Party increase their articulation on the immigration issue by 1 percentage point the electoral support for the radical right will in turn increase by 1,40 percentage points with a standard error of 0,31 percentage points. The variation in the electoral support is 71% explained by the variation in The Moderate Party's articulation on the immigration issue. The regression coefficient will decrease but remain above 1 percentage point as the control variables are added while the standard error slightly increases to 0,38 percentage points. The adjusted  $R^2$  is practically unchanged. But, when excluding the 2018 election from the regression model the adjusted  $R^2$  falls down to around 30%. The regression coefficient will also decrease but stay close to 1 percentage unit while the standard error almost doubles. However, none of the results excluding the 2018 election are significant.

## Conclusion

The aim of this study's statistical part has been to derive an answer to the third and final research question. After running a regression for the 16 different regression models and analysing the results from regression model 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 it becomes possible to answer the third and final research question of this study:

3. *Are there indications of a potential correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right in 1988-2018?*

Even though the collected data suggests a positive correlation between the independent and dependent variable in 6 out of 16 regression models, the actual results ought to be further analysed before deriving a final conclusion to the research question.

When looking at the time period 1988-2018 (summarised in table 3-8) the regression coefficient in the third column in the respective graph ranges between 1,17 – 3,02 suggesting that when the two control variables are included an increase in the articulation on the immigration issue by 1 percentage point can result in an increase in the support for the radical right by as high as 3,02 percentage points. This, however, does not go for all the 6 regression models. The three regression models defining the immigration issue as (only) immigration all present a regression coefficient close to 3, while the other three regression models using the immigration + integration definition of the immigration issue produce a regression coefficient close to 1. The standard error is comparatively higher for the regression models defining the immigration issue as (only immigration), as is the adjusted  $R^2$ . Moving to the first column of the respective tables the parameter estimates decreases, but the definition of the immigration issue as (only) immigration still in general produces relatively higher values than the other definition. The bivariate graphs (graph 3-8) visualises the results from the respective first column. With some variation between the regression models it can generally be said that some of the 9 election observations are very close to the regression line, while others are further away (outliers). Graph 5 and 7 are the ones where most observations follow the regression line. However, it should be emphasised that the results in graph 3-8 are without any of the two control variables.

If excluding the 2018 election from the regression models it turns out that while the regression coefficient and standard error increases, and the adjusted  $R^2$  decreases, almost none of the regression models present any significant results, with the exception being model 5 and 9. The major difference between the two is that the latter does not produce any significant result when both control variables are included, as opposed to the former. Indeed, column 6 in table 5 suggest that during the time period 1988-2014 if the mainstream parties increase their articulation on the immigration issue by 1 percentage point the support for the radical right increases by 8,48 percentage points, with a standard error of 2,80. According to the regression result 65 % of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the variation in the independent variable.

Now, do the findings excluding the 2018 election alter the possibility of an affirmative answer to the research question of this statistical part of the study? Not necessarily, but there are arguably strong reasons for taking it into consideration before formulating a final answer. At the top end of the regression line in graph 3-8 respectively is the 2018 election observation, and as can be seen it is not an outlier. However, as became evident, it is a very influential case. While the outliers are likely to have a negative effect on the regression coefficient for the respective regression models, the significance of the results seems to be conditional on the inclusion of this particular influential case. This study cannot answer why the 2018 election is such an influential case. Indeed, the data set may very well include several influential cases. But, in retrospective the 2015 European migration crisis preceding the 2018 election is believed to potentially have altered the underlying mechanisms regarding voting behaviour in a way significantly differing from the other election observations. Based on a similar assumption the 1994 election could be tested as a potential influential case given that it was preceded by a big migration wave from Yugoslavia. While the two should arguably only be compared more in depth, the 2015 European migration crisis is perhaps the one with bigger effects on factors potentially linked to this particular study. In the end, the 2018 election is part of the time frame specified in the third research question, regardless of its influence on the regression analysis. That said, the regression model(s) producing significant results even when excluding it does arguably provide stronger indications of a correlation between the independent and dependent variable. Even though the other five regression models (1, 3, 7, 9, and 11) indeed do show significant results for the time period 1988-2018, it is in comparison to model 5 more likely that those results are not that of an actual correlation between the independent and dependent variable.

Thus, the final answer to the third research question is that there are indications of a (positive) potential correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right in 1988-2018, which is in line with the second expectation. Such indications have not been observed when examining either The Social Democrats as the only party articulating the immigration issue, or the estimated mean value of the socioeconomic control variables between the election periods. If going more into detail, defining the immigration issue as (only) immigration suggests a relatively higher potential effect on the electoral support for the Swedish radical right than when defining it as immigration + integration. With the exception of The Social

Democrats, the findings suggest that there is no real difference on the potential effect by what party constellation is doing the immigration issue articulation. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the mainstream parties' (understood as one unit) articulation on the immigration issue defined as (only) immigration provide the strongest indication of an actual correlation between the independent and dependent variable since significant results are produced from the regression analysis even when excluding the 2018 election which has been identified as one influential case.

