

Moving reality closer to the ideal

The process towards autonomy and secularism
during the Social Democratic hegemony in
20th century Sweden

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**The process towards autonomy and secularism during the
Social Democratic hegemony in 20th century Sweden**

Per Ewert

Doctoral dissertation

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Längtan, alltid denna längtan, härifrån långt bort

Långt, långt bort

*Och rosorna fäller alla kronblad igen
som grät dom blod, för att livet är så kort*

*Och människor i de låsta tysta husen
gläntar på gardinen och stirrar ut på gatan,
med ögon som är rädda, för allting som kan hända
Fast det redan hänt*

Kent "Rosor & palmblad", *Du & jag döden* (2005)

Lyrics: Joakim Berg

Abstract

21st century Sweden is arguably the most secular-individualistic nation in the world. In this dissertation, I perform a qualitative textual analysis on how positions on autonomy were expressed in the political discourse in 20th century Sweden, and what possible implications this may have had for a process of secularization. The focus is on the three spheres of church, education and family policy during a period of Social Democratic hegemony. Autonomy is in this study understood both as an affirming value, and as opposition towards a threefold antithesis of community, authority and the Sacred.

During the research period, the initially community-oriented Social Democrats held power between 1932 and 1976 under only three Prime Ministers. Their party programmes consistently display a critical attitude towards religious authorities, most notably in church and school. The programmes from the Agrarians and the Conservatives strongly defend the Christian foundation for society, while the Liberals hold a position between these antipoles. Over time, though, Agrarians and Conservatives move towards the secular and partly also the autonomous ideals, where the Social Democratic programme of 1960 made a distinct turn in an autonomous direction.

Of the three Prime Ministers, Per Albin Hansson is identified as a religion-hostile Marxist, Tage Erlander as a pragmatic nation-father and Olof Palme as an intellectual radical who embraced the new ideals of autonomy. Four other central Social Democratic actors are studied: Arthur Engberg and Harald Hallén are central in early Social Democratic church policy, where the former was initially very hostile towards the Sacred, while the latter was more diplomatic. Still, both shared an anti-authoritarian vision for the State Church that led to democratization and secularization of the Church from within. In education policy, Stellan Arvidson started out from an anti-religious and authority-critical position and led the reforms of the school system in a secularizing direction. Alva Myrdal proposed a similar anti-authoritarian ideal, along with an autonomous vision, propagated in both church, education and school policy.

My conclusion is that these individual actors and the Social Democratic party as a hegemonic collective actor actively contributed in strengthening politically motivated autonomous values, in which each of the three analysed societal spheres contained a specific battleground between opposing values: in church policy the politization of decision making in the Church, in education policy the removal of the teaching of Christianity, and in family policy the introduction of individual taxation.

During a build-up phase up till around 1960, the top political leadership in Sweden was characterized by a version of autonomy that was not yet proclaimed in its affirming version, but rather as a confronting autonomy, mainly directed against authority. This period and argumentation also interacted with a process of secularization. The early 1960s to 1976 was instead characterized by an ultra-progressivism that proclaimed an autonomous liberation from all factors understood as reflecting some kind of authority. Instead, a state individualism arose, where the state became a new authority with the task of securing the independence of the individual. This was also a period when the secularization of Swedish society was considered as largely completed.

Sammanfattning

Sverige under 2000-talet kan anses vara världens mest sekulärindividualistiska land. I denna avhandling gör jag en kvalitativ textanalys av hur inställningar till autonomi uttrycktes i svensk 1900-talspolitik, och vilka tänkbara konsekvenser detta kan ha haft för sekulariseringsprocessen. Fokus ligger på de tre samhällssfärerna kyrko-, utbildnings- och familjepolitik under den period när Socialdemokraterna hade en hegemonisk position i svensk politik. Autonomi definieras i denna studie både som en bejakande värdering och som opposition mot en trefaldig antites bestående av gemenskap, auktoritet och det Heliga.

Under undersökningsperioden satt de inledningsvis gemenskapsorienterade Socialdemokraterna vid makten mellan 1932 och 1976 under endast tre statsministrar. Deras partiprogram uppvisar en konsekvent kritisk inställning till religiösa auktoriteter inom kyrka och skola. Bondeförbundet och Högerpartiet försvarar tvärtom tydligt en kristen grund för samhället, medan Folkpartiet intar en mellanposition. Socialdemokraternas programrevision 1960 gjorde en skarp sväng i autonom riktning, och över tid flyttar sig Bondeförbundet/Centerpartiet och Höger/Moderaterna närmare sekulära och i viss mån även autonoma ideal.

Av de tre statsministrarna beskrivs Per Albin Hansson som en religionsfientlig marxist, Tage Erlander som en pragmatisk landsfader och Olof Palme som en intellektuell radikal som kom att omfamna de nya autonomiorienterade idealen. Fyra ytterligare centrala socialdemokratiska aktörer studeras också: Arthur Engberg och Harald Hallén är partiets centrala kyrkopolitiska aktörer i periodens inledande fas, där Engberg initialt är starkt kritisk till det Heliga, medan Hallén intar en mer diplomatisk roll. Båda delade dock en antiauktoritär vision för statskyrkan som ledde till en demokratisering och sekularisering av kyrkan inifrån. I utbildningspolitiken utgick Stellan Arvidson från en religionsfientlig och auktoritetskritisk grundsyn och ledde skolreformerna i sekulariserande riktning. Alva Myrdal förmedlade liknande auktoritetskritik och en grundhållning till förmån för autonoma ideal i kyrko-, utbildnings- och familjepolitik.

Min slutsats är att dessa individuella aktörer och det socialdemokratiska partiet som hegemonisk kollektiv aktör medverkade aktivt för att stärka politiskt motiverade autonoma värden, där varje politikområde innehöll varsitt centralt slagfält mellan motstående värderingar: i kyrkopolitiken politiseringen av beslutsfattandet i statskyrkan, i utbildningspolitiken avskaffandet av kristendomsundervisningen, och i familjepolitiken införandet av individuell beskattning.

Under en uppbyggnadsfas fram till omkring 1960 utmärktes det politiska ledarskapet i Sverige av en version av autonomi som ännu inte framträdde i sin bejakande form, utan snarare som en konfronterande autonomi, främst riktad mot auktoriteter. Denna period karakteriserades också av en sekulariseringsprocess. Tidigt 1960-tal till 1976 kännetecknades istället av en ideologisk vision som förespråkade en autonom frigörelse från alla faktorer som uppfattades reflektera någon form av auktoritet. Dessa radikalt autonoma ideal benämner jag ultraprogressivism. De gamla auktoriteterna ersattes av en statsindividualism, där staten tog rollen som ny auktoritet med uppgift att garantera individens oberoende. Under denna period kom sekulariseringen av samhället också att betraktas som i huvudsak genomförd.

Preface

Doing research about your own nation and culture from an external perspective is challenging. Writing about areas close to your own heart is twice as challenging. And finally, analysing some of the most defining value-related processes in a nation, in areas which typically give rise to strong reactions and public debate, may be the most challenging of all.

Still, the opportunity to study central processes that shaped the nation I belong to – and to do this on paths previously untrodden – also creates great enthusiasm.

Completing this PhD dissertation has been both a surprising and confirming task, but it has also been a constantly fascinating experience to, figuratively speaking, sit at the feet of some of the people who were most influential in shaping 20th century Sweden. In view of the processes studied in this dissertation, my estimation is that most readers will react by turning either hot or cold, but I find it improbable that many people will be lukewarm.

When looking back on this project, my largest gratitude goes to my wife Therése and our four children, who have allowed me the time needed to complete it. My supervisors Kjell O Lejon and Knut Alfsvåg deserve thanks for their patient and well-conceived advice through the whole process. My gratitude also goes to Sebastian Rehnman, without whose advice in the initial phase, this project would never have got started; to Anders Jarlert and Egil Morland for guiding and inspiring comments at preparatory seminars; to Torbjörn Aronson, Douglas Brommesson, Rune Imberg, Per Landgren and Johan Sundeen for valuable input from a conceptual and factual point of view; to Grace Olaison for very professional linguistic corrections and advice; to Per Larsson and Chuck White for encouragement along the way; and finally to librarians and archivists who have carried literally tons of books and documents back and forth for me. All this taken together has made this final product possible.

I also wish to thank all those involved at the Clapham Institute, Sweden's leading Christian think tank, where I have in my role as director dealt with constant debate, applause, criticism and wrestled with questions relating to this project. Thanks also to previous church leaders, ministers of government, et cetera with whom I have had interesting background conversations concerning this study. All these have provided valuable input, correction and encouragement during the process.

As this project is now complete, I find companionship in the millennia-old words of another writer who bears a pseudonym connecting to a title common in this project, namely Ecclesiastes. After having evaluated both values and politics in his own nation, he summarized: “Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter.” His suggestions make sense also to me, and I hereby present my product to the public.

The author,

Forserum, Sweden, Pentecost 2022

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Abbreviations used

FC: Swedish parliament, First Chamber
SC: Swedish parliament, Second Chamber
SLMA: Swedish Labour Movement's Archive
WVS: World Values Survey

1. Introduction

1.1 The global canopy and the Swedish example

In the early 1900s, Sweden was a nation shaped by 400 years of Lutheran culture, which influenced not only faith but also social matters, education, and other societal areas. At the end of the century, though, Sweden had changed into a culture with very different values. When Gallup asked in the early 2000s, “Is religion an important part of your daily life?”, this nation had the world’s highest percentage of respondents answering the question in the negative.¹ Simultaneously, Sweden displays a higher degree of individualistic values and opposition towards authority than any other Western nation.²

Extensive data about the central factors in this project is found in the World Values Survey (WVS). The first survey was published in 1981, and since the 1990s, a new study has been undertaken around every five years, with “wave 7” published in 2020.

The WVS does not focus primarily on religious affiliation, beliefs or practice, but rather on people’s *values* in different nations. The central pedagogical tool from this survey is the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world – a two-axis diagram, created by Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, describing values within two variables.

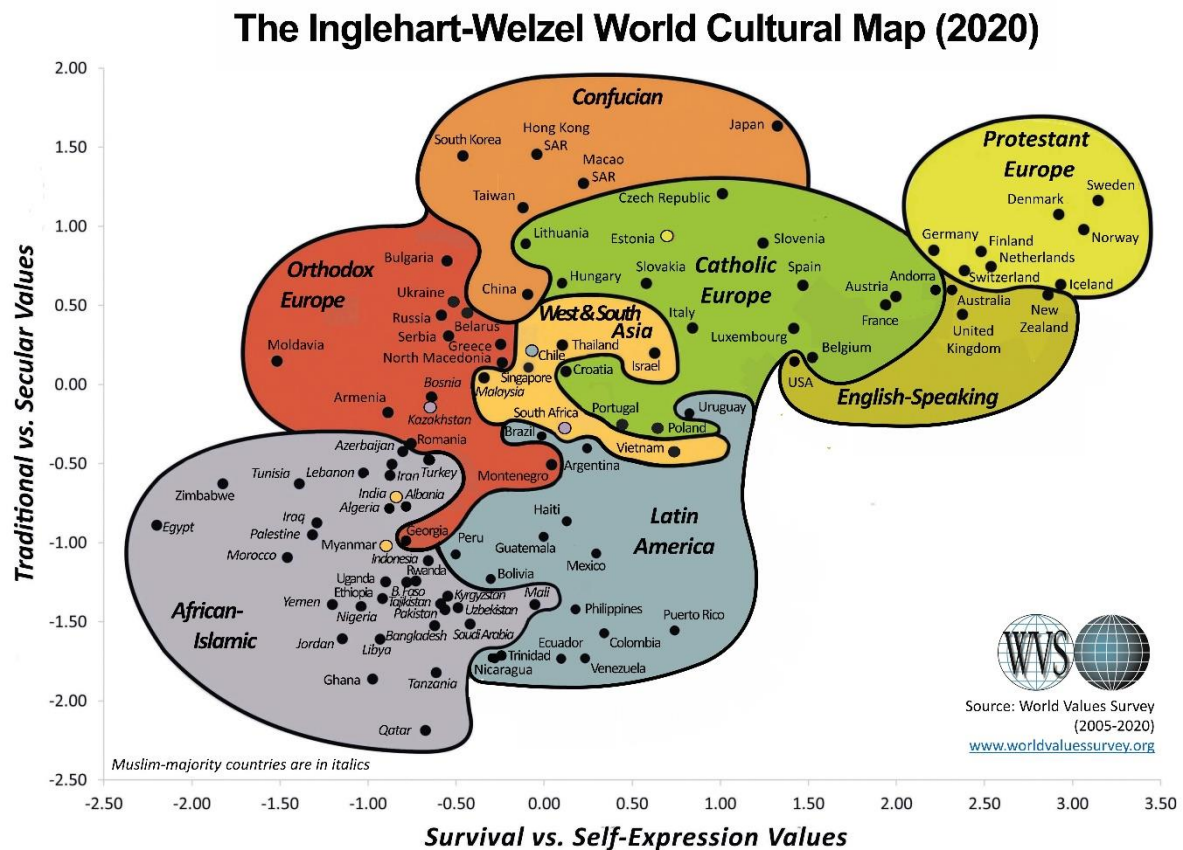
In this chart, Sweden stands out as the world’s most distinct example of a very high degree of secularization and individualism. Sweden gained the world’s highest score of self-expression values somewhere around the year 2000, a position that Sweden has since then consolidated. Sweden’s position, shared with or just below Japan, as world-leading in secular values has remained since the WVS began in the 1980s.³

¹ Steve Crabtree, *Religiosity Highest in World's Poorest Nations* (2010), accessed 4 November, 2020, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142727/religiosity-highest-world-poorest-nations.aspx>.

² World Values Survey, *World Values Survey and European Values Study joint survey round (2017-2020) Results in % by country* (2020), Q 17; Ivar Ekman, "Like Garbo, Swedes just want to be alone," *New York Times* 2006, 13 November.

³ World Values Survey "Live cultural map over time 1981 to 2015," 2015, accessed 15 October, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABWYOcru7js>.

Diagram 1: The Inglehart–Welzel cultural map of the world ⁴



After having examined how well these two dimensions correlate to the overall findings of the WVS, Inglehart and Welzel argue, “These two dimensions explain more than 70 percent of the cross-national variance in a factor analysis of ten indicators – and each of these dimensions is strongly correlated with scores of other important orientations.”⁵

Therefore, and also due to the huge impact this graph has had on the public discussion, it will be used as a frame of reference, and a modified version of Inglehart and Welzel’s use of terms forms a basis for this study.

The terms used for the two dimensions on the scale are, however, not self-evident. One could argue that “secular values” is not necessarily the perfect antipole to “traditional values” – in itself a wide term. However, when applying the Inglehart/Welzel chart in this project, the term

⁴ In the 2020 chart, Sweden has become even more individualistic, and dropped slightly in secular values, compared to previous version. This is largely explained by an increasing divergence between Swedish-born citizens and immigrants with more traditional values. Bi Puranen, “What do immigrants know about Sweden?,” *Kvartal*, 2020, 24 September.

⁵ World Values Survey “The WVS Cultural Map of the World,” World Values Survey, 2013, accessed 2 October, 2019, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54.

secular fits well with the scholarly discussion on the issue.⁶ The title of the other axis also raises questions, especially what the phrase “self-expression values” signifies. When elaborating on their methods, the authors describe the two poles as “survival values” meaning collectivism, and “self-expression values” equalling individualism.⁷

Based on the above, 21st century Sweden can be described as a nation with a remarkably high degree of secular and individualistic values. There is, however, a lack of comprehensive studies on which values that were central in the political discourse leading up to our present-day scene. It is therefore of both national and international interest to study the political ideas and processes that led up to this culture.

Early 20th century Sweden saw several short-lived governments of various political and sometimes non-political persuasions. Between 1917 and 1932, Sweden had lived through 14 governments. This period of constant change came to an abrupt end after the 1932 election, when Social Democrat Per Albin Hansson was appointed Prime Minister. This formed the beginning of an unparalleled era of one-party political hegemony, lasting till 1976, with one party holding power under just three Prime Ministers during 44 years.

One initial point worth mentioning is that *hegemony* is not synonymous with *monopoly*. This dissertation analyses the political field during a period when the Social Democrats experienced an undisputed hegemony in Swedish politics. Nevertheless, there were times when other parties would participate in Social Democrat-led governments. Other parties also had constant opportunities to exercise an ideological influence when in opposition. Therefore, it is of interest to study values also among the other parties. The largest part of this analysis must, however, deal with the party in hegemony.

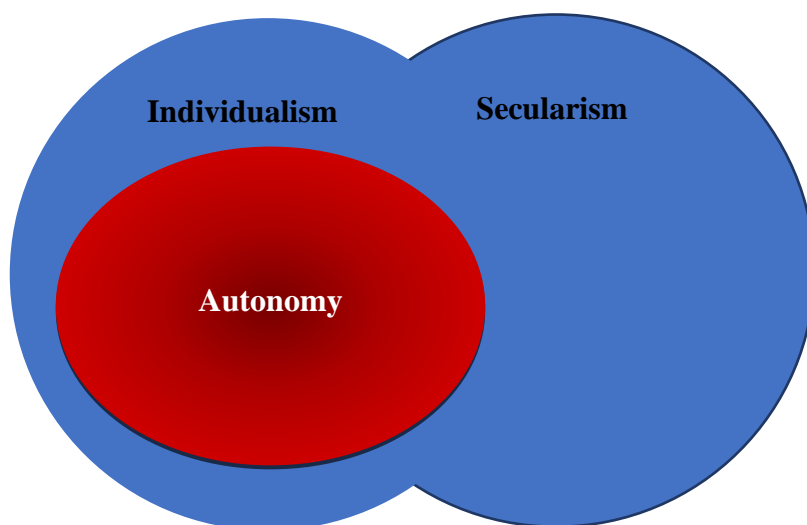
Descriptive research has been done on Swedish secularization, as well as on different facets of its long Social Democratic governance. There is also a discussion on the particularly Swedish form of individualism, which will be further analysed below. There is, however, a need for analysis concerning the relationship between politics and values during the 20th century, whether and to which extent deliberate political actions were made to move the nation in a direction where secular and individualistic values appear as typical concomitants.

⁶ Wave 7 has also changed to the term *secular*.

⁷ Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy. The Human Development Sequence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 138.

The pervasive change that Sweden went through during the 20th century is a prime example of a cultural development that has affected the whole Western world. A recurring topic in popular and academic discussions concerns which factors drive nations towards secularization, and other discussions deal with the growth of different types of individualism.⁸ The framework in this project will be further explained in coming chapters, but the possible common denominator which secular and individualistic values are argued to interplay with, and which will thus form the centre in this project, is the concept of *autonomy*.

Diagram 2: Central values and their relationship to each other



Autonomous values are here understood as a narrower version of individualism. There are situations where individualistic and secular values appear together, but also situations when these are expressed independently. Secular values may appear unconnected to autonomous values, but autonomous values may also be expressed as an integral part of secular values, as shown in the diagram above. The concept of autonomy hereby takes centre stage in this project, intended to cast a historical light on the shaping of late-modern Sweden.

A nation's values are obviously shaped by several cultural factors. This project, however, focuses on the *political* argumentation and processes. This study is performed in a nation that, at the turn of the millennium, had become arguably the world's most secular-individualistic. It is also a nation where a collective-oriented ideology of Social Democracy has dominated the political realm, although eventually ending up in individual-oriented values. A central focus

⁸ E.g. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); Robert N Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

in this study will be to illuminate this apparent paradox, and whether there may be a common denominator under these seemingly contradictory values.

This dissertation is a cross-disciplinary study with its centre in the fields of history and political science. It also analyses the relationship between state and religion in a broader sense, and more specifically wishes to provide a deeper understanding of political factors influencing a nation with a very high level of secular and individualistic values.

To clarify my perspective, I also wish to underline that this project does not deal with the moral implications of secularization and individualism. Nor does it deal with the question of whether Swedish present-day secularization is indeed as strong as otherwise stated. Instead, this analysis has an historical-descriptive perspective, studying what the source material displays under the aim and research questions below, and how these correspond to current scholarship.

1.2 Aim and research questions

A brief overview of 20th century Sweden shows a nation that found its own path by avoiding the Second World War. It is a nation with a uniquely long period of 44 years with the same political party in power – a period when Sweden underwent a period of considerable change, both in general terms and within the specific spheres studied in this project.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse how positions on *autonomy* were expressed in the political discourse during the Social Democratic hegemony in 20th century Sweden, and what possible implications this may have had for a process of secularization.

Three spheres where autonomy stands out as especially significant in both primary sources and previous research are *church*, *education* and *family policy*. These three spheres are central in shaping a person's life, and also central arena for anyone wishing to influence present and future generations in society. Therefore, this study will give a special focus to these three spheres in order to get a broad view on to what extent a striving for increased autonomy is expressed in the shaping of what is arguably the most secular-individualistic nation in the world.

This dissertation will focus on the following research questions, where the first three have an empirical angle and the fourth a theoretical:

1. What positions on autonomy were expressed in party programmes during the Social Democratic hegemony in 20th century Sweden?
2. What positions did leading Social Democratic actors present and promote in relation to autonomy?
3. How were positions on autonomy expressed in political processes within the narrower spheres of church, education and family policy?
4. How do the empirical findings relate to theories concerning processes of autonomy and secularization?

1.3 Demarcations

This project has its historical focus on the period of Social Democratic government from 1932 to 1976.⁹ The latter year forms a natural end to this project, as the year when the party lost the election and government power. The beginning of this study is, however, more open – mainly because some formative processes, especially in Church and education, started before 1932, when central figures began their ideological activity in parliament and when the party first attained power over Church and education. Therefore, source studies in these spheres will begin from the 1910s, when Harald Hallén and Arthur Engberg became prominent actors, and when Värner Rydén was appointed the first Social Democratic Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs – i.e. with responsibility over both Church and education matters.¹⁰ The central processes of change in education policy began with the 1919 curriculum. Therefore, the source study of the school-political texts starts there.

Politics is a complex world of motives and strategies. This dissertation does not deal with all values in Swedish 20th century politics. It is obvious that more values than those studied here were central in Social Democratic policy-making. Some of the most commonly used are democracy, equality and solidarity. Such words and the reasoning around them may, however, also convey other values. This study centres around what role *autonomy* and related values played in the political discourse of 20th century Sweden.

Several political, cultural, religious and philosophical factors may have influenced the values that dominated Sweden by the time Per Albin Hansson became Prime Minister in 1932. Such

⁹ The exception to the unbroken line was when Per Albin Hansson resigned during a few summer weeks before the 1936 election.

¹⁰ This combination of tasks lasted until 1968, when these responsibilities were split in two, with Olof Palme becoming Sweden's first Minister of Education and Alva Myrdal the following year taking over the second task, when appointed the first Minister of Church Affairs.

factors have been analysed elsewhere and go beyond the scope of this study.¹¹ Due to their very dominating position in Swedish politics, the main focus in this dissertation is the Social Democratic party. However, hegemony is not identical with monopoly. Therefore, party programmes from The Agrarians, The Liberals and the Conservatives are studied in order to analyse how central values appear among the different parties. The fifth party in parliament, the Communists, were the smallest in terms of seats, and never exercised any real political influence, and they are therefore excluded in this study.

When deciding what individual actors to include, the three Prime Ministers Per Albin Hansson, Tage Erlander and Olof Palme are obvious political leaders of influence. The four others are Arthur Engberg, Harald Hallén, Alva Myrdal and Stellan Arvidson. The first two appear, both in primary and secondary material, as the two dominating politicians in Church policy up till the Second World War. Regarding the other two, vast scholarly research has been done on Alva Myrdal's influence on Swedish politics, and she is also a central person in the primary sources. On Stellan Arvidson, less research has been done. In the primary material, though, he stands out as a very prominent actor and debater – not only in school matters but also on church and religion.

One other central person worth mentioning is value nihilistic professor Axel Hägerström (1868-1939), described as “perhaps the most influential figure in the intellectual life of Sweden in the twentieth century”.¹² Regardless of Hägerström's possible impact on those involved in this study, he was not an active politician. He also passes unmentioned in the source material. Professor Hägerström and other non-political influencers are therefore not included in this project. Hägerström's disciple Vilhelm Lundstedt (1882-1955) was, however, a parliamentarian 1929-1948, and is described as a strong influence on Social Democratic views of law and human rights.¹³ Still, Lundstedt was not a central actor in the processes and spheres studied in this project, and he is therefore not included. The same applies for Nils Karleby (1892-1926), an influential Social Democrat with an articulated hostility towards

¹¹ E.g. Henrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa? Gemenskap och oberoende i det moderna Sverige*, 2 ed. (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2015).

¹² Richard F. Tomasson, "How Sweden Became So Secular," *Scandinavian Studies* 74, no. 1 (Spring) (2002), 85.

¹³ Anders Jarlert, "Swedish modernity in transition within law and theology. Halvar G F Sundberg (1894-1973) and Gustaf Aulén (1879-1977)," in *Law and the Christian tradition in Scandinavia: The writings of great Nordic jurists*, ed. Kjell Å. Modéer and Helle Vogt (London: Routledge, 2021), 314.

authority and Christianity.¹⁴ Karleby could, however, not continue his writings as he died at young age, and he is therefore also omitted.

The choice of societal spheres rests both on earlier research and the source material. These spheres appear repeatedly in the secondary literature, and also in the primary sources the areas of church, education and family repeatedly stand out as central in policy discussions relating to autonomy, individualism and secularism.

When analysing these spheres, focus will lie on those periods where the most vivid political debates and changes in ideas and policy occurred; for the church sphere from the beginning of the period up to the introduction of female clergy in 1950s; for the school system from the 1946 School Commission up to the curriculum of 1969; and for family policy from the introduction of the Social Democratic study group of women's affairs in 1960 and up till 1976.

Regarding church policy, internal church processes and arguments are not included, as this project deals with political sources, especially focused on the Church of Sweden – the formal name for the Lutheran State Church. Indeed, it could have been useful to investigate how political sources related to the free churches. This perspective is, however, very limited in the sources. Therefore, the major part of this analysis will deal with the State Church.

1.4 Definitions

To follow the line of reasoning in a study, it is vital to understand how its concepts are used. This project takes place within what I call the *political discourse* in 20th century Sweden. This term is here used in its most concrete meaning, as “the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions”.¹⁵ This means that this dissertation consists of a textual analysis of the political primary sources, according to the methodology, theoretical framework and choice of sources described in following chapters.

The central concept in this project is *autonomy*. The word literally means “self law”, from the Greek *autonomia*, made up of the Greek words for “self” and “law”. In contemporary academic discussion, this word has several, somewhat differing meanings, depending on

¹⁴ See Nils Karleby, *Socialismen inför verkligheten: Studier över socialdemokratisk åskådning och nutidspolitik*, (Stockholm: Tiden, 1926).

¹⁵ Teun A van Dijk, “Principles of critical discourse analysis,” in *Discourse & Society* 4(2) (1993), 22.

where they are used. Some common understandings of this word do not relate directly to the theme in this dissertation.¹⁶

In political philosophy, autonomy appears as a recurring concept – from Immanuel Kant’s brand of liberalism where autonomy takes a centre stage, through John Stuart Mill’s utilitarian liberalism as a general element of well-being, up to John Rawls’ alternative to utilitarianism, where free and equal persons act as autonomous members of society, when the obligations they recognize are considered self-imposed.¹⁷

In later decades, the academic literature has provided a vast discussion about this type of autonomy, often referred to as *individual* or *personal autonomy*. This development of the concept may end up in an understanding fitting with certain strands of both liberalism and socialism, which is also the function it takes in this study. I define autonomy as *the intention to increase the independence of the individual*.

Inglehart and Welzel state that socio-economic modernization gives people the opportunity to freely enhance three corresponding processes: “to base their lives on autonomous choices”, “to demand and defend freedom of choice” and “to exert free choice in their activities” – all of which reflect the larger focus on “the growth of autonomous human choice”.¹⁸ They conclude that when considering all empirical findings in the WVS, regardless of measurement approaches, types of samples or time periods, they all turn out as a common and cross-cultural variation, “reflecting an emphasis of autonomous human choice”.¹⁹

Sociologist Edward Shils argues that the modern individualistic view of being “true to oneself” implies some kind of battle between the self and all factors that may threaten its independence.²⁰ Therefore, autonomy may or may not include a deliberate opposition to antithetical factors. Consequently, autonomy is in this dissertation interpreted as a twofold phenomenon: one *affirming* and one *confronting*; the former defined as *an active striving to increase individual independence*, the latter as *an opposition towards antipoles to individual*

¹⁶ One example is *basic autonomy* – the minimal status for a human being of being responsible and able to speak for oneself. Another is *moral autonomy* – a person’s ability to make moral choices. In international law, the word signifies what constitutes an independent state, etc. Examples largely based on John Christman, “Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2015).

¹⁷ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1999), 12

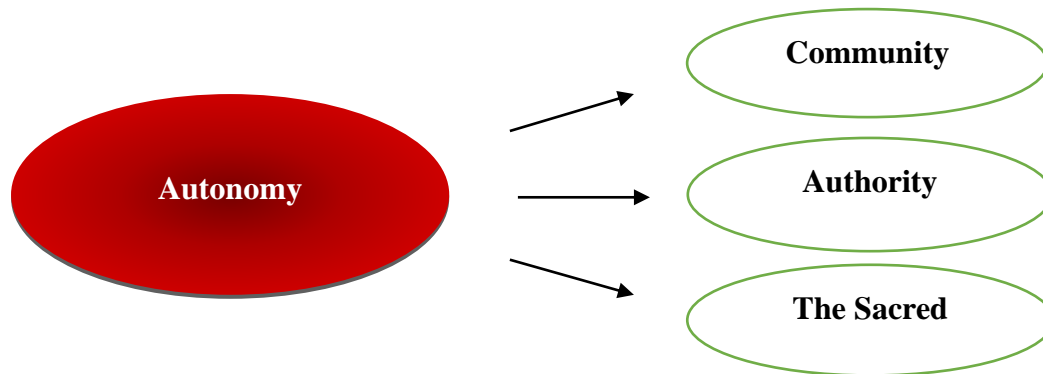
¹⁸ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*, 2f.

¹⁹ Ibid. 136f.

²⁰ Edward Shils, *Tradition* (1981), quoted in Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 138.

independence. The confronting autonomy is interpreted through a lens of a threefold antithesis, namely *community*, *authority* and *the Sacred*. This model builds on Adam Seligman, professor of religion at Boston University.²¹

Diagram 3: The Basic Autonomy Model – autonomous values expressed as opposition against a threefold antithesis



According to Seligman’s writings, and further developed here, this model describes a culture which proposes autonomy as a central value. In a culture negative to autonomy, the arrows would typically point leftward, defending community-, authority- and Sacred-oriented values. This diagram, however, illustrates an autonomy-affirming culture, and is further expanded below. All the values above appear repeatedly in the primary material, although not always in these exact words. The content of these concepts and how they are understood in the sources is more thoroughly explained in coming chapters.

There are also other terms that regularly appear in the sources and that relate to autonomy-connected values. *Equality* and *freedom* are two significant ideological terms at the core of Social Democracy, but also close to values in liberalism. Such values may, however, take very different meanings in different ideologies and parties.²² In relevant cases, the analysis will discuss how these terms are expressed in the source material and how they relate to the underlying tension between autonomy and its antipoles.

The term *Marxism* regularly appears in this dissertation. This is mainly because this ideological view is very common in the Social Democratic sources during the first decades of

²¹ Adam B Seligman, *Modernity's Wager: Authority, the Self, and Transcendence* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 37-40.

²² Andrew Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 128-131.

this study. When used by party actors, the understanding gradually moves away from a wider definition to a narrower, reformistic sense, as opposed to revolutionary communism. When I use the term in the analysis, it denotes socialism in a broad sense according to Karl Marx, which is also the way the concept is used during the first decades of Social Democracy.

Another central term in this analysis is *ultra-progressivism*. School historian Hans Albin Larsson applies this term to the intention of using school education to promote societal change in a specifically socialist direction, stimulating pupils to question injustices and other societal conditions.²³ However, in the source material, the most radical suggestions cannot be argued to reflect only socialist ideas, but also radical forms of liberalism. Therefore, “ultra-progressivism” will be understood in a wider sense, as *the striving for an autonomous liberation from all factors understood as reflecting some kind of authority, where this utopian striving trumps all other values and practical challenges*.

As stated above, autonomy is in this project interpreted as a narrower version of *individualism*, where the latter is defined according to political scientist Andrew Heywood: *a belief in the primacy, or supreme importance, of the individual over any social group or collective body*.²⁴ Even though this value closely resembles autonomous values, there are also forms of individualism that fall outside the definition of autonomy; more about this distinction below.

The third central concept in this project is *secularism*, defined as *the wish for an increased secularization*. This is originally a word from within Christianity, deriving from the Latin *saeculum* – an expression for the physical, perishable time, in contrast to *aevum*, God’s eternal, imperishable time. During the Middle Ages, and to some extent still in Catholic quarters, *secular* was used to distinguish those monastic orders that were active in society, rather than remaining cloistered inside the monastery performing only spiritual work. Consequently, working in the secular realm was at this time not a disconnection of religion, but rather the opposite: religion ought to function in society, not just in the spiritual realm.²⁵

The wider concept *secularization* has several definitions in the literature. In order to separate a value-oriented from a process-oriented understanding of the word, I build on Charles Taylor’s work *A Secular Age*. Here, he uses a wide definition with three dimensions of

²³ Hans Albin Larsson, *Mot bättre vetande: En svensk skolhistoria* (Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2011), 145f.

²⁴ Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics*, 133. (My italics)

²⁵ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 32f.

secularization: 1) “the retreat of religion in public life”, 2) “the decline in belief and practice”, 3) “the change in the conditions of belief”.²⁶ The first two describe the *process* of secularizing a culture, while the third lays more emphasis on the *value* of secularism, leading up to actual change in the first two aspects. This third aspect is consequently at the centre of this study. How these values are actually presented in the primary sources from 20th century Sweden is what this project sets out to investigate.

1.5 Disposition

Based on the considerations above, this dissertation will be presented in the following order: First comes a presentation of method and source material, including the methodological and source-related challenges in this project. After this follows a theoretical background of the central values, beginning with the concept of individualism, followed by how the narrower concept of autonomy functions as a specific form of individualism. Thereafter, the area of secularism and secularization is presented in a similar fashion. Then comes an overview on previous empirical research on the central values, and on the specific Swedish context, actors and spheres.

The empirical part, a qualitative textual analysis, begins with party programmes of the four dominating parties in Swedish 20th century politics, with a special focus on the Social Democratic programmes. This analysis is followed by a study of individual actors, beginning with the three Prime Ministers, and then the four political actors who appear as particularly influential in the political discourse. After this comes an analysis of the formative processes within the three spheres of church, education and family policy.

The empirical analysis begins with visionary documents, which constitute the ideological basis for political parties. The choice to include the processes leading up to the Social Democratic programme revisions makes it possible to also follow individual influences during the process. After analysing the seven selected individual actors, the investigation continues with texts from the legislative political processes concerning church, education and family. The ambition is hereby to facilitate the understanding of the interaction between individuals and group actors, and which of these appeared to have had the upper hand in different situations.

²⁶ Ibid. 423.

After this source-based analysis, covering the first three research questions, follows a concluding part, where the textual analysis is adjoined with a larger theoretical discussion on how the findings in this project connect to earlier theoretical and empirical studies, in order to give a useful contribution to the field of research.

2. Methodology

2.1 Foundational methodological considerations

The empirical focus in this study is on analysing how positions on autonomy were expressed in the political discourse during the Social Democratic hegemony in 20th Century Sweden. This aim will be reached through a qualitative textual analysis of policy-related source material of various genres.

A qualitative analysis differs from a quantitative one, in that the study does not rest on any statistical compilation of certain key words. There is also a difference in risk of scholarly bias, compared with projects where texts or data sources are created around the research project. Instead, this method takes its starting point in already written and fixed texts, using those source-critical tools which follow the genre of each text.²⁷

When analysing political sources, the scholar deals with three levels.²⁸ The *textual level* is what an actor actually says or writes; reality as the actor describes it in public. The *informational level* is reality as the actor perceives it. Between these is a *decision mechanism* in which the actor evaluates what intellectual or tactical considerations to apply when expressing his or her views in public. Below these is also the *level of reality*; how the situation is in actuality. Based on this, the informational level of each political actor is formed by a *perception mechanism* where the actor interprets facts directly but also through other people's information and interpretation of reality.

In this project, the focus is on the *textual level*, what opinions and arguments the actors express publicly. The decision mechanisms shaping the actors' public statements and the perception mechanisms shaping their informational level may indeed be of interest, but these processes are not at the centre here. When such factors appear clearly in the source material, these will be referred to, but the main focus in this study is what opinions and arguments the actors openly express, not what tactical, intellectual or emotional considerations they may have below the surface.

²⁷ Sharon Lockyer, "Textual Analysis" in Lisa M. Given, ed., *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (London: Sage Publications, 2008), 865f.

²⁸ Based on Lennart Lundquist, *The Party and the Masses: An Interorganizational Analysis of Lenin's Model for the Bolshevik Revolutionary Movement* (Stockholm/New York: Almqvist & Wiksell/Transnational Publishers, 1982), 43f; Lundquist, *Det vetenskapliga studiet av politik* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1993), 109-111.

Several areas of research, not least political science, deal with the question of causality. In political decisions, several factors influence decisions, and it is often difficult to determine which factors are most defining for a political decision. These challenges are especially prevalent in quantitative political research.²⁹

Causation is, however, relevant also in research on political values, because different factors and actors relate to each other, also on the ideological level, as “*values of the one tend to produce distinct values of the other*”.³⁰ This project does not aspire to establish with certainty every factor behind political reforms or changes in direction. My aim is, however, to analyse what values are argued along the antithetical line between autonomy and its threefold antithesis – where, how and by which actors. When causal relationships between texts and actors seem to appear in the material, these are highlighted in the analysis.

A qualitative textual analysis can be defined loosely as “an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text”.³¹ Still, this does not mean that readers can make a text mean whatever they wish. A narrower and bolder description of this method can be described as the possibility to provide the more *likely* interpretations, where the researcher provides “a detailed knowledge of the sense-making culture they’re describing”.³² This prerequisite is fulfilled in this project by using several documents, authors, contexts and genres from the same time period and the same spheres of society. This width of source material enhances the likelihood that the interpretation of the sources will be reliable.

A qualitative textual analysis sets out to provide an understanding of the intentions and arguments in a text, the topic addressed and how the intended audience may influence the shaping of the text.³³ Based on these considerations, the empirical part of this study will rest on the search for value-based formulations in the primary sources, with a focus on the role of autonomy.

²⁹ W. Phillips Shively *The Craft of Political Research* (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 42-46, 73-75.

³⁰ Ibid. 73 In all quotes from primary and secondary sources, italics, exclamation point et cetera are quoted in accordance with the original, unless otherwise stated.

³¹ Alan McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 1.

³² Ibid. 137.

³³ Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 865.

2.2 Grounded theory as methodological tool in political discourse

In textual analysis, several methodological models exist within social sciences, such as history and political science. Several theorists have developed discourse analysis in a more general sense. Laclau and Mouffe are considered central in the formation of discourse analysis, but even if they delve into concepts like hegemony and Marxism, their theory relate hegemony mainly to poststructuralism and the use of language, and therefore lack the necessary methodological tools for a study of a political hegemony.³⁴

Some scholars use discourse analysis mainly on a general and linguistic level.³⁵ Closer to this project is Walter R. Fisher, who describes narration as a rhetorical tool when presenting public moral arguments.³⁶ This also applies for Thomas Luckmann and Ruth Wodak in their reasoning on variations between different genres of communication.³⁷ Actual methodological tools are presented by Martin Reisigl, who describes eight fields of political discourse.³⁸ His pattern is, however, too wide for this study, as only a few of these fields consist of written texts.

When approaching my research questions and source material, some methodological models from present-day scholarship appear as less useful. Treating the texts according to critical discourse analysis, either as a language game, according to Wittgenstein, or as power structures, according to Foucault, would become too narrow, given the wide variety of genres, contexts and audiences.³⁹ Critical discourse analysis also carries the risk of starting out from a fixed perspective, not letting the sources speak for themselves, something which has raised

³⁴ Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 35-43; Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001, 2nd edition), 105-114.

³⁵ Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London: SAGE Publications, 1987), passim.

³⁶ Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value and Action* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 69-75.

³⁷ Thomas Luckmann "Communicative Genres" in Johannes Angermüller, Dominique Maingueneau and Ruth Wodak, eds. *The Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014) 351-356; Ruth Wodak "Introduction: Discourse Studies – Important Concepts and Terms" in Wodak and Michal Kryzanowski (eds) *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 14-17.

³⁸ These fields are: Lawmaking procedure, formation of public opinion, party-internal formation of opinion, inter-party formation of opinion, organization of interstate relations, political advertising, political executive and administration, political control. Martin Reisigl, "Analyzing Political Rhetoric" in *ibid.* 98f; Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)" in Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds) *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage, 2009), 91.

³⁹ Stefan Titscher, Michael Meyer, Ruth Wodak and Eva Vetter, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis* (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 144-164. For a thorough analysis of ten different methods of textual analysis, see the whole volume.

criticism that this research model “is in fact a political theory as much as a method of inquiry”.⁴⁰

A similar problem applies for the model of objective hermeneutics. This could indeed provide important insights into values in a text, but gives too large weight to the decision mechanisms of the author, rather than the texts themselves.⁴¹

The Manifesto Research Group have developed an elaborate methodology of interpreting positions in party programmes. This group does, however, take a more quantitative approach and present their findings on statistical scales.⁴² Therefore, it does not fit the aim, qualitative ambition and wider source material in this study.

The model which best connects to the methodology in this dissertation is *grounded theory*. A bibliometric comparison of scholarly works presents this model as by far the most common in social sciences.⁴³ A central feature in grounded theory is that “empirical indicators are coded according to concepts” – which fits well for this project, because the empirical analysis is not primarily centred around words, but around value-based concepts in the political discourse.⁴⁴ In grounded theory, a core category is typically selected – a “central phenomenon around which all other categories are integrated”.⁴⁵ The researcher starts out from a theoretical base, and from this performs the coding of texts, “generalizes to a conceptual unit which is the core category”.⁴⁶ In this study, *autonomy* takes this role as central value/phenomenon/core category around which the investigation rotates.

Grounded theory is described as more of a research strategy, rather than a specific method of analysis – “an approach to the development of (text-data based) concepts and theories”.⁴⁷

However, when building the textual analysis on a theoretical foundation, such as here, grounded theory can be a tool that “facilitates the desired search for and recognition of indicators in the text”.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 339.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Michael Laver and John Garry “Estimating Policy Positions from Political Texts”, *American Journal of Political Science*, July, 2000, Vol. 44, No. 3, 619-634.

⁴³ Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, 217.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 77.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 80.

⁴⁶ Barney G. Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions* (Mill Valley: Sociology Press, 1998), 160.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 85.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 80.

The actual coding of the textual analysis in this dissertation is described more in detail below, but focuses on those manifest and latent *values* that appear in the texts. This dissertation builds on a *qualitative* textual analysis. Therefore, it works according to a methodology which does not primarily study the *frequency*, but rather the *dominance* of certain concepts, i.e. those discussions which stand out as most fundamental and profound in the texts.⁴⁹

A particularly useful feature of grounded theory is its function of finding concepts and values “of which the authors are not (or need not be) aware”.⁵⁰ This feature becomes central here, when analysing values which are sometimes openly communicated, but sometimes appearing underneath the surface of the topic that the author mainly addresses. An important factor to consider in a textual analysis such as this is not only what is said in the texts, but also what is *not* said.⁵¹ Grounded theory here takes the function of finding both concepts which appear repeatedly and those which stand out as not present.⁵² This matter is particularly important when comparing when values either disappear in the political discourse, or when they appear as central to some actors but are invisible among others.

Starting out from these foundational considerations, let us now proceed to the handling of the theme at the centre of this study, namely autonomy.

2.3 Coding political texts through the Autonomy Model

The choice to centre the analysis around the concept of autonomy is based upon both its centrality in the source material and what is presented in previous theoretical research. In the primary sources, it soon becomes apparent that even when autonomy is an approved value, it is not always expressed as a direct promotion of autonomous values. Rather, it is often presented as opposition to factors in explicit or implicit contradiction to autonomy. Therefore, the researcher will need to analyse both the manifest and the latent content, i.e. not just study words explicitly mentioned in the texts, but also values expressed implicitly.

This project needs an applicable methodological tool to analyse autonomy and its opposing values. The theoretical foundation for this study is described more in depth below, but it may

⁴⁹ Douglas Brommesson, *Från Hanoi till Bryssel: Moralsyn i deklarerad svensk utrikespolitik 1969-1996* (Stockholm, Santérus, 2007), 70.

⁵⁰ Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, 85.

⁵¹ Julie-Marie Strange “Reading Language as a Historical Source” in Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (eds) *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 167.

⁵² Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, 81.

be initially noted that Ronald Inglehart affirms a foundational connection between opposing values: “Data from scores of countries demonstrates that Individualism and Collectivism (...), Autonomy-Embeddedness (...), and Survival/Self-expression values (...) tap a similar underlying construct which reflects the extent to which people give top priority to individual choice, over survival needs”.⁵³ The WVS concept of “survival values” is, however, not used in this study – simply because it is so rarely used in the literature, apart from when discussing the Inglehart/Welzel chart itself. Instead, my theory and methodology builds on those values which most closely reflect the ideological tension appearing in the sources.

When political messages are communicated in a culture, they are *encoded* with certain ideological, tactical and other content. The task in this study is to *decode* the messages in political texts in this case by focusing on the *values* that appear.⁵⁴

In grounded theory, the methodology focuses on “a central phenomenon around which all other categories are integrated”, where “empirical indicators are coded according to concepts”. In this study, the decoding, or just *coding* of the texts is consistently focused upon the concept of autonomy, resting on my Autonomy Model, building on Seligman, where the concept of autonomy finds its reverse in a threefold antithesis of community, authority and the Sacred. The analysis of the source material will thus build on a study of whether the sources display an explicit/manifest or implicit/latent striving regarding autonomy or any of its three antithetical factors.

In this methodology in line with grounded theory, I work with an *open coding*, where codes emerge as the texts are studied, where “the researcher puts aside presuppositions and previous knowledge of the subject area and concentrates instead on finding themes in the data”.⁵⁵ The coding in this study is limited in the meaning that it focuses on particular values, but it is open in the meaning that these are wide values, studied in all different forms and contexts in which they may appear in the sources. This means that in the analysis, I do not limit myself to occasions where these exact terms appear. This is not a study of *words* but of *concepts*. Hereby, large portions of the source texts are discarded, inasmuch as the content does not deal with the issues in this project. E.g., discussions on state finances, foreign policy, defence

⁵³ Ronald Inglehart and Daphna Oyserman, "Individualism, Autonomy and Self-expression: The Human Development Syndrome," in *Comparing cultures: Dimensions of culture in a comparative perspective*, ed. Henk Vinken, Joseph Soeters, and Peter Ester (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1.

⁵⁴ Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler “State of the Art of Comparative Political Communication Research”, in *Comparing Political Communication*, 336.

⁵⁵ Halperin and Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 350.

issues or infrastructure very rarely touch upon the tension between autonomy versus community, authority and the Sacred. Passages dealing with education, family matters, religion or general views on the individual and society tend, however, to be filled with expressions of values concerning autonomy and its relating values. This means that the focus through the whole dissertation lies on those passages that express an ideological leaning regarding the antithetical struggle for or against autonomy, which forms the theoretical and methodological basis for this project.

Consequently, the textual analysis will involve all areas where the theme of autonomy is addressed, either proposed or opposed, whether written explicitly or implicitly in the context of the particular texts. This focus on autonomy and its relating values, eventually emanating into the three spheres of church, education and family policy, is hereby a well-calculated methodological tool in order to capture the research aim of this project.

This concept-focused method of coding means that I study how the concepts and arguments are used in the sources, even when expressed in different terms. Thus, *community* is understood in a broad sense, as all content concerning groups and cooperation larger than the individual. Here, the family stands out in both previous research and the source material itself as the community most in focus of the discussion. The concept of *authority* is also analysed in a broad sense, studying all passages dealing with factors that are understood to stand above human autonomy, factors that the individual can be expected to submit to, be they rooted in individual actors, structure, tradition, established expertise, or physical reality. Finally, *the Sacred* will include all discussions in the source material relating to religion, church or God.

It may also be clarified that when I discuss critical attitudes appearing in the sources, terms such as community-critical, anti-authoritarian, religion-hostile et cetera are used in their wide meanings, as examples of a larger ideological pattern. Sometimes the texts express criticism directed against a particular example within the threefold antipole to autonomy, sometimes against the value itself. When describing such passages, they are used as reflections of the general pattern, if not otherwise stated.

The source analysis also includes a discussion of what wordings or arguments are used to display values, and which ideological stance ultimately prevails in legislative documents. Those positions that end up in final legislation can thus be argued to have exercised a strong impact on the processes concerning autonomy and secularization in the nation of Sweden.

2.4 Methodological challenges

In doing research, every scholar runs a risk of bias, especially in matters as personal as religion and its role in society. James Beckford points out that very few social scientists seem willing to abandon their viewpoints, even when facing arguments that are allegedly fatal to them.⁵⁶ Critics of a qualitative textual analysis also raise concern that the reading of a text may echo the perspective of the researcher, and that the approach of analysis may be as ideological as the texts themselves.⁵⁷

In this study, this risk is handled by the choice of not performing a moral evaluation of the values in the texts, but rather giving a reliable description of the values expressed by the actors themselves. This is a historical-descriptive study, where the empirical analysis deals with the positions and arguments appearing in the source material. Therefore, I wish to underline that the aim is neither to confirm nor reject the position of present-day Sweden, e.g. as pictured in the Inglehart/Welzel chart.

This angle reduces the risk of the scholar's own opinions overshadowing the analysis. It also facilitates good research reliability in order that other studies of the same source material would get similar results, regardless of the political or religious view of the researcher. Grounded theory as a tool to analyse large amounts of primary sources, gathered from several decades, also ensures good research validity, certifying that the descriptions of the different texts and actors indeed display a valid picture of the values expressed in the sources.

When analysing and comparing political communication, a common challenge is how political messages may be influenced by very different surrounding cultures, which may skew the comparison.⁵⁸ This study, however, deals with one single nation with a relatively homogenous culture. The Swedish culture does indeed change during the research period, but does so in close relation to the political discourse, and it can thus be analysed without those difficulties in interpretation that international comparisons entail.

These are general factors, but this project also contains a few specific methodological challenges. One is that the source material is in Swedish, while this dissertation is written in

⁵⁶ James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 70.

⁵⁷ Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 865.

⁵⁸ Werner Wirth and Steffen Kolb, "Designs and Methods of Comparative Political Communication Research" in Frank Esser and Barbara Pfetsch (eds) *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases and Challenges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 97-99.

English. I have therefore worked cautiously to translate Swedish terms and arguments as literally as possible to their equivalents in English. In general, this is a controllable problem, as this project mainly analyses in which direction the sources point: towards or against an increased autonomy.

A common methodological problem in textual analyses deals with terminology. The central theoretical concept in this thesis is *autonomy*. Even if the Swedish word *autonomi* is very rare in the source material, the concept behind the word still appears regularly. The paucity of this Swedish term is due both to autonomy being more of a theoretical concept than a political slogan, and due to the fact that this project deals with a time when this particular term was still not common in the Swedish public debate.⁵⁹ Therefore, I am restricted to studying those terms which most closely connect to the ideological content expressed under autonomy and its antipoles.

Some of these appear as explicit words in Swedish, as direct counterparts to the English terms. Others are context-related discussions which do not use the exact word but still express the same value. Thus, the methodology in this project deals with how the *concept* of autonomy is expressed in the sources, rather than a search for exact words.

Concerning the Swedish equivalent to the English *autonomy*, two words appear repeatedly in the source material, and they are used almost synonymously. These are consistently translated as follows: the Swedish *oberoende* is translated into the English *independence/independent*, which is the exact English equivalent. The Swedish *självständighet* is in its turn translated into the English *autonomy*. This does not exactly capture the same connotations as the Swedish word, but functions in practice similarly to the Swedish *autonomi*.

The sources also contain words that express adjacent values such as *frihet* (freedom). When such terms are used in the texts, they are taken into consideration only when used in contexts where the meaning to some extent relates to what is here discussed under the concept of autonomy.

The Swedish word *fostran* is common in the texts, and has a meaning which in English reflects the content of both *education* and *upbringing*. In order to best reflect the content in the sources, the English translation *education* is used when referring to school matters or

⁵⁹ The exception is the debate about the Lutheran State Church, where the concept is used differently. This usage is further analysed below.

fostran in a larger societal perspective, while *upbringing* is used when the context is family-related.

In sum, the securing of research reliability, and the handling of the methodological challenges is managed by studying all source material with the same methodological glasses, i.e. focusing on how the texts position themselves under the antithetical umbrella of autonomy versus community/authority/the Sacred. When analysing the sources, the focus is not a normative evaluation of whether the chosen direction is beneficial to a nation. Instead, the focus is descriptive, analysing the tendency and values expressed in the source material.

In a study as large as this, though, the amount of texts from different actors, periods and genres also provides the possibility of a high degree of research reliability. I.e., if the same values appear in texts of different genres, this strengthens the general picture of the political discourse. On the other hand, if different values appear in different texts, this provides evidence for value-based differences among different actors. When such inner tensions appear in the material, these will be analysed, leading into a discussion about which values receive a hegemonic position, and how this hegemony is achieved.

This multitude of source texts from different periods and genres also provides the opportunity to establish whether continuity or change dominates the political discourse, and also which actors take a prominent position in policy-shaping, more specifically within the spheres of church, education and family policy. Even though the use of texts of different genres may imply a methodological challenge, this method of analysis secures a good research reliability, as all sources are studied according to the same methodology.

The methodology in this dissertation treats all the analysed sources as primary material, as they all belong to the same general category of public documents from the political discourse in 20th century Sweden. Exceptions from this general rule is further explained below. Even though these sources used are treated according to the same methodology, they still belong to different genres, and must therefore be treated accordingly. We therefore proceed to a deepened discussion about the sources themselves.

3. Source material

Cultural, geographical and historical factors predating the 20th century may very well have impacted Sweden's extreme position in values, and several authors point to these as possible explanations.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is difficult to establish direct causal connections between such impersonal factors and values among future generations. This is one reason why this study builds on written primary sources from the period of actual political reform.

In historical studies, it is vital to select those sources which are best suited to fulfil the aim of the study in question. Peter Seixas has presented a sixfold framework for how the historian transforms the past into history. One needs to establish: historical significance, evidence from primary sources, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspectives and an ethical dimension.⁶¹

Of these, the first four are of particular importance in this dissertation. Consideration has been taken to use sources with *historical significance*, i.e. that the actors and texts may be considered influential in the political discourse during the period. The *historical evidence* is taken from primary sources. Using texts from different individual and collective actors over several decades provide insights into *continuity or change*, and in where major value changes appear in the political discourse. In relation to this, the source material may also give insights in *cause and consequence*, i.e. if formulations and values in some sources result in consequences such as proving influential in the political discourse.

In the selection of sources, grounded theory becomes a valuable tool not only in methodology, but also in establishing which sources are best fitted for both the adequacy of the research process and the empirical grounding of the findings. Especially important in both source selection and methodology is how central concepts appear and how they relate to each other.

The large amount of sources used also meets central criteria for good research, namely reproducibility and generalizability, implying that another scholar, starting out from the same theoretical assumptions and source material, should reach the same conclusions. This methodology, building on grounded theory, combined with the wide range of sources from different genres can thus “fulfil the criteria of validity, reliability and credibility of data,

⁶⁰ Henrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh mention several such background factors, as does British author Paul Britten Austin in his analysis *On Being Swedish*, see Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 29-42.

⁶¹ Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson, 2013), 4-7

theory plausibility and value, as well as appropriateness of the research process”.⁶² Hereby, this study may contribute to previous research on 20th century politics, providing a deepened understanding of both processes of change, and what texts and actors that were influential in realising this change.

In a study with a large body of source material, the weight given to different sources becomes central. Even though all source material belongs to the larger field of a political discourse, they still belong to different genres, displaying both similarities and differences. Using the term *genre* for separating texts has its challenges. Often, the theoretical discussion on this matter tends to be more philosophical than practical, and also focus more on genres of fiction than on social sciences.⁶³ In this study, I understand genre in a communicational sense, that “*a text’s genre is the way in which it is meant to be taken*”.⁶⁴

Political texts are typically separated into three groups: *Official documents*, e.g. government reports, legal documents, transcripts of speeches, records from schools, courts, et cetera; *cultural documents*, such as newspaper articles, tv programmes, art works et cetera; and finally *personal documents*, e.g. diaries and letters.⁶⁵ As this is a textual analysis of values, communicated in public sources, such a genre categorization is less useful. Instead, the empirical analysis in this dissertation is sorted under the following three genres, or categories:

Some sources are of a *visionary* nature, e.g. party programmes and other texts describing positions on ideology and values. In this study, this category consists of party programmes and the processes leading up to these. Such visionary sources come from actors either in power or in opposition. Whether a party is in power or in opposition typically shapes the content and tactical considerations in the texts, but the focus in this study is continually the *values* communicated, and these values appear among parties both in power and opposition.

