Geographica 37

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A Nationalist Contradiction

Homonationalism and Nationalist
Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism in Sweden

**UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET**

Abstract

Lagerman, J. 2023. A Nationalist Contradiction. Homonationalism and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism in Sweden. *Geographica* 37. 119 pp. Uppsala: Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University. ISBN 978-91-506-3031-2.

Homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are two geographical and historical processes which contradict each other, as the latter frequently targets the former (and vice versa). We see this contradiction in the global far-right attacks on LGBTQ people, rights, and spaces through discourse, politics, and violence, including in nation-states frequently thought of as progressively pushing LGBTQ rights forward through national legislation and shifting values among the population from homophobic to "LGBTQ friendly" (i.e. homonationalism). While this contradiction may be thought of as indicating flaws in linearly progressing democracies (a so-called "backlash" to LGBTQ rights), this thesis instead examines if and how these polar movements are unified through the struggle over the role of sexuality in nationalism. It does so by examining how nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism have contributed to an evolving homonationalist discourse in Sweden. Drawing upon qualitative analyses of neo-Nazi and far-right anti-LGBTQ attacks and oppositions to LGBTQ spaces between 2016 and 2020, and responses to them, the thesis analyses the ways in which state hegemony and nationalist myths about an LGBTQ-inclusive Swedish state are re-articulated in different responses to anti-LGBTQ nationalism.

The thesis consists of two parts: the first is a theoretical introduction to sexuality as constructed through nationalism, which also provides an outline of the thesis' methodology. The second part consists of five research articles which together analyse events of nationalist sexual politics in Sweden and their connections to homonationalist discourse. The two first articles examine the economic and political contexts for Swedish homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism. The third, fourth, and fifth articles analyse concrete nationalist anti-LGBTQ political and activist events and how they have affected and been shaped by (homo)nationalist discourse, policing, and legislation.

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Preface and Acknowledgements

I moved to Uppsala in 2013 and have since spent many hours, and years, in the lecture halls and corridors of the Department of Human Geography. After finishing my bachelor's degree, I was overjoyed and relieved that there was the option to continue studying human geography – three years were certainly not enough! During my time as a master's student at the department I learnt not only more about the topic, but also that not even a master's degree (and the six-year limit on student loans) is a definitive ending to academic journeys. That I never even had considered and barely knew of this opportunity ten years ago indicates how this preface and all pages following it are an outcome of several personal, historical, and geographical accidents laying out pathways that I might never have seen, let alone walked down. I certainly could have missed them entirely, had I not met people who pointed them out to me.

This thesis would not have been possible if it hadn't been for all the wonderful, brilliant people I have had the privilege to know and learn from, and learn together with, over the years. I am very grateful to all the research participants who took the time to speak with me. A special thanks goes out to the anti-Nazi activists I met in 2019 and 2020, whose relentless struggles should be an inspiration to us all. This research has also been helped by people working for different city organisations, Pride events, or Swedish court and police authorities, who participated in interviews or helped me in my searches for research material. I am also grateful for the stipends funding parts of the research, from Torsten Amundsons Fond (AM2019-0018) and Anna Maria Lundins Stipendiefond (AMv2022-0121).

I thank all my colleagues at the Department of Human Geography, both for all the advice you have provided in formal and informal discussions, and for all the fun I have had getting to know you over the years. I'd like to thank my advisors, whose support and guidance has been invaluable. Your engagement in my project and your advice on how to navigate various academic labyrinths have been great. To Micheline van Riemsdijk, whose impressive attention to detail and clarity helped me make my own ideas make sense to others. To Maja Lagerqvist, whose knowledge and engagement in the context of my study always brought in ideas and new angles to grapple with. You have both been great discussion partners from the first months of narrowing down ideas for a project, to the later stages of providing guidance in finishing the thesis. Thank you for all the support over the years!

List of Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

I.   Lagerman, J. Nationalist Contradictions. On the Relations between Homonationalism and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism. *Unpublished manuscript that has been revised and re-submitted to Lambda Nordica*.

II.   Lagerman, J., and Pugh, R. The Convergence of Homonationalism and Urban Entrepreneurialism. *Unpublished manuscript that has been revised and re-submitted to Social & Cultural Geography*.

III.   Lagerman, J. (2023). Neo-Nazi Heteroactivism and the Swedish Nationalist Contradiction. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 22(3), pp. 1093–1114.

IV.   Lagerman, J. (2023). Homonationalism on the Defensive. News Media Responses to Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Attacks in Sweden. *Antipode*. In print.

V.   Lagerman, J. The Dual Policing of Swedish LGBTQ Spaces. Neo-Nazi Anti-LGBTQ Demonstrations and Public Order Regulation in Sweden. *Unpublished manuscript undergoing revisions for Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*.

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Contents

Abbreviations

HBTQ	Homo-, Bi-, Trans-, and Queer (common Swedish acronym for LGBTQ)
ILGA	The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer
NRM	The Nordic Resistance Movement (Nordiska motståndsrörelsen)
NY	Nordic Youth (Nordisk ungdom)
RFSL	Riksförbundet för homosexuellas, bisexuellas, transpersoners, queeras och intersexpersoners rättigheter (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Rights)
RFSU	Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning (The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education)
SD	The Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna)
SOU	Statens Offentliga Utredningar (The Government's Official Investigations)

1. Introduction

> Journalist: The rainbow flag, does it have the potential to become something for the West to rally around?
>
> Interviewed historian: Yes. I think and hope so, because it has to do with diversity and being able to tolerate people of entirely different opinions, but still debate them, and show them, and not try to beat down and kill [each other].
>
> Journalist: But those who have emphasised the Western and maybe focused on the Christian and the conservative [Western values], will they be able to unite around "being Western" being to wave with a rainbow flag?
>
> Interviewed historian: No, I don't think so, because the West will always have conflicts about such things. And the big thing is that one can acknowledge the conflicts and debate them, without having to beat each other to death. But there will be disagreements and in different [Western state] parliaments there will be different bills. It is not only Russia and the Orthodoxies that are, so to speak, "gay hostile", but there are countries like Poland and Hungary. And it has been like that also in Ukraine, we should not forget that. But I want to highlight the thing with acknowledged conflicts, diversity, and source criticism as the West's strengths. (P1 Morgon, 2022)

The history professor emeritus Kristian Gerner and the journalist interviewing him, Henrik Torehammar, were discussing the meaning of the rainbow flag and whether it is something that symbolises Western Europe. Their discussion was broadcasted on Swedish public service radio and held in relation to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The discussion was seemingly set out to treat Ukraine's ambiguous status as "Western" or "Eastern", all the while bombs were being dropped by Russian forces. Central to the discussion was the possibility of an abstract symbol representing LGBTQ rights or visibility (the rainbow flag) as a sign of unity, not only within a specific nation-state (and certainly not specific to LGBTQ people), but also in the wide, vague geographical region of "the West". In addition to being discussed in the interview, the rainbow flag was also used as the header image on the web page where one can listen to the interview recording (P1 Morgon, 2022). The rainbow flag thus has the potential to be used for a political and cognitive divide between "East" and "West", or "North" and "South", which several scholars cited in this thesis would agree with, although they would be critical of this use rather than affirming it.

The interviewer points out an obvious flaw in this division: there are homo- and transphobic interests alive and well in "places rallying around Pride flags". The universal/European unity is a promise impossible to fulfil. Gerner's response to this indicates how, in the words of Wendy Brown (1993, p. 392, emphasis in original), "in a smooth legitimate liberal order, the particularistic 'I's' must remain unpoliticized, and the universalistic 'we' must remain without specific content or aim, without a common good *other than* abstract universal representation or pluralism". If homophobia exists in "the East", it is deemed symptomatic for the place (Kulpa, 2014; Pitoňák, 2019). If homophobia exists in "the West", it is instead considered a sign of democracy – something to discuss in a civil way instead of through violence (as emphasised by Gerner). While the interview is about modern European or Western unity, the unitary and dividing paradox goes for nation-states as well: any particular political expression (such as supporting LGBTQ rights) that is assumed to signal unity (such as Western ideals, or Swedishness) is contradicted by the universality of the pluralism of ideas and political interests. This is because valuing pluralism demands acknowledging conflicts and thus questions the very being of a "national unity".

This thesis is about how one imagined social unity, the Swedish nation-state, is ideologically reproduced through *contradictory sexual politics*: conflicting nationalist heteronormativity (valuing a straight and cisnormative Swedish nation) and homonationalism (valuing the Swedish nation as protective of LGBTQ people). The two processes are contradictory in the Marxist meaning of the word, rather than the common-sense or logical meaning. The common-sense or logical meaning refers to conceptions of reality that cannot simultaneously be true: a nation cannot logically be both hostile and protective of LGBTQ people, only either/or.

The Marxist contradiction instead refers to real social processes, such as homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, which oppose each other, but depend on each other in doing so. Both homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are real processes that present themselves as each other's opposite, and in doing so, they mutually both undermine and reinforce each other. Homonationalism needs nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism and vice versa, as they only exist through opposing one another. Homonationalism depends on being posed as opposite to nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, while the latter has increasingly been articulated in opposition to the former. This thesis seeks to empirically examine how the two opposing nationalist elements through mutual undermining and opposition create a nationalist contradiction. This contradiction is not a logical impossibility (meaning that both processes cannot exist simultaneously and both be true), but a description of how two conflicting processes relate to each other.

The contradicting nationalist elements manifest how LGBTQ subjectivity, rights, and activism are reduced to symbolically represent places, being

deemed either an asset or a liability. In the words of Eng and Puar (2020), this reduction is produced through the continuation of colonial global hierarchies:

> In the age of neoliberalism and human rights, the colonial dynamic of white men saving brown women from brown men has been reconditioned as white folks (straight and gay) saving brown homosexuals from brown heterosexuals. As sexuality becomes a primary language – perhaps the primary language – of modern citizenship, a model of queer rights and representation in the West assumes an ever-expanding ambit in a global politics of recognition. (Eng and Puar, 2020, p. 7)

The aim of this thesis is to show and explain how such symbolic uses of LGBTQ subjectivity have been constructed in, and about, Sweden and how they have been used to fit contesting ideas of Swedish nationalism, as well as contesting claims to public space where these contesting ideas are manifested. It is thus not a study of LGBTQ lives or experiences, but instead a study of *assumptions* about LGBTQ lives and experiences. These assumptions are abstractions, defining LGBTQ lives and experiences by how they symbolise the nation.

Such abstractions of minority groups in general, and here LGBTQ people in particular, are always conditioned by majority populations. "Tolerated individuals will always be those who deviate from the norm, never those who uphold it, but they will also be further articulated as (deviant) individuals through the very discourse of tolerance" (Brown, 2009, p. 48). The word "tolerance" implies the overseeing and enduring of something or someone that is unwanted. The status of "the tolerated" as an outsider is sustained and managed, and in order to be tolerated, outsiders can never divert too much from majority norms lest they become intolerable. The social antagonism posted by difference is then not resolved through tolerance – only managed (Brown, 2009, p. 35).

More crucially, "tolerance" of LGBTQ people and racial minorities has also been defined as a national virtue in Sweden (Edenheim, 2020). The term captures the widespread idea that Sweden as a place and as a social and political entity is inherently accommodating of racial, gendered, and sexual difference (Norocel, 2016; Jansson, 2018; Nygren, Martinsson, and Mulinari, 2018); an idea that is supposedly challenged by a surrounding racist and heterosexist "intolerance" (Edenheim, 2020). The concepts of "tolerance" versus "intolerance" reflect a liberal hegemonic discourse which translates inequality as being about individuals' knowledge and values, as opposed to being about individuals' unequal living conditions. The rationale behind "tolerance" is that race, gender, and sexuality are not identities shaped by oppression and exploitation (such as patriarchy, class society, or racism). Instead, these identities are viewed as essential and innate to humans. The oppression of minorities is therefore attributed to individuals' disrespect for innate human differences and

suggests "tolerance" (educating individuals to accept assumedly innate human differences) as the solution to discrimination (Edenheim, 2020).

The concept of "tolerance" has been critiqued for privatising and individualising structural inequality and oppression. Underlying assumptions of the concept as connected to virtues of liberalism, democracy, and modernity also have geopolitical and nationalist undertones, as "tolerance" (and "tolerant people") are consistently located in the West (Brown, 2009; Lentin and Titley, 2012; Edenheim, 2020). This can be read in the quoted exchange between Gerner and Torehammar, in which Gerner says that "the West" is enlightened by tolerance towards both differing sexualities and differing opinions – unlike "the East". As argued by Sharp (1996a, p. 566), invoking "tolerance" as a moral virtue held by Westerners (in her case, people in the USA) renders power-political relations between countries as "a clash of worldviews". In Sweden, "tolerance" has been established as part of the nation-state in the ideological praise of its equality, and is invoked in state policy (Edenheim, 2020). Thus, "tolerance" does not refer to the measurement of individuals' acceptance of differences, but to the nationalist assumptions of Swedes (and Westerners) as morally superior by being "tolerant".

In the fostering of those assumptions, homonationalism is crucial: "the use of 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects [is] the barometer by which the legitimacy of and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated" (Puar, 2015, p. 320). Homonationalism is defined in Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* as a form of nationalist discourse relying on sexual exceptionalism that represents the (own) nation as exceptionally sexually progressive in comparison to other nations (Puar, 2017, p. 2). The expansion of LGBTQ rights in state policies, starting around the late 1990s, marks a change where some queer acts and identities such as homosexual relations and (to a lesser extent) transgender expressions have gone from being incompatible with national identity to being included in – and at times even symbolising – the nation. LGBTQ people have (in some areas) gone from being threats to the state to instead being worthy of protection provided by the state, for example through legislation, policing, border control, or even imperialist warfare, such as USA's "war on terrorism" (Puar, 2017).

Nation-state borders are conceptually and ideologically central to homonationalism, which builds on imagining homophobia and heteronormativity as fitted into maps with rigid political borders. Some nation-states, often in the Global North, are represented as being tolerant and free, while others, often in the Global South, are represented as repressed and repressing. These narratives are frequently supported through global and regional statistical measurements of LGBTQ rights, where nation-states are presented as competitors, comparable by state laws. Such is the case in maps created by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA), which presents rankings of alignment with LGBTQ-accommodating legislation and policies (see Figure 1). The map visualises how many LGBTQ rights and policies

countries have implemented, out of a list of rights including marriage equality, anti-discrimination laws, and conditions for LGBTQ public events and assemblies. Based on these criteria, ILGA creates an index for how well countries perform. The number of criteria fulfilled by each country is expressed in percentages: the higher the percentage, the higher the number of listed criteria fulfilled. The countries are then compared with each other and ranked, visualised on the map by both a list (Figure 1, left-hand side) and colours, where green indicates a high number of fulfilled criteria, whereas red indicates a low number.

The dichotomy of LGBTQ-friendly/anti-LGBTQ places has been theorised as a continuation of the colonial distinction between a "civilised" or "modern" West and a "primitive" or "backwards" East (Bracke, 2012; Puar, 2013; Rao, 2020). The emphasis on time is expressed through a binary between progress and backwardness, which in ILGA's European map (2022) is represented with colours: green, yellow, and red. In Rahul Rao's postcolonial reading, the colours represent traffic lights in a "spatial representation of time", where green indicates movements forward, yellow indicates pausing, and red indicates halt. The countries are represented on the maps as being in different times (Rao, 2020, p. 37). In my view as a geographer, the maps are not so much spatial representations of time as they are chronological representations of space – "a temporal convening of space" (Massey, 2005, p. 69). Space is represented as divided into different temporalities, located by where they are placed "in time" along one single universal route of progress. According to Rao (2020, p. 37), "the banality of the red-yellow-green as an integrated system of signalling suggests that we are all on a road, the same road, governed by a common set of rules". More than being a simplification of real heterogeneity, such representations are continuations of colonial and imperial forms of power/knowledge. By representing and understanding people in "red" places as being "behind", any qualitative difference in historical conditions or lived realities are in Western contexts dismissed as "our past", and only defined in opposition to "Us", which blurs and displaces a real understanding of "Their" lives and conditions (Massey, 2005).
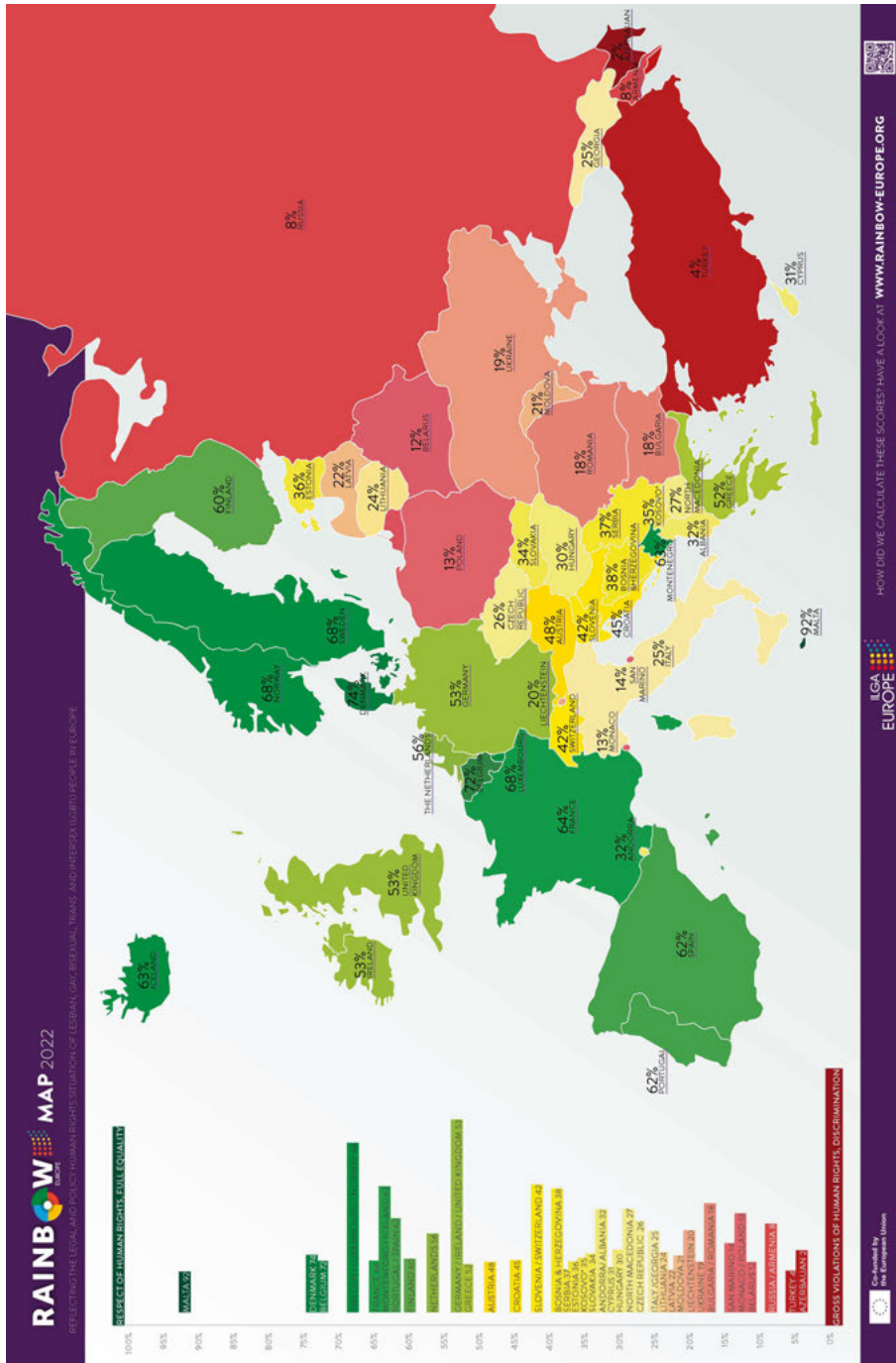
Figure 1. Rainbow map 2022 (ILGA Europe, 2022). For an enlarged map, see: https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/rainbow-europe-2022/

As indicated by Torehammar and Gerner's discussion, however, the reality of heteronormativity and homo- or transphobia, as well as LGBTQ liveability, is not as neatly ordered along nation-state borders as the comparison of LGBTQ legislation may suggest (see also Ammaturo and Slootmaeckers, 2020; Browne et al., 2021). Not least has the homonationalist imperative been put into question by political movements in the Global North that hold national coherency very high but disagree with its expansion of LGBTQ inclusion (that is, homonationalism). In this thesis, such movements are collectively defined as "nationalist anti-LGBTQ politicians and activists". The concept includes neo-Nazis, who have performed verbal and physical attacks on LGBTQ spaces and people throughout the twenty-first century (Expo, 2003; Lööw, 2015, pp. 157–165; Linander, Lauri, and Lauri, 2022). It also covers the more moderate nationalist politicians, such as the now second-largest political party in Sweden, the Sweden Democrats, whose members have resisted various projects promoting gender- and sexual rights in local and national constituencies (RFSU, 2020). Both neo-Nazis and Sweden Democrats have received much public attention and scrutiny for various actions against LGBTQ people, spaces, and symbols. This attention, as I will argue in this thesis, results in Swedish nationalism being reproduced as a contradiction, created by the two opposing elements of homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism.

1.1. Aim and Research Questions

The thesis examines how representations of sexuality, especially LGBTQ identity and rights, in Sweden are (re)produced in contradicting nationalist ideologies. It thus examines how struggles over defining the meanings of sexuality are tied to struggles over the contents of nationalist ideology as well as claims to public spaces. Its contribution to current knowledge of nationalism, sexuality, and far-right politics consists mainly of studying anti-LGBTQ actions, and how these are shaped by, and shape, Swedish nationalism. The thesis analyses in what ways nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, conducted by actors within far- and extreme-right milieus, is configured both through and in opposition to a homonationalist hegemony. It then substantially analyses how various actors reproducing or representing the Swedish nation-state react and respond to such anti-LGBTQ politics and activism in words (discourse) or in action (on behalf of state institutions). The thesis aims to extend the understanding of how sexuality takes shape and is used in place-specific politics of borders, belonging, and attachments.

Thus, the thesis contributes to wider scholarship on how normative sexuality is formed through both material and discursive social processes. In this effort, the thesis also contributes to the wider field of research on homonation-

alism by examining how, or if, homonationalist discourse is affected and potentially altered by – while also affecting and altering – homo- and transphobic activity by white activists and politicians, mainly from the far right. It is well established that homonationalist discourses racialise homo- and transphobia, reifying assumptions of homo- and transphobic Others as being non-white, as migrants in (parts of) Europe, as African, Asian, or Eastern-European. Less analysed, however, is how actual homo- and transphobic political action coming from white nationals – who are also white national*ists* – discursively "fit" in imaginaries of homonational nations. One overarching question driving this thesis is thus*: What are the economic and social processes behind homonationalist discourse, and how are they altered by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?*

This question has shaped the whole process of research for the thesis and is answered in two ways: in research Article I and through the second-level research questions (II–V) it has been divided into. First, the concept of homonationalism needs to be defined in terms of how it has been manifested in Sweden, which is done by asking and answering the overarching first research question and research question II. Second, the overarching research question is divided into the questions of how nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism has been altered by homonationalism (question III), and how homonationalism has been altered by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism (question IV). Last, the state action responding to nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism is examined, moving beyond discourses of the nation to include actions of the nation-state (question V). The research questions are thus as follows:

I. What are the economic and social processes behind homonationalist discourse, and how are they altered by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?

II. How has homonationalism been reified through urban entrepreneurialism in Sweden?

III. Have far-right nationalist and neo-Nazi tactics and discourse changed in relation or reaction to contemporary homonationalist discourse? If so, how?

IV. How has "the nation" been discursively reproduced in reaction to far-right nationalist and neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?

V. How has organised neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ activism been regulated and policed in Swedish public space?

The research questions are answered and discussed in correspondence to the five research articles which are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of articles, research questions, methods, and geographical scope.

Article	Research question	Methods	Geographical scope
Article I Nationalist Contradictions: On the Relations between Homonationalism and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism	What are the economic and social processes behind homonationalist discourse, and how are they affected by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?	Theoretical analysis	Nationalism and sexuality
Article II The Convergence of Homonationalism and Urban Entrepreneurialism	How has homonationalism been reified through urban entrepreneurialism in Sweden?	Interviews, visual and textual analysis	City governance and sexuality
Article III Neo-Nazi Heteroactivism and the Swedish Nationalist Contradiction	Have far-right nationalist and neo-Nazi tactics and discourse changed in relation or reaction to contemporary homonationalist discourse? If so, how?	Critical discourse analysis	Nationalism and sexuality
Article IV Homonationalism on the Defensive: News Media Responses to Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Attacks in Sweden	How has "the nation" been discursively reproduced in reaction to far-right nationalist and neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?	Critical discourse analysis	Nationalism and sexuality
Article V The Dual Policing of Swedish LGBTQ Spaces: Neo-Nazi Anti-LGBTQ Demonstrations and Public Order Regulation in Sweden	How has organised neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ activism been regulated and policed in Swedish public space?	Archival study	State governance and struggles over public space

1.2. Sexuality: A Definition

Before specifying the thesis' theoretical and methodological endeavours, as well as their execution in the research articles, a clarification of the term *sexuality* is in place. This is crucial for specifying the thesis' aim, which is to extend the understanding of how sexuality takes shape and is used in place-specific politics of borders, belonging, and attachments. In short, "sexuality is one set of discourses through which the human capacity for sensation and affect and the human need for social intercourse is historically organised" (Hennessy, 2017, p. 22). I agree with Hennessy's definition, to which we also need to add that the discourses are *geographically* organised, noticeable not least in the homonationalist discourse introduced above. I consider sexuality and sexual identity as constructions, or social systems, for how human affect, companionship, and desire materialise – and are *expected* to materialise, dependent on geographical and historical context.

Theoretically, this thesis draws on and expands critical scholarship on the social, economic, and political processes behind gendered and sexual norms. The term sexuality here does not refer to a fixed identity marker, experiences of identification or desires, or something a person *has*. Rather, sexuality is socially formed through historical and geographical processes, as different social systems and organisations of social life give rise to different understandings and experiences of sexuality. Sexuality is socially constructed and can as such be thought of and researched on different intersecting social levels, such as structures, meanings, everyday interactions, or subjective experiences (Richardson, 2018, p. 19). In this thesis, the levels concerned and examined are those of structure and meaning. Richardson (2018) summarises the first level as "sexuality institutionalized as a particular form of relationship, family structure and practice traditionally based on heterosexual, monogamous marriage". The second level, which she calls social and cultural meaning, covers "how sexuality encodes and structures the socially and culturally available 'scripts' available to us that inform shared understandings and knowledge about sexuality".

Examining how sexuality is structurally and socio-culturally constructed, I draw on writings by Foucault (2002), Wittig (1992), and Butler (2007), who do not separate the terms sex (as in biological sex: females and males), gender (as in socially inscribed identities based on biological sex), and sexuality (as in sexual actions or "orientation": heterosexuality, homosexuality, pansexuality etc.). These categories are not separate from each other but are all regulated through social structures and meaning-making processes of kinship and the reproduction of life. While such a conflation of sex/sexuality/gender may at first glance seem complicated and philosophically dense (which of course it is), it is also quite easy to grasp, possibly even "common-sense", when considering how human sexuality is for the most part classified and experienced

in contemporary heteronormative society, where sexuality is inseparable from conceptions and discussions of gender (Domosh, 1999).

Based on their bodily composition, people are classified as male or female as they enter life (or even earlier, as parents may be informed by medical professionals if their expected child is a "boy" or a "girl"). The classification is based on their genital organs,[1] and becomes recorded and reiterated in hospital administration, population registries, and passports. While it may seem somewhat of a "biological reality" that *most*[2] humans are born with bodies that are possible to rapidly classify as male or female, the classification based on that observable "reality" is nonetheless socially constructed and deeply engraved in a plethora of societal structures. Therefore, the separation of "biological sex" and "gender" – the latter meaning social norms and expectations of males becoming men and females becoming women – obscures the fact that even the classification and symbolic weight of "biological sex" is very much socially constructed (Butler, 2007). The categories of (male and female) sex are abstractions forced upon us, which obscures the material inequality (patriarchy) they reify, by seemingly *natural* categories instead of a system of domination (Butler, 2007, pp. 186–204).

Without classification of sex (and gender), there can be no classification of sexual orientation. If the person classified as biologically male, then gendered as a man, engages in sexual acts[3] with another person classified as female/woman, he is considered heterosexual (desiring the "other" sex). If he engages in sexual acts with another person classified as male/man, he is considered homosexual (desiring the "same" sex). The very existence of different sexual orientations requires the classification of different "sexes", since categories like hetero- and homosexual would make no sense without categories of "males/men" and "females/women". Thus, heteronormativity as a regulatory norm is stabilised through the classifications of sexes (Butler, 2007), while the opposite is also true: heteronormativity as a social system regulates the classifications of sex/gender, which has mostly been thought of as two binary categories (male/female) opposed to each other and unifiable through heterosexuality (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 31).

The term "sexuality" used in this thesis therefore encompasses not only sexual orientation, but sex and gender as well. While sexuality is socialised as "natural", and by many experienced as such, it is nonetheless socialised. Post-

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[1] In Swedish, the sexual character of gendering is linguistically manifested in the terms for sex/sexuality/gender all being tied to the term *kön* (Svenska akademiens ordbok, 1939): könsorgan (genitalia), kön (sex) and könsroll (gender), könsakt or könsumgänge (intercourse), and könsdrift (desire), which clearly shows how gender is firmly connected to the classification of organs, and the social (heteronormative) meaning of sexuality.