## **Ending discussion**

Based on the way the data has been collected for the four included variables, and the method used to answer the three research questions, the reliability of this study is considered high. The same conclusion has been drawn regarding the validity, while still acknowledging that it suffers somewhat from the operationalisation of the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue. As for the interpretation of the results, the findings of both the descriptive and statistical part are rather straight forward in the sense that they provide concrete answers to their respective research question. It is however still worth emphasising that the findings of the statistical part do not propose an actual correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support for the Swedish radical right in 1988-2018, but rather merely indicate a potential existence of such a correlation. That said, the findings of both the descriptive and statistical part are in line with the expectations based on the issue saliency theory and the legitimisation theory, and hence do not provide any reason for rejecting the fundamental idea that there could be a legitimising effect in the Swedish case, just as have been observed in other Western European states. On the contrary, these findings arguably encourage future research to continue examining this particular issue.

While the aim of this study has been to provide an initial building block to the more long-term aim of determining whether there is a legitimising effect at play in the Swedish case, some suggestions can be made for future studies. First, the operationalisation of political parties' articulation on the immigration issue should be extended to include televised party duels and party leader interviews, as well as speeches, public statements, and social media activity. Indeed, as noted by Dahlström & Esaiasson, there are other forums, aside from the election manifestos, where parties can communicate with their voters (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2009, 17). Second, the operationalisation of media's articulation on the immigration issue should not be limited to printed media. Even though the content of digitalised newspapers in large can be assumed to be the same as that of printed media, one complication in measuring this variable is that the ever evolving technology has made personalised news flows increasingly used. People may to a greater extent not receive the same news in their smartphones and tablets, which seem to increasingly replace printed



media. Third, the electorate's perception of the political parties' articulation should be included in a study on the legitimisation mechanism since the political parties' themselves probably are far from the only actor shaping that perception. Fourth, even though the established parties' articulation on the immigration issue would turn out to have an impact on the electorate resulting in a shift in party preferences benefitting the radical right, it is not necessarily because the electorate feels it has become more legit to cast a vote for the radical right. Therefore, it would also be beneficial to centre attention to the social aspects of the electorate's voting behaviour and what keeps the voters from actively supporting the party that they would prefer. Fifth, while it may not vary much over time, there are some demographic characteristics of the electorate that may be worth exploring since they have been argued relevant in this context by scholars. For example, in his article from 2003 Bale identifies the kind of citizen who generally is, or rather has become, the typical radical right voter. Ironically, research suggest, support for radical right parties tends to be skewed towards the part of the electorate that in times past probably could have been relied upon to vote either for left-wing parties or other (possibly centre-) parties that likewise would not have aided the formation of a right-wing government. In comparison to other parties the radical right has managed "disproportionately well" to secure votes from working-class men in urban areas. Mutual characteristics for these citizens are that they "possess little in the way of educational qualifications or job security" and because of that are more likely to suffer the downsides of globalisation. They are also more likely to perceive immigrants as the embodiment of the (arguably imagined) threat to their jobs, their welfare, their security, and their culture. As an explanatory factor for the shift in party preferences among this particular part of the electorate Bale points to the socialist and social democratic parties seeming to "rely ever more strongly on the public sector (and often female) salariat as key components of their constituencies" consequently facilitating the radical right (re-) profiling itself as "the party of the workers" (Bale 2003, 71, 73). Arzheimer & Carter note that it is typically the comparatively younger and older members of a given electorate that are more likely to support a radical right party. These two groups in society are likely to depend disproportionately on welfare and experience a weaker social integration than other groups. Therefore they are considered "more likely to view immigrants as competitors" (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 421, 428-429). Empirics also suggest that this identified group of likely radical right supporters is disproportionally consisted of men (Arzheimer & Carter 2006, 428).

Judging by the content in the political discourse over the last years, and the active choices made in connection with the January agreement (*Januariöverenskommelsen*) which followed four months after the 2018 election, it seems that the Swedish established parties are far from keen on witnessing The Sweden Democrats gaining increasing influence in Parliament and Government. Something that, although not exclusively, is dependent on the electoral support for The Sweden Democrats. Yet, hypothetically, even if a positive correlation between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electoral support of the Swedish radical right were to be identified by future studies, additional research on its empirical implications would most certainly be required before adequate measures could be taken in order to achieve their shared desired end. Who knows -

the political cost of increasing the articulation on the immigration issue might be less than that of keeping it at a fixed level, or not articulating it at all.

Finally, if no correlation is found between the Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue and the electorate support for the Swedish radical right it would not automatically imply that the legitimisation theory is unable to explain the Swedish case. Indeed, the actual trigger of the legitimising effect may be tied to the content in the articulation on the immigration issue and its relative distance to the radical right on the ideological axis.