Other sources are of an *opinion-making* nature. Such texts may consist of different types of texts from different actors with the intention of influencing positions or legislation among parties, parliament or government. These texts belong in their turn to different genres: speeches, newspaper articles, book chapters et cetera, and are directed at different audiences:

⁶² Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, 83f

⁶³ Eva Haettner Aurelius and Thomas Götselius, *Genreteori* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997), 5-11.

⁶⁴ Anders Pettersson, “Traditional Genres, Communicational Genres, Classificatory Genres, in *Genres and their problems: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives* (eds Beata Agrell and Ingela Nilsson), (Göteborg: Daidalos, 2003), 36.

⁶⁵ Halperin and Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 345.

party members, other politicians, the general population, foreign readers and so on. It may be noted that some of these contributions, for instance public speeches, were not originally intended as texts, but are still treated as such here, while they appear in anthologies from the selected actors. Some texts are formulated to promote or defend ongoing political processes, some propose rolling back reforms, while others propose larger leaps forward. Consequently, texts under this category belong to different subgenres and have different intentions and audiences. Still, it is possible to code them according to the same methodological pattern, in order to display the larger political discourse.

Finally, other sources are of a *legislative* nature. Some of these texts, such as government reports, have a preparatory function, providing background information and arguments for legislation. In this genre are also included party reports from the governing Social Democrats. Most weight is given to texts which eventually end up as legislation or other central legislative texts; some sources studied under this category are not explicit law texts, but politically established texts for the three spheres, such as national school curricula. Some of these texts are signed, and values from the individuals involved can thus be traced; others are unsigned or written by party-unaffiliated actors. In such cases, it is considered in the analysis when these are appointed by a government or individual actor with a particular ideological leaning.

The function of the different texts decides their place in the disposition. This means that some material by individual actors will be analysed under party programmes and the processes leading up to these, other material is analysed under the heading of each actors, and some material is finally analysed under the political processes of the three spheres – depending on what category each source falls under.

The disposition of the empirical analysis thus takes an order beginning with the party programmes as central expressions of the values of each party, where the adopted programme texts display the established values of the party. Political processes are, however, a constant interplay between collective and individual actors, between a long-term vision and what appears as politically feasible at the moment. As the Social Democrats were the party in hegemony during the research period, the processes leading up to the adopted programme revisions are therefore studied as background material, intended to illustrate which ideological considerations and individual actors that influenced the process of finalizing the programme formulations. In these processes, remarks from congress delegates are included in order to

establish the general view within the party. This part of the analysis also includes a discussion on which actors and texts appear as influential in formulating the adopted programme texts, and can thus be argued as having more weight in shaping the party's political vision.

Between the visionary and the legislative texts stand the opinion-making texts from the seven selected individual actors, who could exercise influence over both the visionary texts in the party programmes, and over the legislative texts. It is discussed throughout the empirical analysis as well as in the concluding discussion to what degree each actor contributed in shaping the political discourse.

It must also be noted that several political processes in a nation take place without directly referring to party programmes. In the analysis of the three spheres of church, education and family policy, government reports take a central role in the analysis of dominating values within the process of legislation. In relevant cases, government propositions as well as parliamentary motions and debates are also included, in order to shed more light on the processes. Government reports are generally given higher priority in the analysis than parliamentary motions, government propositions and parliamentary debates. Central reasons for this is that propositions typically rest upon government reports, and that values are typically more clearly expressed in the latter. Individual contributors also tend to have more transparent roles in government committees, and this increases the possibility to evaluate which individual actors were most influential in authoring these reports. When relevant differences appear between government reports and final legislation, these will be highlighted and discussed.

These legislative texts may also display how the ideological considerations in the party programmes and among the leading individual actors took effect in actual policy. Hereby, these sources may provide a deeper understanding of the causal effects – which factors in the source material that exercised most influence in the actual decisions regarding church, education and family, and finally: how these texts may have contributed to processes of autonomy and secularization.

3.1 Selected sources

This project mainly covers the time-period between 1932 and 1976, which equates with the 44-year-long Social Democratic government. However, some defining processes in church

and education policy took place before 1932, and these processes are therefore followed from the 1910s, when the Social Democrats first gained a position of partial hegemony.

The choice of sources rests on the aim to capture texts and actors that had a defining political influence on processes of autonomy and secularization in Sweden, more specifically in church, education and family policy. These spheres can in their turn be considered to exercise a strong influence on a nation and people's values, not least those studied in this project. The selection and weighing of texts is based on both previous research and patterns appearing in the primary sources themselves, e.g. how political texts refer to others, hereby showing when particular texts or formulations became especially influential in the political processes.

There are obvious differences between sources of different forms and genres. Private texts, such as diaries and letters, are excluded from the empirical investigation. However, some sources of a non-public nature are included. These consist of archived material related to Social Democratic programme revisions, as well as the internal documents from *Grupp 222* during the 1960s. Some of this material is traceable to individual actors and can be argued to more honestly express the actors' views, being less disturbed by the decision mechanism described above, as this material was not shaped for public distribution.

The source material analysed in this dissertation is divided into the following three main categories:

First, all party programmes applying from 1932 to 1976 from the four dominating parties: The Social Democrats; Bondeförbundet (the Agrarians), from 1957 renamed Centerpartiet (the Centre Party); Folkpartiet (the Liberals); and Högerpartiet (the Right Wing Party, here named the Conservatives), from 1969 renamed Moderaterna (the Moderates). The Communists are, because of their very limited political influence during the period, not included.

Due to the Social Democratic hegemony during the period, their programmes are of extra importance in the investigation. Therefore, the material relating to the programme commissions, gathered in the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive (SLMA) is also studied, along with the congress debates about the programme changes. An analysis of the processes leading up to the non-socialist programme texts may indeed be of interest, and could well be a matter for further studies, but must be omitted here. Included here is also a 1957 book by Clas-Erik Odhner, explicitly subtitled as a contribution to the programme debate. The internal material from the programme commissions plays an important role in reflecting the decision

mechanisms and ideological views that may not appear in the adopted programme texts, and is therefore relevant in order to understand the deeper ideological reasoning within the party leadership.

For the seven individual actors, their whole written production during the period is studied, although limited to publications where these actors are listed as authors or co-authors in Sweden's national library database *Libris* at the Royal Library in Stockholm – with the few specific exceptions described below. When books are co-written, necessary considerations have been applied in order to evaluate the authorship of different sections, so that all published texts by these actors are included. Some *Libris* entries consist of single or several speeches, articles or debates, and some is published after the end of the research period; in such cases only material stemming from within the period is used.

The inclusion of the three Swedish Prime Ministers during the period, Per Albin Hansson, Tage Erlander and Olof Palme, is motivated by their special influence over the political discourse on basis of their office. For Hansson, the studied period begins in 1920 when he was appointed minister in the first Social Democratic government under Hjalmar Branting. From Erlander, no speech collection is published, but a number of other books exist. For Palme, all published material from his first book text in 1956 is used, due to his early prominent role as Erlander's secretary. Speeches and other texts from Palme are collected in at least five collections in Swedish and English. Several speeches, especially during his first years as Prime Minister, were also published as books.

One notable difference between the Prime Ministers is the amount of published books. Both Per Albin Hansson and Olof Palme have a large literature published, which facilitates the investigation of their ideological positions. From Tage Erlander, the number of published books is more limited, which makes his positions more challenging to establish in detail.

From the four other individual actors, these stand out as central figures in the source material from the processes in church, education and family policy, and they are also in earlier research described as having had a defining influence over the political spheres relating to this dissertation. Those selected are: Arthur Engberg and Harald Hallén, typically portrayed as the two most prominent church-political actors during the early part of the period, plus Alva Myrdal and Stellan Arvidson, who were active participants in general Social Democratic

policy during several decades, especially in education and church matters, and – in Alva Myrdal's case – also in family policy.

Engberg was Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs during the first seven years of Social Democratic hegemony. He was a very outspoken debater on faith and church during the years leading up to the takeover in 1932. Hallén was a Lutheran priest who attained political influence as parliamentarian, but even more so as a participant in government reports and with sermons before parliament. He was also the longest-serving of the individual actors, and can hereby represent processes of continuity or change within party policy.⁶⁶

For Engberg and Hallén, a large part of their policy-influencing writings and speeches date from before the Social Democratic takeover in 1932. Therefore, material is used from 1912, when Hallén submitted his first motion in parliament, and 1918, when Engberg published his first book on church policy, *Statskyrkans avskaffande* (The Abolition of the State Church).

In order to adjust the selection of sources under the aim of this project, some material has been excluded: books that deal exclusively with defence and foreign policy issues (most relevant for Per Albin Hansson and Alva Myrdal) or consist of fiction or literary discussions (most common for Stellan Arvidson). For Hallén, his book publication is not as vast as the three others. Therefore, defining remarks in parliament is also included in order to better secure his ideological reasoning. In this case, Urban Claesson's large doctoral thesis on Hallén's career has been used to distinguish his most relevant remarks in parliament.

Here, it may be appropriate to describe my considerations regarding actors not included in this project. Apart from the selected individuals, at least one more person could be argued to have played a central role in several spheres in this project: Social Democrat Lena Hjelm-Wallén (1943-). She led the governmental school committee whose report was published just before the 1976 election, and she also participated in the Alva Myrdal Church-state commission. This school committee did, however, not result in any concrete legislation or a new curriculum, even though some of its proposals were adopted by the following government, and the Alva Myrdal commission did not lead to the proposed disestablishment of the State Church. Neither did Hjelm-Wallén publish any book during the research period, and she can

⁶⁶ Urban Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka: Harald Hallén och folkkyrkans genombrott. En studie av socialdemokrati, kyrka och nationsbygge med särskild hänsyn till perioden 1905-1933" (Doctoral Thesis, Uppsala University, 2004), 35f, 38f.

therefore not be considered influential on the same level as those above. She is, however, mentioned when taking a leading role in family-political processes.

Omitted is also Herbert Tingsten (1896-1973), who was a central voice during this period and a member of the 1944 Social Democratic programme revision commission. Soon thereafter, though, he left the party and would make his strongest imprint as chief editor at liberal newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. Even though Tingsten is described as having had a large impact on Swedish secularization, he still falls outside the scope of this study as his function was more of a free opinion-maker than a politician. The same goes for his long-time atheistic writing partner Ingmar Hedenius (1908-1982), who was very influential as a philosopher but not directly involved in political issues. The impact of these two may well be a topic for further research.

The final category of sources are texts relating to the political processes in the three spheres. The selection of material in these chapters builds on which sources are pointed out as vital in previous research, and, according to grounded theory, those that appear as influential in other source material. Most central in this part of the dissertation are those government reports from 1920 up till 1976 which deal with church, education and family policy.

The source material regarding the role and governance of the Lutheran State Church take its beginning at the first example of Social Democratic hegemony, when the party gained control over the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs in 1917. As this project analyses the *political* discourse, only material derived from state and parliament will be studied. Therefore, material from decision-making bodies within the Church of Sweden is excluded. The same applies for the Alva Myrdal committee intended to disestablish the State Church, as this was never realized during the period.

Also used are politically determined sources relating to the school system, its content and pedagogy. Apart from government reports and legislation, the sources in this sphere also include national curricula, including syllabuses for the *folkskola*, and from 1962 the *grundskola*, as well as the first curriculum for the new *gymnasium* in 1965. The reason why the latter is the only selected curriculum from the higher school forms is that previous research points out this reform as pivotal for a reformed mindset, especially regarding religious education. Due to its impact on forthcoming school reforms, literature directly deriving from the 1946 School Commission is also studied.

Finally, political documents relating to family policy is studied. The most relevant ideological material in the beginning of the period comes from Alva Myrdal and is analysed in the chapter about her. The ideological shift in family policy began from the 1960 Social Democratic party congress and onwards. Therefore, the focus in this sphere lies on documents from both government and party. Included here are government reports on family policy from the 1938 population commission onwards, as well as internal reports published by the Social Democratic party organization. Source material from the informal cross-party-political group named *Grupp 222* (Group 222) is also studied, as this was an arena where secondary sources mention influences from both the Social Democrats and the Liberals. The following and even more radical socialist-feminist *Grupp 8* did not share the same party affiliation and is therefore not included here.

The same considerations as for the internal material from the Social Democratic programme revision commissions is used for the preserved sources from *Grupp 222*. As these documents contain material not communicated in public, they may shed light on which party representatives were most influential in the family-political processes around 1970.

Different studies have previously been performed for parts of this material. There is, however, a lack of broader studies of the political discourse regarding the value-based development ending up in those secular-individualistic ideals where present-day Sweden stands out as internationally peculiar. This lack of studies applies both when it comes to individual and collective actors, such as the content of party programmes. The same goes for comparisons between the leading parties and their developing positions on values relating to autonomy and its antipoles. Here is why this study sets out to give an input to current scholarship and the understanding of the historical processes that contributed in shaping the world's possibly most secular-individualistic nation.

3.2 Source problems

A general challenge when analysing sources is how to interpret texts written in different contexts and formulated for different audiences. Maria Sjöberg provides three central criteria when analysing historical texts of diverse genres, namely *intertextuality*, *context* and *representativity*. Intertextuality means how texts from different times and genres relate to the web of relations with other texts; context means how the text in question connects to the historical reality addressed; while representativity means how the text mirrors the period in

question.⁶⁷ To meet these three criteria, it is vital to select sources which reflect a general pattern.

In this study, these criteria are handled in several ways. The demarcation of sources is shaped by the *Libris* database, which means that the literature collected there will necessarily consist of different genres. This width of sources and genres does, however, shed light on the context by connecting to the historical reality in which the text originated. For political texts, such connections typically relate to societal and cultural movements already taking place, as well as to the political visions of the individual or collective actors behind the texts. Thus, texts of different genres provide a wide view of how the actors relate to reality and vision, both when developing party strategies and connecting to different public audiences, as well as in the process of legislation.

In order to secure a valid representativity, i.e. how the messages in the texts actually portray the values present in each context and from each actor, all sources from different genres are analysed according to the same methodology, centred around grounded theory. In practice, this means disregarding passages which do not connect to the values and spheres in focus in this study, and focusing where these appear, not always in explicit words, but as concepts. The wide range of sources from different actors and historical periods also contributes to the intertextuality, displaying how the different texts and values relate to other previous, contemporary or later sources, hereby filling a gap in previous research on the process of secularization and autonomy in Sweden during the 20th century.

This study focuses on *public* texts, which means that messages would typically be adjusted to audience, general culture or other context. In cases where such deliberations appear to result in deviations from the actors' general positions, these are discussed. Here, the choice to include some internal material provides a more complete insight into which values and deliberations were considered in these processes, even when these were not yet spoken publicly.

This study includes a multitude of sources from different genres and authors. When material is limited, there is a risk of misinterpreting the ideological reasoning. In this study, however, the large amount of texts becomes a safeguard, securing that the general line of reasoning from individual actors, parties and governments is correctly understood. Selection bias is a

⁶⁷ Maria Sjöberg "Textanalys" in *Metod: Guide för historiska studier* Martin Gustavsson and Yvonne Svanström (eds) (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2018), 73-77.

general risk when selecting texts from a larger volume of source material.⁶⁸ E.g., studying the party programmes from only one non-socialist party might give a skewed picture of the values among the political opposition during the Social Democratic hegemony; picking just a few government reports within the three spheres might give a non-representative view of the political discourse; selecting only parts of the published literature from the individual actors creates a similar risk of a biased selection.

My strategy to handle such source problems is to select a very large scope of texts – namely all opposition parties in parliament, all literature in the national database and all government reports which touch upon the three spheres and values in question involved in this study. This large bulk of source texts hereby becomes a safeguard for a good research validity, and, taken together, they provide a coherent picture of which values that appear as most central in the political discourse during the research period.

The demarcation to use all literature in the *Libris* database means that different types of texts will dominate for different actors. For some studies, this could imply a challenge. In this case, however, the wide range of text genres studied according to the same methodology rather increases the validity of the empirical analysis. I.e., if similar values for or against autonomy or its threefold antithesis are expressed in texts of different genres, this underlines the centrality of these values. If, on the contrary, different values are expressed in texts for different audiences or contexts, this may lead into a deepened understanding of which values are expressed under which circumstances.

Here is how the specific challenges regarding individual actors are handled: One source problem particularly related to the material from the Prime Ministers is the risk of speech writers and editors influencing the content. When relevant, this matter is discussed in applicable passages. Per Albin Hansson is described as having written most of his speeches himself.⁶⁹ Erlander was assisted by others, primarily Olof Palme, but Erlander is still described as having had a large personal participation in his speech writing.⁷⁰ Even if Palme had a larger staff, he tended to have a very personal tone in his speeches. He also habitually handwrote his speeches, which suggests that the content really reflected his own thoughts.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Halperin and Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 174-176.

⁶⁹ Anna Lisa Berkling, ed., *Från Fram till folkhemmet: Per Albin Hansson som tidningsman och talare* (Metodica Press, 1982), 39.

⁷⁰ Dick Harrison, *Jag har ingen vilja till makt: Biografi över Tage Erlander* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2017), 416-419, 657f.

⁷¹ Handwritten speeches from Palme are found in the SLMA.

As a general principle, though, each Prime Minister must be argued to represent his own words, regardless of speech writer influence.

A similar problem applies for speech collections, where selection and occasional editing may reflect the editor's view, not only the speaker's. Especially concerning Palme, this problem is resolved by the vast amount of collected and published speeches, which provides a large body of speech material, not limited to a single editor. Also, texts in anthologies may not always be perfectly representative of the authors. However, the vast amount of material, also from books untouched by editors, gives a satisfactorily and also homogenous deep insight into the actors' ideological positions, arguments and possible changes of positions over time.

All literature by the selected actors listed in Sweden's national library database *Libris* has been analysed in this dissertation. Still, it cannot be entirely guaranteed that every co-written book is registered under the name of each author. Necessary considerations have, however, been taken in order not to let relevant literature fall through the filter.

One particular source problem relating to Alva Myrdal is that some of her books are co-written with her husband Gunnar Myrdal. Alva was, however, the most active public debater of the two, regarding autonomy-related matters. She was also the one involved in all the processes covered in this study, while Gunnar dedicated a lot of his time and work to strictly financial matters. Alva also published several books without Gunnar in most of the topics covered in this dissertation. She can thus be argued to represent all material relevant to this study also in their co-written books.

For Engberg, his posthumous three-volume collection *Tal och skrifter* (Speeches and Writings) is his most extensive source material printed in book format. However, this collection – published just a year after his sudden death – suffers from the problem of an editor-biased selection. This can be seen for instance by the omission of all texts and speeches proposing race eugenics, euthanasia and direct antisemitism – the latter highlighted in Håkan Blomqvist's study about the antisemitism of the younger Engberg.⁷² This lack of controversial texts also means that some of the most frequently quoted anti-clerical attacks from Engberg are excluded in these anthologies. However, Nils & Lars Beltzén's *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker* provides a broad overview of Engberg's career, and relevant source material referred to by the Beltzéns is therefore used, along with Engberg's own written production,

⁷² Håkan Blomqvist, *Socialdemokrat och antisemit? Den dolda historien om Arthur Engberg* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2001).

including the texts in *Tal och skrifter*. This largely resolves the problem of editor-biased selection and provides a satisfactory overview of Engberg's views.

The least productive public writer of those studied is also the longest-serving of the Prime Ministers: Tage Erlander. This makes his ideological positions most difficult to follow in depth, but the material at hand still gives enough to make a sound judgment. This lack of material also indicates that Erlander did not have the same interest in pronouncing sharp ideological positions as the other actors. The short books he penned deal largely with arguments against political opponents and presentations of what the party had achieved while in government. These books still provide material on how Erlander positions himself on the autonomy-community scale.

One source problem relating to all Prime Ministers, not least Erlander, is the difficulty of distinguishing which words come from the writer's own heart. Especially after 1953, when Olof Palme began working as Erlander's assistant, it is reasonable to assume that Palme exerted influence in the Erlander's writings. Some expressions appear in both men's writings, and it is sometimes challenging to distinguish whose voice is speaking. At the very least, Erlander's books should be viewed as central messages from the ruling party, and can be treated as such.

Regarding policy-influencing texts relating to the three spheres of church, education and family policy, one may fall into the trap of cherry-picking sources. This risk is reduced by keeping to official documents like government reports, and material from parliament and government, plus public reports from the Social Democratic party organization. Here, there is a risk that some important sources may have been omitted. However, the wide range of material provides a picture valid enough when it comes to the positions and arguments from government and central actors. Regarding family policy, the small number of accessible sources for *Grupp 222* makes the positions and influence of this group and its participants hard to establish with certainty. However, double-checks have been performed to ensure all accessible source material from the group has been included.⁷³

By this selection of sources and the chosen methodology, resting on grounded theory, the validity and reliability of the research is well secured. This study does, however, rest on a

⁷³ E-mail conversations with the SLMA, 8 and 12 November 2019.

theoretical base, revolving around the concept of autonomy. To this theoretical base we now turn.

4. Autonomy and secularization – a theoretical overview

The fourth research question in this dissertation deals with how my empirical findings relate to theories on autonomy and secularization. This chapter provides an initial overview on current scholarly theories.

The study deals with autonomy as a narrower expression of the individualistic and to some extent also the secular ideals reflected in the Inglehart/Welzel chart. In the literature, a general individualism is regularly described as a central partner to secularization. Still, individualism *per se* does not necessarily seem to lead to secularization. Rather, the development appears to rest on what kind of individualism is most active in a culture.

4.1 Individualism: the larger value surrounding autonomy

To repeat, I understand the wider concept of individualism as “a belief in the primacy, or supreme importance, of the individual over any social group or collective body.” This definition is wide enough to allow for different types of individualism, a larger umbrella under which the narrower concept of autonomy can fit in.

Sociologist of religion Grace Davie describes how individualism can function as a guiding light for nations with very different kinds of religious influence, but they appear to have different outcomes in different places, not necessarily linked with each other.⁷⁴ Robert Bellah et al have conducted a large interview study of the individualism that appeared in late 20th century, published in *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American life*. This book analyses four different forms of individualism in the particular context of America. The authors distinguish between the two historical roots to individualism, one Biblical and one republican version, contrasted with a modern individualism, separated in one utilitarian and one expressive version.⁷⁵

Some particularly Swedish features of individualism are pointed out in the literature. In their book *Är svensken människa: Gemenskap och oberoende i det moderna Sverige* (Is the Swede Human? Community and Independence in Modern Sweden), historians Henrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh discuss aspects of individualism in different cultures, and provide three models regarding how the individual relates to family and state. They describe the “rugged

⁷⁴ Grace Davie, “Europe – The Exception that Proves the Rule?,” in *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and Politics* ed. Peter Berger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 75.

⁷⁵ Bellah et al. *Habits of the Heart*, 27-51.

individualism” that they see in America as different from the one in Sweden, as the American version does not primarily deal with independence from other people, but rather from the federal government. They also note that American individualism connects people to family, religious denominations and charitable institutions, rather than – as in Sweden – to trade unions and sports clubs.⁷⁶ As a model for a third meaning, Germany is used as an example of a system where individuals are seen as parts of already existing units: family, church, et cetera. The welfare system is generally run by the institutions of civil society, and the state is only called upon when all else fails.⁷⁷

This discussion is mirrored by sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen, who makes a similar comparison between systems of welfare state, where Germany represents the conservative, United States the liberal and Sweden the socialist regime-type.⁷⁸

In all these three societies, two agents seem to join forces against the third. In schematic view, the pattern could be described as follows: in America, the family and individual take a stand against the state; in Germany, the family and the state unite and the individual consequently falls into the background; whereas in Sweden the individual and the state join forces against the family. Berggren and Trägårdh state that both the USA and Sweden have an individualistic ethos, which emphasizes self-expression in life and work. The difference is that in Sweden, the state is expected not only to facilitate this pursuit of independence through a public safety-net, but also to provide resources “in a way that makes the individual independent from family, neighbourhood, employers and other collective networks.”⁷⁹ The authors illustrate their international comparison in the diagram below.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 49.

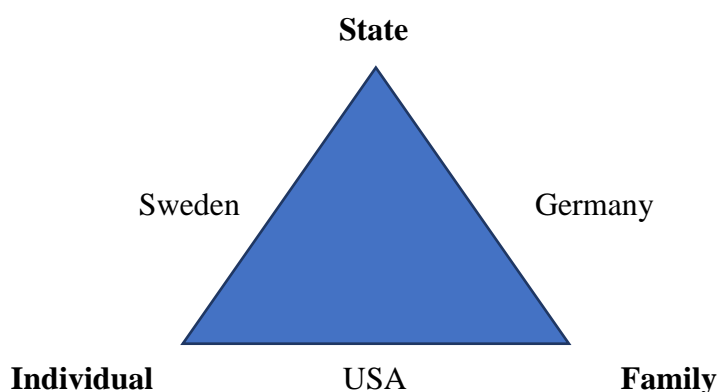
⁷⁷ Ibid. 50f.

⁷⁸ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 222-226.

⁷⁹ “...på ett sätt som gör individen oberoende av familj, grannskap, arbetsgivare och andra kollektiva nätverk.” Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 83.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 80.

Diagram 4: The positioning of societal actors in different cultures



This diagram leads on to a concept that is fundamental for Berggren and Trägårdh, namely *the Swedish state individualism*. They describe this concept as follows:

[T]he Swedish welfare state is based on an agreement between state and the individual that has radically liberated individuals from a mutual, interpersonal dependence (...) We call this alliance between state and the individual citizen *the Swedish state individualism*.⁸¹

This particular construction of words does not appear in the primary sources, but the ideological content captured in this term still appears in several ways. This study will therefore analyse whether such a connection between state and individual is argued in the source material.⁸²

A general individualism does not appear only in a positive sense, highlighting the importance of the individual. In the sources, it also often appears in the form of opposition towards antithetical values, e.g. as stated by political scientist Henrik Oscarsson on the concept *individualization*. He quotes fellow social scientist Adrienne Sörbom, who describes this as “a larger independence for the individuals vis-à-vis social ties and traditions” with the individual

⁸¹ “...den svenska välfärdsstaten är baserad på en överenskommelse mellan stat och individ som på ett radikalt sätt frigjort individen från ömsesidigt, mellanmänniskt beroende. (...) Denna allians mellan stat och enskild medborgare kallar vi *den svenska statsindividualismen*.” Ibid. 22. It is worth noting that Berggren and Trägårdh do not describe this social contract mainly as the result of the supply side of the market model, but rather as the result of public demand. According to them, the Swedish social contract largely rests on “a Swedish theory of love”, where love is not built on mutual dependence, but on a spontaneous relation between two autonomous persons – a pattern with its roots dating back to the 19th century. However, these demand-oriented hypotheses fall outside the scope of this study.

⁸² The insight that different versions of individualism appear in different contexts/countries may serve as a reminder when studying the Inglehart/Welzel chart. Instead of using the broader term individualism, a more interesting question is rather what *kind* of individualism that dominates in the different contexts/countries. As presented, the focus in this study is on what kind of individualistic values that appear in the examined texts and what role autonomy plays.

becoming more important than collective actors such as church, state and political parties.⁸³ Oscarsson himself describes a similar redistribution of power, with natural consequences, namely, “secularization, weakened group identities, reduced faith in authority, the weakened position of the nuclear family”.⁸⁴ These descriptions lie close to the perspective in this project. Therefore, we now move inwards in the individualistic circle, to a value at the core of individualistic thought, namely autonomy.

4.2 Autonomy: theoretical perspectives

In practice, individualism seldom seems to function just as a belief in the importance of the individual. Rather, it tends to connect the individual to certain other values or actors, while raising opposition to others. To repeat, my definition of autonomy in this dissertation is “the intention to increase the independence of the individual” – a value that may appear both as an active striving for autonomous values, and as opposition to antithetical values. The former of these I call an *affirming autonomy*, and the latter a *confronting autonomy*. Such a dual understanding of a concept parallels a similar use of other concepts, where one aspect propagates a particular value, while the other proposes an absence of factors that oppose this value, e.g. Isaiah Berlin’s use of positive and negative liberty.⁸⁵

Charles Taylor uses a similar idea in his book *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Here, he describes a new form of individualism, labelled “the individualism of self-fulfilment”, which has grown in later centuries, mainly in Europe, eventually coming to be regarded as the only conceivable outlook, pushing society and people towards a social atomism. This atomism tends to neglect or delegitimize all demands from beyond our own desires or aspirations, “be they from history, tradition, society, nature, or God.”⁸⁶ In *A Secular Age*, Taylor describes a long-time development of the autonomous project. Although giving the greatest emphasis on Enlightenment and Romanticism, he also describes how late-medieval Renaissance and Reformation played a role in creating an individual-focused culture which later utterly

⁸³ “ett större oberoende för individerna gentemot sociala bindningar och traditioner” Henrik Oscarsson, “Om individualisering,” in *Det hyperindividualiserade samhället?*, ed. Ulf Bjereld et al. (Umeå: Boréa, 2005), 61.

⁸⁴ “sekularisering, försvagade gruppidentiteter, minskande auktoritetstro, kärnfamiljens försvagade inställning.” Ibid.

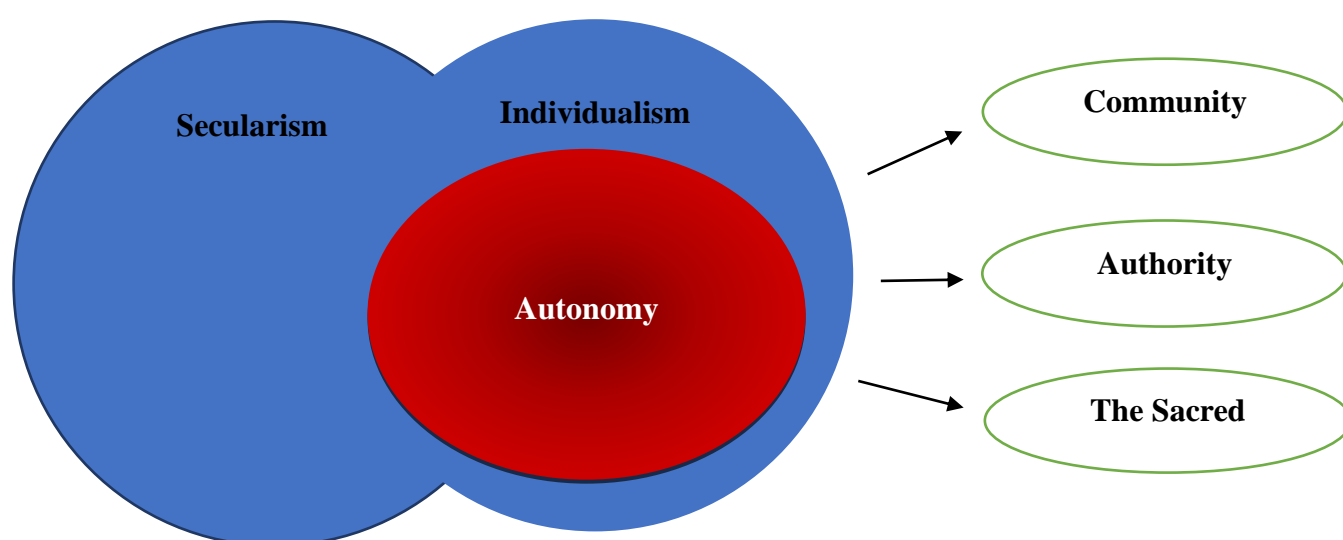
⁸⁵ Carter, Ian, “Positive and Negative Liberty”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), accessed 14 November, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/liberty-positive-negative/>.

⁸⁶ Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 14, 58.

permeated Western culture in our time, ending up in what Taylor calls an “expressive individualism”, resembling what in this project is meant by autonomy.⁸⁷

When viewing autonomy this way, it appears to serve as a factor in the middle, connecting the threefold antithesis of community, authority and the Sacred, while also forming a bridge over to larger societal processes of individualism and secularism, as shown in the following diagram.

Diagram 5: The Expanded Autonomy Model. The relationship between all six central values in an autonomy-centred culture.



This diagram functions as a basic model for how these six central factors in an autonomy-centred culture are expressed in a particular discourse. If an analysis of a particular discourse shows that autonomous values are not defended, or that no opposition is expressed against community, autonomy and the Sacred, this cannot be described as a fully autonomy-centred value culture.

In this study, I analyse which values the top political leadership proposed or opposed during the research period. The final analysis will return to this diagram to illustrate how these values appear in the source material, and what values were given more or less emphasis in the political discourse, hereby providing a visual illustration of the central values communicated during different periods of Social Democratic hegemony in 20th century Sweden.

⁸⁷ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 85-87, 143-145, 299.

4.3 Autonomy and its antipoles

Adam Seligman is not alone in trying to describe an antipole to autonomy. Shalom H. Schwartz suggests, based on his own empirical surveys, that the battle stands between autonomy and what he calls *embeddedness*. He argues that in *autonomy cultures*, people are viewed as autonomous entities who are encouraged to independently pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions. As an opposite he describes *embeddedness cultures*, where meaning in life comes largely through social relationships and identifying with the group.⁸⁸ This expression is, however, too indistinct for this project.

Danish psychologist Lene Arnett Jensen gives a more elaborate description. She separates between three different ethics, with different moral reasons and values, as well as understanding of the human person: the ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity.⁸⁹ The first one focuses on the needs and desires of the individual, with the moral goal “to recognize the right to the fulfilment of these needs and desires and to strive to make available the means to satisfy them.” This ethic has autonomy-oriented virtues, such as self-esteem, self-expression, and independence.

In opposition to this dominating ethic, Arnett Jensen proposes two alternatives. The ethic of Community centres on people as members of social groups, such as family, school and nation, and how people occupy various roles and positions within these groups, with the moral goal of fulfilling duties towards others. The virtues in this ethic are community-oriented, e.g. “self-moderation and loyalty toward social groups and their members”.

The ethic of Divinity, finally, states that people are also conceptualized in spiritual or religious ways. Here, the moral goal is to become increasingly connected to that which is pure or divine. The central moral conceptions in this ethic are to pertain to divine and natural law, as well as sacred texts. Here, the virtues are divinity-oriented, “such as awe, faithfulness, and humility”.

Arnett Jensen’s approach connects well to this project. Still, her model of three parallel ethics does not meet the antithetical perspective so common in the source material. Here, Seligman’s

⁸⁸ Shalom H. Schwartz, "Mapping and interpreting cultural differences around the world," in *Comparing Cultures: Dimensions of Culture in a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Henk Vinken, Joseph Soeters, and Peter Ester (Brill, 2004).

⁸⁹ The following from Lene Arnett Jensen, "The Cultural Development of Three Fundamental Moral Ethics: Autonomy, Community, and Divinity," *Zygon* 46, no. 1 (March 2011), 153f.

description fits better with my theoretical and methodological purposes. Seligman summarizes the modern idea of the self as “an autonomous, atomistic and self-regulating moral agent endowed with rights”.⁹⁰ He concludes that such a society only has one basic virtue: individual autonomy. From this, he describes personal autonomy as countered by a threefold antipole of *community*, *authority* and *the Sacred*.⁹¹

At the same time, Seligman describes the basic philosophy of the late-modern West as “a vision of radical autonomy that would seem to divorce the self from all communal referents, from all claims to moral authority”⁹² When establishing the opposing factors, he notes that *community* is usually understood as a factor that people typically view as positive, while *authority* has more negative connotations with power that may be abused. He argues, though, that authority without a communal referent may collapse into coercion. Therefore, and due to historical connections, community and authority are “two sides of the same coin, two aspects of the same phenomenon”, and therefore typically find themselves as joint antitheses to autonomy.⁹³

The Sacred, in its turn, stands in opposition to autonomous values because the Sacred contradicts the autonomous idea that nothing meaningful can be found outside the human negotiation and struggle: “Like authority (but unlike power), the sacred is a realm defined by what cannot be bartered or bargained” – especially “when posited in transcendent and absolute terms.”⁹⁴ To this, Seligman adds that just as neither community or authority can be thought without the other, “both are inherent in any idea of sacrality”, where the modern value of individual autonomy challenges and denies “the bonds of community (...) the principled existence of authority (...) the call of the sacred.”⁹⁵

In Seligman’s terms, authority is not restricted just to people or political systems that may exercise power over the individual. It also has a more abstract meaning, ranging across the field, from simple norms and traditions all the way up to an almighty God.

Seligman’s description of autonomy and its opposites is, however, not developed into a complete model. Rather, it is a part of his larger reasoning about authority, self and

⁹⁰ Seligman, *Modernity's Wager*, 6.

⁹¹ Ibid. 135.

⁹² Ibid. 37.

⁹³ Ibid. 37, 40.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 39.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 40f.

transcendence. Other theoretical literature, along with the value content in the Swedish political discourse has, however, illustrated the need to develop Seligman's ideas into a larger theoretical and methodological model to illustrate the antithetical pattern of values in previous scholarship and in the source texts themselves.

In this model, authority is put at the centre of this threefold antithesis towards autonomy, connecting a general and possibly negotiable community on one hand and a non-negotiable divine power on the other. Authority appears as a central value also to other scholars. Max Weber distinguishes between three different forms: *traditional authority*, rooted in history and tradition; *charismatic authority*, stemming from the power of personality, and *legal-rational authority*, grounded in a set of impersonal rules connected to a certain office.⁹⁶ To this, Heywood adds a fourth form called *expert authority*, resting on a person's virtue or specialist skills of knowledge.⁹⁷ He also adds that authority "establishes common norms and values that bind society together" and argues that those who primarily oppose authority are libertarians and anarchists, groups where the quest for autonomy is particularly strong, while socialists and liberals tend to accept authority if it can be understood as purely instrumental and arising from below, not from above.⁹⁸

Alasdair McIntyre discusses in his major work *After Virtue* the modern individualistic project and its ability to create new authorities. He states that the Enlightenment project is responsible for some of the largest problems in modern moral theory, by narrowing down the centre to the individual, freed from both hierarchy and teleology, finally ending up in an autonomous situation where each individual is made sovereign in his or her moral authority.⁹⁹

Inglehart and Welzel portray this late-modern focus on the individual as one of the most important expressions of modernity, where the rejection of a transcendent authority has given way to a new autonomous ideal. They argue that this rejection of authority comes in two steps: first in the industrial era by shifting authority from the religious to the secular realm, and then in the post-industrial era by reacting against authority *per se*. They argue that the early rise of secular-rational values brought "a secularization of authority", while the later rise of self-expression values brings "an emancipation from authority."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Referred to in Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics*, 15.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 16.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd edition ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 75.

¹⁰⁰ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*, 25f.

Philosopher Bernard Berofsky constructs his theory of autonomy as a way of liberation, a word with obvious positive connotations. He describes the opposing force as “essentially a reversion to dependence – the very antithesis of autonomy”.¹⁰¹ Here, an affirming autonomy typically corresponds to a negative portrayal of authority. This view also connects to what Seligman suggests when describing authority and autonomy as opposite powers. It also casts light on apparent paradoxes, e.g. actors from a liberal-autonomous discourse arguing against the independent choice of families, because of a wish to foster the children in a public system where individualism is promoted, rather than one more focused on community and authority.

It is thus suggested that an autonomous perspective may still open up for certain types of authority, albeit very specific ones. With empirical backing in the WVS, Inglehart and Welzel state that secular values “are perfectly compatible with nondemocratic systems”, continuing that secular-rational values do not question authority as such; “they simply shift its basis from religion to science and from religious authority to the bureaucratic state.”¹⁰² This indicates that a secular-individualistic mindset must not automatically oppose all authorities. They may actually endorse *some* authorities, but only those that endorse autonomous values. Here, a state-individualistic culture may build precisely such circumstances where a secular state could take over this role from a religious authority.

Seligman provides a deepened analysis of how authority has traditionally been expressed in Western culture. Here, authority is traditionally rooted in one or more of three sources: either in a transcendent monotheistic Creator God, in a tradition of republican virtue or in norms of kinship reciprocity.¹⁰³ However, he describes a paradox in the late-modern process: when individuals free themselves from earlier authorities, they will ultimately collapse into either totalitarian collectivism or individualistic liberalism, where Seligman finds both positions in the long run untenable.¹⁰⁴

In their book *I vattumannens tid* (In the Age of Aquarius), Swedish political scientists Ulf Bjereld and Marie Demker discuss the causes and consequences surrounding the dramatic changes around 1968. They state, inspired by Inglehart, that 1968 meant “a complete victory

¹⁰¹ Bernard Berofsky, *Liberation from Self: A Theory of Personal Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11-13.

¹⁰² Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*, 285f.

¹⁰³ Seligman, *Modernity's Wager*, 28.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 124.

for modernity, not least in the sense of a tearing down of authority”.¹⁰⁵ They suggest that this period tore down not only the remaining authorities from pre-modernity, such as church, family and sexual order but also the authorities of the new industrial era, exemplified by the political system and parties, employers, unions and teachers. This way of questioning all authorities of modern society meant, according to Bjereld and Demker, modernity’s revolt against itself.¹⁰⁶

With examples of how authority was torn down in all societal areas: politics, labour market, culture, sexuality, family, school, sports and religion, the authors describe a new kind of protest, different from modernity’s struggle for a liberation aiming at progress. Instead, this new movement struggled for liberation also from the lessons learnt by history and tradition. Bjereld and Demker name this new vision *ultra-modernity* (ultramodernitet), characterized by “a complete liberation from the past in the form of authorities, norms and traditions, and a challenge of the given, not because it prevents progress but precisely because it is given.”¹⁰⁷

A concept closely related to Bjereld/Demker’s term ultra-modernity is the previously mentioned term *ultra-progressivism*. Hans Albin Larsson describes the dominating education view around 1960 as a more general progressivism, largely built on John Dewey’s pedagogy of democracy and individualism – an education with its main objective to reform society.¹⁰⁸ During the 1960s, an even stronger ideological push came under the Social Democratic dominance, which would largely be accepted also by the other parties. Larsson argues that an ultra-progressive perspective became very influential during the 1970s and 1980s among radical left-wing scholars, politicians and pedagogues. He also argues that this view was countered by a realism-based opposition from the teachers, but as this criticism was not taken up by the political opposition, the leading politicians were able to effectuate reforms in a progressive direction.¹⁰⁹

The term *ultra-progressivism*, understood as a striving for an autonomous liberation from all factors understood as reflecting some kind of authority, where this utopian striving trumps all

¹⁰⁵ “ett totalt genombrott för det moderna, inte minst i betydelsen auktoritetsnedrivande” Ulf Bjereld and Marie Demker, *I vattumannens tid? En bok om 1968 års uppror och dess betydelse idag* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2005), 19.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 20.

¹⁰⁷ “fullständig frigörelse från det förgångna i form av auktoriteter, normer och traditioner och ett ifrågasättande av det givna, inte för att det givna hindrar framsteg utan just därför att det är givet.” Ibid. 20f.

¹⁰⁸ Larsson, *Mot bättre vetande: En svensk skolhistoria*, 145.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 145f, 154f.

other values and practical challenges, reflects the source content in this project better than the term *ultra-modernity*, and is therefore chosen here as an alternative to Bjereld/Demker's term.

Regarding the relationship between autonomy and the Sacred, William H. Becker describes the concept of "self law" as being at the very heart of the modern secular spirit. Secular man is an autonomous man in that he sees his own personal values, his free choices, as the only proper source of law. He goes on to say that a secular culture is to be considered autonomous in that it "defines its own laws and values; not taking orders from any outside authority, be it pope or king or God."¹¹⁰

Swedish scholar of religion David Thurfjell describes the autonomous vision as a tension also against religious values, stating that many Swedish people have adopted a kind of Protestant humanism, a combination of "post-materialism, secular rationalism, relativism and, not least, individualism."¹¹¹ This individualistic ideology, in its autonomous version, came during the 1960s to include very different movements in society: sexual liberation, left-wing pathos, the struggle for women's rights, anti-fascism, et cetera, all included under the wider anti-authoritarian movement, while traditional Christianity was considered an obvious opponent of this position.¹¹²

Based on the above, autonomous values appear to relate to other values and reach across several spheres of society. Therefore, it is worthy of deeper scholarly analysis. Even though authority regularly appears in the literature as a central opposing value, autonomy also appears to be opposition towards both community and the Sacred. This leads on to the next phenomenon in connection to autonomy, namely secularization.

4.4 Secularization, a typical concomitant to autonomy

Basically, there are two dominating theoretical perspectives regarding secularization: either, it arises spontaneously as history and modernity develops, or it depends on certain circumstances.

¹¹⁰ William H Becker, "Autonomy vs. Authority?," *The Christian Century* 39, no. Sept 30 1970 (1970), 1149.

¹¹¹ David Thurfjell, *Det gudlösa folket. De postkristna svenskarna och religionen* (Farsta: Molin & Sorgenfrei, 2015), 26.

¹¹² Ibid. 107.

Leading sociologist Steve Bruce states that modernization itself creates such great problems for religion that it necessarily leads to secularization.¹¹³ This view, commonly labelled the *secularization paradigm*, has during the last decades come under serious criticism, even from those who agree with its basic proposition that modernization and secularization are intimately connected. Rather, the majority of theorists hold that secularization does not arise spontaneously but as the result of certain factors. If this is the case, it becomes increasingly interesting to study changes in conditions of belief, as analysed in this project.

Charles Taylor does not disagree with all aspects of the secularization paradigm, but he rejects Bruce's causal description of modernity automatically leading to secularization as "woefully inadequate".¹¹⁴ According to Taylor, the shift from a strongly Christian culture, through an non-exclusive humanism to the present exclusive humanism, was not the result of our culture suddenly leaping over to full-scale atheism; it was only possible through small steps where the responsibility of creating the good world was gradually conferred to the human, without Divine intervention.¹¹⁵ Taylor also argues that the reason public debate gives the impression that religion necessarily has to retreat in a modern world is not that this viewpoint is shared by the general population, but because it is prevalent among intellectuals and academics.¹¹⁶ According to this view, secularization is not only, or even primarily, driven by popular demand, but rather by the ideological supply provided in society, particularly its educational policy.

These changes in conditions involve long-time structural processes; here Taylor specifically mentions a culture of "expressive individualism" and the "arising of a humanist alternative".¹¹⁷ According to the aim and research questions presented above, this project will not focus on how much religion has retreated in society and among individuals. Rather, the empirical analysis lies closer to Taylor's third dimension, investigating whether the source material expresses an ideological striving that could change the conditions of belief.

Berggren and Trägårdh point out that Swedish self-image is not arbitrary, but would be "impossible without a line of very empirical, historical and social conditions".¹¹⁸ The view

¹¹³ Steve Bruce, *God is Dead. Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 2, 240f.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 267.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 247f.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 429.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 299, 423.

¹¹⁸ "omöjlig utan en rad högst empiriska historiska och sociala förutsättningar." Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 24.

that secularization does not arise spontaneously but as a result of particular circumstances, is commonly labelled the *market model*. Norris and Inglehart present a useful definition:

The religious market model disregards the public's "demand" for religion, which is assumed to be constant, but focuses instead on how conditions of religious freedom, and the work of competing religious institutions, actively generate its "supply".¹¹⁹

In connection to this idea, this dissertation intends to analyse the ideological "supply" provided through the political discourse in 20th century Sweden.

4.5 The relationship between autonomy and secularization

Connecting to several values studied in this project, Church historian Hugh McLeod argues that the secularization during the 1960s was made possible when ideas, originally limited to avant-garde or marginal groups, received wider influence due to the post-war social change, a decline of collective identities and "the increasing emphasis on individual freedom (...) when nothing was any longer sacred, and taboos existed only to be broken."¹²⁰

A suitable scholar to introduce the relationship between autonomous and secular ideals is Ronald Inglehart. His career began in 1977 with his book *The Silent Revolution*, whose data showed a large shift of values in advanced Western industrialized societies. Here, Inglehart pictures two value-changes: "a decline in the legitimacy of hierarchical authority, patriotism, religion, and so on", plus a declining confidence in institutions.¹²¹ His point is that values do not change as a result of people changing their mindset over the course of life, but rather as the result of new generations adopting new values, which they then keep during life.¹²² This view indicates that neither individualism nor secularization happen automatically, but are the result of active decisions and strivings, where the school system may be considered central in forming a new generation and its values.

Building on Inglehart's findings, Swedish sociologist of religion Thorleif Pettersson published a report from the Swedish Institute for Futures Studies in 1988. Here, he describes the value-based antitheses being *materialistic* and *post-materialistic* values, where the latter

¹¹⁹ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011), 11pp.

¹²⁰ Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 257f.

¹²¹ Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 4.

¹²² Ibid. 23.

have increased since the Second World War.¹²³ Pettersson agrees with Inglehart that people's values are adopted during their formative years and then kept during the rest of his or her life. Thus, societal changes occur when older generations with their set of values are replaced by younger generations with other values.¹²⁴

Limited as Pettersson's theoretical perspective may have been, he did make the prediction in 1988 that the future would probably see an even stronger secularization, especially in the terms of the privatization of faith. He also viewed a future with more permissive moral values and a lessened role of authorities.¹²⁵ These factors can be argued to correlate well with what in the WVS chart would be described as secular-rational values and self-expression values, or, as Inglehart himself describes them in shorter terms: secular and individualistic values.

Arguably, it is often difficult to establish direct causal relationships between values, but it can still be noted that both Inglehart and other scholars describe an interchange between the three concepts of secularization, individualism and autonomy. Autonomy and secularization are repeatedly mentioned together in the literature, although rarely in terms of friendship. On the contrary, wherever personal autonomy is proposed, religion regularly appears as a more or less ubiquitous adversary, as an ultimate source of authority that may threaten the independence so central in the autonomous discourse. Social ethicists Brad Stetson and Joseph G. Conti confirm the opposing forces in that autonomy is "to be unhindered by tradition or custom, especially religious in character, and to be free to strike out into the world unburdened by a person's familial, cultural or religious past."¹²⁶

According to Steve Bruce, the most important secularizing factor is individualism and the broken bonds to a common culture, where religion has been one of the strongest connecting factors. His position is that individualism has threatened the communal basis of religious belief and behaviour.¹²⁷ When religious affiliation became a matter of personal preference, the

¹²³ Thorleif Pettersson, *Bakom dubbla lås: En studie av små och långsamma värderingsförändringar*, Institutet för framtidsstudier (Stockholm, 1988), 22.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 43f, 51f.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 169f.

¹²⁶ Brad Stetson and Joseph G. Conti, *The Truth about Tolerance: Pluralism, Diversity and the Culture Wars* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 95f.

¹²⁷ Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World. From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 230.

rise of the voluntary association model undermined the taken-for-grantedness of religion, resulting in the very secular society of today.¹²⁸

Even if Bruce repeatedly uses the term individualism, the narrower concept of autonomy stands out as very central in his theoretical framework. In fact, he suggests that when certain forces work together, they may end up in both individualism and secularization, drawing the connection as far as stating that “unless we can imagine a reversal of the increasing cultural autonomy of the individual, secularization must be seen as irreversible.”¹²⁹

When discussing the long-term roots to this connection, the Reformation is mentioned in the literature, as well as Pietism’s increasing focus on the individual’s relationship with God as initial forces that, in the long run, might end up in a secularizing direction.¹³⁰ Seligman argues that the creation of Protestant churches rests on the idea of the autonomous self – a view which has also shaped the modern secular idea of the self. However, this loss of an external authority “underpins the process of secularization through which heteronomous authority is ultimately lost”¹³¹ In Seligman’s view, this also makes secularization the “unintended, unplanned, and somewhat ironic consequence of Reformed religiosity”.¹³² Francis Sejersted touches briefly upon the same subject, writing that because the Reformation made religion a private, personal matter, this individualization of faith remained a “constituent feature while society gradually became secularized”.¹³³ David Martin agrees, arguing that Protestantism connects to subjectivity, in opposition to obedience, and that this ends up in “rejecting authority, in particular patriarchy, religious or otherwise.”¹³⁴ Martin also paints what he views as negative consequences of an individualistic and atomistic religiosity, where the religious aspects of community is reduced, and where neighbourliness and solidarity is downgraded at the local level, making the world “as incoherent as it is depersonalized”.¹³⁵

A sphere affected by the level of secular and autonomous values is the family, where scholars state that the nature of family ties in a culture is relevant to the role of religion – a relationship

¹²⁸ Steve Bruce, *Secularization. In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), 76f.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 56.

¹³⁰ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 488, Casanova, José, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1994) 13-39.

¹³¹ Seligman *Modernity’s Wager*, 37, 126.

¹³² Ibid. 12.

¹³³ Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press 2011), 7.

¹³⁴ David Martin, *On Secularization. Towards a Revised General Theory* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005), 84.

¹³⁵ David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 87f.

that might work both ways. Hugh McLeod argues that the sexual revolution during the 1960s placed “attachments to religion or the churches under severe strain.”¹³⁶ Sociologist David Popenoe claims that stronger religiosity also builds stronger relations, especially in the family. As example he mentions Sweden, a nation that he describes as “probably the world’s most secular country”, suggesting the lessening of religious belief as one important factor leading to family decline.¹³⁷ His point is that in other nations, religiously inclined people tend to have stronger marriages, and one reason why the marriage rate dropped so fast in late-20th century Sweden may be the rapid secularization of Swedish society.¹³⁸

Swedish secularization scholar Magnus Hagevi argues likewise, showing how nonperformance of religious rites, civil marriages and children born outside marriage all saw a dramatic increase in Sweden around 1970. He suggests that this reduced demand for both religion and family traditions illustrates the consequences of a long-term change in religious supply. Hagevi argues that in “extremely secular societies such as Sweden”, the important value formation at a young age tends after a generational time lag to end up in a changed demand of religion and family relations.¹³⁹

Mary Eberstadt is very clear in her argument about a slightly different causal relationship in her book *How the West Really Lost God*, arguing the Western record suggesting that “family decline is not merely a *consequence* of religious decline [but] ... that *family decline in turn helps to power religious decline*”.¹⁴⁰ She argues that the example of Scandinavia and especially Sweden confirms the proposition that the “collapse of the natural family and collapse of Christianity are obviously closely tied”. She gives several examples of the former, such as Sweden’s high rates of divorce, births out of wedlock and high ages at first marriage, and writes that Sweden is “at the cutting edge of family trends”, making families and people ever more atomized.¹⁴¹

Consequently, there seems to be a scholarly consensus that autonomy and secularization are closely related, not least in Protestant cultures. In sum, several scholars have discussed both

¹³⁶ McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, 187.

¹³⁷ David Popenoe, “Family decline in the Swedish welfare state,” *The Public Interest*, no. Winter 1991 (1991), 73.

¹³⁸ David Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1988), 226f.

¹³⁹ Magnus Hagevi, “Religious Change over the Generations in an Extremely Secular Society: The Case of Sweden,” *Review of Religious Research* 59 (2017), 509, 515.

¹⁴⁰ Mary Eberstadt, *How the West Really Lost God* (West Conshohocken: Templeton Press, 2013), 5f.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 119, 175.

these features, but in light of the Swedish context. From an international perspective, the views from Seligman and Taylor emerge as particularly relevant for this study, due to Seligman's description of the antipoles to autonomy, and Taylor's description of societal value changes through a gradual transfer of authority from external sources to the individual. It is, however, also relevant to compare with previous empirical research. This is where we now turn.

5.Previous research

To position this project in relation to previous scholarship, this chapter summarizes previous empirical research. The chapter begins with studies on the connection between autonomy and secularization, followed by research on the political discourse in Sweden, with particular focus on Social Democracy, concluding with studies on the individual actors and political processes within the three selected spheres during the research period.

5.1 Autonomy and religion

Sweden's individualistic focus is described as exceptional, in both the Inglehart/Welzel chart and other research. Sometimes, these values are directly described in their narrower, autonomous form, sometimes in more general individualistic terms, and repeatedly also in connection to religion.

David Thurfjell writes, drawing on Thorleif Pettersson, that the Swedish focus on the individual's right to shape his or her life has become so strong that it may rightly be described as a sacralisation of this feature. Swedish people may deny that there are absolute values and rules that one ought to adhere to, but, based on Thurfjell's interviews with typical Swedes, he argues that they still seem to believe in "one absolute and non-negotiable value (...) namely the one of the individual's right to define his or her own life."¹⁴²

Several scholars point out Sweden as a particular example of an extensive autonomy, on several levels. Historian of thought Peter Antman mentions how public welfare in Sweden and the struggle to reduce unemployment were both hung up on the same principle, that each person ought to have the power over his or her own life. Based on the situation in late 20th century Sweden, he goes as far as saying, "Few welfare states are... built around the idea of the autonomy of the individual as systematically as Sweden."¹⁴³

¹⁴² "ett absolut och icke ifrågasättbart värde (...) nämligen det om individens rätt att definiera sitt eget liv." Thurfjell, *Det gudlösa folket*, 27.

¹⁴³ "Få välfärdsstater är... lika konsekvent uppbyggda [kring] idén om individuell autonomi som Sverige." Peter Antman, "Inte utan jämlikhet," in *Hur förena jämlikhet med individens frihet?*, ed. Peter Antman and Karl-Petter Thorvaldsson (Stockholm: Utbildningsförlaget Brevskolan, 1994), 16.