[2] See Malantino (2019) for a critique of how medical and scientific epistemologies interpret and diagnose bodies "that don't cohere according to cis-centric, sexually dimorphic, ableist conceptions of somatic normalcy" (p. 2).

[3] The distinction of what acts are defined as "sexual" is of course also part of socially defining sexuality.

structural scholars describe this socialisation in terms of repeated and rehearsed social acts (Butler, 2007), or as knowledge regimes created by state institutions (Foucault, 2002). People learn and repeat the scripts of normative sexuality, which are created and reproduced through institutions such as medicine (classifying normative sexuality and treating deviations) and states (overseeing population growth and setting the institutional and legal frames for sexuality).

1.2.1. Sexuality: Economic Shifts and Hierarchy

The acts and institutions reproducing sexuality according to Butler and Foucault have a function of maintaining social hierarchies or regimes of power, which is why this thesis also draws upon Marxist theorising of sexuality. In this thesis, sexuality is understood to be shaped and constructed not merely by norms, but by norms which can be traced to, and reproduce, global and local hierarchies. Therefore, a brief overview of Marxist explanations of sexuality follows below. What Marxist perspectives capture is an understanding of sexuality as not only shaped through *ideas*, but also by *economic and institutional structures and systems*. Foucault's writing on sexuality (2002), which has been formative of critical research on sexuality, views it as changing through knowledge regimes, emphasising moral and ideological shifts. This section explains how sexuality is also formed by material shifts, seeking to guide the reader to a fuller understanding of what I mean by "sexuality".

Marxist research, particularly Marxist feminist research, emphasises how sexual norms exist to affirm inequality and dominance between "men" and "women":

> The category of sex does not exist a priori, before all society. And as a category of dominance it cannot be a product of natural dominance but of the social dominance of women by men, for there is but social dominance. (Wittig, 1992, p. 5)

Marxist perspectives on sexuality have been advanced by theorising the family and its social role in shaping sexuality (particularly as a unit of production, consumption, and wealth inheritance). In general, Marxist perspectives on family formation have examined either how the modern family form of marriage was shaped materially through economic social change (Engels, 1884), or how capitalism has suppressed (Kollontai, 1923), or shaped (D'Emilio, 1993; Knopp, 1992; Hennessy, 2017), diversions from it. The "modern family form" is here defined as the heterosexual monogamous bond between one man and one woman with an internal division of labour. The man is the head of the household, economically productive through ownership or selling labour, while the woman is responsible for the domestic labour of caring for children and the husband.

According to Engels (1884), the modern family form was necessary for increased accumulated wealth (primarily in the form of cattle and slaves), owned by men in societies where inheritance went from being maternal to being paternal. Using the Roman family institution as an example of this relation, Engels wrote:

> The original meaning of the word "family" (familia) is not that compound of sentimentality and domestic strife which forms the ideal of the present-day philistine; among the Romans it did not at first even refer to the married pair and their children, but only to the slaves. Famulus means domestic slave, and familia is the total number of slaves belonging to one man. As late as the time of Gaius, the familia, id est patrimonium (family, that is, the patrimony, the inheritance) was bequeathed by will. The term was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism, whose head ruled over wife and children and a number of slaves, and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all. (Engels, 1884, p. 31)

The primary economic unit of the family was thus the household, including several generations and unfree persons. This historical and etymological function of families is also stressed by Christine Delphy (1980), who argues that the exploitation by one individual (the male head of the household) persists as unpaid labour by women is appropriated within the household. Earlier forms of this exploitation included women's production of goods, especially on farms, but more of the work previously done in the household has become market commodities for families that can afford them through their own means or state subsidies (food, childcare, cleaning, and other domestic services). Work conducted by women of course also includes what Wittig (1992, p. 6) calls "the compulsory reproduction of 'the species'", which she defines as the exploitative economic base of heterosexuality. According to Wittig, the (heterosexual) marriage is a contract enabling the exploitation of women's reproductive work, especially literal labour (as in giving birth) and childrearing.

In many contemporary marriages women are, especially within the family, increasingly exploited for love and care rather than the concrete production of commodities and goods, or domestic services that can be outsourced, such as childcare (Jónasdóttir, 1988). However, this does not mean that the exploitation of women producing commodities, goods, and domestic services has ceased to exist. Rather, domestic work and the production of food (crops, animals, preparing and conserving), which mainly used to be done unpaid within the family, is instead (also) performed on a global market, by racialised and feminised working classes. Even when women's labour is performed through the global capital market instead of within family units, it is often low paid and undertaken by women from lower classes, differentiated by citizenship, race, and gender (Wright, 2006; Tsing, 2009; Bair, 2010; Mies, 2014; Hierofani, 2016).

According to Federici (2004), the appropriation of women's labour was intensified in the feudal shift to capitalism through several contingent struggles where people, especially women, were dispossessed of communal land and the power over reproductive knowledge and labour. "The construction of a new patriarchal order, making women the servants of the male work-force, was a major aspect of capitalist development" (Federici, 2004, p. 115). This development was also one of spatial alteration, as women were not only stripped of access to communally shared land; they were also limited in accessing public urban spaces (Federici, 2004; Chitty, 2020). Critical thinkers such as Federici (2004), Goldman (1911), and Delphy (1980) have pointed out that the exploitation of women under capitalism includes sexual exploitation, both through marriage and through the market (i.e. prostitution). Thus, the family form and the gendered division of labour are inherently sexual. Said theorists derive what we could call "identities" or "norms" based on sex, gender, and sexuality as constructed through power relations, not through any kind of innate sense of being. The reproduction of sexuality which Butler (2007) takes to be reified through social and lingual acts, or which Foucault (2002) ascribes to knowledge regimes, is according to a Marxist view strongly impacted by the division of labour on local (i.e. the family) and global (i.e. the capitalist market) levels.

1.2.2. Sexuality: Homosexuality

When it comes to researching and theorising non-heterosexual modes of being, some Marxist perspectives have tended to view them as either lesbian escapes from patriarchal exploitation (especially Wittig, 1992), or they have investigated how the conditions for homosexual relations and spaces have been shaped through economic shifts (Knopp, 1992; Hennessy, 2017; Valocchi, 2017). Such works include D'Emilio's (1993) argument about homosexual subcultures being consequential to urban industrial clusters: when individuals were separated from families to a higher degree and when larger numbers of people seeking homosexual relations clustered, it became possible for separate homosexual spaces to form. This does not mean that homosexuality as a set of practices did not exist before industrialism – but that the homosexual identity was shaped through industrial capitalism's alterations of space: homosexuals could to a larger extent meet in urban spaces and create meeting spaces.

D'Emilio's piece and other studies on gay male social formations (such as Castells, 1983) highlight the spatial character of an increased visibility of homosexuality. This is because they take the creation, and noticeability, of communities outside of the traditional family form to be a consequence of urbanisation (see also Knopp, 1992). While many such arguments are based on research on gay white male spaces, there have been crucial interventions in theorising from lesbian (Kenttamaa Squires, 2019; Gieseking, 2020; Preser,

2021; Tang, 2021) or racialised queer (Haritaworn, 2015; Rosenberg, 2017, 2021) space-making practices, which also shows how these have been shaped by capitalism in many ways, not least by housing markets enabling and restricting different spaces for LGBTQ people to live, meet, and organise.

If the spatial and social formation of homosexuality was a result of the urban restructuring of space, so was the policing of it. The important contribution from Chitty (2020) has pushed this argument further, as he examined sexual relations between men in Mediterranean pre-capitalist cities (around the years 1400–1700) as formed by "demographic peculiarities, extreme class polarisation, and such early circulation of men and goods from distant lands" (Chitty, 2020, p. 73). His argument is dense[4] and includes several examples of how the policing of sodomy was utilised in power struggles. These include, for example, making it profitable in city state economics (having sodomites paying charges to avoid punishments of public humiliation). He also argues that sodomy laws were frequently combined with other regulations utilised by ruling classes to hold at bay the social instability in times of economic shifts. These shifts have much to do with the ruling classes' geographical projects, particularly visible in how sodomy laws were globalised during imperial expansion, a time when, he argues, piracy and sodomy laws were ideological twins (Chitty, 2020, p. 105). Through a historical reading, Chitty shows that sodomy was not policed solely by ideas of morality – but instead exploited in economic and political struggles among the elites.

1.2.3. Sexuality: Summary and Outlook

In the above sections I have laid out a definition of sexuality as socially constituted, rather than essential or individual. As such, the embodiment, manifestation, and ideological statements of what sexuality *is* relies on the social organisation of human reproduction and classifications of sex. The ideological construction of sexuality (and thus also of sex/gender) is both consequential to and reproducing the oppression of women and people who divert from normative sexuality. The (institutional, lingual, and social) category of sex "shapes the mind as well as the body since it controls all mental production" (Wittig, 1992, p. 8). Therefore, there is no "natural" or pre-social sex or sexuality, only sexuality manifested and conceptualised through a range of historically and geographically contingent processes. More importantly, sexual difference (between men/women, heterosexuals/homosexuals, cis/trans etc.) is created through classification systems which are traceable to hierarchical gendered divisions of labour (Delphy, 1980; Wittig, 1992; Federici, 2004).

This definition of sexuality, informed by post-structural, feminist, and Marxist thinkers, provides an insight into the ontological grounds of the thesis,

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[4] The work was never finished by Chitty himself but was published by his friends and colleagues after his death.

which aims not at experienced sexuality but at *the social meaning of sexuality*. It also serves as an introductory guide to the forthcoming theoretical chapters and research articles. The remainder of the thesis seeks to explain how a set of particular ideas and norms about sexuality have taken shape in contradiction to each other through different social and economic changes. The above outline of sexuality as connected to sex/gender hierarchies, and as a social and economic process, is therefore crucial for the reader to bear in mind for a fuller grasp of the thesis' argument, research design, and findings.

1.3. The Argument of the Thesis

The particular set of ideas and norms of sexuality here concerns the symbolic role that LGBTQ people play in Swedish nationalism. Since the entrance of the concept of homonationalism (and the actual existing discourse it describes), an increasing number of studies tell how contemporary Western nations, including Sweden, have renegotiated this role, ambiguously embracing rather than entirely ostracising LGBTQ people within nationalist imaginaries. The social meaning of homosexuality and sexuality in general has indeed been altered, as nation-states are compared to each other as more or less modern and enlightened by being more or less allowing for LGBTQ identities to be recognised in laws and public policies.

However, geographical work on nationalism entails that struggles over the meaning of nationalisms and the nations' outsiders or insiders are subject to constant change (Paasi, 2021). Nationalism is an ongoing process, marked by struggle and conflict, and is never as monolithic as nationalist ideology would have it. These struggles and conflicts are not only inevitable, but further a fruitful entry point for research on nationalism (Koch, 2023). Especially if, as this thesis does, seeking to describe not only certain features of certain nationalisms, but also *how* these features are contested and reproduced through struggles of various kinds (Goswami, 2004).

This work therefore adds to previous research on homonationalism by examining how it is reproduced locally in dialectic tandem with nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism. While acknowledging that homonationalism, nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism (and nationalism in general) are global phenomena (Goswami, 2002; Puar, 2017), there are always local, specific struggles over sexuality in different national/ist discourses (see Rao, 2020, and Savci, 2021, for great investigations of different local struggles of national/ist sexuality as well as their global elements and connections).

The overall argument of the thesis, informed by empirical research, is therefore that sexuality in Sweden shapes and is shaped by nationalism, and that nationalism is in turn created through struggles over the meaning of what sexuality is and should be in Sweden. In these struggles, LGBTQ people are

used symbolically as representatives of Swedish nationalism, by signalling either national modernity (homonationalism) or national decay (nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism). These opposing symbolic discourses on LGBTQ people are in contemporary nationalism reliant on each other and reinforced by one another in a nationalist contradiction.

1.4. Disposition

As this is a compilation thesis, it consists of a kappa (Chapters 1–5 and a concluding chapter at the end of the thesis) and of individual research articles. The kappa explains the theoretical and methodological grounds upon which the articles rest. It also contextualises the articles by clarifying the strands of research in which they belong and which they contribute to. Furthermore, the kappa introduces the thesis' argument and shows how the articles together contribute to support it.

Following this introductory chapter are two theoretical chapters on nationalism and sexuality, which both rest on the ontological assumption that sexuality is socially constituted through economic and discursive processes in general, and through nationalism in particular. In the first of these (Chapter 2), the concepts are laid out and explained in a wider sense, drawing upon their global compositions. In Chapter 3, the particularities and historical foundations of Swedish nationalism as well as the social organisation and structures of sexuality are provided. The two theoretical chapters mirror each other as nationalism and its formative functions for sexuality are first described in abstraction, to then be described in the concrete foundations and manifestations of Swedish nationalism. Each chapter introduces nationalism and its historical foundations to then lay out the thesis' core argument by explaining how contradicting ideologies of sexuality work to reinforce both each other and nationalism as an ideology defining and deciding sexuality.

The fourth chapter covers methodology and describes the research process, including the selection and analysis of data. It then describes how the ontological approach laid out above has impacted the research design and execution, as well as ethical problems deriving from it. Thereafter follows a conclusion of the kappa (Chapter 5), which summarises and clarifies the thesis' argument and contribution. The remainder of the thesis presents the outcome of the research undertaken, divided into five research articles (Chapters 6–10). These all contribute to the thesis' overarching argument, showing through different empirical studies how homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are contrasting, *contradicting*, elements creating and maintaining a *nationalist contradiction*.

The first article develops and deepens the explanation of the nationalist contradiction. While the kappa already defines the concept, the first article

strengthens it further by theorising the contradicting nationalist discourses regarding how they either exploit or exclude LGBTQ people economically, socially, and symbolically. Distinguishing between exploitation and exclusion, homonationalism is explained as an exploitation of LGBTQ people, which contradicts and is contradicted by the nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics of excluding LGBTQ people. It also exemplifies how the contradicting discourses reinforce each other as they appear in dialectic opposition. The article thus highlights how the nationalist contradiction is reproduced through, and in turn reproduces, the changing social and economic organisation of sexuality.

All subsequent articles are empirical pieces which show the reader concretely how the dialectic oppositions and struggles between homonationalism and anti-LGBTQ politics and activism have played out in Sweden. The second article focuses on how homonationalism is an economically exploitative ideology through a study of urban entrepreneurial branding of cities as "LGBTQ friendly". It is followed by the third article which lays out how the contradicting anti-LGBTQ politics and activism have taken shape in opposition to Swedish homonationalism. This article also contains a discussion of how anti-LGBTQ activism has been responded to in ways which emphasise and reproduce the ideas of a homonationalist, sexually exceptional Swedish nation-state.

The analysis of discourses in response to nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism is then expanded in the fourth article, which explains how homonationalism is reinforced through reactions in news media to domestic far-right homophobia and heterosexism. The fifth and final article widens the scope by examining how nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and action have been shaped and negotiated by Swedish state officials working in the police or courts. It does so through an analysis of not only the conflicts over nationalist discourse (as in Articles II–IV) but also the conflicts over public spaces, where a large part of nationalist anti-LGBTQ activism has taken place.

Lastly, the thesis is summarised in a conclusion, which highlights and discusses the main empirical contributions and the arguments based on them. With this last chapter, the reader is provided with a condensed explanation of how Swedish nationalism has been reproduced through a contradiction, composed of opposing views on national sexuality.

2. Nationalism, Homonationalism, and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism

Three concepts are central to the events studied in this thesis. The first of them is *nationalism*, the second is *homonationalism*, and the third is *nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism*. The concepts are related yet different from each other. The first is the most abstract, referring to the deeply pervasive, global, longstanding ideology of nation-states as being the primary unit of social, political, and economic community. The latter terms instead refer to specific forms and enactments of nationalism in historical and geographical context. Hence, the concepts should not be subsumed entirely into each other, as the first refers to a wider ideology, and the latter refer to specific political articulations and actions in which that ideology is manifested, shaped, and reproduced. This chapter defines the concepts and how the concrete forms of nationalism (homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism) reproduce the wider nationalist ideology (nationalism) by contradicting each other.

This chapter highlights theories of nationalism that are in line with the thesis' aim: to study how contestations over symbolic meanings of LGBTQ-subjectivity reproduce and alter Swedish nationalism. Here, the purpose of studying nationalism as expressed by Fuchs (2019) has been useful. According to him:

> A critical theory of contemporary nationalism has two tasks: (a) it needs to analyse what nationalism is, in what political-economic context it stands, and why it exists; and (b) it needs to analyse how the ideological structure of contemporary nationalism is communicated. (Fuchs, 2019, p. 8)

The first task is divided between this chapter and Chapter 3, as this chapter explains "what nationalism is" while the subsequent chapter explains the political-economic context: how it has developed in Sweden and Swedish nationalism(s). The second task identified by Fuchs, (b), is carried out in the thesis' research articles. The articles examine how nationalism has been reproduced and communicated in contradictory ways through both antipathies and sympathies towards LGBTQ people, who are either defined as threats or as symbolic resources to the Swedish nation-state.

2.1. Nationalism: What it is and Why it Exists

Nationalism is an ideology through which people perceive and experience life in a world made up by nation-states. As such it is geographical, as it depends on how space is socially configured by territories, boundaries, borders, and meanings ascribed to nationality. Nationalism is therefore "a *spatial* expression of community", through which land is understood, governed, and experienced as national territory (Koch, 2023, p. 201, emphasis in original). It is thus a mode of creating, comprehending, and experiencing the social meaning of space (Kaiser, 2002, p. 231; Koefoed and Simonsen, 2007). Nationalism as an ideology stems from the *nation as a social form*: a set of practices and institutions through which social life is shaped and conceived. It is a global social form, as it relies on a global structural inter-state system[5] in which all space is territorially bound to a state, and nationhood and statehood are tied to each other, creating (or seeking to create) *nation-states* (Goswami, 2002). Nationalism is a primary contemporary ideology because the nation has become the model way of political organisation (Smith, 1998, p. 116).

While all nations (and, accordingly, all expressions of nationalism) are believed to be unique, they are only particular in relation to a global universality of the political nation form:

> Nationalist movements and nation-states claim the patrimony of a culturally singular, territorially bounded national community that, in turn, is represented as an instantiation of a universal political and cultural form. The doubled character of the nation form as both universal and particular mirrors, in this respect, the spatial partitioning of the modern inter-state system into a series of mutually exclusive, formally equivalent, sovereign states. Nationalist movements and nationalizing states present themselves as universalistic within the confines of the national community, but as particularistic without, that is, in relation to other nations and nation-states. Likewise, nationalizing states claim to represent the universal interest of a bounded citizenry within a delimited national space. Yet these universal interests are configured as particular within the context of the inter-state system. Nationalist claims of particularity and the imagined singularity of national formations only become intelligible against and within a global grid of formally similar nations and nation-states. (Goswami, 2002, p. 785)

Nations and nation-states are taken to be, and act, as fixed geographic entities that are the main definers of human difference: every person is assumed to have a particular nationality, decided by which nation they live in, or are born in. At the same time, nationalism is also the main expression of homogeneity, as all people belonging to a particular nation-state are assumed to share interests as well as history, language, and values (see also Lefebvre, 2009, pp. 112–

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[5] Some of the institutions reproducing these systems are borders and passport regulations, global capital markets, the World Bank and the United Nations (Goswami, 2002; Lefebvre, 2009, p. 133, 187).

113). Goswami emphasises, however, that the nation form homogenises not only internal subjects within a specific nation (national communities). Rather, nationalism is also globally homogenising, as belonging to a (particular) nation-state has become universal by way of the nation form being a global mode of political organisation and expression of community (see also Smith, 1998, p. 7). National belonging is, through the structure and ideology of nationalism, assumed and experienced as a primary identity and category of group belonging. This means that humans are socially differentiated and categorised by their nationalities as well as their citizenship in a global structure of inter-state systems.

Nationalism in contemporary modern states is hence argued to shape and be reproduced through most, if not all, individuals' everyday experiences and their understanding of them (Billig, 1995; Koefoed and Simonsen, 2007; Hearn and Antonsich, 2018). Nationalist ideology can thus more or less be traced in every communicative exchange or administrative setting. The nation is narrated in sports, where forty or so players in a game of football represent a competition between countries (Koch and Paasi, 2016, p. 2), and in the ILGA maps (see Introduction, this thesis), where nation-states instead compete in the "sports" of LGBTQ inclusion. Per this definition, nationalism is not restricted to a limited number of actors or movements, but circulates through institutions, structures, and a multitude of human interactions (Anderson, 1983; Goswami, 2002; Ahmed, 2013; Szulc, 2016; Militz, 2019).

Research on nationalism as pervasive stands in contrast to scholarship that instead views nationalism as an ideology and a political project reproduced and utilised only by a marginal group of political movements. Nationalism would, according to the contrasting strand, only be found in independence movements, far-right parties, or genocidal regimes, whose (bad) ethnonationalist violence should be separated from (good) civic patriotism (see for example Snyder, 1976; Connor, 1993). What this view misses is how nations are loaded with meaning and have a real impact on the everyday experiences of all people – not only those loudly proclaiming to speak in the name of the nation. Narrow definitions of nationalism also disregard the ideology's history and geography – how it has evolved over time and in different places. Expressions of what defines national communities, and their exteriors change over time and place (Paasi, 1997) and should thus not be recognised only in movements expressing one particular mode of nationalism. To view only a narrow set of expressions as nationalist (i.e. far-right movements, independence movements etc.) is to "freeze" the ideology of nationalism, to recognise nationalism as rigid and always looking the same, thus missing how it is articulated and changes in different historical and geographical contexts.

The emphasis on nationalism as a pervasive ideology emerged in critical research in the 1990s, scrutinising projections of nationalist ideology onto (mainly non-Western) "Others", where own nations and nationalities were de-

clared to have passed and overcome nationalism (Koch, 2023, p. 202). Towards the end of the twentieth century, some argued that nationalism had played its part in Western states and that post-national, cosmopolitan modes of political, economic, and social organisation were becoming the norm (Hobsbawm, 1990, pp. 181–182). Assuming that nationalist modes of community were on the decline enabled the recognition of only certain specific nationalist expressions, which were always carried out in non-Western places or by marginal communities within the West. Being a crucial contributor to the scrutiny of this turn, Billig (1995, pp. 15–19) argued that liberal Western academics in general identified nationalists as either irrational extremists (such as participants in armed conflicts and genocides) or heroic figures (for example anti-colonial independence fighters).

Per these narrow definitions, "nationalism can be seen almost everywhere but 'here'" (Billig, 1995, p. 15). Scholars arguing that nationalism is a structural part of everyday life and meaning making thus critically responded to scholarship which mistook *changing* expressions of nationalism for *disappearing* expressions of nationalism. Any claims to nationalism being disappearing (often referring to nationalism *in Europe*) at the end of the twentieth century could be swiftly disproven by the growing influence of nationalist movements, including far-right political parties. The insistence on separating nationalist movements from a wider nationalism, however, prevails. Research seeking to understand contemporary nationalist movements, such as far-right political parties, always runs the risk of describing nationalist parties as the *only* nationalists acting in an otherwise non-nationalist context, or as being the *bad* nationalists threatening the *good* (civic and inclusive) sense of national community and solidarity (see Koch, 2023).

Rather than identifying nationalism only in fringe historical actors and moments, Billig and others (such as Paasi, 1997; Lagerqvist, 2014; Hansson and Jansson, 2021) show how nationalism is instead a widespread, multifaceted, and dynamic core ideology of modern life. Despite of its perseverance – or because of it – nationalism is an ideological construct, in the sense that it obscures complex realities and struggles behind the appearances of nations. Nations then appear as natural, unchangeable, and coherent, assuming that all people living in a nation share a distinct "culture" (whatever that may be)[6] and a joint interest in the wellbeing of the nation (Luxemburg, 1976, p. 108). It is an ideology which is reproduced through devotion to the nation, and its "imagined community"[7] (Anderson, 1983) defined by categorising and separating people into groups based on geographical location and origin, and which assumes these imagined groups to be natural, everlasting, and essential. The real

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[6] See Yuval-Davis (1997, p. 40–46) and Mitchell (2000, pp. 12–16) for substantial discussions on the term.
[7] Imaginary meaning created: nations consist of people *imagining* themselves to form a spatial community. While the communities are imaginary, they are not *false*, in the sense that they could be juxtaposed by truer, *real* forms of companionship (Anderson, 1983, p. 6).

heterogeneity (such as class, religion, gender, race, values, and ethics) existing within nation-state borders are obscured and denied, as modern nation-states order themselves as racially and culturally homogeneous (Goldberg, 2002, p. 16).

2.2. The Colonial Foundations of Nationalism

While arguably pervasive, nationalism has a history and a political function derived from colonialism. According to Penrose (1990), "the *ideology* of nationalism is very much a product of the 18th century and […] at its simplest, nationalism is the pursuit of the idea that political and cultural boundaries should coincide" (p. 429, emphasis in original). Nationalism thus combines ideas about shared culture (nation) and shared political organisation (state), in practice mainly through nation-states. It is strongly tied to racism, where geo-political conflicts, or global and local inequalities, are translated into notions of national or "cultural" differences. Whereas some forms of racism are articulated by defining people as biologically superior or inferior, in nationalist discourses racism is more commonly articulated as differentiating between *culturally* superior or inferior people (Miles, 1993, pp. 62–79; Pred, 2000, p. 27; Lentin and Titley, 2012). Because national belonging (owing to nationalist ideology) is taken as the main defining cultural trait, racism is inseparable from nationalism, especially as it is invoked through discrimination, exclusion, and violence towards immigrants and "non-nationals". While racism and nationalism are social processes not entirely reducible to each other, racism is nonetheless a fundamental component in nationalism (Balibar, 1991). In the words of Robert Miles (1993, p. 76): "[T]he ideas of 'race' and 'nation', as in a kaleidoscope, merge into one another in varying patterns, each simultaneously highlighting and obscuring the other".

The connection between racism and nationalism becomes clearer when considering how they both are historically derived from capitalist and imperialist expansion. Nationalist ideology is widely recognised as having originated around the eighteenth or nineteenth century, coinciding with imperial projects of that time and the construction of modern nation-states in the West (Penrose, 1990; Smith, 1998). Nationalism therefore was, and is, part of enabling global exploitation and imperialism, while the nation-state (hailed and affirmed through nationalist ideology) is a "tool for domination and conquest" (Luxemburg, 1976, p. 175). During the colonial projects of European powers, racist classifications emerged and intensified, regarding white Europeans or their descendants as superior over the people they (thus "rightly") enslaved and exploited (Goldberg, 2002). It therefore has been, and still is, part of evolving power inequalities (Penrose, 1990). The historically and geographically complex formations of contemporary nationalist ideology are thus consequential to two simultaneous processes: the dispossession and exploitation of colonised

people, and the ideological construction of national foundations of people sharing national histories, belonging, and myths. The first process shows not only the connection between racism and nationalism, but also the convergence of capitalism and nationalism, as they took shape through the increased circulation of people and commodities (and people *as* commodities) in colonial projects and conflicts (Miles, 1993, p. 61).

Nationalism in its modern form has therefore been traced historically to when European economic centres were established and competed with one another for recourses in the American, African, and Asian peripheries (Goldberg, 2002; Smith, 1998, p. 49). During this colonial stage of uneven development, racist boundaries were drawn between coloniser and colonised (Goldberg, 2002), and later between the civilised nations and barbaric "Others" external to them (Miles, 1993). This is true also for Swedish nationalism, which is described further in Chapter 3.

2.3. Sexing the Nation

> The family is a miniature of the nation. (Fanon, 1986, p. 142)

> Nationalist rhetoric is characteristically heterosexual/heterosexist, most especially in its promotion of the nuclear family. (Sharp, 1996b, p. 105)

Nationalism is not only founded on racism and the categorisation of humans into races, but also on sexism and the categorisation of humans into sexes. Racialisation and sexualisation are intertwined in nationalist ideologies, not least since race, as a nationalist category, is reproduced (socially and "biologically") through heterosexual encounters and structures (Hill Collins, 1998).

Both the nation and the family are geographical, economic, and political units: sexualised spaces thought of as communities made up by different (and differently sexed) individuals. This leads to the nation being imagined as a family, and the family being imagined as a nation (Hill Collins, 1998; Johansson and Molina, 2005, p. 269). The term sexualisation (in sexualised spaces) refers to how humans are socially constructed as different from one another and categorised based on sex and sexuality. Sexuality therefore covers identity constructions such as "gender", "sex", or "sexual orientation", which are all constructed through a social structuring of sexuality (Johansson and Molina, 2005, p. 265; see also this thesis, Section 1.3).

In nationalism and nationalist discourse, sexuality is configured through attributing different roles to women and men to (socially and biologically) reproduce the nations to which they belong. In a large part of nationalist discourses, men have been imagined and discursively represented as the individ-

uals fraternally belonging to the nation and being those responsible for its survival (by for example partaking in wars). Women, on the other hand, have more frequently been excluded from that fraternal national community, and have instead been symbolic resources for the nation, being either mothers or vulnerable citizens needing (male) protection. These heteronormative sexualised scripts generally have the own nation imagined as a feminine body, alongside the actual bodies of women, as needing protection from foreign penetration literally and figuratively. The imagined foreign threats against the nation are in turn also sexually configured, since the feared potential perpetrator is described as unnaturally sexually aggressive – as perverse (Sharp, 1996b, pp. 97–100; Goswami, 2004, pp. 199–203).