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## Appendix

### The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue

1988	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	831	15	1,8 %	15 ss <sup>9</sup>	1,8 % ss	15	1,8 %
The Moderate Party	1535	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Centre Party	1021	-	-	14	1,4 %	14	1,4 %
The Liberals	3329	119	3,6 %	22 ss	0,7 % ss	119	3,6 %
The Christian Democrats	629	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Green Party	723	23	3,2 %	-	-	23	3,2 %
The Left Party	2682	22	0,8 %	-	-	22	0,8 %

Table A.1.1. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 1988

1991	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	1698	18	1,1 %	-	-	18	1,1 %
The Moderate Party	1911	31	1,6 %	15	0,8 %	46	2,4 %
The Centre Party	1608	30	1,9 %	-	-	30	1,9 %
The Liberals	3092	91	2,9 %	75 ss	2,4 % ss	116	3,8 %
The Christian Democrats	644	22	3,4 %	-	-	22	3,4 %
The Green Party	1407	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Left Party	1237	2	0,2 %	-	-	2	0,2 %
New Democracy <sup>10</sup>	3749	127	3,4 %	101 ss	2,7 % ss	158	4,2 %

Table A.1.2. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 1991

<sup>9</sup> The ss abbreviation stands for *same sentence* and indicates that some or all of the counted sentences in the integration section have also been identified and counted in the migration section.

<sup>10</sup> Party program (the party did not issue any election manifesto)

1994	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	2538	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Moderate Party	2440	31	1,3 %	45 ss	1,8 % ss	45	1,8 %
The Centre Party	1939	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Liberals	2855	32	1,1 %	74	2,6 %	106	3,7 %
The Christian Democrats	1035	22	2,1 %	22 ss	2,1 % ss	22	2,1 %
The Green Party	1420	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Left Party	2122	19	0,9 %	19 ss	0,9 % ss	19	0,9 %

*Table A.1.3. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 1994*

1998	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	2884	-	-	105	3,6 %	105	3,6 %
The Moderate Party	4378	-	-	80	1,8 %	80	1,8 %
The Centre Party	2857	-	-	29	1,0 %	29	1,0 %
The Liberals	908	17	1,9 %	12	1,3 %	29	3,2 %
The Christian Democrats	2301	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Green Party	650	-	-	38	5,8 %	38	5,8 %
The Left Party	4584	69	1,5 %	99 ss	2,2 % ss	165	3,6 %

*Table A.1.4. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 1998*

2002	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	2898	40	1,4 %	107	3,7 %	147	5,1 %
The Moderate Party	5740	35	0,6 %	208	3,6 %	243	4,2 %
The Centre Party	2617	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Liberals	5675	112	2,0 %	322 ss	5,7 % ss	343	6,0 %
The Christian Democrats	4670	27	0,6	19	0,4	46	1,0 %
The Green Party	1480	57	3,9	-	-	57	3,9 %
The Left Party	5683	152	2,7 %	327	5,8 %	479	8,4 %

*Table A.1.5. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 2002*

2006	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	4117	34	0,8 %	163	4,0 %	197	4,8 %
The Alliance <sup>11</sup>	10887	73	0,7 %	662	6,1 %	677	6,2 %
The Christian Democrats	2138	-	-	46	2,2 %	46	2,2 %
The Green Party	1843	65	3,5 %	-	-	65	3,5 %
The Left Party	3547	75	2,1 %	-	-	75	2,1 %

*Table A.1.6. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 2006*

2010	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	2528	-	-	26	1,0 %	26	1,0 %
The Alliance <sup>12</sup>	16797	96	0,6 %	661	3,9 %	757	4,5 %
The Red-Green <sup>13</sup>	5593	61	1,1 %	34	0,6 %	95	1,7 %
The Centre Party	7079	-	-	27	0,4 %	27	0,4 %
The Liberals	9901	189	1,9 %	610	6,2 %	799	8,1 %
The Christian Democrats	3354	109	3,2 %	116	3,5 %	225	6,7 %
The Green Party	2430	56	2,3 %	101	4,2 %	157	6,5 %
The Left Party	2581	20	0,8 %	-	-	20	0,8 %
<i>The Sweden Democrats</i>	1775	46	2,6 %	15	0,8	61	3,4 %

*Table A.1.7. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 2010*

2014	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	6464	48	0,7 %	41	0,6 %	89	1,4 %
The Alliance <sup>14</sup>	25067	521	2,1 %	1267 ss	5,1 % ss	1725	6,9 %
The Centre Party	5581	92	1,6 %	133	2,4 %	225	4,0 %
The Liberals	5069	173	3,4 %	158	3,1 %	331	6,5 %
The Christian Democrats	6195	297	4,8 %	-	-	297	4,8 %
The Green Party	6285	246	3,9 %	85	1,4 %	331	5,3 %
The Left Party	5127	144	2,8 %	-	-	144	2,8 %
<i>The Sweden Democrats</i>	5472	155	2,8 %	189	3,5 %	344	6,3 %