The Swedish individual-oriented focus on family relations is also highlighted in international research about family and business, where Sweden in both areas reveals a very strong focus on individual autonomy, in combination with a large tax-financed welfare system.¹⁴⁴

Thorleif Pettersson goes one step further, describing the population of Sweden as having “*the most atypical and deviating value profile of all!*”¹⁴⁵ Historian Paolo Ronfani agrees with this description, arguing that even though Europe as a whole has moved away from hierarchic and authoritarian views on the family, such a change is much more manifest in the Scandinavian countries, and also comes much earlier. Ronfani explains that the family legislation reforms in the 1970s were more radical and consistent in Sweden, compared to partial reforms in most other nations.¹⁴⁶

When it comes to correlation and possible causation between autonomy and secularization, a large empirical study on the causal relationship comes from Phillip E Hammond. His study *Religion and Personal Autonomy* is a comparison from the late 1980s of people from different denominations in four quite different US states (Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio and California) and their values, religious belief and practice. Hammond’s empirical findings indicate strongly that it is the level of personal autonomy that drives the direction of religion, not the other way round. The author gives a clear answer to his own research question: “Does personal autonomy translate everywhere into lower parish involvement? The answer is yes”. He summarizes that wherever personal autonomy is low, parish involvement is high, and vice versa. This is the case for all denominations in every state.¹⁴⁷ Hammond separates people’s church involvement into two groups: to the *collective-expressive* group, the church has a primarily collective function, and to the *individual-expressive* group, the church becomes more of “an avenue to some privately chosen goal”.¹⁴⁸ He finds that increased autonomy not only lessens religious practice but also changes “the meaning of parish involvement from collective-expressive to individual-expressive”.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Family scholar Elizabeth Özdalga and economist Lennart Stridsberg, quoted in Berggren and Trägårdh *Är svensken människa?* 37, 39.

¹⁴⁵ “*den mest atypiska och avvikande värdeprofilen av alla!*” Thorleif Pettersson and Yilmaz Esmer, *Vilka är annorlunda? Om invandrares möte med svensk kultur*, Integrationsverket (Norrköping, 2005), 18.

¹⁴⁶ Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?* 77.

¹⁴⁷ Phillip E Hammond, *Religion and Personal Autonomy. The Third Disestablishment in America* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 154.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 157.

Hammond points out that there are notable cultural differences between the four regions, but this does not change his conclusion:

Irrespective of these differences, however, personal autonomy is everywhere corrosive of parish involvement and thus a force for further disestablishment, in part because it encourages a changing view of the church.¹⁵⁰

As historical background Hammond points out the social revolution of the 1960s and '70s, which he argues "speeded up this shift considerably – so much that it warrants the designation 'third disestablishment'".¹⁵¹ He states that this social revolution had a large impact not only on the youth of the time but on society as a whole.¹⁵² The novel turn in this last disestablishment was "not merely the weakening of traditional ties, but included as well the emergence of a competing legitimating rationale", namely a significant increase in personal autonomy.¹⁵³

Hammond explains this wave as another step towards secularization, and states that his findings assuredly reveal diminished ties to church community.¹⁵⁴ He suggests that the underlying force behind this is radical individualism, where the rejection of traditional codes in the family/sexual sphere corresponds to the shift in people's view of the church from collective-expressive to individual-expressive.¹⁵⁵

There are obvious differences between the American Protestant culture and the Lutheran state churches in Scandinavia. Still, Hammond describe patterns which could be cross-cultural, regarding the effects that a focus on personal autonomy may have on religion also in a state-church system.

5.2 Swedish secularization

Especially from the last couple of decades, there is a good amount of empirical data describing Swedish religiosity over time. The trend towards a decrease in personal piety, church attendance and participation in religious life rituals is described both by the WVS, the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 138.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 5.

¹⁵² Ibid. 76.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 7, 11, 63. Inglehart and Welzel make almost exactly the same analysis, that all of these changes "reflect growing emphasis on human autonomy". Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*, 3f.

¹⁵⁴ Hammond, *Religion and Personal Autonomy*, 175.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 13.

SOM Institute at Gothenburg University and also individual scholars.¹⁵⁶ One statistical example relating to this research period comes from sociologist of religion Berndt Gustafsson, who records a steep decline in Sunday service attendance in the Lutheran State Church, from 17% in year 1900, down to 2.1% in 1975.¹⁵⁷

At the turn of the millennium, the Church of Sweden was separated from the state. Still, a vast majority of Swedes remained members of the State Church. Grace Davie has named this particularly Scandinavian phenomenon *belonging without believing*, as opposed to for instance Britain, which is an example of the opposite.¹⁵⁸ In wider international comparison, Swedes at the end of the 20th century stood out as the lowest ranked among Western Europeans in terms of personal piety and belief in God.¹⁵⁹ Even when compared with the most unbelieving category of Americans – physical and biological scientists – the Swedish level of belief was well below those.¹⁶⁰

The Swedish position stands out even more when it comes to people's values regarding religion. The percentage of people in 21st century Sweden who think religion is mostly a negative force in society is 81% – remarkably higher than in other Western democracies.¹⁶¹ Eva Hamberg, Swedish secularization scholar, makes a comparison between Sweden, Norway and Italy on how important God is to believers. Her results indicate that God plays a larger role in people's lives in Norway, and especially in Italy.¹⁶² She concludes that for those in Sweden who believe in God, this belief is "more or less unimportant."¹⁶³ A comparison

¹⁵⁶ A more thorough summary of the empirical findings on Swedish secularization goes beyond the scope of this project; more facts found in Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide* 90pp, 258f; Thorleif Pettersson, *Det kyrkliga livets utveckling 1975-1986*, Religionssociologiska institutet (Stockholm, 1988); Curt Dahlgren, "Sverige," in *Religiös förändring i Norden 1930-1980*, ed. Göran Gustafsson (Malmö: Liber, 1985), 215-221; Hamberg Eva Hamberg, "Kristen På Mitt Eget Sätt," *Religion & Samhälle*, no. 10-11 (1989); Margareta Skog, ed., *Det religiösa Sverige – Gudstjänst- och andaktsliv under ett veckoslut kring millennieskiftet* (Örebro: Libris, 2001); Magnus Hagevi, "Efter sekulariseringen: förändrade religiösa värden mellan generationer," *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift* no. 3-4 (2009).

¹⁵⁷ Daniel Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar. Socialdemokratisk kyrkopolitik under perioden 1944-1973* (Göteborg: Församlingsförlaget, 2006), 39.

¹⁵⁸ Grace Davie, *Religion in modern Europe: A memory mutates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

¹⁵⁹ Göran Therborn, "Nation, klass, tur och skicklighet: Vägar till ständig (?) makt," in *Socialdemokratins samhälle: SAP och Sverige under 100 år*, ed. Klaus Misgeld, Karl Molin, and Klas Åmark (Stockholm: Tiden, 1988), 275.

¹⁶⁰ Tomasson, "How Sweden Became So Secular", 62.

¹⁶¹ "Ipsos Global @Dvisory: Is Religion a Force for Good in the World? Combined Population of 23 Major Nations Evenly Divided in Advance of Blair, Hitchens Debate," Ipsos, 2010, accessed November 7, 2020, <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/ipsos-global-dvisory-religion-force-good-world-combined-population-23-major-nations-evenly-divided>.

¹⁶² Eva Hamberg, "Religiös tro och religiöst engagemang. En analys av material från projektet Livsåskådningar i Sverige," *Religion & Samhälle* 8 (1988), 37pp.

¹⁶³ Eva Hamberg, "Christendom in Decline: the Swedish case," in *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000* ed. Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003), 48.

between the Nordic nations also shows a stronger de-confessionalization of the teaching and a larger weakening of the bonds between church and school in Sweden, compared to the other Nordic nations.¹⁶⁴

In sum, the empirical findings indicate that Sweden has indeed become more secularized during the last century, both in terms of religious belonging (to some extent), of religious faith and practice (to a larger extent), and especially in values.

Church historians Peter Lodberg and Björn Ryman argue that there was a strong Christian opposition towards the “new individualism” of the 1960s, especially against its consequences for family and relations, which they describe as a “secular development”. This resistance was, however, not strongest from the Lutheran State Church but from revival movements and Catholic and Orthodox representatives.¹⁶⁵

An individualized form of religion is also something that David Thurfjell describes to have arisen strongly in present-day Sweden. He argues that secular Swedes in the 21st century have adopted a mindset where their own worldview is associated with progression and freedom, while descriptions used for more religious groups carry negative values, or at least a sense that they belong to the past.¹⁶⁶ Anneli Winell points out in her doctoral thesis about spirituality in Swedish women’s magazines that the individualized role of religion in popular media follows an overall changing process in society, “where the deregulation of institutional religion has paved the way for individual spirituality”.¹⁶⁷

A focus in my empirical study is to analyse how the values presented in the political sources correspond to this previous empirical research.

5.3 Sweden – a party-political overview

Although this study analyses a period of Social Democratic hegemony, other parties had some political influence, and their programmes are therefore included in the analysis. One recurring paradox in this project is that a striving for autonomy intuitively appears to come more natural in other ideologies, e.g. liberalism, but less so in the collective utopia of traditional Marxism.

¹⁶⁴ Dahlgren, "Sverige," 251-253.

¹⁶⁵ Peter Lodberg and Björn Ryman, "Church and Society," in *Nordic Folk Churches: A Contemporary Church History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 119.

¹⁶⁶ Thurfjell, *Det gudlösa folket*, 112f.

¹⁶⁷ Annelie Winell, "Godis för kropp och själ Välbefinnande och vardagsandlighet i tre svenska kvinnotidningar" (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala university, 2016), 207.

Berggren and Trägårdh exemplify with how Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's goal, adopted by the Social Democrats, to separate children from their parents in order to nurture individual independence, is paralleled in the central dogma of liberalism.¹⁶⁸

The 1960s saw several parallel developments, forming a path towards secularization and individualism, not only within Social Democracy but also in other parties. Jan Hylén argues that the Conservatives during the 20th century “unambiguously and substantially” assumed an “individualistic, i.e. liberal direction”.¹⁶⁹ All dimensions he has analysed mirror a change from a collectivistic conservatism to an individualistic liberalism, and he argues that the change among the Conservatives during this period is stronger than the continuity, where “nation, Church and family as the primary carriers of moral ideals have been replaced by individual rights and liberties.”¹⁷⁰ Torbjörn Aronson concurs in his dissertation on Conservative party leaders, showing that Gunnar Heckscher and Gösta Bohman, who led the party during the 1960s and 1970s, adopted a new type of Conservatism, based on a secularized view of man.¹⁷¹

Several scholars describe conflicting ideological goals within Social Democracy but also areas of connection to other ideologies, most notably liberalism. Professor of comparable politics Hans Keman argues that central Social Democratic goals are formulated in terms of humanist values, “often more or less derived from liberal ideas and mainly of an individualist nature”.¹⁷² These values may, however, be of a conflicting nature, for instance equality versus equity, or collective goals versus individualistic goals.¹⁷³ Keman describes this as an inherent paradox within Social Democracy but adds that this paradox also relates to a decision whether to adopt “certain elements inherent in the Christianity”. He argues that such Christian-based values are “certainly less individualistic and more based on solidarity”.¹⁷⁴

Andrew Heywood also describes ideological tensions within Social Democracy. One such is the effort to create a balance between market and state, between efficiency and equality but also “between the individual and the community”. In this sense, Social Democracy “may also

¹⁶⁸ Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 245.

¹⁶⁹ Jan Hylén, *Fosterlandet främst: Konservatism och liberalism inom högerpartiet 1904-1985* (Stockholm: Norstedts juridikförlag, 1991), 274.

¹⁷⁰ “Nationen, kyrkan och familjen som de främsta bärarna av moraliska ideal har ersatts av individuella rättigheter och friheter”, *ibid.* 254, 261.

¹⁷¹ Torbjörn Aronson, “Konservatism och demokrati: En rekonstruktion av fem svenska högerledares styrelsedoktriner” (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, 1990), 243, 292.

¹⁷² Keman, *Social Democracy*, 55.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* 56-58.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 59.

be informed by modern liberal ideas”.¹⁷⁵ Regarding individualism, Heywood mentions that an ethically egoistic understanding of individualism is rejected by modern communitarians, traditional conservatives as well as socialists, where the latter oppose an individualism that “promotes greed and competition, weakening the bonds of community”. He argues that there is still a *developmental individualism* that allows for social responsibility, and in this case “blurs the distinction between individualism and collectivism”.¹⁷⁶

Consequently, there seems to be versions of individualism, collectivism and community that Social Democracy could either applaud or reject, depending on which version is proposed, and how these values correspond to other central Social Democratic values.

One particular cross-party-political connection during the 1960s was in the informal *Grupp 222*, with both Social Democrats and Liberals as participants. This group is described in previous research as a central influence for the family policy changes during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

5.4 The hegemonic Social Democracy

The Social Democratic party governed Sweden, sometimes together with other parties, but mostly in exclusive power, between 1932 and 1976.¹⁷⁷ The party had, however, already participated in different governments from 1917, first led by Liberals, then by Social Democratic leader Hjalmar Branting. This gave the party the possibility of an early influence over fields where the party could appoint ministers, most notably the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

However, even after the party gained power in 1932, the Social Democrats occasionally left the governance over Ecclesiastical Affairs to others. During the war coalition government Conservative leader Gösta Bagge held the office; after the war, Tage Erlander handed church matters to independent Nils Quensel; and during the coalition government with the Agrarians in the 1950s, their representative Ivar Persson was appointed Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. These alterations did, however, reveal telling differences in both ideology and action, as will be shown in more depth in chapters 9 and 10.

¹⁷⁵ Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics*, 74f.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 133f.

¹⁷⁷ For this development, see e.g. Svante Nordin, *Sveriges moderna historia: Fem politiska projekt 1809-2019* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2019), 143pp.

From around 1930, the party launched a vision called the *folkhem* (the people's home), presented by Branting's successor Per Albin Hansson in a parliament speech in 1928, then used as an inspiration to get through the economic depression and build an equal society for all. This *folkhem* concept would eventually become the centre and foundation for the Social Democrats' view of themselves and their role in nation-building. In her historiographic analysis of the party's self-understanding, Åsa Linderborg describes the *folkhem* ideology as a growing self-understanding of the party's reform programme "something natural, and Social Democracy is seen as the end of history."¹⁷⁸

In connection with Seligman's picture of community as an antithesis to autonomy, Berggren and Trägårdh suggest that the *folkhem* vision was never a very strong *Gemeinschaft*. On the contrary, it was to a very high degree "a *Gesellschaft* inhabited by hyper-modern and, in historical terms, extremely autonomous individuals."¹⁷⁹ According to the authors, Swedish society is actually not a nation of collectivism, "but an alliance between state and individual that, in an unparalleled way, has delivered the individual from dependence on the family and charity of civil society."¹⁸⁰

Hans Keman has conducted a study of Social Democratic parties across the world, and he points out that the Swedish party stands out as particular in several areas, especially regarding time in power, governmental power in relation to parliament, left-wing radicalism and policy-making in relation to their electoral strength.¹⁸¹ Keman also describes the Swedish Social Democrats' ability to exercise such strong influence in their nation as a natural consequence of how they solidified their grip on power several years before the Second World War and could then continue to ride the popular wave after the war.¹⁸²

Francis Sejersted describes Swedish and Norwegian Social Democracy in his volume *The Age of Social Democracy*. Sejersted has a focus on the whole field of practical policy, and gives more weight to materialistic than the idealistic side of politics, but he still provides valuable

¹⁷⁸ Åsa Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia: Historieskrivning som ideologisk maktresurs 1892-2000* (Stockholm: Atlas, 2001), 479.

¹⁷⁹ "...ett *gesellschaft* bebott av hypermoderna och historiskt sett ytterligt autonoma individer" Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 61.

¹⁸⁰ "...utan en allians mellan stat och individ som på ett enastående sätt förlöst individen från beroendet av familjen och civilsamhällelig välgörenhet" *ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Keman, *Social Democracy*, 45f, 92, 106, 108, 112, 127. In international comparison, Keman describes the Swedish Social Democrats as being positioned far left between 1945 and 1959, only slightly exceeded by their counterparts in Norway and New Zealand. Between 1960 and 1974 the party moves even further leftward, only exceeded by their colleagues in France. Data from the Manifesto Research Group, in *ibid.* 92.

¹⁸² Hans Keman, *Social Democracy: A Comparative Account of the Left-Wing Party Family* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2017), 45f, 67f.

insights for this study. He describes the period from around 1930 to 1970 as the zenith of Social Democracy, but where their “well-planned, man-made world” ended up in “a touch of hubris”, leading over to the next phase of larger societal disintegration, with “the liberation of the individual” as underlying theme.¹⁸³

Sejersted describes the period around 1970 as defining, where strong conflicts arose in what he calls “the two most important areas of socialization”, namely school and family. He argues that the previous Social Democratic period was characterized by a “strikingly harmonious development”, but that the earlier norms of equality during these years were replaced by new norms of “individualization and freedom of choice”, with school pedagogy and family policy being two central areas of change.¹⁸⁴

The relationship between Social Democracy and religion has been a central matter for several scholars. The rise of Social Democracy in the late 1800s was accompanied by the growth of other, radically liberal movements, e.g. the utilitarian movement, where Hjalmar Branting took a leading role. Another leading actor Viktor Lennstrand described it as “my duty to set not only utilitarianism but also Social Democracy openly against Christianity”, while Branting over time changed from a directly hostile to a more diplomatic attitude, where religion would be treated as a private matter, expected to eventually lose its role in a socialist society.¹⁸⁵

In 1929, a new branch was formed within the working-class movement: the Swedish Association of Christian Socialists, later renamed the Christian Social Democrats' Association of Sweden. They sparked a large debate on the relationship between Christianity and Socialism, more covered below. The association came to be more known by its popular name “the Brotherhood Movement”, and in 2011 it turned into a pan-religious movement named Social Democrats for Faith and Solidarity.¹⁸⁶

In a study of Nordic Social Democracy, economist Robert Nelson describes Lutheranism as an important background in the political discourse, although with a distinct alteration of

¹⁸³ Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, 7-9, 240.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 417-419, 430.

¹⁸⁵ “min plikt att öppet mot kristendomen sätta ej allenast utilism utan även socialdemokratin.” In Oloph Bexell, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Folkväckelsens och kyrkoförnyelsens tid* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2003), 170; Bernt Ralfnert, “Kvinnoprästdebatten i Sverige i perspektivet kyrka-stat” (Doctoral thesis, Lund university, 1988), 67f.

¹⁸⁶ Harald Lundberg, *Broderskapsrörelsen (s) i svensk politik: Studie rörande ståndpunkter och praktiskt politiskt handlande under åren 1930-1980* (Stockholm: Sveriges kristna socialdemokraters förbund, 1988), 10-17.

authority. He describes Social Democracy as a *secular Lutheranism* where professional expertise “replaced the Lutheran clergy as the leading Nordic priesthood”. He goes as far as describing Social Democracy as presenting an alternative religion, a new clergy seeking a “secular salvation of society along a path to a new heaven on earth guided by science and economics.”¹⁸⁷ According to Nelson, this new materialistic worldview facilitated the introduction of government measures that the population considered harmful, and would elsewhere have caused strong popular opposition. This succeeded because new values had replaced the old ones, where “its unifying faith was no longer the Lutheranism of old but a social democratic economic religion”.¹⁸⁸

The fact that the Swedish Social Democrats could gain and hold on to power has also called for scholarly analysis. Bengt Schüllerqvist argues that the reason the Social Democrats prevailed in the 1930s was a combination of a structural reform of the party during the recurring government crises during the late 1920s, which changed the party from what he calls a “loose” organization into a “hard” one. This opened up for a more actor-based situation in Swedish politics, giving “increased opportunities for actors and groups of actors to influence direction with strategic actions”, where Per Albin Hansson is described as the most successful actor around 1932.¹⁸⁹

Jon Pierre has conducted a study on the power balance between Social Democratic party congresses and actual government policy. His study does, however, only focus on congress motions, not programme revisions. Despite the both long and strong influence of this party in Swedish politics, research is scarce on the ideological strivings within Social Democracy, regarding the value-related field where present-day Sweden stands out as internationally distinctive. This is a gap that this project intends to fill.

Still, Pierre describes how different party leaders placed different emphasis on what he calls larger structures (party congresses) and narrower, actor-centred structures (party leadership and government). Erlander argued that congress decisions *shall* be followed – if not, the party leadership must resign. Palme in his turn argued that congress decisions are not coercive but

¹⁸⁷ Robert H. Nelson, *Lutheranism and the Nordic Spirit of Social Democracy: A Different Ethic* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2017), 41.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 204.

¹⁸⁹ “ökade möjligheter för aktörer och aktörsgrupper med strategiskt handlande att påverka utvecklingen” Bengt Schüllerqvist, “Från kosackval till kohandel: SAP:s väg till makten (1928-1932)” (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala university, 1992), 199-207.

ought to be taken into *strong consideration*.¹⁹⁰ This indicates that Palme gave the party leadership more freedom to act than Erlander did. On the other hand, party congresses tended to be ever more offensive and agenda-pushing over time, thus giving more influence to individual activists.¹⁹¹ This double development provides reason for a twofold strengthening of the actor perspective at the expense of a structural perspective.

Jens Ljunggren has performed a study rather close to mine, where he explores concepts of emotion in Social Democratic policy. He concludes that the first decades of Social Democracy under Branting were characterized by hatred and rage. However, once the party gained power, the message transmuted into Hansson's more pragmatic worry and insecurity. After decades in power, Erlander changed strategy into fomenting worry about *potential* worries, while Palme, laying the blame for worry on nations far away, diverted the party's traditional rage towards powers abroad.¹⁹² Similarly, political scientist Douglas Brommesson shows how an autonomous perspective was expressed during this period; Swedish foreign policy was under Palme characterized by a Marxist-oriented struggle between rich/dependent and poor/dependent, forming a goal that "aimed at breaking the state of dependence".¹⁹³

Ljunggren concludes that the Social Democratic strategy was very efficient in appealing to popular frustration over societal change, even though they had themselves held power for decades, arguing that the party "first shaped a policy that created worry, and thereafter won an election by promising to handle the same worry that they themselves had participated in creating."¹⁹⁴

Björn von Sydow, later appointed as Parliament Speaker, has studied the relationship between public and private attitudes within the party leadership between 1955 and 1960, the formative period preceding the 1960 programme revision. His study focuses however on financial and foreign policy, as well as tactical considerations towards other parties, and does not deal with the ideological issues in this project. Still, von Sydow points out that there were discrepancies

¹⁹⁰ Jon Pierre, *Partikongresser och regeringspolitik: En studie av den socialdemokratiska partikongressens beslutsfattande och inflytande 1948-1978*, Lund Political Studies 51, (Lund: Kommunfakta förlag, 1986), 72f.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 269.

¹⁹² Jens Ljunggren, *Den uppskjutna vreden: Socialdemokratisk känslopolitik från 1880- till 1980-talet* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2015), 264-275.

¹⁹³ Brommesson, *Från Hanoi till Bryssel*, 217.

¹⁹⁴ "först drev en politik som skapade oro och därefter vann ett val på att ta hand om samma oro som man själv varit med om att skapa", Ljunggren, *Den uppskjutna vreden*, 207.

between private and publicly expressed attitudes, and the latter rested mainly on a wish for vote maximisation, holding the party together and also maximising influence in parliament.¹⁹⁵

During the research period, the Social Democrats had large success in elections, never falling below 44% in parliamentary elections between 1936 and 1970. In 1969, Erlander retired after 23 years, giving way to Olof Palme, who had worked closely with Erlander, first as his personal secretary since 1953 and then rising through the ranks until Erlander's resignation. In the new one-chamber parliament in 1973, the two political blocs received 175 seats each in parliament. Palme still managed to remain Prime Minister until the next election in 1976, when the party finally lost power for the first time in 44 years.

5.5 Individual actors

There are several previous studies of the central actors in this project, although mainly covering a narrower, more personal scope. Several biographies are published on the prime ministers, most notably Anders Isaksson's four-volume work *Per Albin* about Hansson; Dick Harrison *Jag har ingen vilja till makt* on Erlander, and Henrik Berggren *Underbara dagar framför oss* about Palme. These biographical works display their general careers and discuss the value-related aspects more in passing. Here, this study may give valuable input to the field of research.

Concerning the other individual actors, the most extensive literature relates to Alva Myrdal.¹⁹⁶ On Stellan Arvidson, relatively little research has been done. One biography displaying his ideological leanings is written by Birgitta Almgren, scholar on relations between Sweden and Nazi Germany and the GDR, where Arvidson's connection to the latter is central for his ideological positioning.

¹⁹⁵ Björn von Sydow, *Kan vi lita på politikerna? Offentlig och intern politik i socialdemokratins ledning 1955-1960* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1978), 438-441.

¹⁹⁶ Some central works are Jan Olof Nilsson *Alva Myrdal: En virvel i den moderna strömmen* (1994); former parliament speaker Ingegerd Troedsson, *Den kommenderade familjen: 30 år med Alva Myrdals familjepolitik*; Allan Carlson *The roles of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal in the development of a Social Democratic response to Europe's population crisis 1929-1938* (1970) plus *The Swedish experiment in family politics: The Myrdals and the interwar population crisis* (1990); a research paper by Stina Lyon (1999) *Modernity, social science and educational engineering: Alva and Gunnar Myrdal and the "Swedish model" of school reform*; a Finnish anthology *Models, modernity and the Myrdals* (1997) and a comprehensive biographical analysis by Thomas Etzemüller, *Alva and Gunnar Myrdal: Social engineering in the modern world* (2014).

Several Church historians point to the early 20th century as a battle between the visions of Arthur Engberg and Harald Hallén, whose positions are studied in detail in this dissertation.¹⁹⁷ Engberg's ministership is described as "seven of the most formative years in modern Swedish history", when the new relationship between Church and state gradually took shape.¹⁹⁸ Engberg's view lay closer to the anti-clerical French *laïcité*, with which he provided a radical ideological pressure, while Hallén's position could gain support because it was viewed as a middle ground in the political confrontation with the Church. However, Engberg gradually changed his view towards keeping the State Church, while transforming it from within.¹⁹⁹ An overview of Engberg's developing ideology in general, and view of Church and religion in particular is found in Nils & Lars Beltzén *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*. A thorough study of Hallén's long career and church-political programme is presented in Urban Claesson *Folkhemmets kyrka*.

D.E. Weston suggests that a key reason why the Social Democrats were so successful in secularizing the Church was that the transition, especially under Engberg, was negotiated so smoothly, without the violent confrontation that has appeared in other contexts marked by religious monopoly. He also states that any acceptable theory of secularization must comprehend "the process of transition from old to new sources of faith and authority", and here he suggests the Swedish experience as an example of a feasible paradigm.²⁰⁰

The chapters about different actors are introduced by brief biographical information. This is only to be understood as background information, not part of the empirical analysis. My contribution with this project is to put these individual actors in the context of other Social Democratic political processes and documents, hereby analysing the value-based impact from both party organization and individual actors.

¹⁹⁷ Tobias Harding, "The dawn of the secular state? Heritage and identity in Swedish church and state debates 1920-1939," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 4 (2016); Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka: Harald Hallén och folkkyrkans genombrott. En studie av socialdemokrati, kyrka och nationsbygge med särskild hänsyn till perioden 1905-1933."; Sven Thidevall, *Kampen om folkkyrkan: ett folkkyrkligt reformprogramms öden 1928-1932* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2000); Sören Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan: Om Svenska kyrkan, folket och staten* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2003).

¹⁹⁸ Harding, "The dawn of the secular state?" 643.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 642f.

²⁰⁰ D.E. Weston, "Secularization and Social Theory: Swedish Experience in the Context of an International Theoretical Debate," *Acta Sociologica* 36, no. 3/4 (1983), 335.

5.7 Three societal spheres

5.7.1 Church policy

On Church policy, several previous studies touch upon this project. The standard work *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* describes that the early Social Democracy viewed religion as either an oppression from the upper class, or as a Church-shaped distortion of Jesus' true, socialist message. Either way, "Church criticism and anti-clericalism stood out as a natural feature in the class struggle", and the early labour movement was shaped by a "militant atheism".²⁰¹ The state, in its turn, responded to the criticism with prosecutions for blasphemy, something which mainly increased tension and the view among the working class that the State Church was allied with the ruling class, in opposition to individual liberties.²⁰²

Lennart Tegborg and Bengt Thelin describe how Church policy developed during the period just before this project. Tegborg focuses on the dissolution of administrative connections between the State Church and the compulsory *folkskola* around the turn of the century. However, his study does not cover the ideological positions in teaching plans. Neither does the early Social Democratic movement play any substantial part in Tegborg's thesis. Rather, he describes Liberal Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Fridtjuv Berg as prominent in diminishing Church control over school matters. These changes are, however, described more as the consequence of a changing and urbanizing society than the result of any deliberate secularizing motives.²⁰³

Thelin analyses a similar change during the same period, but in the secondary *läroverk*. Here, too, the battle stood between Conservative and Liberal politicians. Thelin describes the 1906 curriculum as "an important step in the movement towards 'objective' (non-biased) teaching of religion that was entirely accepted and adopted in 1969." He argues that Fridtjuv Berg was anxious to avoid another ideological struggle and therefore made efforts not to push similar changes in the *folkskola*, due to the gradual strengthening of the Social Democrats who demanded a complete separation between Church and school.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ "framstod kyrkokritik och antiklerikalism som en självklar sak i klasskampen", "militant ateism" Bexell, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Folkväckelsens och kyrkoförnyelsens tid*, 171.

²⁰² Ibid. 172f.

²⁰³ Lennart Tegborg, "Folkskolans sekularisering 1895-1909: Upplösning av det administrativa sambandet mellan folkskola och kyrka i Sverige" (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, 1969), 14, 215f.

²⁰⁴ Bengt Thelin, *Exit Eforus: Läroverkens sekularisering och striden om kristendomsundervisningen* (Stockholm: Liber Läromedel / Utbildningsförlaget, 1981), 259-261, quote on 261.

Regarding Sweden's combination of secular and autonomous ideals, David Thurfjell argues that important roots are found among Swedish theologians inspired by enlightenment thought in the late 18th century.²⁰⁵ Sten Hidal shows how a liberal theology that questioned the authority of the Bible had already gained strength among theological departments, and to some extent also among bishops, during the 1910s.²⁰⁶

During the period around the Social Democratic takeover, the focus of the State Church began to change direction, from a "priest church" to a *folkkyrka* (people's church), where a central focus was the transferral of power from clerical leaders to democratically elected lay persons. Church historian Oloph Bexell describes this move as something in an international perspective truly unique, as it largely dissolved the connection between the worshipping congregation and the ecclesiastical governing body.²⁰⁷ According to Church historian Björn Ryman, the two major areas of debate in the Lutheran State Church during the 20th century was the relationship between Church and state, and the ordination of female clergy. Ryman also notes that these areas were "dominated by the politicians and not by theologians or church people."²⁰⁸ This view corresponds with the areas that take the central place in the source material, and consequently receives a central role also in this project.

Daniel Alvunger has analysed Social Democratic Church policy during this research period and defines the party's policy and its following results as a *secularized Lutherdom*. He argues that this direction was largely the result of Social Democratic visions, where traditional Lutheran ideas were subsumed into a system of secular ideas and norms.²⁰⁹ From an international perspective, David Martin describes this local symbiosis between Social Democracy and Lutheranism as a pre-eminent case of a "secular mutation of faith", which had crucial significance for secularization in Scandinavia.²¹⁰ Robert Nelson argues that this had implications for the societal role of the Church; as the State Church became so fully established that it never posed a strong obstacle to secularizing trends, it also became easy for

²⁰⁵ Thurfjell, *Det gudlösa folket*, 47f.

²⁰⁶ Sten Hidal, *Bibeltro och bibelkritik: studier kring den historisk-kritiska bibelsynens genombrott i Sverige 1877-1910 med särskild hänsyn till Gamla testamentet* (Uppsala: Verbum, 1979), 182-186.

²⁰⁷ Oloph Bexell, "Om Svenska kyrkan under 1900-talet. Några rapsodiska årtal på vägen till idag," *Svensk Pastoraltidskrift* no. 1 (2017), 9.

²⁰⁸ Björn Ryman, "Church of Sweden, 1940-2000," in *Nordic Folk Churches: A Contemporary Church History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 50.

²⁰⁹ Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar*; *ibid.* 248, 259

²¹⁰ Martin, *On Secularization. Towards a Revised General Theory*, 78.

Social Democracy to provide a new “unifying faith that now took the form of a worship of professional expertise that would guide the future wellbeing of the whole nation.”²¹¹

Susan Sundback also shows that in a Scandinavian comparison, the Swedish politicising of the Church was stronger than elsewhere.²¹² Another Nordic overview comes from Pirjo Markkola, who calls for further research on religious thought among those who shaped welfare policies, a request that connects to the content in this study.²¹³

The influences from radical left-wing policy towards the end of this research period, especially in the Lutheran State Church, but to some extent also in other denominations, has been covered by Johan Sundeen in *68-kyrkan*. Alvunger describes this politicizing process as a practical means to marginalize the influence of conservative and confessional groups within the Church, in favour of political candidates who endorsed the Social Democratic Church policy.²¹⁴ One other central study comes from Lennart Ahlbäck, who in *Socialdemokratisk kyrkosyn* analyses the party’s church-political positions. His study completes this one, as he covers the later period 1979-1996.²¹⁵

Church historian Klas Hansson describes how the party-political nature of the State Church grew over time, with the Social Democrats as a prime example. He underlines that these decisions were based on political arguments, with equality as a dominating goal, implying that the church-political actors “do not think that the church in its tradition or theology has instruments enough to work with these issues; it is necessary to add a political component”.²¹⁶

The political influence over the appointment of bishops and deans has been analysed by both Rune Imberg and Ulrika Lagerlöf Nilsson. The latter states that the candidates’ position regarding female clergy was one of the central reasons in government appointments of bishops after 1958, while Imberg argues that this factor was absolutely decisive.²¹⁷

²¹¹ Nelson, *Lutheranism and the Nordic Spirit of Social Democracy*, 43.

²¹² Susan Sundback, "Hur möter människorna religionen i de fem städerna?," in *Religion och kyrka i fem nordiska städer 1939-1985*, ed. Göran Gustafsson (Malmö: Liber, 1987), 345.

²¹³ Pirjo Marttila, "The long history of Lutheranism in Scandinavia. From state religion to people’s church," *Perichoresis* 13, no. 2 (2015), 13.

²¹⁴ Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar*, 141.

²¹⁵ Lennart Ahlbäck, "Socialdemokratisk kyrkosyn : en studie i socialdemokraternas kyrkopolitiska riktlinjer 1979-1996" (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, 2003).

²¹⁶ Klas Hansson, *Kyrkomöte och partipolitik: Politisk påverkan på Svenska kyrkans kyrkomöte 1930-2018* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2019), 283.

²¹⁷ Ulrika Lagerlöf Nilsson, "Med lust och bävan: Vägen till biskopsstolen inom Svenska kyrkan under 1900-talet" (Doctoral thesis, Göteborg University, 2010); Rune Imberg, *Biskops- och domprostutnämningar i Svenska Kyrkan 1866-1989* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1991), 113.

The introduction of female clergy in the late 1950s has been much covered in earlier research, generally focusing on the processes within the General Synod, which lies outside this project. This area is covered by e.g. Dag Sandahl in *Kyrklig splittring* and *En annan kyrka*, where the author describes the issue as “a watershed” in 20th century church policy.²¹⁸ Bernt Ralfnert describes the Social Democrats as active in realizing this reform, but he also describes this decision as being largely the result of structural processes, driving the Church a step away from traditional Christianity.²¹⁹ In sum, my main contribution to the church-historical field will be an analysis of the extent to which autonomy-related values played a part in the political processes, primarily in relation to the Lutheran State Church.

5.7.2 Education policy

Regarding the Swedish school system, some previous studies provide a broad description of Swedish school organization or pedagogy, while others touch upon the ideological areas covered in this project.

Bo Lindensjö describes the management of the internationally unique combination of the political goal of social equality and the technocratic efficiency goal of adjusting school and labour market to one another as a central ideological consideration in the school reform process.²²⁰ Another central goal was to make *democracy* the central value in Swedish schools. School historian Åke Isling explains that this was performed by making democracy both “*means and form*, but also as a *goal and content*”, where equality was made the major criterion.²²¹

Other scholars have pointed to actor-based explanations. Bo Rothstein has done a study, where he argues that a central reason why the reform process of the school system could not gain speed before the Second World War was Arthur Engberg’s lack of interest for school

²¹⁸ Dag Sandahl, *Kyrklig splittring: Studier kring debatten om kvinnliga präster i Svenska kyrkan samt bibliografi 1905-juli 1990* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1993), 13-43, quote in Dag Sandahl, *En annan kyrka: Svenska kyrkan speglad genom Kyrklig samling och Kyrklig samling speglad genom Svenska kyrkan* (Helsingborg: GAudete, 2018), 514.

²¹⁹ Ralfnert, "Kvinnoprästdebatten i Sverige i perspektivet kyrka-stat." 302-308.

²²⁰ Bo Lindensjö, "Från liberal bottenkola till allmän grundskola: En huvudlinje i socialdemokratisk skolpolitik," in *Socialdemokratins samhälle*, 191.

²²¹ Åke Isling, "Kampen för och mot en demokratisk skola: 1. Samhällsstruktur och skolorganisation" (Doctoral thesis, Stockholm University, 1980), 359. It can be noted that Isling displays an anti-religious bias, several times describing the earlier teaching of Christianity as “indoctrination” (indoktrinering), e.g. *ibid.* 270. He also voices an autonomous tendency, describing the older school as patriarchal, with the pupils submitting to God and other authorities, while he views the modern school as positive and democratic. E.g. Åke Isling, *Det pedagogiska arvet: Kampen för och mot den demokratisk skola 2* (Stockholm: Sober förlag, 1988), 601-611, 633-635.

matters, while Stellan Arvidson would later show greater determination.²²² Also, regarding the coalition government 1951-1957, where the Agrarians held the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, school historian Ulf Larsson argues that the Social Democrats were still the most active party in education policy, and that “in many areas, [future Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Ragnar] Edenman could be viewed as the actual chief of the ministry”.²²³

The process towards a larger reformation of the Swedish school system from around 1950 and onwards was, according to Karin Hadenius, characterized by two guiding stars: *equality* (jämlighet) and *freedom* (frihet).²²⁴ Sejersted describes the same period as the shaping of a “*school of equal opportunity*”, built on the principle of “*freedom of choice*”.²²⁵ Bo Lindensjö and Ulf P. Lundgren describe the tug-of-war during this period with a similar dichotomy under the related concepts *equivalence* (likvärdighet) and *freedom of choice* (valfrihet).²²⁶ All these describe the new school system as balancing between two values which may be difficult to combine. Hadenius explicitly notes that the principle of autonomy creates a dilemma of trying to increase both equality and freedom of choice at the same time, and she argues that such a principle would therefore in practice end up in limitation to one or both of these concepts.²²⁷

Consequently, Inger Enkvist argues that the progressive school pedagogy contained several inconsistencies: laying the responsibility for the learning process on both the pupil and the teacher; the idea of shaping a school built on certain norms while simultaneously leaving the normative function to the pupils; and finally the dual emphasis on individualizing the teaching, while all pupils must at the same time be in the same classroom group.²²⁸ Enkvist argues that the 1962 and 1969 curricula reflect the difficulty of balancing the double aims of individualism while building a comprehensive school for all, a balancing act that can also be described as a struggle between socialist and liberal visions.²²⁹

²²² Bo Rothstein, *The Social Democratic State: The Swedish Model and the Bureaucratic Problem of Social Reforms* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 189.

²²³ “I många avseenden kunde Edenman uppfattas som departementets verkliga chef.” Ulf Larsson, *Olof Palme och utbildningspolitiken* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2003), 21.

²²⁴ Karin Hadenius, “Jämlighet och frihet: Politiska mål i den svenska grundskolan” (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, 1990), 33.

²²⁵ Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, 272, 429.

²²⁶ Bo Lindensjö and Ulf P. Lundgren, *Utbildningsreformer och politisk styrning* (Stockholm: HLS förlag, 2000), 92.

²²⁷ Hadenius, “Jämlighet och frihet” 50.

²²⁸ Inger Enkvist, *De svenska skolreformerna 1962-1985 och personerna bakom dem* (Möklinta: Gidlunds förlag, 2016), 60, 66, 102f.

²²⁹ Ibid. 62f.

Carl-Eber Olivestam has studied the role of religion in the 1946 School Commission and argues that a crucial difference between the government school committees of 1940 and 1946 was their view on the individual and the collective. The former group viewed tendencies of collectivization in society as a threat to individual liberty and regarded a state built on a cultural Protestantism as a guarantee for this liberty. The latter group, in their turn, built on the vision of uniting the individual with the collective – a position that could be described as a limited version of state individualism.²³⁰

Karl-Göran Algotsson concludes that over time this debate and the content of religious education shifted from instructive teaching in Christianity towards a non-biased teaching, even though some influential debaters proposed a directly critical approach in school teaching, against religion in general and Christianity in particular. He also describes that even if the critical response from Swedish Christianity against the reform process 1963-1964 was very strong, they soon accepted the new form of teaching.²³¹

Tomas Englund describes three different periods in the national curricula. Up till the Second World War, the *patriarchal* conception of education dominated. After this came the *scientific-rational* conception, first visible under Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Värner Rydén's reforms 1918-1919 and is also found in the Myrdals' view on pedagogy, but came to full fruition with the 1946 School Commission. The third period was characterized by the *democratic* conception of education, dating from the end of the 1960s and onwards, which provided space for what Englund calls a *political education*.²³²

Englund further describes a foundational *citizenship education*, expressed particularly in the teaching of social science, history and Christianity, which became "politically and socially conditioned and a manifestation of power and ideology".²³³ This description lies close to what in this project is discussed under the *market model* concept, where change of beliefs, practice and values does not occur only due to popular demand but, to a high degree, also the "supply" provided by political and other societal leadership.

²³⁰ Carl-Eber Olivestam, "Idé och politik: De politiska partierna, skolan och kristendomen, En studie i svensk skolpolitik under 1940-talet" (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala university, 1977), 55.

²³¹ Karl-Göran Algotsson, "Från katekestvång till religionsfrihet: Debatten om religionsundervisningen i skolan under 1900-talet" (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, 1975), 508-510.

²³² Tomas Englund, *Curriculum as a political problem: changing educational conceptions, with special reference to citizenship education* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1986), 311-318.

²³³ Ibid. vi.

A present-day backdrop to the results of the historical process is presented by Karin Kittelmann Flensner. Her dissertation *Religious Education in Contemporary Pluralistic Sweden* analyses the classroom climate in Religious Education classes in Swedish high schools. She found that a secularistic and individualistic discourse appeared in all classrooms, both from students and teachers.²³⁴ Individualism was considered to be a core value of our time, while religion in general was regarded as contradictory to this value.²³⁵ The author summarizes the dominating perspective in Swedish classrooms as “Doing anything with reference to religion or God [...] was impossible if you wanted to be seen as a modern, strong, independent individualistic Swede.”²³⁶ She concludes that individualism in classrooms “emerged as a superior value, which everybody had to relate to regardless of discourse”, and consequently, religion in general, and Christianity in particular, could be accepted only “as long as it could be characterized as individualistic”.²³⁷

Linda Vikdahl has in a later study confirmed this atmosphere, where religious teenagers, especially Christians, made efforts to downplay their religiosity, and where interviewed pupils repeatedly expressed that “religion is an individualized and private matter.”²³⁸ Kittelmann Flensner’s study, in particular, indicates that individualism primarily drives secular views, rather than vice versa.

Despite this large number of works, little research has been performed on how the ideological values in this project are conveyed in central school documents, and what influence these values may have had in the formation of the new school system.²³⁹ This is where this project finds its place in this sphere.

²³⁴ Karin Kittelmann Flensner, “Religious Education in Contemporary Pluralistic Sweden” (Doctoral thesis, Göteborg University, 2015), 107, 120.

²³⁵ Ibid. 151.

²³⁶ Ibid. 130f, 260.

²³⁷ Ibid. 260. This view also coincides with the Social Democratic party programme of 2001, which states: “Cultural and religious plurality is affirmed insofar as it does not imply limitations in other people’s right and opportunities to make their own life choices.” (Kulturell och religiös mångfald ska bejakas i all den utsträckning den inte innebär begränsningar i andra människors rätt och möjlighet att göra egna livsval.) Social Democratic Party program 2001, 22.

²³⁸ “religion är en individualiserad och privat angelägenhet.” Linda Vikdahl, *Det kommer inte på tal: En studie om religiös och kulturell mångfald i grundskolan* (Skellefteå: Artos Academic, 2018), 168.

²³⁹ For an overview on the human person in Swedish curricula, see Tomas Appelqvist, “Från kristendomsämne till religionskunskap. Människosynen i Sveriges läroplaner under 1900-talet” in *Fri och bunden: En bok om teologisk antropologi* (Göteborg: Församlingsförlaget, 2013).

5.7.3 Family policy

On family policy, some studies connect to the theme in this dissertation, where the pervasive Swedish reforms during the late 1960s and early 1970s is described as “one of the most far-reaching examples of a social-politically individualised society that the world had seen”.²⁴⁰ Berggren and Trägårdh argue that the reason this revolution was stronger in Sweden than in other nations was that it happened not through noisy student rebellions but through legislation that made family members ever more independent from each other.²⁴¹

Gøsta Esping-Andersen argues that Scandinavia became “the international vanguard” in “the revolution of women’s roles” to a degree not found elsewhere, and relates this to the expansion of public day-care and formation of a labour-intensive public sector that created a new norm of full-time employment among women. Here, Sweden stands out, e.g. with the fastest disappearance of housewives.²⁴²

Jonas Hinnfors has analysed Swedish family policy from 1960, with a focus on party-political positions on child-care allowance. He argues that the defining change occurred between 1964 and 1966 and describes that the Liberals displayed the family-political positions closest to the Social Democrats between 1960 and 1973. They both moved from a family-based view towards government-managed security systems during this period, although with the Social Democrats consistently being more radical than the Liberals.²⁴³

This radical turn is explained in slightly different terms. According to gender historian Yvonne Hirdman, it was the result of the Social Democrats accepting the radical, partly liberal gender role discourse as a necessary new part of the larger vision of equality between classes – “a new field for the art of social engineering”. This vision also included a larger scheme to change attitudes by “propaganda/enlightenment/persuasion – take your pick”.²⁴⁴ Thus, this process of change was expressed in both legislation and ideological debate. Katharina Tollin argues, based on a study of the concept of equality and power relations in family policy, that the Social Democratic policy expressed an ambition to monopolize the

²⁴⁰ “ett av de mest långtgående exemplen på ett socialpolitiskt individualiserat samhälle som världen hittills sett” Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?*, 304.

²⁴¹ Ibid. 306.

²⁴² Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Families in the 21st century* (Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2016), 43, 100f.

²⁴³ Jonas Hinnfors, *Familjepolitik: Samhällsförändringar och partistrategier* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992), 91f, 266.

²⁴⁴ “ett nytt fält för den sociala ingenjörskonsten”, ”Propagandan/upplysningen/övertalningen – var god välj” Yvonne Hirdman, *Vad bör göras? Jämställdhet och politik under femtio år* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2014), 37f.

areas of family and equality as a Social Democratic affair and include these issues in “an overall policy for equality and socialism”.²⁴⁵

In sum, previous studies have been done on autonomous values and secularization processes, and also on the Swedish political discourse during the Social Democratic hegemony in the 20th century. No major study has, however, been undertaken on the connections between these and how they shaped the formative spheres central in this project. Therefore, it is now time to introduce the texts themselves.

²⁴⁵ “en övergripande politik för jämlikhet och socialism”, Katharina Tollin, *Sida vid sida : en studie av jämställdhetspolitikens genealogi 1971-2006* (Stockholm: Atlas, 2011), 54-56.

6. Party programmes

Party programmes constitute a particular text genre. They have to balance between utopian visions for the present and future, while also avoiding presenting a vision too impossible to realize. This balance becomes particularly important when a party is in government, which will be shown below.

For a political party, its programme functions as a sort of guide for what direction to take in general debate or specific legislation. Party programmes prove central for practical policy, especially for a party with governing power, as they reflect each party's main ideological foundations, driving forces and final objectives.

The programmes can partly be seen as a *reflection* of society but also as documents with an ambition to *influence* society. Both these aspects can be seen when the focus changes over time. In this aspect, a party in government obviously has the greatest opportunity to influence society and other parties with their visions and values.

The empirical part of this project begins with a study of all Social Democratic party programmes from 1920 to 1975. I also follow the source material from the processes leading up to final programme revisions, as well as the debates in the party congresses that adopted programme revisions, with particular focus on 1944, 1960 and 1975, when the party was in power.

One point to underline here is that *hegemony* is not identical to *monopoly*. This dissertation analyses the political field during a period when the Social Democrats experienced an undisputed hegemony in Swedish politics. However, there were times when other parties would participate in Social Democrat-led governments. Except for the war coalition government, other parties had constant opportunities to exercise an ideological influence when in opposition. Therefore, it is of large interest to study how values appear among the other parties, and to what extent one party appears to influence another.

The largest part of this analysis must, however, deal with the party holding the power of hegemony. In order to follow the ideological reasoning behind their final program formulations, the archived material from the programme commissions, including congress remarks and debates is also analysed. All material from the Social Democratic programme

processes, along with the programmes from the other parties is coded through the same methodological tool of analysing the tension between autonomy and its threefold antithesis.

6.1 The Social Democrats

Due to the Social Democratic hegemony over Swedish 20th century politics, their party programmes are of particular importance when analysing the ideological driving forces in Sweden during this period. Unlike those of other parties, all Social Democratic programmes follow the same disposition. Therefore, the Social Democratic party programmes stand out as *revisions*, rather than beginning anew each time. Consequently, changes in wording and content become easier to follow in the Social Democratic programmes than in those of other parties.

Each programme begins with an introduction with general principles, ranging from less than two pages in 1897, up to twenty pages in 1975. After this follows a political programme, typically described in short phrases or even single words, e.g. “Republic”, “Census”, “Freedom of religion”. This concise way of presenting party policy is most frequently found in the earliest programmes, but gradually becomes more developed.

6.1.1 1920: *Marxism at the centre*

The members of the commission that shaped the 1920 programme revision were Richard Sandler, Gustav Möller, Ivar Neuman, Arthur Engberg and Per Albin Hansson. The latter substituted Hjalmar Branting who missed too many meetings due to time abroad.²⁴⁶ The official collection of Social Democratic programmes describes the 1920 programme as having arguably the strongest Marxist focus in the history of the party.²⁴⁷ The general principles deal with the class-struggle and ambition to reshape society into a new socialist order of production, where private ownership is replaced by societal control. A frequent description of the relationship between bourgeoisie and working class is the Swedish term *utsugning*, close to the English “exploitation” but used exclusively in a Marxist context. The term is frequently used by Social Democratic writers at the time, and the removal of the word caused a heated debate at the 1944 congress.

²⁴⁶ Programme commission protocol 7 July 1919. All sources for the 1920 revision process in SLMA 1889: F/9/1.

²⁴⁷ All references to the Social Democratic party programmes are taken from the official collection, Klaus Misgeld, ed., *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990* (Stockholm: Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek, 2001). This occasion, 31.

The concept *liberation* (frigörelse) appears a few times in the general principles, but the context clarifies that this implies a traditional Marxist view of liberation from the capitalistic system and class society.²⁴⁸ Any policy concerning autonomy and its antipoles is difficult to follow, due to the brief formulations. “Freedom of religion” is introduced as a new concept along with other basic freedoms to be promoted, but the concept is not defined. However, the expression will appear repeatedly in the party material during the following century, generally understood not just as a positive freedom to religion but also a negative freedom of not having to be exposed to religion.

Under the area of education, the programme proposes an “undenominational educational system”, which can be considered a more radical demand than the earlier formulation of separating school education from the Church.²⁴⁹ The area of religion displays a traditional critical socialist stance towards organized religion. The earlier demand for abolishing the State Church is radicalized so that property currently controlled by the Church will remain in possession of the society.²⁵⁰ Arthur Engberg represents the programme commission in the congress debate and argues that the addition of a societal takeover of Church property is important in order to reduce the economic power of the Church. In the debate, Harald Hallén opposes Engberg’s demand to abolish the State Church, although based on a rather similar argument, that a disestablishment of the Church would only lead to stronger reactionary currents.²⁵¹

Just before the vote, Hallén proposes a compromise, suggesting the abolition of “the State Church enforcement” and that society should keep “redundant Church property”. However, the congress adopts Engberg’s suggestion with a large majority.²⁵²

The Marxist focus becomes even stronger in areas concerning ownership of property, where the programme proposes state ownership of all natural, industrial, agricultural, financial and transportation resources necessary to build a planned economy, and that society should take control over companies that may still remain in private ownership.

In sum, the programme of 1920, which applied when the Social Democrats came to power in 1932, has a strongly Marxist tendency, with far-reaching interferences in private right of

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 32-34.

²⁴⁹ “Konfessionslöst undervisningsväsen”, *ibid.* Point 5.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. Point 6.

²⁵¹ *Congress protocol 1920*, (Socialdemokraterna), 51f.

²⁵² “statskyrkokotvånget”, ”kyrkans överflödiga egendom”, *ibid.* 55.

possession and the explicit goal to replace the current financial system with a socialist planned economy.

The most central actor is “society”, which in this context is to be understood as equivalent to the state.²⁵³ When dealing with the role of religion, the programme wishes to see the abolishment of the State Church and that society would take control over all Church assets, as well as most private assets. Education is proposed to be undenominational. Liberation is named, but hardly in an autonomous sense, but rather as the working class liberating themselves from the capitalist system, where some type of community is to be considered an ultimate utopian goal. Any such community is, however, to be understood under the umbrella of socialist organization and production.

6.1.2 1944: Pragmatism and control over Church

Before the next programme revision, the situation has changed considerably. The World War is terrorizing Europe, and the Social Democrats have been in power in Sweden since 1932, with Per Albin Hansson as Prime Minister. In such a situation, the Marxist ambitions would need to become more pragmatic, and the party congress had already in 1932 agreed to replace the ambitious socialization programme with a more pragmatic practical policy.²⁵⁴

The 1944 programme revision is shaped while Hansson leads the coalition war government. The content is to a large extent shaped by Minister of Finance Ernst Wigforss, who belongs to the left wing of the party.²⁵⁵ The permanent members of the programme commission, along with Wigforss and Hansson, are Arthur Engberg, Minister of Social Affairs Gustav Möller and former short-term Prime Minister Richard Sandler, with a few others appearing as substitutes.²⁵⁶

At the commission’s first meeting, Per Albin Hansson refers directly to the new and different political situation and argues for a more pragmatic programme, including the removal of areas

²⁵³ Explicitly explained by Ernst Wigforss, programme commission protocol 11 January 1942, 5. All sources for the 1944 revision in SLMA 1889/F/9/2. This understanding of society is also proclaimed in the central paragraph of Per Albin Hansson’s *folkhem* speech, describing the *folkhem* vision as a distinguishing feature in “society – the state, the municipality” (samhället — staten, kommunen). Parliament, Second Chamber 1928: protocol 3, page 11 (following occurrences in short form, in this case SC 1928:3, 11).

²⁵⁴ Villy Bergström, "Program och ekonomisk politik 1920-1988: SAP i regeringsställning," in *Socialdemokratins samhälle*, 26-29.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. 35.

²⁵⁶ *Congress protocol 1940*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1940), 218.

that he regards as “showbread”, which the party in reality does not plan to propose, such as the abolishment of the State Church.²⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the final version of the programme maintains a typically Marxist focus, even though some expressions such as “class struggle” are removed.²⁵⁸ Wigforss’ programme speech before the party congress is long and completely dominated by a Marxist-motivated discussion on economy and class-related matters.²⁵⁹

Some expressions in the introduction of the general principles are – with some minor changes – kept in all following programmes during the 20th century. These are therefore of particular importance as core elements in Social Democratic ideology, and how the party handles the effort to balance a socialist ideology with an emerging autonomous perspective.

The 1944 programme describes the party’s political goal, worded in similar socialist terms as in 1920, as putting the control over production in the hands of the entire population so that “the majority are liberated from dependence on a small number of asset owners”, and that the class-based societal economical order should give way to “a community of citizens, cooperating on the foundation of freedom and equality”.²⁶⁰ Moreover, the general principles describe a “community of free and equal citizens” as the ultimate goal for Social Democracy.²⁶¹

These formulations express the ambition to balance the two antipoles of individual and community, lifting some kind of independence as a basic political goal. However, this independence retains the same class perspective as the previous programme, where the working class should be liberated from the authority of asset owners. Any autonomous perspective is practically non-existent in the discussions within the programme commission. Rather, the discussions in the protocols consistently start out from a classic Marxist perspective, where capitalism is the enemy and socialism the goal, while democracy and reformism are highlighted as the preferred alternative to bolshevism.

²⁵⁷ “skådebröd” Programme commission protocol 11 January 1942, 29f.

²⁵⁸ The following from Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 40-50.

²⁵⁹ Wigforss, Ernst *Congress protocol 1944*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1944), 58-70.

²⁶⁰ “...flertalet frigöres från beroende av ett mindretal kapitalägare” “en gemenskap av på frihetens och likställighetens grund samverkande medborgare” Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 40.