While the nation is *generally* represented as feminine, there are also many instances of representing the nation as masculine: a fraternal community or a paternal control and protection of its members, such as the idea of a "fatherland" instead of a "motherland" (see for example Theweleit, 1987; Höjdestrand, 2020). When the nation is symbolised as feminine, it is through discourses emphasising a need for protecting the nation. When the nation instead is symbolised as masculine, it is through discourses emphasising the nation as the protector, or an authority.

We can recognise the sexualised scripts in many contemporary nationalist projects and discourses, perhaps most clearly – but certainly not merely – in contemporary conspiracy theories about "the great replacement". The conspiracy theory in sum consists of perceiving and fearing that racially homogeneous white national populations in Europe and European nations are becoming "replaced" by non-Europeans (Ekman, 2022, p. 1130). A threat which would then be overcome not only through the exclusion of non-Europeans, but also through the reproduction of "racially pure" nationals in nuclear heteronormative families. Hence, the heteronormative white nuclear family is a core institution for many nationalist projects, as the family is the space where the nation's future inhabitants are reproduced (Hill Collins, 1998). In contemporary European nationalisms, white national families are politically central, as they are the means for "keeping the nation white" – protecting it from "the great replacement" (Siddiqui, 2021).

The central role of nuclear families in nationalism is most evidently (but again, not *only*) manifested in projects coming from the far right (Mudde, 2019, p. 148). Examples of how the great replacement theory has been translated in a Swedish context can be found in several of the statements and campaigns made by the Sweden Democrats. In one of their most widely spread video campaigns from 2010, they visualised the threat of a great replacement and its racialised and sexualised underpinnings. The video is described in detail by Mattias Ekman (2022, p. 1136):

[…] people are feeding cash into two automated money counters. On the table there are two signs that read "Administrative Officer. Pensions" and "Administrative Officer. Immigration". A numeric figure, that connotes the state budget, is counting down rapidly in the foreground. A female voice declares "all politics is about prioritizations", creating a binary opposition between pensions and immigration. Suddenly, a loud alarm much like a civil defence siren sounds, a red beacon starts flashing in the background and the voice says, "now you have a choice". Two red emergency stop brakes simultaneously drop from above, one with the word "pensions" and the other with "immigration" written on them. The combination of the semiotic resources connotes a national emergency. The two breaks function as metaphors for tax spending (or the possibilities of cutting them) and anchor the message that there are only state funds for one of these "options". So far, the clip mainly reproduces a common anti-immigration message by juxtaposing two "tax-consuming" groups. The clip then shifts to a person approaching the two emergency breaks. It is an elderly lady pushing a medical walker in front of her. The camera shifts between a close-up of the face of the elderly lady (with a Swedish appearance [read: white]) and the slowly moving wheels of the walker. The lady has a determined look in her eyes and makes her way slowly towards the two emergency breaks. Suddenly, she looks over her shoulder and the camera shifts to an approaching group of (supposedly) women, all dressed in black burqas and niqabs. The women are pushing strollers in front of them. They approach fast and start to race the elderly lady towards the emergency breaks. The clip ends with a close-up centred on the two breaks, with the elderly lady's hand trying to reach the "immigration break" and several hands simultaneously reaching for the "pension break". The scene ends with the voice stating: "on 19th of September, you can choose the immigration break over the pension break, vote for the Sweden Democrats".

In the video, the people "competing" for nation-state resources are all women. The white, elderly woman is a woman needing protection and monetary support from the nation-state. Put up as a threat against her well-being is a group of Muslim women with children. The video thus clearly communicates that white women as individuals need protection, as their wellbeing is threatened by immigrants, whose sexual reproduction (symbolised by the strollers) is narrated as costly for the Swedish nation-state and directly harming white Swedish women. In the video, Muslims are represented as threats not only nationally, but also sexually, by having Muslim women contributing to a supposed (racialised) "overpopulation" (indicated by the strollers).

While men are absent in the video, they are in general far from absent in nationalist imaginaries, in which they are often given roles as "protectors" against perceived "demographic attacks". If women are gendered as in need of protection, men, or abstract masculine symbols, are gendered as the protectors. The allegory of patriarchal households being miniature nation-states is thus repeated through the different social roles connected to femininity (passive) and masculinity (active) in nation-states. These are reproduced in ideological constructions of men as protectors of their families, and of the nation, by keeping both spaces safe from perceived "bad men":

> The "good" man is one who keeps vigilant watch over the safety of his family and readily risks himself in the face of threats from the outside in order to protect the subordinate members of his household. The logic of masculinist protection, then, includes the image of the selfish aggressor who wishes to invade the lord's property and sexually conquer his women. These are the bad men. Good men can only appear in their goodness if we assume that lurking outside the warm familial walls are aggressors who wish to attack them. (Young, 2003, p. 4)

Young's theorisation of the masculinist, protective state is closely aligned to feminist theories of nationalism as a heteronormative ideology, in which the nation is imagined to be an allegory of the male-headed family. Nationalism as an ideology relies on symbolic representations of sex and sexuality. Through the nation-state, sexuality is shaped materially through legal and economic structures which go hand in hand with these representations, such as marriage laws, anti-sodomy laws, and abortion laws (Rydström and Mustola, 2007; Andersson, 2011; Eduards, 2012).

This subchapter has explained how sexuality is integrated in, and socially reproduced through, nationalist ideology. In many nationalist scripts, the nation is thus conceived as an allegory of the nuclear family, where the nation is symbolised as feminine and in need of protection, or as masculine when it is the institution set out to protect its members. While the above cited feminist analyses of nationalist heteronormativity explain how sexuality has been reproduced as heteronormative through nationalism, these scripts are constantly changing in tandem with changing social definitions of heterosexuality and of sexuality in general. As will become clearer in the next section, the nation is not heteronormative a priori and not all nationalist discourses require all national members or subjects to be heterosexual or cisgendered.

2.4. Homonationalism

> There is nothing inherently or intrinsically antination or antinationalist about queerness. (Puar, 2017, p. 77)

> Once excluded as sexual outlaws from the hallowed institutions of family and property, same-sex couples now represent model neoliberal citizens in many high-income countries. (Chitty, 2020, p. 23)

Sexuality is always entwined in nationalist ideology, and vice versa, but the specific ways in which this is manifested vary over time and space. While this chapter so far has provided examples of how nationalism *mostly* relies on heteronormative symbolism and institutionalisation, this does not suggest that *all*

nationalisms, or forms of nationalism, are inherently or entirely heteronormative. Instead, nationalism can be, has been, and often is, founded on different ideological structures of sexuality.

One such set of nationalist structures of sexuality is *homonationalism*, which emerged in the beginning of the twenty-first century. This newer sexual nationalist script features LGBTQ subjects as symbolic representations of nationalist superiority. Homonationalism as an ideology defines nation-states as comparatively superior or inferior measured by LGBTQ rights and visibility. A nation-state's level of modernity and civility are judged by, for example, viewing Pride parades as "litmus tests" that indicate the modernity or, relatedly, the proximity to Europe of specific nations (Slootmaeckers, 2017). The term homonationalism was coined in Jasbir Puar's (2017 [2007]) book *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Homonationalism is a nationalist discourse relying on sexual exceptionalism, in which the nation is imagined as exceptionally sexually progressive in comparison to other nations (Puar, 2017, p. 2).

Puar coined the concept in response to feminist research that theorises the nation as rigidly heterosexual and heteronormative (see Section 2.3), and she argues that homosexuals are not always, or inevitably, positioned outside of nationalism. Heteronormativity is frequently but not *inevitably* a stable core element in nationalism. Rather, contemporary nationalist discourses and processes may – and do – incorporate LGBTQ people into sexualised scripts of nationalism. These scripts hold the LGBTQ subject as a symbol of the nation, translating changing sexual social norms and struggles for sexual rights into matters of national identity. This has become evident through a rich body of research on homonationalism showing how LGBTQ rights have become narrated and politically defined as a past problem in Western nation-states and an urgent problem in Southern and Eastern countries, for example through parliamentary acts (Ammaturo, 2015; Lalor and Browne, 2018; Slootmaeckers, 2017), political messages and speeches (Bracke, 2012; Kehl, 2018; Redd and Russell, 2020), military campaigns and discourses (Puar, 2017; Strand and Kehl, 2019), and tourism (Puar, 2002; Hubbard and Wilkinson, 2015; Hartal and Sasson-Levy, 2021).

In all these homonationalist discourses, historical and present oppressions and inequalities are glossed over in simplifying narratives of nations – and their citizens – as modern and LGBTQ friendly, or as barbaric and homophobic. In homonationalist discourse, we therefore find resemblances with nationalism as it was described earlier in Section 2.1, namely as an ideology assuming nations to be unitary and essential, sharing a "culture". This disregards the messy reality of inequalities within and across nations, including how their current forms originated from the colonial remapping of the world:

> Debates regarding which communities, countries, cultures, or religions are more, less, equally, similarly, or differently homophobic miss a more critical

assessment regarding the conditions of its possibility and impossibility, conditions revolving around economic incentives, state policies on welfare and immigration, and racial hierarchy, rather than some abstracted or disengaged notion of culture per se. (Puar, 2017, p. 29)

Homonationalism is thus one form nationalist ideology may take, bypassing several social, economic and political processes via ideas of stable, isolated countries that are imagined as stable social units in a world composed of comparable, equally stable, nation-states. Such comparisons are often made by bolstering the ("own") nation as sexually enlightened in transnational comparison.

While homonationalism follows an expansion of LGBTQ rights and visibility in public spaces (see Section 3.4 for how this is the case in Sweden), it simultaneously and conflictingly reiterates heterosexuality as the norm, defined by homosexuality as its constitutive opposite, be it a tolerable or even desired opposite. In homonationalist discourses, LGBTQ people are typically given the status of "equal but different", mainly recognising forms of non-cisheteronormative acts and experiences which do not divert *too much* from heterosexual norms. Here, the same-sex marriage serves as the most obvious example, as queer relations are folded into national normalcy by being understood as variations of the traditional monogamous relationships authorised by the state (Puar, 2017, p. 51). While the homonationalist nation-state is claimed to be sexually diverse without limits, the diversity offered requires that the formerly "deviant" (homo)sexual Other conforms to the boundaries of (the somewhat expanded) sexual norms (Sabsay, 2012, p. 610).

If homonationalism obscures the conditions behind what makes homophobia or its absence possible (Puar, 2017, p. 29), scholars and researchers using the homonationalist concept have identified several circumstances that made homonationalism possible. Of these, two wider historical and geographical processes reoccur as explanatory for the emergence of homonationalism: colonialism and neoliberalism.

2.4.1. Homonationalism's Colonial Foundations

Colonialism lays the ground for and is reproduced by homonationalism. The contemporary lines between LGBTQ-friendly (homonational) and homophobic nation-states correspond more or less directly to the lines between colonising and colonised states. Such is the case in the United Kingdom, where homophobia is medially and politically positioned in for example Uganda and India (Lalor and Browne, 2018; Rao, 2020; Wahab, 2021), and in the Netherlands (Bracke, 2012), Germany (Haritaworn, 2015) or Sweden (Kehl, 2018), where the homophobic Other is constructed in the form of Muslim migrants.

These works explain homonationalism to be a form of (neo)colonialism (Bracke, 2012) or homocolonialism (Slootmaeckers, 2017), as the LGBTQ-

friendly subject – or the LGBTQ subject – is racialised as white and in need of protection from non-white homophobic Others (Haritaworn, 2015; Puar, 2017). This racialised imaginary falls back on using LGBTQ-friendliness as a measurement of national progress and enlightenment, which in turn is a continuation of the colonial distinction between "the so-called advanced western democracies in opposition to their 'undeveloped others'" (Sabsay, 2012, p. 606; see also El-Tayeb, Haritaworn, and Bacchetta, 2015). The colonial separation of Western democracies and "undeveloped others" further serves as a justification for colonial politics, such as "the war on terror" (Puar and Rai, 2002; Puar, 2017; Meyer, 2020), anti-migration politics in Europe (Sabsay, 2012; Sörberg, 2017; Boulila, 2019), and colonialist rescue narratives of "saving Muslim queer women" (Jungar and Peltonen, 2015), "saving gays" (Bracke, 2012), or "saving LGBT refugees" (Hiller, 2022) from Muslim and/or non-European men.

2.4.2. Homonationalism as Neoliberal Sexual Politics

Homonationalism is not only contingent on and a continuation of colonialism, it is also, relatedly, identified as part of a *neoliberal* form of sexual politics,[8] one generally termed *homonormativity*: a sexual politics which cherishes heteronormative institutions (such as the nuclear family), but introduces LGBTQ subjects as a depoliticised social group seeking "access to the institutions of domestic privacy, the 'free' market, and patriotism" (Duggan, 2002, p. 179). Neoliberalism as a term refers to the globally widespread political ideology, and connected policies, of economic privatisation, marketisation and rollbacks of welfare policies and programmes. While neoliberalism is multifaceted and integrated differently in different geographical contexts (Larner, 2003; Peck, 2004), all its different forms are both ideologically and in practice characterised by deregulating economic transactions globally, privatising (formerly) state-owned businesses and utility provisions, and regarding public welfare as a cost instead of a public demand (Jessop, 2002, p. 454).

Neoliberal shifts in economic policy and politics have been coupled with inconclusive sexual politics (Duggan, 2002; Binnie, 2010, pp. 25–28). Some forms of neoliberal discourse and practice condone non-heterosexual practices (Peterson, 2011; Oswin, 2019), whereas others do not, but instead include (Wilkinson, 2013) – and even praise – some LGBTQ forms of companionship (Bell and Binnie, 2004). This form of neoliberal sexual politics, widely labelled as homonormativity, has been recognised in for example how same-sex civil partnerships and marriages are compatible with decreasing state welfare, as the private home and the family becomes more crucial for care and economic support – and thus a more important institution for same-sex couples to

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[8] See Rustin and Massey (2014), who argue that neoliberalism is a continuation of colonial and colonialising imperial projects.

partake in (Richardson, 2005; Osterlund, 2009). Other examples of neoliberal sexual politics that include LGBTQ people (as actors, subjects and symbols) are, for example, demands for LGBTQ safety, including demands for private property and increased surveillance of wealthy or gentrifying neighbourhoods (Hanhardt, 2013; Haritaworn, 2015), or representation in politics, corporate settings and culture commodities, where lesbians and gays at times are hailed as ideal neoliberal subjects "freely" choosing who they are and how they live, expressing these choices by choosing which commodities to consume (Hennessy, 2017).

2.4.3. Critiques of Research on Homonationalism

Key critiques of research on homonationalism (and on the closely related concept of homonormativity) are that its theorisations are too homogeneous, too all-encompassing, and disregard contextual circumstances, differences, and everyday life (Brown, 2012; Currah, 2013; Schotten, 2016; Kehl, 2020a). Paisley Currah argues that queer critiques of homonationalism fetishise the state and its role for LGBTQ lives by viewing it as more uniform than it really is. Critique of homonationalism therefore risks becoming exactly what it criticises: a narrative which assumes the nation-state to be a bounded social and economic unit, missing the contradictory realities within. In agreement with Currah's (2013) criticism of viewing the (nation-)state as a coherent unit, this thesis seeks to highlight some of the glossed-over contradictions within contemporary nationalism in the Swedish nation-state.

Theorists of homonationalism have also been critiqued for reaffirming narratives of Western (homonationalist) nations as agents and Southern nations as lacking subjectivity and historical complexities of their own (Rao, 2020; Savci, 2021). Queer theory in general, including the critical interventions on nationalism, are also to a large extent not only Western but specifically US centric. We therefore ought to study not homonationalism in general but acknowledge *homonationalisms* as produced under different conditions leading to different outcomes (see Hall, 1986, p. 23). After acknowledging the US origin of the concepts of homonationalism and homonormativity, we ought to ask where they have travelled, what they brought with them, and what they left behind when they arrived to explain new processes.

2.4.4. Homonationalism in Human Geography

How homonationalism as a concept has travelled can be traced in two important ways: institutionally and geographically. The remainder of this section traces the concept's journey into human geography, saving the specifics of its geographical journey to Sweden for Section 3.4.1. Institutionally, the term homonationalism stems from postcolonial queer studies, where it still circulates. In human geography, Puar's (2017) and Duggan's (2002) works have

been cited in reviews of queer and feminist geographies (Oswin, 2008; Pain, 2009; Wright, 2010; Nash and Browne, 2015; Browne, Brown, and Nash, 2021) and in works ranging from migration (Wimark, 2021) to tourism (Kenttamaa Squires, 2019; Hartal, 2022).

The concepts have been especially influential in urban geography, and the work in this area has guided my work in Article II, as well as my conceptualising of homonationalism as exploitation (see chapter 2.4.4 and Article I). In urban geography, the concept of homonationalism (and the related homonormativity concept) has been deployed in research on dispossession, gentrification, exclusion, and exploitation in different places, showing how "LGBTQ rights" have been instrumentalised in power over, or access to, spaces by and for actors with economic and/or racial privileges (Bell and Binnie, 2004; Haritaworn, 2015; Hubbard and Wilkinson, 2015; Oswin, 2015; Tan, 2015; Hartal and Sasson-Levy, 2017; Rosenberg, 2017). Urban geographers have especially researched the alignment of LGBTQ friendliness with Richard Florida's urban entrepreneurialism, through which:

> Gay-friendliness has come to be used as a form of cultural capital deployed by powerful groups and by cities themselves as they jockey for position on the global urban hierarchy. Gays are now seen as strange attractors of venture capital. (Bell and Binnie, 2004, p. 1817)

The ideological construction of the LGBTQ-friendly nation or city is thus combined with material power structures and struggles, such as property ownership and gentrification (El-Tayeb, 2012), queer activism (Goh, 2018), and urban governance (Hartal and Sasson-Levy, 2017; 2019; Hartal, 2019), to name a few. This makes it clear that the national ideological use of sexuality is not solely about nationalism, as it is entwined with city governance and how capital structures urban space.

These works exemplify how the concepts of homonationalism and homonormativity many times have been interpreted and used in geography, connecting them explicitly to the ways in which specific spaces are governed, designed, used, or in other ways shaped by different actors. On an epistemological note, geographers highlight the importance of empirical, space-sensitive research, both in general and in critical opposition to homonationalist discourse. Consider, for example, the following three statements:

> A nuanced spatial lens offers a critique of the assumption that the Global North is "progressive" and "forward thinking" in terms of sexuality and gender liberations and that the Global South is "backwards". (Browne, Brown, and Nash, 2021, p. 2)

> Not only can attention to the place specificities of LGBTQ+ activisms enrich the portrait of queer lives and their political acts, in a global context it can also assist in undermining the formation of a discursive binary between the world

cities of the seemingly "progressive" global North and those of its "repressive" others – the global South, but also the rural, the suburban, the small town. (Bain and Podmore, 2021, pp. 1306–1307)

It is essential to understand the specific instances in which sexuality is constructed, performed and reproduced. (Mitchell, 2000, p. 198)

This emphasis on specificity and difference diverts somewhat from Puar's more global definition of homonationalism as being marked by geographical and contextual conditions, but nonetheless working as "a global force" and "something you cannot opt out of" (Puar, 2017, p. 228). Still, as geographers use the concept to describe local forms in different spaces, there is no denying that homonationalist discourses are both global, shaped by uneven capital circulation and nation-state borders, and spatially contingent and contextual.

2.4.5. Homonationalism as Exploitation

This praise of LGBTQ inclusion is distinguishably neoliberal when it is used for generating urban economic growth. In neoliberal urban governance, cities are not providers of public welfare, but work for economic growth – usually so by seeking to attract capital (Harvey, 1989). In this search for capital, LGBTQ spaces[9] in cities have become used in city marketing, thus valued for the value they bring to the city. They are sources for urban economic growth directly by providing places for consumption but also for providing "selling points" for attracting investments and tourists, as LGBTQ spaces have been used as signifiers for safe, modern cities and (Bell and Binnie, 2004; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004). This marketing is not exclusively directed towards LGBTQ people or investors. Instead, LGBTQ spaces may be "promoted to the wider community as a non-threatening authentic commodity" (Binnie and Skeggs, 2004, p. 56). Through this promotion, LGBTQ people also "become objects for the fetishisation of difference" (Binnie and Skeggs, 2004, p. 57).

If LGBTQ spaces are fetishised[10] and promoted as commodities, the people creating them are subjectable to exploitation for the value created by their efforts. Exploitation names the process of actors gaining wealth from the use of land, people or labour (see Williams, 2015, pp. 86, 227; Balibar, 2018). In the case of cities, LGBTQ spaces (and thus their creators and producers) are exploited for the value they bring a city's "brand" and its capability to attract

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[9] By LGBTQ space, I refer not only to clusters of LGBTQ households or venues, but to any social space marked by LGBTQ use. This includes temporary events, meeting places or even private homes. LGBTQ spaces, especially so lesbian (Gieseking, 2020), and queer of colour (Haritaworn (2015) spaces are often marked by *temporality*, leading to a need to acknowledge that an LGBTQ space can be constructed through very different practices, for different purposes and with different people.

[10] In the Marxian sense, meaning obscuring the real relations and labour behind the production of commodities.

capital. Agreeing with Andrucki (2021), the creation of LGBTQ spaces is made possible by labour, particularly so socially reproductive labour of care and support. The labour behind LGBTQ spaces such as "gaybourhoods", Pride festivals, protests marches, support networks, or social gatherings, are however obscured as they are turned into symbols of a city's value. Not least are the multidimensionality of LGBTQ struggles obscured: real LGBTQ organising, activism, and living that is founded on intersectional struggles, such as anti-capitalism, anti-racism, decolonialisation, or feminism, are neglected in definitions of LGBTQ rights as a single-issue of demanding safety from homophobia and access to markets (Ferguson, 2019). While LGBTQ spaces become fetishisations of difference, the process of exploiting them is at the same time a process of *equalisation* in the Marxist sense: specific values for users are transformed into abstract exchange values on a market. When an LGBTQ space is appropriated in city "marketing", the appropriation is not of its use-value: how it is used by people participating in or consuming the space. Instead, it is appropriated for its "exchange value": what it is worth for the city – or for the nation-state.

We see how LGBTQ people, spaces and rights have been translated into formally equivalent systems of values in homonationalist discourse. The discourse persistently relies on assumptions that LGBTQ liveability can be measured and compared through a singular set of global criteria (see Ammaturo and Slootmaeckers, 2020; Rao, 2020; Browne et al., 2021). The exploitation of LGBTQ spaces thus also occurs on the national scale at which LGBTQ rights are used as signifiers of national modernity. While homonationalism has hitherto been defined as either "co-option" or "assimilation" (Puar, 2017), this thesis argues that homonationalism ought to be conceptualised as a form of *exploitation*. The argument is inspired by above cited research on cities promoting LGBTQ spaces as a mean to promote the cities themselves – which is a form of symbolic exploitation.

We can further see hints at how homonationalism is a form of exploitation in how it is used in differentiations between "developed" LGBTQ-friendly nation-states and "undeveloped" queerphobic nation-states (see Sabsay, 2012; Rao, 2020). Exploitation as a concept and a process is connected to the concepts and processes of *development* and its opposite *underdevelopment*, both commonly used for descriptions of global economic change and inequality (see Smith, 2010). The concept of development partly refers to an evolutionary view of industrial activities: the changes in efficiency of exploiting recourses and labour for production. Thus, underdevelopment became a term used for "lands in which 'natural resources' have been insufficiently developed or EXPLOITED" (Williams, 2015, p. 64, capitalisation in original).

LGBTQ rights (or any human rights) is expressed a form of *development* (Sabsay, 2012; Rao, 2020), and has become integrated in economic development (most clearly expressed on the urban scale: see Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Hubbard and Wilkinson, 2015). This then means that the demands and lives

of LGBTQ people are increasingly exploited for bringing value to a place, such as the city or the nation-state. Undeveloped or underdeveloped nation-states can then be termed as such because they have failed to perform this exploitation, thus remaining "backward", and in need of future human rights development (Rao, 2020). The discursive definition of nation-states as undeveloped/underdeveloped then leaks over to nationalist assumptions of people in, from, or with ties to these as embodying this underdevelopment. These people are then always risking *exclusion* from the homonationalist imaginary of belonging and from access to the homonationalist state (Sabsay, 2012; Puar, 2017).

The ways in which national and urban scales of exploiting LGBTQ spaces are related vary between geographical contexts (Bell and Binnie, 2000, pp. 84-94), as it depends on varying power relations between state and local forms of government and governance (see for example Andrucki and Elder, 2007; Hartal 2019), and international state relations (Puar, 2017; Rao, 2020). Both nations and cities, however, have different modes of using LGBTQ people, rights and spaces as symbols of development, safety, orderliness or other sought after special characteristics. As such, LGBTQ efforts, socialising, and labour might become exploited for the value they bring any place: be it a continent (Europe), a nation-state (Sweden), a region, city or even a street.

It is, however, important to bear in mind that not all LGBTQ people or spaces are exploitable. People or spaces which do not contribute to homonormative or homonationalist value are instead excluded. Homonationalism is more often critiqued for how it excludes people rather than for how it exploits them. The exploited LGBTQ spaces in cities are often marked by exclusion based on race, gender and class: more accessible for male, white and middle- or upper classed LGBTQ people (Binnie and Skeggs, 2005), ostracising people from lower classes and migrant or non-white communities (Haritaworn, 2015; Rosenberg, 2017; 2021). In exploiting LGBTQ spaces for narratives of attractive cities, people who do not "contribute economically" are consistently excluded (Hubbard and Wilkinson, 2015). On the national scale, racialised Others are excluded from the national imaginary by being marked as un-nationally homophobic (Puar, 2017).

Naming the praise of LGBTQ spaces (in cities) or LGBTQ rights (in nation-states) as a process of exploitation does not equate arguing against the good of these being in place. Neither is it meant as an accusation against the people who partake in creating LGBTQ spaces, or who enjoy different types of LGBTQ rights. The critique here only refers to how historical and present efforts by a wide range of actors have become boiled down and valued for what they provide in terms of urban economic growth, or nation-state comparison.

2.4.6. Homonationalism: A Conclusion

The concept of homonationalism is derived from critical queer scholarship and critically examines and explains how LGBTQ rights have taken shape *in line with* or through instances of nation-state action and nationalism, rather than in opposition it. Homonationalism as both a social process and a discourse reminds us how nationalism and sexuality are ongoing processes, and as such they are constantly changing structurally and socio-culturally. Some changes that are related to homonationalism include structural changes such as same-sex marriage laws or socio-cultural changes such as corporations and state institutions signalling support of LGBTQ people, or the belief that the national population holds few if any prejudices against LGBTQ people. These changes enabled (some) LGBTQ people to be conditionally folded into national belonging and state institutions.

The inclusion of (some) LGBTQ subjects in nationalist discourses and state structures marks a historic-geographical shift in how nation-states and nationalist imaginaries configure sexuality, in which heterosexuality is less foundational. Like nationalism in general, homonationalism is derived not only from shifting ideas or morals, but also from political-economic shifts (such as colonialism and neoliberalism) and from the colonial foundations of the nation as a global form (see Luxemburg, 1976; Goswami, 2002). It is thus a "new" nationalist discourse, as it has emerged in the last decades, while it also is a continuation of Western colonial nationalisms. While this nationalist discourse has been defined as a form of "co-option" or "assimilation" of LGBTQ rights (Puar, 2017), this thesis takes homonationalism to be a form of exploitation of LGBTQ rights: using them for bringing symbolic value to the nation-state.

2.5. Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism

> Homosexuals are like salt in soup. If there isn't enough it's a bit bland; when there's too much, it's inedible. (Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2016, quoted in Mudde, 2019, p. 153)

The relative novelty of homonationalism is juxtaposed to a much longer historical tradition of nationalism as more rigidly heteronormative. This tradition was introduced in Section 2.3, which pointed to how several Western nations have been ideologically constructed on racialising and sexualising scripts. In these scripts, the actions and symbolic presence of dissidents from heteronormativity and gendered norms are crucial. Because the nation is not heteronormative a priori (as made even more evident through the emergence of homonationalism), its imagined heteronormativity needs to be asserted, enforced. While this is done through the gendered symbolism of patriarchal, nuclear

families, such as those described in Section 2.3, national heteronormativity is also constantly reinforced by policing people who break from it.

Because it is so common for nationalist scripts to reinforce heterosexuality, the existence of homosexuality, transgenderism, and other deviations from cisheteronormativity are either downplayed and suppressed (Hill Collins, 1998), or outrightly attacked (Siddiqui, 2021) in the name of the nation. This section contextualises the changing sexual scripts of nationalism by reviewing literature of contemporary *nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism*, many of which are carried out by far-right movements and parties. These actions are here termed nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, which captures how actors and movements defined as nationalist have, through politics, activism, or both, worked against LGBTQ people, rights, spaces, and symbols.

In the last decade, nationalist far-right projects have been growing in size and influence on a global scale. Nativist, xenophobic, and racist targeting of immigrants and native minorities led to successes in the 2010s for politicians and parties such as Jair Bolsonaro, Donald Trump, Narendra Modi, the Danish People's Party, the Sweden Democrats, Front National and Lega Nord – to name but a few (Mudde, 2019; Hart, 2020a, 2020b; Walia, 2021, p. 169ff). So far, the current chapter has laid out what nationalism is and hinted at why it exists; an ideology which divides people into racialised and sexualised groups interior or exterior to nations. The brief summary of colonial projects and national sexual scripts, however, has not yet told us too much about the current multiple far-right nationalist projects or their sexual politics. Are we, for example, witnessing a resurgence or amplification of heteronormative nationalism in the rise of a global far right? If so, how are we to understand it against the background of a wider nationalist ideology, in which such movements are not *the* nationalist ones in a non-nationalist world, but instead *one form* of nationalists, acting both in conflict with and with the mutual support of contradicting nationalisms?