*Table A.1.8. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 2014*

<sup>11</sup> The Moderate Party, The Christian Democrats, The Liberals, and the Centre Party

<sup>12</sup> The Moderate Party, The Christian Democrats, The Liberals, and the Centre Party

<sup>13</sup> The Social Democrats, The Left Party, and The Green Party

<sup>14</sup> The Moderate Party, The Christian Democrats, The Liberals, and The Centre Party

2018	Total words	Migration words	Migration %	Integration words	Integration %	M + I words	M + I %
The Social Democrats	4615	196	4,2 %	175	3,8 %	371	8,0 %
The Moderate Party	12334	704	5,7 %	944 ss	7,7 % ss	1547	12,5 %
The Centre Party	5392	299	5,5 %	289	5,4 %	588	10,9 %
The Liberals	7260	423	5,8 %	713	9,8 %	1136	15,6 %
The Christian Democrats	1855	24	1,3 %	155	8,4 %	179	9,6 %
The Green Party	7351	385	5,2 %	167	2,3 %	552	7,5 %
The Left Party	8900	744	8,4 %	51	0,6 %	795	8,9 %
The Sweden Democrats	7341	601	8,2 %	123	1,7 %	724	9,9 %

Table A.1.9. The Swedish established parties' articulation on the immigration issue in 2018

### Swedish printed media's articulation on the immigration issue

Printed media's articulation on the immigration issue					
Mean articles/day 1998-2018					
Immigration			Immigration + Integration		
Year	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Confidence interval ( $\bar{X}$ ) 95 %	Year	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Confidence interval ( $\bar{X}$ ) 95 %
1998	0,36	0,18 – 0,54	1998	0,63	0,38 – 0,88
1999	0,21	0,08 – 0,34	1999	0,41	0,23 – 0,59
2000	0,39	0,2 – 0,58	2000	0,53	0,3 – 0,76
2001	0,32	0,15 – 0,49	2001	0,45	0,25 – 0,65
2002	0,61	0,3 – 0,92	2002	0,84	0,5 – 1,18
2003	0,38	0,2 – 0,56	2003	0,59	0,36 – 0,82
2004	0,33	0,18 – 0,48	2004	0,44	0,25 – 0,63
2005	0,59	0,31 – 0,87	2005	0,76	0,45 – 1,07
2006	0,27	0,11 – 0,43	2006	0,58	0,35 – 0,81
2007	0,41	0,2 – 0,62	2007	0,55	0,31 – 0,79
2008	0,4	0,23 – 0,57	2008	0,58	0,36 – 0,8
2009	0,31	0,12 – 0,5	2009	0,41	0,2 – 0,62
2010	0,25	0,13 – 0,37	2010	0,43	0,26 – 0,6
2011	0,22	0,09 – 0,35	2011	0,31	0,15 – 0,47
2012	0,35	0,17 – 0,53	2012	0,46	0,26 – 0,66
2013	0,49	0,28 – 0,7	2013	0,69	0,44 – 0,94
2014	0,41	0,2 – 0,62	2014	0,55	0,31 – 0,79
2015	1,01	0,59 – 1,43	2015	1,46	0,94 – 1,98
2016	0,81	0,5 – 1,12	2016	1,28	0,87 – 1,69
2017	0,65	0,41 – 0,89	2017	0,85	0,56 – 1,14
2018	0,82	0,46 – 1,18	2018	1,16	0,67 – 1,65

Table A.2.1 Confidence interval for the estimated mean values illustrated in graph 2.1