²⁶¹ “...den gemenskap av fria och likaberättigade medborgare, som är målet för socialdemokratins strävan”, *ibid.* 43

Consequently, the descriptions of the utopian goal express a balance between community and autonomy, with a leaning towards community, where freedom is to go hand-in-hand with cooperation and community. It can also be noted that in the struggle for the ideal society, the general principles praise the bourgeois democracy for having removed juridical and political privileges, while the Social Democrats also propose as a goal the removal of the economical ones. The general principles end with a pledge to work together for the liberation of the working class. Here too, the context makes it clear that this liberation is viewed as a Marxist liberation on the economical level, without any specific focus on autonomy.²⁶²

Concerning the Marxist focus on planned economy, the political programme is almost identical to the 1920 programme. The final formulations on school and the State Church are also almost identical, with the abolishment of “the State Church” altered to abolishing “the State Church system”. However, the process leading up to these formulations reveals strong tensions within the party and also displays deeper ideological values.

Neither “freedom of religion” nor “unconfessional teaching” are defined, either in the programme itself or in the documents from the programme commission. However, the congress debate on religion in school shows a sharp division between openly anti-religious speakers and members of the Christian Brotherhood Movement.

Bertil Mogård, leader of the Brotherhood Movement and substitute in the programme commission, registers his dissent to the commission’s demand for “unconfessional teaching”, which he finds has a negative bias towards Christianity. At the congress, he argues that the original meaning of the concept was to avoid teaching only based on the Catechism, but that an unconfessional teaching would go against the conscience of a teacher with a living Christian faith.²⁶³ Adolf Wallentheim responds, wishing to avoid dogmatic and propagandistic religious teaching, and adds in an autonomy-leaning conclusion: “We want (...) autonomous judgment to be fostered in young people and free, personal thought to be promoted.”²⁶⁴

Future school reformer Stellan Arvidson argues strongly that the demand for unconfessional teaching must remain, and be put in practice as soon as possible. He praises the recently deceased Arthur Engberg for having partly succeeded in removing the school law’s

²⁶² Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 40-45.

²⁶³ *Congress protocol 1944*, 132f.

²⁶⁴ “Vi vill ... att ungdomen fostras till självständigt omdöme och att en fri, egen tankeverksamhet befrämjas”, *ibid.* 136.

requirement to promote Christian fostering, and Arvidson demands that this requirement should be removed altogether.²⁶⁵

Per Emil Brusewitz, substitute in the commission, objects sharply to Arvidson's hostile attitude and praises Christianity as a positive societal force. Brusewitz defines "unconfessional" as the right for non-Christian parents to let their children abstain from being taught Christianity, but states that the overwhelming majority of parents who want an education in Christianity have a right to have their choice accepted.²⁶⁶

Arvidson replies by rejecting the Christian faith as such, arguing that teachers of Christianity teach things that are "evidently contrary to facts" and that children from Christian families who receive such teaching would suffer from "parental oppression, which I cannot accept".²⁶⁷ The congress decision follows the suggested wording, rejecting the more Christian-friendly reservations. Another indication of the party's general view on religion is that in the election of a new programme commission, Mogård receives only 29 votes (in comparison to Wigforss and Hansson with over 300), and the last permanent seat goes to Alva Myrdal, 137 votes.²⁶⁸

The debate over the State Church is the longest at the congress. Participants arguing for disestablishing the Church typically reason from a mildly autonomous perspective, stating religion as a private matter.²⁶⁹ The programme commission suggest, however, to remove the demand to abolish the State Church and the accompanying societal control over Church assets. Their motivation is that the Church used to be an institution for reactionary forces, which created a huge gap between labour movement and Church. Over time, though, the latter has become "ever more tolerant", and this has changed the view on the State Church.²⁷⁰

Commission representative K.J. Olsson assumes at the congress that "democratic society" would wish to control the Church also in the future, and it would therefore be unwise to cut the state-Church ties. Instead, he wishes to keep the State Church, modernize it, reform it, democratize it and, to the greatest extent possible, use it to create a better society and make citizens "loyal and faithful to the democratic idea and democratic order".²⁷¹ The programme

²⁶⁵ Ibid. 136.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. 138f.

²⁶⁷ "...uppenbarligen strider mot fakta", "...föräldraförtryck, som jag inte kan godtaga", ibid. 145.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. 450.

²⁶⁹ Z. Höglund, Frans Severin, ibid. 159.

²⁷⁰ "allt mer tolerant", ibid. 151.

²⁷¹ "...bli lojala och trogna mot den demokratiska tanken och den demokratiska ordningen", ibid.154.

commission thus expresses a view where the traditional Sacred-oriented authority of the Church is replaced by a new, although not clearly defined concept of democracy.

Olsson also highlights the risk of revival movements within the State Church, such as the Schartau movement in Western Sweden, gaining influence and tightening its grip over individuals. Therefore, keeping the State Church is a better way to maintain control over church life.²⁷² Another argument raised is that the State Church has always worked to preserve the established order. Consequently, if the party actually would succeed in building a Social Democratic society, it would be valuable for Social Democracy to keep the State Church.²⁷³

This debate also reveals hostile attitudes towards other Christian denominations. Frans Severin from the party board suggests that the State Church, mainly consisting of “religiously indifferent” people, could function as a bulwark against “sects”, i.e. free churches, whose influence he hopes to reduce.²⁷⁴ Erik Ståhl from Jönköping, centre of the Swedish Bible-belt, describes these churches negatively, and argues for keeping the State Church. His explicit argument is that as the party demands societal control over everything else, why should they relinquish the control that they now have over such a central societal factor as religion?²⁷⁵ Another speaker does describe the free churches positively, but only when viewed as joint partners to Social Democracy in their opposition towards “faith in authority”, above all the State Church.²⁷⁶

One speaker describes the Church as an institution that Social Democrats of principle should condemn, and portrays church participation as contrary to the party programme.²⁷⁷ Party board representative Z. Höglund shows frustration over religious renaissance tendencies during the World War, and if the party could manage to abolish the State Church, he hopes that such movements can be stopped.²⁷⁸ Nancy Eriksson also rejects these tendencies as “rather impudent behaviour”, religious “drivel” and “rather rude abuse”²⁷⁹, while another speaker warns that if the party cannot hinder Church influence, they risk having to open the

²⁷² Ibid. 155.

²⁷³ Edvin Gustafsson, *ibid.* 161.

²⁷⁴ “religiöst indifferent”, “sekt”, *ibid.* 160.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. 177f.

²⁷⁶ E. Kumm, *ibid.* 166f.

²⁷⁷ Karl Salomonsson, *ibid.* 162f.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. 167f.

²⁷⁹ “ganska fräckt uppträdande”, “dravel”, ”ganska oförsämt övergrepp”, *ibid.* 168f.

next party congress with a church service.²⁸⁰ Stellan Arvidson concludes that the preservation of a State Church system would result in a church offensive, a development that he imagines would be viewed negatively within the party.²⁸¹

K.J. Olsson does not reject the critical attitudes, but shares the concern over the new dynamic among some Stockholm churches, and over dictatorial powers in some free churches. Olsson rejects any general anti-religious bias within Social Democracy, but he still represents a negative attitude towards organized Christianity.²⁸²

Another conclusion from the debate is how several speakers praise the party for having managed to decrease Christian influences over school education and in social welfare.²⁸³ It is also expressed that Social Democrats should enter church politics to fight for the party's social and economic programme, and to counter religious tendencies not supported by the party.²⁸⁴

After a long debate, the congress decides with 240 votes to 101 to keep the demand to abolish the State Church system.²⁸⁵ Altogether, the debate displays a very church-critical stance, at least when regarded to play any role of authority. However, the view can also be described as critical towards the Sacred in general, unless it is controlled by the egalitarian, democratic values of Social Democracy.

A new area in the 1944 programme is the inclusion of family policy, although not particularly radical at this point. The programme only states that society shall support family creation and housing, and provide arrangements to facilitate housework, along with provision, care and upbringing of children. These points are adopted by the congress without debate.²⁸⁶ However, during another debate, Alva Myrdal proposes exchanging the suggested programme formulation of giving special support to families with a large burden of rearing children, for "Societal arrangements to reduce the burden of childrearing". Her explicit reason for this is

²⁸⁰ Forsberg, Wilhelm, *ibid.* 170.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* 174.

²⁸² *Ibid.* 170-172.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* Hernfrid Bark, 165; Nancy Eriksson, 169.

²⁸⁴ Z. Höglund, *ibid.* 167f.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 188. The wording to abolish the "State Church system" is suggested by Stellan Arvidson, to avoid giving the impression of desiring to abolish religion *per se*, but rather the organized relation between state and church. *Ibid.* 175.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 234. This indicates that the autonomous perspective from the Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, studied more in detail later, had not yet gained enough support to enter the program.

“to give the party more freedom for reforms”.²⁸⁷ This suggestion gets endorsed by Prime Minister Hansson and is adopted by the congress, and can be considered a small shift of focus, away from the families and towards the state.²⁸⁸

The programme revisions, programme commission protocols and congress debates show that any focus on autonomy is limited in the 1944 programme; the focus is still very much based on a Marxist view of society. The delegates’ view on religion, regardless of their position regarding the State Church, is generally negative. Those who wish to keep the State Church typically argue for the need to maintain control over the Church, while those who propose a disestablishment argue for personal freedom or privatization of religion.

There are no direct arguments for all-out autonomy in the debate, but repeated criticism appears against authoritarian tendencies. A few delegates are positive towards Christianity, but the general attitude is explicitly negative towards the Sacred, and a decreased Church influence over different societal sectors is generally praised.

6.1.3 1960: The individual becomes the centre

By 1960, the Social Democrats have ruled Sweden for 28 years, with Tage Erlander as Prime Minister for 14 years. This programme displays a far less utopian Marxist perspective. Rather, it is characterized by Erlander’s opinion to avoid strong tensions between programme and practical policy.²⁸⁹ Still, a utopian perspective is found also in this programme. It is, however, a new utopia.

The process preceding the programme revision does not indicate any new perspective. On the contrary, the 1955 pamphlet *Program, praxis, perspektiv* leans on Wigforss, and focuses on continued socialization.²⁹⁰ The 1956 congress motion from Hans Hagnell and Nils Kjellgren, which leads to the launch of a new programme revision, points in no other direction.²⁹¹

Prime Minister Erlander explains at the first meeting of the programme commission in 1957, that he sees two areas as most important in this programme revision: issues concerning capital

²⁸⁷ “...samhälleliga åtgärder för att minska barnförsörjningsbördan” “...att ställa partiet friare inför reformer”, *ibid.* 254.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 358.

²⁸⁹ Enn Kokk, in Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 51.

²⁹⁰ Torsten Nilsson, "Med sikte på framtiden," in *Program, praxis, perspektiv* (Brevskolan/ABF, 1955), 28-32.

²⁹¹ *Congress protocol 1956*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1956), 243-246.

and economic distribution, plus the future democratization and the individual citizen's active participation in society.²⁹²

The programme commission members are Erlander, Torsten Nilsson, Gunnar Sträng, Ragnar Edenman and Nils Kellgren.²⁹³ Kaj Björk, Nancy Eriksson, Hilding Johansson, Hjalmar Mehr and Brotherhood Movement chairman Åke Zetterberg were also suggested as members but did not receive enough votes from the congress. However, Erlander suggested, referring particularly to complaints that no Christian had been selected, that all these ought to be included as alternate members, and congress decided accordingly.²⁹⁴

Even though neither of them is formally elected to the programme commission, both Wigforss and Olof Palme regularly attend its meetings.²⁹⁵ Before the commission, Wigforss argues the necessity of understanding the historical Marxist analysis, which he describes as the ideological backdrop for the previous programme, and any formulations concerning collective ownership must be unambiguous.²⁹⁶ After this, Wigforss disappears from the process.

Despite Erlander's and Wigforss' more traditional remarks, the revision will take another route. One particularly central text in this process is *Framtidens socialism* (Socialism of the Future, 1957), by Clas-Erik Odhner, committee secretary at the Labour Movement Union, and loosely connected to the commission. The subtitle of the book declares itself explicitly as a contribution to the programme debate. The content becomes a striking example of the struggle between competing discourses within Social Democracy, and the author states that changing times call for a thorough revision.²⁹⁷

Odhner establishes some ideological points to form a basis for future socialism: "*Man must be the measure of all things*" and, as Socialism is a movement of freedom, it is also "*principally an opponent of authority*".²⁹⁸ Still, the book also contains the opposite perspective, calling for

²⁹² Programme commission protocol, 2 May 1957. All sources from the 1960 revision process in SLMA 1889/F/9/3.

²⁹³ *Program för vår tid: Socialdemokratiska Programkommissionens förslag till nytt politiskt program*, Tiden (Stockholm, 1959), 5f.

²⁹⁴ *Congress protocol 1956*, 444-447.

²⁹⁵ Programme commission protocols, 18 December 1957, 23 October 1958, 8 December 1958, 30 January 1959, 13 February 1959, 20 March 1959, 28 April 1959, 12 May 1959, 7 September 1959.

²⁹⁶ Programme commission protocol 30 January, 13 February 1959.

²⁹⁷ Clas-Erik Odhner, *Framtidens socialism: Ett inlägg i programdebatten* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1957), 16. Here, Odhner mentions that he disagrees with Kellgren, economist at LO, who at this time assumes that the general principles can remain, while Odhner proposes a revision. As they later will write the central wording together, it appears as the latter eventually convinces the former.

²⁹⁸ "*måste människan vara alltings mått*" "*i princip en motståndare till överheten*", *ibid.* 20, 24.

brotherhood within human primary groups (family included), discussing the negative aspects of dissolved family ties and replacement by impersonal secondary groups, and mentioning man's need for spiritual and material relations with the outside world.²⁹⁹ Odhner builds largely on psychologist Erich Fromm, who claims that the modern, capitalist system has deprived man of his previous context of religion, relations, et cetera, and that the solution lies in making man more independent, while also creating stronger secondary groups.³⁰⁰

Still, Odhner mainly leans towards a new, autonomous perspective that will come to dominate the final programme. The individual person must be the centre, not the system; the workplace should facilitate the development of the individual personality; people must have new possibilities of freedom and personal development; people in a socialist culture should be independent, liberated and self-conscious, and strengthen independent thought and self-expression.³⁰¹ He expresses that "our only chance" to directly change the direction of society is to reform the school system and alter school culture, which Odhner describes as too much characterized by "dependence and belief in authority."³⁰²

His conclusion is that the party has in practice already left the Marxist idea of socialization, and must therefore give way to new, autonomous goals. Starting out from the slogan of freedom, equality and brotherhood, Odhner raises the need to oppose the oppressor of freedom, "*wherever he may be found*", stating the need for Socialists to stand in the front "*for the freedom of the individual against all irresponsible exercise of power*", whatever this may be.³⁰³

This book from the beginning of the revision process, indicates that religion has had its time, that a need for some kind of community still exists, but that modern man needs a new goal, which should mainly be expressed under an autonomous umbrella.

A defining shift in the 1960 programme revision is the exchange of central agent in society; from class to individual – a focus which will be maintained and increased during coming years. Some expressions regarding the relationship between state and individual also reveal an opening for a state-individualistic perspective.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. 29, 147, 149.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. 153, 164.

³⁰¹ Ibid. 86, 133, 165, 176, 184.

³⁰² "vår enda möjlighet" "osjälvständighet och auktoritetstro", ibid. 179.

³⁰³ "var han än är att finna" "för individens frihet mot all oansvarig maktutövning", ibid. 188.

The first sentence of the general principles states that the ideals of democracy should “enable the individual to have a rich and meaningful life”.³⁰⁴ Wigforss’ expressions, including the 1944 formulation of independence, are kept in the introductory paragraph, although with a vital change of direction: where Wigforss imagined the independence of the working class from asset owners, the focus is now widened, not only in scope but also to the groups included, into “the citizens are liberated from dependence of any kind on power groups beyond their control”.³⁰⁵ This gives a distinctly stronger autonomous focus than in the 1944 programme, which maintained a generally stronger focus on community.

There is a process leading up to this formulation, although not between the permanent commission members, but rather among substitutes and others. Several suggestions close to Wigforss’ more orthodox Marxism can be found in the archived material. Kaj Björk suggests two alternatives: “the majority are liberated from dependence on every type of power-possessing minority”, and “...every type of power-possessing and uncontrolled minority”.³⁰⁶ Hilding Johansson suggests that the majority be liberated from dependence on “a minority of capital owners and a class-based order of society”.³⁰⁷ At this point, Wigforss makes his final interjection in the discussion, defending the present Marxist wording and interpretation.³⁰⁸ Still, the stronger autonomous focus wins acceptance with suggestions from Nils Kjellgren and Clas-Erik Odhner, ranging through “liberated from dependence on every kind of uncontrolled power group” to “liberated from dependence on any kind of power groups beyond their control”.³⁰⁹ The latter also becomes the final programme wording.³¹⁰

The goal to build “a community of citizens, cooperating on the foundation of freedom and equality” is kept as before, with the word “citizens” only replaced by “humans”.³¹¹ The effort to balance autonomy and community reappears in a new wording summarizing the socialistic values of “freedom and equality, cooperation and brotherhood”, combined with the striving to “offer people a freer and richer life”.

³⁰⁴ “ge varje individ möjlighet till ett rikt och meningsfyllt liv.” Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 52.

³⁰⁵ “medborgarna frigöres från beroende av varje slags maktgrupper utanför deras kontroll”, *ibid.* 52.

³⁰⁶ “...flertalet frigöres från beroende av varje slags maktägande minoriteter”, ”... varje slags maktägande och okontrollerade mindretal” Suggestions to programme commission, dated 24 January, 13 March 1959.

³⁰⁷ Suggestion to programme commission, dated 7 February 1959.

³⁰⁸ Ernst Wigforss, Suggestion to programme commission, dated 13 February 1959.

³⁰⁹ “...frigöres från beroendet av varje slags okontrollerade maktgrupper”, “...frigöres från beroende av varje slags maktgrupper utanför dess kontroll” Suggestions to programme commission, dated 13 March, 24 april 1959.

³¹⁰ *Program för vår tid: Socialdemokratiska Programkommissionens förslag till nytt politiskt program*. 9.

³¹¹ Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 52.

The rest of the general principles continues similarly. The focus on Marxism has given way to *freedom* as a central theme, although no longer from a class perspective, but in an individualistic sense. Social Democracy wishes to “increase people’s freedom to more and more areas”.³¹² The party also wishes to create a society that allows space for the individuality of each person. Even the traditional socialist focus on equality and equal chances has now been redefined to “above all” signify the individual’s “right and opportunity to develop oneself according to one’s personal disposition”.³¹³

The explicit goal for Social Democracy is described as “shaping a society, which provides space for each person’s individuality and needs of expression”, a society intended to “shape free, independent and creative human beings”.³¹⁴ Like the introductory remark about liberating citizens from dependence on other power groups, these phrases will become central, as they are repeatedly referred to when actors argue for increased autonomy in other areas.

The archived material does not reveal who introduced this highly significant formulation. It does not appear in Kaj Björk’s and Hilding Johansson’s final draft, and first appears in a document by Hjalmar Mehr. On the other hand, Mehr’s congress speech is a strong defence of socialism, rather than individualism.³¹⁵ Therefore, the question of the authorship of this exact phrase must remain open.

Concepts like solidarity and cooperation still appear in the general principles, but they are described as prerequisites for people’s demand for freedom and their striving to shape their own lives. These wordings clearly show that autonomy has become a central part in the Social Democratic policy in the new era. This is also the commission’s motivation before the party’s executive committee for suggesting these changes in the political programme.³¹⁶

The political programme of 1960 shows some alterations from earlier versions, mainly in accordance with the general principles. School education has changed from “undenominational” to “objective”, but the individualistic focus is apparent, not least in the commission’s motivation that schools should not “force final opinions on anyone”, either in

³¹² “...vidga människornas frihet till allt fler områden”, *ibid.* 56.

³¹³ “...rätten och möjligheten att få utveckla sig efter sin personliga linje och sina egna anlag”, *ibid.*

³¹⁴ “...forma en samhällsmiljö, som ger plats för varje individs egenart och uttrycksbehov”, ”dana fria, självständiga och skapande människor”, *ibid.* 59.

³¹⁵ *Congress protocol 1960*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1960), 261-264.

³¹⁶ Referral document before the party executive committee, 3 February 1959, Point 7.

religious or political matters.³¹⁷ The programme states that all education and conveying of knowledge shall “promote independence and ability of cooperation, as well as found a democratic view of life”.³¹⁸ The programme commission explicitly explains this wording as resting on the aim in the general principles to shape free and independent citizens.³¹⁹ The point about scientific research follows the same pattern of an effort to balance independence and community, with independence constantly appearing first, and where the purpose of research is “the free development of personality and people’s adjustment to society”.³²⁰

The debate on the Church-state relationship has already been practically resolved by the party no longer calling for the abolishment of the State Church. Instead, the programme states that all religious practice should rest on principles of democracy, freedom of religion and the foundation of free will. The commission’s motivations are few and unprecise, only referring to freedom of religion, which is undefined both in this and previous programmes. The only ideological motivation is to underline “the integrity of the individual in this area”.³²¹

During the congress debate, Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Ragnar Edenman, who has written the new formulation, admits openly that this is a compromise to evade the question of the abolishment of the State Church.³²² He also explains the historical background, how the working class since its beginning viewed Church and religion as “opium for the people” – a representative of the upper class and the conservative movement, and therefore a natural enemy to socialists. However, he also underlines that the party has since its beginning evaded stances against religion *per se*, but argued that religion should be a private matter.³²³ When discussing the relationship between state and Church, he regularly refers to “freedom of religion”, without further definition.

Minister Edenman refers to Arthur Engberg as a central figure in the party’s embracing of the State Church, quoting Engberg’s line of reasoning, “Why should we de-socialize one of the few areas where we have actually succeeded?”. He also presents warning examples from other nations, where talk of Christianity in society “awakens immediate suspicion of a

³¹⁷ “...påtvunga någon färdiga åsikter”, *Program för vår tid*, 43.

³¹⁸ Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. Point 8.

³¹⁹ *Program för vår tid*, 42.

³²⁰ Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. Point 10.

³²¹ *Program för vår tid*, 46.

³²² *Congress protocol 1960*, 328, 336.

³²³ *Ibid.* 328f.

reactionary and conservative social policy”.³²⁴ Edenman also mentions in passing that he suspects the congress to be rather much in consensus to keep Christianity as a school subject, now that Church influence has been removed from school administration.³²⁵ This matter would, however, be reversed just a few years later. The rest of the debate deals exclusively with the question of state control over the Church, after which the congress adopts the new formulation.³²⁶

One point of observation is that none of the reportedly Christian substitutes in the commission ever invoke explicitly Christian or wider religious arguments or positions in their written referrals but appear to have accepted a secular mindset.³²⁷

The Marxist ideal regarding distribution of resources remains, although further weakened. Family policy is still not particularly radical; it is only stated that the party recommends an active family policy and a child-friendly society. Concerning family relations, the programme limits itself to promoting support of parents in their role as trainers of the young. However, a criticism of authority in the sense of tradition is expressed by stating that “prejudice with its roots in the past” has tied women to family-caring duties and acted as resistance against work-life equality.³²⁸

After the final round of referral, the commission adds the undefined phrases “active family policy” and “sex education”.³²⁹ The archived material does not reveal who presented these additions which provide an opening for future changes. Nancy Eriksson presents only one written suggestion during the commission work, where she argues for a community-critical perspective, opposing the “traditional bondage to family-caring duties”.³³⁰ At the congress, she specifically highlights the aim to create free and independent persons, expressing her wish that this vision should influence the period until the next party congress, and result in a more radical view on women’s issues.³³¹ Concerning the programme suggestions for family policy,

³²⁴ ”Varför skall vi avsocialisera ett av de få områden, där vi verkligen har lyckats?”, ”...väcker omedelbara misstankar om en reaktionär och konservativ socialpolitik”, *ibid.* 329.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* 329.

³²⁶ *Ibid.* 338

³²⁷ Suggestions to the programme commission, *passim*.

³²⁸ “Fördomar med rötter i en gången tid” Misgeld, *Socialdemokratins program 1897 till 1990*. 53.

³²⁹ Socialdemokraterna, “Socialdemokratiska Programkommissionens slutliga förslag till politiskt program” *Tiden*, 1960), 3, and Point 25.

³³⁰ “den traditionella bundenheten vid familjevårdande uppgifter” Suggestion to the programme commission, undated.

³³¹ *Congress protocol 1960*, 265.

nobody takes the floor for debate, and the formulations on family policy are adopted without discussion.³³²

Olof Palme presents no written suggestion before the commission, although he is often present and occasionally makes oral remarks. Nevertheless, in the congress debate on the general principles, Palme expresses satisfaction that he, as representative of the party's Youth Association, has inspired the commission. He also expresses delight that the programme "means a radicalization of the party policy in central areas". He does not explicitly mention how and where, but it is apparent that Palme applauds the new direction and reminds the congress to keep its utopian ideals high and "not to let the connection to practical reality obscure and weaken Utopia".³³³

In sum, the general principles of the 1960 programme take a strongly autonomous turn. This enlarged focus on autonomy is evident also in the political programme, especially regarding education, although still not in family policy. A distinct change in an autonomous direction can be traced during the process leading up to the final programme draft. The attitude towards the Sacred is not explicitly antagonistic in the debate, but the individualistic focus can still be seen in the formulation that all religious practice ought to rest on a foundation of free will. Minister Edenman displays an attitude towards Christianity that is mostly negative. The weak support for the Christian candidates and the general tone in the debate also reveals a general view of secularism as the default Social Democratic position.

The overall impression is that the initial focus on economic distribution from Erlander, and even more from Wigforss, is overrun during the process. Instead, an individualistic focus, with personal autonomy and the ideals of democracy replace the utopian Marxist goals as the ultimate foundation of Social Democratic policy. It is not entirely clear which actors were most active in performing this turn during the process. Claes-Erik Odhner played a key part, both through his book and the new wording in the introduction that he shaped together with Nils Kjellgren, moving away from a Marxist and more community-centred view and into the autonomous perspective. Nancy Eriksson and Olof Palme were also two of the most prominent participants to praise the new radicalization, pointing forward to how these principles would guide the party in coming years.

³³² Ibid. 353.

³³³ "innebär en radikalisering av partiets politik på väsentliga punkter", "att anknytningen till den praktiska verkligheten inte får fördunkla och försvaga utopien", *ibid.* 269.

6.1.4 1975: *Ultra-progressivism in full bloom*

The 1975 programme is preceded by an extensive process through the party system. The Social Democrats have by now ruled Sweden for 43 years, and the programme commission is led by Prime Minister Olof Palme. The other permanent members are Erlander, Inga Thorsson, Gunilla Nordqvist (who soon moves abroad, leaving her seat to Krister Wickman) and Maj-Britt Sandlund.³³⁴

The introduction of the general principles keeps the wordings from 1960 almost word for word, with the small exception of “brotherhood” being replaced by “solidarity”. The central goal to free citizens from dependence of any kind on power groups beyond their control stands exactly as before. The introduction is also accepted without debate and can thus be considered fully implemented within the party.³³⁵

The concept of *freedom* remains very central, preceding equality, solidarity, democracy and labour as subheadings under the general principles. The programme contains an extensive discussion on the benefits of planned economy, although not with the same Marxist focus as before, but rather leaning towards an individualized focus. Planned economy is now described to rest on “the forms of ownership, enterprise and innovation that best serve people’s demand for progress and welfare”. The central goal from 1944 of building a “community of free and equal citizens”, removed in 1960, now returns, although reformulated to a “community of free and independent people”. This change enhances the message that autonomy have overtaken equality as a centre of Social Democratic policy.

The pattern is, however, ambiguous. Palme’s initial congress speech highlights solidarity and classical Marxist values.³³⁶ Still, this solidarity is above all discussed in international terms, not as community within family or civil society. The end of Palme’s speech displays a similar ambiguity, describing socialism as both a freedom movement and a popular movement, with freedom, community and solidarity as central concepts.³³⁷ He also states that the programme commission’s work was formed around a central theme of “economic democracy and human participation”.³³⁸

³³⁴ Socialdemokraterna, "Reviderat förslag till nytt partiprogram" Tiden, 1975), 4.

³³⁵ *Congress protocol 1975*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1975), 152.

³³⁶ Ibid. 90, 108.

³³⁷ Ibid. 108.

³³⁸ “ekonomisk demokrati och medbestämmande för människorna”, ibid. 147.

The political programme keeps the same attitude towards religion as in 1960, although with the word “Church” replaced by “faith denominations”. The congress debate on church matters is quite short and without any explicit suggestions.³³⁹ This is largely a consequence of the government’s earlier decision not to proceed with Alva Myrdal’s government report, which called for disestablishing the State Church, but failed to gain acceptance in parliament and was therefore retracted. Apart from the brief debate on this programme point, discussions about religion are more or less non-existent in the 1300 pages of congress protocol.

The most important value-related change is found in education and – above all – family policy. Fifteen years have passed since the last programme revision, and large changes have in the meantime taken place in these two areas, something that becomes evident in the programme revisions.

The basic principle to promote independence and ability of cooperation in school education remains as before, but the 1975 programme increases the anti-authoritarian perspective, by demanding “student influence at all levels”. Lena Hjelm-Wallén represents the party board, and introduces the subject by stating that “democracy and equality” are the primary goals for Social Democratic education policy.³⁴⁰ She complains that school teaching is still characterized by a traditional mediation of knowledge, and postulates that a new distribution of resources will enable the party to “break up those conservative features that remain in school”.³⁴¹

A state-individualistic perspective can be traced in Hjelm-Wallén’s introduction as well as in another programme point, added during the congress, calling for society to take over the production of all textbooks in school. This suggestion is motivated by criticizing how existing books portray developing nations, ethnic groups, the labour movement and gender roles.³⁴² Before adoption, this suggestion is first dismissed by Hjelm-Wallén, who refers to the introduction of a new state textbook council with several Social Democratic delegates, which ought to ascertain that inspections are performed “in the way that we wish”.³⁴³

The programme also displays a wish to break free from gender roles, as school education and vocational guidance is demanded to contribute to gender equality in family, work life and

³³⁹ Ibid.1054-1062.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. 308.

³⁴¹ “...bryta upp de konservativa drag som finns kvar i skolan”, ibid. 309, 311.

³⁴² Gunnar Larsson, ibid. 319. Adopted suggestion, 348.

³⁴³ “på det sätt som vi vill”, ibid. 343.

society. Even stronger pushes for countering traditional gender roles are expressed during the congress debate, with suggestions for a gender quota in all school areas, and an increased focus on these issues in the education of parents and nursery school teachers.³⁴⁴

Regarding family policy, the 1975 revision makes a strongly autonomous turn. Responsible for this part in the commission are Maj-Britt Sandlund and Inga Thorsson, along with one male representative for each of the two passages in question.³⁴⁵ Sandlund also submits a special petition during the process of the commission, arguing that the report *The Family in the Future* (further analysed below) ought to form the basis for the party's family policy. She also specifically mentions the need to establish that all adult people shall be financially independent from one another, although with the even more radical formulation that all adults ought to be "financially independent from relatives".³⁴⁶ Here, Sandlund introduces the central formulation that independent individuals are to be viewed as the central units in family, taxation and social policy.³⁴⁷

During the round of referral, the demands for gender equality, often based on *The Family in the Future* were expressed "with an almost violent force" from a number of women's associations, highlighting demands for financial independence from relatives.³⁴⁸ However, these formulations do not appear in any versions from the programme commission, and no explanations are given to why. The same thing applies for other ultra-progressive demands suggested in the round of referral, such as the introduction of free contraceptives and legislation that would equalize all types of cohabitation.³⁴⁹ Reasons to avoid such formulations may be fear of public reactions, internal discussions or other things; the sources give no explicit information on this.

In the congress debate on family policy, Palme's initial speech states that the core goal for this area, and indeed the largest priority for the whole society, is the extension of public childcare. The rest of Palme's speech is, however, not as autonomy-driven as other debaters. Even

³⁴⁴ Ulla Olander, *ibid.* 332. This suggestion is rejected by Hjelm-Wallén as too weak, as these efforts should be used in all areas. ³⁴⁶; Lena Boström 329. She later retracts the suggestion, after Hjelm-Wallén states that there are also other methods to reach the desired gender equality. ³⁴³ Boström then argues for a weaker formulation, which Lena Hjelm-Wallén rejects, as this is already expressed in the suggested wording. ³⁴⁶.

³⁴⁵ Förslag till arbetsplan för tiden 11 februari-11 mars, SLMA 1889:F/9/6.

³⁴⁶ "ekonomiskt oberoende av anhöriga" Suggestion to the programme commission, 16 April 1974, SLMA 1889:F/9/6.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ "med nästan våldsam kraft" Enn Kokk, *Program och politik: Resultat av partienkäten*, 22 March 1974, SLMA 1889: F/9/7, 36.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 49.

though he supports the programme formulations, he still maintains a somewhat traditional perspective and ends his speech by mentioning family community as an important value.³⁵⁰

Following Palme in the speaker's booth is Lisa Mattsson, representing the Women's Association. She connects to *The Family in the Future*, stating that its perspective has already achieved a dominating role in practical policy.³⁵¹ The rest of the extensive debate on family policy is dominated by the question of how to finance extended day care for children, and whether a six-hour working day and prolonged paternal leave is practically and financially feasible. Concerning the central ideological turn, though, neither pros nor cons are raised.³⁵² This fact signals that the ideas in the programme have indeed already won the acceptance that Lisa Mattsson describes.

Family policy takes in this programme a strong direction towards autonomy, arguing that society's family support is to be directed at the children, and that "family legislation, taxes and social policy are to be designed with respect to the family members being independent individuals". Despite the autonomous turn in the 1960 programme, this still maintained a rather traditional, community-oriented view of the family. Here, the 1975 programme makes a leap into ultra-progressivism, understood as *the striving for an autonomous liberation from all factors understood as reflecting some kind of authority, where this utopian striving trumps all other values and practical challenges*. Some of these changes are introduced very late, in the programme committee's last revision after the final round of referral. Unfortunately, these changes are not motivated in words. In the archived material, a piece of paper with the new text is simply glued over the older version.³⁵³

The programme commission's final version also makes some changes to Sandlund's original suggestion that legislation and financial systems shall "build on the foundation" that "spouses" are independent individuals, exchanging this with the wording that these systems shall "consider" that "the family members" are independent individuals.³⁵⁴ Moreover, the previous expression of creating "a child-friendly society" is removed in the final version. The ideological implication of the latter changes is somewhat ambiguous, but the exchange of

³⁵⁰ *Congress protocol 1975, 755-770.*

³⁵¹ *Ibid.* 770.

³⁵² *Ibid.* 772-834.

³⁵³ Final draft from the programme commission, 11 April 1975, SLMA 1889:F9/9.

³⁵⁴ "grundas på förutsättningen att makarna är självständiga individer", "utformas med hänsyn till att familjemedlemmarna är självständiga individer", Socialdemokraterna, "Förslag till nytt partiprogram" (Tiden, 1974); Socialdemokraterna, "Reviderat förslag till nytt partiprogram." Point 23.

“spouses” to “family members” is an explicit change in a more autonomous direction, as this stresses that not only the parents but also the children are considered independent.

All in all, the individualistic and autonomous focus in 1960 becomes even stronger in the programme of 1975. In certain areas, this does not represent a new visionary change, but is rather a consequence of the radical increase of individual autonomy already implemented in school education and – above all – family policy. Church and Christianity have by this time become almost invisible areas in the debate, which indicates an understanding of secularization as a completed process. The few times that the Sacred realm is mentioned, it is placed under the same individualistic umbrella as other topics.

6.2 The non-socialist parties

Even if the Social Democrats exercised a strong hegemony over Swedish policy during this period, it is still vital for an understanding of the larger political discourse to study the programmes of the other three major parties, how they change their positions over time and whether these changes can be argued to precede or follow value-related changes among the Social Democrats.

The party *Bondeförbundet*, which initially represented farming communities, will be referred to as *the Agrarians*. In 1957, it changed its name to *Centerpartiet* (the Centre Party).

For the party with the non-ideological name *Folkpartiet* (the People’s Party), the English term *the Liberals* will be used. This name (*Liberalerna*) was used in the early 1900s, and was finally reinstated in 2015. The party also maintained a clearly Liberal ideological focus during the period. The current party organization stems from a 1934 merger between the more urban, often radical Liberal Party and the more rural and traditional Free-minded National Association, with a large representation within the free church movement.³⁵⁵

The party, which for most of the research period was called *Högerpartiet* (the Right Wing Party) and currently named *Moderata Samlingspartiet* – popularly *Moderaterna* (*Moderate Coalition Party/the Moderates*), will be referred to as *the Conservatives*. This English expression is, however, ambiguous, both because this group was in the early 1900s more a loose group of conservative parliamentarians than a formally organized party and also because the party over time moved in a more liberal direction, ending up in a liberal-

³⁵⁵ Nordin, *Sveriges moderna historia: Fem politiska projekt 1809-2019*, 202.

conservative ideology, which is still the party's position. *The Conservatives* is also the English translation used in Jan Hylén's dissertation of the evolution of the party during the 20th century, and will be used also here.³⁵⁶

As all other parties lived under the hegemony of the governing party, the following presentation will begin with the party in closest cooperation with the Social Democrats.

6.2.1 The Agrarians/Centre Party: Christianity and nation turning into liberalism

The Agrarians begin this period with a programme from 1933. They then adopt new programme versions in 1944, 1946 and 1951, until the party writes a new programme in 1959 under its new name the Centre Party, followed by a more extensive programme revision in 1970.

The 1933 programme has a strongly affirming attitude towards Christianity, naming it as the safest foundation for society, individuals and upbringing. This leads to the viewpoint that "Christian faith and view of life must be promoted and kept as a foundation for the upbringing of the Swedish people".³⁵⁷ Accordingly, the programme underlines that religious life must be allowed to develop unhindered by antireligious influences.³⁵⁸ It also has a very positive attitude towards family ties, stating that all forces that intend to dissolve these ties must be combated.³⁵⁹ This conservative view in the 1933 programme thus presents a both community- and authority-encouraging view on both religion and family, and also has a nationalistic and eugenic focus, aiming to defend the Swedish racial group from "inferior foreign racial elements".³⁶⁰

In the programme versions around the end of the Second World War, the Agrarians remain very positive towards Christianity as a faith and societal force. The 1944 programme keeps the demand that the Christian faith and worldview must be "strongly defended as foundational for the development of society".³⁶¹ The focus on families as a community is also strong: family policy should support young people to marry and build a home and family.³⁶² School

³⁵⁶ Hylén, *Fosterlandet främst* 271-274.

³⁵⁷ "måste kristen tro och livsåskådning främjas och bevaras som grundval för svensk folkuppfostran" *Bondeförbundets grundprogram*, (1934), II.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. III.

³⁶⁰ "mindervärdiga utländska raselement" Ibid., IV, XII.

³⁶¹ "kraftigt värnas såsom grundläggande för samhällets utveckling" *Handlingsprogram för Landsbygdspartiet Bondeförbundet*, (1944), 3.

³⁶² Ibid. 12

education should not only provide knowledge but, above all, shape character. And this character must rest upon “the unalienable values of Christianity”.³⁶³

The 1946 programme begins with the aim to build Swedish society on a “national and Christian foundation”.³⁶⁴ School education must find its basis in the Christian worldview and be directed at both formation of character and building of knowledge.³⁶⁵ Finally, the formulation from 1933 about fighting the destructive forces that wish to dissolve family ties is kept word for word.³⁶⁶

The 1951 version maintains the same basic foundation for society, with the small and religion-affirming change that the Christian basis of society now precedes the national one in the introductory sentence.³⁶⁷ “Freedom” appears in different contexts as a goal for the party, but it is pervadingly presented as a freedom expressed under responsibility.³⁶⁸ Civil society and communities are given a central role in the programme, where civil organizations should have the freedom to perform their work without interference from the state.³⁶⁹ Home and family are still described to be the foundations of society, and the need to battle family dissolving forces remains as before. The responsibility for fostering and caring for children is also explicitly described as always having to rest on the family itself.³⁷⁰

Regarding education, the Agrarians state that school education shall shape young people’s character and defend moral values and that the Christian worldview shall be the foundation. As above, there is a tendency towards individualism, insofar as the schools ought to shape people who can think and act freely, although still expressed under a sense of moral responsibility. This shaping is also suggested to take place in a cooperation between home, school and church.³⁷¹

In 1959, the new Centre Party displays an apparent wish to handle the challenges of a rapidly changing society. The party begins its first programme with three rhetorical questions that discuss how to find a sound balance – between modern technology and the spiritual and material welfare of individuals; between freedom and security; and how to build peace and

³⁶³ Ibid. 14.

³⁶⁴ ”nationell och kristen grundval” *Grundprogram för Landsbygdspartiet Bondeförbundet*, (1946), 3.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. 6.

³⁶⁶ Ibid. 7.

³⁶⁷ *Bondeförbundet, handlingsprogram*, (1951), 3.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. 3, 13.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. 5.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. 14f.

³⁷¹ Ibid. 15.

avoid war. The quite short programme argues that industrialized society has been harmful to family ties, and that society must work to strengthen these and give young people security and good norms.³⁷² This programme mirrors the Social Democratic discussion on individualism and equality, although for the Centre Party, the important balance is between the individual's need for freedom from collective measures and their need for financial security. Here, the party suggests socio-political reforms that provide security but without harming the individual's need for freedom.³⁷³

The very central position of Christianity has been somewhat downgraded. Instead of letting the introduction begin with establishing its central role, the introduction now concludes by affirming the Christian foundation of society, although this time more in passing.³⁷⁴ Religion still retains its central place in school education and culture, where the Christian worldview and its view on human dignity is said to represent an unalienable ethical asset. Christianity is also described as valuable for general knowledge and cultural heritage. Christianity shall be kept a school subject, and its teaching should "give a positive view on the Christian view of life".³⁷⁵

The positive attitude towards family remains, although not as strongly underlined as before. The destructive forces are still mentioned, although not as a factor to battle, but rather that society should work together to strengthen family ties and provide a good home environment. The possibility for mothers to care for their children themselves "must in all ways be promoted."³⁷⁶

In 1970, after a rapid secularization of the school system, the Centre Party programme has also become remarkably secularized, where the earlier strong references to Christianity are removed from the preamble. Instead, equal value and rights for all people has overtaken religion as the foundation for the party's policy.³⁷⁷ Indeed, the reference to Christianity as a foundation remains, but it appears in a discussion about a shrinking world, where people of different backgrounds meet and where the Christian worldview and humanism represent a view on human dignity that the party defends as a foundation and inalienable asset.³⁷⁸ Still,

³⁷² *Centerpartiets program*, (1959), 3.

³⁷³ *Ibid.* 6.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 7.

³⁷⁵ "ger en positiv inställning till den kristna livsåskådningen", *ibid.* 8.

³⁷⁶ "måste på allt sätt främjas", *ibid.* 10.

³⁷⁷ *Jämlikhet och trygghet i ett decentraliserat samhälle; Centerpartiets program*, (1970), 5.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 6.

this formulation is considerably more pluralistic and gives a weaker defence of Christianity compared to the earlier programmes.

In 1970, the Centre Party has also taken a more autonomous turn, where conservative ideals have been exchanged for liberal ones, stating that all societal work must be built upon four basic individual rights and be intended to “give each person opportunities to shape his or her life”.³⁷⁹ Community is indeed highlighted as a central value, to function as a help for the individual to develop and function in society.³⁸⁰

The programme has a decentralist view, where decisions are to be taken as close as possible to the individuals. Civil society and popular movements are praised as important actors that society should promote and support.³⁸¹

The earlier conservative view and praise of the family is, in the 1970 programme, considerably weakened. The programme merely points out that both parents now work outside the home and the Centre Party accepts individual taxation and the new social security systems, describing their family-political goals as ironing out differences in standards, along with creating a good environment for child rearing and promoting community for all.³⁸²

Likewise, the role of Christianity in school is weakened. Instead, democracy has been raised as the central value. Twice in the programme, this value is highlighted as especially vital, with pupil and student influence over education also twice mentioned as important. The central goals in school education are now described to be good knowledge, independent and critical thinking and the ability to cooperate.³⁸³

Lastly, the weakened authority of Christianity can, in 1970, also be seen in the Centre Party’s cultural policy. They state that religious practice and work must be guaranteed but that the cultural debate should give room for different positions in religious and other views, where the Christian view on human dignity is described as one basis (as opposed to *the* basis) for cultural policy.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ ”ge varje människa möjligheter att forma sin tillvaro”, *ibid.* 6.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 7.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.* 7f.

³⁸² *Ibid.* 35, 83-85.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* 58-62.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 55.

6.2.2 *The Liberals: Individualistic and mildly Christian*

Regarding values connected to this project, the Liberals typically take a middle position between the Social Democrats and the other two non-socialist parties. Compared to the Agrarians, the Liberals display considerably weaker support for the Christian faith, values and norms. The party programmes during this period date from 1934, 1944, 1962 and 1972. The party's liberal ideology quite naturally gives an individual-oriented focus, but proposals for an affirming autonomy do not appear until the end of the research period.

The programme of 1934 – the first for the merged party where one half was the Free-minded, Christian-inspired movement – begins by stating that the party's goal is the improvement of the spiritual, economic and social areas of life. Basic human freedoms, including equality for women are defended, while also checking what they call the “dysfunctions of democracy”.³⁸⁵

This programme displays no explicit autonomous tendencies, but regarding social policy, the programme underlines the need for everyone to support themselves and the trend of people without serious needs beginning to seek support from society should be stemmed.³⁸⁶ Thus, a form of individualism is proposed, but it is in the traditional economically inspired version of liberalism, rather than a directly autonomous perspective.

The final paragraph, on the spiritual and cultural health of the people, has a passage with a leaning towards authority in a nationalistic and also race-related sense, stating the need to counter the degeneration of traditions and of the racial group.³⁸⁷ Programme formulations about what worldview or ideology to promote is, however, rather hazy. Idealistic popular movements are to be supported, but cultural expressions of an “unsound life of pleasure and greed for profit” is to be battled.³⁸⁸ The only reference to church or Christianity in the programme is found in one sentence stating that the respect for spiritual, religious and ethical values should be maintained. This sentence also endorses defending and widening the important heritage in the shape of the “serious view of life (...) which in the Christian culture has its strongest hold”.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ ”demokratiens oarter” (the concept is not further explained), *Folkpartiets program*, (1934), 1.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 3.

³⁸⁷ ”sedernas urartning” ”folkstammens försämring”, *ibid.* 4.

³⁸⁸ ”ett osunt nöjesliv och ett vinstbegär”, *ibid.* 4.

³⁸⁹ ”allvarliga livssyn”, ”som i den kristna kulturen har sitt starkaste fäste”, *ibid.* 4.

The 1944 programme begins with the party wishing to defend the liberal values of freedom, justice and humanity, plus the respect of human dignity and the rights of the individual.³⁹⁰

The school system is suggested to prioritize the shaping of character and development of personality, although the programme does not state what worldview schools shall promote, apart from a “democratic education of citizens in accordance with the demands from home and social life”.³⁹¹

The final paragraph about the spiritual and physical health of the people is kept almost identical to the earlier version, including the race-related remark.³⁹²

The 1962 programme largely follows the same description of the party’s basic tenets as the previous programme. The introduction ends by describing that the hope for the future in liberalism is in covenant with the ideals from Christianity and humanism.³⁹³ When discussing the order of law, the programme mentions the same two values as the foundation to defend, namely Christianity and humanism.³⁹⁴

When stating its opinion on the relationship between state and Church, the programme limits itself to recommend the government committee on this matter to keep in mind the principles of freedom of religion, the liberty of faith denominations to freely decide on their own matters, the right of the individual to decide on religious membership, along with Sweden’s history and “the current community around the ethical values Christianity has promoted”.³⁹⁵ Apart from these considerations, the Liberals do not take any stand on faith, church and religious values.

In family policy, the 1962 programme expresses a quite community-based and family-oriented view, defending the rights of parents to care for the upbringing of their children. It also praises the work of housewives and promotes taxation and social policies that would make it easier for families to decide whether to live on one or two salaries.³⁹⁶

Regarding education, research and culture, the programme endorses what it in vague terms calls a “conscience-based view of life”, the development of a “spiritual culture” and “the

³⁹⁰ *Folkpartiets program*, (1944), 2.

³⁹¹ ”demokratisk medborgarfostran i enlighet med hemmets och samhällslivets krav”, *ibid.* 7.

³⁹² *Ibid.* 8.

³⁹³ *Folkpartiets program*, (1962), 7.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 8f.

³⁹⁵ ”den rådande gemenskapen kring etiska värden som kristendomen främjat”, *ibid.* 9f.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 11f.

understanding of spiritual quality”.³⁹⁷ All these expressions show some kind of openness towards a Sacred realm but without recommending any particular view.

The 1972 programme uses expressions quite similar to the Social Democrats, such as the subheading “Freedom in community”, under which the party states as a goal to “create equal chances for all to self-express”.³⁹⁸ The programme also warns against giving too much power to the state, writing that “society is the human community”.³⁹⁹ These wordings display a different conception of *society* than the Social Democrats express, and the programme clarifies this further by explaining that the individual is defended when society defends itself against the state.⁴⁰⁰

The formulations about Christianity and humanism in the judicial system are kept from the earlier programme, along with the loosely described view on the State Church and organized religion.⁴⁰¹ The programme does, however, underline the importance of popular movements and civil society, which the Liberals wish to support. In this context, the programme also states that the independence of faith denominations in relation to the state should be secured.⁴⁰²

In family policy, the 1972 programme displays a complex view. On one hand, it continues to underline the responsibility of parents, and it defends marriage as the dominating form of cohabitation. Families should be given larger freedom of choice regarding working hours, parental leave and family subsidies. On the other hand, the programme takes a more autonomous perspective, where marriage is explicitly described as “a form of voluntary cohabitation between independent individuals”, where individual taxation is now fully promoted.⁴⁰³

The party’s education policy follows this complex view. It repeats the standpoint that the family has the main responsibility for the upbringing of children and continues to use somewhat vague formulations, such as the goal to “give all individuals equal opportunities to

³⁹⁷ ”en samvetsbestämd livshållning”, ”den andliga kulturen”, ”förståelsen för andlig kvalitet”, *ibid.* 13-15.

³⁹⁸ *Liberal kurs: Folkpartiets program*, (1972), 8.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 9.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* 22.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.* 24f.

⁴⁰³ ”en form för frivillig samlevnad mellan självständiga individer”, *ibid.* 32, 63-65.

make the best of their circumstances”, promoting “spiritual and material progress” and a “conscience-based view of life”.⁴⁰⁴

In the cultural sphere, a more autonomous focus can be traced as the programme states that culture policy is to be broad-minded, open and tolerant, most explicitly described in the demand: “All tendencies towards monopolizing of values must be opposed.”⁴⁰⁵

If the Liberals appear to position themselves both in opposition but also somewhat close to the values conveyed by Social Democracy during this period, the ideological clash is – at least for several decades – more palpable among the Conservatives.

6.2.3 The Conservatives: Christian-traditional but weakening over time

In 1934, the Conservatives adopt a programme, then under the name *General Electoral League* (Allmänna Valmansförbundet). This programme lies close to their previous from 1919, and new ones are adopted in 1946, 1956 and finally in 1969, when the Right-Wing Party changes name to its present one, the Moderates.

The programme from 1934 has a conservative and nationalistic focus, promoting a strong state and free enterprise. As cornerstones in society, they name *home and family* and “*the Christian faith*, an upholding and purifying power in society, which is to be nurtured as our most valuable asset.”⁴⁰⁶ The final paragraph in the programme establishes the need for teaching Christianity in school, preservation of the Church and the explicit statement that the people of Sweden are a Christian people.⁴⁰⁷

In 1946, the party defines itself as being in opposition to the Social Democrats and Marxism, while defending the freedom of the individual. Ideologically, it positions itself as promoting a “conservative policy of progress, under the banner of freedom”.⁴⁰⁸ The party explains that their view of society and democracy includes distribution of responsibility to independent citizens, but the context of a conservative tradition indicates a different understanding of this

⁴⁰⁴ ”ge alla individer likvärdiga möjligheter att göra det bästa av sina förutsättningar”, ”andliga och materiella framsteg”, ”en samvetsbestämd livshållning”, *ibid.* 73, 77.

⁴⁰⁵ ”Alla tendenser till värdemonopolisering måste motarbetas.” *Ibid.* 82f.

⁴⁰⁶ den *kristna tron* en uppehållande och renande makt i samhället, vilken bör vårdas som vår dyrbaraste egendom” *Svenska högerens program, Allmänna valmansförbundet*, (1934), 3.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 4.

⁴⁰⁸ ”konservativ framstegspolitik i frihetens tecken” *Högern vill...: Högerens handlingsprogram*, (1946), 1.

independence than the view that will soon come out in full bloom among the Social Democrats.⁴⁰⁹

The programme puts itself in historical context and argues that the World War was not – as the socialists declare – caused by material causes. Instead, it was the result of Western culture having torn down its Christian foundation, whereafter a modern form of paganism gave way to nazism and communism. Instead, the Conservatives propose “a Christian rebirth”.⁴¹⁰ The programme places Christianity above politics, declaring that conservatism is a political ideology, although it must rest on Christian values, and this must be taken into consideration when judging societal matters.

The values presented include the following: a Christian view on the individual human, the Christian commandment of love and a culturally conservative view, based on a Christian foundation, in opposition to cultural radicalism. The programme further argues that the will of the Swedish people is to live in a Christian society, reflected in both the State Church and the free denominations, defending the “inner freedom” of the State Church, the independence of congregations and teaching of Christianity in schools. The focus on freedom and independence for both church and individual is hereby expressed, but very clearly under a Christian-Sacred umbrella.⁴¹¹

In family policy, the programme criticizes the environment around the entertainment business, underlining that society should help young people to build families and that schools should support families in the upbringing of their children.⁴¹²

The 1956 programme defines the Conservatives (under the name of the Right-Wing Party) as a party of progress, founded on conservatism. It repeats the previous writing that the Swedish people are a *Christian people* and that “the Christian faith is an indispensable, supporting and purifying power in society.”⁴¹³ The quite short programme keeps the same focus as the previous one, describing home and family as cornerstones in society, that these have the main

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. 1f.

⁴¹⁰ ”en kristen pånyttfödelse”, ibid. Article I.

⁴¹¹ ”inre frihet”, ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid. Article XV, XVI.

⁴¹³ ”den kristna tron är en oumbärlig, uppehållande och renande kraft i samhället.” *Högerpartiets principprogram* (1956), Preamble.

responsibility for the upbringing of children and that society should shape population policy, taxation and housing policy in order to strengthen the family.⁴¹⁴

The necessity of securing the freedom of the Church of Sweden is maintained and further explained, stating that all faith denominations should have “the right to act in accordance with their character”, that the Church of Sweden shall be a free folk church, working together with the state for a Christian education of the people. It is underlined that the Church of Sweden shall own full authority over its inner life and play a key role in all decisions on the relationship between state and Church.⁴¹⁵ A small opening for a more autonomous perspective is found in the area of education, where the programme states that Christianity shall be taught, although with respect for those with a dissident view.⁴¹⁶

In 1969, the programme for the newly formed Moderate Party follows largely the same direction that the Centre Party underwent during the same period. The party continues to define itself in the conservative tradition, working for societal development that can satisfy individual persons. The reference to Christianity is kept in the introduction, although in a more inconspicuous position preceded by humanism and reformulated as “the cultural view and ethical norms for human coexistence that build on Christianity”.⁴¹⁷

Other areas in the programme follow the same pattern: references to Christianity and family remain, but in a weakened form. The party underlines the importance of family community, that parents have the main responsibility for childcare and fostering, and that each family must find the form of life which best fits the family.⁴¹⁸ However, they also propose a society of “independent and active citizens”, with a high degree of personal choice of values and ways of life.⁴¹⁹

Another slightly weakened position is found in the formulation that the Church of Sweden’s own viewpoint regarding the relation between state and Church “must be given great importance”. The need for a Christian education of the people is replaced by arguing that state and municipalities “should take a positive attitude towards ecclesiastical and religious work”, along with the demand that both school and culture should provide the understanding that

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. §13.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. §16.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. §14.

⁴¹⁷ ”den kultursyn och de etiska normer för mänsklig samlevnad som bygger på kristendomen” *Partiprogram Moderata samlingspartiet: Samverkan, rättvisa, ansvar*, (1969), 3.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. 4, 30f.

⁴¹⁹ ”självständiga och aktiva medborgare.” Ibid. 17.

ethics and traditions in Sweden rest on a Christian tradition.⁴²⁰ And finally, the same effort to move the value balance in school education is expressed in the wording that “Christianity obviously has a central position”, while also demanding that school education should give an all-round description of different views of life.⁴²¹

6.3 Party programmes – concluding comparison

As the totally dominating party during this period, the Social Democratic party programmes must be considered the most important to analyse, in order to understand both the ideological foundations and changes in Sweden during the 20th century. The textual analysis of these programmes shows a clear pattern with one pivotal change of perspective around 1960. The wider analysis also shows that the other parties over time conceded large parts of their previous opposition, and by the 1970s they had largely adopted central facets of the secular individualism propagated by Social Democracy.

At the beginning of the period, the Social Democrats appeared as a strict representative of reformistic socialism. The focus on community is central in the 1920 and 1944 programmes, although clearly in a Marxist version, where this community is understood as class-based, rather than connected to other types of community. Over time, though, most notably in the 1960 and 1975 programme revisions, the party moves in a distinctly autonomous direction, where the vision to “shape free, independent and creative human beings” becomes an ideological core, around which the rest of the party policy takes shape.