2.5.1. Terminology: The Nationalist Far Right

Before answering these questions, some terminological clarifications are needed. Firstly, I describe actions rather than ideology: anti-LGBTQ politics and activism rather than, for example, "heteronationalism" as an ideology opposing homonationalism. Using such a dichotomy (of homo- and heteronationalism) would risk implying that homonationalism is a *break* with heteronormative nationalism, which it is not (Puar, 2017, p. 51).[11] Homonational-

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[11] I do not mean that using the term heteronationalism to describe what I call nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism by default would mean one is arguing that homonationalism is a break with heteronormative nationalism. I do, however, suggest that defining nationalist anti-

ism is not an opposite to heteronationalism or a replacement of it, but a re-working of heteronormative nationalism to include some homosexuals and other LGBTQ people – who are still Othered rather than really constituting a social norm.

Homonationalism does not entail that homonormative nations de facto are constituted by a norm where people are generally assumed to be homosexual, to live homosexually in the same way that heteronormativity works. There is no "compulsory homosexuality" in homonationalist nations that has replaced "compulsory heterosexuality", which reiterates heterosexuality as the social norm (see Rich, 1980). Homosexuality in homonationalist ideology is no-where near such a social norm and LGBTQ people are still constituted as a minority (Sabsay, 2012; Puar, 2017). Accordingly, homonationalism is not opposed to, nor is it opposed by, heteronationalism; rather, it is a modified heteronationalism, more to do with norms of accepting the existence of LGBTQ people, not having homonormativity replacing heteronormativity. Because homonationalism is not a break with or a binary opposite to hetero-nationalism but an alteration of it, actions opposing this alteration are here termed nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism.

Moreover, the thesis' emphasis on nationalist politics and activism points to how the empirical material of the thesis consists of precisely politics and activism: attacks, threats, and parliamentary decisions that target LGBTQ peo-ple, spaces, and symbols as part of nationalist projects, in which LGBTQ peo-ple are defined as enemies instead of subjects who are worthy of protection (as they are in homonationalist discourse). The *politics* in nationalist politics and activism consists of actions made either through parliamentary activity or by elected officials. *Activism* instead refers to social organising, actions and campaigns intended to change society. Neo-Nazis can thus be termed as far-right activists through their organisational and political form: strengthening an internal collective, strategically using public space for advocating for their cause, frame their messages as seeking (destructive) political change and re-spond to external political opportunities – such as LGBTQ activisms (see Blee and Creasap, 2010). Both the political and activist anti-LGBTQ actions de-scribed in this thesis (carried out by far-right actors) are part of a wider project: entirely excluding non-white minorities from the Swedish nation. Nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are thus not carried out as a single-issue cause, but as directly tied to racist politics or neo-Nazi activism.

What is also crucial to bear in mind, and the reason I chose the term "na-tionalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism" rather than, for example, "radical or extreme nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism", is that even if the movements referred to enact specific, contextual nationalist projects, these are

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LGBTQ resistance to homonationalism, or anti-LGBTQ nationalism more generally, as *hetero-nationalism* risks putting up a binary which signals that homonationalism is less heteronorma-tive than it really is.

not *resurgent* in the sense that they in any way radically break with some new post-nationalist hegemony, or are "backward-looking assaults on the civilized world, that seemingly leapt out of nowhere to catch everyone by surprise" (Hart, 2020a, p. 240). They are not nationalists reacting to non-nationalist hegemonies. They are *nationalists antagonistic to a competing nationalist hegemony*, one which will be explained in Section 2.6. This argument draws on critical scholarship which takes far-right action to be integral to the ongoing social antagonisms along the lines of class, race, nationality, and gender (Fekete, 2017; Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017a, 2017b; Hart, 2020a; Walia, 2021).

In this thesis, I distinguish between far-right nationalism and neo-Nazism, which in turn are separate from "mainstream" or "liberal" nationalism. The Swedish far right and neo-Nazis have some historical, ideological, and organisational overlaps, as well as strong commitments to nationalism (see Section 3.5), leading to the frequent grouping of them under one larger category, such as "radical nationalism" (Teitelbaum, 2017) or the "radical right" (Rydgren, 2018). There are, however, divergences within the category, such as between what Teitelbaum (2017, p. 5) calls "cultural nationalists" and "race revolutionaries", two strands covered by the wider concept of "radical nationalists". The first term, cultural nationalists, includes the Sweden Democrats and refers to nationalists who define nationality as cultural rather than ethnic, while gaining wider appeal for anti-immigration and anti-Muslim views. The second term, race revolutionaries, describes neo-Nazis: violent paramilitary groups who celebrate historical Nazism. While this division is useful, the framework risk singling out specific political groups as being *the* carriers and reproducers of nationalism, which excludes the possibility of nationalism as a much wider ideology, reproduced not only through the political struggles of "radical nationalists" but also global structures (Goswami, 2002), everyday discursive exchanges (Billig, 1995 Skey and Antonsich, 2017), and experiences (Koefoed and Simonsen, 2007).

In the broadest sense, "radical" or "extremist" nationalists envision reinforced hierarchies based on race, nationality, gender, and sexuality. Does naming these aims radical/revolutionary/extremist imply that the contemporary nation-states they act in are not reproducing the very same hierarchies? Is it radical to state that heterosexuality is and should be the norm, that women and men are essentially different beings, or that white Swedes should have privileges over non-white Swedes and Swedes with transnational migration histories? Many of us may of course *want* these to be radical or revolutionary claims that sharply break with a current non-hierarchical reality. However, naming them as such awards a normalcy to the current state of things and occludes how the assumedly radical or revolutionary nationalisms are not only reflective of society at large (Mudde, 2010), but in some cases also very much part of shaping state policy and laws. Naming movements radical, revolutionary, or extremist comes with unspoken, vague assumptions of their stances

being much further away from "mainstream" views or governmental power than they really are.

The actors conducting nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are in this thesis referred to as "far-right nationalists" or "neo-Nazis". Neo-Nazis are part of far-right nationalism as a wider project, but all far-right nationalists are not neo-Nazis. These terms are of course not entirely unproblematic, either, but I find them more empirically fitting in the Swedish context. The Sweden democrats, the most successful far-right nationalist organisation (and defined as such in Mudde, 2019, pp. 5–7; Walia, 2021, p. 183), have since the 2022 election been collaborating with a right-wing governing coalition, after receiving the second largest number of votes in the state parliament. As such they have increasingly become a larger part of the wider right-wing political spectrum. Neo-Nazis, on the other hand, are rather easy to describe as such, at least if they – like the Nordic Resistance Movement in Sweden and the Nordic countries – praise the Third Reich and spread an overtly antisemitic ideology (Kølvraa, 2019). These movements will be further described in Section 3.5, while this chapter instead describes the wider global and European sexual politics of nationalist far-right movements.

2.5.2. An Overview of Sexual Politics in Nationalist Movements

There are some general similarities in far-right nationalist movements' sexual politics, which all connect to their commitment to their nativism: the nation being reproduced through racially defined nuclear families (Hill Collins, 1998; Siddiqui, 2021). The ideological similarities between far-right nationalist movements generally mirror the sexual scripts defined in Section 2.3, in which heterosexuality is the core of the idealised white nation, and the process through which women and men are defined relationally to each other – by complementing one another (Mudde, 2019, p. 149). Gender differences are naturalised as stable and heterosexual, as far-right movements argue the heteronormative two-gender system to be a biological (and thus inescapable) "fact" (Mayer, Ajanović, and Sauer, 2020, p. 105).

Mudde (2019) describes the sexual politics of the contemporary far right as divided, as it can either idolise women as pure, as mothers of the white nation, or it can be hostile to women, particularly so feminists. He points to the connection between far-right views on feminists and homosexuals and writes that "feminism, like homosexuality, is portrayed as a (mortal) threat to the nation by many far-right groups" (p. 151), as both (in the eyes of the far right) undermine the traditional family reproducing the white nation. While Mudde points to the connections between far-right attacks on feminism and on LGBTQ people, he does not sufficiently provide an overview of the latter. Instead, he highlights how some nationalist far-right actors subscribe to homonationalist discourse (p. 153), which is certainly correct, but leaves out the specificities of their continued anti-LGBTQ politics and activism.

These specificities are well-captured in research on "anti-gender" sexual politics subscribed to by European far-right movements (see Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018), especially in research that emphasises that the policing of gender is used to reinforce heterosexuality (Schmincke, 2020, p. 65). The concept "anti-gender" captures political projects that oppose feminism and LGBTQ activism and academic efforts, often by framing them as attacks from an "elite" on "the people" (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018, pp. 8–9). This "policing of gender" is a policing of all practices diverting from heterosexual norms, which may include one or several restrictions on sexual and reproductive rights, such as women's emancipation, birth control, abortions, homosexuality, transgenderism, sex education and so on (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018; Browne and Nash, 2020). The policing of homosexuality is thus intertwined with the policing of gender and sexuality in a wider sense (Butler, 2004, p. 110).

This connection has not least been identified in research on heteroactivism, which takes aim at contemporary oppositions to LGBTQ and sexual rights in the Global North (Browne and Nash, 2017; Nash and Browne, 2020). The concept of heteroactivism, along with the empirical works that use it, points to how not all contemporary anti-LGBTQ politics and activisms are outrightly homo- or transphobic, in taking the immorality of homosexuality or transgenderism *for granted*. Instead, those opposing LGBTQ rights in the Global North have legitimised their projects by framing them as rights to, for example, free speech (Nash and Browne, 2020, p. 147ff). Some heteroactivist projects are also embedded in nationalism, such as the example of the Irish heteroactivist campaigns (Browne, Nash, and Gorman-Murray, 2018; Browne and Nash, 2020). In protests against extended abortion rights or same-sex marriage legislation, the oppositions were expressed as resisting "English values", arguing that the legislations would be continuations of English colonisation. In other nationalisms, LGBTQ rights have also been resisted as a form of Western imposition of a national culture. If LGBTQ rights are defined as a Western virtue, they can be resisted as such as well (see Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018; Höjdestrand, 2020).

2.5.3. Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism of Exclusion

While homonationalism is constructed through both exploitation and exclusion, nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are to their core exclusionary. Sexual rights are entwined in the boundary makings of the nation, in which some belong, and others do not, based on sexuality and race (Siddiqui, 2021; Liinason, 2023, pp. 1057-1058). The homonationalist discourse may be used to emphasise racial Others as unbelonging (due to lack of LGBTQ acceptance), while nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism continue the

longer ideological and political history of excluding LGBTQ people from national belonging: they are deemed unfit for inclusion in the nation (Liinason, 2023).

LGBTQ people and feminists are posed as "a threat to the nation, wanting to tear 'us' apart" (Liinason, 2023, p. 1063), by nationalist anti-LGBTQ actors who seek to further excluding them from national belonging. This sexually exclusionary project has in practice, not least in Sweden, been manifested as part of defining the nation as racially exclusionary. Anti-LGBTQ politics and activism identified in this thesis have been carried out as part of ethno-nationalist projects, in which the nation is deemed under threat from both racial and sexual Others, who "threaten" a uniform national community.

The details of these projects are laid out in the articles, but it should be noted here how they could be understood as continuation of the sexual elements of nationalism described in chapter 2.3. The allegory of the national family, so often used in contemporary ethno-nationalisms, is founded upon several joint exclusions of "enemy figures": Immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ communities, and feminists (Siddiqui, 2022, p. 6). As such, nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism have increasingly been contradicting and contradicted by homonationalism, according to which LGBTQ people symbolise national modernity. In nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, LGBTQ people instead symbolise threats to the nation: threats to the reproduction of the (white) national population and the stability of nuclear families (Hill Collins, 1998; Siddiqui, 2022).

2.5.4. Homonationalism in Far-Right Movements

While most far-right actors and movements value national heteronormativity, they may at the same time subscribe to some homonationalist discourse, primarily by projecting homophobia (and sexualised violence against women) onto migrants, particularly so Muslim migrants (Kehl, 2018; Mudde, 2019; Mayer, Ajanović, and Sauer, 2020). In addition, nationalist far-right politics in Europe have been argued to depend less on traditional homophobic figures: declaring homosexuality a threat to the nation due to its "degeneracy" (Browne and Nash, 2017; Wielowiejski, 2020, p. 138). Once an unquestionable national ill, homosexuality has become an increasingly ambiguous question for those opposing it, including nationalist movements.[12]

Contemporary nationalist stances on different LGBTQ and sexual rights may claim that they seek to protect homosexuals from homophobic Others: from migrants and refugees (Sörberg, 2017; Kehl, 2018; Wielowiejski, 2020). They may also oppose LGBTQ and sexual rights not through old, homophobic

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[12] Note, however, that historical nationalist movements indeed also have had ambiguous stances on homosexuality, despite politically defining it as a national ill (Theweleit, 1987; Halberstam, 2011).

stereotypes, but by claiming to defend heterosexuality, defend children, defend the rights to free speech, or defend national sovereignty (Nash and Browne, 2020). Far-right movements do not have a single unitary, or coherent, politicisation of sexuality, and often specific movements are internally diverse in being rigidly heteronormative while to different extents projecting homophobia onto migrants, arguing to be protective of homosexuals (Wielowiejski, 2020). Thus, not all far-right movements or actors are necessarily clearly anti-LGBTQ – and neither are they necessarily heterosexual or cisgendered themselves (ibid.). This plurality further necessitates an empirical focus on *actions*, examining the instances of specific far-right nationalist politics and how they politicise sexuality. Hence, this thesis does not seek to clarify or answer *if* far-right nationalists (in Sweden) *are* homonationalist or anti-homonationalist; rather, it seeks to answer what has happened in events where they have been explicitly anti-LGBTQ in their actions.

2.5.5. Critiques of Research on the Far Right as Nationalist Movements

There has been extensive scholarly interest in the increasing influence of nationalist movements in the twenty-first century, including interest in their gendered and sexualised ideologies and practice (see Rydgren, 2018; Mudde, 2019; Dietze and Roth, 2020). However, in this field of research, an old debate on nationalism resurfaces: is nationalism to be found *only* in self-proclaimed nationalist movements? Koch (2023) has argued that the tendency to divide nationalism into "good" and "bad" forms, critiqued by Billig and others (see Section 2.1), remains in newer research on far-right nationalism. Nationalism is at times still identified as the problem of "others" rather than a deeply integrated form of spatial community, leaving researchers' own national(ist) biases unremarked upon. According to Koch (2023, p. 202), inclusionary cosmopolitan nationalism is put as a binary to exclusionary ethno-nationalism, which "implies that nationalism is fine if we can just promote the 'right' kind". It is in these strands of research on nationalism (as a "bad" ideology, found only in separate racist and heterosexist movements or actors) that certain movements are seen as *the* nationalists, understood as an anomaly instead of as being intertwined with the larger nationalist structure.

   Aligned with the critique from Koch (2023) and others (Hart, 2020a, 2020b; Walia, 2021), this thesis argues that nationalist movements must be understood in relation to the wider structure and ideology of nationalism, in which they are *one form* of nationalism, not *the* nationalists. To implement this theorisation, I suggest that nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism and homonationalism relationally form a nationalist contradiction.

2.6. The Nationalist Contradiction

> Homonationalism and heteronationalism are often discussed as two contradictory phenomena. (Slootmaeckers, 2019, p. 256)

> In capitalism everything seems and in fact is contradictory. (Marx, 1963, p. 218)

Some research has emerged on how homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism relate to one another. Slootmaeckers' article from 2019 is one clear contribution, in which he uses the term heteronationalism to describe the ideology of what I have termed nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism. While the concepts are closely related, the latter – which I use – is more specific to *actions* reproducing heteronationalism rather than the ideology per se. Slootmaeckers (2019) theorises how the two opposing sexualised nationalist scripts (homo- and heteronationalism) coincide with one another. He argues that these "are often discussed as contradictory phenomena" (p. 256), a discussion he undermines by suggesting they are both different alterations and reproductions of (masculinist) nationalism, only differing in how they define masculinity and femininity. He argues that homonationalist discourse relies on a masculine subject which is enlightened and therefore protective of LGBTQ others, whereas the heteronationalist discourse builds on the masculine subject distancing himself from effeminate people and symbols, thus seeking to expel or destroy LGBTQ others. While agreeing with Slootmaeckers' emphasis on the two nationalist forms as relational, this thesis seeks not to disprove the contradiction as unfounded, but instead proves this contradiction to be not only real, but fundamental to contemporary nationalism.

The argument builds on understanding *contradiction* as defined in the Marxist philosophy of internal relations. In a Marxist understanding of a contradiction, two or more elements which are opposed to one another arise simultaneously (Harvey, 2014, p. 17). The fact that elements are contradictory, as in opposing each other, however, does not hinder them from being *real* and existing relationally to each other. Unlike a paradox, a contradiction (in the Marxist sense) consists of elements that, while opposing each other, are *internally related*, rather than being individual or separate phenomena that cannot logically co-exist (Ollman, 2015). Elements in a contradiction are parts which in relation to each other create a whole – thus, they may present as separate entities, but are in reality relational and depend on each other (Ollman, 2003, p. 15). Defining a contradiction as a relation between opposed social processes differs from the more common-sense, logical, or Aristotelean meaning of the term. The logical definition of a contradiction entails that two elements contradicting each other *cannot co-exist* as things are "either the same/identical or different, not both" (Ollman, 2003, p. 15; see also Harvey, 2014, p. 1).

Therefore, the logical contradiction needs to either be disproven as false – elements are only *seemingly* contradictory, but not contradictory in reality (Slootmaeckers, 2019)[13] – or the contradiction that arises needs to be discursively resolved: elements contradicting one view of reality are gotten rid of through mental and discursive efforts (Pred, 2000).

In the Marxian contradiction, however, opposing elements *do co-exist*, and they do so through their contradictory relation. A contradiction is a *real* relation in which elements in the same relation both oppose and depend on each other (Ollman, 2003, p. 17). One major difference between the Marxian contradiction and the logical contradiction is that the former focuses on the relations between *elements in themselves* – the actual ongoing social processes – whereas the latter concerns *ideas* about reality (Ollman, 2003, p. 18). Viewing a contradiction as a mental activity, as ideas about reality, is what leads to explaining that it either is false (Slootmaeckers, 2019), or that it needs to be mentally resolved (Pred, 2000). Using the Marxian definition of contradictions does not look at conceptions of reality, but at ongoing processes (such as homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism) and how they are related and dependent on each other *through* being contradictory.

2.6.1. The Contradiction of Homonationalism and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism

Nationalism is then a contradictory social process in the Marxian sense: a complex reality of global migration, commodity chains, and capital flows are comprehended and experienced via the ideological persistence of nations as main bases for human community. Nationalism as an ideology is furthermore fundamentally produced through several contradictions, such as being both particular and universal (Goswami, 2002), and both constantly changing and nonetheless imagined as stable (Paasi, 1997). The nation-state is built on and reinforces social unity (for those belonging to it), which contradicts its inherent social divisions, allowing it to exist as a unity: class, sexuality, and race (Cocks, 1997, p. 56). Thus, the ideology of nationalism is not only obscuring inequality, but the very inequality is a foundational contradictory element without which the nation-state has hitherto not been able to exist. The social cohesion assumed in nations is even asserted by internal social inequality – such as in the gendered division of labour in idealising the nation as a "family" and the family as a nation in miniature (see Section 2.3).

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[13] Note here that while Slootmaeckers (2019) uses a logical concept of contradiction, his effort to explain homo- and heteronationalism as two modes of masculinities is a study of how they are internally related. Because he theorises how opposing elements are part of the same whole, his disproval of a (logic) contradiction is, in my understanding, not so different from my own approach in this thesis: homo- and heteronationalism are relational and not entirely separate from each other.

Nationalism in its contemporary sexual form has given rise to another contradiction, related to those described above: a homonationalist nation which depends on domestic homophobia, which is declared as overcome. The homonationalist nation-state depends on its opposite nationalist anti-LGBTQ "past", as well as homophobia in other nations, in order to exist (Lalor and Browne, 2018; Rao, 2020). Without homophobia, no nation could present itself as being opposed to it. The "LGBTQ-friendly" nation-state requires anti-LGBTQ activity both in its own past and in other nations. While homonationalism then is contradicted by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, these two processes depend on each other. Through struggles over the meaning of national sexuality, both elements contribute to a nationalist contradiction in which they are articulated in opposition to each other.

This understanding of contradictions in nationalism draws on Hart's (2018, 2020a, 2020b, 2021) work, which makes it possible to theorise opposing nationalist articulations as connected, mutually reinforcing and undermining each other. Hart has explained the relation between radical nationalist politics and the liberal neoliberal order they question as a struggle between two opposing neoliberal hegemonies, which both articulate nationalisms differently. While "liberal forms of neoliberal bourgeois hegemony" attempt to neutralise social antagonisms, "populist forms" instead attempt to mobilise them (Hart, 2020b, pp. 257–258, 350). Social antagonisms of racism, class struggle, and patriarchal heteronormativity are not to be resolved but neutralised, for example by blaming these oppressions on "intolerant" individuals instead of an unequal social structure (see also Brown, 2009; Edenheim, 2020).

The hegemonic struggle between liberal neutralisation and the populist mobilisation of antagonisms has also been examined by Mulinari and Neergaard (2017a, 2017b), who write of different utilisations of nationalism and racism. The liberal form of neoliberalism seeks to neutralise antagonisms and use nationalist border regimes to access cheap migrant labour, while the populist form mobilises antagonisms in projects to exclude migrants entirely. Whereas Hart distinguishes between liberal and populist neoliberal hegemonies, and Mulinari and Neergaard between exploitative and exclusionary racisms, this thesis instead scrutinises the opposing hegemonies of *homonationalism* and *nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism*. These two ideologies are, like Hart's (2020b, p. 235) conception of resurgent populisms, "two distinctive but related forms of neoliberal hegemony". The former seeks to neutralise antagonisms of gender and sexuality and the latter seeks to amplify them, all through claims to speak for the nation.

Through fears and hostility as well as embracement and inclusion, "the nation is founded on the (homo)sexual other" (Puar, 2017, p. 49). The growing significance of homonationalism in Western nationalisms – and, as I will argue later, Swedish nationalism in particular – has led to a historically and geographically specific contradiction, created through the struggle over *how* the (homo)sexual Other is to be foundational to the nation. This is an urgent area

of conflicts over how the nation should politically sexualise its members and subjects. As such, it gives rise to a sexually contradictory nationalism, shaped through the two (internally homogeneous) elements of constituting the (homo)sexual other as either exterior or internal to specific nations.

3. Contemporary and Historical Foundations of Swedish Nationalism, Homonationalism, and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism

Sweden is a nation-state in the sense that the nationalist ideology particular to Sweden was, and still is, shaped through state bureaucracy and institutions, as well as by way of comparison to other states (Goswami, 2002, p. 786). There are scholars who have cautioned against conflating the concepts of nation and state. Some critics of the conflation have argued that in reality, "boundaries of nations virtually never coincide with those of the so-called 'nation-states'" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 3). Returning briefly to the question of what nationalism *is*, proponents of a conceptual separation between state and nation define the state as a political regime and a set of institutions with clear boundaries (i.e. borders), whereas they deem the nation a spatially defined, more or less "ethnic" community sharing cultural traits such as language, memorialisation, and customs (see Nielsson, 1985). They rightly point out that few (if any) states are home to only one nationality (meaning "ethnic community") and that not all communities possibly defined or defining themselves as nations have a correlating state.

However, I maintain that state and nation do strongly overlap in Swedish nationalism (and in many other nationalisms globally, per Flint and Taylor, 2011, pp. 157–192). By this, I do not mean that all Swedish citizens and residents share a history, language, or other "cultural traits", but that the nationalist myth of Swedishness is created in tandem with – and largely through – the Swedish state, which supresses other potential nations and nationalities within the state other than the Swedish nation. Gaunt and Löfgren (1991, p. 13, my translation) describe the Swedish form of nationalism as globally particular due to its historically strong connections with the state:

> In other places one has lived side by side with other peoples [meaning nationalities]. Here in Sweden there has for a long time been a lack of other people than Swedes: one people, one state religion [Protestantism], one language [Swedish]. We have for quite a long time lived protected and therefore gotten used to seeing our own orderliness and conscientiousness as the only way to live.

Their statement is reflective of how Swedish nationalism is generally thought of as shaped by a unitary people with common political and religious institutions: a nation-state (Löfgren, 1993, p. 77). As will become clearer in Section 3.2, the "fact" that no other nationalities have lived in Sweden until recently is not very accurate, but nonetheless a myth essential for Swedish nationalism; a myth that disregards a more "multinational" reality. Swedish nobility representing national unity, as for example the current royal family, are descendants from a monarch born in France (King Karl XIV Johan, coronated in 1818). As for the general population, it has for centuries included people not consistently identified or identifying themselves as "Swedish", such as Sami, Tornedalian, Roma, and Jewish minorities (see Lantto, 2000; Elenius, 2001; Carlsson, 2004; Lipott, 2015; Selling, 2022). Thus, assuming Swedish nationality to be or to have been the *only* nationality in Sweden has been made possible through a history of extensive state exclusion and the oppression of any other nationalities within the Swedish state, some of which will be told in this chapter (Section 3.2).

Swedish nationalism thus follows definitions of the nationalist concept that emphasise the connections between state and nation, such as Goswami's theorisation of the nation form as constructed through political and economic restructuring (in which states certainly play a part). It also follows Gellner's (1983, pp. 1, 36) definition, according to which nationalism as a political theory or ideology, and nationalism as a practice, hold that political (state) and ethnic (nation) boundaries ideally ought to align with each other. It is thus a question of the nation-state being a nationalist *ideal*, and an ongoing process of striving towards state and nation alignment, rather than a reflection of such ideals being manifested in "true" nation-states where such alignment fully exists. The empirical accuracy of Sweden de facto *being* a nation-state in the sense that "ethnic" and political boundaries neatly align is of less relevance than the fact that nationalism as an ideology enforces that they do, or that they ought to. Hence, the Swedish nation-state, or any nation-state, is created and maintained through constant reinforcements of social (the nation) and political (the state) boundaries as aligned with each other.

3.1. An Overview of Swedish Nationalism

> An impoverished peasant who for a thousand years
> got to toil in the dark, regardless
> if it was peacetime or an Era of Great Power,
> suddenly won the highest prize and got to reap
> what others sown in the colonies.
> Two world wars gave his ore an ecstatic clientele
> and coerced at the same time the rivals
> to bleed, so he got a quick start for free
> and could rapidly with the help of steel- and gunpowder

assets heave the enchantment of its crofts,
so they like in the fairy tale were turned into castles.
(Palm, 1984, p. 9, my translation)

The translated excerpt from Palm's poem captures the general gist of Swedish nationalism well: a history of poverty among the people, glossed over by a grander history of the nation's imperial expansion in the Era of Great Power (circa 1611–1721). An enrichment which was partly made possible by the global need for iron and weapons for which minerals and arms manufacturing (see Jansson, 2018, p. 90) were (and still are) exported from Swedish territory. During the twentieth century crofts were turned into, if not *castles*, then at least modern standardised, affordable housing, as the Swedish welfare nation-state, the *folkhem* (people's home) was built.[14]

The contents of Swedish nationalism have changed over time and have done so through struggle over what the nation is, who its heroes are, and how the nation should be celebrated. In an overview of Swedish nationalism, Ehn, Frykman, and Löfgren (1993) show some of these struggles over what Swedishness has meant in different times and among different actors. In this overview, Löfgren (1993) argues that there was a shift in nationalist narratives after the Social Democrats took power in the early 1930s. Previous national heroes, such as monarchs and imperially successful monarchs in particular, were replaced by heroes signalling modernity: "A good Swede had to be a modern Swede with a determined look to the future, who did not drag their feet" (Löfgren, 1993, p. 54, my translation).

It was during the long Social Democratic rule in the twentieth century, accompanied by the building of the nation-state, that one particular characteristic of Swedishness came to reign: the modern, reasonable and equal citizen, mirrored in a nation-state pragmatically improving living conditions of the wider population: "the idea of equality was a new part of what is typically Swedish" (Frykman, 1993, p. 144, my translation).

The moral superiority of Sweden and the Swedes became intertwined with the results of working-class and feminist struggles, such as agreements between unions and employers – "The Swedish model" (see Nycander, 2018) – and policies for gender equality (Martinsson, Griffin, and Giritli Nygren, 2016). The outcomes of such struggles have, however, been transformed into nationalist myths, where the Swedish nation-state is perceived as the actor that guarantees equality (ibid.). This myth of Swedish equality as exceptional and

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[14] Swedish housing was in fact transformed through the extensive state-subsidised building of new homes in the 1950s to 1970s (see Grundström and Molina, 2016; Grander, 2018, pp. 87–94), not a literal transformation of crofts. The crofts that remained were instead transformed into different kinds of "castles", namely second or holiday homes mostly utilised for leisure and recreation (Lagerqvist, 2014).

exceptionally modern can be exemplified by the introduction of a state investigation document about xenophobia (titled "The xenophobe within us" [Främlingsfienden inom oss]):

> Many of the values manifested in Swedish political decisions over the past decades, such as individual taxation, parental insurance with paternity leave, legal abortion, the ban on corporal punishment, the right of homosexuals to marry and the right of asylum-seekers in need of protection to be granted a residence permit, were unthinkable just a few decades earlier. Today, many of them are seen as "typically Swedish". (SOU 2012:74, p. 33)

While Swedish exceptionalism and contemporary Swedish nationalism are generally ascribed to the period of welfare state expansion, as the quote suggests with its emphasis on changes in policy and law, these myths build on longer histories of narratives about who Swedes as a people are. Tracing back to the seventeenth century, Swedes have been declared as morally superior by being culturally refined in comparison to the rest of the world – a morality deeply embedded in discursive whiteness (Schoug, 2008).