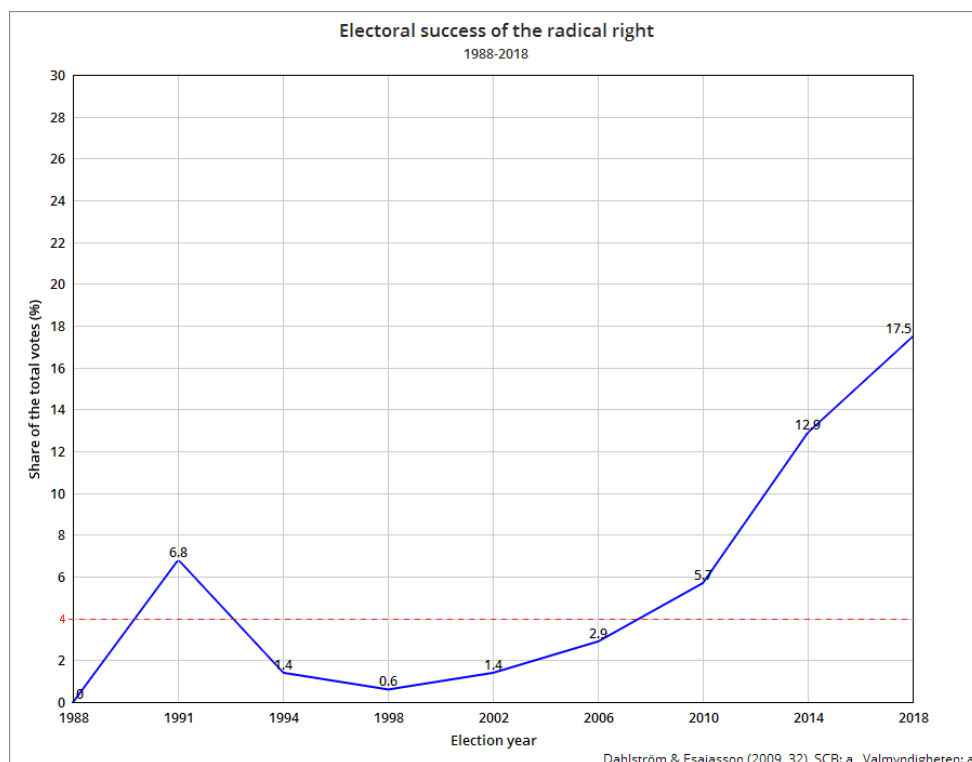
Printed media's articulation on the immigration issue Mean articles/day since last election 2002-2018					
Election year	Time since last election to current election	Immigration		Immigration + Integration	
		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Confidence interval ( $\bar{X}$ ) 95 %	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Confidence interval ( $\bar{X}$ ) 95 %
2002	Sep 21 <sup>st</sup> 1998 - Sep 15 <sup>th</sup> 2002	0,32	0,23 – 0,41	0,5	0,39 – 0,61
2006	Sep 16 <sup>th</sup> 2002 – Sep 17 <sup>th</sup> 2006	0,44	0,33 – 0,55	0,64	0,5 – 0,78
2010	Sep 18 <sup>th</sup> 2006 – Sep 19 <sup>th</sup> 2010	0,34	0,25 – 0,43	0,5	0,39 – 0,61
2014	Sep 20 <sup>th</sup> 2010 – Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> 2014	0,35	0,26 – 0,44	0,48	0,37 – 0,59
2018	Sep 15 <sup>th</sup> 2014 – Sep 9 <sup>th</sup> 2018	0,81	0,65 – 0,97	1,16	0,95 – 1,37

Table A.2.2 Confidence interval for the estimated mean values illustrated in graph 2.2

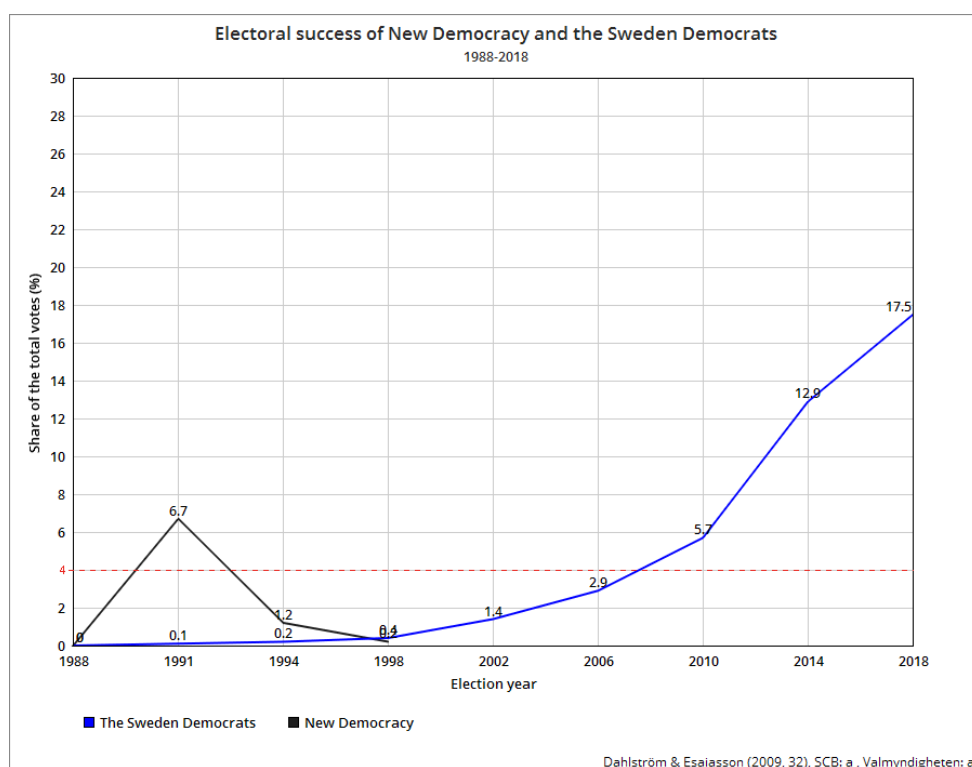
Printed media's emphasis on the immigration issue Mean articles/day the year of the election 1998-2018					
Election year	Time since January 1 <sup>st</sup> to the respective election day	Immigration		Immigration + Integration	
		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Confidence interval ( $\bar{X}$ ) 95 %	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Confidence interval ( $\bar{X}$ ) 95 %
1998	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 1998 – Sep 20 <sup>th</sup> 1998	0,44	0,21 – 0,67	0,76	0,44 – 1,08
2002	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 2002 – Sep 15 <sup>th</sup> 2002	0,48	0,2 – 0,76	0,72	0,39 – 1,05
2006	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 2006 – Sep 17 <sup>th</sup> 2002	0,25	0,05 – 0,45	0,6	0,31 – 0,89
2010	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 2010 – Sep 19 <sup>th</sup> 2010	0,22	0,09 – 0,35	0,43	0,24 – 0,62
2014	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 2014 – Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> 2014	0,33	0,1 – 0,56	0,45	0,19 – 0,71
2018	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 2018 – Sep 9 <sup>th</sup> 2018	0,82	0,46 – 1,18	1,16	0,67 – 1,65