A striving for community and solidarity returns every now and then also in the programmes and congress debates in 1960 and 1975, although often expressed in an international perspective, rather than in the form of family and civil society. Altogether, the balance has definitely tipped over to the autonomous side of the scale during the end of the research period.

This Social Democratic position becomes even clearer when looking at authority, which is regularly confronted in antagonistic terms, regardless of whether this comes from religion, school or family. Independence becomes the goal to strive for and, as a consequence of this, authority becomes a factor to battle.

⁴²⁰ ”måste tillmätas stor betydelse”, ”bör intaga en positiv hållning till kyrkligt och religiöst arbete”, *ibid.* 15, 17.

⁴²¹ ”kristendomen självfallet måste inta en central plats”, *ibid.* 17.

Regarding the realm of the Sacred, the Social Democratic programmes never describe Christianity in a positive light. The completely dominating religio-political theme for them is whether or not to keep the State Church. Whenever religion in general appears in the programme, it is stated that this shall be expressed upon the foundation of free will. Still, the congress debates do reveal deeper value discussions, where religion, especially when uncontrolled by the state, is mainly described in negative terms. Thus, the Social Democrat view on the Sacred can largely be described as principally hostile, and therefore practically necessary to keep under some kind of state control.

The party's attitude towards the State Church may cause some confusion as it may, at first glance, give the impression of an opposition towards autonomy. When evaluating the party's general position on religion, though, it becomes apparent that the stance to keep the State Church may rather be understood as a wish to keep religion under the party's control. This is not because they view Christianity as very important; on the contrary, the congress debates reveal a generally negative view on organized religion, and sometimes also on religion in general. Thus, the party attitude can rather be described as taking necessary precautions to keep religion under control in order to prevent the State Church from coming under some kind of Sacred authority, rather than under the state. This attitude does not change considerably over time. The main change deals with how the party should deal pragmatically with the fact that a Lutheran State Church exists. With the revision processes of 1960 and 1975, it is also apparent that no voice any longer remains to lift a religious perspective in the debate. Therefore, processes of secularization can be argued to first reflect a wish to put organized Christianity under governmental power, and later, to view the Sacred as a realm no longer relevant.

The changes in the Social Democratic party programmes and strategies to implement these in practical policy reveal different strategies from individual actors. For the 1944 revision, Per Albin Hansson calls for a pragmatic handling, but some of the most radical calls for a confronting or affirming autonomy are presented by Stellan Arvidson and Alva Myrdal, although with the latter taking a more withdrawn role. In 1960, Tage Erlander and Ernst Wigforss take the roles of holding on to the Marxist and community-based perspective, while Nancy Eriksson, and to some extent also Olof Palme, aim towards a more autonomous direction at the congress. The most important changes in this programme, though, arise during the writing process. For some of the central passages, the authorship cannot be established

with certainty. Clas-Erik Odhner's book and contribution in the commission does, however, appear central in shaping the new emphasis on autonomy.

In 1975, Maj-Britt Sandlund, Lena Hjelm-Wallén and Lisa Mattsson appear as some of the strongest proponents of the ultra-progressive move, particularly in family policy. The first of these is also central in pushing for the autonomous direction in the programme commission. In its final suggestion, some central autonomous changes are made, but like in 1960, it is sometimes unclear exactly which words were written by whom.

In a general overview of the non-socialist party programmes, two lines of reasoning appear; on one hand, the view of the Liberals, who lie closer to the Social Democratic view on the values studied in this project, and on the other hand the view among the Conservatives and the Agrarians, who initially share a rather similar view, albeit very different from the Social Democrats, especially regarding the realm of the Sacred. Still, both Agrarians and Conservatives move in a more secular and also somewhat more autonomous direction towards the end of the period.

The Agrarians undertake a long ideological journey during a few decades from a conservative rural party into a modernized liberal party. During this period, the party moves from a Christian- and family-oriented perspective, which strongly defends community (in the form of the family), authority (in the form of nation and tradition), and the Sacred (expressed in the Christian faith and view of life), as foundations of society. Their move in a more liberal, as well as secular and autonomous direction, is especially rapid during the 1960s. It is not possible to establish with certainty what effect the joint government under Erlander during the 1950s meant for the development of ideology and positions within the party, but it is evident that during this and especially the following decade, the party shifts from a position where they first strongly praise Christian and community-based values but then swiftly change into a liberal party with autonomous values.

The party programmes from the Liberals do not perform the same remarkable volte-face during the period as the other parties. They do move in a more autonomous direction over time, and rather consistently, they display a position regarding the Sacred realm which is generally more positive than the Social Democrats, and they do not share the Social Democratic view that the state and party should control the Church.

The earliest Liberal programme is by far less enthusiastic about Christianity than the those of the Agrarians and the Conservatives. However, towards the end of the period, they share more or less the same rather vague references to ethical values promoted by Christianity and humanism. To be added, the Liberals share some of the anti-authoritarian and autonomous values that the Social Democrats increasingly adopt during the period, although the Liberals do not present this perspective with the same emphasis as the governing party.

Regarding the relatively weak emphasis on Christianity in the party programmes, it is apparent that of the two parties that merged in 1934, the secular-minded Liberals already from the beginning got the upper hand over the Christian influences within the Free-minded National Association. This more secular view also retained and strengthened its position during the rest of the period.

From the beginning of this research period, the Conservatives propose a version of individualism that is not autonomous but expressed under the umbrella of Christianity and conservative values. For the Conservatives, the individual should be liberated, although not from power groups in general but from the state. Instead, community, authority and the Sacred are held in high esteem. This view holds all the way up till the party's transformation into the Moderates in 1969. By then, the party has adopted some of the autonomous ideas now common in other parties, where the Christian church, values and faith still remain in the text, although firmly in the background.

All in all, during the 44 years of Social Democratic rule, their party programmes move in a much more autonomous direction. Other political parties and opinion-makers may have had some influence over Sweden during this period, but the very long period in government made it possible for the Social Democrats to have a unique impact on the nation. Thus, it is evident that the other parties partly follow along in the same autonomous direction taken by the ruling party, especially towards the end of the period, as a consequence of the ultra-progressive turn in the late 1960s, which will be described more in detail below.⁴²²

⁴²² Despite these changes in party programmes, a 1985 survey among Swedish members of parliament still displayed considerable differences. To the question whether they wished a society where Christian values play a larger role, 100 % of the Conservative parliamentarians responded affirmingly, and 80 % among the Centre Party and the Liberals, while only 17 % of the Social Democrats and 7 % of the Communists affirmed such a wish. Peter Esaiasson, Sören Holmberg "De folkvalda: En bok om riksdagsledamöterna och den representativa demokratin i Sverige", 137, referred in Andreas Johansson Heinö, "Har religion blivit vänster? De svenska partierna och religionsfrågorna," in *Religionen i demokratin*, ed. Eli Göndör (Stockholm: Timbro, 2013), 20f.

When it comes to secular values, especially the Agrarians and the Conservatives begin the period with a very strong defence of the Christian faith as the central foundation for Swedish society. Over time, though, they both move closer to slightly alternative versions of the autonomous-secular view of religion as a private matter that the Social Democrats adopted from their beginning, and which does not change considerably over time in the Social Democratic Party programmes. The Liberals and Conservatives, in particular, continue to defend the authority of the State Church to govern itself, free from political control. Apart from this, however, their perspective moves closer to the secular shift that society had already experienced.

Regarding individualistic values, it is notable that the Liberals and Conservatives praise these, but it is a different type of individualism than the Social Democrats. The latter begin the period with a community-oriented and Marxist view but change into an ever more autonomous view. The Liberals and Conservatives, on the other hand, promote the rights of the individual, but do so by underlining the need to defend the individual against the state, hereby showing a critical view of the state-individualistic perspective that took shape under the Social Democratic leadership during this period. Especially for the Conservatives but also for the Agrarians, community, authority and Christianity have central positions at the beginning of the period. However, especially during the last ten years of the research period, they too turn towards a more secular view.

In family policy, especially the Agrarians and Conservatives argue strongly for the family community at the beginning of the period. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, though, these parties follow each other along in the ever more autonomous direction that the Social Democrats have already taken, and where the Liberals had long since taken a middle path.

Family policy is, along with education policy, the area where the direct striving for an increased autonomy is strongest within the Social Democrats and, towards the end of the period, the other parties follow in their footsteps. More research will be needed to find out which individual actors played the most influential roles in the changes of perspective in the non-socialist parties' programme revisions.

For the Social Democrats, the party programmes were not the only sources for political action. Between the program revision processes, the policy was to a large extent shaped by individual actors. Therefore, we now proceed to those party actors who were arguably most

influential in shaping the political discourse, to analyse the values presented in their political communication.

7. Prime Ministers

The textual analysis in chapters 7 and 8 uses a much wider range of text genres than the previous chapter on party programmes. The selection of sources is done with the national *Libris* database as demarcation. This means that the material will range from public speeches, short newspaper texts to whole books. Even though the texts differ much in content and genre, all material is still coded through the same analytical tool, with a focus on what manifest or latent positions the individual actors express on autonomy or its threefold antipole of community, authority and the Sacred.

7.1 Per Albin Hansson: The religion-hostile Marxist

After some years as parliamentarian and editor of two Social Democratic newspapers, Per Albin Hansson (1885-1946) became Minister of War in Hjalmar Branting's first Social Democratic government in 1920. After Branting's death in 1925, the succession remained unclear until Hansson was formally elected party leader in 1928. The election of 1932 led the Social Democrats to power, where Hansson became Prime Minister, a position which he (with the exception for a few summer weeks before the 1936 election) kept until his sudden death in 1946.

7.1.1 *Community in a socialist garb*

As Per Albin Hansson began his government career as Minister of War, his earliest books deal with this area. His first book with a wider scope dates from 1926, while he functioned as informal party leader. The title is *Sverige åt svenskarna – svenskarna åt Sverige* (sic!) (Sweden for the Swedes – the Swedes for Sweden), and the content displays a combination of socialist distribution policy and love for the nation.

The theme of socializing financial resources and creating an equal distribution of wealth are recurring topics in Hansson's early writings, and his arguments are typically presented in strict economic terms, rather than values related to this project.⁴²³ His core themes are class, the people and their joint struggle for liberation from the forces of capitalism.⁴²⁴ This is an

⁴²³ Per Albin Hansson, *Inför partikongressen 1928: Hälsningstal och parentation* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1928), 15-19; Hansson, *Ett demokratiskt framstegsprogram* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1930), 22f; Hansson, *Socialdemokratin inför valet* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1932), 13-20.

⁴²⁴ Hansson, "Folk och klass," in *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1935), 33-35, 43f.

evidently non-individualistic perspective, although with community not necessarily being the defended value.

Per Albin Hansson's most influential political legacy is arguably his parliament speech on the *folkhem* (the people's home) in 1928. This speech has a rather traditional focus, where Hansson describes community and a feeling of belonging as the foundations of a home. He does talk about eradicating the differences between classes and the introduction of an economic and social democratization.⁴²⁵ His main theme is, however, wider than just a traditional Marxism, and he explains as the party's main political task to make the nation into a good home for the citizens and securing the existence of its inhabitants through a "cooperation of all, for the common good".⁴²⁶ This talk displays a clearly community-centred view.

The following year, Hansson repeatedly clarifies the party's goal in Marxist terms, even though he suggests that the word *class* might now be exchanged for the word *people*. He connects to the formulations in the 1920 party programme, calling for a joint struggle against the capitalist forces and oppressors, and by this, the Social Democratic leader voices a general anti-authoritarian perspective.⁴²⁷ The explicit task he sets out for the party is to gather all oppressed classes, "to politically organize this gathering, and with its support carry out the socialist organization of society".⁴²⁸ Hansson's Marxist perspective of the class struggle and final abolition of the classes as an equally important goal remain core elements all the way through his leadership, while arguing that this goal runs alongside the ideology of the *folkhem*.⁴²⁹ He never defends individualism in a broader meaning, nor in its narrower autonomous sense. Rather, his position can be described as an opposition to egoism.⁴³⁰

7.1.2 An ambiguous approach to authority

Democracy occurs repeatedly as a central concept from Per Albin Hansson. Sejersted notes, however, even though *democracy* stands out as so central to Per Albin Hansson, he never systematically expands what he means by the term.⁴³¹ Here is one area which calls for a

⁴²⁵ SC 1928:3,11.

⁴²⁶ "allas samverkan för gemensamt bästa", *ibid.* 19.

⁴²⁷ Articles in *Ny Tid* 5 and 10 September 1929, in Berkling, *Från Fram till folkhemmet*, 184-188.

⁴²⁸ "att politiskt organisera denna samling och med dess stöd genomföra samhällets socialistiska organisation." "Medelklassen och socialdemokratin" *Ny Tid* 20 June 1931, in *ibid.* 190.

⁴²⁹ Hansson, *Socialdemokratiska idéer och framtidsutsikter* (Frihets förlag, 1943), 13.

⁴³⁰ Hansson, "Demokrati eller diktatur," (1933) in *Demokrati: tal och uppsatser*, 128.

⁴³¹ Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, 162.

deeper understanding of underlying values in political speech. In an anniversary speech, Hansson argues that the party's legacy and future lie in the idea of socialism and faithfulness to democracy. This can be viewed against the backdrop of how the socialist movement in late 1910s split into one revolutionary and one reformist branch. Hansson's position is an obvious summary of the central idea of Social Democracy, displaying a general anti-authoritarian perspective, coupled with the Marxist vision of liberating the oppressed classes.⁴³²

Hansson's time as Prime Minister would, however, largely be characterized by managing two international crises: the economic depression and the Second World War. These challenges naturally took precedence over ideological matters, and this is also evident in Hansson's publications during his time in office.

Regarding his relationship with other ideologies and parties, Per Albin Hansson is deliberate in putting up a strong wall against the communists. It can, however, be noted that he repeatedly describes the cooperation between Social Democrats and Liberals as the natural left-wing strategy to counter right-wing candidates and policy.⁴³³ In connection to this, he describes such a cooperation between Social Democrats and "related radical parties" as an older idea, presented already by Branting.⁴³⁴

In his general views on authority, Hansson is not particularly clear. The 1932 party congress devotes particular attention to the event in Ådalen the year before, where five people were shot to death by the military at a tumultuous left-wing demonstration. Hansson does not explicitly side with the demonstrators, but highlights the mistrust among the labour movement against ruling groups. The solution he presents is a societal control over production forces and cooperation on the foundation of equality. Hereby, Hansson can be argued to display both a slight distance towards authority as well as a focus on community, although in a Marxist fashion.⁴³⁵ In one parliamentary debate, Hansson gets challenged by Conservative opposition leader Arvid Lindman on the relationship between state and individual. His response does not lean towards an autonomous perspective, but rather equates the individual with the private

⁴³² Hansson, *Vår väg till seger* (Frihets förlag, 1934), 4-8.

⁴³³ Hansson, *Ett demokratiskt framstegsprogram*, 3-7; Hansson, "Nordisk demokrati," in *Demokrati - Tal och uppsatser*, 223f; Hansson, *Oppositionen och koalitionen* (Stockholm Tiden, 1938), 16f; Hansson, *Samverkan i svensk politik: En redogörelse för socialdemokratins linje i svensk inrikespolitik* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1940), 10-18.

⁴³⁴ "närstående radikala partier" Hansson, *Samverkan i svensk politik: En redogörelse för socialdemokratins linje i svensk inrikespolitik*, 7.

⁴³⁵ Hansson, "Tal till partikongressen," (1932) in *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser*, 98, 103.

businessman and, when discussing the rights of the citizens, he returns to defending democracy as a political system.⁴³⁶

When Per Albin Hansson uses community-oriented expressions, such as cooperation, he does not deal with family or civil society, but generally describes how the dominating parties need to cooperate in order to manage threats from international crises and secure the democratic system and the provision of the citizens.⁴³⁷ When speaking to students in 1934, he talks of the radicalism often represented by the young but underlines that this is a time for a radicalism of action, of national and universal citizenship, of fulfilment of duty and of justice, of democracy and of fellowship.⁴³⁸

The affirming autonomy that will grow so strong in later decades, is non-existent in Per Albin Hansson's writings. Instead, the Prime Minister gives more support to the opposite side, especially to community, but to some extent also to authority, although not for the Sacred. The nationalistic focus that occasionally appears in his earliest books remains rather strong also from Hansson as Prime Minister, displaying a more nationalistic community-based policy, where he repeatedly praises love for the motherland and rejects an internationalism that manifests itself in the disdain for national symbols and the security and wellbeing of the nation.⁴³⁹

7.1.3 Religion at arm's length

On several occasions, Per Albin Hansson quotes *Biskop Thomas frihetsvisa* (Bishop Thomas' Freedom Song). However, he never refers to its Christian roots but uses the song to refer to democracy and basic human freedoms.⁴⁴⁰

Of the three Prime Ministers studied in this project, Hansson provides the most active discussion regarding the relationship between Social Democracy and Christianity. In 1929, he discusses the foundation of the Christian Socialist's association of Sweden, in both oral and written form. Per Albin Hansson describes the party's historical hostility towards Christianity and rejects the notion that any particular position concerning religion should be the main

⁴³⁶ Hansson, "Staten och de enskilda," (1935) in *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser*, 209-212.

⁴³⁷ Hansson, *Demokratisk samverkan eller nationell splittring?* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1934), 9-13; Hansson, "Svensk folklpolitik," (1935) in *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser*, 245.

⁴³⁸ Hansson, "Tal till studenterna," (1934), in *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser*, 151.

⁴³⁹ Hansson, "Arbetarskandinavismen," 168; Hansson, "Regeringens politik," (1935) in *Demokrati: Tal och Uppsatser*, In ibid. 178f.

⁴⁴⁰ Hansson, *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser*, 60, 132.

criterion for a good socialist. As a solution, he argues for the earlier programme formulation – although removed in the 1920 programme revision – “Religion declared to be a private matter”.⁴⁴¹ Later in the same speech, Hansson discusses the parallel of whether a good socialist can also be a national patriot. As an affirming example, he describes an instance where he and other Social Democrats gladly joined in singing the Norwegian national anthem. He also admits that in hindsight it felt rather awkward as a socialist to join in the anthem’s words of relying on God’s protection but explains that one does not have to “heed words”, but instead look at the intention of the song.⁴⁴²

In article form, Hansson describes this new Association of Christian Socialists as having “the purpose of dissolving the mistrust of Social Democracy among Christians”.⁴⁴³ He also dismisses warnings from party newspaper *Social-Demokraten* and its editor-in-chief Arthur Engberg, that this association might have the aim of spreading Christianity among the Social Democrats. Instead, Hansson underlines the association’s aim to “work for Social Democracy”.⁴⁴⁴ Per Albin Hansson’s general mistrust towards Christianity can also be traced in a fictitious story from 1931, where he portrays a discussion on how to replace traditional Christmas services with new Socialist versions.⁴⁴⁵

It should be added, though, that Per Albin Hansson is the only Social Democratic party leader in this extensive source material to quote the Bible: at Farmer’s Day 1935, he recites the Golden Rule – “the old Christian commandment” – to explain the spirit of citizenship in a speech that is, in several other aspects, remarkably traditionalistic.⁴⁴⁶

Summary

Per Albin Hansson is best known as the man who shaped the *folkhem* vision and also managed to maintain Sweden’s neutrality during the Second World War. These two visions, one ideological and one pragmatic, also form the foundation on which the general values and arguments are built in his writings and central speeches. The international crises, which affected almost his entire time in office, also put a restraint on ideological convictions that were more strongly promoted before he became Prime Minister.

⁴⁴¹ Hansson, "Vad kan en god socialist vara?" (Stockholm: 1929), 53f.

⁴⁴² "märka ord" Between brackets in original. Ibid. 54f.

⁴⁴³ "med syfte att bland de kristna skingra misstron mot socialdemokratin." Hansson, "De kristna och partiet," *Ny Tid*, 21 August 1929, in Berkling, *Från Fram till folkhemmet*, 222.

⁴⁴⁴ "att verka för socialdemokratin", ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ "Krona håller julotta" *Folkbladet* 52/1931, in Berkling, *Från Fram till folkhemmet*. 224-226.

⁴⁴⁶ "den gamla kristna maningen" Hansson, "På bondens dag," In *Demokrati: Tal och uppsatser*, 265.

Hansson entered government around when revolutionary Communism broke away from revisionist Social Democracy. Still, his ideological position can consistently be described as Marxist. When he rose from his previous ministership for defence to party leader after Hjalmar Branting's death, the scope of Hansson's ideological writings gradually widened. In relation to the values in this project, there is no notable preference for autonomy, or even for individualism in a broader sense. On the contrary, Per Albin Hansson is very critical against the individualistic tendencies he views as a central feature of egoistic capitalism. Rather, he can be considered to have a community-oriented perspective, although not expressed in civil society, family or church.

The community he proposes is instead gathered under a Marxist umbrella, where class initially functions as the natural factor. Gradually, however, Hansson shifts to a more traditional and nationalistic focus as the context where a possible community would be expressed. This move may be due to different pragmatic approaches; both a wish to connect to the more traditional views among ordinary people, expressed in Hansson's 1928 *folkhem* speech, and also as a uniting tool to manage the challenges of economic depression and the World War.

Still, Per Albin Hansson expresses a general antipathy towards authority, especially dressed in socialist-based argumentation about gathering all oppressed classes, with the goal of performing a socialist reshaping of society. Along with the responsibility inherent in the office, Prime Minister Hansson expresses a more open attitude towards authority in an impersonal sense, for instance expressed in nation, justice and duty.

However, Hansson's disdain for religion and Christianity colours his basic perspectives during the entire period. Even if he once quotes the Golden Rule before an audience, which he arguably imagined to be conservative, he repeatedly points out that religion and the realm of the Sacred are such self-evident antipoles to Socialism that he never sees the need to motivate this distancing from religion; he just underlines it when needed. This becomes especially evident when discussing the new Association of Christian Socialists, where he underlines that Christians may be active party members but simultaneously makes it clear that it is Social Democracy that ought to influence Christianity, not the other way round.

7.2 Tage Erlander: The pragmatic nation-father

Tage Erlander (1901-1985) became a Social Democrat when studying at Lund University in the early 1920s, after having arrived there as an active Christian. He gradually rose through the ranks in the party, became a member of parliament in 1932, entered government in 1944, became Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs the following year, and in 1946 he was appointed party leader and Prime Minister after Per Albin Hansson's sudden death. Erlander remained at this post for a remarkable 23 years, until 1969. He was still active as member of the 1975 Social Democratic programme revision committee, but the source material indicates that he kept a low profile in this work.

7.2.1 A community-oriented Prime Minister

Two days before Per Albin Hansson's death, Erlander gives a speech before students in Lund. As then-Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, he displays a slightly anti-authoritarian perspective when arguing that the "bantering scepticism towards belief in authority" is a valuable asset among students.⁴⁴⁷ However, his ascension to prime ministership a few days later made Erlander take on a more authority-affirming focus, just like his predecessor Hansson.

In 1948, a printed version of Erlander's debate against Communist Party leader Sven Linderot is published in book format. No actual tendency regarding autonomy is found in the printed version, but it is worth noting that when Erlander mentions basic democratic rights, he does not mention freedom of religion.⁴⁴⁸

Socialdemokratins väg (The Way of Social Democracy) from the same year is largely a summary of how the party has fulfilled its post-war programme. The focus is economic, although highly pragmatic, rather than visionary. Regarding schools, a small hint for the future is given when Erlander mentions that the new school commission has proposed an extensive process of school democratization.⁴⁴⁹ Even though Christianity's role in school was and would be the key area of ideological conflict, the religious realm passes unmentioned in this passage and also in the rest of this book. The author brings up the quest for freedom, although this discussion largely consists of the need to abolish post-war food rationing, and

⁴⁴⁷ "raljerande skepticism mot auktoritetstro" Tage Erlander, *Akademikerna och samhället*, vol. 9 (Stockholm: Tiden, 1946), 1.

⁴⁴⁸ Tage Erlander and Sven Linderot, *Demokrati eller folkdemokrati: Disputationen Erlander-Linderot* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1948), *passim*.

⁴⁴⁹ Erlander, *Socialdemokratins väg* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1948), 10.

there are no traces of an autonomous perspective.⁴⁵⁰ Erlander concludes by describing the party's goal: exchange the class society for the *folkhem*.⁴⁵¹

In 1950, Erlander evaluates the five post-war years under Social Democratic government in the short book *Fem efterkrigsår* (Five Post-War Years). It deals mainly with foreign policy and domestic economic progress. However, he concludes with a discussion of the balance between individual and state, responding to criticism against socialist government measures. Erlander argues that “society” – for Erlander as for other party actors understood as the state – is not to be viewed as the enemy of the individual. These two must be partners, and whenever there seems to be a tension between demands of the individual and the interests of society – defined by Erlander as *community* – society must look to serve the larger group.⁴⁵² He ends the book quoting the goal in the party programme of 1944 to build a “a community of citizens, cooperating on the foundation of freedom and equality”.⁴⁵³ This book thus displays a clearly pro-community perspective.

Erlander's following book *Två årtionden* (Two Decades) from 1952 is also largely a look back on the twenty years of Social Democratic rule. One thing he highlights as especially important is the formation of a new nine-year comprehensive school.⁴⁵⁴ As previously, the debate about religion in school passes unmentioned. Neither does this topic – or other ideological discussions – come up when the Prime Minister describes cultural improvements in society. Instead, the book takes on a very practical-political perspective.⁴⁵⁵

A more developed book from 1954 sends a signal through its title, *Människor i samverkan* (People in Cooperation). Here, expressions like solidarity and cooperation play a central role. The book is highly community-oriented, describing the individualism presented by liberalism and conservatism as too self-centred and focused on competition. Erlander balances this by stating that Social Democratic policy aims to assist people to shape their lives, although coupled with community and solidarity.⁴⁵⁶ However, when describing the process of school reformation, the Prime Minister opens an autonomous perspective, highlighting

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. 22f.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. 30.

⁴⁵² Erlander, *Fem efterkrigsår* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1950), 26-30.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. 30.

⁴⁵⁴ Erlander, *Två årtionden: Från arbetslöshet till full sysselsättning* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1952), 19.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. 19.

⁴⁵⁶ Erlander, *Människor i samverkan* (Stockholm: Socialdemokraterna/Tiden, 1954), 14-20.

individualization and the shaping of personality as central aims, rather than rote learning.⁴⁵⁷

The book ends by balancing these two opposing factors, describing people in cooperation as a central goal, while also creating a society that “gives the individual the chance to freely develop his distinctive character”.⁴⁵⁸ This book can thus be understood as a defence of community, although opening up for the individual as an important agent.

7.2.2 *A disinterest in the Sacred*

Despite – or possibly due as a result of – Erlander’s Christian upbringing, religion is an almost invisible topic in his publications. In *Människor i samverkan*, Erlander mentions in passing the religious revival when discussing 19th century popular movements as tools for building a better society.⁴⁵⁹ A few years later, he does the same in a speech before the sobriety movement.⁴⁶⁰ Apart from such brief historical references, the Sacred realm is an avoided topic in the Tage Erlander’s writings.⁴⁶¹

When Erlander was appointed Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in 1945, he convinced Per Albin Hansson to relieve him of the responsibility for several church matters on the grounds of his deep lack of interest for these matters. Hansson was, however, cautious not to let the public know these motives.⁴⁶²

7.2.3 *Accepting but also questioning the new perspective*

In 1962, Tage Erlander’s book title *Valfrihetens samhälle* (The Society of Free Choice) indicates a change following the new autonomous perspective in the 1960 programme. In the introduction, Erlander uses words close to the new programme when presenting the goal of the party as “giving people opportunities to shape their lives, so that they best utilize their

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. 26.

⁴⁵⁸ ”ge den enskilde möjlighet att i frihet utveckla sin egenart”, *ibid.* 54.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. 15.

⁴⁶⁰ Erlander, "Välstånd och folkrörelser," in *Aktuella ungdomsproblem* (Stockholm: Godtemplarorden, 1959), 11.

⁴⁶¹ This dissertation does not analyse private material. Still, it is worth noting that other scholars have highlighted a very negative attitude in Erlander’s personal diaries against the public or privately devoted religiosity among e.g. bishop of Stockholm Manfred Björkquist and UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld. Oloph Bexell, "Gud kan göra under också i Stockholm." Manfred Björkquist som biskop," in *Manfred Björkquist: Visionär och kyrkoledare*, ed. Vivi-Ann Grönqvist (Skellefteå: Artos, 2008), 218f; Lodberg and Ryman, "Church and Society," 108; Harrison, *Jag har ingen vilja till makt*, 611. On the other hand, Erlander’s diary also expresses fury over how Stellan Arvidson’s openly atheistic opinion-making undermines others, including the Prime Minister himself. Birgitta Almgren, *Dröm och verklighet: Stellan Arvidson - kärleken, dikten, politiken* (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 2016), 193.

⁴⁶² Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan*, 65.

predispositions and circumstances”.⁴⁶³ Based on this goal, he explains the party-political crossroads as the Conservatives arguing for egoism, while the Social Democrats are worthy of praise for enabling cooperation and solidarity.⁴⁶⁴ The Prime Minister consistently emphasizes that society, in the traditional Social Democratic sense, should direct the envisioned enabling of individuals and increased freedom of choice and that this must be done through higher taxes and a larger public sector.⁴⁶⁵ He also argues that these measures will support the general independence of the individual.⁴⁶⁶ These descriptions indicate the formation of a developed state individualism.

Cooperation and solidarity remain key concepts, although explicitly described in a class perspective, where solidarity is to be directed towards those with low income.⁴⁶⁷ Erlander concludes this book by touching on a briefly anti-authoritarian perspective, stating that the cooperation and solidarity he envisions has “nothing in common with the old authoritarian custodian state” but are society’s tools for contributing to increased freedom for the people.⁴⁶⁸

Towards the end of Tage Erlander’s time in office, no books are published with him as author, and he only appears with short contributions in book format. In his foreword to the party study group on women’s affairs, which was appointed at the 1960 congress, Erlander affirms the initiative, stating that women’s issues have previously been subordinate to the larger goal of equal rights to security but that the time has come to remove “the practical difficulties that now limit women’s freedom of choice”.⁴⁶⁹ It can be noted, however, that he does not endorse requests for independence and autonomy, but rather underlines the need for equal possibilities.

Erlander also delivers a speech at a Social Democratic culture conference in 1966, around the peak of the cultural shift of the time. This speech is remarkable in the sense that the Prime Minister of 20 years expresses a distanced view of the development. He is not completely enthusiastic about the economic progress during his period in power, arguing that this

⁴⁶³ ”ge människorna möjligheter att forma sitt liv så att de bäst tillvaratar sina anlag och förutsättningar” Erlander, *Valfrihetens samhälle* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1962), 8.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Erlander, *Valfrihetens samhälle*, 31, 64f, 82.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. 67.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. 34.

⁴⁶⁸ ”ingenting gemensamt med den gamla auktoritära förmyndarstaten”, ibid. 84.

⁴⁶⁹ ”de praktiska svårigheter, som nu inskränker kvinnornas valfrihet” *Kvinnans jämlikhet: Ett framtidsprogram* (Socialdemokraterna/Tiden, 1964), Foreword.

progress has not resulted in harmony, but rather anxiety.⁴⁷⁰ He sees an ongoing urbanization that “breaks up much of the old community and feeling of belonging without creating a new one”.⁴⁷¹ As the setting is a cultural conference, Erlander suggests that culture can realize visions, and the vision he suggests is one that replaces isolation and loneliness with solidarity and a feeling of belonging.⁴⁷²

In Erlander’s farewell speech at the 1969 party congress, he looks back at the Social Democratic period in government since 1932. Naturally, he describes the efforts of the party as successful. He also rejects the predictions from the opposition that socialism would fade away in the modern age, and the vision he proposes is collective-oriented rather than centred in the individual. Erlander’s vision when leaving office is that the current time of change needs “the strong society” and that the party demands “the economic and social liberation of the people”.⁴⁷³ The tool to accomplish this will be *solidarity* and the goal will be *equality*, understood as minimizing class differences.⁴⁷⁴ Tage Erlander’s last years in office can thus be described as displaying a hesitation towards the new autonomy, grasping for a more community-oriented perspective, which in his view may have been lost along the way.

Summary

For a person leading the nation during such a large cultural shift as Sweden experienced during his 23-year period of leadership, Tage Erlander’s written production shows a Prime Minister whose views are surprisingly traditional. It cannot be excluded that he occasionally softens his real positions in public texts, but he displays some public hesitation towards the new autonomous perspective, most distinctly visible in the 1960 programme. As described earlier, it can also be noted that Erlander, at the first meeting with the 1960 programme revision committee, laid out two goals, where both can be argued to be society- and collective-related rather than individualistic.

Generally, Tage Erlander can be described as a traditional democratic socialist, where community stands out as the central value in his literary publications. He does not argue for the values of democracy and socialism to the same strong extent as his predecessor Hansson

⁴⁷⁰ Erlander, "Rikare kulturliv ökar vår frihet," in *Politik för kultur* (Kulturarbetarnas socialdemokratiska förening i Stockholm, 1966), 3.

⁴⁷¹ "bryter mycket av gammal gemenskap och samhörighetskänsla utan att skapa ny", *ibid.* 4.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.* 4f.

⁴⁷³ "det starka samhället", "människornas ekonomiska och sociala frigörelse" Erlander, "Tage Erlander: Kongressens öppnande," in *Nu gäller det 70-talet: Sju tal från partikongress -69* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1969), 16.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

or his successor Palme, and generally gives the impression of a pragmatic leader, led by the intention to present government policy and safeguard that the government and nation could function and make progress.

While several of Tage Erlander's books deal largely with presenting government reforms, it is not evident who has been the main author of these passages, and they also display little indication of ideological leanings.⁴⁷⁵ More relevant in these kinds of books and especially in other material are passages with a more personal tone, displaying the Prime Minister's own opinions. Here, it becomes apparent that community, cooperation and solidarity are central values for him and, like Per Albin Hansson, he opposes a conservative view on the individual, which he characterizes as egoistic. Instead, he proposes a view of community that largely coincides with the Marxist perspective.

Notable is that Erlander allows himself to voice an authority-critical perspective in early October 1946, not knowing that he will find himself in a new role just a few days later. As Prime Minister, Erlander rarely voices direct criticism against authority and just voices such a perspective in indirect terms, in that case typically under the traditional class-based perspective of distribution of assets.

On the realm of the Sacred, two things about Tage Erlander are notable. Firstly, the infrequency with which he mentions religion, Church and Christianity in contexts where such topics would otherwise be considered natural. In non-public sources it becomes apparent that Erlander has a deep disinterest in religious matters. It is also notable how he, whenever describing the reform of the Swedish school system, never mentions the theme that is actually most debated: the role of Christianity in school.

Secondly, however, Erlander does not show the same public hostility to church or religion as the other two Prime Ministers during the period of research. Tage Erlander's lack of public criticism of the Sacred may be due to strategic reasons but may also be caused by his upbringing in a free-church environment.

When weighing the two antithetical values in this study against each other, Tage Erlander allows but does not actively endorse the new autonomous turn expressed in the 1960 programme. In his 1962 book on freedom of choice, he accepts this new perspective but

⁴⁷⁵ Palme's co-worker Ulf Larsson states that Palme had a central influence in shaping the content of several of Erlander's books and speeches. Larsson, *Olof Palme och utbildningspolitiken*, 55.

underlines that the freedom of the individual is best administered under the framework of society. If we are to compare which programme version he lies closest to, Erlander gives stronger endorsement to the 1944 vision of a community of citizens than to the vision of independence from 1960 and onwards. Even if he accepts the narrower autonomous understanding of individualism, he still criticises other forms of individualism, most notably those connected with capitalism.

Tage Erlander can generally be described as distanced from, but not directly hostile towards both authority and the Sacred, and this position remains quite similar during his whole period in office. He clearly shows a large appreciation for community, although rarely under the umbrella of family, Church or other areas of civil society, but rather under a traditional Marxist vision. Towards the end of his leadership, he also expresses regret over the anxiety and isolation he sees in the culture of the late 1960s and proposes a new but still more community-based society.

7.3 Olof Palme: The intellectual radical

Olof Palme (1927-1986) differs from most other prominent Social Democrats by coming from an upper-class home. In his early twenties, he experienced a political awakening after studying in the United States, listening to Ernst Wigforss and by working for a student organization.⁴⁷⁶ He found his ideological home within Social Democracy and from 1953 when he was hired as Tage Erlander's secretary until his death by a murderer's bullet in 1986, Olof Palme was at the absolute centre of Swedish politics.

Working as Erlander's right-hand man, Palme exercised a growing influence, gradually moving from secretary to parliamentarian in 1958, Minister without portfolio in 1963, then Minister of Communication, then of Ecclesiastical Affairs, then of Education. When Erlander eventually resigned in 1969, Palme was his natural successor.

7.3.1 An early appreciation of Marxism

Despite his fewer years at the highest office, Olof Palme's book publications vastly outnumber his predecessor's. Palme's first public book text – co-written with Torsten Eliasson, study leader at the party's youth organization – appears in a booklet from 1956.

⁴⁷⁶ Henrik Berggren, *Underbara dagar framför oss: En biografi över Olof Palme*, 2 ed. (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2014), 135f.

Even though it cannot be taken for granted exactly what words were written by which author, this text is of particular interest, as it displays the ideological position that Palme brings into his political career and will later develop more in depth.

This text lays out the ideological dividing lines between Swedish parties. The main discussion is directed against liberalism, whereas the Conservatives are rejected as inactive in the ideological debate and the Communists as uninteresting.

The authors describe the other parties as having largely accepted Social Democratic policies.⁴⁷⁷ They also take a clearly Marxist and collective/community-oriented perspective, rejecting the liberal forms of individualism, while highlighting future key words for Palme, namely “freedom, equality, cooperation and solidarity”.⁴⁷⁸ The ideal society is consistently described under the concepts of Marxism or socialism, although in its reformist tradition. Increasing the freedom of the individual is mentioned as a goal. However, this should take place under the agencies connected to the party: unions, cooperative sector (where companies are owned and run by their customers), municipality and state.⁴⁷⁹

The text suggests a number of measures to reach the ideological goal, and these are mainly directed at changing the economic power relations in society.⁴⁸⁰ Palme and Eliasson do address the area of education, culture and values, but when suggesting the future direction for these areas, these too are discussed solely in Marxist terms of classes and the need for more of a planned economy.⁴⁸¹ Christianity and values connected to religion are not discussed at all in this text.

This early text from Palme thus provides evidence that he enters his political work with a view that is firstly Marxist-reformistic, secondly community-oriented and only thirdly with a tendency of an autonomous perspective. His views will, however, develop over time, becoming less radically Marxist, more evolved and also more radical in other aspects.

⁴⁷⁷ Olof Palme and Torsten Eliasson, "Vad skiljer?" in *Program, praxis, perspektiv* (Stockholm: ABF, Brevskolan, 1956), 150f.

⁴⁷⁸ “frihet, jämlikhet, samverkan och solidaritet” *ibid.* 149, 153. The similarity with Erlander’s book two years earlier is striking, and points to a close ideological inspiration between him and Palme. It cannot, however, be established with certainty who exercised the dominating ideological influence over the other.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 156.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 164f.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.* 161f, 173-175.

7.3.2 A materialistic distance towards religion

During his political career, Palme repeatedly returns to his vision of *democracy*. To him, this is both a national and an international goal. In 1968, Palme is invited to deliver a radio speech, which centres around democracy and a Malthusian-leaning wish to avoid mass starvation and poverty.⁴⁸² He does mention the risk of chasing “salvation doctrines”, which could spontaneously be interpreted as having a religious meaning.⁴⁸³ When Palme uses the same expression elsewhere, though, it becomes clear that he uses it to describe and reject other political visions, like reactionary conservatism and revolutionary communism, where his own vision of democratic socialism is presented as the preferable alternative.⁴⁸⁴

Particularly notable in Palme’s vast production is his remarkable lack of discussion about religion in general and Christianity in particular. He may occasionally allude to well-known Biblical stories or quotations, but through all his many publications, he never argues openly either for or against God, religion or church. Rather, these appear to be a non-matter, not worth mentioning. Symptomatic is his remark *en passant* in 1971 where he names drugs and “cults” as similar ways of escaping reality. No further explanation is given as to what Palme means by the word “cults”, but his solution is more of solidarity and planned economy.⁴⁸⁵

Still, he sometimes makes indirect dismissals of religion as an outdated remnant of a bygone era. Without explicitly naming Christian heritage, he warns of trying to recreate the society from before “the breakthrough of rational thought and reason”, a path that would once more allow “medieval darkness” to blanket the countryside and people’s minds.⁴⁸⁶ On one occasion, he refers to a quotation from the pope, warning about the imperialism of capitalism, but does this without mentioning the papal title, instead saying “the head of the catholic church.”⁴⁸⁷ In 1972, Palme displays what can be described as a classic Marxist-materialistic interpretation of religion’s function in society, when he with exclamation points underlines that the conflict in Northern Ireland is not the result of either religion or national

⁴⁸² Olof Palme, "Genombrott eller sammanbrott?," in *Människa i morgon* (Stockholm: Sveriges radio, 1968), 9-18.

⁴⁸³ ”frälsningsläror”, *ibid.* 16.

⁴⁸⁴ Palme, "Idé, program, handling," in *Ökad jämlikhet - för ett rättvisare samhälle* (Stockholm: Socialdemokraterna/ABF/Brevskolan, 1969), 10f; “Ungdomsprotesten 1968, speech February 1968, in Palme, *Palme själv: texter i urval* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1996), 58.

⁴⁸⁵ ”sekte”, Palme, *Våra närmaste arbetsuppgifter* (Stockholm: Socialdemokraterna, 1971), 40.

⁴⁸⁶ ”det rationella tänkandets och förnuftets genombrott”, ”medeltidens mörker”, Olof Palme, *Att vilja gå vidare* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1974), 14.

⁴⁸⁷ ”katolska kyrkans överhuvud”, Palme, "Förstamajtal" Speech 1 May 1967 in *Politik är att vilja*, 204.

disagreement. Rather, it is the result of social conditions – “the poor people’s revolt against a situation they find insufferable”.⁴⁸⁸

Over the years, Palme uses different distancing strategies when having to address issues connected to the Sacred realm. In 1960, in response to a direct question on the abolition of the State Church (which Palme endorses), he replies in line with formulations from earlier Social Democrats that the State Church in older times was a voice for reactionary forces, but in the 1960s only the “confession front” has any impact, and this in the tabloid press.⁴⁸⁹ He also adds that he makes this response “in the middle of a yawn”.⁴⁹⁰

At the 1972 congress, Palme comments on the recent Moderate party congress, which he describes as having dealt mainly with the monarchy and the Church of Sweden, to which Palme responds in a rather condescending fashion that those who expected answers to how the Moderates would tackle the real issues in society, such as unemployment and the status of women, were in for a disappointment.⁴⁹¹

7.3.3 *Autonomy moved to the centre of policy*

As Minister of Communication, Olof Palme declares in speeches before both the Association of Newspaper Publishers and before a Social Democratic culture conference that *autonomy and independence* will be the key elements in future television policy.⁴⁹² It is not entirely clear exactly what Palme intends by these concepts. Still, his use of these words highlights their importance to Palme. One other word that Palme frequently proposes in the source material is the word that marks out Sweden as singular in the Inglehart-Welzel chart, namely the goal of *self-expression* (självförverkligande). This indicates an active striving for an autonomy that correlates with one of the factors where present-day Sweden finds itself in the international periphery.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁸ “de fattiga människornas revolt mot en situation som de upplever som olidlig” Palme, *Solidaritet och frihet* (Stockholm: Socialdemokraterna, 1972), 26f.

⁴⁸⁹ ”bekännelsefronten”, Palme’s 1960 response published in Palme, *Att vilja gå vidare*, 59.

⁴⁹⁰ ”mitt i gäspningen”, *ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ Palme, *Democratic socialism means solidarity: Inaugural address 1972 party congress* (Stockholm: Socialdemokraterna, 1972, 30 September), *ibid.*

⁴⁹² ”självständighet och oberoende”, Palme, *Pressen i massmediasamhället, anförande vid Svenska tidningsutgivareföreningens vårmiddag den 10 maj 1966* (1966), 9; Palme, ”Radio, TV och kulturen, speech at Kulturarbetarnas socialdemokratiska förening, Folkets Hus, Stockholm,” in *Radio och TV idag, i morgon* (1966), 17.

⁴⁹³ E.g. Palme, ”Förstamajtal 1966” Speech 1 May 1966 in *Politik är att vilja*, 187; SC 1968:41, 67.

At the 1969 party congress, where Palme is elected party leader, he gives a long speech about the implemented changes in the school system and the visions for future education. The central focus in his speech is increased equality, to a lesser extent individualization, and as usual for Palme, the Sacred realm is not mentioned at all.⁴⁹⁴ Days later, in his first speech as new party leader, Palme closely follows Erlander's farewell speech, twice highlighting solidarity and cooperation as foundational goals.⁴⁹⁵ However, he also opens the gate for a more autonomous perspective. He describes a new "wave of democracy", where the young generation who have grown up in the new school system will not accept authoritarian systems in the workplace.⁴⁹⁶ Among twelve important tasks for the 1970s, he also names the reformation of marriage and family legislation, with the intention of creating equality between man and woman.⁴⁹⁷ Palme's speech does not develop the exact content of this equality, but later, when these reforms are completed, he explains the foundation to be financial independence.⁴⁹⁸

7.3.4 A critical view of authority

Olof Palme's general view on authority is rarely developed in detail, but the passage above about the workplace is one that displays a general disdain for authority. In 1965 and 1966, he describes support of the oppressed against oppressors and of the poor against their masters as basic principles.⁴⁹⁹

In 1973, Palme explains that he has battled a number of phenomena throughout his adult life, where one of these is "authoritarian life forms".⁵⁰⁰ This view is expressed more clearly earlier in his career. Before the party's Youth Association in 1964, Palme declares that the destiny for Social Democrats is to "question authority and distrust authorities", adding that one of their responsibilities is to think independently.⁵⁰¹ Two years before this, his negative views on different forms of authority are expressed when Palme highlights the need for independent

⁴⁹⁴ Palme, "Olof Palme: Utbildningen," in *Nu gäller det 70-talet*, 43-60.

⁴⁹⁵ Palme, "Olof Palme: Socialdemokratin inför 70-talet," in *ibid.* 90, 102.

⁴⁹⁶ "Demokratis våg" *ibid.* 100 The same view is reflected in Palme, "Anförande vid TCO:s utbildningsdagar," (1967, 28 October), in *Politik är att vilja*, 88.

⁴⁹⁷ Palme, "Olof Palme: Socialdemokratin inför 70-talet," 106.

⁴⁹⁸ Palme, "Olof Palme vid Handelsanställdas förbunds kongress i Malmö", Speech 12 May 1976, in Olof Palme and Gunnar Sträng *Två tal om skatter och solidaritet* (Socialdemokraterna, 1976) under heading "En trygg barnomsorg".

⁴⁹⁹ Palme, "Anförande vid broderskapsrörelsens kongress, Gävle," (1965, 30 July) in *Politik är att vilja*; "Förstamajtal 1966", in *ibid.* 173, 194.

⁵⁰⁰ "auktoritära livsformer" Palme, *Att vilja gå vidare*, 67.

⁵⁰¹ Palme, "Politics is will. Speech at Social Democratic Youth Association congress," in *Olof Palme speaking* (1964, 12 May), 31.

thought and voices the suspicion that those who wish for a faith based on authority might turn into either Stalinists, Catholics or nihilists.⁵⁰²

The reformed education policy is discussed in chapter 10, but it may be added here that Palme's anti-authoritarian perspective is expressed in 1967, when explaining the new school and pedagogy as newly elected Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. In one speech he connects to a newly arisen debate on discipline in school. Palme distances himself from this word, arguing that it is negatively associated with barrack yards and "ideals of an authoritarian society", and that relations in school should not rest on obeying and keeping discipline, but rather on a positive experience of working together towards a common goal.⁵⁰³ He also adds in a speech about the 1968 youth protests that a successful democracy might stiffen in shapes and authorities, and this is a danger that must be confronted by changing the social realities in society.⁵⁰⁴

7.3.5 Community through the collective

Palme often appears to try to find a balance between the struggle for individual autonomy and the vision of community. In the programme revision year 1960, Palme argues for the *collective* as the way for the individual to shape his life. He mentions that the collective may threaten the individual's independence but still concludes that the question is not whether we should have collectivism or not, but what *kind* of collectivism society should choose. In a telling quote, he argues that freedom comes not from the collective, "but in the collective and through the collective".⁵⁰⁵ Palme uses the same phrase in a 1966 pamphlet arguing for Social Democracy's superiority to communism, where he states more clearly that the goal for this collectivism is to defend the liberation of the individual person.⁵⁰⁶

Olof Palme's elevated view of the collective has more in common with impersonal Marxist class thought or a strong state than with a community-oriented approach where family, church and other non-political groups receive a central role. These passages exemplify Palme's positive view of the particular combination of individualism and collectivism, which in

⁵⁰² Palme, "Ungdomen och ideerna," *Tidskriften Fönstret* 1962:8-9 (1962), in *Politik är att vilja*, 39.

⁵⁰³ "ett auktoritärt samhälles ideal", Palme, "Anförande vid TCO:s utbildningsdagar," in *ibid.* 98.

⁵⁰⁴ Ungdomsprotesten 1968, speech in February 1968, in Palme, *Palme själv: texter i urval*, 58.

⁵⁰⁵ "utan i kollektivet och genom kollektivet" In Bonniers litterära magasin, 1960:3, in Palme, *Att vilja gå vidare*, 63.

⁵⁰⁶ Palme, *Socialdemokratin och kommunisterna* (Stockholm: Socialdemokratiska partistyrelsen, 1966), 15.

practical policy would be realized in the state-individualistic vision described as specifically Swedish.

This position can also be traced at a 1973 panel debate on the role of the cooperative sector. In a discussion about which areas cooperative companies ought to connect to, Palme describes it as reasonable that the state together with the cooperative sector could take over parts of the business sector – indicating that the Prime Minister finds it more reasonable that the state is the steward over cooperative organizations than civil society.⁵⁰⁷ A year earlier, he also explicitly equals “society” with “the central state power”.⁵⁰⁸

Later, Palme uses more community-oriented language, albeit still coupled with an individualistic approach. At the 1972 congress, he states that the liberty of the individual benefits most if a person is able to find paths to a sense of community, co-operation and solidarity, and that this is a way for the individual to control their own situation and to influence their own surroundings.⁵⁰⁹ In parliament, he describes as a goal to “continually increase people’s ability to decide over their own lives”, while also stating that this requires solidarity and community with others.⁵¹⁰ A few months later, he speaks before the party’s Youth Association about a middle path between the focus on production and technology appearing in both communism and capitalism, where his goal is a democratic socialism that can make use of “people’s wish for solidarity and community”.⁵¹¹ It can be noted, though, that the reforms Palme proposes in this speech deal exclusively with production, economy and workplace regulations.⁵¹² Thus, the community he envisions has first and foremost a materialistic basis.

This apparent paradox of autonomy and community-leaning factors presented side by side appears several times in the material. Despite the individualistic turn that his party took from the 1960 programme onwards, Palme criticizes other forms of individualism whenever he views these as connected to conservative thought. He dismisses this version of individualism

⁵⁰⁷ *Kooperationen och framtiden*, (HSB:s riksförbund, 1973), 14.

⁵⁰⁸ ”den centrala statsmakten” Palme, *Solidaritet och frihet*, 8.

⁵⁰⁹ Palme, *Democratic socialism means solidarity: Inaugural address 1972 party congress*, 18.

⁵¹⁰ Palme, ”Den nya konservatismen”, speech in parliament 2 February 1972, in *Att vilja gå vidare*, 229.

⁵¹¹ ”människornas önskan om solidaritet och gemenskap” Palme, ”En vidgad välfärd. Speech at Social Democratic Youth Association congress,” in *Att vilja gå vidare* (1972, 26 June), 164.

⁵¹² *Ibid.* 170f.

as deliberately egoistic, in contrast to the solidarity he himself proposes, although the latter comes in a materialistic sense of distribution of production assets.⁵¹³

Palme's view on solidarity thus appears in two versions. In the international perspective, the term signals support for people in other nations – most often in Vietnam – whom he describes as suffering under different kinds of oppression. In the national perspective, his view of solidarity is almost consistently connected to financial resources but to a much lesser degree to other possible aspects of the word, such as the family or other parts of civil society.⁵¹⁴ Terms like freedom, liberation and community are also closely connected to the financial situation and power distribution in the workplace, rather than other, non-materialistic areas.⁵¹⁵ Sometimes, Palme does discuss the loneliness and suffering in modern society and describes the solutions as cooperation and solidarity in terms of adjustment of economic power.⁵¹⁶

7.3.6 Different rhetoric for different contexts

Olof Palme occasionally changes his balance between autonomy and community, depending on the audience he addresses. One example of particular interest is when he in 1972 contributes a chapter in the radical American anthology *The Future of the Family*. In this piece, Palme argues in a tone best described as activist, that his party has been successful in changing the attitudes to family and gender among both the population and other political parties.⁵¹⁷ The view he presents on these issues is very radical, even for his time. With a defining formulation, which I have paraphrased for the title to this dissertation, Prime Minister Palme presents what is possibly the strongest utopian vision during his entire career. He highlights the importance of independence within the family and takes pride in “the practical measures we are taking to make reality move closer to the ideal”.⁵¹⁸ In a similar fashion of social engineering, he also argues that experts have showed that a culture of gender roles “represses the individuality of the child” and states that programmes have been drawn

⁵¹³ Palme, *Att vilja gå vidare*, 15f.

⁵¹⁴ E.g. Palme, *Sysselsättning, miljö, demokrati : anförande vid storrådslaget i Stockholm den 19 september 1971* (Socialdemokraterna, 1971), 5-26.

⁵¹⁵ Palme, *Solidaritet och frihet*, 4-11.

⁵¹⁶ Palme, "Anförande vid Skånes socialdemokratiska partidistrikts 60-årsjubileumsmöte," in *Politik är att vilja* (1965, 30 October), 53.

⁵¹⁷ Palme, "Lesson from Sweden: The Emancipation of Man," in *The Future of the Family: Mothers, Fathers and Children – Sex Roles and Work - Communities and Child Care Redefining Marriage and Parenthood*, ed. Louise Kapp Howe (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 247-258.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.* 248.

up in “different parties” (it is unclear exactly which groups he is referring to), demanding that “men and women should have the same roles”.⁵¹⁹

Ideologically, it is noteworthy that Palme does not describe these changes as distinctly socialist, but rather as liberal – possibly to facilitate a common understanding with the American reader. Another possible interpretation is that it is easier for Palme to freely expose any underlying liberal ideas in a foreign publication than in his own Swedish context.

As suitable means for societal change, he explicitly names the school system, explaining that “educational policy is an important instrument contributing to a more liberal attitude.”⁵²⁰ As a concrete decision, Palme names the recently realized change in individual taxation, and as ideals to follow, he repeats some of the most radical demands from the Swedish pamphlet *The Family in the Future* from the same year, such as “that all people shall be regarded as financially independent individuals and that society shall adopt a neutral attitude toward the form of co-habitation that people choose”.⁵²¹ In this text, Palme presents a picture of a very conscious move that his party and government have performed and will continue to pursue in order to change attitudes and conditions in society to achieve a higher degree of autonomy.

The same attitude is largely reflected in Palme’s speech at the same year’s party congress, where he highlights women’s liberation as a central societal goal and that the party therefore needs to attack values that stand in its way.⁵²² When defining the “real freedom of choice”, which he argues to be the right to work, he dismisses the so-called “housewife rebellion” that opposed the new family legislation, stating that their expression of opinion rests on fear and prejudice.⁵²³

When addressing the Association of Industries, however, Palme describes the ongoing changes as the result of women’s own wish to take a larger responsibility in work life and society and concludes that this would require a huge change in life pattern, family life and parental duties.⁵²⁴ Here, the Prime Minister’s approach appears to be that the government only follows public demand rather than deliberately changing the conditions in society.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. 250-253.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. 256.

⁵²¹ Ibid. 253f.

⁵²² Palme, "Jämställdhet för kvinnorna! Speech at party congress," in *Att vilja gå vidare* (1972, 2 October), 172.

⁵²³ “en verklig valfrihet”, *ibid.* 181f.

⁵²⁴ Palme, *Samhället, industrin och politiken : Sveriges industriförbunds stämma den 14 maj 1975, anförande av Olof Palme* (Stockholm: Sveriges Industriförbund, 1975), 15.

Another version of this message comes when Palme delivers a speech alongside Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1975. Here, Palme repeats the party programme's autonomy-focused wording of liberating the citizens from dependence on every type of power group beyond their control, but he describes this vision as the final phase of a distinctly Marxist perspective. He highlights the concept of a Socialist revolution and argues that the organization of production and laying the power over production into the hands of the whole people play a "crucial role" in this liberation.⁵²⁵

A final example of this effort to balance seemingly contradictory values comes before the 1976 election. This year, Palme publishes the book *Tillsammans kan vi göra ett bra land bättre* (Together We Can Make A Good Country Better), a series of edited speeches from 1976, connecting the 1975 programme revision with Palme's own goals for the future.⁵²⁶ The issue of religion is also in this book non-existent, but the presented balance between autonomy and community is very different from that found in the American anthology. The "Together" in the title reflects a community-oriented focus, further confirmed by the fact that the central concept running through the book is *solidarity*, which often appears alongside words like cooperation and community.