3.2. Swedish Nationalism: Colonial Foundations

> Swedish colonial history may sound almost like a self-contradiction. (Waller, 1954, p. 1)

Contemporary nationalism as both a global form and an ideology based on national particularity cannot be fully understood without knowledge of its colonial foundations (Luxemburg, 1976; Goswami, 2002). Therefore, an overview of how Swedish nationalism developed during colonial restructuring is crucial. Current nationalist contradictions need to be contextualised in the history of racial and colonial power, both globally (se Section 2.2) and in the specific locations of Northern European countries (Keskinen, Stoltz, and Mulinari, 2021, p. 9), here focusing mainly on Sweden. In agreement with postcolonial research (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012; Keskinen, Stoltz, and Mulinari, 2021), the contemporary struggles over the meaning of national(ist) sexuality and sexual norms did not appear from thin air. Rather, they follow a long history of a nationalism built on racial and sexual social structuring of the nation-state.

The mutual reinforcement of racism, nationalism, and capital expansion can here be exemplified by some of the historical processes that are part of Swedish colonial state-formation, and with which they coincided. Scholars writing on the topic have identified Swedish colonial projects in imperial, economic, and scientific efforts. While seldom considered a larger player on the global imperialist stage or in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Swedish state

and many of its citizens were definitely part of both. This fact has often been downplayed or ignored in scholarship and education; a denial reproducing ideas of an exceptional Swedish nation-state marked by class, racial, and sexual equality (Pred, 2000; Fur and Hennessey, 2020; Molina, 2020, p. 306; Pålsson, 2023, pp. 56–58).

Contrary to common beliefs of Sweden as exempt from colonial violent dispossession and enslavement, the Swedish crown owned a colony in the West Indies, St. Barthélemy, between 1784 and 1878. For almost a century, colonial commerce went through the island's ports when they were owned by the Swedish crown, which also gained part of the income from tariffs. Alongside goods and commodities, slaves were part of this commerce. Port Gustavia on St. Barthélemy was established as a *free port*, a port where trade could occur on ground neutral to ongoing wars and where tariffs were comparatively low. Even after slave trading had been made illegal in an increasing number of state laws and international treaties (including the Swedish abolition from 1813), slave ships continued to sail through St. Barthélemy and Port Gustavia, enabled by the island's administrators who overlooked the illegality of slave trading while often profiting from it (Wilson, 2015, pp. 158–161).

People born in Sweden in the nineteenth century were also partaking in settler colonialism in North America, when 1.5 million of them migrated there (Carlsson, 2020, p. 270). Aside from such large-scale migration, Swedes also carried out various travels to African, American, and Caribbean colonised land, either seeking to exploit soil, slave workers, and commerce for economic profits, or travelling to educate and "enlighten" locals in European and Christian manners and values (Ripenberg, 2019, pp. 167–188, 280–291). The colonial participation of the Swedish crown, its noblemen, merchants, and subjects was, however, not restricted to territorial expansion (such as the establishing of Swedish colonies) or human migration in voluntary or involuntary journeys. It was also accomplished through the export of goods – especially metals – such as the large quantities of Swedish iron that were exported internationally and circulated in the global slave trade (Evans and Rydén, 2018).[15]

While several scholars have begun to expose how Swedish authorities and subjects were by no means exempt from the European colonisation of African and American land (see for example Evans and Rydén, 2007; Wilson, 2015; Pålsson, 2016; Fur and Hennessey, 2020), Swedish colonial efforts were – and still are – largely carried out in a Northern direction, through the ongoing colonisation of Sápmi. Sápmi is the name of Northern land areas home to the indigenous Sami, which spans over parts of Swedish, Norwegian, Finish, and Russian state territories. The indigenous land was initially colonised in the

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[15] So-called "voyage iron", which became used as a form of currency on colonial journeys and traded for slaves on the West-African coastline. To indicate quantities of Swedish iron used in the transatlantic slave trade, Evans and Rydén (2018, p. 60) estimate that around 2,304 tonnes of voyage iron were exported from Stockholm and Gothenburg in 1739, of which the most part was imported to the English ports (from which they were taken for trade in West Africa).

seventeenth century, but, as argued by postcolonial researchers, it is still undergoing colonising processes through the relentless disregard of people's languages and heritage, and the economic expansion of natural resources (Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012; Keskinen et al., 2009; Össbo and Lantto, 2011; Ojala and Nordin, 2015; Carlsson, 2020).

The colonisation of Sápmi, much like the transnational commerce and colonial territorial acquisitions, was economic, as it was motivated by gaining expanded land territories and access to slave labour, goods, or natural recourses (Lindmark, 2013, p. 131; Naum and Nordin, 2013, p. 10). It was integrally ideological, as colonised people were Othered and scientifically and medically defined as inferior to Swedes, especially in scientific theories such as Linnaeus' categorisation of human species distinguishable by geographical origin and biological and cultural traits. In these theories, for example, Europeans ("Homo Europaeus") were considered as lawful, Africans ("Homo Africanus") were seen as impulsive, and Sami ("Homo Monstrosus") were deemed degenerate (Koerner, 1999). These categorisations were clearly racial, but also sexual, most notoriously so in how race was biologically defined and thus reproduced generationally – thus leading to interventions through state eugenic sterilisation programmes targeting racial minorities, disabled citizens, and transgender citizens – people deemed unfit to reproduce (Broberg and Tydén, 2005; Björkman and Widmalm, 2010).

The Swedish colonial past has been formative for Swedish contemporary nationalism, which aligns with how nations and nationalism globally are contingent to capitalism's geographical transformation (Goswami, 2002, 2020). The Swedish nation-state and the ideology of Swedishness as a moral virtue have been formed in different historical events, ranging from colonial expansion to the control over migration flows. Narratives of Swedish nationality as a marker of superiority have persistently accompanied Swedish state actions, assuming and enforcing political and cultural boundaries to overlap in a Swedish nation-state. These narratives are traceable in several instances, such as the portrayal of Swedish colonialists as morally superior to both the people they colonised and to other colonisers (Idevall Hagren, 2022, p. 391), and in narratives of Swedish exceptionalism from the twentieth century and onwards, which hold Sweden and the Swedes as exceptionally enlightened, modern, and equal (Section 3.1). The question that remains to be answered is, however, what role sexuality and sexual difference play in Swedish nationalism.

3.3. Sexing the Swedish Nation

The colonial foundations of Swedish nationalism were racialising and sexualising to their core, not least through scientific racism and eugenics programmes in which forced race-based sterilisations were conducted to prevent people from reproduction if they were deemed "undesireable" (Marttinen,

2022). During the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, race and nation were explicitly intertwined in Swedish nationalism, as the Swedish nation was ascribed "racial characters" (by for example eugenics scientists, such as Linders and Lundborg, 1926). In the time period, "'biological race' was inseparable from the nation and physical character was assigned to territories" (Marttinen, 2022, p. 236). These characteristics were defined as biological and genetically hereditary, leading to sexuality being intertwined with race and nation as the means for their reproduction. Accordingly, white middle-class women were considered resources for reproducing a healthy nation, whereas women from lower classes, from minority populations, with disabilities, mental illnesses, or sexually "deviant" behaviour were considered threats to a healthy nation and thus subjected to forced sterilisations (see Broberg and Tydén, 2005; Marttinen, 2022).

Alongside the racial definitions of national sexuality, noticed most clearly in the eugenics projects that mapped and ordered racial and sexual characteristics,[16] was a cultural definition of national sexuality: sexual customs within the nation-state borders were – and still are – considered unitary and nationally specific. One example of assumed national coherency and specificity in sexual customs can be found in marriage laws, which have been subjected to constant change and alterations. One such alteration was prepared in 1913, which included an alignment of marriage laws in the Scandinavian countries, with the aim to coordinate these with one another. A coordinated legal framework for marriage was then considered difficult (but not impossible) to implement because of customs differing across the nation-state borders, which signifies an assumption of unitary customs for sexuality within the separate nation-states (Andersson, 2011, p. 69). When it was nonetheless decided to align the Scandinavian marriage laws, the uniqueness of the separate nations was argued to be less significant than their similarities in terms of marriage customs, thus necessitating their coordination (ibid.).

The more overtly racial eugenics programmes with their focus on sexually reproduced race declined in influence, while the cultural definitions of national sexuality remained central. From the second half of the twentieth century, nationalist formations of race and sexuality have been expressed in terms of culture rather than biology (see Balibar, 1991; Miles, 1993, pp. 62–79; Lentin and Titley, 2012). Schall (2016, pp. 44–49) describes the shift in Sweden from racially to culturally defined Swedishness as a "third way" between ethnic (racial) and civic (citizenship-based) nationalism, which were blended in the concept of a Swedish *folk* or people. The concept relied on the "idea that

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[16] Racial characteristics because people ascribed as belonging to other "races" than the "Swedish race" were deemed less suited for modern life and reproduction, and sexual characteristics because the "healthy nation" was to be produced by controlling the population's reproduction, including forced sterilisations as a means to prevent racial minorities and people with various mental or physical conditions from bearing children (see Broberg and Tydén, 2005; Marttinen, 2022).

Swedes were naturally, ethnically, hereditarily predisposed to be democratic citizens" (Schall, 2016, p. 49).

The cultural (or blended ethnic and civic) forms of nationalist scripts for Swedish sexuality can be divided into two functions: one of assuming, emphasising, and actively reinforcing sexual life and customs as nationally shared; and one of assuming these "unitary customs" to be distinct in comparison to those in other nation-states, or among people living in Sweden but with ties to other nation-states.

3.3.1. Maintaining an Internally Cohesive Swedish Sexuality

> The folkhem served as a unifying concept for a political project envisaged to symbolically offer a protective roof for the (implicitly homogeneous) Swedish people, both men and women, consolidating the idea of a gender-equal welfare state. (Norocel, 2016, p. 375)

Sexuality became a matter for the nation-state to manage in the early twentieth century, through state attempts – informed by race biological research – to increase birth rates among people considered "healthy" Swedes, while hindering births for those who did not (Andersson, 2011, pp. 66–98; Marttinen, 2022). One key state control of reproduction can be found in marriage laws and policies. According to Andersson (2011, pp. 128–129), marriage had a central status in Swedish society throughout the twentieth century, but it transgressed from a question of population politics to family politics. In the first decades (up to the 1950s), marriage was articulated (in state documents concerning marriage law) as a contract and a means for reproducing a healthy population. From the second half of the twentieth century, marriage laws were more concerned with *families*, which rests on reproduction as an implicit premise (Andersson, 2011, p. 146).

Marriage became a question of family politics (rather than explicit control of population reproduction) as part of the growing welfare state – the *folkhem* (people's home), which, at least in theory, has gender equality as a foundational principle (Norocel, 2016, p. 375). The *folkhem* concept was made central by a Social Democratic minister of state, Per Albin Hansson,[17] who, in 1928, defined it "as a place where women and men complement each other: while women cared for the children and the home of the family, men protected the home of the people, the nation" (Liinason, 2023, p. 1055). Generally, the folkhem was a Social Democratic governmental project[18] aiming to "create an

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[17] Although the concept of the *folkhem* was used by the Social Democrats to term their own politics a politics for the nation, the first use of the concept has likely come from Rudolf Kjellén, who used it to describe the Swedish nation (Schall, 2016, pp. 36–37).

[18] The party became Sweden's biggest party in 1932 and had an almost unbroken ruling position in the Swedish parliament up to 1976, and had a dominant position until the 1990s (Schall, 2016, pp. 34–36).

equal classless society, an approach regarded as the 'middle-way' between socialism and capitalism" (Rokem and Vaughan, 2019, p. 2428). As such, it has been central to Swedish nationalism, which became characterised by a strong welfare state, through which the population could be made more internally equal. In the foundational definitions of the *folkhem*, we can also recognise the tendency to use the family as an allegory for the nation, combining the concept of (a familial) *home* with the concept of a national community: a *folk*. In Per Albin Hansson's speech from 1928, the connection between nation and family was made, as he likened the national community to a family – both being built on equality, compassion, and cooperation:

> The foundation of the home is fellowship and feelings of togetherness. The good home doesn't admit privilege or backwardness—neither favorites nor stepchildren. There one doesn't look down on the other. There, one doesn't seek advantage to another's cost. The strong do not oppress or pillage the weak. In the good home there is equality, compassion, cooperation, helpfulness. (Per Albin Hansson, quoted in Schall, 2016, p. 37)

The Swedish folkhem thus initially reproduced the heteronormative nationalist scripts of the family as a social role model for the structure of the nation (see Section 2.3). In this case, the good family and the good nation were both social entities that were ideal marks of equality. As such, the folkhem definition of an equal family and nation also included nationalist sexual scripts in which men were protectors and women were carers, with men and women as equals but with a distinct division of labour (see Hirdman, 1992).

The model of gender equality in the Swedish welfare state (the folkhem) changed in the 1970s by moving away from the previous ideal of the division of labour within heterosexual families. Through efforts to make women more equal to men in their working lives, particularly by improving parental leave insurances, the "mantra" of Swedish gender equality began to take form (Martinsson, Griffin, and Giritli Nygren, 2016, p. 5), which was closely linked to women's participation in the labour market (de los Reyes, 2016, p. 27). The mantra, based on real policies and legal changes (such as abortion rights, contraception subsidies, parental leave laws, and later gender-neutral marriage laws), entails that Sweden is a rational, modern, enlightened nation-state, given its efforts to enable equality in general and gender equality in particular.

The state-sanctioned gender equality efforts take the heterosexual family as a given, and as a relation through which equality is hindered but also can be achieved. Sexuality is a (sometimes implicit) key focus for gender equality policies in Sweden, being both the base for family construction and simultaneously the core problem, as inequality between men and women is often considered a problem within heterosexual families – a problem to be solved by

state legislation and policy: "Women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms" (Policy goal 4, from the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, n.d.).

Dahl summarises the core of gender equality discourses in Sweden to be about "reconstructing men and women and their relation, without, however, questioning or undermining the heterosexual desire" (Dahl, 2005, p. 49, my translation). Heterosexual desire and family formation are taken for granted in Swedish gender equality policy, while also being problematised. This is particularly evident in policies on both state and regional levels which attempt to question and change the gendered division of labour within families, such as promoting husbands or fathers to take on more household responsibilities. In these policies and campaigns, the heterosexual family remains an ideal, but one that needs interventions to become more equal – to rationally overcome old, traditional gender roles (Dahl, 2005; Widegren, 2016). The nuclear, heterosexual family is thus both the problem and the end goal for gender equality policy.

3.3.2. International Comparisons: Sexual Exceptionalism

There is a continuity in the centrality of heteronormativity in Swedish state policy, as the nuclear family has remained central first as a means of reproducing a "healthy population", then as the means for and end goals of equality. The reproduction of a healthy population was an overtly nationalist aim, defining the Swedish nation as a racially white nation which needed to be controlled and safe-guarded from "unhealthy reproduction". During the folkhem foundation, the family was made an allegory for the nation, and equality within both the nation and the family became entwined with Swedish nationality.

Gender equality has also been translated into a question of national superiority in Sweden (Martinsson, Griffin, and Giritli Nygren, 2016), and later, in the 1990s, it was fuelled by including LGBTQ rights as a sign of sexual equality (Edenheim, 2005; Liinason, 2017). The role sexuality plays in this nationalist mantra is that of distinguishing Sweden and Swedes as enlightened in terms of equality between the sexes and sexualities: "If you are identified as a secular Swede and racialised as white, you are supposed to be gender equal, or at least more gender equal than others" (Martinsson, Griffin, and Giritli Nygren, 2016, p. 213).

Such assumptions are closely connected to the history of the state institutionalisation of gender equality in laws and policies from the 1970s and onwards. Through these, gender equality became a crucial piece in Swedish nationalism, transforming it from "an ongoing political project to a distinctive national characteristic" (de los Reyes, 2016, p. 28). Nationalist definitions of Swedes as particularly gender equal could be understood as a continuation of the earlier assumptions of Swedes as naturally more democratic and more

equal owing to their national belonging (see Schall, 2016, pp. 33–57). It could, as I will argue in the coming pages, also be seen as a predecessor and a discourse aligned with assumptions of Swedes as more sexually progressive and less homophobic than other nationalities. While the gender equality policies and LGBTQ rights policies are held somewhat distinct – given the heteronormative assumptions of the former – they are joint as contributors to two variations of a *Swedish sexual exceptionalism*. They both are part of the wider productions of a discourse of Swedish sexuality "through connections between sexual liberation and women's liberation, between sex and democracy, based on ideas of good, normal and healthy sex, contributing to the construction of Sweden as a modern, rational and, subsequently, liberal nation" (Liinason, 2017, p. 2).

These narratives, spread in state policies, international descriptions of Sweden, and a range of cultural expressions (see Liinason, 2017; Dahl, 2018; Kehl, 2018; Martinsson, Griffin, and Giritli Nygren, 2016), are possible to define as exceptionalism, as they single out the Swedish nation as precisely exceptional. This exceptionalism "contributes to a national imagined community of modernity and secularism, bringing promises of a happy future for those who are included and invited into this society" (Alm et al., 2021, p. 2). For those outside of the Swedish nation, it instead serves as a "role model for other countries to follow" (Martinsson, 2021, p. 84). The element of sexual exceptionalism[19] of Swedish nationalism has connections to a wider, general Swedish exceptionalism, in which Swedes are assumedly more equal and democratic than others in terms of not only sexuality but also class and race (Pred, 2000; Habel, 2012). While *ideals of equality* therefore are a longstanding, multifaceted, and general element of Swedish nationalism, this thesis focuses in depth on the role LGBTQ people have come to play as symbols in reinforcing Swedish sexual exceptionalism and therefore Swedish nationalism.

3.4. Swedish Homonationalism: A Country that Has "Come a Long Way"

> Here in Sweden and the Nordic countries, we have come a relatively long way when it comes to LGBTQI rights. But what we see as self-evident – or at least would like to believe is self-evident – is unthinkable in other parts of the world. In many countries, same-sex relationships are illegal. Young people are forced to hide and deny their love and their identity. LGBTQI people are persecuted, harassed and even imprisoned. For me, this is totally inconceivable. But I know that in these countries, those of you who are here today [the people partaking

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[19] Elsewhere sometimes referred to as *gender exceptionalism* (Martinsson, Griffin, and Giritli Nygren, 2016; Kehl, 2018).

in or watching the digital Pride parade] are a source of both inspiration and enormously important support.

I also believe that this task is particularly important right now when the Coronavirus pandemic has put so much on hold and when – in some cases – progress has even been reversed. At the same time, we must not forget that even here in Sweden there are many people – young and old – who are afraid to be open. There are families and contexts where views of LGBTQI people are still characterised by prejudice and ignorance. (H.K.H. Kronprinsessan Victoria's introduction speech, video uploaded by Stockholm Pride 2020)

In 2020, the Stockholm Pride parade was turned into a digital parade due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Introducing the broadcast was a speech by Sweden's crown princess, Victoria Bernadotte. Few, if any, people could be said to represent the Swedish nation more clearly than the heir to the throne, who during a three-minute-long recording took a stand for LGBTQ and human rights, ending the speech by declaring that she stands behind all people who cannot or dare not show the world their true selves. The crown princess also tells the viewers what the Pride festival *is*, declaring that "it [Stockholm Pride] is a reminder of the progress that has been made – but also of everything that still remains to be done". She returns to the topic of progression in her speech, narrating Sweden's position as ahead of other countries.

The crown princess' speech contains elements often repeated in narratives of Sweden as LGBTQ-progressive in international comparison (see Article III). These narratives rely heavily on temporal conceptions of national space (as homonationalist discourse so often does, see Rao, 2020): "we have come a long way", yet *still*, there are individual "families and contexts" in Sweden that have not kept up the pace with the stated national norm. The acknowledgement of anti-LGBTQ sentiments and practices within a homonationalist nation locates them only in bounded communities, which are held as exceptions and anomalies in an otherwise LGBTQ-accepting nation (Meyer, 2020). The vagueness implies that it could be *any* families and contexts that hinder people from being "open". However, scholarship on homonationalism informs us that this is not the case. When concretely described, the anti-LGBTQ family or context is racialised in the body of migrants and non-white citizens, who are thought of as more homophobic than white families (Haritaworn, 2015; Puar, 2017, p. 29; Kehl, 2018).

3.4.1. Previous Research on Swedish Homonationalism

With some noteworthy exceptions of geographers who mention Swedish homonationalism or normativity (Wimark and Hedlund, 2017; Molina, 2020; Wimark, 2021), most examinations of homonationalism in the Swedish context have occurred outside of human geography, such as in gender studies, sociology, global relations, and journalism. Most general in its geographical

coverage is the Swedish journalistic introduction to homonationalism, where Sörberg (2017) situates homonationalism as a new, widespread Western (North American and West European) discursive strategy. The author provides examples of Swedish homonationalism from Swedish liberal and conservative politicians speaking at Stockholm Pride, who boast about the success of LGBTQ struggles in Sweden. Doing so, they focus more on being proud of Sweden being an LGBTQ-friendly nation-state, rather than on how this came to be. Sörberg presents these comments alongside a wide range of other examples from Europe, the United States, and Israel, focusing in particular on far-right and populist homonationalist discourses (Sörberg, 2017).

Academic notions of homonationalism in Sweden have been narrower in their empirical scope. They concern army marketing campaigns (Strand and Kehl, 2019), rainbow flags (Laskar, Johansson, and Mulinari, 2016), or lesbian motherhood (Dahl, 2018), which all are used to signify a progressive, sexually exceptional Swedish nation-state where homophobia only exists outside of the country. These discourses have also been reproduced in racist discourses of assumedly homophobic migrants (Kehl, 2018) and conditions for foreign aid (Laskar, 2014). Others have examined media and social media representations, such as the construction of Swedish homonationalism through imaginative geographies of homophobia in Africa taking shape in news articles. In these articles, Sweden is portrayed as LGBTQ-friendly and modern (homonational), by describing homophobia *elsewhere* in sensational ways (Jungar and Peltonen, 2017). Another study of media analyses Muslim LGBTQ persons' postings on Instagram, debunking assumptions of them needing to be saved from their own communities, and resisting different forms of objectification (Kehl, 2020b). These studies serve well to show some contemporary homonationalist discourses in Sweden, highlighting how they have been reproduced in different settings. In the remainder of this subchapter, I provide my own overview of Swedish homonationalism, focusing on how the role of the state has been crucial in the imaginaries of an LGBTQ-friendly Swedish nation. The overview thus also serves to strengthen the argument made about Swedish nationalism in general, namely that it is strongly tied to the state.

Neither homonationalist narratives nor their critiques tend to specify *how* Sweden allegedly overcame its anti-LGBTQ past, only that it has done so. To some extent, research critiquing these narratives has also bypassed this trajectory, instead favouring deconstructions of contemporary expressions of the homonationalist myth. This is true for this thesis as well, which empirically examines Swedish sexual nationalism between 2016 and 2020. While the development of Swedish homonationalism deserves deeper investigation, this section offers some historical specificities of moments crucial for the Swedish homonationalist discourse. Below follow some broad strokes of how the history of Swedish LGBTQ rights is often portrayed, offering insights into the development of homonationalist discourse in Sweden. This approach follows

Goswami's (2002, 2004) argument for taking seriously not only how nationalism is discursively reproduced in a contemporary context but also how it has developed over time.

3.4.2. Some Historical Specificities of Swedish Homonationalism

Homonationalist narratives in Sweden build on other, related discourses of Swedish moral superiority that take pride in equality. Doing so, they rely heavily on the nation-state as the prime agent for ensuring that Sweden is LGBTQ friendly. An illustrative example of this is how Stockholm city's marketing bureau markets Stockholm as an LGBTQ tourist destination. Together with links to suggested venues to visit and places to stay, they have a list of Swedish LGBTQ rights, titled *LGBT Progress in Sweden* (Visit Stockholm, 2022):

- 1944 Homosexual relationships are legalized
- 1972 Sweden becomes the first country in the world to legally allow gender change
- 1979 The National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) decides homosexuality is no longer a mental disorder
- 1987 Ban on discrimination against homosexuals by businesses and government officials takes effect
- 1988 Homosexuals included in the cohabitation law
- 1995 The Registered Partnership Act (domestic partnership law) is passed
- 1999 HomO, an ombudsman for LGBT people, is established
- 2003 Constitutional change to outlaw hate speech based on sexual orientation
- 2003 Adoption rights for same-sex couples
- 2005 Insemination rights for lesbian couples
- 2009 Transgender identity and expressions included in the anti-discrimination act
- 2009 Gender-neutral marriage law in effect
- 2011 Prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation is added to the Swedish constitution
- 2013 Mandatory sterilization stricken from the law regarding change of legal gender

The list suggest that these policy and legislative changes are important information for LGBTQ tourists, regardless of how long they plan to stay or for what purpose. It also defines Sweden as exceptionally progressive, when possible, by stating that Sweden was the first country ever to allow gender changes in 1972. This permission was, however, not unconditioned, as people

could change their legal gender only if they were unmarried and physically unable to procreate, which in practice meant sterilisation was mandatory for changing a person's legal gender. The last item on the list (about changes in 2013) therefore refers to an alteration of the 1972 law, which hints at more complex processes hiding behind any assumed linear progress.

Visit Stockholm's list of changes serves as an example of homonationalism in practice: referring to laws and authority policies as evidence of Sweden's homonational status. It also serves as a good entry point to show how Swedish homonationalism is connected to the welfare state. Defining all the listed changes as *progress* for LGBTQ people, made by the Swedish state, is a crude simplification. In 1944, the decision was made to remove the law prohibiting "fornication, which is against nature" ["otukt, som mot naturen är"] (Edenheim, 2005, p. 215), which included homosexual acts, but also infidelity, prostitution, incest, and other acts. The grounds for decriminalisation were stated not as a recognition or approval of homosexuality; rather, homosexuality was very much considered a problem to be solved, and more efficiently so if homosexuals could be treated by doctors instead of keeping their actions, acts, and relationships secret in fear of punishment (Edenheim, 2005, pp. 97–98). The decriminalisation was thus a question of changes in how homosexuality was to be treated since previous methods (repression) had not worked. Further, the arguments made for decriminalisation in the state investigation of the matter served to increase the hegemony of medicine and decrease the hegemony of the Christian ethic behind the law.

A related reasoning surrounded the decision to allow gender change in 1972, which was also very heteronormatively defined. Changes in legal and medical treatments of non-normative gender identity were assessed with explicit aims to minimise the "risk" for increased homosexuality among the population, while also defining sexual identity as determined by heterosexual desire (Edenheim, 2005, pp. 79, 90). The reasoning behind the 1972 law allowing gender change is, according to Edenheim (2005, p. 101), somewhat similar to the investigation into the decriminalisation of acts against nature: the state puts medical routines into place and sees a future of medical discoveries (including operations) or psychological treatments to solve what is perceived as a problem for society and individuals, and which could best be solved by treatment instead of repression (Edenheim, 2005, pp. 128–139).[20]

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[20] It is mainly male homosexuality that is treated in the assessments and considered a larger problem for society. Edenheim (2005, p. 110) concludes that the investigations hold that women cannot *really* be homosexual. In the investigation concerning decriminalisation, it is stated that "female homosexuality [is] less easily detectible both for outsiders and for the women themselves, who many times are entirely unaware of their homosexual disposition" (SOU 1941:32, p. 39, quoted in Edenheim, 2005, p. 109; my translation). The same investigation also describes female homosexuality as less offensive and less disturbing for the public order and decency, because lesbian sexual activity more often than male homosexual activity has less "sexual character", as the authors state that female homosexual acts are more "innocent", of less "genital character" (Edenheim, 2005).

The changes in how the Swedish nation-state turned homosexuality and transgenderism into medical problems aligns with Foucault's (2002) study on the history of sexuality, in which he argues that society has not gone from repression of sexuality to free sexuality – rather, the increased recognition of (homo)sexuality was a transformation in how abnormality was defined and handled in hegemonical shifts from religious punishments to medical diagnosis and treatment. Neither decriminalising homosexuality nor allowing gender change followed state *acceptance*; instead, they resulted from changes in the strategy for how they – articulated as problems – were to be solved (Edenheim, 2005, p. 207). In the words of Jens Rydström (2003, p. 4): "What can be interpreted as increasing tolerance was rather a redefinition of the boundaries of permissible sex and a more rigid policing of transgressions". In this shift, the discourses on homosexuality and transgenderism were also increasingly individualised: having been subjects conducting "acts against nature", homosexuals became objectified as victims of unfortunate biological circumstances.