Table A.2.3. Confidence interval for the estimated mean values illustrated in graph 2.3

## Electoral support for the radical right

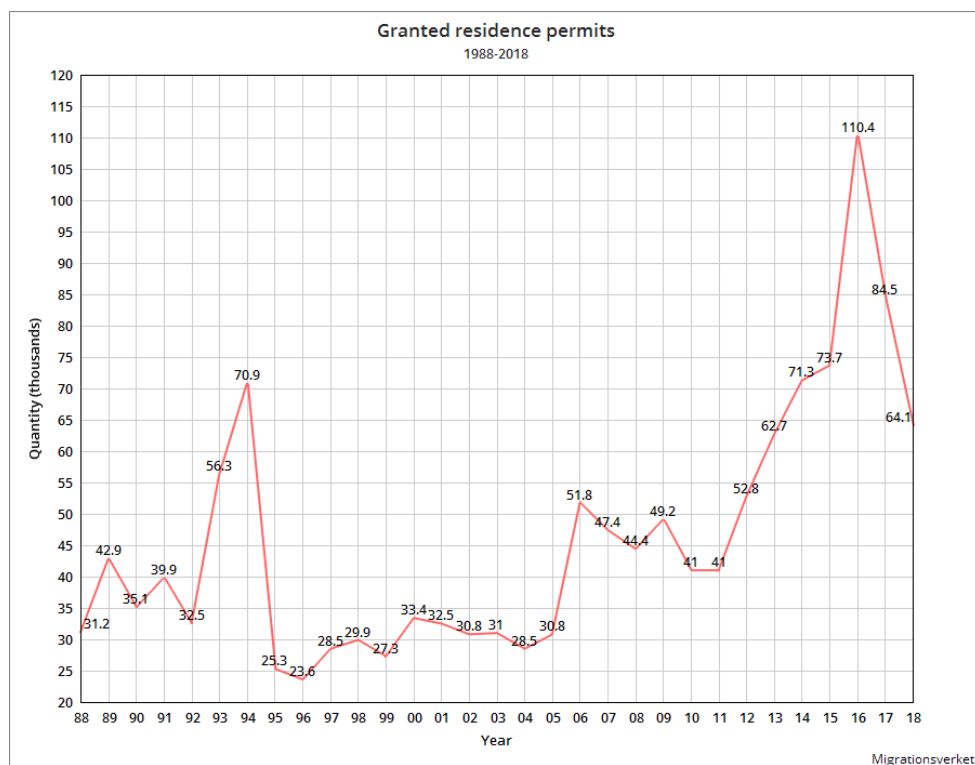


*Graph A.1.1 Electoral support for the radical right 1988-2018*

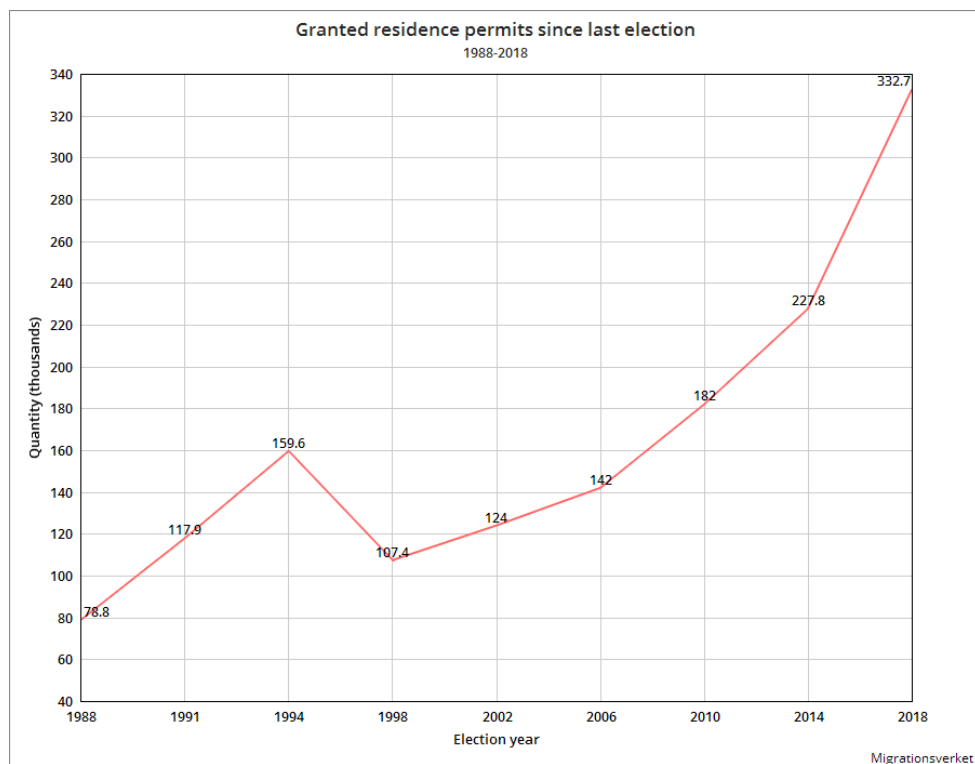


*Graph A.1.2 Electoral support for New Democracy and the Sweden Democrats 1988-2018.*