Notable is that Palme describes the central themes in the last programme revision and the party's reform agenda in a slightly authority-critical way as the strengthening of worker and union influence in the workplace, and more of a planned economy.⁵²⁷ The strongly autonomous perspective in the 1975 programme can be seen at the end of the book, although rather in passing; in the introduction it is almost invisible.⁵²⁸ Palme does summarize the change in family policy but avoids mentioning the most radical moves, even if he repeats the goal of raising "free and independent humans".⁵²⁹ Instead, he reiterates the goal of building a "child-friendly society", even though this goal was actually removed in the adopted version of the programme.⁵³⁰ It can also be noted that this book repeats *in extenso* Palme's passage from this party congress speech where he highlights the community within the family.

⁵²⁵ "en avgörande roll" Olof Palme, "Inget kan stoppa drömmen om frihet" Speech 29 June 1975 in Santiago de Cuba, in *Vi ses igen, kamrater: Tal och texter 1964-86*, 80f.

⁵²⁶ The book is co-edited with Sven O Andersson, but the content consistently bears a very personal touch, and can be considered to reflect Palme's thinking.

⁵²⁷ Palme, *Tillsammans kan vi göra ett bra land bättre* (Stockholm: Tiden/Socialdemokraterna, 1976), 10, 61f.

⁵²⁸ Ibid. 127, 3-7.

⁵²⁹ Ibid. 85.

⁵³⁰ Ibid. 81, 84, 87.

All in all, the message in this book is much more community-oriented, with leanings towards a planned economy, especially in the workplace. Thus, Palme's final book message as Prime Minister is more community-oriented than both his earlier speeches and writings and also the actual content in the new programme revision. Apart from this book, Olof Palme's messages during the 1970s present a distinctly autonomous view.

Summary

Olof Palme has the shortest time in office of the three Prime Ministers between 1932 and 1976. Still, he is by far the most radical in presenting, defending and pursuing an autonomous perspective.

The text in the first book Palme published in 1956, while he was Erlander's secretary, reveals a clearly Marxist view. The goals and means are described in terms of socialist revisionism. The liberal view of the individual is rejected, while the Marxist view of individual and society is embraced. In relation to the antithetical tension in this project, Palme begins his career leaning towards the community-end of the scale.

However, even with Palme not being an elected member of the 1960 programme revision commission, he regularly attends their meetings, and at the congress he expresses delight over having been able to influence the process and the radical new formulations. His actions during the programme revision process cannot be directly traced in the source material, but it is evident from Palme's other writings and speeches around and after 1960 that he has adopted a much more autonomous view.

Olof Palme's embrace of the autonomous form of individualism is apparent in several ways. Repeatedly, he uses and proposes values such as autonomy, independence and self-expression. Especially in the spheres of school and family, he also presents arguments and measures directed at increasing the independence of the individual. More examples of this will be detailed in coming chapters.

Parallel with this autonomous striving, Olof Palme expresses a stronger disdain for authorities than his two predecessors – not just in the class-based Marxist perspective, but authority in a broader sense, especially where some kind of authority might threaten individual autonomy.

As regards autonomy and community, a notable difficulty in balancing these two perspectives arises for Palme. Community-related terms such as cooperation and – above all – solidarity,

regularly appear at the centre of Palme's texts and speeches. However, these are seldom described in the context of smaller communities such as the family or other situations that typically include some kind of authority. Instead, the community-leaning concepts are generally used in a class-related discussion, where solidarity is to be shown towards those who in a class perspective may be considered oppressed or subordinate. This way, Palme's appraisal of community often takes the practical form of an anti-authoritarian perspective, presented in community-based wordings.

Occasionally, Palme expresses a perspective that may be called state-individualistic, repeatedly arguing that "society", i.e. the state, should build systems intended to secure individual autonomy. Here, collectivism is not understood as an opposite of individualism, but rather as a necessary tool in order to guard the independence of the individual. According to Palme, the main question is not whether we should have collectivism or not, but what *kind* of collectivism we should have. Thus, it is not entirely clear whether Palme begins from a collectivistic idea which results in a state-run individualism or whether individualism is the key value, realized in collectivism.

Several times, Olof Palme's published material reveals a tension between individual and community. What antipole he stresses most seems to depend heavily on the audience he is addressing. When talking or writing to the general Swedish population, Palme regularly gives a more community-oriented description, especially regarding the family. When addressing narrower and more radical audiences, though, he delivers a much more autonomous message. Likewise, when he addresses people who accept his autonomous position, Palme underlines how the party has been pushing and will continue to actively push for a more autonomous vision. However, when reaching out to audiences expected to be more critical, he typically describes the changes as the result of popular demand, which the party has merely followed.

Consequently, Palme's reasoning in his last book before the 1976 election, which is intended for the general population, is more family-friendly and very different from the radically autonomous perspective described in the American anthology four years earlier, where he argues that one goal for his government is to change reality in accordance with his vision. It is not evident whether the lesser emphasis on autonomy in the 1976 book is due to tactical considerations to satisfy the electorate, a push from Palme to change emphasis in the new

programme or a sign of approval towards the labour union LO, which was an active contributing partner to the book.⁵³¹

The value where Olof Palme is most clear, though, is the area of the Sacred. Here, Palme consistently gives the impression that matters concerning God, church and religion are completely uninteresting in the modern society. The few times in the vast material when he has to refer to this area, it is regularly with a distanced or directly derogatory attitude, showing that such matters belonged to a time long gone. Palme's way of addressing these issues indicates that he pictures secularism as a self-evident default position in the modern world, and that the important issues for post-war times are materialistic, not spiritual.

The overall impression is that Olof Palme from the time around 1960 adopts a strongly autonomous view of the individual and society, with individual independence raised to a central political goal. Alongside this vision, more community-leaning goals such as solidarity appear repeatedly, although generally in a materialistic, authority-critical perspective. This way, Palme manages the apparent contradiction of proposing both autonomy and community by consistently presenting the latter in an exclusively non-authoritarian and independence-endorsing context. However, both before and after becoming Prime Minister, Palme proposes actively changing society and people's values in an autonomous direction, where the school reform process is highlighted as one of the most important factors in achieving this goal.

⁵³¹ The participation of the labour union LO is mentioned in the introduction, 3f.

8. Other influential individual actors

One of the consequences of carrying the office of Prime Minister is the need to keep the nation together and avoid unnecessary ideological confrontations. Hence the strongest ideological pushes for policy change often come from actors on the level beneath the highest political office. Therefore, this chapter will follow the reasoning of the four individual actors selected as having had a particular influence in the ideological battle between autonomy and its threefold antithesis, especially in the spheres of church, education and family policy.

8.1 Arthur Engberg

Arthur Engberg (1888-1944) is the individual actor in this project who displays the largest change in thought and strategy during his active period. Engberg began his career as member of parliament in 1917 and was by then a well-known writer and debater with a radically Marxist and anti-religious perspective. Still, he was appointed Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in 1932, a position he kept until 1939. During this time in office, and especially thereafter, his previous radicalism was gradually revised, especially on religious matters.

8.1.1 A radical Marxist opposition to religion

The younger Engberg is very clear in his standpoint: Karl Marx is his main inspiration as political and general philosopher, and Marx' ideology is also Engberg's.⁵³² On this matter, he is more consistent than Per Albin Hansson, who embraces some features connecting both Social Democracy and liberalism. Engberg, though, considers the latter to be an obvious partner of capitalism, and therefore an enemy to defeat.⁵³³

Engberg rejects all religious confessions, although he does confess acceptance of a general religiosity in accordance with Schopenhauer.⁵³⁴ The Christian faith *per se* – even though it contains some elements which resemble socialism – is however discarded as vulgar and superstitious, intellectually insufficient, a fairy tale.⁵³⁵ The opposition between the two

⁵³² Arthur Engberg, "Framtidsmusik," *Arbetet* 1918, 14 December. In Engberg, *Tal och skrifter*, vol. I (Stockholm: Tiden, 1945) 29f; Engberg, "Träsket," *Arbetet* 1919, 1 July. In *Tal och skrifter*, vol. II (Stockholm: Tiden, 1945) 29; Engberg, "Frihet och personlighet: Till den politiska diskussionen," *Arbetet* 1923, 22 June. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 91.

⁵³³ Engberg, "Kätterier," *Arbetet* 1919, 2-5 January. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 21

⁵³⁴ Engberg, "Religion och politik," *Arbetet* 1920, 1 June. In *Tal och skrifter*, vol. III (Stockholm: Tiden, 1945), 254.

⁵³⁵ Engberg, "Professor Segerstedt i modersfamnen," *Arbetet* 1922, 24 March. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 61; Engberg, "Jultankar inför Människornas Son," *Arbetet* 1918, December 24. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 221.

worldviews is for the younger Engberg evident: “Wheresoever the view of life from socialism enters, Christianity must exit, and vice versa.”⁵³⁶ This hostile attitude remains unchanged for several years. After the founding of the Association of Christian Socialists in 1929, Engberg accuses them of aiming to Christianize the party – a goal he criticizes, although at this stage in milder terms, using the former programme description of religion as a private matter.⁵³⁷

In his younger years, Engberg strongly opposes the State Church as being reactionary, violating and hypocritical. In 1918, he publishes the book *Statskyrkans avskaffande* (The Abolition of the State Church), which promotes a distinctly Marxist perspective, describing the Church as the result of the modes of production, just like all other areas in society.⁵³⁸ Thus, he also takes an anti-authoritarian perspective, describing the State Church as a representative for the dominating and suppressing class over the working class.⁵³⁹ Already at this early point, Engberg’s individualistic fondness is apparent. In this aspect, he considers this perspective to be a central factor in destroying the State Church system, through a “religious and irreligious individualism”.⁵⁴⁰

Particularly interesting in this book is also the dawning of Engberg’s refined position on the State Church, which he will fully embrace a decade later. In 1918, this is only mentioned as a remote idea, and thus also more explicitly outspoken: properly managed, writes Engberg, the State Church could actually be a tool to secularize the nation. If modern, radical theology could take over universities and the education of clergy, and tear down the old dogma, then an “enlightened state power” could “systematically permeate the whole nation with a scientific view on religious matters”, and hereby “make the institution of the State Church itself (...) take on the duty of dechristianization”.⁵⁴¹

This statement is one of the most explicitly anti-religious and secularization-aiming formulations during the entire research period. It is also apparently well-conceived; in a parliamentary debate the same year, Engberg proceeds with the same idea of a pervasive secularization as the proposed vision. While continuing to argue for abolishing the State

⁵³⁶ ”Där socialismens livssyn går in, där måste kristendomen gå ut och tvärtom.” In Nils Beltzén and Lars Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg - publicist och politiker*, Arbetarrörelsens årsbok 1973, (Stockholm: Prisma, 1973), 37.

⁵³⁷ Engberg, ”Ett avsteg,” *Social-Demokraten* 1929, 14 August. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 79f.

⁵³⁸ Engberg, *Statskyrkans avskaffande* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1918), 4f, 7.

⁵³⁹ Ibid. 9, 14f.

⁵⁴⁰ ”den religiösa och irreligiösa individualismen”, ibid. 7.

⁵⁴¹ ”en upplyst statsmakt”, ”systematiskt genomsyra hela nationen med ett vetenskapligt betraktelsesätt i religiösa ting”, ”låta statskyrkoinstitutionen själv (...) träda i avkristningens tjänst”, ibid. 21.

Church, he openly repeats the idea that the State Church through a new radical theology could be used “to dechristianize the people”.⁵⁴²

In relation to his disdain for religion, Engberg also expresses a somewhat autonomous vision, although not entirely developed. When looking for historical role models to inspire 20th century culture, Engberg compares the deaths of Jesus and Socrates and praises the latter for not capitulating before his destiny, but rather acting as a proud, free and noble spirit.⁵⁴³ In general, Engberg argues that the triumph of Western culture and its rise above barbarism derives not from Nazareth and Christian culture but from Athens and Greek culture.⁵⁴⁴ Engberg further compares Socrates, Plato, Hegel and Marx as equal symbols of bravery and independence and states that socialism is the logical consequence of these longings.⁵⁴⁵

In one of Engberg’s most vitriolic texts, from 1919, he defends Olof Olsson, the newly appointed Social Democratic Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, whom he honours as a good heathen.⁵⁴⁶ He then goes on to argue that Social Democracy has for too long been tolerant towards the State Church system. Among all Engberg’s negative portrayals of the Church and what he views as Social Democratic hypocrisy towards the Church and its too yielding approach towards capitalism, he twice writes that the party must become more relentless, more filled with *hate* (italics in original), to battle its way to victory over capitalism and thereby build the new heathendom.⁵⁴⁷

The following year, Engberg begins elaborating his church-political vision, arguing that it may be reasonable to precede the disestablishment by first taking control of the system by abolishing the General Synod and appointing Church leadership in the same way as other public offices, even with the consequence of “an atheistic supreme leadership of the Church”.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴² ”att avkristna folket” SC 1918:4:59, 80.

⁵⁴³ Engberg, ”Medan tankarna leka,” *Arbetet* 1921, 16 December. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 263.

⁵⁴⁴ Engberg, ”Kristendomen som västerländsk kulturgrundval,” *Arbetet* 1922, 10 August. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 365f.

⁵⁴⁵ Engberg, ”Frihet och personlighet: Till den politiska diskussionen.” In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 91.

⁵⁴⁶ Engberg, ”Ren hedning,” *Arbetet* 1919, 12 December. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 251.

⁵⁴⁷ Engberg, ””Ren hedning.”” In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 252.

⁵⁴⁸ ”en ateistisk högsta kyrkoledning”. This central article is excluded in *Tal och skrifter*, but is quoted in Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 114.

Engberg explains that he would rather see the free churches conquer the State Church, which he regards as a dangerous power structure.⁵⁴⁹ When comparing the Swedish form of Christianity to its American counterpart, he notes that no state church exists in America. Still, he is highly critical towards the USA, not just because of its capitalism, and its “dreamy, superstitious and naïve Jesus worship”, but also for the central societal role given to a church he considers to be characterized by “rock-hard dogmatism, fanatically slavish literalism, muggy air and lust for persecution”.⁵⁵⁰

Despite the above, Engberg displays a distinctly negative attitude also towards the Swedish free churches, which build on a “fanatic lust for self-isolation, a perverted hermit mentality”, with its adherents “crawling on the floor in a stuffy chapel while speaking in tongues”.⁵⁵¹ These very strong words also against the free churches indicate that it is not just an authoritarian State Church Engberg opposes, but rather the nature of Christianity itself and the Divine authority inherent in a Christian worldview.

This leads on to another point often raised by the young Engberg, which also concludes his article about Christianity in America: teaching of Christianity in schools must be disconnected from the Church and turned non-confessional. His argument here rests both on a critical view towards religion and also on an early conception of the autonomy of the pupil.

In Engberg’s view, true freedom of religion cannot be established just by abolishing the State Church. His view is authority-critical, and he states that in order to “liberate the nation’s whole adolescent generation from coercion of religion”, the teaching of Christianity in school must be replaced by a non-confessional teaching of religion.⁵⁵² In parliament, Engberg also argues that schools of the time present “more or less unreasonable metaphysical conceptions” and that this form of education must be removed.⁵⁵³

Engberg’s hostility towards the Sacred does not appear only in writing. He also takes a prominent role in shaping the policy of his party. As described above, Engberg played a

⁵⁴⁹ Engberg, "Kristendom och partipolitik: Ett hopplöst förslag," *Arbetet* 1922, 11 October. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 272.

⁵⁵⁰ "svärmisk, vidskeplig och naiv Jesusdyrkan", "benhård dogmatism, fanatisk bokstavsträldom, instängd luft och förföljelselusta" Engberg, "I apans skugga," *Social-Demokraten* 1925, 25 July. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 274.

⁵⁵¹ "fanatisk självisoleringens lusta, ett perverst enstöringslynné"; "krälar på golvet i ett kvavt bönhus som tungomålstalare" Engberg, "Meditation," *Arbetet* 1924, 25 July. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 112, 117.

⁵⁵² "befria hela nationens uppväxande släkte från religionstvånget" Engberg, "I apans skugga." In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 275f. Four days later, in the same publication, Engberg uses the even stronger concept *tvångskristning* (coerced Christianization) about the school teaching. Ibid. 280.

⁵⁵³ "mer eller mindre orimliga metafysiska föreställningar" Speech in parliament, SC 20 April 1921, in *Tal och skrifter*, III, 19.

central part as a member of the Social Democratic programme commission of 1920, and he also played a prominent role in the congress debate on the radicalized claims to disestablish the State Church and let society take over Church property.⁵⁵⁴

Engberg's position on early 20th century Christianity is well summarized in a 1919 article. Here, he considers the truth claims of Christianity to be superstitious and states that his view is, to an increasing extent, also accepted by leading theologians within the Church of Sweden. All in all, Engberg argues that everything points towards the new Protestantism dissolving into an "*atheistic general religiosity*".⁵⁵⁵ He concludes by stating that the Swedish people have for too long been taught by priests and their free church counterparts, and that the time has come for a new heathendom, whose victory must "be celebrated on the ruins of the Christian view of life".⁵⁵⁶

One thing to note from the younger Engberg is that although he dismisses the truth claims of Christianity, he also reveals and despises the intellectual contradictions he notices in liberal Protestant theology.⁵⁵⁷ He argues that the Christian faith, if it is to be taken seriously, must include a real, supernatural content and states that if the position of the liberal theologians would prevail, "the fate of Christianity is in reality sealed".⁵⁵⁸

8.1.2 A consistent hostility towards authority

In relation to authority, Engberg takes a consistently critical stance. He argues that the *authoritative state* does not resound with what he understands as the Swedish character, and consequently, the Swedish people have calmly removed it.⁵⁵⁹ In traditional Marxist terms, Engberg opposes the upper classes and proposes that the lower classes should crush their reactionary conspiracy and pride.⁵⁶⁰ However, he distinguishes between what he imagines as

⁵⁵⁴ Also described in Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 117f.

⁵⁵⁵ "ateistisk allmän religiositet" Engberg, "Nyprotestantismens förfall," *Arbetet* 1919, 14 June. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 227.

⁵⁵⁶ "firas på den kristna livssynens ruiner", *ibid.* 229.

⁵⁵⁷ "En modärn ståndpunkt i teologien" *Arbetet* 15, 18, 20, 24 November 1919. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 230-248.

⁵⁵⁸ "är kristendomens öde i själva verket beseglat." *Ibid.* 232.

⁵⁵⁹ Engberg, "En anknytning: Socialdemokratiens framtidsuppgift," *Arbetet* 1922, 3 October. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 75.

⁵⁶⁰ Engberg, "Gungbrädan," *Social-Demokraten* 1926, 5 February. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 163-167; Engberg, "Överklassens heroer," *Social-Demokraten* 1927, 27 January. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 192; Engberg, "Den stora besvikelsen: Hur framstegets sak förrådades," *Social-Demokraten* 1928, 22 July. In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 239.

the more or less removed authoritative state and the *upper class state*, which must still be battled.⁵⁶¹

Consequently, just before the election victory in 1932, he argues in parliament for removing the monarchy as an outdated authority.⁵⁶² To Engberg, the monarchy, the military and the Church – the latter called “the rule of the [clerical] black robes” – are only different aspects of the same atmosphere of “*subservience*”.⁵⁶³ In one of the few explicitly racist texts included in the collection *Tal och skrifter*, Engberg argues that fondness of monarchy among Asian and Negroid races is evidence of their retardedness.⁵⁶⁴

Engberg repeatedly expresses criticism against Catholicism because of its inherent authority, which surpasses that of the state.⁵⁶⁵ Still, he dismisses as hypocrites those who criticize Catholicism as being particularly authoritarian, arguing that the Church of Sweden has also abandoned Scripture as the highest authority, instead putting “*state power*” in its place, implying that it maintains authority while simultaneously creating a “*religion of force*”.⁵⁶⁶

In his writings, Engberg seems to nurture a fascination for the autonomous individual who stands in opposition to the heavy burdens of religion, other authorities, and the state, which cannot be allowed to turn the individual into a puppet. Rather, the state needs to provide space for each person to develop their individuality.⁵⁶⁷

Still, the pattern is ambiguous. Several times, including in another text published one month after the one above, Engberg states that the only way to complete a full socialization is through an organized and well-planned world household, realized in an *international state*.⁵⁶⁸ To develop this idea even further, he argues in parliamentary debate for increasing the autonomy of the state, rather than that of the Church. This could be performed by undressing the state of its religious confession, thereby turning it into a free cultural state, which could

⁵⁶¹ Engberg, "Kätterier." In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 11.

⁵⁶² Engberg, "Republiken," (Parliament, SC, 1932, 13 February). In *Tal och skrifter*, I, 259-266

⁵⁶³ "svartrockväldet", "underdånighet" Engberg, "Republiken: En otidsenlig betraktelse," *Arbetet* 1923, 12 July. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 67.

⁵⁶⁴ Engberg, "Kring ett kungajubileum: Ärftlig monarki eller republik?," *Social-Demokraten* 1928, 15 June. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 72.

⁵⁶⁵ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 122, 125.

⁵⁶⁶ "Statsmakten", "tvångsreligion" Arthur Engberg, "Fallet Bitter," *Arbetet* 1920, 24 November. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 258.

⁵⁶⁷ Engberg, "En vädjan," *Arbetet* 1920, 10 June. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 39-42.

⁵⁶⁸ Engberg, "Framstegets väg," *Arbetet* 1920, 20 July. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 43-46; Engberg, "Världshushåll och socialism," *Social-Demokraten* 1932, 5 August. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 94; "internationalstat", Engberg, "Vägen och målet: Nationernas Förbunds framtid," *Arbetet* 1923, 8 September. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 209.

consequentially underline also the citizens' right to free thought and belief.⁵⁶⁹ In this regard, the right to leave the State Church would also be a central part in "avoiding submitting to things that you cannot imagine yourself performing with a retained self-respect".⁵⁷⁰ These expressions display a wish from Engberg to increase individual and state autonomy *from* the Church, its authority and tradition, rather than *for* the church to be autonomous from state power. They may also be described to be an expanded example of state individualism, with the alteration that the nation-state as the guarantee for the autonomy of the individual is replaced by an international state.

8.1.3 A developed church-political programme takes shape

After having spent several years attacking Christianity and church in general terms, Engberg begins to shape a church-political programme during the early 1920s. The abolition of the State Church begins to move further away in time, preceded by other measures that first need to be realized in order to avoid the risk of the State Church falling into the hands of conservative forces or turning into just another free church. Thus, Engberg gradually shapes the idea of first binding the Church closer to the state, not to be released until it is fully reformed in accordance with Social Democratic policy.⁵⁷¹

Engberg takes several initiatives in parliament on reforming state-Church relations; these are further analysed in chapter 9. In addition to these demands, Engberg publishes a full six-point programme in *Social-Demokraten* in 1925, to be introduced in the following order:

1. Merging of the civil and clerical municipalities [meaning that Church congregations be sorted under secular municipalities].
2. Allowing the right to freely leave State Church membership.
3. Abolishing the veto of the General Synod [concerning Swedish law making on ecclesiastical issues].
4. Removing the constitutional demand [for higher offices] of the confession of the pure Evangelical creed.
5. Reshaping the teaching of religion in schools in order to teach this subject on the same principal foundation as other school subjects.
6. Disestablishing the State Church.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁹ Engberg, "Den blivande ecklesiastikministern," Speech in parliament, SC, 1921, 20 April. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 17-19.

⁵⁷⁰ "slippa underkasta sig saker som man icke med bevarad självaktning ansåg sig kunna begå." Quoted in Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 129.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid. 116.

⁵⁷² "1) Den borgerliga och kyrkliga kommunen sammanslås; 2) rätt till fritt utträde ur statskyrkan beviljas; 3) kyrkomötets vetorätt avskaffas; 4) bestämmelsen om bekännandet av den rena evangeliska läran utplånas ur R.F.

In 1930, Engberg's programme finds a workable slogan when he coins the expression *the Royal Bureau of Salvation Matters*. This phrase – arguably the most well-known from Engberg's career – calls for some background. The context is a parliamentary debate on a Communist motion, suggesting the abolishment of the State Church, the transition of public school from clerical to secular authorities, plus removing the teaching of Christianity in school – all suggestions Engberg himself has proposed.

However, Arthur Engberg's church-political programme has by now moved the disestablishment very far into the future. Therefore, he dismisses the motion, as well as the reply from the parliamentary committee.⁵⁷³ Instead, he proposes to pull the Church under the wings of the state even more firmly. Engberg takes the floor thrice in this two-day debate and uses the defining expression only once, possibly spontaneously:

Personally, it is my judgment that the time is increasingly ripe for something to be done in this area. However, gentlemen, I think that the proper course for abolishing the Church organization is to realize its own idea. Let us begin with abolishing the bishops and introducing a clerical Supreme Board with a director-general over the Royal Bureau of Salvation Matters, or whatever you gentlemen wish to call it. (...) Appoint priests along the same lines that apply to other officials, and create guarantees for due process, i.e. promotion according to merit and ability.⁵⁷⁴

Even though the "Royal Bureau of Salvation Matters" formulation may have arisen in the moment, the idea behind the expression appears to be thoroughly considered. In his second response the following day, Engberg repeats the idea of creating what he now calls a Supreme Board and turning the priests into ordinary state officials.⁵⁷⁵

Two years later, just weeks before Engberg is appointed Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, he becomes the Social Democratic party's first official representative in the General Synod.⁵⁷⁶ In his first session there, he repeats his goals to strengthen the state grip over the Church and the education of clergy, abolish the General Synod and possibly get rid of the bishops. Also, he

§28; 5) religionsundervisningen i skolan omlägges på principiellt samma grund som skolans övriga ämnen; 6) statskyrkan avskaffas." *Social-Demokraten* 29 July 1925, in *Tal och skrifter III*, 126.

⁵⁷³ SC 1930:17, 59-61.

⁵⁷⁴ "För min del har jag den uppfattningen, att tiden mer och mer mognar för att något göres på detta område. Men, mina herrar, jag tror den riktiga vägen att avskaffa kyrkoväsendet är att förverkliga dess egen idé. Låt oss till att börja med avskaffa biskoparna och införa en kyrklig överstyrelse med en generaldirektör för kungliga salighetsverket eller vad herrarna vilja kalla det för. (...) Tillsätt prästerna efter samma mönster som gäller för övriga ämbetsmän och skapa garantier för rättssäkerhet, d. v. s. för befordran efter förtjänst och skicklighet." Ibid. 61.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. 70.

⁵⁷⁶ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg - publicist och politiker*, 134.

repeats the demand to create a Royal Supreme Board for Church Matters, like the national school board.⁵⁷⁷ The rather derogatory term “Royal Bureau of Salvation Matters” is now exchanged with a Royal Supreme Board, but the connotations are the same.

8.1.4 An improved relation to the Sacred

After Engberg enters government, the volume of his published texts and speeches diminishes. What can be established from this later period are two themes: his focus on the individual and opposition towards authority remains, while his hostility against religion and church weakens considerably.

On the first theme, a public speech from 1935 titled “The individual and the state” gives a clear indication of keeping his previous position. Although being a minister in government for three years, Engberg’s individualistic focus remains. The concept of some kind of invisible community is to him a delusion.⁵⁷⁸ The idea of a leader over the people is outdated; state power must be surrendered to its citizens, and the reverence for “the free and independent personality” is to be defended.⁵⁷⁹

In another text from 1938, Engberg follows Per Albin Hansson’s example of using Bishop Thomas’ Freedom Song, stating that this freedom is destroyed whenever independence is “replaced by blind submission”.⁵⁸⁰

That same year, Engberg publishes the book *Demokratisk kulturpolitik* (Democratic Cultural Policy), which functions as a summary of the achievements of his six-year tenure and his wishes for the future. Generally, the book displays a balance between autonomy and a type of community, beginning by describing the foundation of the state as a free cooperation between independent personalities who share the responsibility for the common good.⁵⁸¹ The main part of the book deals with policy for the obligatory school system and does not show any particular ideological leaning. More important for this study is his description of university

⁵⁷⁷ ”kunglig överstyrelse”, *ibid.* 135f.

⁵⁷⁸ Engberg, ”Individen och staten,” (Skansen, 1935, 25 August). In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 299.

⁵⁷⁹ ”den fria och självständiga personligheten”, *ibid.* 301-305.

⁵⁸⁰ ”självständigheten [ersätts] med den blinda underkastelsen”, Engberg, ”Med frihet följer ära,” *Julfacklan*, 1938. In *Tal och skrifter*, II, 318f.

⁵⁸¹ Engberg, *Demokratisk kulturpolitik* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1938), 3.

and scholarly research, where he points out the need for free, critical thinking, without any monopoly of truth.⁵⁸²

Even more interesting in this book, though, is Engberg's discussion concerning the Sacred. In 1938, his tone is much less confrontative, even though his individualistic and anti-authoritarian perspective remains. Without explicitly mentioning the Catholic Church, he expresses how Evangelical Protestantism, with its emphasis on freedom and opposition to totalitarianism, provides a view of life that well suits the democratic Swedish state and the Social Democratic government. He defends the new legislation that has granted more power to the state in appointments of vicars and diocesan chapters, but he does so using very diplomatic language, describing how these measures result in a better functioning church system. The vision Engberg stresses most is the education of clergy, where he – albeit in conciliatory terms – explains that this needs to be modernized and scientific, more understanding and humanistic, providing “wider views and a more tolerant view of life”.⁵⁸³

Without stating this explicitly, the text indicates Engberg's desire for a more liberal and anti-authoritarian ministerial education, and the message in this 1938 book is diplomatically presented, but a perspective that still leans towards the autonomous side of the scale.

Engberg's anti-authoritarian perspective remains also after leaving office during the war, and he continues to argue publicly for the abolition of homework, proposing the “work school” instead of the “homework school”. The former is to be understood as an intimate cooperation between teacher and pupil, the latter as a trial with constant interrogation.⁵⁸⁴

The most remarkable turn by the older Engberg, though, is his shift to a more positive tone towards Church and Christianity. The reasons for these are, according to Beltzén and Beltzén threefold: two practical-political and one personal. Firstly, his initial suggestions appeared as too radical, both to the other parties and also to his own, to gain acceptance in the short-time perspective. Also, the economic and political challenges in Europe during this period became more important in Swedish politics than ideologically motivated reforms. And finally, the authors mention Engberg's changed personal journey towards a friendlier view.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸² Ibid. 29.

⁵⁸³ “vidgade vyer och tolerantare livssyn”, *ibid.* 39-42.

⁵⁸⁴ ”arbetsskolan”, ”läxskolan”, Engberg, “Lektioner är ingen rättgång!” *Vecko-Journalen*, 1943, 11 April. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 202.

⁵⁸⁵ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 175f.

In another telling contribution regarding the relationship between state and Church, Engberg delivers a parliamentary speech in 1937 as a critical response to a motion suggesting a radically more secular revision of the Book of Worship. Engberg describes that full freedom of religion has by now been realized, as all Church rituals have been made non-compulsory. He mentions that the goal of reshaping the teaching of religion in school has not yet been accomplished, but he does so in a more diplomatic tone than before. He rejects the demands for the radical revision and makes the point that a state can never manage without religion; it needs to collaborate with a religious culture.⁵⁸⁶ This confirms Engberg's reformed position after some years in government; a maintained view with criticism against authority, doubt before community and with autonomy as a positive value, albeit coupled with a more positive tone towards areas connected to Christianity.

The reasons for this change of tone may also be the need for a more diplomatic relationship with the Church he was leading, as well as practical difficulties in effectuating his church-political programme from 1925 as quickly as planned.⁵⁸⁷ But there is also a more personal, pious tone from the older Engberg, especially after leaving government. During his final years in life, Engberg's texts indicate that his younger self, the strong opponent of religion, has now become a friend of the Christian faith and the realm of the Sacred.⁵⁸⁸

In 1944, he writes a letter to archbishop Eidem on a matter over which he expresses great concern and wishes to meet on the basis of their mutual heart for the future of the Church. In the letter, Engberg proposes a reform of the General Synod in order to make the Synod freer from the state and thus able to better benefit the interests of the Church – a position opposite to the one he proposed during his younger years.⁵⁸⁹ Apparently, this meeting never took place as, a few weeks later, Arthur Engberg passed away, at the age of 56.

Summary

Arthur Engberg's reasoning undergoes a discernible development. The beginning of his political and writing career had the tone of the activist during the 1910s, but during the 1920s he became more pragmatic and strategic. This phase then turned into to an ever more diplomatic attitude from 1932 and onwards, after Per Albin Hansson appointed Engberg as

⁵⁸⁶ Engberg, "Stat och kyrka," Speech in parliament, FC, 1937, 17 March. In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 281-286.

⁵⁸⁷ This theme is developed in more detail in Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 175-182, 206-210.

⁵⁸⁸ Texts and speeches from 1940-1942 in *Tal och skrifter*, II, 324-352, *ibid.*, III. 287-304.

⁵⁸⁹ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 207f.

Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in his new government – a position Engberg maintained until he was replaced in the war coalition government in 1939.

The early period is radically anti-religious, and his view on every area connected to the Sacred sphere is strongly negative. This tone does soften over time, but still, Engberg's early hostility towards Church and Christianity can be considered important as these ideological standpoints can be regarded as central to his political agenda and his future influence over public debate and legislation. From the 1910s onwards, he proposes a strongly secular, heathendom-based view on Christianity. He accepts a general religiosity while showing a somewhat double-minded attitude towards liberal theology; he despises what he sees as its philosophical shortcomings, while simultaneously regarding it as a valuable tool to push the State Church, its priests and faith into a theologically liberal, less authoritarian, more autonomous and explicitly dechristianizing direction.

The younger Engberg's position in relation to this project is clear: he is strongly hostile to all aspects connected to the Sacred. He does not endorse community as a virtue, apart from endorsing a general Marxist philosophy, but he displays a negative attitude towards authority in general, not least in Catholic and other Christian denominations. He proposes increased autonomy for individuals, schools and state from the faith content and rituals of the State Church, and he describes independence as opposed to submission, endorsing the former and criticizing the latter.

During the 1920s, Engberg's practical approach regarding the Church of Sweden changes considerably. The rudiments of this changed approach are already in place in his 1918 book about the abolishment of the State Church, where he opens for keeping the Church, with the explicit intention of using it for dechristianization. With this revised view, the disestablishment of the Church continually moves further into the future, until other steps are taken, as presented in his 1925 six-point programme.

When considering Engberg's underlying ideological convictions, it appears as though this postponement of disestablishment is more of a change of order than a revision of values. During his younger years, Engberg views the disestablishment as the main goal. As time passes, though, he appears to see a more comprehensive goal of a general secularization and removal of authority in church, school teaching and society, with other reforms to follow in the most suitable order to achieve this goal. Engberg is also the only actor studied in this

project to explicitly – and during a long period – express a view hostile to Christianity *per se*, not just against the Church system. He is also the only one to voice the active striving to dechristianize the nation by actively using the Church as a tool to reach this goal.

Thus, Arthur Engberg's *strategy* changes over time, but his basic *views* seem to remain rather solid up until he enters government: his strongest focus is a strongly anti-Christian message and criticism against everything falling under the umbrella of authority and the Sacred. If he shows any appreciation for community, it is under a Marxist heading, but his argumentation for individual autonomy is stronger.

When Engberg becomes Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, his written production shrinks. A seemingly surprising fact is that when finally in power, he does not present any strong arguments for his own Church reform programme and he only introduces small steps in the achieved direction. His 1938 book on culture policy reveals a minister who has abandoned his previous attacks on Church and Christianity but kept to his previous positive view on autonomy. Engberg's harsh criticism weakens considerably after having left office in 1939 his negativity even transforms into appreciation of religion and church. This change of direction appears to rest on both practical-political considerations and a renewed personal view on the realm of the Sacred.

8.2 Harald Hallén

Harald Hallén (1884-1967) was a Lutheran priest in the Church of Sweden with a very long career as Social Democratic member of parliament, from 1912 to 1960, with a break 1921-25 when he functioned as a parish priest. He was never picked for government or party board, but still gained a strong position in parliament as chairman at the Standing Committee of the Constitution from 1939 to 1958. Hallén was also a leading party representative in the church-political debate, and co-author of several key government reports. In his double office as priest and parliamentarian, he held several sermons before parliament, whereof several were published in book format. Hallén is typically viewed to represent the line contrary to Engberg's from the 1910s to the 1930s, where the latter represented the antagonistic attitude towards the State Church, while Hallén represented the Church-friendly but still reform-directed attitude.

8.2.1 A continuous opposition to Church authority

As a priest, Harald Hallén represented a liberal theology, avoiding literal interpretations of the incarnation, resurrection and atonement. Instead, he wished both Church and schools to return to the inner-worldly preaching of Jesus.⁵⁹⁰ In his political career, he promulgated a view on religion and politics that contrasted with the traditional message among the working class. Hallén's point was that Christianity must not be understood mainly as an authoritative tool to control the masses. Instead, the working class could picture Jesus as a revolutionary who worked to establish a just society.⁵⁹¹

The foundational anti-authoritarian nature of Hallén's theology and political ideology is described in an early article in *Dagens Nyheter* 1910, where he defends himself after having been formally reported to the diocesan chapter. Hallén describes his vision to replace the conservative Church authorities with a popular power: "Here, it is needed that the people themselves would intervene."⁵⁹² He suggests two alternative means of achieving this abolishing the General Synod or democratizing the Church by introducing more lay participation in bishop elections, diocese boards, General Synod, et cetera.⁵⁹³

Like Engberg's church-political programme of 1925, this vision appears to be an nascent version of Hallén's future agenda. It is also a vision he will keep consistently during his whole career. With this idea as a basis, Harald Hallén enters parliament in 1912, after declaring that his ideal of Christ may not connect very much to the historical Christ; instead, he proclaims that the working class should take over Christ's work for justice.⁵⁹⁴

For several years, Hallén would be Engberg's most prominent opponent in the debate on Church and state, both within the party and in Parliament. However, their differences in view were more of a practical nature, more concerning means than ultimate goal. Regarding personal autonomy and different types of Church authorities, Hallén displayed a standpoint similar to Engberg's from the beginning, although their personalities and ways of reasoning differed.

⁵⁹⁰ Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka." 159f, 198. Hallén was reported to and received criticism from the diocesan chapter for his unorthodox teaching and way of conducting service. Ibid. 210-212.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid. 162-164.

⁵⁹² "Här behöfdes att folket själf grepe in." "Torrskögsprästen förklarar sig," *Dagens Nyheter* 1910, 22 November.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka." 218.

In a 1915 parliament debate on the school teaching of Christianity, Hallén rejects the dogmatic catechism teaching. He advises not using the Bible directly as a schoolbook and instead calls for teaching in line with modern theology.⁵⁹⁵ In a 1918 debate on the State Church, Hallén approves of the new liberal theology at universities and argues that this theology should form the basis for preaching among priests. He also underlines that a modern State Church cannot allow even a shadow of enforcement regarding participation in church rituals.⁵⁹⁶ This said, he still counters Engberg's demands in the debate for abolishing the State Church, with the rhetorical question of whether it could be described as good Social Democracy "to allow such an important area in life to completely conduct its own free life?"⁵⁹⁷

Hallén stands out as Engberg's opposite in yet another aspect: he is the only one among the studied actors to constantly display some kind of respect before the Sacred. This may come naturally, due to his office as priest, but through all his talks and sermons published in book format, he gives a pious impression. In his sermon before parliament in 1919, Hallén displays a positive attitude towards both community and Sacred, mentioning a faith in "the general brotherhood and the kingdom of God".⁵⁹⁸ The community he describes, though, has as many Marxist elements as it has Bible-based content, and the sermon underlines the oppression that the working class suffer under the upper classes of this world.⁵⁹⁹ Therefore, Hallén can be argued to display a perspective that is simultaneously pro-Sacred and anti-authoritarian. This aspect of his message displays a merging of politics and theology described by Church historian Anders Jarlert as "an idealistic holistic view" that must be considered "remarkable, but as an alternative theology, and not only as politics".⁶⁰⁰

A much stronger Marxist perspective appears in his book *Kvinnorna, hemmen och socialismen* (Women, Home and Socialism) from the same year. Here, Hallén argues that the main reason behind the First World War was the capitalist system and suppression exerted by the upper classes. The main threats towards family values are the hunger for profit among the bourgeoisie and the capitalists within the cultural sector, plus the militarism that takes sons

⁵⁹⁵ SC 1915:59, 75-78.

⁵⁹⁶ SC 1918:59, 83-85, 89.

⁵⁹⁷ "att låta ett så viktigt livsområde leva fullständigt sitt eget fria liv?" Ibid. 93.

⁵⁹⁸ Harald Hallén, *Riksdagspredikan* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1919), 9.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. 6f.

⁶⁰⁰ "en idealistisk helhetssyn", "anmärkningsvärd, men dock som en alternativ teologi, och inte enbart som politik" Anders Jarlert, "Daniel Alvunger "Nytt vin i gamla läglar" (review)," *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* (2007), 326.

away.⁶⁰¹ Hallén's solution lies, just like Engberg's, in an ordered world household, a socialist takeover and redistribution of capital, with the final goal achieved when the power of money is finally broken in society.⁶⁰² A community-endorsing view of the family sphere is here coupled with a Marxist anti-authoritarian perspective.

During the 1920 party congress, Hallén tries to oppose the Church-hostile suggestions from Engberg about disestablishing the State Church and taking over Church property, but loses the vote. It can, however, be noted that even though Engberg prevailed in forming the party's view on the State Church, Hallén authors a separate statement, signed by 27 delegates stating the importance of religious values, underlining that this must be done while removing "every form of enforcement".⁶⁰³ This action confirms Hallén's position where his reverence for the Sacred is paralleled by his disdain for authority.

Hallén's role of being a middle path between conservative ideals and Engberg's radicalism is displayed also in parliament in 1921. Here, Hallén calls for a new educational programme in schools, which does influence children but "without being strictly confessionally tied".⁶⁰⁴ The same year, he also warns about the free churches, calling them "cult churches", uncontrolled by the state and unaffected by modern culture.⁶⁰⁵ Thus, keeping and controlling the State Church and reforming school education are portrayed as the best ways to push society in the ideological direction Hallén endorses. His spoken statements for a socialist programme do, however, appear less radical in his parliamentary speeches than in the book above on families and socialism.

Hallén's introductory sermon as vicar in 1928 contains a community-perspective connected to the Sacred, concluding by describing the goal as a life "in community with God through Jesus Christ".⁶⁰⁶ This perspective is, however, combined with his generally critical view towards authority, not least within the Church, and Hallén contrasts modern times with periods when people "humbly bowed under the spiritual dominion of the Church". He also connects to Renaissance and Reformation when "the old Church's firm grip over the senses was

⁶⁰¹ Hallén, *Kvinnorna, hemmen och socialismen* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1919), 6f, 11f, 20.

⁶⁰² Ibid. 7, 15, 19.

⁶⁰³ "varje form av tvång" *Congress protocol 1920*, 141f.

⁶⁰⁴ "utan att vara konfessionellt strängt bunden", SC 1921:35, 57.

⁶⁰⁵ "sektkyrkor", SC 1921:31, 102.

⁶⁰⁶ Hallén, *Trons svårigheter: Installationspredikan i Arvika kyrka den 4 mars 1928* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1928), 15.

loosened”.⁶⁰⁷ Sixteen days later, Hallén connects to the latter theme in parliament, when debating his motion on democratization of the Church. In the motion text and debate, he argues that just as all other areas in society have undergone “a true modernization” and democratization, this should also be done concerning the Church, at all levels.⁶⁰⁸

Over time, Hallén does not stray from this conviction. His opinions in the source material are more difficult to follow than other actors in this study as Hallén produces little material in book format. The books published in his name consist of sermons or devotions, a format that typically provides a different line of reasoning than political texts. As he advances in years, his language and radical formulations from younger years become milder. In general terms, however, his views remain more or less the same, especially when it comes to his view on authority.

At the end of the Second World War, Hallén holds an opening sermon before parliament, reflecting over the events in Europe, posing the rhetorical question whether people’s security has actually increased along with the increase of production, wealth and knowledge, and contemplates how little Jesus means to people “in this secularized time”.⁶⁰⁹ In conclusion, he urges the politicians to stand behind the three articles of faith: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁶¹⁰ The sermon displays a slightly different reflective evaluation than his younger years. It also expresses a more distanced attitude to his previous Marxist materialism and a hint of a more relaxed attitude towards a general authority, at least before the Divine.

8.2.2 The political end justifying the secularizing means

The reform of the General Synod in 1949 will be analysed in more detail below, but one reflection from Hallén on secularization is worth mentioning here. In parliamentary debate about the government proposition, he argues that personally, he would gladly have seen an even stronger democratization of the Synod.⁶¹¹ Hallén also affirms that there are secularizing risks with this decision. He openly acknowledges this, arguing “that this reform might lead to

⁶⁰⁷ “ödmjukt böjde sig under kyrkans andliga herravälde”, ”den gamla kyrkans fasta grepp över sinnena lossnade”, *ibid.* 5.

⁶⁰⁸ ”en verklig modernisering”, Motion in SC 1928:46, SC: 1928:6:19, 15-17.

⁶⁰⁹ “i denna sekulariserade tid” Hallén, *Inför dag, som grånar: Predikan hållen vid riksdagens högtidliga öppnande den 10 januari 1945* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1945), 5f, 9.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.* 7, 9, 12.

⁶¹¹ SC, 1948:9, 37.

a secularization of the Church from within, but that a real folk church must take this risk”.⁶¹² This indicates that Hallén weighs the risk of secularization against his wish to hand the Church power of clerical authorities over to the people. If the latter goal is achieved, Hallén declares himself ready to accept secularization as the consequence.

Hallén’s antipathy towards authoritarian tendencies within Church and policy is expressed under different wordings. In a parliamentary debate in 1950, before the new legislation on freedom of religion, he describes the risks of future disestablishment of the State Church. If uncontrolled by the state, the Church may become dogmatic and reactionary and bring these symptoms into church life and possibly also politics.⁶¹³ Consequently, Hallén can accept state control over church matters, insofar as it functions as a guard against factors that become unwanted authorities. The following year, he also argues in parliament that *society* (italics in original) must keep control over religious matters, not leaving them to “only private initiative”.⁶¹⁴ This view can also be interpreted as a church-political version of the state-individualistic perspective, where the state is imagined as the safeguard to secure the autonomy of the individual from external authorities, also in their Sacred form.

8.2.3 A balance-act between values in older age

During Hallén’s last decade in parliament, he occasionally expresses a more positive view of authority in its Biblical context, when discussing issues disconnected from politics, e.g. in his published collection of radio devotions. This also implies a lessened focus on autonomy, displayed in describing positive sides to repentance and penance.⁶¹⁵ In this collection, Hallén also displays sorrow over secularization, young people’s lack of reverence before the Sacred and the reduction of daily devotions in people’s homes. Still, he does not name any reasons behind this secularization.⁶¹⁶

However, when reflecting on current political decisions, Hallén’s anti-authoritarian perspective still shines through, e.g. when commenting on the introduction of the 1951 Freedom of Religion Act, which allowed people to freely leave the State Church. Here, Hallén describes parliament’s recent removal of religious enforcement as positive. His motivation for

⁶¹² ”att denna reform skulle kunna leda till en sekularisering inifrån av kyrkan, men att en verklig folkkyrka måste taga denna risk” Ibid. 39.

⁶¹³ SC 1950:12, 49.

⁶¹⁴ ”enbart det privata initiativet” SC 1951:20, 40.

⁶¹⁵ Hallén, *Ting som förbliva: Morgonandakter i radio och andra betraktelser* (Uppsala: J.A. Lindblads förlag, 1953), 70-72, 147.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid. 118-121, 127-129.

allowing people to leave the State Church, while maintaining the system itself, is a somewhat ambiguous combination of perspectives. Hallén states that the secularized society is a fact and that the Church hereby ought to be open to people of all faiths, while also arguing that all these people suffer under their sin and long for divine forgiveness and righteousness.⁶¹⁷

In general, though, the older Hallén maintains his distinctly anti-authoritarian perspective. In relation to the debate on female clergy during the late 1950s, he describes a new popular Christianity, which intuitively understands Christ as a “completely free and shapeless” character, without restrictions of boundaries. Opposed to this is a Christ coming from above, instituting a church organization, sacraments, et cetera, and Hallén argues that the former must prevail over the latter.⁶¹⁸

In parliament, he expresses strong frustration over what he views as a stubbornness among the General Synod concerning the appointment of clergy. His remarks in this debate also serve as a summary of Harald Hallén’s long parliament career, spanning over almost half a century. The context is a 1957 interpellation debate on the forthcoming government report on the relationship between state and Church. Here Hallén takes the opportunity to criticize the General Synod’s unwillingness to follow the parliament decision to introduce female clergy. He complains that despite his many years in parliament trying to change the direction of the State Church, this is unfortunately still governed by such a “fundamentalist and literal view”.⁶¹⁹

Hallén describes this as just a new version of the old conflict from the turn of the century, when the labour movement’s demands for freedom were opposed by the Church, which, according to him, rejected the demands for a new societal order on grounds of being “a rebellion against Divine world order”.⁶²⁰ However, Hallén still states seeing a light at the end of the tunnel; the past General Synod was not representative of the folk church, and furthermore, the lay Synod delegates now have a larger influence than people might expect and the laity “draw clearer conclusions concerning the impact of the Spirit of Christ on the contemporary age more clearly than the Church can manage, I regret to say.”⁶²¹ Here, Hallén

⁶¹⁷ Ibid. 95-98.

⁶¹⁸ ”fullständigt fri och formlös”, In *Expressen* 2 October 1958, in Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka." 17.

⁶¹⁹ ”fundamentalistiska och bokstavsbundna syn”, SC, 1957:25, 19.

⁶²⁰ ”ett uppror mot den gudomliga världsordningen”, *ibid.*

⁶²¹ ”drar klarare konsekvenser av Kristusandens följdverkan i nutiden än vad kyrkan tyvärr mäktar göra.” Ibid. 20.

presents an authority-critical perspective where the people, not the Church authorities, are pointed out as the true bearers of the Spirit of Christ.

The following year, when the General Synod has not yet adopted the government request to accept female clergy, Hallén shows frustration and voices different versions of the same anti-authoritarian view. He complains about the dissenters' interpretation of the Bible, which he regards as "literal slavery and captivity".⁶²² He rhetorically asks what the Church in reality is, and responds to himself: "Is it not the sum of us all who wish to remain in the Church?"⁶²³ Hallén admits that this large group of members may not have very good theological knowledge, but they have what he considers more important – an intuitive feeling, which Hallén suggests would affirm his position, rather than the traditional view of the Church.⁶²⁴

Summary

Harald Hallén has a very long period as an active politician and opinion-maker. All the way from his programmatic article in 1910 and up till his last days as member of parliament, half a century later, when female clergy had eventually also been accepted by the General Synod, he consistently works and argues for a democratization and decreasing of authority over the Church of Sweden, instead transferring power to the people.

On community, Hallén expresses a somewhat ambiguous view, where community in the family and between people is sometimes highlighted, but in these cases regularly described under a class-based Marxist perspective. This is especially explicit in the first part of the period and later presented as a counterweight to various forms of authority.

Hallén's view of a *folkkyrka* goes hand in hand with Per Albin Hansson's view of the *folkhem*, even though his own early work preceded Hansson's *folkhem* speech and policy. Hallén mainly does this in accordance with a liberal theology, portraying an anti-authoritarian Divinity. When referring to Scripture and Divinity, it becomes apparent that Hallén does not hold these as sacred above everything, at least if the Sacred realm appears to stand in the way of the class-based demands for political reformation of society.

Harald Hallén is the actor in this study who shows the highest reverence for the Sacred, more notably towards God than towards the Church – a reverence that apparently deepens with

⁶²² "bokstavsträldom och bundenhet", SC 1958:10, 58.

⁶²³ "Är det inte summan av oss alla, som denna tid vill stå kvar i kyrkan?" Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

advancing age. This may partly be explained by the fact that several of his published books consist of sermons and devotions. His religious message is, however, repeatedly conveyed with an authority-critical perspective, where the realm of the Sacred is often expressed in worldly terms. In the beginning of the period, his message is regularly put in Marxist terms, later in a general anti-authoritarian perspective.

In contrast to Engberg's more directly confrontational rhetoric, Hallén acts in a more diplomatic manner, without direct attacks on either God or Church, but rather by advancing demands to reform the Church to achieve the anti-authoritarian vision that actually both Hallén and Engberg propose. In practical policy, Hallén's line would eventually turn out to be more successful, a pattern that will be studied more in detail in chapter 9.

Generally, Hallén's position is consistent over time. All through this period, he maintains a respectful attitude towards the Sacred, at least in relation to God. Still, he does so under a liberal, inner-worldly theological point of view. He also continually strives against authority and instead wishes to form a Church built on the autonomous perspective where the power of man, expressed through party politics and popular vote, becomes the preferred base of the Church rather than clerical or Biblical authorities.

8.3 Alva Myrdal

There is reason to regard Alva Myrdal (1902-1986) as one of the most influential actors during the research period. This is partly due to her long active period, and even more important, she is also the actor most active in all the three spheres covered in this project. Tage Erlander stated that Alva Myrdal shaped the work of the School Commission considerably by introducing a new kind of education.⁶²⁵ In family policy, Olof Palme named Alva Myrdal as especially central in the formation of the party's family policy.⁶²⁶ Francis Sejersted summarizes her wide-ranging ideological radicalism by writing that Alva Myrdal's reasoning on one hand resembled communist actors in other nations, but still created a society that became more liberal than socialist.⁶²⁷

In 1924 Alva, then Reimer, married Gunnar Myrdal at a civil ceremony. After this, they cooperated in many projects and wrote several books together. Both reached high positions in

⁶²⁵ Sondra R. Herman, "Alva Myrdal's Campaign for the Swedish Comprehensive School," *Scandinavian Studies* 67, no. 3 (1995), 336.

⁶²⁶ Congress speech on family policy, *Congress protocol* 1975, 756.

⁶²⁷ Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, 245, 249.

the Swedish government as well as in the United Nations. Both would eventually become Nobel Laureates, Gunnar in economy and Alva in peace. The reason only Alva is studied in this project is that Gunnar devoted most of his career to a narrower financial sphere. Alva and her works did, however, cover a wider scope, which also closely correlates with the values of this study.⁶²⁸

In Alva Myrdal's early career, before the Second World War, her writings focused on family policy. After the war, she was given a central role in the 1946 School Commission, and then shifted her focus to an international career that occupied most of her attention for the best part of two decades. She returned, however, to prominent roles in Swedish politics at the end of the 1960s as Minister of Church Affairs and also chair of party and government reports on both family, education and church.

8.3.1 A new radical approach in Swedish debate

In 1932, Alva Myrdal publishes the article *Kollektiv bostadsform* (Collective Form of Living). This text displays the ideological pattern that she and Gunnar will soon develop more in depth. The text displays an early vision of autonomy and social engineering, and can be argued to express a threefold opposition towards the Sacred, against authority in the form of tradition and against community in form of the traditional family.

Alva Myrdal argues that modern times have forced both religious imaginations and moral traditions to a necessary change, and the sociological changes of this time imply that the "illusion of household unity" must be replaced by new ways of living together.⁶²⁹ Like Per Albin Hansson, she rejects a particular form of individualism, namely the bourgeoisie, competitive individualism. Instead, she suggests a new form of collective housing, admitting that this expresses "a collectivistic ideology", which also includes collective nursery schools, where children can get a "*constructive education*".⁶³⁰ What Alva Myrdal means more specifically by this concept will be developed further in coming years.

Kris i befolkningsfrågan (Crisis in the Population Question) in 1934 is Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's breakthrough in public debate. This book has a very practical purpose: to increase

⁶²⁸ Yvonne Hirdman, *Det tänkande hjärtat: Boken om Alva Myrdal* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2006). Passim.

⁶²⁹ "illusionen om hushållsenheten" Alva Myrdal, *Kollektiv bostadsform*, vol. Tiden, no 10 (Stockholm: Tiden, 1932), 601f.

⁶³⁰ "en kollektivistisk ideologi", "*konstruktiv uppfostran*", ibid. 607f.

the number of babies born in order to avert a population decline. Despite this practical theme, this influential book displays several arguments of importance in this study.

The introduction declares that the area of reproduction has been of interest to teachers of religion and moralists, but the authors add in a welcoming tone that old, traditional points of view are currently being torn apart.⁶³¹ Even though the book is intended to increase births, the Myrdals display an anti-authoritarian view on both contraceptives and abortions, and also proclaim the eradication of the idea of anything shameful in bearing children out of wedlock.⁶³²

The major part of the book, authored by Gunnar, consists of rather technical national-economic calculations, while Alva has written the chapters on family and social policy.⁶³³ These parts of the book are most interesting for this project, and they also contain the most radical suggestions. The text calls for reforming the school system and portrays a dichotomy between oppressed and free human beings, between those who are subordinate and obedient instruments under leaders and those who are brave, adult and independently thinking citizens. The authors' conclusion is clear: neither tradition nor authoritative ethics will suffice in building future society. They state that the current school system is shaped for "obedient, unreflecting feudal people" and call for a new ideal of "individual autonomy" combined with "collective cooperation".⁶³⁴ Consequently, the Myrdals call for a school that shapes children into "individually strong collectivists".⁶³⁵ The new school philosophy they proclaim has a utopian perspective, demanding "education for a new world".⁶³⁶

The Myrdals' vision is both descriptive and utopian. They state that the former circles of influence, "family, homeland and church", have been broken in the new society.⁶³⁷ The old ideal of obedience is outdated and should be replaced with a new one of "subsuming, not just submission".⁶³⁸ They argue that the old school system promotes an excessive and false individualism aiming at competition. Instead, they propose a new kind of individualism in line

⁶³¹ Alva Myrdal and Gunnar Myrdal, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1934), 7f.