3.4.3. The Role of the Nation-State in Swedish Homonationalism

Examining the background to some of the items on Visit Stockholm's list, we can see how homonationalism in Sweden is based on approving – and celebrating – the ways in which the state has sought to first cure homosexuality and transgenderism and then, later, maintain a definition of LGBTQ people as objects instead of subjects under the law, as minorities falling victim to their identities. Such is the case for the later changes between 1980 and 2000. The state investigations into sexuality from the 1980s and later (see SOU 1984:63, 1993:98, 1997:175) established the narrative of lists marking progression (similar to the one by Visit Stockholm). State investigations then also placed themselves in the trajectory of moving from previous injustice towards future equality, attributing decreasing homophobia among the population to legal changes, such as the Civil Partnership Act in 1994 (Edenheim, 2005, p. 156). The narrative of the societal problem then shifted from subjecting homosexuality in itself to treatment, to instead defining homophobia and the living conditions of LGBTQ people as the problems to be solved through legislative change.

In this shift, Edenheim's analysis of Swedish state investigations highlights a new definition of homosexual desire. Having been defined as sexual (and sexually deviant) from the 1930s to the end of the 1960s, homosexual relationships were in 1993 defined as *emotional*: as love. In addition, this love would ideally be shared in stable, prolonged relationships (Edenheim, 2005, pp. 157–158). This shift could be named *homonormative* (see Duggan, 2002)*, since homosexuals are described with assumptions of how they (all) want to live their lives – in coupledom similar to heterosexuals, which, according to the public investigations, is enabled by state legislation. The Civil Partnership

Act was argued to both improve attitudes of the population and be less homophobic, while also aiming to "facilitate solid and lasting relationships", which would "partly have a value in itself, partly be able to prevent HIV infection" (SOU 1993:98, p. 15, my translation). The shift could also be named homonormative because of the explicit ideological framing of what the role of society (read: the nation-state) should be:

> It does not fall upon society to have views on people's life choices. Society's task should instead be to facilitate – not prevent – people from living in accordance with their own wishes and personality orientation, all on the condition that this does not harm others. (SOU 1993:98, p. 11, quoted in Edenheim, 2005, p. 157; my translation)

The state investigation clarifies that its main role for improving people's lives is not to intervene, to draw back, for individuals to choose their lives as they wish, while they simultaneously imply that those choices are best made through longstanding, monogamous coupledom (SOU 1993:98, p. 15; Edenheim, 2005, p. 158). This description is homonormative, in that the role of the nation-state (in the investigation named "society") is to draw back (not having views on people's life choices), thus aligned with the simultaneous ongoing privatisation in Sweden generally (see Skyrman et al., 2022).

There is a continuity in the narratives of Swedish progression regarding LGBTQ rights when it comes to the amount of recognition awarded to the nation-state authorities and legal system. This is, of course, particularly visible in state investigations, written with the very aim of having the nation-state define and solve problems. The narratives in these sources highlight state action and downplay LGBTQ activism and social struggles.[21] The significant role awarded to the Swedish nation-state is, however, also reflected in which LGBTQ activism and struggles have been considered most important in Swedish history.

Few moments of LGBTQ struggles – if any – are as known in Sweden as the activist occupation of the National Board of Health and Welfare[22] on 29 August 1979. It has been retold in documentaries and newspaper articles and is included in (another) list over LGBTQ rights progression found on the website of the Living History Forum, a public agency working for democracy and equality (Forum för levande historia, n.d.; see Edenheim, 2020, for an analysis of the agency). The occupation consisted of activists placing themselves inside of the board's office, demanding that homosexuality be taken off its register of mental illnesses. They succeeded in having their demand met, after the head

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[21] According to Edenheim's (2005, pp. 180–182) analysis of the investigations, some LGBTQ voices are also dismissed as unrepresentative for the general aspirations of LGBTQ people.

[22] A government agency that "work[s] to ensure good health, social welfare and high-quality health and social care on equal terms for the whole Swedish population" (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2019).

of the board, Barbro Westerholm, discussed with them and later made sure the diagnosis was removed from the board's register in October 1979.

The action was preceded by other more formal requests to remove the classification, as well as other demands, such as RFSL (Sweden's largest LGBTQ civil organisation) demanding a change of the age of consent for homosexual acts to the same as the age for heterosexual acts. Another more formal action was that of the Left Party,[23] who put forth a suggestion in parliament to banish marriage and replace it with a form of civil partnership which included same-sex couples, which was rejected. The occupation of the National Board of Health and Welfare also took place alongside a range of other radical LGBTQ activist actions and groups, such as *Lesbisk Front* (Lesbian Front) or *Röda Bögar* (Red Gays) (Svensson, 2001, pp. 33–35; Hallgren, 2008).

What is interesting about the action is both its success and that of all radical and non-radical LGBTQ activism preceding and following it, the occupation is the one with the strongest hold in commemoration of Swedish LGBTQ activism. In the lists of LGBTQ progression, such as that of the Living History Forum, it is the only Swedish activist event mentioned, positioned in between international activist and historical events (such as the Stonewall uprising) and changes in state legislation. The LGBTQ activist event most significantly known in Swedish history is one where activists demanded a change made by a state authority, a request which was met. Hence, while rightly being remembered as an effort by LGBTQ activists, the occupation simultaneously gave way to portrayals of the Swedish nation-state as part of this heroism, as a result of the compliance of the director of the board.

Unlike memorialising Stonewall, remembering the occupation of the National Board of Health and Welfare generates a discourse of protest which portrays the nation-state (enacted through the national board and its director) in a more favourable light – as taking part in the struggle instead of opposing it. Repeating this instance as the main (and sometimes only) LGBTQ activist effort in Swedish history thus serves to reify the nation-state as the central agent in LGBTQ activism. The many lists narrating LGBTQ rights in Sweden that appear in public agencies (Living History Forum/Forum för levande historia), tourist marketing (Visit Stockholm), and newspaper articles (Fridh Kleberg, 2019) highlight legislative changes and one moment of LGBTQ activism in Sweden – the occupation of the National Board of Health and Welfare in 1979. It is thus very common to summarise Swedish LGBTQ history as a history that has progressed mainly – if not only – through nation-state decisions, which on one occasion was initiated by an activist effort. This, I argue, indicates that in Swedish homonationalism, we see that the nation-state is awarded a significant role as few moments of activism or state repression is mentioned – and when they are, they are narrated as oppressions overcome,

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[23] *Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna* (Left Party – The Communists), who have been working under the name *Vänsterpartiet* (The Left Party) since 1990.

solved by nation-state progressive action. In the broad strokes of Swedish LGBTQ rights, struggles are downplayed in favour of portrayals of the nation-state as *the* actor responsible for societal improvements – even so when including a historical activist event.

3.5. Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism in Sweden

Despite the above cited studies confirming homonationalism as a widespread discourse in Sweden (Section 3.4.1), homonationalism has at times been thought of as manifested primarily in statements by the Sweden Democrats (SD), Sweden's currently second largest parliamentary party. They are explicitly nationalist, having anti-migration policies as their main political project. Examples of the Sweden Democrats picking up homonationalism can be found in a debate article from 2010 and a small "Pride parade" that one SD-affiliated writer organised in 2016. In the debate article (Åkesson and Herrstedt, 2010), the party leader Jimmie Åkesson and his colleague Carina Herrstedt claim that their party is not (as critics have it) homophobic, but on the contrary beneficial for gay, bi-, and trans people who the authors suggest fear Muslims in Sweden (Ambjörnsson, 2016, p. 179; Siverskog, 2016, p. 77). The 2016 parade, organised by the former editor and writer for Sweden Democratic news sites, Jan Sjunnesson, also framed Muslims and immigrants in general as threatening LGBTQ people in Sweden, which is why they chose to "provocatively" hold the parade in a suburb where many inhabitants have migrant backgrounds (see also Ambjörnsson, 2016, p. 179; Sörberg, 2017, pp. 31–34; Kehl, 2018).

The debate article and nationalist Pride parade are examples of how Sweden Democrats make occasional claims that homophobia in Sweden would only come from migrants, particularly so Muslims. The Sweden Democratic chairman of the Committee on Justice, Richard Jomshof, made a similar statement when he said that "if you stand and preach hatred and antisemitism and against homosexuals in a mosque, that is a good example of something that could lead to deportation" (quoted in Rohwedder, 2022; my translation). Portraying homophobia as coming only from Muslims is the most overt reproduction of homonationalist discourse, but it is far from the only form which homonationalism in Sweden can take (Jungar and Peltonen, 2017; Dahl, 2018; Strand and Kehl, 2019). Alongside the Islamophobic assumption of homophobia as exclusively a Muslim issue, SD members have mostly opposed LGBTQ events, symbols, and policies (see Article IV), which necessitates continuous attention to far-right strategies and their opposition. There is a range of Swedish homonationalist strategies that have been identified so far: the outward-

looking identification of a homophobic Other, either Muslim or non-European, who defines Swedish sexual exceptionalism by being constructed as its opposite; and the inward-looking praise of a progressive Sweden, where exterior homophobia is kept in the background.

To continue the emphasis on nationalist ideology in the examination of Swedish cases of homonationalism, while aiming for geographical sensitivity, the thesis investigates tensions in nationalist ideologies and LGBTQ rights and visibility in Sweden today, where they occur, and how they play out. The thesis takes nationalist ideology and sexual/gender norms not as constant, but as contextual. This is made clear not least in the ways nationalist movements only occasionally spread homonationalist discourse publicly in Sweden, despite earlier tendencies. While the debate article from SD and the suburban "Pride parade" indicated that the party would follow a Western European trend of shallow praise for national sexual exceptionalism, the strategy is ambiguous, since homo- and transphobia remains central for the Swedish far right. Furthermore, leading civil society organisation actors working for sexual rights (RFSU) and LGBTQ rights (RFSL) define SD as a threat to sexual and gendered freedoms and equality (Ehne and Linde, 2018; RFSU, 2020). Outside of parliamentary far-right nationalism, there has also been an upsurge in the visibility of neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ attacks (see Articles III–V). The different actors with varying proximity to national-socialist ideology and practice work against rather than with increasing LGBTQ rights and recognition. As argued in Section 3.4, state authorities have instead embraced and reinforced homonationalist stances, further necessitating attention to competing and changing nationalist ideologies about sexuality.

In the sections that follow, the Swedish nationalist movements concerned in this thesis are introduced. Sections 3.5.1 to 3.5.3 provide an overview of the three most publicly active movements from 2016 to 2020, describing them in general terms, as well as their anti-LGBTQ politics and activism. While these were not the only active nationalist movements at the time, they were the ones receiving the most public attention for their overall activity and for their anti-LGBTQ politics or activism.

3.5.1. The Sweden Democrats (SD)

The Sweden Democrats (SD) is a political party, often defined as an "extreme-right party" (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017b, p. 265), "radical right" (Hellström and Nilsson, 2010; Aylott and Bolin, 2023), "populist radical right" (Jungar, 2017, p. 147), or "cultural racists" (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2014). The latter term captures the main political question for the party: opposing immigration and advocating for expelling immigrants, Muslim immigrants in particular, from Sweden. By phrasing themselves in terms of being concerned with protecting Swedish "culture", they pose that it is under threat from im-

migrants – a stance which *is* racist, but expressed as protecting Swedish "culture" rather than cruder demands to protect a Swedish, white "race" (see Miles, 1993; Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017b, p. 261; Sections 2.1–2.2, this thesis). In brief, SD's political project and path to power has consisted of portraying the Swedish welfare state and Swedish national cohesion as threatened and dismantled by immigrants. Schierup, Ålund, and Neergaard (2018, p. 1842) summarise the Sweden Democratic ideology as follows:

> The migrants are seen as pollution and the destruction of what is truly Swedish, while the established left, imagined as ranging from socialists and social democrats to feminists and anti-racists, are seen as betraying Sweden and the ideals of the nation and the family. Thus, the destruction of the nation through immigration and the import of foreign cultures with a particular focus on Islam are at the core of the party's political imagination.

SD entered the Swedish state parliament in the 2010 election and has since received increasing support with every election. After the 2022 election, they received 20.5 percent of the votes and became the second largest party in parliament, after the Social Democrats. Leading up to the 2010 and 2014 elections, all other parliamentary parties declared they refused to collaborate with SD (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017b, pp. 262–263). As SD's support grew, however, some parties withdrew their refusals, not least the conservative party *Moderaterna*, the liberal party *Liberalerna*, and the Christian-conservative party *Kristdemokraterna*, who formed a government after the 2022 election by collaborating with SD (Aylott and Bolin, 2023).

The party, now (writing in 2023) collaborating with the conservative coalition government, has gained increased significance in the Swedish political landscape since their founding in 1988. The party was founded by a fraction from the short-lived predecessor *Sverigepartiet* (SVP, *The Sweden Party*), a fraction in which many members were former activists from the anti-immigration campaign group *Bevara Sverige Svenskt* (BSS, *Keep Sweden Swedish*). Most of the founders of SD had a history in BSS, which arranged manifestations and printed flyers with racist messages. The campaign group had support from and connections to Nazi and fascist organisations in Sweden: organisations with roots from the 1920s and 1940s that had taken inspiration from German Nazism and Italian Fascism. Some actors from these organisations were later also involved in SD. While SD did not explicitly originate as a Nazi or fascist party but specifically as an anti-immigration party, they had connections to such organisations in Sweden from the start, first during the BSS campaigns and later as a political party. The party was not only affiliated with Nazi and fascist organisations, but also had members, some of them in high positions, who were Nazis – including a former accountant, Gustaf Ekström, who had fought as a volunteer in the Waffen SS in the Second World War (Widfeldt, 2018, pp. 549–550; Lodenius, 2022, pp. 18–36). SD remained

affiliated with various Nazi actors and movements over the years, leading to several scandals whenever members were found to support or collaborate in more radical Nazi movements. Nonetheless, the party has become less stigmatised as they have received larger support and gained representation in parliament and local parliaments.

SD's initial stance towards LGBTQ people was a hostile one. In their party programme of 1999, they wrote that they were against the "glorification of the homosexual lifestyle" (cited in RFSU, 2020, p. 12; my translation). When SD made efforts to become more acceptable for mainstream audiences in the 2000s, their stance on LGBTQ people changed somewhat as well. In a leaked email sent to party members, a former party secretary wrote that members should not say "faggots back into the closets", but instead say "preserve the nuclear family". The prompt was articulated together with similar suggestions for expressing racism in better disguised manners by stopping the use of racist slurs and instead agitating against "ethnic strangers" (Lodenius, 2022, p. 74). The leaked prompts and the fact that SD have had overlaps with Nazi movements (whose anti-LGBTQ stances have been made clear, see Lööw, 2015) reflect anti-LGBTQ views, of which some need to be rephrased when expressed in public.

In the 2010s, the party officially but ambiguously subscribed to homonationalism, mainly as a tool for their anti-immigration and anti-Muslim argumentation: in a debate article, they argued that increased homophobia in Sweden was caused by a "growing Islamisation" (Åkesson and Herrstedt, 2010). This accusation was preceded by an apology on behalf of SD members who in the past had expressed themselves homophobically. The party's reliance on homonationalism is, however, ambiguous as there have been several continued instances of SD members expressing themselves homophobically in the years that have passed since Åkesson and Herrstedt's debate piece. Some of these are mentioned in the articles in this thesis (mainly in Article IV) and range from individual tweets and Facebook posts to agitations against LGBTQ people and events. SD members have been called out for instances where they have written scornfully about LGBTQ people – especially in reaction to ongoing Pride events. In these reactions, homophobic tropes have been used, calling homosexuals degenerates, perverts, or paedophiles. These tropes have simultaneously been articulated in both historical and recent Nazi groups (see sections below), indicating that SD remains in ideological proximity to them, albeit having been successful in mainstreaming their politics.

It is not only a question of party members expressing themselves in homophobic ways, but also a question of actual parliamentary politics. SD worked against issues such as same-sex marriage, homosexual adoption, and insemination up until 2019 (Lodenius, 2022, p. 203), abandoning their official resistance to these rather recently – several years after they began accusing Muslim minorities of constituting a homophobic threat. Since they entered parliament, SD have continuously voted against all suggested improvements of

LGBTQ rights, including expanded hate crime laws (adding gender identity and gender expression as grounds for hate crimes in the current law), a regulation of insemination less discriminatory towards same-sex couples and singles, and the removal of mandatory sterilisation when changing one's legal sex (Jonsson and Schwartz, 2014; Jonsson, 2018).

In local parliaments where SD hold seats, they have been highly active in local sexual politics, particularly so in local parliaments where they have larger or longer trajectories of parliamentary representation. The main questions SD have been raising on the local level are: gender pedagogy in schools and preschools, honour-related violence, financial support to associations (advocating against funding of LGBTQ associations), LGBTQ competence/certifications, rainbow flag policies, Pride events, and abortions (RFSU, 2020). Based on a report from RFSU (2020), some patterns can be found in SD's local parliamentary activities. In several different municipalities, they have advocated against funding associations working for LGBTQ rights, including Pride organisations and events. They have also argued against changing municipal flag policies, opposing suggestions to hoist rainbow flags on specific dates. They also continuously oppose norm-critical education policies for schools and for municipal employees and elected officials (such as LGBTQ certification of municipalities or their service providers).[24]

SD's relation to homonationalism resembles their relation to gender equality: they are anti-feminist and anti-LGBTQ (often expressed as being *for* heterosexual families). Yet, they vouch for gender equality and LGBTQ rights (mainly rights to safety from violence) as Swedish characteristics under threat from migrants (Mulinari, 2016; Kehl, 2018). Considering that SD's sexual politics are ambiguous, changing, and opportunistically homonationalist, they are both as a party and through individual members responsible for instances of nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism in Sweden. As a party, they have advocated against a range of LGBTQ rights and policies both nationally and locally. In the early years, and later through individuals active in the party, anti-LGBTQ stances have been expressed through explicit homophobic statements. Their anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are *nationalist*, not only because the party is a self-proclaimed nationalist party. The nationalist opposition to LGBTQ rights, people, events, places, and symbols is also constituted by being connected to specific nationalist ideals of sexuality.

In these ideals, sexuality and whiteness are intertwined in the nationalist scripts described in Section 2.3. SD's anti-immigrant rhetoric is loaded with fears of white women being potential victims of brown or black male sexual violence. The portrayal of immigrant or minority men as threats to women (and to LGBTQ people) has also been manifested in SD's political project, as

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[24] It should be noted that while SD are identified as by far being the most active party in terms of opposing these policies, the policies are to varied extents also opposed by parliamentarians from other parties.

they consider them threats to white women's (and LGBTQ people's) safety (Mulinari, 2016; Norocel, 2016). Their general sexual politics have from the start been oriented towards ideals of ethnically homogeneous nuclear families in which men are considered active and women passive (Lodenius, 2022, pp. 170–172) and where women and men complement each other through the family (Mulinari, 2016, p. 148). In SD's party programme of 2011, they rehearse the allegory of family and nation: "The Sweden Democrats view the nation as the most important, oldest and most natural human community after the family" (quoted in Mulinari, 2016, p. 147).

The heterosexual family, with its "complementary" roles for women and men, is foundational in much nationalist ideology in general and also in SD's nationalism. By considering the nation a reflection of the family, the demonisation of migrant men's sexuality (as figures of sexual violence) is part of the central project of maintaining the whiteness, or "racial purity", of the Swedish nation (Hill Collins, 1998; Mulinari, 2016). Accordingly, SD's official stance towards LGBTQ people and rights is that they are acceptable in the private, but not in the public sphere. As summarised by Kehl (2018, p. 680), SD "promote a notion of LGBT people as sexual deviants, to be tolerated if they behave, and argue at most for a privatised and depoliticised LGBT other, looking for inclusion and integration into the norm". This is reflected in SD's political actions, as well as their homophobic reactions to public LGBTQ events, as they openly oppose any public LGBTQ activities that would in any way question heterosexual family life as the national norm.

3.5.2. The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM)

The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) has in common with SD that they can be viewed as a continuation of historical Swedish Nazi and white power movements. However, while SD have formally distanced themselves from this history, NRM is an explicitly nationalist socialist movement. As such they are to their core antisemitic, drawing ideological inspiration from nationalist socialist movements in the 1920s to 1940s. In comparison to SD, who politically direct their racism towards immigrants, racial minorities in Sweden, and especially so Muslims,[25] NRM instead reify the Jewish world conspiracy. They consider migration a threat, but a threat assumedly orchestrated by an imagined Jewish conspiracy (Lööw, 2019a; Mattsson and Johansson, 2022).

In the years examined in this thesis (2016–2020), NRM was the most influential of Swedish national socialist organisations in Sweden (Westberg, 2021, p. 216). The organisation was founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s

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[25] While antisemitism is not central for contemporary SD, the party has nonetheless had many members engaging in Nazi movements at the same time as they were active in SD (Lodenius, 2022). It could also be argued that SD and other anti-immigration nationalist parties contribute to a mainstreamed form of conspiracy theories with antisemitic cores, such as fears of "the Great replacement" (see Ekman, 2022).

by actors who already had central positions in the white power milieu (Lööw, 2015, p. 70), and were active under the name *The Swedish Resistance Movement*[26] (SRM) before 2016 (Westberg, 2021, p. 216). Since the 1990s, SRM and later NRM have belonged to the most militant part of the wider white power milieu, and many members have committed violent actions. They articulate their aim to be to create a unified and ethnically white Nordic nation. Their practical strategies for achieving this have consisted of combining internal activities with propaganda online and in public spaces (through leafleting, marching, and holding public campaigns), and assaulting and on occasions murdering political opponents (Lööw, 2015, pp. 45–46, 71–80).

The organisation is ideologically and organisationally positioned within a wider network of white power movements globally and within Sweden. While it gained the largest influence and public awareness in the 2010s, it should be understood as part of a larger web of historical and contemporary Nazi and white power actors and organisations (Lööw, 2015). NRM's organisational structure resembles that of socialist-nationalist movements active in the years leading up to the Second World War: high demands on activity and loyalty from members, internal training, street activism, and propaganda (Lööw, 2015, p. 184). In the years included in this study, NRM's public activities have consisted of combining "flash mob" appearances – showing up unexpectedly to hand out flyers, have public meetings, or hold demonstrations (ibid., p. 187) – with large-scale marches (the largest including approximately 500 participants,[27] according to Jones, 2017). They also film and photograph many of their activities to post them online (Lööw, 2015, p. 187).

NRM and other neo-Nazis strategically abstain from violence when acting in public (marching, leafleting, demonstrating) to avoid police intervention and portray themselves as peaceful, using violence only as self-defence, compared to anti-fascists (Lööw, 2015, p. 208; Bjørgo and Ravndal, 2020). Yet, violence remains a crucial part of their activism, which they direct towards people and groups who they consider part of the Jewish world conspiracy, inferior, and unwanted. Because neo-Nazis consider themselves as opposing a *system*, differences between the political "enemies" they attack are blurred and can be anyone they define as part of this system. Jews, Romani people, racial minorities, refugees, leftists, LGBTQ people and others are attacked and argued to be personifications of this system – the Jewish world conspiracy threatening the white Swedish or Nordic nation (Lööw, 2015, p. 142).

According to Lööw (2015, p. 158, my translation):

> Homophobia has for a long time held a prominent position among the Swedish national socialists and race ideologists and is a central part of the "moral ene-

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[26] Svenska motståndsrörelsen (SMR).
[27] The actual number of active members in the movement and participants in their activities are very hard to determine (Lööw, 2019a, pp. 225–226).

mies". Homosexuals are considered "inferior" and "racially perverted" and homosexuality is seen as a "Jewish invention'"– as another means for the Jews to "annihilate the white race".

Homosexuals share their position as "moral enemies" with other people who in any way break with the preservation of a "healthy white race", including feminists and rapists – the latter highly racially defined in the fear of white women being sexually assaulted by migrants and racial minorities. In the national community as defined by neo-Nazis, women and men have different, complementary roles and the only accepted sexual activity is that between white men and women (Lööw, 2015, pp. 157–165). Sexuality, even when confined to the white heterosexual family, never has a value for its own sake, however, but is rather considered a means to reproduce the white, national race (Lööw, 2016, p. 417; see also Hill Collins, 1998).

The concrete anti-LGBTQ actions of one specific neo-Nazi organisation therefore ought to be read in the light of a longer history of ideological targeting of LGBTQ people and organisations among neo-Nazis, and as one element of their wider violent activism. NRM continued this tradition when they threatened different LGBTQ organisations in the 2010s. They have stood by the side-lines of Pride festivals and other LGBTQ events, holding up homophobic banners[28] and sometimes attacking people. They have also leafleted and demonstrated nearby LGBTQ organisations' venues, leading to targeted organisations cancelling their activities (Linander, Lauri, and Lauri, 2021, 2022). In line with their general strategy, NRM often posts about their activities online, where they describe them as attacks against an LGBTQ conspiracy – one connected to the overarching Jewish conspiracy (see Article III).

3.5.3. Nordic Youth (NY)

Aside from NRM, Nordic Youth (NY)[29] was another, comparatively smaller and less militant neo-Nazi organisation active between 2010 and 2019. The organisation's founding members had backgrounds in a group called *Nationaldemokraterna* (The National Democrats) or their youth section, a nationalist political party created by people who had left SD (Dalsbro, 2019). According to Lööw (2019b, p. 61), NY were ideologically close to NRM, who also participated in one of NY's arranged demonstrations (Dalsbro and Vergara, 2018), but they are two organisationally different groups. When active, NY arranged and participated in various racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-LGBTQ demonstrations and had members involved in attacks, such as assaulting a demonstration against deportations (Dalsbro and Leman, 2018).

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[28] Commonly stating "Crush the homo lobby" (see Engebretsen, 2021, p. 238).
[29] Not to be confused with an organisation sharing the same name that was active in the 1930s.

In 2015, NY conducted their first counterprotest at the Stockholm Pride march, using banners with the messages "Protect the children from the pervert festival" and "Protect the nuclear family". Afterwards, they called the protest the first of its kind since 2003, when the youth section of the National Democrats assaulted the march and bystanders (Dalsbro, 2019; see also Expo, 2003). The 2015 protest was followed by several similar yearly actions against Stockholm Pride, where NY in 2018 protested from the sidelines, or in 2016 and 2017 jumped into the march, blocking its path before being removed by the police (Malmgren, Samuelson, and Österberg, 2016; Vergara, 2018; Dalsbro, 2019).

3.5.4. Variations of Nationalism among Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politicians and Activists

The three different organisations responsible for most publicly known nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism between 2016 and 2020 have internal similarities as well as differences regarding how and why they target LGBTQ people, events, symbols, rights, or spaces. They are similar, as they all have historical connections to Nazism, but different in that SD have distanced themselves from their Nazi past, nowadays focusing on anti-immigration. NRM on the other hand are self-proclaimed nationalist socialists. While NY has not been as extensively researched as SD or NRM, they could be argued to be positioned somewhere "in between" these stances. NY sprung from actors previously engaged in a parliamentary party set up as a more radical alternative to SD (The National Democrats) but acted as a white power activist group – through public actions rather than parliamentary activity.

Of the groups, NRM's anti-LGBTQ activism is hence the only one with an entirely unquestionable base in Nazism, connecting it explicitly to an imagined Jewish world conspiracy. NY and SD have, at least in public, instead toned down their anti-LGBTQ stances in favour of claiming to "protect the white nuclear family" and, by extension, the nation. By claiming to act *for* the family and the nation rather than *against* LGBTQ people, both SD and NY could be described as heteroactivist (as defined by Brown and Nash, 2017). However, their claim of protection is rather exemplary of how racism, homophobia, and transphobia are narrated as "love" for their own nation instead of "hate" for the nation's Others (see Ahmed, 2013). While they therefore claim to protect the nation, this is in no way a sign of them not being hostile towards the Others they "protect" the nation from.

All three separate organisations in slightly different ways re-articulate standard scripts of nationalism's sexuality as described in this thesis (see Section 2.3). LGBTQ people are attacked or opposed for going against the white heterosexual reproduction of the nation, by (either through their mere exist-

ence or through political organisation) questioning the value of the heterosexual family. In NRM's and NY's activism, this can be recognised in how they attack LGBTQ events by claiming they are threats to the nuclear family. While SD works against LGBTQ rights, they are more ambiguously anti-LGBTQ, as they officially subscribe to parts of homonationalism.

SD's ambiguity towards homonationalism also shows the differences in how these movements are nationalist. SD's nationalism takes the Swedish nation-state as central – working towards increased ethnic unity within the state. Both NRM and NY are, however, more internationalist in both ideology and organisation, as they strive for an ethnically united *Nordic* nation. Neo-Nazi and white power movements have since the 1980s and 1990s become more internationalist, defining groups as separate on the base of race rather than nation (Lööw, 2016, p. 548), while organising across nation-state borders (Kotonen et al., 2023). While they have international claims and connections, neo-Nazi groups can nonetheless be defined as "ultranationalist", working towards nations with stricter ethnic divisions (i.e. "ethnopluralism"). Both NRM and NY also claim to speak on behalf of the "Swedish nation" and celebrate nationalist heroic symbols, such as King Karl XII (1697–1718), who they memorialise for his war efforts as a monarch (Lööw, 2015, pp. 87–98).

The anti-LGBTQ politics and activism carried out by the separate movements are all *nationalist* for two reasons. Firstly, the groups are self-proclaimed nationalists, either working to change the Swedish nation (SD) or simultaenously striving towards a pan-Nordic white nation (NRM and NY); thus, all their activities could be argued to be nationalist, including their anti-LGBTQ politics and activism. Secondly, they oppose or attack LGBTQ people, rights, symbols, and spaces because they define them as threats against the "healthy" white, heterosexual nation.

3.6. The Swedish Nationalist Contradiction

Swedish nationalism has for several decades been marked by a contradiction. Because it relies on ideas of moral superiority – being more democratic, less racist, less fascist, less sexist, or less heterosexist than other nations – the very real instances of racism, sexism, heterosexism and so forth, carried out either through or in the nation-state, always need to be either downplayed or seen as isolated events occurring in isolated places (Pred, 2000; Eriksson, 2008; Lööw, 2015, pp. 11–20; Kehl, 2018; Osei-Kofi, Licona, and Chávez, 2018).

