**Is Europe becoming more selfish?**

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In a few recent articles, I have written about the general elections in two European countries, Sweden and Italy. The Sweden Democrats (‘Sverigedemokraterna’), a right-wing party in that country, received over twenty percent of the votes, becoming the largest party on the bourgeoisie side, a few percentage points more than the Conservative Party (‘Moderaterna’), which still will lead the coalition government, with Ulf Kristersson to become PM. The Swedish Democrats, with its chairman Jimmie Åkesson, will support Kristersson, but will not have cabinet posts since they are not seen as quite ‘clean’ by most parliamentarians and the public, considering the party’s neo-Nazi past when it was established in the late 1980s; still, some skeletons pop up from time to time.

In today’s article, I am asking if Europe is becoming more selfish, mainly because of the rise in some ultra-conservative parties. I shall pay most attention to the political situation in Sweden, in many ways being a mirror of the conservative and right-wing trends elsewhere, too. I shall also mention some other countries; first, Poland and Hungary, which have had very conservative governments for several years. In the Netherlands, a right-wing party has had some success. In Denmark, the right-wing did well in some earlier elections but failed to maintain popularity. Mette Fredriksen of the Social Democratic Party is a firm and not always quite a democratic PM. However, politicians who thrive in exercising power may be the calibre needed in our time. Denmark was scheduled to have its next general elections in June 2023, but the PM has just decided to call an early election on 1 November this year.

[Interior Ministry pens letter to ECP to postpone by-polls](https://www.nation.com.pk/08-Oct-2022/interior-ministry-pens-letter-to-ecp-to-postpone-by-polls)

In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen’s party, National Rally (‘Rassemblement Nationale’) won 23.2 percent of the vote in the presidential election in April this year and did even better in the parliamentary elections the same month. Yet, President Emmanuel Macron of the more centrist party ‘La Republique En Marche!’ won his second term in office. France has many political challenges ahead, and compromises must be made rather than real change implemented.

In Germany, the right-wing party, Alternative for Germany (‘Alternative für Deutschland’), with its two co-leaders Tino Chrupella and Alice Weidel, got 12.6 percent of the votes in the last general elections in September 2021, a decline from the previous elections. Olaf Scholz of the Social Democratic Party won 25.7 percent of the votes, and became the new Chancellor after the legendary Angela Merkel, establishing a coalition government with the Liberals and the Green Party. The Germans, like the Swedes, are quite level-headed and don’t want too sudden changes; hence, extreme parties will remain far from gaining a majority, but they will still have some influence.

[Germany announces additional €10mln for flood-hit people](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Oct-2022/germany-announces-additional-euro-10mln-for-flood-hit-people)

In Italy, the Brothers of Italy (‘Fratelli d’Italia), with its leader Georgia Meloni, won 26.4 percent of the votes in the elections last month. Georgia Meloni will form the next government in coalition with other conservative parties, including the Italy Forward Party (‘Forza Italia’) of Silvio Berlusconi (86), winning just over eight percent of the votes. He was a controversial, populist PM earlier (1994-1995 and 2001-2006), but now he seems to have become more moderate, playing the role of an ‘elder statesman’.

In this brief listing of the rise of the right wing in a more selfish Europe, I shall draw attention to the Conservative Party in the UK, with its new PM Liz Truss. She seems to be more conservative than most members of the UK parliament, especially in economic policies, reducing government assistance to people in a country where poverty grows fast. However, her try last week to reduce taxes on the ultra-rich, resulted in an outcry and she had to withdraw the proposal. But most of her other conservative policies are still on the agenda.

[Punjab ACE summons Islamabad IG over corruption charges](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Oct-2022/punjab-ace-summons-islamabad-ig-over-corruption-charges)

Now back to Sweden, which I use as the main ‘example’ of the rise of the right-wing in Europe, though in orderly and controlled forms.

The Sweden Democrats are against Sweden’s liberal immigration and refugee policies, as all such parties are. They argue for stern law and order measures, considering an increase in gang crimes, including shootings and economic crimes related to drugs. They are also against Sweden allocating generous development aid, about one percent of GDP. They are critical of the UN and other bilateral organisations, and they are lukewarm to the EU, yet, accepting its existence and Sweden’s membership; similarly, with regards to NATO. The Sweden Democrats are nationalists, and that also has an impact on what they believe about climate change and environmental issues, being against Sweden taking a lead in those fields.

Many other policies of the Sweden Democrats remain more unclear, and they are not always conservative. For the Sweden Democrats to be a party supporting the government, but not be directly responsible with cabinet posts, is probably going to benefit the party in the next elections in four or eight years, when they can argue that they tried their best to influence the Conservative Party, but that they didn’t always succeed. They may aim at becoming the leader of the conservative bourgeoisie side themselves. But the level-headed Swedes don’t want a too powerful right-wing party, as most Swedes are liberal, tolerant, and practical innovative people. Hence, the Swedish Democrats must clean up their party and make policies more acceptable to everyone. The current four-year parliamentary term will be an apprenticeship time for the party. Alas, in some fields they may not learn and remain extreme.

[Qadir appreciates UNICEF to support flood victims in Pakistan](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Oct-2022/qadir-appreciates-unicef-to-support-flood-victims-in-pakistan)

Let me not only be negative to the Sweden Democrats. Always with new parties, and especially if they have radical policies, there would be new and interesting views, either one agrees or not. I believe that much of the reason for the rise of radical populist parties is the failure of the established parties in renewing themselves. Often, they also develop a near monopoly in government offices, suppressing opposing views.

The social democrats, having been in power in Sweden and many other European countries for most of the post-WWII time, have developed some such attitudes, sometimes even arrogance. In Sweden, that is quite clear, not the least in foreign affairs, development aid, immigration, and refugee issues. Even when the conservative-centre bourgeoisie ‘Alliance’ ruled (2004-2010), with Fredrik Reinfeldt as conservative PM, Sweden maintained liberal immigration and other international policies, seen as being in a true Swedish spirit.

Thus, the Sweden Democrats with fewer political hang-ups and fixed opinions on economic and other issues may be a fresh breath, thus challenging the other parties, especially the social democrats and socialists, to rethink their policies and party practices. We should realise that the social democrats do not always have the best policies for the lower and working classes. They have sometimes become too academic and intellectual, rather working for the middle-class than the working class, and then some voters turn to populist parties, where language and policies are simpler, although perhaps not always realistic.

[Third part of alleged cipher leak surfaces](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Oct-2022/third-part-of-alleged-cipher-leak-surfaces)

In an upcoming article or two, I shall discuss some more aspects of Europe’s political, economic, social, cultural, human rights, and other aspects, indeed as related to the war in Ukraine and other defence and military issues. Europe and America are still in the lead in international affairs, setting most standards, but many times they are selfish, thinking of themselves rather than what is globally neutral and to the benefit of poor countries and people.