⁶³² Ibid. 52 Even if both contraceptives and abortions would reduce the number of babies, the Myrdals still support legalization of both these measures, for ideological and practical reasons, 50-54.

⁶³³ Authorship explained in e.g. Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish experiment in democratic family and population policy* (New York/London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1941), vii.

⁶³⁴ "lydiga, oflekterade feodalmänniskor", "individuell självständighet", "kollektivt samarbete" Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, 261f.

⁶³⁵ "individuell starka kollektivister", ibid. 263.

⁶³⁶ "uppfostran till en ny värld", Between quotation marks in original. Ibid. 264.

⁶³⁷ "släkten, bygden och kyrkan", ibid. 269.

⁶³⁸ "inordning och ej blott underordning", ibid.

with the central virtues in the future society the Myrdals envision: “independence and capacity for personal initiative and decision-making, plus a love for work in itself”.⁶³⁹

The authors conclude by explaining that the future “demands an expurgation among the ideals of upbringing, demands new social goals for educating individuals.”⁶⁴⁰ In this context, it may also be noted that the Myrdals praise racial eugenics and forced sterilizations as useful tools in order to minimize reproduction among “individuals highly unqualified for life” – people with intellectual, physical or social disabilities.⁶⁴¹

The Myrdal family programme can be described as strongly anti-authoritarian and critical against the traditional family community, while instead proposing a new, autonomous vision. They describe the family authority over children as already having been reduced, but this development needs to be pursued much further. Referring to their demands for school reform, the Myrdals describe a similar pattern for the family; to educate children to completely new degrees “of autonomy, of self-determination, of psychological independence”.⁶⁴²

Several times, the Myrdals repeat a radical vision of separation of family members, describing the need to “liberate” children from their parents due to the “more intensive parental influence and affection” to which modern children are exposed as a consequence of decreasing childbirths.⁶⁴³ This liberation is supposed to take place during adolescence and also by partly transferring the upbringing of young children from the family to nurseries, as the Myrdals view it as “almost [...] pathological” to raise children in the modern family.⁶⁴⁴ Thus, in order to benefit both mothers and children, a professionalization of child-care in nursery schools, at least for a few hours a day, should be introduced for all families.⁶⁴⁵ The authors can thus be argued to present a version of state individualism, where the collective vision overruns the community interest within the family.

Concerning genders, the authors repeatedly describe the woman as tied up by home, marriage and children, and she therefore needs to be liberated, not least to perform paid work.⁶⁴⁶ They conclude that the modern family is in a state of dissolution and should therefore not be treated

⁶³⁹ ”självständighet och förmåga till egna initiativ och beslut samt kärlek till arbetet såsom arbete.” Ibid. 268.

⁶⁴⁰ ”kräver utrensning bland uppfostringsidealen, kräver nya sociala mål för individernas fostran.” Ibid. 276.

⁶⁴¹ ”höggradigt livsodugliga individer”, ibid. 42, 74-77, 217-226. Quote on 217.

⁶⁴² ”av självständighet, av egen beslutskraft, av psykologiskt oberoende”, ibid. 301.

⁶⁴³ ”frigöra”, ”en alltmer intensiv föräldrapåverkan och tillgivenhet”, ibid. 301.

⁶⁴⁴ ”närmast [...] patologisk”, ibid. 303.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid. 304-308.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. 305f, 312, 315.

too gently. On the contrary, it demands “radical surgery” – separating the families during daytime to abolish what they describe as a closed-in position of the wives.⁶⁴⁷

Alva and Gunnar Myrdal also provide a noteworthy discussion on alternative understandings of words like individualism and community. They describe the transition phase between the farming patriarchy and the modern family as an individualistic period – although not in an autonomous version, but one where the family became an individual unit, disconnected from the old village community and larger family. The authors argue that the conservative critics of their radical programme defend a kind of individualism, while they themselves propose a new kind of community: a collectivistic community.⁶⁴⁸ Consequently, they argue that the type of family individualism, which regards the family as responsible for itself, is based on “a sadistic inclination” wishing to stretch out this so-called freedom to “an unlimited and uncontrolled right to rule also over others”, the right of the family supporter to “be lord over his poor creatures”.⁶⁴⁹ The Myrdals thus provide a radical new value-system where they reject the community of the family as a negative group individualism that ought to be replaced by another community, one of collectivistic nature.

After *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, its visions began to take practical shape, both through Gunnar Myrdal’s participation in the Swedish Population Commission and Alva founding and becoming the first director at the Social Pedagogy Seminary, which enabled her to put her ideas on child education into practice.⁶⁵⁰

Alva followed up the *Kris* book with two shorter books with her as sole author: *Stadsbarn* (City Children) and *Riktiga leksaker* (Real Toys). The latter book is very practical, discussing suitable toys for children. Only a slight non-authoritarian perspective shines through when discussing the need for boys to play games and use toys traditionally used by girls and vice versa.⁶⁵¹

More of interest is *Stadsbarn*. Here, the ideas in the *Kris* book take concrete shape, describing how a large day nursery could function in the modern city. Alva Myrdal’s anti-authoritarian view is apparent, by explaining that children are to be fostered into independence and that

⁶⁴⁷ “en radikal operation”, *ibid.* 317. It is explicitly stated that both parents must be away from home for seven to eight hours a day.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 319-321.

⁶⁴⁹ “en sadistisk benägenhet”, “en obegränsad och okontrollerad rätt att härska även över andra”, ”att vara herre över sina stackare”, *ibid.* 299f.

⁶⁵⁰ Etzemüller, *Alva and Gunnar Myrdal: Social Engineering in the Modern World*, 193-195.

⁶⁵¹ Alva Myrdal, *Riktiga leksaker* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1936).

modern pedagogy proclaims children should never receive punishments other than being left alone so that they will experience a “social rejection”.⁶⁵² She dismisses what she considers to be an indifferent education, institutionalized and with strict rules, and instead recommends a less authoritarian one that makes use of “the child’s own positive powers”.⁶⁵³

Alva Myrdal distances herself from what she sees as an ultra-individualism in Rousseau, Montessori and psychoanalysis. In its place, she argues for replacing the old pedagogy in both society and family with a new one, built on “the democratic core of incorporation, as opposed to submission”.⁶⁵⁴ She underlines that this pedagogy is not to be confused with collectivism but correlates with good individual treatment of individual children.⁶⁵⁵ She describes the family as “the only remaining autocratic form of government” and explains that modern society no longer wants obedience under authoritarian individuals.⁶⁵⁶

In 1936, Alva Myrdal develops this into an even more radical perspective in the article “Fostran till frihet, kritik och kulturkamp” (Education to freedom, criticism and cultural struggle). Like *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, the anti-authoritarian view deals with family and school education. Alva Myrdal argues that psychoanalysis has shown the dangers of strong ties between parents and children. This means that parental authority must decrease, not least as it is a “model for every authority on the whole”.⁶⁵⁷ Therefore, this authority must be loosened in order not to train the child into submission and subservience. Alva Myrdal presents a drastic dichotomy: the old discipline worked with tools like enforcement and complaint, creating fear and a feeling of inferiority, hereby crushing the individual. The new pedagogy, on the other hand, liberates the child from agony and provides the greatest prerequisite for a free and democratic coexistence.⁶⁵⁸ In this “apology for disobedience”, as she calls it, Alva Myrdal presents a future utopia, which is a society characterized by freedom and democracy, of happiness and harmony – a day when “punishment and hate and mistrust can be analysed away as neurotic misreactions.”⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵² ”sociala ogillandet”. Between quotation marks in original. Alva Myrdal, *Stadsbarn: En bok om deras fostran i storbarnkammare* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1935), 25, 96, 175.

⁶⁵³ ”de positiva krafterna hos barnet självt”, *ibid.* 77f.

⁶⁵⁴ ”inordningens demokratiska grundkaraktär till skillnad från underordningen”, *ibid.* 84f, 94.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 102.

⁶⁵⁶ ”den enda återstående autokratiska styrelseformen”, *ibid.* 94.

⁶⁵⁷ ”företrädare för all auktoritet överhuvudtaget”, Alva Myrdal, “Fostran till frihet, kritik och kulturkamp,” *Kulturfront*, no. 1 (1936), 67.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 67-69.

⁶⁵⁹ ”försvarstal för olydnaden” (between quotation marks in original); ”straff och hat och misstro skall kunna bortanalyseras som neurotiska felreaktioner”, *ibid.* 68f.

In 1938, Alva Myrdal contributes two texts to the anthology *Kvinnan, familjen och samhället* (Woman, Family and Society). Her introductory text bears the telling title “Den nyare tidens revolution i kvinnans ställning” (The contemporary revolution of the position of women). Here, she describes this revolutionary process as being currently underway and that this revolution consists of breaking free from traditional gender norms that made women *dependent* (italics in original) on several factors. The perspective is materialistic, describing the family as a working cooperation and explaining that a new time is dawning “when the family no longer remains the natural unit of economic life” as the working chores become increasingly separated from the family.⁶⁶⁰ This revolution implies that the central social and economic unit in society changes, from family to individual. This revolution is not man- or woman-made. Rather it has, in accordance with a Marxist-leaning historical materialism, created itself.⁶⁶¹

Alva Myrdal’s second text in this book largely repeats the same historical background and autonomous perspective. She expresses that her vision, equated to “clear thinking”, has been hindered by both the “strong ties of tradition” and “sentimental points of view”.⁶⁶² However, she adds that the number of divorces has increased dramatically during the last half-century and ponders over the questions of whether marriage actually is beneficial for women and what the future of the marriage institution may be.⁶⁶³ Her conclusion is that the social role of women must be adapted to the new social order and that this must be performed by two means, although vaguely formulated, but indicating an anti-authoritarian impression: a less complex-creating upbringing and a slow removal of prejudice.⁶⁶⁴

Alva and Gunnar Myrdal’s book *Kontakt med Amerika* (Contact with America) from 1941 describes their experiences while living in and studying American society. Large parts of the book are about economy, while others deal with family and education policy, most probably with Gunnar and Alva writing one half each. The Myrdals look with admiration upon the individualism they see in the American system, especially in school education. Their authority-critical focus becomes apparent when describing the American crime landscape

⁶⁶⁰ ”när familjen upphör att vara den naturliga enheten för det ekonomiska livet”, Alva Myrdal, ”Den nyare tidens revolution i kvinnans ställning,” in *Kvinnan, familjen och samhället* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1938), 5f, 16.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. 17, 41.

⁶⁶² ”klart tänkande”, ”traditionens starka band”, ”sentimentala uppfattningar”, Myrdal, ”Den svenska kvinnan i industri och hem,” In *Kvinnan, familjen och samhället*. 183.

⁶⁶³ Ibid. 188, 194f.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. 215.

argued to be the result of “the old-fashioned strict European upbringing”, with the addition that such an upbringing does not work in an American society that opposes authoritarian control and obedience.⁶⁶⁵

An autonomous focus also surfaces in the authors’ praise of the generally independent, critical, non-obeying, progressive philosophy they claim to see in America.⁶⁶⁶ As a pedagogical role-model, the book promotes American educational reformer John Dewey, whose non-authoritarian orientation would gain large influence in the coming decades’ reformation of Swedish education policy.⁶⁶⁷ The Myrdals praise the ideas they see in him and the education in America.

This book praises the pedagogical idea of group assignments, which will later appear frequently in Social Democratic school documents. The authors also promote pupils developing a critical view, where they would no longer be enslaved under the printed word. Such pedagogy is described to result in a livelier, happier school and childhood.⁶⁶⁸

The same year, Alva Myrdal publishes another large volume in English: *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy*. This book is especially interesting as she describes it as a substitute for an English translation of *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*.⁶⁶⁹ It also functions as a summary of the reports from the Swedish Population Commission. In this book, Alva Myrdal distinguishes between different forms of individualism, distancing herself from the Soviet and American versions.⁶⁷⁰ Instead, she proposes a combination of a Social Democratic view on distribution of resources and the autonomous message presented in the *Kris* book.

Alva Myrdal also argues that the work of the Population Commission has resulted in a “moral revolution” in Sweden and has rapidly moved public opinion.⁶⁷¹ This claim is not evaluated here, but the mere fact that she raises this point is important in order to understand her ideological focus to make the Myrdal visions result in practical and revolutionizing reforms.

⁶⁶⁵ “den gammaldags stränga europeiska uppfostran”, Alva Myrdal and Gunnar Myrdal, *Kontakt med Amerika* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1941), 94f.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid. 109, 111, 129.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. 108-115, Olivestam, “Idé och politik” 76.

⁶⁶⁸ Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kontakt med Amerika*, 129-132 Criticism has, however, been raised that Alva Myrdal strongly overestimated the features she describes in the American system, which gives the impression that she used the American example as an argument for her personal views, rather than as a neutral description. Herman, “Alva Myrdal’s Campaign for the Swedish Comprehensive School,” 341f.

⁶⁶⁹ Myrdal, *Nation and Family*, vii.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. 9f, 103.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. 111.

In education policy, she repeats the goal of shaping individual personalities as “the lodestar for all progressive education”.⁶⁷² This area is also the result from the Population Commission that Alva Myrdal praises most in the book, namely the expanded sex education in schools, including a more open attitude towards contraceptives, birth control and abortions.⁶⁷³ This focus may appear counter-productive for the general need of increasing childbirths, but indicates that such a goal comes under the ideological umbrella of autonomy and a wish to replace “old taboos” and moralistic attitudes” with modern “rational thinking”.⁶⁷⁴

A materialistic perspective can also be traced in how the socio-economic needs for childbirths are described as a more legitimate basis for modern family values than moral or religious obligations. Instead, Alva Myrdal wishes to find a combined focus on “national planning (...) without encroaching on individual freedom” – a position that also signals an opening for a state individualism.⁶⁷⁵ These suggested national needs may also serve as an explanation for another topic which appears more provoking in the 21st century than when these words were written, namely Alva Myrdal’s strong approval of eugenics and forced sterilizations of what she calls “extremely unfit and worthless individuals”.⁶⁷⁶ She describes all these reforms as the “final victory of the Neo-Malthusian movement”, arguing that the entire people have now been won for this new view on sexuality and relations.⁶⁷⁷

Finally, this period can be concluded by mentioning that Alva Myrdal follows the same pattern as others in this project, by changing her tone when addressing groups that can be expected to have a more conservative view. For instance, when writing a piece for the Swedish housewife society in 1941, she proposes that the family ought to be put back into a place of honour and that society ought to nurture a positive view of the family.⁶⁷⁸ Apart from this, the period from 1932 and through the Second World War is for Alva Myrdal stamped by a radically autonomous view of the individual, in opposition to traditional family community and different kinds of authority, and indirectly also against the Sacred.

⁶⁷² Ibid. 114.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. 176-186, 205-212.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. 188.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid. 398.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. 115-118.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid. 217.

⁶⁷⁸ In Cecilia Åse and Yvonne Hirdman, eds., *Alva Myrdal: "Något kan man väl göra" Texter 1932-1982* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2002), 134-137.

8.3.2 *Opposition towards religious authorities*

At the age of 16, Alva experienced a religious crisis. She tried to become a believing Christian but failed and then turned against Christianity.⁶⁷⁹ Her position towards religion in general, and Christianity in particular, is rarely expressed clearly, but sometimes shines through in passing.

In 1932, Alva Myrdal rejoices in that modern people are beginning to learn that “even religion and conceptions of divinity” must submit to the laws of change.⁶⁸⁰ Therefore, these ought to overcome their “stiff, complex-ridden personal concepts of ethics”, especially concerning their traditional views on the family.⁶⁸¹

In magazine articles, she portrays religion and its view on relations as something outdated and in need of replacement. She argues that women’s dependence upon men is the result of the view of female impurity in ancient religions and more specifically “the Christian ethic of asceticism”, which has degraded women.⁶⁸² In a thematic issue on the new family from the Social Democratic Women’s Association magazine *Morgonbris*, she explains that dechristianization, with religion losing its grip and norm-shaping power over people, facilitates the reformation of the family.⁶⁸³ The Old Testament way of educating youth does not work in modern society, which needs to oppose obedience under authorities by “more than ever” educating the next generation into “criticism, opposition and sound self-assertion”.⁶⁸⁴

In the *Kris* book, Alva and Gunnar criticize the present moral education in school as being too much based on the teaching of Christianity, with too much focus on personal salvation. The alternatives they recommend are the educational philosophies of Locke and Rousseau (even if Alva distances herself from Rousseau in other aspects) and the individual’s right to free development. In accordance with a state-individualistic perspective, though, they underline

⁶⁷⁹ Hirdman, *Det tänkande hjärtat*, 29-32.

⁶⁸⁰ ”t.o.m. religioner och gudaföreställningar”, Myrdal, *Kollektiv bostadsform*, Tiden, no 10, 601.

⁶⁸¹ ”stela komplexbundna personliga moralbegrepp”, *ibid.*

⁶⁸² ”den kristna askesmoralen”, ”Uppfostrad till ’äkta kvinnlighet’”, *Idun* 1934:8, in Åse and Hirdman, *Alva Myrdal: "Något kan man väl göra"*, 27.

⁶⁸³ Alva Myrdal, ”Familjen göres om,” *Morgonbris*, 1933. 13. The article is unsigned in the printed magazine, but everywhere it appears in the literature it is attributed to Alva Myrdal; it also contains her general line of argument.

⁶⁸⁴ ”mer än någonsin”, ”kritik, opposition och en sund självhävdelse” Alva Myrdal, ”Föräldrauppfostran,” *Morgonbris*, 1933. 31.

that this should not be in line with the liberal version of individualism but one that is ordered according to the interests of society.⁶⁸⁵

Regarding the family, the *Kris* book proposes that people should stop viewing the family as a freely formed relationship, instituted by God or by people. This view ought to be replaced by a social-materialistic view, as a new form of cohabitation, resting on financial and social factors.⁶⁸⁶ The old-fashioned, patriarchal family type may have been beneficial in previous orders of production but is as obsolete in modern society as a knight's armour to an engineer.⁶⁸⁷ Along with industrialization and its changing order of production comes a natural and unavoidable disorganizing of the family, and the best way for society to facilitate this transition is to direct it in order to hasten it.⁶⁸⁸

Neither Christianity nor religion in general appear as topics in the large day nursery that Alva Myrdal describes in *Stadsbarn*. She does mention religion in one passage, though, when discussing the education of staff. One labour group, previously common in childcare institutions, are deaconesses. This is, however, a group that the author advises to avoid employing, due to them being too unqualified and too strictly religious. Instead, nurseries should search for suitable young women of other education "without ties to any confession".⁶⁸⁹

In *Kulturfront* the following year, Alva Myrdal displays a very negative attitude to authority in all forms, not least in its religious form. She complains about current society, arguing that it portrays Christian, conservative attitudes in education as acceptable and objective, while an irreligious, atheistic perspective is considered to be subjective. Instead, she proposes an education that is unconfessional and critical against conservative values. She argues that traditional education, with a focus on authority, creates unskilled, dependent and subservient people, easily made victims of autocratic rulers. The new ideals, on the other hand, help people to act and think freely and stand strong against authorities.⁶⁹⁰

In their 1941 book about America, the Myrdals' distance towards religion becomes apparent. They state that social science functioned badly both when it was a servant of the Church and

⁶⁸⁵ Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, 265f.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid. 287.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid. 289, 293.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid. 294-296.

⁶⁸⁹ "utan all konfessionsbundenhet" Myrdal, *Stadsbarn*, 155f.

⁶⁹⁰ Myrdal, "Fostran till frihet, kritik och kulturkamp," 64-67.

when it was under the authority of the nation-states. Not until Enlightenment could social science break free from “the shackles of dogma and state powers”.⁶⁹¹ When explaining American culture to Swedish readers, the Myrdals display a vague surprise towards the central role Christianity plays in American society, a surprise that simultaneously displays their views on religion in general and in Sweden.⁶⁹² They find some traits of American Christianity positive, though, as long as it functions as a foundation for freedom and equality. In its practical function, though, the Myrdals dismiss religion as being narrow, bigoted, curiously strange and indifferent to those outside the dogma.⁶⁹³

The text reveals Alva and Gunnar’s general antipathy for what they imagine to be authoritarian forms of religion. They explain that they prefer the secularizing society of modern Sweden to earlier times, when Church and priests were “a general reactionary weight upon people’s thoughts”.⁶⁹⁴ They also display the same criticism expressed by other Social Democrats against the Catholic Church for being hierarchical, above control and with “totalitarian demands for the obedience of the souls”.⁶⁹⁵

Towards the end of the Second World War, when Alva Myrdal realizes the horrific consequences of the antisemitism in the Third Reich, she proposes a solution in the form of a new world religion, because the current religions complicate the assimilation between cultures. This new religion should, however, be a deistic kind of faith, a new Reformation that “boldly eradicated the dogmatic content in both Christianity and Judaism”.⁶⁹⁶ The reason she gives for this reformation is that dogmatic beliefs also imply a faith in authority and are hereby related to superstition, “whereof nazism itself is one species”.⁶⁹⁷ Thus, her view of the Sacred reflects a distinct hostility to all religion, insofar as it is connected to any kind of authoritative claims.

After the war, Alva Myrdal’s lack of written production affects her publications also on religious matters. Years later, as a newly appointed minister of government, she would soon receive the superordinate responsibility for religious matters as the first Minister of Church

⁶⁹¹ “dogmernas och statsmakternas bojer” Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kontakt med Amerika*, 18.

⁶⁹² The Myrdals state explicitly that even though the book describes America, it is “in reality” about Sweden. Ibid. 342.

⁶⁹³ Ibid. 44f.

⁶⁹⁴ “en reaktionär allmän tyngd på tankelivet.” Ibid. 43.

⁶⁹⁵ “totalitära anspråk på själarnas lydnad”, ibid. 47.

⁶⁹⁶ ”frimodigt rensade ut dogmgodset ur såväl kristendom som judendom”, Aftontidningen 6.10 1943. In Åse and Hirdman, *Alva Myrdal: "Något kan man väl göra"*, 180.

⁶⁹⁷ ”varav nazismen själv är en art”, ibid. 181.

Affairs, when the previous ministership of Ecclesiastical Affairs was divided between her and Olof Palme.

During this transition period, Alva Myrdal delivers a speech at a national Church meeting in 1967. She keeps a generally diplomatic tone, praising how the Church mission has played an important role in Sweden's move into internationalism and how the ethics among missionaries have been beneficial to developing nations.⁶⁹⁸ However, her perspective is strictly materialistic, further underlined by the fact that when quoting Scripture, she uses a verse calling for the redistribution of wealth. On one occasion, a higher dimension than the strictly material is applied, when referring to a bishop who labelled racism a sin. Also, when exemplifying the high morals among missionaries, Alva Myrdal only exemplifies with their refusal to take bribes.⁶⁹⁹ Thus, this speech neither praises nor opposes religious values, but rather avoids the topic. However, it becomes apparent that her worldview does not take the dimension of the Sacred into consideration. Rather, her speech follows the party's strategy to make use of the Church as an arena in which to perform its political programme – a view that summarizes the way the Social Democrats looked upon the State Church for most of this period.

In 1971, Alva Myrdal is invited to talk at a congress of free churches. Her speech here largely follows the same pattern as four years earlier. She praises the free churches, although specifically for their contribution to Sweden's historical development into a democracy. The two societal problems she raises in her speech consist of racial problems and economic gaps. The solutions she suggests are to provide more education and remove gaps by siding with all kinds of underprivileged groups contra all overprivileged groups in society.⁷⁰⁰ In accordance with this authority-critical perspective, she does praise the mission work of the free churches but states openly that she dislikes the "paternalistic view", where missionaries claim to present a "higher religion".⁷⁰¹

All in all, Alva Myrdal voices during the whole research period an attitude that is generally distanced from, and sometimes directly hostile towards, religion and Christianity. She accepts

⁶⁹⁸ Alva Myrdal, "Sverige i världen," in *Kyrkan i världen* (Malmö: Svenska kyrkans centralråd, 1967), 42, 55, 57.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. 51, 57, 60.

⁷⁰⁰ Speech at the Free Church Meeting in Örebro 1971 (no date given), in Åse and Hirdman, *Alva Myrdal: "Något kan man väl göra"*, 217, 220f.

⁷⁰¹ "paternalistisk inställning", "högre religion", ibid. 221.

religion whenever it can be argued to be in accordance with her authority-critical and autonomy-affirming vision, otherwise not.

8.3.3 Post-war diplomacy and later re-radicalization

After the Second World War, Alva Myrdal is given different leadership positions within the United Nations and is later appointed Swedish Ambassador to India. Understandably, this period draws her focus away from domestic policy-making and writing. In 1956, though, she publishes the book *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work*, co-written with British sociologist Viola Klein, built on material that Alva Myrdal had gathered since the end of the war.⁷⁰² This book has a slightly different, less radical perspective than Alva Myrdal's earlier work. It will not be evaluated here as to whether this milder argumentation is the result of another position from the co-writer, a wider perspective as the result of international work, or some other reason.

The main theme in this book is that modern women, due to a longer lifespan, have more time available for work outside the home, and society should therefore through different means facilitate paid labour for women.

The authors propose the Swedish model, which increases the opportunities for both male and female individual workers.⁷⁰³ Apart from this slightly individualistic perspective, the book presents the two fields of home/family and paid work as equally important and states that both the labour market and housing policy need to be adjusted in order to help women manage both fields, e.g. by increasing the availability of part-time work.⁷⁰⁴ The needs of the children are presented as equally important as those of the mother, and the book distances itself from the more radical feminists.⁷⁰⁵

However, when Alva Myrdal returns to the Swedish arena, she quickly regains and partly even radicalizes her previous autonomous perspective. In a 1964 article, she underlines that the married woman can no longer bury her individuality and limit herself to being the servant of others.⁷⁰⁶ Also, the children and other family members must be made more independent,

⁷⁰² Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's two roles: Home and work* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), ix.

⁷⁰³ Ibid. 113.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. 154-184.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid. 116f, 157.

⁷⁰⁶ "Den nya familjen" *Vi* 1964:5, in Åse and Hirdman, *Alva Myrdal: "Något kan man väl göra"*, 156.

with their psychological independence being “the prime goal of upbringing”.⁷⁰⁷ Indeed, she proposes “a very early divorce” between parents and teenagers, either through boarding schools or by new kinds of housing, with each generation living in separate compartments.⁷⁰⁸

In the late 1960s, Alva Myrdal is appointed chairman for a Social Democratic report on equality, intended to form the basis for the party policy in the 1970s. This large report is first published and accepted by the party congress in 1969, where Alva Myrdal’s presentation reveals her views on both past and future decades. She argues that it is the party’s striving for equality that, more than anything else, has transformed Sweden “almost beyond recognition” into a social and democratic role model among nations.⁷⁰⁹ She also explains with delight that several of the suggestions in the report have already been incorporated in party and government policy.⁷¹⁰

In a historical overview, Alva Myrdal explains how Social Democracy has achieved the goals of equality in material terms, completed in three stages. Therefore, the time has come for a fourth phase, which for the first time calls not only for equality and security but for “a bolder advancement of positions”, aiming for a stronger dynamic of societal change.⁷¹¹ Here, she presents four new goals: a fairer distribution of resources, enlarged opportunities for all to shape their individual lives, stronger individual influence over education and culture, and greater opportunity for individual decision-making in business and economy.⁷¹² The first and to some extent also the fourth goal mirror a traditional Marxist perspective, although without a particular orientation towards community, while the second, third and partly the fourth goal call for an autonomous form of individualism.

One interesting point for this study is that this extensive report, intended to increase equality throughout society, displays a materialistic perspective and never mentions either church or religion. The congress decision was to accept the report and declare that its principles should

⁷⁰⁷ ”uppfostrens främsta målsättning”, *ibid.* 157, 159.

⁷⁰⁸ ”en mycket tidig skilsmässa”, *ibid.* 158.

⁷⁰⁹ ”hart när till oigenkännlighet”, Alva Myrdal, “Alva Myrdals föredragning,” in *Jämlikhet: Första rapport från SAP-LO:s arbetsgrupp för jämlikhetsfrågor. Från partikongressen 1969: Alva Myrdals föredragning och Kongressens beslut*, ed. Alva Myrdal (Stockholm: Prisma, 1969), 163.

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.* 167.

⁷¹¹ ”en dristigare framskjutning av positionerna”, *ibid.* 165.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*

be guidelines for future policy-making in the party board and parliamentary group and also used in the coming programme revision.⁷¹³ This would indeed be the case.

The report is translated into English in *Towards Equality: The Alva Myrdal Report to the Swedish Social Democratic Party*. This report may be argued to display the strongest and most all-encompassing expression of the radically autonomous perspective here named *ultra-progressive* during the whole research period. The autonomous-leaning formulations from the 1960 party programme are mirrored in the introduction, defining the aim of the report as to give each citizen “equal *freedom of choice* to shape his own future”, plus freedom from “the pressure of external circumstances”.⁷¹⁴

It is not possible to discern exactly which words are written by Alva Myrdal herself, but large parts of the book bear a resemblance to *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, and regardless of exactly which co-author has written what, Alva Myrdal’s autonomous perspective is adopted and further strengthened in this report. The passages dealing with school and family policy will be analysed below, but some general points may be highlighted in this chapter as the whole report bears Alva Myrdal’s name.

The perspective in this report rests on a primarily materialistic base, coupled with an idealism of autonomy. The accomplishments described since the party gained power in 1932 deal solely with economic reforms, plus what the text names the *democratization* of the school system.⁷¹⁵ The report describes the background of the present social system as three branches: one Christian, one patriarchal and one based on Enlightenment and English liberalism, which laid social responsibility on the community. To follow this, the authors propose a fourth branch, specifically connected to Social Democracy.⁷¹⁶ This description provides a distinct example fitting with the values analysed in this project – how the Alva Myrdal Report presents the Social Democratic vision as an alternative model to replace the previous ones reflected in the Sacred, authority or community.

The general perspective in the text is also highly autonomous and anti-authoritarian, in social policy in general, and more narrowly regarding crime and punishment and the labour

⁷¹³ Myrdal, "Alva Myrdals föredragning," 175.

⁷¹⁴ Alva Myrdal, ed., *Towards Equality: The Alva Myrdal Report to the Swedish Social Democratic Party* (Stockholm: Prisma, 1971), 15.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid. 22f.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid. 88f.

market.⁷¹⁷ Substance abuse and crimes are not described as moral problems, but rather as “social deviations” by “socially handicapped” or “under-privileged” people.⁷¹⁸ It is considered important to avoid coercive measures, and supervision in the workplace is argued to “limit personal freedom of action”.⁷¹⁹ And finally, so-called “autonomous groups” are suggested to be introduced in the workplace, where “*the workers themselves plan the work, establish production goals and have responsibility for running operations.*”⁷²⁰

These initial examples from the Alva Myrdal Report capture her radically autonomous perspective, not only on school and family but also on the wider societal context in the defining years when the 1960s turn into the 1970s.

Summary

Alva Myrdal maintains a consistent and radically autonomous perspective during the whole period – with the possible exception of a mid-term international hiatus displaying a less radical perspective. Apart from this, the centre of her ideology and political programme is characterized by a highly autonomous view, consistently aiming at liberating the individual from binding features of community, especially within the family. Her perspective is also during the whole period distinctly opposed to authorities, understood in a very wide sense – be they based in God, individuals, patriarchal structures, rules or traditions of different kinds. Her main goal across the whole field is to break these bonds and increase the independence of the individual.

There are, however, situations where it is unclear how far Alva Myrdal wishes to stretch this autonomy. For instance, she alternately praises and rejects the individualism of Rousseau. During her time away from Sweden, she also gives a more positive impression of family community, where the needs of the children and of the family as a unit are portrayed as equally important as those of the woman. In all her previous and later writings, though, the woman’s striving for financial and other independence from the family is a value raised above others.

In Alva’s and Gunnar’s joint written production, but to an equally high degree also in her own texts, the vision for increased autonomy is above all expressed in the spheres of school and

⁷¹⁷ Ibid. 88-120.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid. 95, 97.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid. 92, 110.

⁷²⁰ Ibid. 115.

family. It becomes apparent that these are the areas where Alva Myrdal views the authoritarian forces as most apparent and thus also the areas where the autonomous perspective should be most forcefully introduced. She provides several historical and international comparisons and, when doing so, she always proposes the modern Swedish system, which she describes as continually growing due to both structural factors and party-directed reforms. Thus, she can be argued to express the changing values in society as both demand-driven and supply-driven. The task of this study is not to evaluate the exact balance of which of these two market model-related forces has been most in effect in 20th century Sweden, but it becomes apparent that Alva Myrdal describes both perspectives as active.

Even if Alva Myrdal does not mention her views on religion as often as the values above, it can still be established that she expresses a hostile view towards the Sacred. When referring to the subject, she often describes religion and Biblical values as outdated and patriarchal, and thus worthy of criticism. This is particularly evident when she discusses organized religions with a specified faith content. These are portrayed as a form of authority, towards which she nurtures a general scepticism. Religion in general, and Christianity in particular, is only described in a positive light when it deals with inner-worldly matters that may be considered to coincide with her own political philosophy.

One version of religion that Alva Myrdal endorses is a utopian vision of a general deistic religion, devoid of creedal content and authority. This feature also reveals what stands out as her central motive for arguing to break free from both community – especially in the family – and the Sacred, namely her strong antipathy towards all actual or imagined expressions of authority. Mirroring this is her consistently strong appreciation for individual autonomy, which from the beginning forms a basis for the ultra-progressivism that would decades later gain hold among the whole party.

8.4 Stellan Arvidson

Stellan Arvidson (1902-1997) is best known for his central role in the 1946 School Commission, but he was also a prominent debater on religion and the State Church during several decades. Academically, he was a literary historian, known for his strong socialist views, close connections to East Germany and his several years as chairman of the Sweden-GDR Friendship Association. Ever since their years at Lund university, Arvidson built a close

friendship with future Prime Minister Tage Erlander, a relationship that lasted the entire research period.⁷²¹

Arvidson was working as headmaster in the higher secondary *läroverk* until 1946 when then-Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Erlander invited Arvidson to be chief secretary in the state School Commission. This was also the beginning of his most active period of writing and opinion-making. In the commission, Arvidson worked closely with Alva Myrdal, who encouraged Arvidson to become a proponent for the school as a social engineering tool and a comprehensive school for all.⁷²² This commission and following reshaping of the Swedish school system has awarded Arvidson the title of “Sweden’s leading person in power since the end of the war”.⁷²³ Biographer Britta Almgren describes parallels between Gunnar and Alva Myrdal’s intense work relationship and the relationship between Stellan Arvidson and Britta Stenholm, for whom Arvidson left his family to share life and work on issues relating to education policy and the GDR.⁷²⁴ Stenholm has, however, published less written material than Arvidson, and is therefore only indirectly included in this study.

8.4.1 A radical atheist

At the age of 18, Arvidson becomes an atheist. He explains in *Clarté* in 1925 that he envisions the outdated Christianity to be replaced by a new, inner-worldly religion – a new faith built on Marx, evolutionism and radical optimism for the power of socialism to build a new society.⁷²⁵ Regarding relations and sexuality, Arvidson and *Clarté* propose a new, liberal view on abortions and contraceptives.⁷²⁶

Like Engberg, Arvidson participates in public debate as an outspoken atheist. Unlike Engberg, though, he keeps to the same position on religion throughout his life. Just after the publication of the School Commission report, Arvidson publishes the debate book *Kristendomen: Mot – för* (Christianity: Against – For) This book – note the word order in the title – was Arvidson’s

⁷²¹ Almgren, *Dröm och verklighet*, 41, 60-62.

⁷²² Enkvist, *De svenska skolreformerna 1962-1985 och personerna bakom dem*, 13f.

⁷²³ ”Sveriges främste makthavare sedan krigsslutet”, Christian Braw, *Skånska Dagbladet* 14 February 1990, in Almgren, *Dröm och verklighet*, 319.

⁷²⁴ Ibid. 19.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. 55-58.

⁷²⁶ Ibid. 58.

initiative and, after some hesitation, Bishop Thorsten Bohlin agreed to represent the “for” side.⁷²⁷

This book is largely a debate on philosophy of religion and the truth claims of Christianity, which Arvidson rejects. His opinions are largely built on a Marxist view of religion, where Christianity in its practical form functions as a reflection of the medieval feudal system and must be dismissed.⁷²⁸ Thus, the way to salvation does not lie in the divine realm but in the political. Consequently, Arvidson quotes the second verse of *The Internationale*, describing how mankind does not praise any higher, divine power above themselves.⁷²⁹ He argues that the Christian worldview has by now largely been and must soon be totally replaced – on philosophical, psychological, moral and political grounds.⁷³⁰ When reasoning about the implications of the Christian faith, Arvidson declares that he does not follow any dogmatic view of history or reality and argues that Christianity is inherently problematic; it bereaves people of their independent qualities as they are not described to exist merely for themselves but for a deity.⁷³¹

One peculiar detail is that Arvidson does not call his view atheism but invents his own concept *god-freedom* (gudfrihet), which gives a slightly different and also more authority-distanced interpretation to his materialistic worldview.⁷³² Even though the book mainly deals with the truth claims of Christianity, Arvidson’s reasoning gives the impression that its claims of authority appear to be equally important reasons for him to reject Christianity. To him, “the very submission under power is constitutive for all religion”, and this feature of faith appears to be the most unsympathetic facet of the Christian faith for a democratically minded person.⁷³³ For the same reason, he also rejects the authority of the New Testament and the atonement of Christ as these too implicate a subservience under a higher power.⁷³⁴

Arvidson argues that this subservience is in conflict with the democratic order, and this is also the reason for the ongoing dechristianization.⁷³⁵ His conclusion is that man must avoid wishful dreams and become humble, although not under any divine majesty but before the

⁷²⁷ Stellan Arvidson and Torsten Bohlin, *Kristendomen: Mot-för* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1949). Passim.

⁷²⁸ Ibid. 20.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. 157.

⁷³⁰ Ibid. 23-26, 31f.

⁷³¹ Ibid. 61, 77.

⁷³² Ibid. 75 and others. Bishop Bohlin notes the surprising use of words, p 89.

⁷³³ ”själva underdånigheten under makten är konstitutiv för all religion”, ibid. 164f.

⁷³⁴ Ibid. 279, 287.

⁷³⁵ Ibid. 167.

context of life. This humility must, however, be combined with pride, demanding one's rights with head held high.⁷³⁶ Stellan Arvidson can thus be argued to present a human-centred worldview, which rejects God as a foundation and instead demands that man deals with the challenges of life as a proud, autonomous being without any connections to a divine realm.

8.4.2 Expanding the negative attitudes towards Sacred and authority

During his active period, Arvidson publishes several books on education policy. Those books that are described as direct results of the 1946 School Commission and following school legislation are found below in chapter 10. There are, however, some chapters in anthologies during the 1950s which bear Arvidson's signature and discuss a wider scope. There is also a book in English presenting the Swedish school system. As these contributions are not introduced as a presentation of the School Commission's work, but rather as Arvidson's personal production, they are analysed here.

Following the 1951 Freedom of Religion Act, Arvidson writes a book chapter discussing the consequences of the new legislation. His text predicts that many more people than anticipated would now leave the State Church. Arvidson's argument for this is that the secularization of people's thoughts and actions in Sweden has apparently "gone further than in any other nation in the world".⁷³⁷ He also predicts that about half the population are of a religiously indifferent kind, and if these would be better informed about the content of the new law, this would dramatically increase the membership withdrawals. He does not propose a strong agitation for this purpose, but on the other hand, he does call for "an energetic enlightenment effort" directed at this large indifferent group.⁷³⁸

Arvidson's point is that the Church of Sweden is a *Christian* (italics in original) church. Therefore, all members who only live by a general religiosity, rather than a distinct faith in the crucified and risen Christ, ought to leave. To remain a member without regularly attending communion is dishonest, argues Arvidson. A decision to leave requires no particular view of life; to remain means that you declare before the whole world that you confess the Church's teaching of Christ. The author adds that those who leave will of course lose the right to participate in church rituals such as baptism, confirmation, marriage and funerals, but they

⁷³⁶ Ibid. 287f.

⁷³⁷ "gått längre än i något annat land i världen." Stellan Arvidson, "De konfessionslösa," in *I kyrkan eller utanför* (Stockholm: KF:s bokförlag, 1952), 13.

⁷³⁸ "en energisk upplysningsverksamhet", ibid. 14-16.

also win the feeling of freedom by standing by their conviction and contributing to a larger honesty in society.⁷³⁹

Further, Stellan Arvidson underlines that a citizen does not lose any important rights in society when leaving the State Church. He points out that the School Commission and the parliament decision to create a new school system has made the school teaching of Christianity objective, giving the pupils the right to learn also about criticism against Christianity so that they can form their own view of life without authoritarian pressure. He admits that the earlier government report of 1940 pointed in a more Christianity-affirming direction, but argues that the sum of parliament decisions and municipal law means that no reason other than the formal eligibility for certain occupations remains as a justification to stay within the State Church.⁷⁴⁰

Arvidson further argues, contrary to the final decision in the School Commission, for abolishing the obligatory morning devotion in school. He repeats the argument from the minority in the Commission that “nobody ought to be exposed to any authoritative influence” and adds that the removal of the morning devotions would be the most important reform in forming true freedom of religion.⁷⁴¹ Here, as elsewhere, Arvidson follows a pattern of describing freedom of religion as primarily a freedom not to be exposed to religion.

Following this, Arvidson argues for the removal of all Church influence in school and tax reduction for those who have left membership in the Church of Sweden. He repeats the claim from the Social Democratic party programme that all Church property belongs to society and shall remain in state custody as soon as the State Church system has been abolished.⁷⁴²

He also mentions several areas where he thinks Christians have subjected atheists to abuse, and based on this, Arvidson publicly declares the formation of the “Association for Freedom of Religion”⁷⁴³. He admits that this Association certainly will gather people with a critical attitude towards religion but uses only positive concepts for the purpose of the organization, such as “freedom to shape and defend a personal view of life without any authoritative

⁷³⁹ Ibid. 16-18, 23.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid. 18-21.

⁷⁴¹ ”ingen bör utsättas för en auktoritativ påverkan”, ibid. 24-27.

⁷⁴² Ibid. 27-29.

⁷⁴³ Ibid. 30-33.

influence.”⁷⁴⁴ He adds that the Association plans to gather reports of abuses against religious dissidents and also to present secular alternatives to Christian rituals.⁷⁴⁵

Over time, Arvidson’s outspoken atheistic worldview and propagandistic profile puts him in conflict, not only towards Christian debaters but also towards fellow Social Democrats. At the 1956 congress, Arvidson opposes suggestions to describe Social Democracy under a Humanist and Christian view of society, stating that these are opposing worldviews: “Humanism is a view where man is at the centre, Christianity is a view where God is at the centre. These views are incompatible”.⁷⁴⁶ He also opposes those who wish to remain in the State Church in order to influence it. Instead, he proclaims it as an intrinsic value to remove church matters from the party, a measure that would also make it “easier to lead the stream out of the State Church”.⁷⁴⁷

This outspoken hostility towards Church and Christianity distinguishes Stellan Arvidson from most other leading party representatives, who generally make efforts to find a diplomatic tone. At the 1952 party congress, Arvidson is also the first signatory of a motion to increase the consequences following the right to leave the State Church and that also demands the abolishment of the obligatory morning devotion in school. The party board responds that further legislation in these areas is being processed and suggests that Arvidson’s demands should not be accepted. The congress follows the party board’s suggestion.⁷⁴⁸

Midway through the school reform process, in 1955, Stellan Arvidson presents the Swedish school system to an English-speaking audience in *Education in Sweden*. The book is largely a presentation of the Swedish school system and the ongoing reform process to a foreign reader. However, it is noteworthy how the author repeatedly pushes his personal view, several times more than facts actually give at hand. For instance, he renames the teaching of Christianity under the name “religion” (for some classes not mentioned as a school subject at all) and states that in the modern school “ex cathedra instruction is banned”.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁴ “frihet att utan auktoritativ påverkan utforma och hävda en egen livsåskådning”, *ibid.* 34f.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 35f. In at least one area, this ambition was successful: The traditional Christian marriage ceremony was not completely abandoned, as the later ultra-progressive move suggested, but complemented with a civil ceremony without religious content. Still, this civil ceremony lessened the emphasis on life-long commitment, hereby underlining the move in an autonomous direction.

⁷⁴⁶ “Humanismen är en åskådning där människan står i centrum, kristendomen är en åskådning där Gud står i centrum. Åskådningarna är oförenliga” *Congress protocol 1956*, 365.

⁷⁴⁷ “lättare att leda strömmen ut ur statskyrkan”, *ibid.* 366.

⁷⁴⁸ *Congress protocol 1952*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1952), 274-277, 279f, 293.

⁷⁴⁹ Stellan Arvidson, *Education in Sweden* (Stockholm: The Swedish Institute, 1955), 8, 19, 34.

When describing the work in the School Commission, Arvidson names eight “defects” in the present system, which the Commission wished to avoid. Seven of these deal with the problems he finds due to the separation of pupils in different secondary school systems, and he describes the negative consequences of the “battle for marks” and the separation into different social classes. The eighth point deals with the pedagogic methods, how the present system is too dominated by “control of knowledge and cross-questioning methods”, not giving space for the individuality of each student.⁷⁵⁰

Apart from this brief mentioning of “outdated” instruction methods, the book is remarkably devoid of the autonomous reasoning in the school-related texts Arvidson previously authored or co-authored in Swedish.

The most remarkable feature in this book, though, is the complete lack of discussion about the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions, elsewhere so dominating in Arvidson’s works. The only time Christianity is mentioned in any school – apart from briefly mentioning that along with other subjects, there also exists a theological university education in Sweden – comes in a passage about the Swedish *folk high schools* for adult students. Here, the author mentions that the Danish version, which were the first source of inspiration for these new schools, is basically a “story-telling and singing, Christian national school”, and Arvidson dismisses this school type as having obvious “intellectual limits”.⁷⁵¹ Apart from this, Christianity is a completely invisible topic in this book about the Swedish school system.

The international reader hereby gets the impression that Sweden in the 1950s undergoes a reform process where ex cathedra teaching is prohibited and that the gathering of all pupils in the same school is the central feature. The worldview of this book is strictly materialistic, indicating that Christianity or the debate thereof has never been a part in either Swedish schools or in the ongoing debate – an impression that is obviously severely skewed.

Stellan Arvidson’s rejection of authority is expressed also in non-religious areas, such as the military, where he at the 1952 party congress rejects a “hierarchic conduct of command and obedience”, instead proposing the need for soldiers to act independently.⁷⁵²

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid. 98f.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid. 90.

⁷⁵² ”ett hierarkiskt kommando- och lydnadsförhållande”, *Congress protocol 1956*, 74f.

8.4.3 A brief parliamentary career

In 1957, Arvidson is elected member of parliament for the Social Democrats. The following year, he contributes a chapter on the new school system to a book from the party's study organization. He largely repeats his arguments from his lengthier books on the reform process, and his personal bias against religion is especially revealed in the questions included for discussion.

In the very first question, Arvidson sets the tone, informing the reader that medieval schools developed submission under the Church, instead of judgement and critical mindset, and asks to what extent modern schools still suffer from this mindset and pedagogy.⁷⁵³ In passing, he describes conservative forces as an enemy of the democratic school, and that not just obligatory but also voluntary morning devotions are an anomaly in a neutral school. He also invites the reader to discuss whether families should help the school in its aim for objectivity and "abstain from influencing the children politically and religiously."⁷⁵⁴ Thus, Arvidson here follows his habit of raising an autonomous ideal, alongside displaying a hostility towards religion in general and what he views as authoritarian Christianity in particular.

With the new *grundskola* finally introduced in 1962, Stellan Arvidson loses his role as a dominating figure in the school debate and reform process. Instead, this period deepens his connections with the GDR school system. There seems to have been a close connection between the ideology behind the Swedish school system and its East German counterpart. Even though the GDR school system was more authoritarian, central formulations in two national curricula during the 1960s are described as having been close to identical.⁷⁵⁵ East German documents also confirm that they considered Arvidson to be an expert on atheistic education and the chief architect of the modern Swedish school system, who managed to build a socialist school system in a capitalistic state.⁷⁵⁶

Eventually, Arvidson is forced out from his parliament seat by his party before the 1968 election due to his refusal to criticise either the GDR regime or the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia the same year.⁷⁵⁷ This discussion lies outside the scope of this project, but

⁷⁵³ Stellan Arvidson, "Skolans demokratisering," in *Skolan mitt i byn* (Stockholm: Brevskolan-ABF, 1958), 6

⁷⁵⁴ "avstå från att påverka barnen politiskt och religiöst", *ibid.* 13, 21 29, 31.

⁷⁵⁵ Almgren, *Dröm och verklighet*, 171 Mikael Bergling and Fredrik Nejman, "Den svenska DDR-skolan," *Skolvärlden*, 10 December, 2010. 18.

⁷⁵⁶ Almgren, *Dröm och verklighet*, 276, 169.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 237, 250.

confirms Arvidson's ideological tenacity in maintaining his opinions, regardless of whether or not they are applauded by others.

Summary

Stellan Arvidson appears, in a degree equal to the young Engberg, to be a consistent atheistic socialist with a radical criticism of both church and the Christian faith. The difference between these is that while Engberg changes his views over time, Arvidson keeps the same position during his whole life.

Out of the values studied in this project, his disdain for the Sacred realm stands out as Arvidson's strongest ideological position, accompanied by a very strong antipathy towards authority. His choice to risk the criticism he received from his own party gives the impression that Arvidson values his hostile opinion towards religion as so important that it cannot be hampered by diplomatic strategies. This way of communicating was also seen above in his oral remarks at the 1944 party congress.

Arvidson's books on religious matters do not follow other actors' way of mainly directing their criticism against aspects they find authoritarian. Rather, Arvidson opposes Christianity *per se*, and does so on philosophical, psychological, moral and political grounds. Politically, he bases his opposition on what he imagines as a subordinate feature of religion, where humans bow under authorities, which reduce people's independence. Not only does he propose the right to leave the State Church, he openly endorses leaving it for everyone who is not a devout believer and also launches an early kind of a secular humanist association, publicly presenting a critical view of areas connected to the Sacred.

Arvidson's general work is most occupied with school matters, as secretary in the state School Commission of 1946. In his own literature on the school reformation process, he argues for an autonomous ideal, although not as strongly as Alva Myrdal. Rather, his views can best be summarized as a negative attitude towards the Sacred and authority, reflected in an autonomous perspective. His descriptions of applicable angles of community are generally scarce.

To conclude, Stellan Arvidson shows a strong devotion for matters he is really passionate about. Thus, his consistent work of opposing Sacred and authority-related phenomena in

society results in recurring demands for a secularization of schools. This sphere is analysed more in depth below.

9. Church policy

The following three chapters deal with one societal sphere each. The order of these chapters follows a chronological order, depending on the order in which the political debate and reform processes was most active, with regard to the values relevant in this dissertation.

The texts in these three chapters will, as the previous two, come from different genres. Largest focus is given to the government reports, and in chapter 10 to the national curricula for the compulsory school system. Due to the defining nature of the content in the 1965 gymnasium, this curriculum is also included in the analysis.

As in previous chapters, all the analysed texts are studied through the same methodological glasses, building on grounded theory and focusing on the value-related tension between autonomy and its threefold antipole.

9.1 The background picture

During the Reformation, King Gustav Vasa separated the Swedish Church province from Rome, and the Lutheran Church of Sweden gradually turned into a state church, which it remained for almost five centuries. The state control over religion was strong and, under the Conventicle Act 1726-1858, private religious gatherings without a priest present, apart from household devotions, were prohibited.

Despite legal restrictions, the revival movement grew during the 19th and early 20th century, where missionary societies, Baptists and, later, Pentecostals, became strong movements that emphasized individual salvation and relationship to God. From the mid-19th century, an individual-oriented view on religion divided itself in two separate directions, which according to Church historian Anders Jarlert came to define religious debate in Sweden until the 1960s: “From one side: there were demands for a personally experienced faith in pietistic, new-evangelical or baptistic form, and from the other, a liberal interpretation of Christianity, which partly began to develop in a direction towards atheism.”⁷⁵⁸ The pattern does, however, point in two directions, and it is not taken for granted that the free churches were more

⁷⁵⁸ ”Från ena sidan gällde det krav på en personligt upplevd tro i pietistisk, nyevangelisk eller baptistisk form, från den andra en liberal kristendomstolkning, som delvis började utvecklas i riktning mot ateism.” Anders Jarlert, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Romantikens och liberalismens tid* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2001), 142.

individualistic than the State Church, with its Lutheran view on each individual's relation to God.

In 1831, the education of clergy became more clearly organized under universities. Around 1900, a growing tension arose concerning the departments of theology torn between Church and state, where the theological departments would gradually move away from the Church of Sweden and closer to the state.⁷⁵⁹ More on the central political processes in relation to the theological departments follows below.

Up till 1860, it was impossible to leave the State Church for another denomination. This year, a new Freedom of Religion Act was adopted, followed by a new legislation for local governance in 1862, separating the clerical and the secular municipalities. In 1868, the General Synod was established, following the abolition of the four-estate parliament, where the clergy had formed one of the estates.⁷⁶⁰

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the industrialization and modernization process accelerated in Sweden, affecting also religious life. At the beginning of the research period, the free church movements in Sweden stood at something of a peak, with the Pentecostal movement growing strongly, while other movements, such as the Mission Covenant Church, the Baptists and the Salvation Army, had reached a mature stage. Their impact on politics, and inversely, the politicians' interest in these movements was limited, although some individual parliamentarians from free churches played a role, especially within the Liberals.⁷⁶¹ The completely dominating religious-political discussion during this period was the status of the Lutheran and state-administered Church of Sweden.

The role of the State Church had been discussed in Sweden since the mid-1800s. The first motion in the two-chamber parliament calling for its abolition was presented in 1909 by a Liberal member of parliament, although written with the intention of reducing the risk of dechristianization and facilitating for the Church to work according to the Bible.⁷⁶² This issue would reappear several times during the century, although typically with a more confrontative attitude towards the Sacred in general and Church authority in particular.

⁷⁵⁹ 1958 års utredning kyrka-stat VIII: *De teologiska fakulteterna*; SOU 1967:17, 13-20.

⁷⁶⁰ Jarlert, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Romantikens och liberalismens tid*, 204-211.

⁷⁶¹ Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan*: 73-75.

⁷⁶² Ibid. 25f.

In 1951 the Church of Sweden lost a core connection to the state when it became legal to leave the State Church without entering another officially acknowledged denomination. Up till then, being Swedish more or less included membership in the Lutheran Church. During the latter half of the century, the political grip over the General Synod became even stronger, to the point that Sweden had built a party-political governance of the Church unparalleled in any other nation.⁷⁶³

In 1956, Parliament approved a demand for a government report aimed to disestablish the State Church. The government report was commissioned in 1958 but was not presented until 1968. Alva Myrdal, in the new office of Minister of Church Affairs, was appointed to lead a commission to realize the disestablishment. However, due to internal opposition from Social Democratic church politicians, criticism from the Centre Party and the Moderates, combined with Olof Palme's reluctance to turn the matter into an electoral question, the government withdrew this proposal in 1973.⁷⁶⁴

Due to the fact that the disestablishment was not realized until after later political discussions towards the end of the century, sources from this process between 1956 and 1973 are not studied in this project. Even though the Alva Myrdal commission failed, Alvunger still considers the underlying Social Democratic strategy as successful, as it managed to knit together the Lutheran State Church with democratic society.⁷⁶⁵

The idea of a politically governed Church would become a new basis for the Church of Sweden. Not only Social Democrats but also a short-lived centre-right government participated in shaping the new Church legislation of 1982, which was in effect until the disestablishment of Church and state in year 2000. This law stated that priests no longer had any designated places in the General Synod and, simultaneously, the bishops could attend but lost their right to vote. All of these steps constituted parts of what Alvunger argues was the strategy of the Social Democrats, "intended ultimately to transform the Church of Sweden from within."⁷⁶⁶ Still today, the Law of the Church of Sweden (SFS 1998:1591) preserves a stronger state connection to the former State Church than to other Christian or non-Christian

⁷⁶³ Hansson, *Kyrkomöte och partipolitik*, 276.

⁷⁶⁴ Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan*, 92-117; Ingmar Brohed, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Religionsfrihetens och ekumenikens tid*, (Stockholm: Verbum, 2005), 266.