Mulinari and Neergaard (2014, 2017a, 2017b) have theorised the increasing growth and influence of SD and emerging racist violence in the 2010s (in which actors within NRM and NY can be included), which they argue might signal a shift in Swedish racial formation. The shift consists of the nation-state being transformed from a *racial state* to a *racist state* as migration politics and

policy have transgressed from exploiting to excluding migrants. They define the separate terms as follows:

> While a *racial state* regulates the presence of migrants through forms of subordinated inclusion, a *racist state* operates through a classification system that creates boundaries between accepted and undesired migrants, a system that is contained within the bodies of migrants themselves. (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017b, p. 269, emphasis in original)

The racial state works by exploiting racial others, as was the case in the colonial period (see Section 3.2). This exploitation has changed form over the decades, with its latest instance being the subordinated inclusion of migrants through state institutionalisation of a segregated work force and labour market (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017b, p. 268). Racial others in the Swedish nation-state used to be increasingly exploited rather than excluded, which now seems to shift, as exclusionary racist policies have been implemented: restrictions on residence permits, enforced border controls, heightened requirements for residence permits and citizenship, and increased resources for state authorities to deport migrants.

The above-described nationalist movements, not least the parliamentary party element of designing some of the exclusionary policies, are to be seen as organisations driving the shift from a racial to a racist state. The increased racial violence and cultural racism have, however, been marked by oppositions, such as the social media slogan "Not my Sweden" used in reactions to racist violence (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2017b, pp. 258, 279). These resistances align with the history of Swedish nationalism being marked by the many struggles over what it is and what it ought to be. Any attempt to define a cohesive national image results in the opposite effect – instead of unifying, the divisions within become clearer (Löfgren, 1993). This is a central contradiction of nationalism, since it is in practice made up by many different people but imagined as a stable unit.

Analysing the relation between mainstream and institutional nationalist racisms, versus far-right and neo-Nazi racist nationalisms, Pred (2000) identified the contradiction to be that racism exists in a nation imagined to be free of it. This contradiction was, however, solved by imagining it to exist only in specific people and specific places. The function of singling out and recognising the joint discourses of racism and nationalism only in the most extreme actions (assaults, neo-Nazism, threats, murders) leaves the everyday reproductions and consequences of nationalism obscured.

Similar critiques have been made in research on homonationalism, where violent homophobic acts are localised either outside of the nation's borders or in fringe white power and far-right groups (Meyer, 2020). Rather than viewing nationalisms in opposition as contradictory in a dialectical sense, Pred (2000)

defines the contradiction as resulting from elements in conflict with perceptions of reality. This contradiction is repeatedly "solved" by displacing racism (Pred, 2000) or homophobia (Puar, 2017; Lalor and Browne, 2018) elsewhere – in "Other" specific people, organisations, and places.

By localising nationalism in only certain people and certain places, deeper-lying nationalism is in practice ignored. Over the years, it has been pointed out that news media narration of far-right and neo-Nazi activity plays an important part in these displacements. They have invested much energy into reporting on far-right nationalism and neo-Nazism, and significantly less so on mundane forms of nationalism reproduced socially or institutionally (Löwander, 1998; Pred, 2000; Holt, 2020). This tendency is likely what has generated much of the data used in this thesis, as many events of nationalist anti-LGBTQ activities reported on have concerned small symbolic acts with little concrete social impact. Actions such as social media posts, rainbow flag thefts, and municipal flag policies have generated long chains of media narrations. In these narrations, the criminality of the events is frequently amplified (see Articles IV and V), which follows media trajectories of narrating racism, which are:

> Framed as something bounded, something which can be narrowed down, pointed out, and defended against with help from the police and the law. Racist violence was made comprehensible as deviating from the normal, meaning something abnormal and sick. (Löwander, 1998, pp. 93–94)

This has been a central function in homonationalism as well, but one in which the abnormality of homo- and transphobia generally has been attributed to racialised minorities and thus located outside of nationality entirely (Puar, 2017; Kehl, 2018). However, the increased media spectacles narrating homo- and transphobic activism by the nationalist far right and neo-Nazis have introduced a new contradiction in the homonationalist discourse which needs further examination.

This contradiction could, following Pred (2000), be understood in a logical sense: when the reality of racist actions appears in a nation supposedly free from racism, it creates a contradiction that needs to be psychologically and ideologically resolved (by displacement). In this sense, the contradiction is a logical impossibility: elements of both racism and non-racism cannot logically co-exist, leading to one of them having to be expelled – and displaced. Without opposing the fact that such displacement is de facto taking place, I wish to linger with the contradiction, examining how it is produced rather than how it is "solved", by viewing it in the dialectic rather than the logic sense. The dialectic contradiction is, unlike the logical contradiction, seldom "solved", but is instead a process created by mutually undermining and reinforcing social elements.

3.6.1. The Contradiction of Homonationalism and Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism in Sweden

The contradiction arises out of opposing struggles to define the Swedish nation as either homonational (LGBTQ friendly) or rigidly heteronormative. The first element, homonationalism, exploits LGBTQ people as a mean to distinguish the nation as sexually exceptional (see sections 2.4 and 3.4). The latter instead excludes LGBTQ people from national belonging altogether (see section 2.5 and 3.5). Both homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism take place in Sweden and do so in direct relation to each other. The LGBTQ person is by some hailed as a marker of Swedish national modernity – and by others as a symbol of national decay. While racism remains central to the contradictions of Swedish nationalism, the question of homo- and transphobia has emerged as another contradiction which needs further examination in the Swedish context. I thus add to our shared knowledge of anti-LGBTQ politics and activism – potentially shaped by and interacting with, but not determined by, homonationalism – by examining how nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are medially represented and policed.

Researching how nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism have impacted Swedish homonationalism opens up for potential comparisons. If the Muslim or otherwise minoritarian homophobic "Other" is generally framed as exterior to the nation owing to their assumed sexual hostility, can the same be said about far-right homophobic actions? The status of white political homophobia, exercised by neo-Nazis and far-right politicians and ideologists, might simply be regarded differently than the imagined or real homophobia exercised by racial or ethnic minorities in Europe, thus telling us something about not only far-right homophobia but also the racialisation of the homophobe.

Homonationalism is a process of racialisation, as it generally builds on confirming the idea of a white Western nation as modern in comparison to multiple Others: migrants, Muslims, Asians, and Africans (Szulc and Smets, 2015; Jungar and Peltonen, 2017; Puar, 2017; Björklund and Dahl, 2019). But where does white domestic homophobia fit into imagined national maps drawn by assuming its absence, and how are the concepts of "homophobia" and "LGBTQ-friendliness" articulated in different, contesting articulations of Swedishness? By examining the discourses and state action responding to explicitly white nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, this thesis analyses some of those tensions in Sweden and how they have progressed over the last years.

4. Methods

The two theoretical chapters above have laid out what nationalism is and outlined the thesis' argument that contemporary nationalist discourses of (national) sexuality take the form of a nationalist contradiction, both globally and in the specifics of Swedish nationalism. The national belonging and the national unbelonging of LGBTQ subjects have increasingly become the dual elements which contradict each other by mutually undermining and reinforcing one another. This argument has been constructed throughout the research process, as a mode of interpreting and explaining how homonationalism as a discourse has changed in the face of intense public heterosexist politics and activism carried out in the name of the white Swedish nation. This chapter provides transparency and reflection upon the research process behind the argument, highlighting how the thesis' aim and research questions have guided epistemological and methodological choices, and how these then have been implemented in practice. It further explains how nationalism and nationalist constructions of sexuality are studied in this thesis.

The intention of the research design described in this chapter is to examine the social constructions of sexuality, more precisely so how sexuality is constructed through a contradictory nationalism: how different, opposing, nationalist discourses and state practices[30] draw on and reproduce discourses of what an LGBTQ person is, what they demand or need – and most importantly – what they mean for the nation and what the nation means for LGBTQ people. Empirically, I draw on archival sources documenting and narrating nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism taking place in Sweden in 2016–2020: texts from news media, neo-Nazi blog posts, and police and court documents. The sources are used to describe, explain, and draw conclusions about the Swedish sexual nationalist contradiction. These archival sources were at different stages complemented by interviews with employees in city marketing, anti-Nazi activists, and the police, to supplement the textual material.

The years 2016–2020 were chosen as they were marked by an intense public negotiation of Swedish homonationalism. Pride events grew in both quan-

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[30] By state practices I mean actions carried out by people working for state authorities, employees of the nation-state, here more specifically police officers, lawyers, court judges, and the legislation they enact (see Section 4.6). In one of the articles, Article II, the importance of *local* state practice is also highlighted, by including employees working for Sweden's two largest cities (see Section 4.3).

tity and size during this period, not least through the increase of various or-
ganisations arranging Pride marches, parades, and seminars in smaller cities
and towns (Olovsdotter Lööv, 2020, p. 93). At the same time, neo-Nazi activ-
ists carried out several public anti-LGBTQ protests and threats, while politi-
cians from the nationalist far right made anti-LGBTQ parliamentary decisions
and statements (see Section 3.5). While such activities are far from novel, they
resulted in extensive reactions during the period, not least as neo-Nazis had
become very successful in using public space for political activity, receiving
much media attention for it (Holt, 2020). Neither Pride events nor far-right
anti-LGBTQ efforts came to a definitive halt in 2020, but during the outbreak
of Covid-19, and following restrictions on public activities, they were signif-
icantly scarcer. By the time both types of activities had increased again after
the restrictions had been removed, the data collection for this thesis had al-
ready been finished, leading to no events after 2020 being included in the ma-
terial.

The archival material and interviews conducted for this thesis will be clar-
ified further as the chapter proceeds. First, the reader is provided an outline of
the project's trajectory. This is followed by an explanation of the epistemo-
logical decision to research opposing nationalist constructions of LGBTQ
people, outlining its theoretical inspiration from queer social sciences gener-
ally, as well as scholarship in political geography and queer geography. There-
after, the ethical problems derived from this decision are discussed. The re-
maining sections outline the practicalities of the research, its methods: how
the research questions were answered, what materials were used to do so, and
how the process of analysis was carried out.

4.1. A Research Trajectory

To briefly summarise the trajectory of this project of approximately five years,
it started with a master's thesis (Lagerman, 2018), which began with curiosity
about the sheer amount of product placements and corporate participation in
Pride festivals. This curiosity led me to urban geographical research on queer
spaces, especially how they are integrated in neoliberal urban governance and
politics (Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Bell and Binnie, 2004; Hubbard and Wil-
kinson, 2015; Oswin, 2015; Kenttamaa Squires, 2019). I connected these
works to my own empirical research in the form of interviews with pride-goers
and employees working for the cities of Stockholm and Gothenburg, as well
as textual and visual material about the festivals published by the Pride organ-
isations and the host cities. Together with my co-author Rhiannon Pugh, I re-
turned to the research material of my master's thesis, and we decided to collect
new material (see Section 4.3) and together analyse in more depth the entan-
glements of urban economic governance and homonationalist discourse in
Sweden's two largest cities.

The intensified focus on homonationalism in city approaches to Pride events was reflected in a research material where cities utilised Pride events for city branding and marketing by drawing upon, and reifying, the image of an LGBTQ-friendly Sweden, and relatedly an LGBTQ-friendly city. This work was also influenced by the research I conducted alongside while co-writing Article II with Rhiannon, in which struggles over the meaning of Swedish sexualised nationalism had become central. Some weeks into the PhD programme, in the autumn of 2018, I went to a panel discussion about LGBTQ histories, which was part of a larger LGBTQ festival in Uppsala organised by LGBTQ refugees and migrants. On my way to the panel discussion, walking through the city's main shopping street, I passed neo-Nazis leafleting just a few metres from the library, which had a full schedule of LGBTQ seminars and events that day. I knew that this was just one of many instances where the neo-Nazi group I saw used public space to reach out, but it was the first one I saw up-close, with my own eyes.

After this accidental encounter, I began to research how neo-Nazis threatened public queer spaces and events, as well as how their targets and onlookers responded to these threats, seeing as they were subjected to frequent outrage and debate (Holt, 2020; Articles III and IV). The first step was to conduct a critical discourse analysis of how neo-Nazis narrated their own activism online, and how their activism was responded to through news media, which resulted in Article III. Originally, I had planned to then travel around Sweden and carry out participatory observations of events such as neo-Nazi marches and their counter-protests, and interview various activists, police officers, and members of LGBTQ organisations. While I managed to attend and observe one event where neo-Nazis demonstrated during an ongoing Pride weekend in 2018, and one counterdemonstration to a neo-Nazi march in 2019, the plans for extended fieldwork were abandoned when the Covid-19 outbreak led to cancelled public events in general, as well as an increased difficulty for me to gain trust and interest from potential interviewees, who I could now only reach through social media, emails, and video- or phone calls (a difficulty elaborated on in Section 4.7).

The project therefore continued to be primarily based on archival material, which was extended to include not only neo-Nazis, but the wider Swedish far right, for Article IV. After then having spent considerable time analysing discourses of anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, I wished to include an analysis of not only how these were defined in text and imagery, but also how nationalist anti-LGBTQ activism was defined in the eyes and actions of the Swedish law. To move beyond discourse, I began to explore the policing and legal treatment of neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ activism, by analysing police reports and court sentences of their actions. This part of the project, resulting in the fifth research article, may seem to divert from the aim of researching nationalist discourse, but does so by interrogating nation-state action, that is, actions

taken by actors employed by state authorities whose roles are to uphold and enact state law.

Nationalist ideology and state action are deeply interconnected. The connection between nationalist imaginary and state law manifests itself not least in the discourses found in media archives. In those, the police were repeatedly critiqued for not acting in the interest of the people of Sweden, and police response to neo-Nazism was often narrated as supposedly representing a unitary national will (see Dagens Nyheter, 2018, and Pettersson and Widman-Lundmark, 2018, for examples). The unmet expectations – expressed by journalists, debaters, and LGBTQ civil organisations – of the Swedish police to hinder neo-Nazis threatening LGBTQ people and racial minorities in public space (both generally and regarding LGBTQ spaces) framed the police as representative of the Swedish will and Sweden as a nation (see also Linander, Lauri, and Lauri, 2022, pp. 63–67). Because the law and its enactment by police officers carries heavy symbolic weight for nationalism, being representations of Swedish national will and morals, the inclusion of a study of state action is highly relevant in a research project about nationalism.

4.2. Epistemology, Ethics, and Blind Spots for the All-Seeing Queer Eye

All collected and analysed material was examined for how LGBTQ identity is constructed, not (mainly) by LGBTQ people themselves, but by a wide range of voices commenting on the ideal symbolic sexuality of the Swedish nation. This epistemological approach follows in the footsteps of queer research taking aim at the meaning of sexuality as shaped by political discourse and structure (Foucault, 2002; Edenheim, 2005; Andersson, 2011; Hennessy, 2017; Chitty, 2020). The scope of the research encapsulates discourses about what an LGBTQ person is in Sweden and how the nation-state, as an imagined entity, ought to act in favour of or against the interests of this imagined entity. As such, the thesis is epistemologically grounded in both Marxist and post-structural approaches to sexuality, and it draws theoretically on geographical scholarship of nationalism and the rising far right. The corresponding methodology consists of using archival material, and to a lesser extent interviews, to understand and theorise how sexuality is constructed through struggles over the sexualised contents in nationalist ideology in Sweden.

4.2.1. Epistemology

This scope enables an increased understanding of the social meaning of sexual identities, understanding them as historically and geographically organised. In this thesis, one type of social meaning has been in focus: nationalism. Because

nationalism, including its sexual scripts and norms, permeates not only state action but all areas of social life (see Section 2.1), the combination of potentially disparate archives and interviews contributes to a fuller picture of the construction and reproduction of sexualised nationalism. The research articles in this thesis, with their different sources and methods, therefore jointly describe and explain the Swedish sexualised nationalist contradiction from various angles. They examine how struggles over the contents of Swedish nationalism are carried out in several overlapping spaces: streets, urban governance and policy, blogs, news media, and court rooms.

The first article of five theorises the elements of the nationalist contradiction, thus answering the first research question:

> Research Question I: What are the economic and social processes behind homonationalist discourse, and how are they affected by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?

The economic and social processes referred to were researched throughout the whole project, and the answer in Article I was written last, after all data collection and analysis had been completed. The research question thus represents the sum of the thesis' parts by clarifying the argument of the thesis.

The first research question reflects the theoretical base of the thesis, which is constructed by works in political, critical, and queer geography. Nationalism is understood as produced through *struggle*, which heavily draws on scholarship in political and critical geography, such as Paasi's (2021) emphasis on elements in nationalism being processes in constant change and thus subjected to struggle. It is also aligned with Koch's (2023) recent call for nationalism scholars to take seriously the binaries in nationalist ideology (such as homonationalism versus nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, "LGBTQ-friendly" versus homophobic nations/nationalities, or inclusive/civil nationalism versus exclusive ethno-nationalism). She argues that discourses about who belongs in nations are sources for conflict about dividing lines (p. 201), which is exactly what this thesis has examined: conflicts about whether Swedish national pride is achieved through exploiting or excluding LGBTQ people and spaces. Koch argues for examining binaries in nationalism, writing that "when the people and institutions we study use binaries, it is incumbent upon us to analyse how they do so and with what effect" (p. 206). The overarching research question aims to answer these questions, but rather than asking what their effects are, it asks how they came to be: through what social and economic processes the binary of homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism have been constructed. While Koch describes these conflicts in terms of binaries, I instead view them as part of a contradiction, in order to explain how they are constructed both through and in opposition to each other in a dialectic relation.

Researching sexuality and sexualised nationalism as historically and geographically organised does not suggest that any structural condition, or geographical context, *determines* such organisations, or that these would ever be stable, consistent, or coherent.[31] Examining political disagreements in the elements of Swedish nationalism, this thesis argues that (sexualised) nationalism is shaped not by coherence but through constant struggle. This argument and research design is guided by political geographical approaches to nationalism which see "politics [including nationalist politics and discourse] in its multiple manifestations", where different scales, such as the global, state, regional, local, and bodily, are mutually dependent (Marston, 2003, p. 634). This is partly what this thesis has set out to do: to analyse how nationalism is manifested in multiple, mutually dependent scales. Hence, the combination of different sources has been beneficial in examining how (sexualised) nationalism is reproduced on different scales, and through various spaces – the global inter-state system, state laws, city organisations and employees, news media and public spaces.

This is achieved theoretically in the first research article, answering the overarching research question. The question is then divided into the remaining four research questions, which are asked and answered to show how the nationalist contradiction has materialised on different scales, as seen in the different research materials. The order of the remaining questions as well as their corresponding articles followed the temporality of the research process described in Section 4.1, which began with an investigation of homonationalist narratives in city collaborations with Pride organisations in Stockholm and Gothenburg (Article II) and ended with an investigation of how nationalist anti-LGBTQ activism has been handled by the police and sentenced in courts (Article V).

The remaining two articles (III and IV) show empirically how homonationalism is constructed in relation to nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, and how anti-LGBTQ politics and activism is conducted in relation to homonationalism. This contradictory relation is explained by shedding light on sexualised nationalism being (re)produced on the local and national scale, through urban economic governance (Article II), neo-Nazism and responses to neo-Nazism (Article III), and wider far-right anti-LGBTQ politics and responses to it (Article IV). While Articles III and IV focus on the discursive production of nationalism, Articles II and V instead investigate the economic (Article II) and legal (Article V) structures that shape, are shaped by, and negotiate the contradictory nationalist discourse. Together, all five articles explain sexualised nationalism as contradictorily produced through political action, discourse, economic governance, and legal structures and enactments.

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[31] These assumptions are often reinforced in homonationalist ideology, according to which the nation-state is an entity that single-handedly determines the living conditions of LGBTQ people through state legislation (see Ammaturo and Slootmaeckers, 2020).

4.2.2. The "All-Seeing" Queer Eye

The thesis examines how LGBTQ identity in Sweden is socially and structurally constructed, analysing archival data. This comes with gains as well as ethical challenges. While the events described in this thesis concern attacks on LGBTQ people, spaces, and symbols, the empirical focus has not been on the experiences of LGBTQ people, nor on the creators and users of such spaces and symbols. Instead, it has been on how LGBTQ people, spaces, and symbols are taken to allegorically *represent something other than themselves* (as critiqued by Gleeson and O'Rourke, 2021, p. 11). Most actors cited and quoted in this thesis are not (at least by self-definition) claiming LGBTQ experiences, but instead narrate ideas about what an LGBTQ experience looks like in an abstract sense and how this abstract LGBTQ experience is and should be positioned in relation to the Swedish nation-state. Through a distanced view, the queer eye of the researcher attempts to see how LGBTQ identity is constructed as something abstract, which has been put to use in contrasting nationalist projects; thus, the research outcome becomes an abstraction of abstractions.

This theorisation of nationalist discourse follows feminist, queer, and Marxist efforts to "think totality", meaning to think how social processes are connected (Floyd, 2009, p. 6), which simultaneously is a critique of "epistemological particularization" (p. 9). Particularisation refers to the tendency to "localise" sexuality and sexual politics, barring it off as separate from other social fields (such as nationalism). The countermeasure to this tendency instead puts emphasis on "the totality" of relations, in how sexuality is embedded in social structures – here the structure of nationalism. Sexual identities (including heterosexuality) cannot be understood fully without understanding the contexts through which they emerge. Instead of understanding the particularities of individual experiences, or theorising from diverse experiences of sexuality, the thesis takes aim at how LGBTQ people symbolically appear through urban governance, nationalist ideological struggle, and state surveillance (policing and legislating) of national space. As such, "particularistic" LGBTQ spaces are evidently part of wider social, economic, and political conditions and conflicts. As a consequence of analysing these ideological constructions of sexuality, the thesis suffers from blind spots regarding in-depth knowledge of, and representation of, lived LGBTQ experiences and resistances to cisheteronormativity.

4.2.3. Blind Spots and the Ethics of Overlooking

There are, of course, no eyes that see everything, queer or not.[32] The effort of widening the scope of view, focusing on structure and discourse, is not actually a way of seeing *more*, but a strategy of choosing where to direct one's gaze, and what to overlook. Overlooking, in the dual sense of the word, is a view from above, and thus also a view that overlooks many specific aspects and details.

My own overlook and overlooking results in a thesis where I mostly write *about* people (or rather, write about people who write about people) instead of taking greater measures to speak *with* people. It could be remarked upon that this thesis critiques the exploitative use of marginalised people, mainly LGBTQ people, for their symbolic values, while not countering this malpractice with better, fairer representations of experiences. While the thesis in many senses is about queer people and lives, it does not contribute to making their experiences, demands, actions, or existence visible. Instead, it analyses how they are *made invisible through being made visible*: difference is exchanged for coherence, especially so in the label "LGBTQ"[33] which downplays differences in where people are positioned along lines of geography, race, class, gender, and bodily composition.

The *queerness* of the eye that overlooks specific complex experiences is composed of efforts to challenge the heteronormative social order in which heterosexuality is considered "natural" and homosexuality "deviant", arguing that these have crucial social meanings and effects (see Browne and Nash, 2010, p. 5). This is achieved by critiquing how LGBTQ lives are comprehended and obscured through nationalist exploitation and exclusion. Thus, it subscribes to queer geographical methodology as summarised by Catungal and Hilt (2022, pp. 123–124):

> [...] queer as a geographical methodology seeks to broaden the ambit and scope of geographical critique from a demographic focus on sexual minority subjects to a more expansive attention to sexuality's intersections with gender, race, class, ethnicity, location, and other modalities of power.

Analysing the ongoing symbolic construction of LGBTQ identities in nationalist ideology therefore adds to, and hopefully complements, research on queer people and their lives. For interest in these, the reader is directed to the rich

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[32] The physical eyes in question (my own) are certainly attached to (or situated in) the body of a white, cis, temporarily state-employed (middle-class) lesbian, but are here used as a metaphor for the thesis' theoretical and methodological positionalities, not a confessional or legitimising disclosure of identity positions.

[33] Again, it can seem somewhat ironic that I myself use this term in the thesis, despite actually being critical of it. The mode of critiquing how LGBTQ identity is constructed as an abstract concept is, however, difficult to achieve without using the same terminology as used in the research material.

and growing research conducted with and/or about queer lives (such as Harita-worn, 2015; Rosenberg, 2017; Goh, 2018; Hartal, 2018; Evans and Maddrell, 2019; Gieseking, 2020; Kehl, 2020b; Liliequist, 2020; Spruce, 2020; Wimark, 2021; Johnston and Waitt, 2021).

To return to the ethically problematic matter of this thesis critiquing abstractions of LGBTQ people by doing the very same thing, the thesis "uses" the uses of LGBTQ people to analyse sexualised nationalism in Sweden. Staeheli and Mitchell (2012) have reflected on the ethics of "using" vulnerable people (in their case homeless persons) for understanding social structures, while simultaneously critiquing such "uses". They write that

> in the process of abstracting from their lives, homeless *people* are only present by their absence: *their* interests are rarely to be found, except insofar as they may incidentally or accidentally be incorporated into the political projects of the advocates. (p. 167, emphasis in original)

Similar to homeless people in Staeheli and Mitchell's (2012) work, LGBTQ people are in this thesis denied individuality by having them signify *something else*, in focusing on how they are symbols in Swedish nationalism, even through a critical examination of this very process. I consider my own participation in neglecting individuality somewhat of an issue, as focusing on generalising abstractions of LGBTQ people as a category compromises the attention to the intersecting modalities of power emphasised by Catungal and Hilt (2023). While I pay attention to how sexuality intersect with nationalism, I do so without acknowledging actual lived experiences.

However, it is nonetheless a conscious choice made to explain how this category is a troublesome abstraction in how it is produced not by marginalised people, but by people in relatively powerful positions: white and/or heterosexual people narrating them in nationalist discourse, cities' economic and political organisations, the police, and courts. LGBTQ people are thus rather absent as *people* – being present only as symbols – in this thesis, as a reflection of them being so in the research material. While this lacks in directly empowering marginalised populations (see Valentine, 2003), it contributes to empowerment indirectly by critiquing processes which lead to continued heteronormativity, as well as race and class inequalities geographically manifested and reproduced through nationalism.

4.3. Researching Homonationalism on the Scale of the City

The epistemological reasoning laid out above shaped the first, overarching research question about the social and economic processes behind homonationalist discourse. This question is answered in the thesis' first article and was also broken down into four second-level questions, the first being as follows:

> Research Question II: How has homonationalism been reified through urban entrepreneurialism in Sweden?

The second question is answered in the corresponding Article II, which analyses how homonationalism was leveraged in city marketing in Sweden's two largest cities: Stockholm and Gothenburg. The focus on Swedish homonationalism in urban contexts serves to deepen the explanations of how Swedish homonationalism materialises in practice. It also supports an argument made in Article I, namely that homonationalism is a discourse of symbolic exploitation, through which LGBTQ spaces are defined for the value they bring to a nation or a city.

In 2018, the Pride organisations in Stockholm and Gothenburg hosted the event EuroPride jointly, after having made their applications together with city marketing bureaus. This offered an opportunity to research a particular case of what rationales were behind the collaboration from the cities' perspective, and how homonationalism was reified through them. The observation that homonationalist discourse was key to the city rationales had already been found in the first round of data collection, conducted for my master's thesis (Lagerman, 2018). For my master's thesis, I interviewed four Pride goers, two employees at city marketing bureaus, and one employee working with Gothenburg's City's participation at EuroPride. It also drew on policy documents and marketing of EuroPride 2018, both from the cities' marketing channels and from the individual Pride organisations. During my PhD project, I decided to expand on the arguments made for my master's thesis, by collecting new data and conducting a collaborative analysis together with Rhiannon Pugh, with whom I co-authored Article II. While I primarily collected the data myself, Rhiannon and I jointly analysed the material and wrote the article based on that analysis (see Section 4.3.3).

4.3.1. Interviewing

When reworking the thesis into an article together with Rhiannon Pugh, we chose to focus on how Pride festivals in Gothenburg and Stockholm were defined from the perspective of the city organisations, particularly so their event and city marketing bureaus. The interviews with city employees conducted in 2018 were complemented by follow-up interviews which I carried out in 2021

and 2022. I interviewed the same actors who were interviewed in 2018, in addition to new interviews with two more city employees (one in Gothenburg and one in Stockholm), as well as one Pride organiser in Gothenburg. All interviews, except for one held in 2018, were carried out over video- or phone call.

At the start of each interview, I presented myself and the purpose of the interview, and then asked for informed consent from the informant, ensuring they knew they had the right to withdraw their participation at any time (which was also repeated at the closure of the interview). The interview then began with straightforward questions about the informants' role and responsibilities in their specific employment. Then the interview centred on informants' experiences and reflections on specific situations they had been part of, opening for storytelling from their viewpoint. Towards the end of each interview, the informants were asked to reflect upon the conversation, including being asked if there was anything we had not covered but which they thought was important to include. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded, mainly through what Dunn (2021, p. 173) terms "latent content analysis", where I searched the transcripts for themes, and meanings of informant responses and stories. When presenting categories and quotes from the interviews, we chose to disclose locations discussed (the cities), but not the names or organisational positions of the interviewees, aiming to provide participant anonymity.