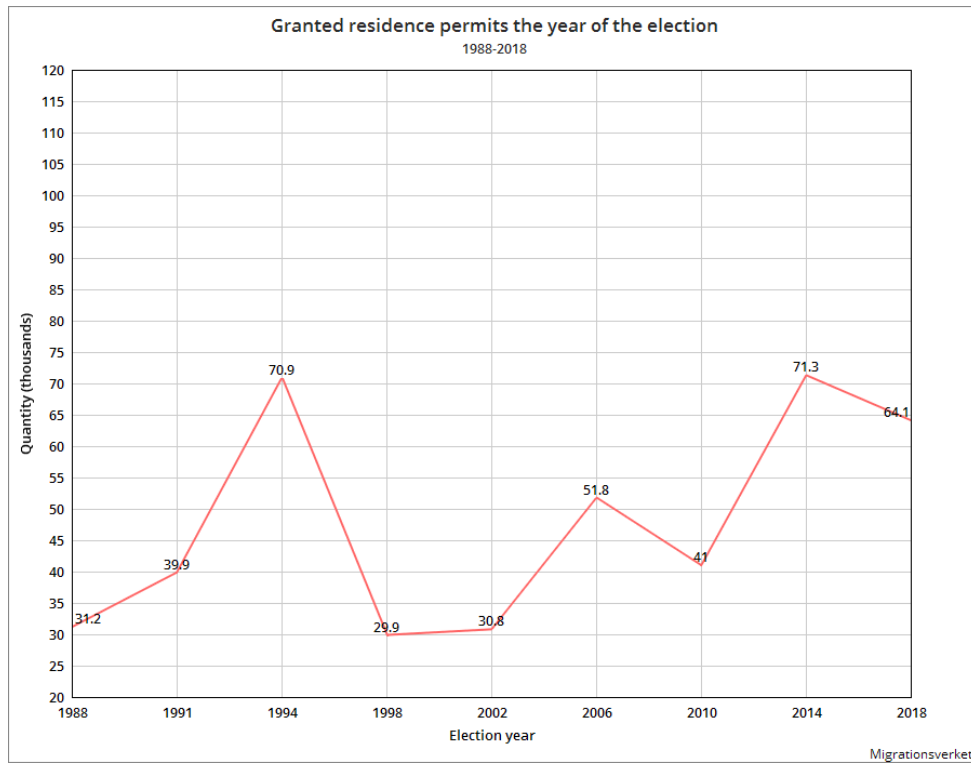
## Immigration



Graph A.2.1. Granted residence permits per year 1988-2018

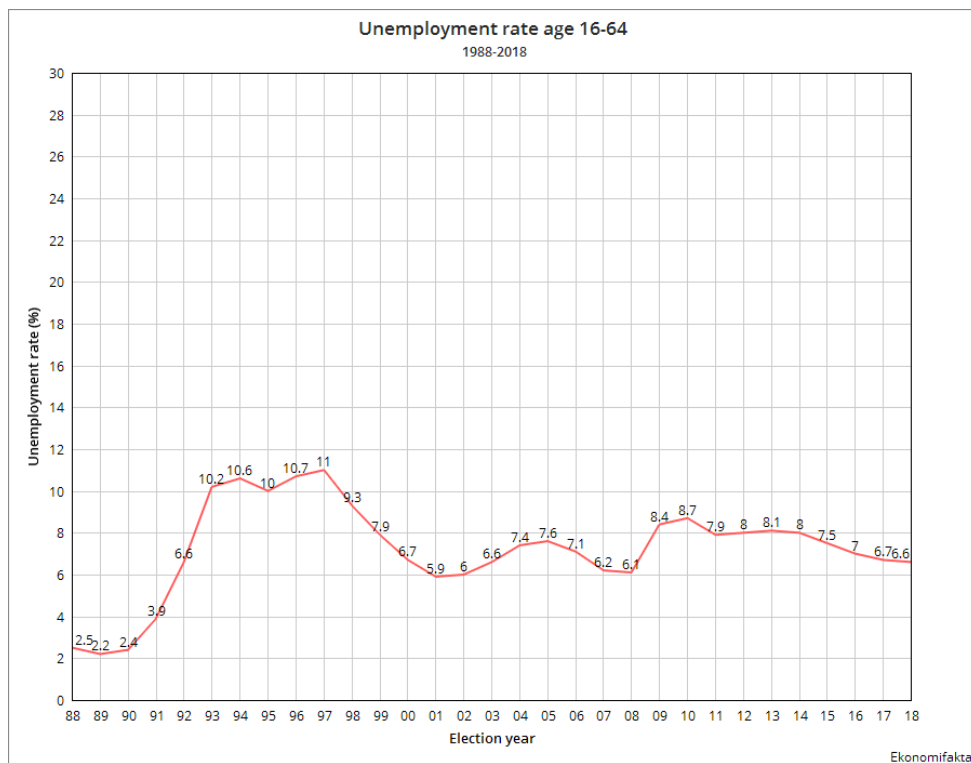


Graph A.2.2. Granted residence permits since last election 1988-2018



*Graph A.2.3. Granted residence permits the year of the election 1988-2018*