4.3.2. Collecting Images and Texts

I collected texts, images, and videos narrating EuroPride 2018 by searching for media articles about the event, using the media archive Retriever Research.[34] I also searched through the Pride organisations' websites and social media web pages (Facebook and Instagram), including all texts, images, and videos in the analysis. Furthermore, I gathered texts and images about EuroPride, and other LGBTQ-oriented topics, in the cities' policy documents (published in 2017–2018), in the city marketing bureaus' campaigns and information, as well as social media posts (from Facebook and Instagram) where elected officials or employees from the cities promoted EuroPride 2018. Similar to the interviews, the textual and visual material was first collected in 2018, and then complemented by a new search in 2021.

4.3.3. Analysis

The analysis of these materials was conducted collaboratively by me and Rhiannon. I selected quotes and themes from the interviews, texts, and images, which we read and interpreted together. We coded the interview quotes and

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[34] Using the search terms *EuroPride*, *West Pride*, and *Stockholm Pride*.

archival material with the aim of answering how homonationalist narratives were altered and reproduced through the rationales of urban entrepreneurialism (as defined by Harvey, 1989), to contribute to research on the relation between city and state homonationalisms (Hartal, 2019). The process of coding was inspired by previous research on nationalist imagery by Strand and Kehl (2019), who analysed military Pride campaigns to draw conclusions about how their imagery narrated Sweden as a sexually exceptional, progressive nation-state needing armed protection from enemies. We also drew on visual and textual analysis as practiced in Rose's (2009) analysis of newspaper narratives that described another urban context (London after the underground bomb detonations in July 2015).

While our material concerned different types of images and texts, they were interpreted for how different forms of diversity were articulated in definitions of city characteristics – and how they were turned into value for the cities, impacting their engagement in Pride events. We therefore analysed the images, texts, and interview quotes for how they narrated LGBTQ people and symbols while narrating the cities of Stockholm and Gothenburg, in order to explain how Pride events were situated and valued in the two different cities. This procedure led to decisions on what citations, images, and quotes to include in the article, based on how they thematically reproduced homonationalist and urban entrepreneurialist discourses. The material did, however, also inform the decision to code for those discourses, as our theoretical decisions were impacted by the themes in the interviews.

4.4. Examining Discourses of Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Activism

After the description and explanation of the economic utilisations of homonationalism, the third research question approaches the main theme of the thesis, namely that of how homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are dialectically intertwined. One of the two questions examining this relationship is stated as follows:

> Research Question III: Have far-right and nationalist neo-Nazi tactics and discourse changed in relation or reaction to contemporary homonationalist discourse? If so, how?

This third research question and its corresponding article address how nationalist anti-LGBTQ activists have drawn upon homonationalism: if and how Swedish neo-Nazis have changed tactics and discourse in relation to homonationalism.

The research process of answering the question started out with examining how contemporary (2016–2020) neo-Nazi activism has targeted LGBTQ people and spaces, analysing the discourses the largest group, NRM, produced on their public blog.[35] I started by searching this blog using keywords the group themselves use when referring to LGBTQ people,[36] then following links to other "recommended articles" on the website. This search resulted in sixty-four publications, of which nine were essayistic texts laying out arguments for why and how LGBTQ people were (by neo-Nazis) considered enemies to the white nation; twenty-three were documentations and narrations of anti-LGBTQ activism carried out by NRM members; and thirty-two were distorted "news" items in which the author either referred to global conspiracy propaganda that supported their views or re-narrated regular news articles through racist, antisemitic, homo- and transphobic language, using them as "evidence" of how Sweden and the "white race" is supposedly under threat.

To fully understand and explain how neo-Nazi tactics have been altered by homonationalism, I sought to analyse not only the discourse used *by* NRM, but also discourses *about* them. For the third research article, I therefore included a news media search of news and debate articles that were written about NRM's anti-LGBTQ activism. Using Retriever Research, I found 125 articles through searches using the keywords: Nazi*, NMR, Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen, HBT*,[37] Pride, and regnbåg*.[38] These were then sorted by article type (news or debate), newspaper (local or national), and political affiliation of author or newspaper.

4.4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis Part I

After sorting the neo-Nazi articles and news media articles by type, publication, and event and actors described, their contents were coded using critical discourse analysis (CDA). The analysis was thus informed mainly by the work of Fairclough (1992, 2003, 2009, 2015, 2017), according to whom texts and symbols (semiotic elements) are means of reproducing, changing, or establishing political hegemonies. He writes that "CDA's contribution is elucidating how discourse is related to other social elements (power, ideologies, institutions, etc.) and offering critique of discourse as a way into wider critique of social reality" (Fairclough, 2017, p. 13). Throughout the thesis, discourse is taken to mean "ways of representing reality" (Fairclough, 2017, p. 15) through

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[35] Although gains can be made from research *with* far-right actors (see e.g. Blee, 2002; Mulinari and Neergaard, 2014; Teitelbaum, 2017), I decided not to interview members of NRM. The reason is that they and their reasoning are not the main interest of the project. Instead, it is their actions, including written publications, which are of interest, to analyse how they shape and are shaped by Swedish sexualised nationalism.

[36] A range of slurs and conspiracy-theory driven concepts such as "the homo lobby", and "the LGBTQP movement" (p standing for paedophilia).

[37] The Swedish acronym for LGBT(Q).

[38] Swedish for rainbow.

"multi-semiotic" texts: combinations of language, visual images, and sound (Fairclough, 2015, p. 8).

In practice, the discourse analysis was conducted by posing questions to the material: Who articulates what discourse? Where? Speaking to whom? In response to what event? How are the events and the actors involved described contextually (i.e. what does the writer take the actions to symbolise)? These questions were set out to capture the reoccurrence of specific words, wordings, and imagery, but also to capture how contradicting discourses of nationalism were constructed by having people (such as LGBTQ people, far-right actors, or neo-Nazis) symbolise threats to the Swedish nation.

4.5. Analysing Responsive Discourses about Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Politics and Activism

Upon finishing the third research article, I developed the study of how nationalist anti-LGBTQ activities were represented, reacted to, and responded to, by asking the following research question:

> Research Question IV: How has the "nation" been discursively reproduced in reaction to far-right nationalist and neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?

The news media search I conducted for the third research article was then expanded to include 320 articles[39] to answer the fourth research question in Article IV. The expanded material was not only quantitatively larger, but also included representations of other anti-LGBTQ actions than those conducted by the NRM, mainly by politicians from the Sweden Democrats, and activists from the group Nordic Youth (NY). All articles were found through the database Retriever Research, using the following keywords: SD, Sverigedemokraterna, NMR, Nordiska motståndsrörelsen, NY, Nordisk Ungdom, Nazi*, or högerextrem*,[40] which were combined with the keywords regnbåg*, pride, HBT*, trans*, homo*, or RFSL (the largest LGBTQ civil society organisation in Sweden). The expanded search confirmed that very few news items (less than five results per year and keyword combination) that included the keywords were published prior to 2016, and they also showed a peak of all keyword combinations in the years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

The decision to extend the analysis of news media representation of nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism was based on the role of news outlets in choosing which events to mediate. News reporting often amplifies chosen events' conflictual elements and presents them in ways that both fit and impact

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[39] Including the 125 articles analysed for Article II, with an additional 195 new articles.
[40] Swedish for "right wing extrem*".

the anticipated readers' worldviews, thus saying something about what both writers and readers agree upon as "common sense" (Hall et al., 2013, pp. 55–57). Simultaneously, news outlets are also important reproducers of nationalism by dividing news items into categories of "domestic" or "foreign" news, setting agendas of what issues concern citizens of the nation (Billig, 1995).

4.5.1. Critical Discourse Analysis Part II

The process of the extended critical discourse analysis began in similar fashion to that of the first discourse analysis described above. I posed questions to the material collected, about who was speaking through the text, and to whom. This included sorting the material by text type (news or debate), type of newspaper (local or national) as well as the political affiliation of the author or the newspaper. The questions asked the second time around were more systematically refined and sorted into eighteen descriptive and analytical categories:

1. Publication date
2. Author
3. Newspaper
4. Newspaper type: local or national
5. Article type: news or debate
6. Political affiliation of the author
7. Political affiliation of the newspaper[41]
8. What anti-LGBTQ event is responded to?
9. Where did that event take place?
10. What type of anti-LGBTQ event was it?
11. What actors are described and how?
12. Who speaks through the text (as author or interviewee)?
13. What image(s) are included in the article?
14. What concepts are used for describing nationalist anti-LGBTQ politicians or activists?
15. What abstract or symbolic concepts are used for describing nationalist anti-LGBTQ politicians or activists?
16. What concepts are used for describing LGBTQ people, rights, spaces, or symbols?
17. What concepts or symbols are used for describing the nation?
18. What concepts are used for describing the state?

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[41] If author affiliation was stated, the newspaper's affiliation was considered less important. It could be good for the reader to know that most Swedish newspapers, aside from public service news and a few smaller commercial newspapers, disclose the ideological base of their editorial pages.

Upon answering these questions for each article,[42] I searched for recurring themes and answers to the questions posed. Symbolic expressions of place identity and belonging, such as flags (Swedish flags, rainbow flags, neo-Nazi flags), emerged as central themes, due to the high frequency of their use in the material. The flags were read as abstract symbols serving to remind the readers of being part of a nation that exists relationally to other nations, reminding "us" of who "we" are, something which was also frequently articulated verbally (see Article V). Alongside nationalist discourses was a discourse of state control, as news media coverage very often represented anti-LGBTQ attacks by neo-Nazis (although not from Sweden Democrats) as threats to security, law, and order, frequently interviewing police officers about the events. The discourse analysis was therefore narrowed down theoretically, by drawing on the concept of homonationalism (Puar, 2017), asking how texts and images defined LGBTQ spaces, their opponents or attackers, and Swedish national identity or the Swedish state.

4.6. Examining the Policing of Nationalist Anti-LGBTQ Activism

Because the Swedish law and its enactment was a crucial element in the homonationalist discourse identified in the analysis of media archives (and in other research, such as Spade, 2015; Russell, 2017; Linander, Lauri, and Lauri, 2022), the last research question and the corresponding article took aim at how the legal structures and enactments of it shaped the outcomes of nationalist anti-LGBTQ activism.[43] This fifth and final research question is:

> Research Question V: How has organised neo-Nazi anti-LGBTQ activism been regulated and policed in Swedish public space?

The question concerns nation-state action (through laws, policing, and court procedures), rather than nationalist discourse. The focus on action contributes to a fuller picture of contemporary nationalism, as the (global and local) state structure cannot be separated from the nationalist discourses ascribing meaning to it (Goswami, 2002). One key aspect of the state structure is its laws. Arguably,

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[42] Documented and sorted in an excel sheet.

[43] Since nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics such as flag policies and the withdrawal of funds for LGBTQ organisations have been carried out with less *legal* controversy, they were exempt from the study. It should, however, be noted that some statements and actions carried out in local and state parliaments or by elected officials could be very important for research for how they have – or have not – been treated as legal issues.

laws and places co-constitute each other, intertwining with the spatial, social, cultural, and historical. The research work is in taking these braids apart to identify the legal provisions and moves to see how they are actively place-forming. (Bennett and Layard, 2015, p. 411)

Therefore, the analysis of how Swedish law has been practised by the police and court systems aimed to grasp how struggles over particular spaces (public spaces occupied simultaneously by LGBTQ activists and anti-LGBTQ activists) played out in particular places – public spaces in Swedish towns.

4.6.1. Collecting Data from Courts and the Police

The data consisted of protocols from the police and the court, assessing and sentencing events where neo-Nazis had conducted verbal or physical anti-LGBTQ attacks. Before collecting this material, the project underwent renewed ethical review, for collecting information about legal transgressions. The original research project, which had already undergone ethical review, was complemented by including the analysis of police and court documents. The new ethics application explained how these documents would be handled in the analysis and how it would be stored responsibly.

Once the ethical review application had been renewed and approved by the ethics authority, I started collecting documents from the police and the courts. I did so by first identifying nationalist anti-LGBTQ events in the analysed media archive (see Sections 4.4 and 4.5) that had been handled by police officers or brought to court. Thereafter I searched the Swedish legal archival database *Juno* (juno.se) for court cases and legal commentaries that had followed the events. I also contacted the Swedish courts in regions where I had confirmed events had taken place, requesting court sentences that concerned events I had read about in the news media articles and court sentences found through Juno. After I had gathered and analysed the court documents, it became very clear that the evidence used in courts primarily came from police investigations and reports, which led me to request these as well. To do so, I contacted the relevant police regional offices, requesting documents of their investigations used in the courts. When requesting documents from courts or the police, I clarified my intentions for how I would use the material, as well as the decision from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority.

The searches and requests resulted in a sample of thirty-eight court cases, twenty-four police investigations and reports, three demonstration permits given or denied to neo-Nazi demonstrations, and five law commentaries published in legal journals. To be able to find and get a hold of these documents, I first had to identify the exact dates and places of events, or even the court case or police investigation numbers, so that I could successfully request them from the police and court authorities. These were easier to reach for events

that had been brought to court and had been closed, leading to cancelled investigations being excluded from the analysis. The sample I ended up analysing is therefore not an exact survey of *all* policing and the legal aftermath of *all* nationalist anti-LGBTQ activist events. Instead, the material consists of cases which I already knew of through their media coverage or became aware of during the sampling process (as they were mentioned in documents I already had collected).

To complement the documents, particularly so the police investigations, I sent out interview requests to Swedish police offices in regions where the nationalist anti-LGBTQ events I had identified had taken place. However, despite sending out multiple written requests, to multiple offices, I was unsuccessful in finding interested interviewees, with the exception of one police officer. During the interview I asked what had made him reply to my request, to which he responded that when his office received the request, they needed someone to take on the interview and he was the one who ended up doing it, based on his experiences. His reply, together with the responses I received from other police offices and officers turning down interviews, shows how the circulation of my requests unfortunately resulted in little interest, or low priority, of participating in the interviews.

My calls for interview participation also resulted in being contacted by phone by an officer (other than the one who agreed to be interviewed), according to whom my prospects of receiving responses were poor. He explained that this was mainly because of organisational priorities regarding resources, as well as the lack of a coherent policy (a policy which he said was in the making) for how the organisation should handle requests such as mine. Since he also mentioned that the organisation needed to see their own gain from participating in research, I rewrote my written call for interviewees after our conversation and sent it out again. In the new call I emphasised further what they could gain from being interviewed, such as having the opportunity to impact what I wrote about their actions and them getting better knowledge of the nationalist anti-LGBTQ events that the organisation had policed. This did, however, not lead to more informants.

4.6.2. Analysis

Initially, the data was sorted categorically, based on places of events as well as types of criminal charges and offences. After reading the sorted documents, I coded them by writing memos (Cope, 2021, p. 356). The memos were both descriptive, concerning places, laws, actions, actors involved, and the courses of events, and they were interpretative and reflexive, connecting the descriptive memos to theoretical arguments about public space and policing. Central to the interpretative and reflective memoing was the role of space (Delaney, 2010, pp. 157–195): how the different actors and activists used public space to be seen and heard, and how the police and courts defined the situations,

such as the police ordering the removal or movement of demonstrators to directed places, or the courts sentencing hate speech differently in online publications and in public space demonstrations. The interpretation of police action was further complemented by police policies for how to generally handle public demonstrations and "extreme right" activists, as well as information provided by the interviewed police officer. The analysis focused on the discrepancies created between the homonationalist ideological assumptions of a Sweden free from homo- and transphobia, versus the legal regulation of public space which both enables and hinders the unfolding of concrete nationalist anti-LGBTQ activism.

The analysis differed from the previous ones as it focused more on how police officers enacted the law and how courts defined the boundaries between legal and illegal nationalist anti-LGBTQ activism, in comparison to the earlier efforts to examine how those actions were folded into nationalist narratives by being deemed in or out of line with "Swedishness". It also brings to the thesis more in-depth descriptions of *what happened* in some of the events where neo-Nazis threatened or attacked LGBTQ people. The events are of course not described objectively in the documents, but in terms of how they were conceived by police officers on duty, or by the courts. Their perspective, combined with court decisions, thus answers the question of how the nation-state, imagined as supposedly "LGBTQ friendly", acts in the face of this imagination being disproved.

4.7. Attempted and Conducted Interviews

While my main argument for the thesis as a whole draws on archival material, I also interviewed actors from three different arenas: six anti-Nazi activists, one police officer, and six actors involved in the planning and marketing of large-scale Pride events in Stockholm or Gothenburg. The interview samples are rather small, despite repeated efforts to reach more participants, which is why they serve as complements to the document analyses rather than being given a more prominent role in the thesis. Of the interviews I did (twelve in total), only seven were cited in the thesis (in Articles II and V). The reasons for including them and not others were that they were more thematically aligned with one another (in the case of Article II) and that the archival material for the research on homonationalism and urban entrepreneurialism, as well as the research on the policing of public space, was scarcer than for the other research questions.

While it is not possible to know all reasons for low participation for certain, some indications were given as to why repeated calls for interviews were turned down. Interviews with activists were set up during the Covid-19 pandemic, and there were few opportunities to meet in person, make informal

contacts at events, or gain deeper trust and interest for the project. The interviews with anti-Nazi activists and the police officer nonetheless contributed to my interpretations of the changing tactics among neo-Nazis, as well as the policing of public spaces. The interviews with city marketing employees contributed to the analysis of why and how Swedish cities draw upon homonationalist discourse. The purpose of all interviews was to complement the other methods, by gaining perspectives of actors who had participated in some of the situations I researched (Dunn, 2021, pp. 149–150).

I reached informants by contacting organisations or networks which I had come across throughout the research process – actors or organisations mentioned in, for example, social media posts or newspapers. Before requesting interviews, I obtained approval from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority, which is required for collecting "sensitive information" as defined by the GDPR.[44] When contacting potential interviewees, I introduced myself and provided letters of information, containing information about the interview, its purpose and potential contributions as well as contact details and information about ethics review and the rights of informants, including the right to withdraw participation (as advised by Robertson, 1994, p. 9). Once I had established contact with individual informants, I asked them to spread my information letters and contact details to relevant people in their networks, so-called snowballing (see "Sampling" in Castree, Kitchin, and Rogers, 2013). This worked to some extent, as people contacted me after talking with previous interviewees; however, the strategy was unsuccessful in reaching any larger number of participants.

I conducted the interviews online via video call (with the exception of one interview with an anti-Nazi activist and one with a city marketing bureau employee, which were conducted over the telephone). I had prepared interview guides with conversation topics and questions before each interview. Nonetheless, I emphasised flexibility during the conversations, letting the interview be shaped by the experiences and perspectives of the interviewees.[45] The topics and questions for the interviews were based on the research questions and informed by preliminary findings and interpretations of the wider data collection. The overall structure of all interview guides was inspired by the "pyramid structure", according to which the interview proceeds from easy-to-answer questions to asking more abstract questions towards the end (Dunn, 2021, p. 155–156). At the start of each interview, I told the interviewees about myself,

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[44] Approval number 2020-03645. The criterion of sensitive information relevant for this thesis, and that was mentioned in the ethics approval application, is *sexual orientation*. In the end, my interviews did not actually explicitly include any information about participants' sexual orientation, as it became less important for answering the research questions throughout the research process – mainly as I did far fewer interviews than planned.

[45] Perhaps I relied on this technique too much, leading to interviews being rather disparate in topics discussed, and thus more difficult to include in the thesis.

the project, the purpose of the interview, and their rights to withdraw participation at any time, after which I asked for informed consent to participate and to be recorded. The right to withdraw participation or contact me for further information was repeated at the closing of each interview.

5. Conclusions on Theory and Methodology

The thesis takes inspiration from works on nationalism that connect political and economic actions to nationalist ideology, arguing that the two are intertwined. Much work on nationalist discourses connects them to global and local economic structures, processes, and shifts (see for example Goswami, 2004; van Riemsdijk, 2010; Lagerqvist, 2014; Dahlstedt and Neergaard, 2019; Koch and Perreault, 2019; Koch, 2020). So does work on homonationalism that centres on economic transformations shaping nationalist discourse. In much fundamental work on homonationalism, the inclusion of LGBTQ subjects as national symbols is derived from neoliberal economic and political conditions (Duggan, 2002; Haritaworn, 2015; Puar, 2017; Rao, 2020). Adding to these works, the thesis examines how homonationalism has been shaped in a contradictory relation with nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, answering the overarching research question: *What are the economic and social processes behind homonationalist discourse, and how are they altered by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?*

5.1. Theorising the Nationalist Contradiction

The thesis argues that homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism shape contemporary nationalism through struggles, in which contradictory elements simultaneously undermine and reinforce each other. On both a global and a national scale, homonationalism needs a constitutive homophobic other, while nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are increasingly articulated by occupying that position.

In the pages that follow, two of the articles (I and II) draw connections between political economy and nationalist discourses, analysing how discourses of sexuality and nation are integrated in global capitalism (Article I) and urban economic governance (Article II). The other articles in turn analyse the discursive reproduction of the nationalist contradiction (Articles III and IV) and the legal-political structures shaping how, when, and where they have been articulated (Article V). Three out of five research articles (I, II and V) therefore analyse the structures shaping and shaped by discourses producing the nationalist contradiction, whereas two articles (III and IV) instead analyse

the discourses' lingual and symbolic elements, as well as their relation to each other.

With the kappa's theoretical chapters defining nationalism, nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism, homonationalism, and the nationalist contradiction, these articles are contextualised within wider fields of research on what nationalism is and how it has evolved and been manifested in the Swedish context. The two theoretical chapters have outlined the geographical and historical processes leading up to the current Swedish nationalist contradiction, where symbolic sexuality has been put at the centre of the struggle over Swedishness.

Theoretically, this thesis draws on and expands critical scholarship on the social, economic, and political processes behind gendered and sexual norms, and the changing relations between the individual, the family, capital, and the nation-state. From this vast field of research, the thesis speaks in particular to the concept and analytic category of homonationalism, according to which homosexuality has increasingly become intertwined in economic and nationalist hegemonies.

"The homosexual" and gender or sexual minorities in general have mostly been considered as lying outside of modern patriarchal nationalist ideals (Marston, 1990; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Hill Collins, 1998; Peterson, 1999), but recent developments show how they increasingly have been (conditionally) intertwined with them (Sabsay, 2012; Puar, 2017; Kehl, 2018). With the introduction of the concept of homonationalism, the long history of research arguing that nationalism is inherently heteronormative and excludes LGBTQ people was put into question. This has, however, never meant that heteronormativity, sexism, and trans- and homophobia have ceased to be enforced in various nationalist ideologies and projects, even in nationalisms that have increasingly become homonationalist, such as Swedish nationalism. The extensive and growing fields of both homonationalism and anti-LGBTQ nationalism have much to gain from deeper integration, researching nationalism not as either heteronormative or homonationalist – but as both. This thesis introduces a study on how homonationalism and nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism are not only concomitant but rely on each other through mutual undermining and support, thus forming a nationalist contradiction through opposing claims to defining proper Swedish sexuality norms.

5.2. Researching and Analysing the Nationalist Contradiction

The methods chapter disclosed the epistemological choices, benefits, and shortcomings of the thesis, which derived from the analysis of archival data, done with the intention to understand how nationalism and nation-state action

shape and are shaped by ideological constructions of sexuality and sexual identity. The research process was explained by presenting the trajectory of how it developed over the years, including some of its pitfalls and moments of re-design. The research questions were repeated, providing insights into how they were answered, showing the material and analytical strategies used. Because the thesis is composed of different types of archival material, supplemented by interviews, the entirety of the data collected and analysed is summarised here in a figure, which visualises how the empirical components of the thesis are combined (see Figure 2) and how they are connected to the thesis' ontology, epistemology, and theory (inspired by Crotty, 1998, p. 4).
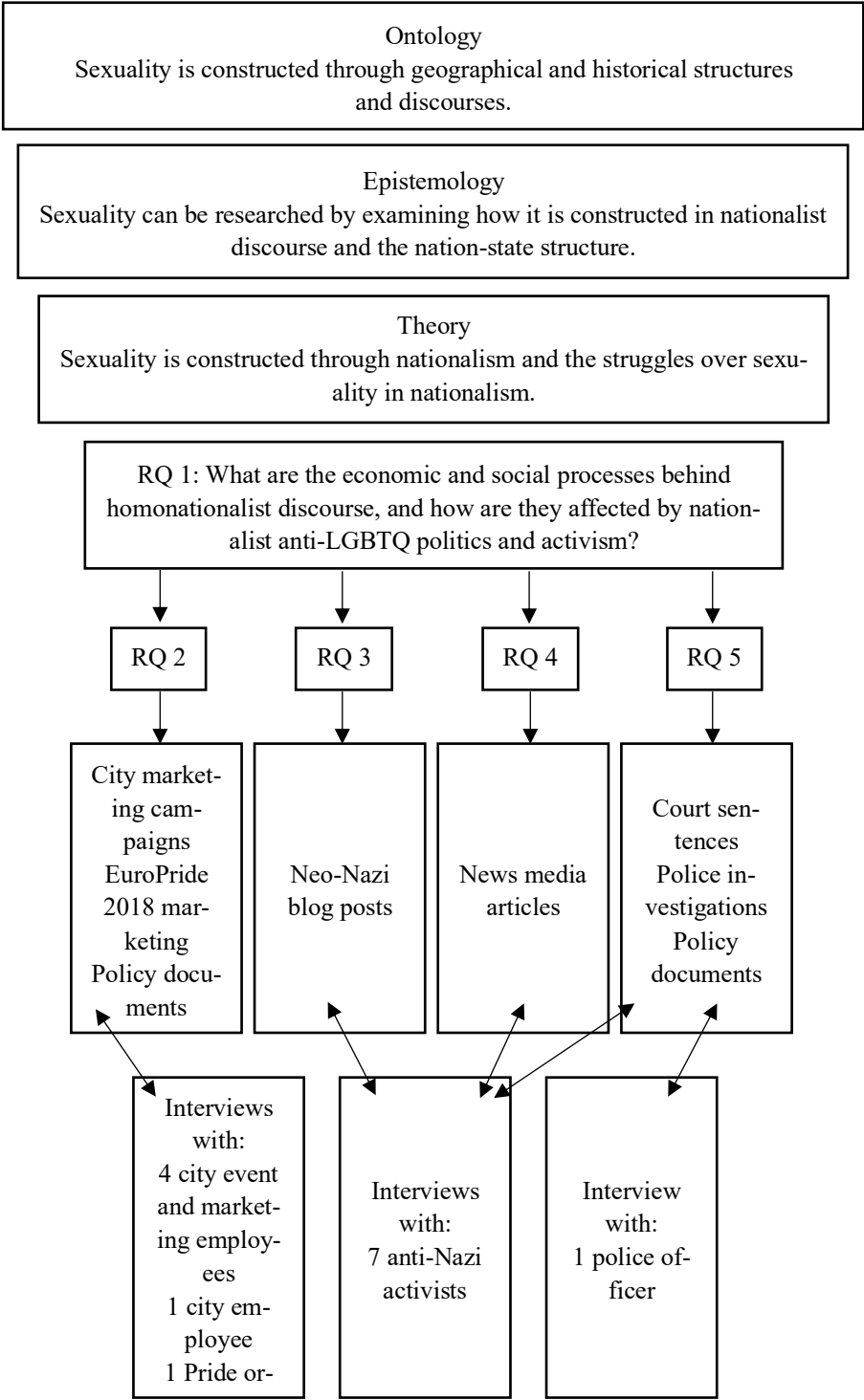
Ontology
Sexuality is constructed through geographical and historical structures and discourses.

Epistemology
Sexuality can be researched by examining how it is constructed in nationalist discourse and the nation-state structure.

Theory
Sexuality is constructed through nationalism and the struggles over sexuality in nationalism.

RQ 1: What are the economic and social processes behind homonationalist discourse, and how are they affected by nationalist anti-LGBTQ politics and activism?

RQ 2

RQ 3

RQ 4

RQ 5

City marketing campaigns
EuroPride 2018 marketing
Policy documents

Neo-Nazi blog posts

News media articles

Court sentences
Police investigations
Policy documents

Interviews with:
4 city event and marketing employees
1 city employee
1 Pride or-

Interviews with:
7 anti-Nazi activists

Interview with:
1 police officer

Figure 2. Summary of Methodology

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5.3. The Swedish Places Appearing in the Articles

The thesis is concerned with Swedish nationalism and the scale of the nation-state; however, all events analysed in the thesis took place at local nodes, on specific streets in specific cities or towns. For readers not familiar with the location of these Swedish cities, I have included a map over all places that have appeared in the data (Figure 3). All nodes on the map are cities or towns in which a nationalist anti-LGBTQ event was documented in news media material, interviews, or documents from courts and police authorities.

These nodes were not identified beforehand as locations for the study, but instead emerged as they were mentioned in the collected data. The map shows the places where different events occurred. The map is provided more as a guide for readers unfamiliar with the location of Swedish towns and cities, rather than to draw conclusions of spatial patterns. The variation of places mentioned in the material confirms that events of far-right and neo-Nazi activity are indeed a national phenomenon. Nonetheless, some places have stood out in the reporting, particularly Visby and towns in the county of Dalarna (Rättvik, Falun, Ludvika, Grängesberg), which occurred more frequently in the material. The reason for this is that NRM were very active in Dalarna, using the county as an organisational nodal point (Lööw, 2015 p. 72). Visby, on the other hand, appeared often in the material due to the yearly political event of "The Almedal Week". In the years examined, NRM campaigned at this forum, generating much attention (see Holt, 2020).

Map: Julia Lagerman
Source: Lantmäteriet, i2012/921.

Figure 3. Map of places covered in the thesis