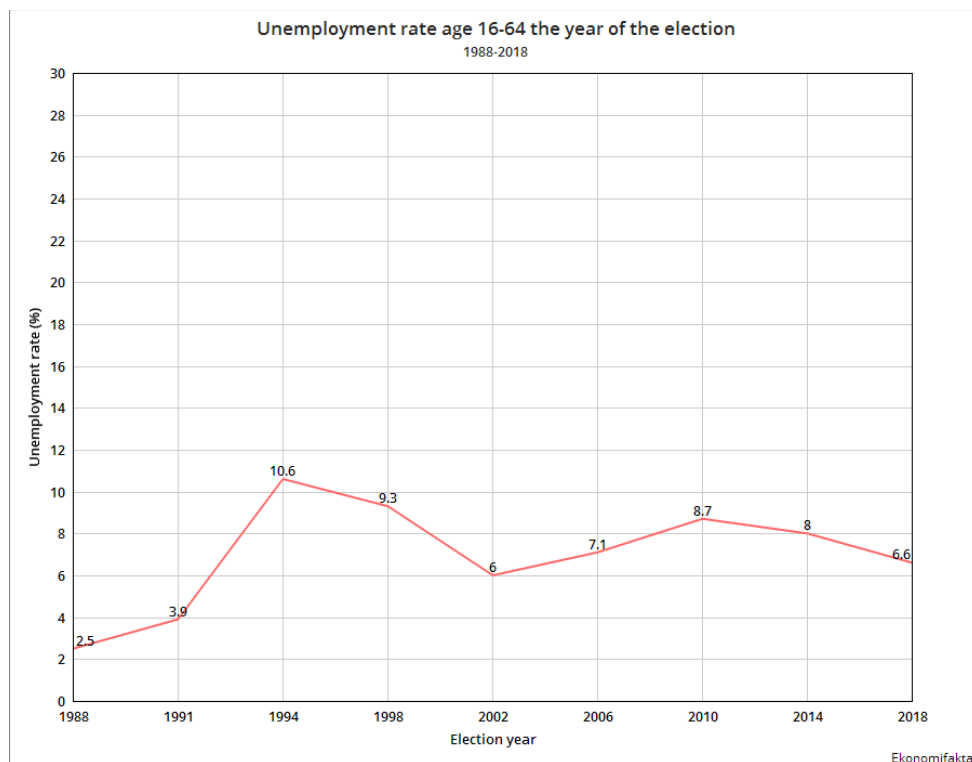
## Unemployment



*Graph A.3.1. Unemployment rate per year 1988-2018*



*Graph A.3.2. Mean unemployment rate since last election 1988-2018*



*Graph A.3.3. Unemployment rate the year of the election 1988-2018*