⁷⁶⁵ Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar*, 212.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. 258.

denominations regarding burials, preservation of buildings, and, also to some extent, Church teaching, geographical organization et cetera.⁷⁶⁷

The relationship between Social Democracy, based on a materialistic worldview, and the Church was initially severely strained, although not always in strictly Marxist terms. Socialist agitators in the late 19th century argued strongly for the privatization of religion, in words that appeared not only socialist but also liberal.⁷⁶⁸ One reason for the antagonistic relation to organized Christianity was that Social Democracy viewed the Lutheran State Church as a central representative of state oppression, and it should therefore be attacked. Predictably, Church reaction towards the socialists became equally hostile.⁷⁶⁹

Already at the founding of the Social Democratic party in 1889, the opposition towards Christianity was evident, but this first congress also found a practical approach. The congress, which began on Good Friday at the time for church service, consisted of two phalanxes. One, led by Hjalmar Branting, called for a formal statement against religion, and the other called for privatization of religion. The latter alternative won by 18 votes to 16.⁷⁷⁰

This vote is an early indication of the future Social Democratic attitude towards religion and Christianity. This was to be elaborated in future party programmes, which first called for privatization of religion and later for abolishing the Church of Sweden and acquiring Church property. During the 20th century, though, the party changed strategies towards the Church, from abolishing the State Church to what Alvunger describes as to “transform the Church of Sweden from within” into an “open and democratic *folkkyrka*”, by subsuming Luther’s principles into “a system of secular ideas and norms”.⁷⁷¹ Here follows how these processes developed, and with what arguments and values.

9.2 Policy for appointment of leadership

The beginning of the 20th century saw a vivid debate on the education of clergy, more specifically whether explicit critics of the Christian faith should be accepted as professors or teachers at theological departments of universities. Previously, all positions within Church and education had required an oath to follow the pure doctrine. From the late 1800s, this oath

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. 19.

⁷⁶⁸ Hans Wahlbom, *Socialdemokratins och Kyrkans första möte* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1999), 95f.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid. 100f.

⁷⁷⁰ Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan*, 21f.

⁷⁷¹ Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar*, 247f, 258.

was simplified and replaced with a promise to deliver Biblical preaching and traditional confession.⁷⁷² This procedure would, however, come under political pressure during the early 1900s.

This debate especially concerned Torgny Segerstedt, later a well-known newspaper editor.⁷⁷³ His appointment as professor made Fridtjuf Berg, Liberal Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, clarify in parliament that it was obvious that a person who had been “proven to have deviated from the pure Evangelical doctrine and not recanted from such, cannot be regarded as eligible to be Professor of theology”.⁷⁷⁴ Hjalmar Branting, however, wished to give the issue a larger solution, where confession should no longer be a requirement.⁷⁷⁵

This question deepened further some years later, then concerning Emanuel Linderholm and Gillis Wetter, whose respective theologies were considered to be very remote from Lutheran orthodoxy.⁷⁷⁶ These appointments were especially praised by Engberg, who is described to have been most influential in the appointment of Wetter.⁷⁷⁷ In one of very few occasions where Axel Hägerström’s nihilistic philosophy is mentioned in the source material, Engberg described Wetter as “having without fear drawn the consequences of Hägerström’s epistemology”.⁷⁷⁸ Engberg further argued that a decision to disregard confession equals a choice between keeping a scientific standard or “shaping (...) propagandists for a Christian dogmatism”.⁷⁷⁹

In a parliamentary debate in 1923, Engberg continued the same argument by declaring himself a heathen and rejecting what he viewed as a reactionary school teaching of Christianity.⁷⁸⁰ Engberg then praised the new radicalization he could see in theological departments and considered this a central development to complete in order to create “modern, open-minded and tolerant popular teaching, which in its turn can undermine old

⁷⁷² Bexell, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Folkväckelsens och kyrkoförnyelsens tid*, 185f, 194f.

⁷⁷³ The early part of this process is thoroughly described in Eva Stohlander Axelsson, *Ett brännglas för tidens strålar: Striden om Torgny Segerstedts docentur 1903* (Lund: Arcus, 2001).

⁷⁷⁴ ”överbevisad om avvikelser från den rena evangeliska läran samt icke återkallat dessa, han ej kan anses till teologisk professur behörig” FC 1913:33, 11.

⁷⁷⁵ *Social-Demokraten* 5 May 1913, referred in *SOU 1967:17*. 22f.

⁷⁷⁶ Brohed, 56, 393f.

⁷⁷⁷ *SOU 1967:17*. 24f.

⁷⁷⁸ ”utan räddhåga dragit ut konsekvenserna av den hägerströmska kunskapsteorin”, *Arbetet* 24 November 1919, quoted in *ibid*. 24f.

⁷⁷⁹ ”att utdana (...) propagandister för kristen dogmatisk åskådning”, *Arbetet* 6 September 1919, quoted in *ibid*. 25.

⁷⁸⁰ SC 1923:29 76f.

superstitious beliefs, which stand as obstacles in the way of progress.”⁷⁸¹ He stated explicitly that the only reason he could see for keeping the State Church was to transform theological departments into “*a whole new ministerial education in the nation*”.⁷⁸² Due to this shift into a liberal theology, which Engberg stated was taking place in higher theological education, he did not wish to rid the state of “the great advantage it has to – with the Swedish State Church as an instrument – continue the emerging radicalization of Swedish religious culture.”⁷⁸³

Despite their opposing views on several church-political issues, this is one of the areas where an authority-critical view of the Sacred realm led Engberg and Harald Hallén to join forces to pursue a common goal. A suggestion to replace the confessional demands with merely a State Church membership was eventually included in the government report from 1927, where Hallén’s was the first signing politician.⁷⁸⁴ The motivation for this suggestion was that teachers at theological departments should be treated equally with teachers in other departments, namely to “be bound only by the conditions and methods that their science imposes on them”.⁷⁸⁵ Thus, the confessional requirement, earlier defended by Liberal Minister Berg, was now removed after a process where authority in the form of adherence to confession and church tradition was reduced for theological departments.

One other telling remark in this committee report deals with the appointment of clergy. Here, the text keeps the demand of confession but adds that one central reason for doing so is that the definition of “confession to the pure Evangelical doctrine” had by now become divided.⁷⁸⁶ A non-orthodox interpretation of doctrine was also a matter for which Hallén himself was criticised some years earlier in his office as priest. It cannot therefore be excluded that the motivation in the government report was based out of Hallén’s personal experience.

After 1932, when Engberg entered government, his active endeavours to increase state influence over theological departments was significantly softened. The state-church report of

⁷⁸¹ ”en modern, vidsynt och tolerant folkförkunnelse, som i sin tur underminerar gamla vidskepliga föreställningar, som ligga hämmande i vägen för utvecklingen.” Ibid. 79.

⁷⁸² ”en helt ny prästutbildning i landet”, ibid.

⁷⁸³ ”den stora förmån, som man har att med den svenska statskyrkan som instrument fortsätta det radikaliseringsarbete av svensk religiös kultur, som påbörjats.” Ibid. It can be noted that Liberal and Christian parliamentarian Sven Bengtsson after the debate wishes to add to the protocol that the underlying motive for Engberg – and probably the majority of the Social Democratic party – for keeping the state church and reforming the theological departments is “that the Swedish people will be dechristianized” (att det svenska folket ska avkristnas). Ibid. 87.

⁷⁸⁴ I.e. after the committee secretary. *Betänkande med förslag angående vidgad rätt till utträde ur Svenska kyrkan samt därmed sammanhängande frågor; SOU 1927:13, 15.*

⁷⁸⁵ ”vara bundna endast av de förutsättningar och metoder, som deras vetenskap ålägger dem.” Ibid. 167.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid. 154.

1967 explains this as being the result of Engberg's evaluation of the Nazi takeover of the Lutheran Church in Germany.⁷⁸⁷ However, this explanation is not evident in the source material, and Engberg's modified tone may also be caused by his general re-evaluation of the Sacred realm. A general conclusion from the 1967 report raises an important point for the whole period: a central reason for the gradually decreased confessionalism within theological departments was "that the theological research was undertaken within the frame of state departments, and not within those connected to denominations".⁷⁸⁸ This report hereby indicates that the political ambitions to move power over theological departments from Church to state appears to have contributed to a more secular direction, replacing a traditional Church-based authority with that of the democratic state.

During coming decades, the debate on the appointment of Church-related leadership moved over towards the appointment of bishops. Since the 17th century, bishops had been nominated by priests in the diocese and members of the diocesan chapter. Out of the three names with the highest vote, the government was free to choose its preferred candidate.⁷⁸⁹

In 1963, this law was changed so that lay representatives were also included in the bishop elections. The directive for the government report preceding the reform argued that such a decision had been long overdue, and the directive underlined the need that a reform must secure that the government's possibility to choose among suggested candidates would be real, not just illusory.⁷⁹⁰ The report motivated its inclusion of a lay electorate with a wish to follow the principle of universal priesthood and dismissed fears that had been raised of politicized bishop elections, noting that it is central that bishops will also represent lay people, not just the clergy.⁷⁹¹

The political emphasis when motivating this reform was thus rather weak. Rune Imberg has also concluded that political considerations in episcopal appointments had up till this time been very low, apart from a tendency to pick candidates from a "theological left", rather than candidates with a more conservative view of the Bible.⁷⁹² However, Imberg also describes that the political steering of bishop appointments became much clearer after the introduction

⁷⁸⁷ *SOU 1967:17*, 29f.

⁷⁸⁸ "att den teologiska forskningen bedrivits inom statliga och icke inom samfundsanknutna fakulteters ram", *ibid.* 172.

⁷⁸⁹ Imberg, *Biskops- och domprostutnämningar i Svenska Kyrkan 1866-1989*, 18-21.

⁷⁹⁰ *Biskopsval: Biskopsvalskommittens betänkande; SOU 1957:19*, 18-20.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.* 56-58.

⁷⁹² Imberg, *Biskops- och domprostutnämningar i Svenska Kyrkan 1866-1989*, 89, 95f, 113.

of female clergy in 1958. From then on, government excluded all suggested candidates who opposed this decision. In 1972, this informal procedure was finally formalized by Alva Myrdal, as Minister of Church Affairs. She established that there is a difference between freedom of thought among clergy and the responsibility of office, where a bishop belongs to the latter and must thus be subordinate to legislation performed by parliament and General Synod.⁷⁹³ This indicates that bishops at this period were considered to belong to a new authority, not based upon Church tradition or Scripture, but a political authority. More about the value-based considerations on the appointment of clergy follows below.

9.3 Control over the local Church organization

One of Harald Hallén's first steps as new parliamentarian in 1912 was to suggest removing the obligatory choice of the vicar as chairman in the local school board, instead allowing these boards to appoint their own chairman, even while still organized under the Church. The arguments in Hallén's motion were diplomatic, describing this reform as a help in reducing the vicar's workload. He did mention that vicars may have exercised "abuse of power" but argued that this should not overshadow the generally positive contributions of vicars.⁷⁹⁴ This motion was adopted by parliament in 1914, and Hjalmar Branting followed Hallén's arguments in the debate, stating the purpose of the motion as a wish to relieve priests, rather than strip them of power.⁷⁹⁵

In 1919, when the Social Democrats had achieved power over the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, a somewhat ambiguous situation arose. Two Liberal parliamentarians submitted a motion suggesting a more democratically representative system in local parishes and that all financial matters governed by the local vestry be transferred to the secular local authorities.⁷⁹⁶

The Standing Committee of the Constitution suggested that the government should appoint a government committee overseeing these matters. The suggestion was well in line with radical Social Democratic demands, but – with explicit hesitation – both Hallén and Engberg decided not to back the motion, instead supporting the committee's suggestion for a committee report. Engberg did not take part in the debate, but expressed his view in a written

⁷⁹³ Alva Myrdal, memo on bishop elections, 16 February 1972, in *Omprövning av samvetsklausulen: Män och kvinnor som präster i svenska kyrkan; SOU 1981:20, 31*; date given in Imberg, *Biskops- och domprostutnämningar i Svenska Kyrkan 1866-1989*, 247.

⁷⁹⁴ Motion in SC 1912:107.

⁷⁹⁵ SC 1914:31, 22-26.

⁷⁹⁶ Motion in SC 1919:38.

note that the report ought to show how the present dual system could be exchanged by a coherent local authority – in line with the first point in Engberg’s church-political programme of 1925.⁷⁹⁷ Hallén developed his position in the debate, arguing that such decisions ought to be handled by the committee for freedom of religion, where he himself participated.⁷⁹⁸ This is a sign of how both these central actors tended to reject small steps, even if they were in the achieved direction, in order to pave way for larger, more all-encompassing reforms.

The same year, Social Democratic Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Värner Rydén launched a government committee on reforming the local Church authority, and his Social Democratic successor Olof Olsson added extra areas of change to include. The committee was led by Conservative parliamentarian K.J. Ekman, and their 1923 report suggested, partly in line with the motions above, to move school matters from the local Church authority to a secular counterpart, introducing a new local deciding body – a church council – and also removing the vicar’s automatic chairmanship in the church council.⁷⁹⁹

The report admits that the suggestions it proposes are of a pervasive nature. No clear ideological arguments are presented for these moves, other than a wish to refine the tasks of the Church. However, it is pointed out that the vicar would probably be elected chairman anyway, even if this would no longer be required by law.⁸⁰⁰ The text also describes this devaluation of the vicar’s position as structure-based, and “beyond doubt (...) demanded by the view, which in other areas of legislation has actually broken through”.⁸⁰¹ Therefore, it is stated that this reform should not be transferred to the General Synod as decisions of this type ought to be understood as part of secular legislation for local authorities.⁸⁰²

In accordance with the directive to investigate whether a representative system could be introduced in the local Church authority, the report also suggests that this could be done.⁸⁰³

⁷⁹⁷ Standing Committee on the Constitution, 1919:17.

⁷⁹⁸ SC 1919:35, 15-17, 24.

⁷⁹⁹ *Betänkande med förslag till lag om församlingsstyrelse samt till bestämmelser om folkskoleärendenas överflyttning från den kyrkliga till den borgerliga kommunen m.m.*; *SOU 1923:4*, 174-191. The government directive is not presented in the report; the assignment is only generally summarized in this report and in previous Annual Parliamentary reports, *Berättelse om vad i rikets styrelse sedan sista lagtima riksdags sammanträde sig tilldragit 1919-1923*.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 189-191.

⁸⁰¹ ”otvivelaktigt (...) påfordras av det åskådningssätt, som på författningsslivets övriga områden faktiskt brutit igenom.” *Ibid.* 192.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.* 191.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.* III f, 182.

However, the committee adds the reservation that this should be done “only if the congregation decides so”.⁸⁰⁴

Thus, this report displays that also a Conservative representative could suggest reductions in the vicar’s influence, although in this case motivated as a result of structural factors, not as an active wish to reduce Church authority. The committee suggestion can also be viewed as a consequence of the directive from Social Democratic ministers, albeit partly defending the right of the Church to have a final say in the matter that most clearly falls under Church authority.

In 1927, Hallén and fellow Social Democrat Conrad Jonsson submitted a motion calling for the formation of secular institutions to replace the diocesan chapters as the responsible authority over school matters.⁸⁰⁵ The argumentation is strictly pragmatic, and no clear values appear in the motion, which was rejected, awaiting a larger reformation of the system.⁸⁰⁶

In 1930, parliament followed the 1923 government report and moved the local school authority from clerical to secular authorities and also introduced the democratically elected church assembly.⁸⁰⁷ The first politicized election according to the new model was performed in 1931.⁸⁰⁸ According to Klas Hansson, this legislation was decisive for the future way and a continued party-political takeover of the Church and would also indirectly shape the elections to the General Synod during the 1930s and 1940s.⁸⁰⁹

One factor that clearly illustrates the ideological dividing lines is the question of the vicar’s obligatory chairmanship. The 1923 government report had suggested removing the vicar’s *ex officio* chairmanship in both church assembly and school board. However, Conservative Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Claes Lindskog suggested in his government proposition of 1930 to bring back the obligatory chairmanship, not only in the church council but also in the school board – a move that would have meant a strong increase of Sacred authority.⁸¹⁰

During the parliamentary process, however, a motion was submitted in the Second Chamber by eight Social Democrats, including Per Albin Hansson, Arthur Engberg and Ernst Wigforss,

⁸⁰⁴ ”endast om församlingen så beslutar”, *ibid.* 182.

⁸⁰⁵ Motion in SC 1927:266.

⁸⁰⁶ SC, first temporary committee: 6, 2-4.

⁸⁰⁷ SC 1930:41, 87-123.

⁸⁰⁸ Carl Henrik Martling, *Fädernas kyrka och folkets: Svenska kyrkan i kyrkovetenskapligt perspektiv* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1992), 205.

⁸⁰⁹ Hansson, *Kyrkomöte och partipolitik*, 23, 94.

⁸¹⁰ Government proposition 1930:100, 5, 13, 16.

and another in the First Chamber, signed by four Social Democrats, including Gustav Möller and Richard Sandler. This strong expression of opinion from several of the party's central actors at the time suggested the opposite, to remove not only the chairmanship but also all other obligatory positions for the vicar in ecclesiastical and school decision-making bodies (except for the vestry, which only had executive power, not decision-making).⁸¹¹

The Standing Committee of the Constitution, in which both Engberg and Hallén were members, agreed on a path closer to the Social Democratic suggestions, but not entirely; to disregard the government proposition, and accept the removal of the obligatory chairmanship in church assembly and school board, but still allow the possibility of electing the vicar as chairman.⁸¹² Engberg et al, though, presented a written reservation in line with their original motion, excluding the possibility for the vicar as chairman in either of the two above.⁸¹³

The blocs in this issue thus were as follows: the Conservative government strongly wishing to increase Church authority, leading Social Democrats such as Per Albin Hansson and Engberg arguing for strongly weakening the same, and the majority in the Standing Committee of the Constitution, including Hallén, presenting a middle path that reduced Church authority, although not to the same extent as Engberg et al. The latter suggestion also became the parliament decision.⁸¹⁴

The parliamentary debate underlined the differences between Engberg and Hallén. The former stressed the importance that also those who “publicly combat” Christianity should be able to take part in both national and local Synods, mentioning himself as example – “even if I am in every aspect an opponent of the Christian worldview”.⁸¹⁵ Hallén, explicitly irritated by Engberg's hostile approach, again took the diplomatic role, repeatedly stating his wish to shape the clerical and the secular authorities formed in the same democratic way.⁸¹⁶ The goals of the two opponents can thus be argued to be similar but their ways of reasoning different.

A following brief Liberal government with Bishop Sam Stadener as Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs performed a pre-emptive move to prevent the realization of the 1920 Social

⁸¹¹ Motions in SC 1930:447, FC 1930:289.

⁸¹² Standing Committee of the Constitution 1930:31, 11-14. It may be added that the Standing Committee also removed the Conservative government's demand that the vestry should prevent “the spread of misleading teaching” (spridande av vilseförande läror), *ibid.* 54.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.* 108-110.

⁸¹⁴ SC 1930:41, 123.

⁸¹⁵ ”offentligt bekämpar”, ”ehuru jag på alla punkter är motståndare till den kristna världsåskådningen.” SC 1930:41, 118.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.* 98-100, 111, 114, 119.

Democratic programme demand for a state takeover of Church property and decided to transfer Church assets from the state to the local Church authorities.⁸¹⁷ In the government proposition, Stadener refers repeatedly to the need to provide the Church of Sweden with a “secured right of possession”.⁸¹⁸

After Per Albin Hansson gained power in 1932, the new government would begin to restructure the State Church, although not at the radical pace that new minister Engberg had previously proposed. In 1934, Engberg appointed a government committee on the diocesan chapters, where Hallén, future archbishop Yngve Brilioth and two others were selected as members.⁸¹⁹ When presented in 1935, the suggestions for state surveillance over these new diocesan chapters were, despite Hallén’s and Engberg’s previous positions, rather weak, but the report suggested introducing two lay people in the chapter, along with the clerical representatives.⁸²⁰ Engberg, who had by now begun his journey into a less hostile position, reduced this number to one.⁸²¹ In the following parliamentary debate, Hallén praised the new construction as a long needed rationalization on the diocesan level.⁸²²

This diocese reform can be described as a limited step in a more anti-authoritarian direction. An interesting detail is that when Engberg entered government and changed his tone, the role of the anti-religious agitator was taken over by Stellan Arvidson. Consequently, Arvidson argued in *Social-Demokraten*, in line with Engberg’s previous reasoning, that it was essential that also non-Christians could take part in the diocesan chapters, thus pushing for a further weakened connection to confession also on diocese level.⁸²³

During coming decades, the reduction of government reports and legislation indicates that the reduction of clerical authority over the local Church organization can be regarded as mainly completed. In 1950, a motion was submitted, arguing for the removal of the exception from 1930, which made it possible for the vicar to be elected chairman in the School Board if there were no other suitable candidates. Chairman Hallén signed the affirming response from the Standing Committee of the Constitution, arguing that population growth over the last decades

⁸¹⁷ Brohed, 117.

⁸¹⁸ ”tryggad besittningsrätt”, Government proposition 1932:187, 44f.

⁸¹⁹ Claesson, “Folkhemmets kyrka.” 346. Here, Claesson quotes a letter from Hallén to the newly appointed Engberg, explaining how Hallén would like them to cooperate in rationalizing the Church at all levels, moving more school matters to secular authorities, modernizing the bishops’ work descriptions, and achieving a real *control* (italics in original) over the clergy. Letter 16 December 1932, quoted in *ibid*.

⁸²⁰ *Betänkande med förslag till lag om domkapitel m.m.*; *SOU 1935:31*, 8-36.

⁸²¹ Government proposition 1936:241, 2, 30.

⁸²² SC 1936:8:37, 60.

⁸²³ Referred in Claesson, “Folkhemmets kyrka.” 349.

made sure that there always ought to be another candidate, and therefore, this exception could no longer be accepted.⁸²⁴

A central decision during the remainder of the research period was the adoption of a new legislation for vestries in 1961. The vicar's role was diminished even further; although allowing him to participate in vestry meetings but no longer automatically as chairman.⁸²⁵ The underlying motivation in both the government report and its directive is explicitly described to follow the ambition to adapt the local Church organization to the legislation for secular local authorities, making these equal in both "form and content".⁸²⁶ Just like in previous reports, the presented motivation for diminishing the role of the vicar is twofold: to reduce the vicar's workload and to follow democratic ideals from secular local authorities.⁸²⁷

9.4 Reshaping the General Synod

Another issue that repeatedly turned up in parliament during this period was the construction of the General Synod. The initial Social Democratic view was to abolish the Synod in the name of democracy.⁸²⁸ Soon, however, the party shifted to another strategy: to alter this assembly by political means.

In a parliament motion in 1920, Engberg suggested the removal of the General Synod's veto over parliament and government decisions on church-related matters, voicing the anti-authoritarian argument that the Swedish people definitely do not wish to be ruled by priests.⁸²⁹ In the text, he equates the Church to other state authorities, arguing that the veto affirms an unreasonably autonomous position for the Church compared to other state bureaucracies. According to Engberg, the veto constitutes a violation of freedom of religion, and the very construction of the General Synod also hands too much power to the bishops. Indeed, this motion portrays the free churches as a positive alternative to the State Church, but the free church press still regarded Engberg's motion as negative against Christianity *per se*. In the following parliamentary debate, criticism was also raised that Engberg only intended to pave the way for a future abolishment of the General Synod and also the State Church.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁴ Standing Committee on the Constitution 1950:3.

⁸²⁵ *Församlingslag: Betänkande avgivet av församlingsstyrelsekommittén; SOU 1957:15*, 17f, 23, 26, 58f.

⁸²⁶ "form och innehåll", *ibid.* 52, 333-339.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.* 194f.

⁸²⁸ Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka." 292.

⁸²⁹ Engberg, "Religion och politik." In *Tal och skrifter*, III, 253

⁸³⁰ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 116f.

The same year, Hallén submitted a motion calling for a democratization of the General Synod in line with the rest of society, with direct elections of lay people to the Synod. The reason presented is the wish to make the Synod more democratic, in better touch with times and less backward.⁸³¹ The argumentation is intended to reduce Church authority; it is also one of the unusual moments in which Social Democratic parliamentarians use such value-laden concepts as “backwardness” to describe the State Church. Urban Claesson states that Hallén had also wished to demand a larger lay representation but waited for purely tactical reasons.⁸³²

Parliament decided on a government report in line with Hallén’s demands. Engberg’s motion on the Synod veto was also accepted to be included in a government report, after the author himself stated that his motion was not intended to eradicate either State Church or religion, which Conservative members of parliament accused him of when they argued for preserving the Synodal veto. Engberg responded by explaining his intention was merely the removal of a historical anomaly.⁸³³ However, Hallén apparently saw a risk with Engberg’s motion and suggested a reservation – which parliament accepted – that the state should not restrict the Synod from deciding over matters relating to inner-clerical matters.⁸³⁴ Thus, Hallén’s position had the strongest practical impact and allowed more Church authority than Engberg wished, and also indicated a less Church-critical impression. Such reports were indeed initiated but were brought to halt in a comprehensive reduction of government committees in 1923.

The demands would, however, return again in 1928. On the 16 January – two days before Per Albin Hansson delivered his *folkhem* speech – a more elaborate motion on the General Synod was submitted by four members of parliament, with Hallén as first signatory. They demanded the reopening of the defunct government committee based on Engberg’s and Hallén’s motions in 1920. This motion adds more strength, compared to the 1920 motions, and also calls for greater lay representation in the Synod. If the requested democratization would be accepted, the motion also suggests the introduction of a new deciding body on diocesan level, formed in the same fashion. The argument is that Sweden needed “*a true modernization of Church representation*”, which would reflect public opinion in the Synod.⁸³⁵

⁸³¹ ”efterblivenhet”, Motion in SC 1920:128.

⁸³² Claesson, ”Folkhemmets kyrka.” 292.

⁸³³ SC 1920:48: 66f, 69.

⁸³⁴ SC 1920:66: 69, FC 1920:5:54, 32f; Hallén’s reservation in Standing Committee on the Constitution 1920:49, 17.

⁸³⁵ Motion in SC 1928:46.

This motion was rejected by the parliamentary committee, awaiting the forthcoming government report on freedom of religion.⁸³⁶ Again, Engberg argued for following the suggestions and arguments of the committee, even though the motion actually endorsed Engberg's own proposal, and the motion was finally rejected also by parliament.⁸³⁷

After the reforms on a congregational and diocesan level, the calls for larger church reforms on a national level were, like other major national reforms, put on hold during the financial crisis and the World War. Not until after the war did the discussions come up again for decision. Here, the General Synod reform in 1949 was particularly important. With this reform, the lay representation would for the first time gain a majority over the clerical representatives in the Synod. A parliament motion suggesting this was submitted by Social Democrats Rickard Lindström and Karl Sandegård in 1944. Their arguments displayed a hostile stance towards priestly authority, stating that the Church of Sweden ought to be a folk church, not a priest church, the latter described as mainly defending clerical privileges and opposing the necessary Church progress.⁸³⁸

Two years later, a government report on the matter was published, led by Edvard Rodhe, Bishop of Lund. The background to this report is politically two-sided. The formal reason for its commission was the Church-critical Social Democratic motion above. The directive was, however, formulated by Conservative Gösta Bagge, Engberg's successor as Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in the coalition war government. His instructions are far milder, merely describing the need to modernize the election of lay representatives in the General Synod, pointing out different ways for this. The central goal of a Synod reform is described as giving voice to different views. Some suggestions in the minister's directive also indicate a wish to maintain a clerical influence: "Furthermore, the possibility of some expansion also of the number of priestal delegates should be considered."⁸³⁹ The suggestions in the report reveal no clear viewpoint regarding the values studied in this project: the central reason given for changing the balance is that the lay voters outnumber the priestal voters.⁸⁴⁰ Indeed, the government attitude during Bagge's ministership became remarkably more positive towards

⁸³⁶ Standing Committee on the Constitution 1928:10.

⁸³⁷ SC, 1928:19: 18, 25. Claesson refers to a letter from Hallén, which suggested that Engberg's decision not to back his own motion was explained by the deliberate idea to weaken the Church instead of modernizing it. Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka." 316.

⁸³⁸ Motion in FC 1944:230, 2.

⁸³⁹ "Därjämte borde övervägas möjligheten av en viss utökning även av de prästerliga ledamöternas antal." *Betänkande med förslag till förordning angående allmänt kyrkomöte m.m.; SOU 1946:32, 35.*

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid. 91.

the Church, illustrated by a joint meeting with both parliament and General Synod in 1941, chaired by the Archbishop, where all present signed a document declaring the Swedish position as “the Christian position”.⁸⁴¹

After the World War and the dissolution of the coalition government, the reform process gained momentum again, and in 1949, parliament introduced proportional elections with a lay majority in the General Synod. Minister of Justice Herman Zetterberg, who represented the government, delivered a strict and non-ideological statement. The relevant values were, however, more clearly expressed by others. Harald Hallén was active in the debate in his role as chairman of the Standing Committee on the Constitution. He admitted that he would gladly have gone further in democratization and, as written above, he regarded the chance to create a lay majority in the Synod so important that he was willing to risk secularization as a consequence.⁸⁴² Nancy Eriksson, Social Democratic member of parliament and delegate in the General Synod, voiced an even more Church-hostile position and argued that the next step ought to be the complete removal of the Synod and transferral of its duties to parliament.⁸⁴³

This was the defining reform for the General Synod during the period, and Klas Hansson argues that this reform proved that Hallén was victorious in shaping the church-political direction of the Social Democrats.⁸⁴⁴

9.5 Religious freedom in a State Church system

Not only outspoken critics of Christianity opposed the State Church system. Prominent free church representatives, such as Mission Covenant Church leader and non-party-affiliated parliamentarian P.P. Waldenström argued for this in the early 1900s, motivated by his wish to form a free church that could defend the authority of Scripture.⁸⁴⁵ However, the coming political discourse would rest on a very different view.

The 1927 government report by Hallén et al suggested introducing the right to leave the State Church without entering another religious denomination. This report refers to an emerging view on the Church of Sweden as moving from a “confessional church” into “society’s

⁸⁴¹ ”den kristna linjen”, quoted in Ralfnert, ”Kvinnoprästdebatten i Sverige i perspektivet kyrka-stat.” 161.

⁸⁴² SC 1949:9, 35-39.

⁸⁴³ Ibid. 40f Nancy Eriksson described herself as the first outspoken atheist in the General Synod. Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar*, 116. This claim was, however, false, as at least Arthur Engberg filled this criterion when he entered the Synod in 1932.

⁸⁴⁴ Hansson, *Kyrkomöte och partipolitik*, 85.

⁸⁴⁵ Brohed, 115f.

agency for virtuous-religious education”.⁸⁴⁶ The committee distances itself from this view, though, stating that every church must have some kind of confession.

The main argument in this report is the principle of freedom for individual, Church and state, not to be obliged to uphold membership for people who do not share the confession of the Church.⁸⁴⁷ The text expands, however, to possible further implications: if people would be allowed to freely leave the State Church – in accordance with the second point in Engberg’s church-political programme of 1925 – the report argues that this might also mean a removal of the compulsory school teaching of Christianity as well as the confession demand for public offices in accordance with Engberg’s points four and five. The report downplays these risks, though, and does not take these aspects into consideration.⁸⁴⁸ Still, this report opens for a more autonomous interpretation of the word “freedom”, indicating a weakened role of the Sacred sphere in school.

However, opposition arose to the gradual degradation of Biblical authority and grounds for membership in the State Church. This is of interest as this opposition displayed different views on authority. The Assembly of Free Churches adopted resolutions in 1924 and 1929, arguing that they all placed membership under their common faith and community in Christ as well as under “the word of God, whose authority they all acknowledge”.⁸⁴⁹ This wording displays the free churches as affirming community, authority and the Sacred. The government report on the State Church, on the other hand, revealed a different perspective, reducing the authority of the Church and its confessional foundation while proposing the right to freely leave it.

The perspective in this report was also countered from within the Church of Sweden, by a motion from the bishops to the 1929 General Synod. This motion also called for the right to freely leave the State Church, but their argument was rather based on the need for the Church to remain a distinctly religious institution, resting on a Lutheran confession. The motion was adopted by the Synod and handed to the Liberal government, which, however, left it without action.⁸⁵⁰ Sven Thidevall describes this as a defining process where the bishops tried to shape

⁸⁴⁶ ”bekännelsekyrka”, ”samhällets organ för sedligt-religiös fostran”, *SOU 1927:13*. 61.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid. 52f.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid. 65.

⁸⁴⁹ ”Guds ord, vars auktoritet de alla erkänna”, quoted in Lennart Tegborg and Urban Claesson, ”Arthur Engbergs statskyrka – Harald Halléns folkkyrka: Två linjer inom svensk socialdemokrati,” *Tro & Tanke*, no. 8 (1996), 22.

⁸⁵⁰ Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan*, 49f.

a Church reform programme, including the right to freely leave the State Church, in order to establish a modern *folk church* built on a distinctly Christian base instead of a secular-political agenda.⁸⁵¹ This strategy only partly succeeded, and neither the government report nor the bishop motion led to any governmental action. Instead came Per Albin Hansson's new government with another church-political agenda. The suggestion to freely leave the State Church would also, like other controversial subjects, be laid to rest during the coming years of international crises.

In addition to the General Synod reform, 1949 also saw the publication of the report from the Dissenter Act Committee, which suggested introducing the right to freely leave the State Church without entering another denomination. This suggestion was in line both with the Church-friendly bishop's motion of 1929 and with documents with a more politicized view, like the 1927 government report by Hallén et al.

The Dissenter Act Committee was launched under Conservative ministership during the war coalition government and was given no specific directive. Its focus can also be described as neutral regarding the values studied in this project. The future impact of this report therefore depended on which groups and arguments could make most use of its content.

In 1951, the new Freedom of Religion Act was adopted by parliament, with the central change being the introduction of the right to leave the State Church without entering another Christian denomination. Hallén expressed in the debate a delight that the suggestions in the 1927 report had to a large extent been followed.⁸⁵² Just like back then, Hallén dismissed fears of future implications and underlined that both politicians and state bureaucracy had guaranteed that the teaching of Christianity in school would remain intact.⁸⁵³ This promise would, however, not stand for long.

A parallel area in this debate that highlighted opposing values was the issue of monasteries. These had been prohibited in Sweden since Reformation, but in accordance with the introduced freedom of religion, the government accepted the lifting of this ban, albeit only partly. The problem raised by Minister Zetterberg was the risk of illegitimate pressure on the

⁸⁵¹ Thidevall, *Kampen om folkkyrkan*, 307-311.

⁸⁵² SC 1951:20, 37.

⁸⁵³ Ibid. 39.

individual entering monasticism, but he imagined that this risk could be managed by preserving the state's right to accept and also withdraw the permits for monasteries.⁸⁵⁴

Ten years later, monasteries were up for parliamentary debate again. Similar arguments were raised this time, most actively by Georg Branting (son of Hjalmar Branting), who stated that the reactionary and backward nature of the Catholic Church makes such monasteries similar to prisons, and they should therefore not be accepted.⁸⁵⁵ These arguments display the Social Democratic view that even voluntarily accepted religious boundaries on people's independence were considered to be such strong threats to individual autonomy that this could overrule the freedom of religion.

A relating issue where an anti-authoritarian position was expressed in relation to the Church of Sweden was in the government report leading up to the 1961 Congregation Act, where the different duties of the vestry to control Church discipline was rejected as "lacking positive content and expresses an outdated view" of the vestry's duties.⁸⁵⁶ This mirrors a critical view on authority in form of both Church discipline *per se* and the tradition on which it rested.

9.6 Appointment of clergy – a choice between authorities

In 1923, a government report initiated by Värner Rydén suggested the introduction of female clergy. The committee was chaired by local female Liberal politician Emilia Broomé. Harald Hallén was also a member, and he later revealed that he authored the motivation for the final suggestion.⁸⁵⁷ The committee's reasons for introducing female clergy were not described as being theological but, above all, "the societal interests affected by this issue" and the role that the State Church played as a public authority in Swedish society.⁸⁵⁸ The suggestions in the report did, however, receive harsh criticism from several clerical authorities and did not gain support from either parliament or General Synod.⁸⁵⁹

The line of reasoning is telling, though. This suggestion was not motivated by respect for community, authority or Sacred, but rather expressed a wish to move the focus of the Church away from these factors over to the interests of the state – thus changing from a Sacred-

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid. 36.

⁸⁵⁵ FC 1961:17, 13f.

⁸⁵⁶ "saknar positivt innehåll och ger över huvud intryck av en föråldrad uppfattning", *SOU 1957:15*. 202.

⁸⁵⁷ Claesson, "Folkhemmets kyrka." 387.

⁸⁵⁸ "de samhällsliga intressen, som beröras av denna fråga", *Betänkande och förslag i fråga om kvinnors tillträde till statstjänster, III, Kvinnas behörighet att innehava prästerlig och annan kyrklig tjänst; SOU 1923:22*, 36, 12.

⁸⁵⁹ *Kvinnas behörighet till kyrkliga ämbeten och tjänster; SOU 1950:48*, 10.

oriented authority to a secular authority. This tug-of-war would become even clearer when the topic came up for decision more than three decades later.

In 1932, a government report on the general appointment of priests was published. Launched by a Conservative government, this committee did not suggest any substantial changes, but argued for a better balance between the local congregations and central Church authorities when appointing clergy. The arguments presented for this were not political but argued to increase the possibilities for priests to be promoted according to ability and experience.⁸⁶⁰ The difference between this and the previous Social Democrat-initiated government report underline the ideological differences that marked the topic.

During the 1950s, the question of female clergy became the defining issue in the relationship between Church and state. In 1946, the new Social Democratic one-party government launched a state committee on this matter. The directive from unaffiliated Church Minister Nils Quensel instructs the committee to search for ways to introduce female clergy. He predicts a conservative reaction, but also expects that this will fade when women priests have become more common.⁸⁶¹

In the government report, a majority proposed the introduction of female clergy. The losing minority base their position on Scripture and tradition, on the critical opinion within the Church and on the ecumenical problems they imagine female clergy would give rise to.⁸⁶² The losing position can thus be argued to reflect a both Sacred- and authority-affirming view.

The winning majority in the committee also expect a critical reaction, based on religious, Biblical and traditional views, which they argue to be “composed of many irrational factors, and hereby evades factual considerations”.⁸⁶³ The committee admits that if the Biblical message would be decisive, the matter would be settled against the suggestion. However, on five occasions they argue with similar wordings, that such a “mechanical understanding of the authority of Scripture” would go against a Lutheran view of Scripture and instead be legalistic and practically unfeasible.⁸⁶⁴ They also argue that if the Church of Sweden had been a church disconnected from the state, where membership rested on personal confession, the state would

⁸⁶⁰ *Betänkande med förslag till ändrade bestämmelser angående tillsättning av prästerliga tjänster; SOU 1932:35, 3f.*

⁸⁶¹ *SOU 1950:48, 11f.*

⁸⁶² *Ibid. 103f.*

⁸⁶³ ”sammansatt av många irrationella faktorer och därmed undandrar sig sakliga överväganden”, *ibid. 60.*

⁸⁶⁴ ”mekanisk uppfattning av bibelordets auktoritet”, *ibid. 34f, 37, 41.*

not interfere against a solid opposition, such as in this case. In a State Church system, though, decisions must not depend only on the views of the churchgoers but also on those who do not attend church. Moreover, according to the committee, this case is not of a “religious, dogmatic and ethical nature”, but rather “a practical question of suitability of an organizational nature”.⁸⁶⁵

When Biblical arguments have been rejected, the majority argues for their affirming position. Their reasoning calls for apparently contradictory values as they first call upon a Sacred value, lamenting the ongoing secularization, and argue for the indisputable need of Christianity to give an “authoritative weight to the moral values”, which creates a need for a larger female participation in Church to reach modern citizens.⁸⁶⁶ Thereafter, though, they invoke a political authority, stating that the opening of priesthood also for women would be “a natural consequence of the principle, established in the law of qualification, of men’s and women’s equality regarding the right to uphold state occupation or otherwise be used in public office”.⁸⁶⁷

Statements from the losing minority, along with some individual suggestions, are added as appendices to the report. Notable here is one remark from Hallén, where he explains his rationale for accepting the committee’s compromise suggestion in order to meet the critical opinion that every congregation also must have one male priest. Hallén’s reason for accepting this decree is that he regards it to be “of a rather temporary nature”.⁸⁶⁸ This was also to be the case.

The majority thus express a distance towards authority, both on tradition and understanding of Scripture, which they reject as “mechanical”, but also argue that such arguments are irrelevant in a State Church system. Still, they build their argument for female clergy on the need to present a Christian authority in society and counter secularization, as well as the need to adapt to the general secular legislation on appointments to state office.

Soon after the publication of the report, its chairman and public representative Torsten Bohlin died and was succeeded by Hallén.⁸⁶⁹ The process of change took a long time, a fact described

⁸⁶⁵ ”religiös, dogmatisk och etisk art”, ”en praktisk lämplighetsfråga av organisatorisk art”, *ibid.* 54.

⁸⁶⁶ ”sin auktoritativa tyngd åt de moraliska värdena”, *ibid.* 48f.

⁸⁶⁷ ”en naturlig konsekvens av den i behörighetslagen fastslagna principen om mäns och kvinnors jämställdhet i fråga om rätten att inneha statstjänst eller eljest brukas i offentliga uppdrag”, *ibid.* 50f.

⁸⁶⁸ ”av ganska temporär natur”, *ibid.* 89.

⁸⁶⁹ Ralfnert, ”Kvinnoprästdebatten i Sverige i perspektivet kyrka-stat.” 186.

as the result of Agrarian Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Ivar Persson wishing to avoid the issue.⁸⁷⁰ In 1957, the General Synod was invited to state their opinion on the matter and rejected an introduction of female clergy by 62 votes to 36. However, a few weeks later, the coalition government fell, and the Social Democrats once again formed a one-party government. A few weeks later, Minister of Justice Ingvar Lindell expressed the ambition to present a proposition introducing female clergy regardless, and also openly mentioned the possibility to remove the Synodal veto, according to Hallén's 1920 motion, if the Synod should once again reject the suggestion.⁸⁷¹

Two months after the rejection from the General Synod came a government proposition that explicitly highlights that the majority of the lay representatives accepted the suggestion.⁸⁷² Here, new Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Edenman argues that female clergy should be introduced, due to one ideological and one practical reason: a rejection would be "irreconcilable with secular society's equalizing of man and woman" and an introduction would be beneficial to church work.⁸⁷³ He dismisses counter-arguments based on Biblical tradition, stating that such factors "cannot be granted a decisive role".⁸⁷⁴

In the parliament debate, Edenman repeated similar arguments, arguing that the issue of female clergy is based on an ideological principle, one of equality. He also underlined that as long as a State Church remains, this issue should not be treated as an internal church matter, but rather as "demands of eligibility for state office", even if this particular state office happens to be clerical.⁸⁷⁵ Hallén was once again more active in the debate than the responsible minister, repeating the same demand as he had made for four decades, and based this demand on his view that the Church is no more than the sum of all its members.⁸⁷⁶ Thus, both Edenman and Hallén built their argument on an egalitarian, non-authoritarian view of the Church and its ordinate clergy.

⁸⁷⁰ Brohed, 210. The same reluctance and the same course of events arose regarding the Church-state relationship, where Persson avoided appointing a government committee on disestablishment. Such a committee was, however, appointed soon after the coalition government fell. Ibid. 262. During the same period, Persson also expressed hesitation to proceed with legislation to remove the diocesan chapters' remaining control function over the schools. Minister Persson agreed that such a move would be a natural consequence of the secularization of the school system, but still wished to postpone the execution of such a decision until after the next General Synod. Government proposition 1957:79, 5-7.

⁸⁷¹ FC 1957:26, 8.

⁸⁷² Government proposition 1958: 30, 3.

⁸⁷³ "oförenlig med det borgerliga samhällets likställande av man och kvinna", ibid. 47, 50.

⁸⁷⁴ "icke kan tillerkännas avgörande betydelse", ibid. 49.

⁸⁷⁵ "behörighetskraven för statliga ämbeten", FC 1958:9, 139.

⁸⁷⁶ SC 1958: 10, 58.

Half a year later, an extra Synod session was summoned, where a committee with lay majority first recommended accepting the new law, which the Synod now followed with a clear majority. The standard work *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* describes that “parliament and government undoubtedly forced the decision”.⁸⁷⁷ This result was produced by a majority of lay representatives within and outside the Synod, and Claesson describes this as a direct theological consequence of the General Synod reform in 1949.⁸⁷⁸

The debates within the Synod are not studied in this project, but it can be noted that Bishop Anders Nygren after the decision declared having changed his mind – although not regarding appointment of clergy. He regretted, though, how he previously dismissed the warnings of Engberg’s *Royal Bureau of Salvation Matters*, arguing that this function had now become a church-political prerequisite, where the Church of Sweden had become “a Church out of the Swedish state, organized within it and without actual independent life.”⁸⁷⁹

All in all, this process can be argued to reflect another gradual move, reducing the former independence of the Church under what Bishop Nygren called “a much higher mission than the state”, and replacing this with democratic ideals.⁸⁸⁰ Eventually, this resulted in a defining reform, where Church tradition and secular society experienced their most serious collision during the research period.

Summary

The church-political processes during the Social Democratic hegemony saw changes in Church organization that may not appear too large at first glance. Still, these changes expressed strong underlying value changes. Especially during the frequent changes of government around 1930, they also underlined the party-political differences: the Conservatives making efforts to assist Christianity to function freely within the State Church, the Liberals taking a middle path that still took steps to secure Church control over its property and the Social Democrats introducing ideology-based changes in a secular direction, where the authority-critical motive was the most prevalent. The same party-political differences were also evident during the 1950s, when the Agrarians avoided introducing

⁸⁷⁷ “tveklöst så att riksdag och regering drivit fram beslutet”, Brohed, 211f.

⁸⁷⁸ Claesson, “Folkhemmets kyrka.” 392.

⁸⁷⁹ ”en kyrka av svenska staten, inorganiserad i denna och utan egentligt självständigt liv.” Quoted in Ralfnert, “Kvinnoprästdebatten i Sverige i perspektivet kyrka-stat.” 298.

⁸⁸⁰ ”ett mycket högre – uppdrag än statens”, *ibid.* 299.

legislation and government reports on female clergy and State Church disestablishment, with such steps taken as soon as the Social Democrats could form a one-party government.

The ways of reasoning differed, according to circumstances. In parliament, the Social Democratic actors typically worded their arguments using diplomatic language, stating that the suggested moves are in the best interest of the Church and its representatives. The 1950 government report suggesting the introduction of female clergy followed the same pattern, presenting a mostly diplomatic description of what was possibly the most unpopular suggestion among churchgoers during the period, even if their description of critics was somewhat derogatory. Apart from this, directly hostile remarks towards the realm of the Sacred are with few exceptions used only by the younger Arthur Engberg.

Diplomatically formulated arguments are, however, not present in the policy-oriented material either from the Social Democratic Party or its leading actors. The diplomatic tone can therefore be assumed to mainly reflect a measure to gain acceptance for suggestions, and enable further progress in the longer term, a strategy confirmed by Harald Hallén's motivation for accepting a temporary rule regarding male and female clergy in local congregations.

The concept of community is hardly used at all in these processes, either in text or in debate in the chamber. In relation to this project, however, Thidevall's final conclusion is noteworthy, stating a community-related factor he argues would prevent an evangelically motivated Church from prevailing: "There was only room for one imagined community in the modern welfare society and that imagined community became the ethnic-nationally-based welfare state under Social Democratic leadership."⁸⁸¹

Thus, the direction during these church-political processes is a continuous reduction of features that signal authority, understood in a broad sense, be it from clerical leaders, Scripture or Church tradition. Instead, when Arthur Engberg's initial demand of immediate disestablishment of the State Church was overtaken by Harald Hallén's plan for a democratic, anti-authoritarian reformation, this process was also realized.

In the earliest decades of Social Democratic influence, securing a non-authoritarian and less confessional leadership for theological departments and the education of clergy were at the

⁸⁸¹ "Det fanns bara utrymme för *en* föreställd gemenskap i välfärdssamhället, och den föreställda gemenskapen blev det etniskt-nationellt baserade folkhemmet under socialdemokratisk ledning." Thidevall, *Kampen om folkkyrkan*, 316.

centre of the process. Thereafter followed a reform of Church organization on congregational and diocesan levels in an authority-reducing fashion, gradually reducing the role of the vicar and introducing more lay representation. This reform programme then followed also for the General Synod.

Processes of change came to a halt, however, during the international crises of the 1930s and early 1940s, possibly also due to the older Engberg's changing approach. When comparing his previous, more hostile argumentation against Hallén's more Church-friendly rhetoric, they both seem to have been successful in practical policy. The direction Engberg presented in his church-political programme of 1925 was followed, although most steps were not realized until after his death. Hallén's more diplomatic approach, while also taking a central role in several of the central government reports, turned out to be successful, as almost all his requested measures were realized. Both of these actors balanced their actions for a better long-term impact, sometimes avoiding affirming limited suggestions in line with their own ideas in order to wait for the right moment for a more thorough revision of the Church system.

During the 1950s, Church policy was largely characterized by the Freedom of Religion Act and the introduction of female clergy. Here, too, the effort to reduce authority was central in the government reports and other political actions from the Social Democrats. Some arguments for an affirming autonomy appear, particularly clearly in the debate on monasteries, where the fear of reduced individual independence appears to overrule considerations defending freedom of religion. The dominating value, however, is a confronting autonomy in the form of a negative approach towards authority of different kinds.

Regarding secular ideals, Engberg is the only central actor to openly propose secularism. Still, the decisions to move power from the Church to secular representatives is a clear expression of secular values according to points 1 and 3 in Charles Taylor's definition of secularization. Even if secularization is generally presented in public as something negative, Hallén still argues openly that secularization is a risk he is willing to take in order to reach his ideological goal of replacing traditional Church authorities with a larger lay representation in accordance with a secular democratic system.

Thus, a persevering opposition to authority became a central tool in changing the conditions of belief in the State Church in 20th century Sweden, hereby contributing to secularizing the nation. Autonomous, secular and Sacred-distanced arguments were indeed used in these

processes, but the value that was most strongly communicated during these decades was a critical stance towards authority. This was also efficiently put in practical policy, step by step reducing authorities based on Scripture and Church tradition and replacing these with a new authority of human-centred democratic ideals.

10. Education policy

The Swedish school system has for almost a millennium had its foundation in Christian worship, Christian faith and Christian ethics since the first schools in Sweden were established in connection to monasteries and cathedrals.⁸⁸² In 1842, a compulsory *folkskola* was introduced, with the State Church responsible for school teaching. By 1900, the *folkskola* had six forms, then growing to seven, then eight forms. Children from fifth form and upwards also had the opportunity to enter the lower secondary *realskola*, and further upper secondary school forms existed side by side. A central organizational goal in the reform process during this research period was to change this into a comprehensive nine-form school system for all pupils.⁸⁸³

The School Law is the central legislative document regarding the education in the nation. The ideological goals and values within the different school forms are, however, largely expressed within the national curricula, or, as they were named before 1962, teaching plans. This is also where the textual analysis in this project finds its central focus.

The largest reform during the research period was the introduction of the new *grundskola*, with its first curriculum of 1962 and a revised one in 1969. Central between these two was the introduction of a new high school, the *gymnasium* in 1965, which removed the subject of Christianity and triggered a large debate, a national petition and the formation of a new Christian Democratic political party.

10.1 Teaching plan of 1919 – from theology to ethics

The period of this study begins with the teaching plan of 1919, adopted under the first Social Democratic Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Värner Rydén, and including several ideas from Harald Hallén and Arthur Engberg's demands for de-confessionalizing the teaching.

The previous teaching plan from 1900 contained very detailed instructions for the teaching of Christianity, including a large number of Bible passages and psalm verses, plus Martin Luther's Small Catechism, and has a clearly confessional perspective.⁸⁸⁴ The main change in the 1919 plan is the removal of learning the Catechism and, in the teaching of the Bible, the

⁸⁸² Torbjörn Aronson, *Kristen skola i Sverige under tusen år* (Uppsala: Areopagos, 2016), 17pp.

⁸⁸³ Arvidson, *Education in Sweden*, 93-97, Gunnar Richardson, *Svensk utbildningshistoria: Skola och samhälle förr och nu*, 8th revised ed. (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010), 97-108.

⁸⁸⁴ Normalplan för undervisningen i folkskolor och småskolor, (Kunglig Maj:t, 1900), 7-10, 17-25.

previously suggested large body of Bible passages are removed. Instead, this document establishes a new centre on the teaching of Jesus, with an explicit focus on the Sermon on the Mount.⁸⁸⁵

The subject retains a confessional element, albeit weakened. It is explained that the purpose of teaching Christianity is to provide knowledge about the rise, content and development of Christianity, in order to “promote the pupils’ religious and moral development”.⁸⁸⁶ The Catechism is still mentioned several times in this teaching plan, although repeatedly to be used as a “historical expression of Luther’s view on the main themes of Christianity”.⁸⁸⁷ The main perspective in this teaching plan is community-based, but a slightly autonomous perspective is introduced, describing that since pupils come from homes with very different religious views, it is important that the teaching does not conflict with “the demands of present-day society for freedom of thought for separate individuals”.⁸⁸⁸

10.2 A hiatus in the process

The process of reshaping the Swedish school system took new steps during the 1920s, although not very hasty or radical at this time. The 1927 government report suggesting the right to leave the State Church also contains a large discussion with suggestions for the school teaching of Christianity. The committee, where Harald Hallén participated, argue for a less confessional teaching but adds that if freedom to leave the State Church would be introduced, the right to be exempt from the teaching of Christianity should also follow. The report mentions that pupils should be able to form their own independent belief. But when weighing the interests of state, family and children, the committee ends up – after explicit hesitation – continuing to allow morning devotion in class.⁸⁸⁹ Thus, this government report points in a double ideological direction.

The late 1920s saw a two-year-long Conservative government. One of its reforms was to bring back the possibility of a larger use of Luther’s Small Catechism in the teaching of Christianity. This was considered a victory, both for the Church and for those who wished for a stronger Christian influence in school. It also further revealed the party-political dividing

⁸⁸⁵ Undervisningsplan för rikets folkskolor, (Kunglig Maj:t, 1919), 20-28, 183-187.

⁸⁸⁶ ”främja lärjungarnas religiösa och sedliga utveckling”, *ibid.* 19.

⁸⁸⁷ ”historiskt uttryck för Luthers uppfattning av kristendomens huvudstycken”, *ibid.* 20-28, 183-187.

⁸⁸⁸ ”det nutida samhällets krav på tankefrihet för de enskilda individerna”, 26.

⁸⁸⁹ *SOU 1927:13*, 95-132.

lines, where the Social Democrats worked for a continuous secularization of the school system, while especially the Conservatives worked in the opposite direction.⁸⁹⁰

During Arthur Engberg's ministership, no measures were taken for a larger school reform. More extensive steps were taken under the war coalition government, with Conservative party leader Gösta Bagge as Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs.⁸⁹¹ He launched the 1940 School Investigation (skolutredning), which was presented in 1944. The directive for the committee mentioned that a basic goal in school must be to inculcate a feeling of responsibility towards others under "faithfulness towards our people's traditions and spiritual heritage", where the teaching of Christianity offers a particularly important means of reaching this goal.⁸⁹² The Investigation underlines that the school has the task of an "authoritative, planned and goal-oriented activity", which together with the family shares the responsibility of the children's upbringing.⁸⁹³ This School Investigation can therefore be argued to revere community, authority as well as the Sacred.

Despite its thoroughness, the 1940 Investigation still did not present any clear plans for reorganizing the school system – a situation Åke Isling describes as a prerequisite for the possibility to launch another state committee, which would take a more radical turn just a few years later.⁸⁹⁴

10.3 The 1946 School Commission and its consequences

A final report from the 1940 Investigation was published in 1946, written with the past World War as a backdrop. The text describes the risks with totalitarian systems, where only one state-affirmed view is tolerated, and it states that democratic societies must allow room for free opinions. However, it is stated that these ought to be presented in a normative environment, and the text displays distress over dissolving family ties and reduced parental authority. Therefore, a wisely used authority is needed in school in order to give children proper guidance. It is also described as obvious that the teaching of Christianity is

⁸⁹⁰ Thidevall, *Kampen om folkkyrkan*, 312.

⁸⁹¹ Olivestam, "Idé och politik" 41-45.

⁸⁹² "trohet mot vårt folks traditioner och andliga arv" *Skolan i samhällets tjänst: Frågeställningar och problemläge; SOU 1944:20*, 28.

⁸⁹³ "auktoritativ, planmässig och målbestämd verksamhet", *ibid.* 48.

⁸⁹⁴ Isling, "Kampen för och mot en demokratisk skola: 1. Samhällsstruktur och skolorganisation." 265.

outstandingly useful for providing the necessary education.⁸⁹⁵ Thus, the same perspective as before is further underlined.

The suggestions and perspectives of the last reports from the 1940 Investigation would, however, soon be overshadowed by the new School Commission (skolkommissionen) that had already been appointed by the one-party Social Democratic post-war government.

The background of this Commission was that during a general school debate at the 1944 party congress, both Alva Myrdal and Stellan Arvidson suggested launching a new school commission to replace the 1940 Investigation, which they considered to be contrariant to Social Democratic policy. Contrary to the party board, which recommended that the 1940 Investigation first should complete its work, the congress tasked the party board and parliament group with forming a new school programme.⁸⁹⁶ Olivestam considers this decision to be both surprising and defining for the future.⁸⁹⁷ In this School Commission, Alva Myrdal and Stellan Arvidson would become the central actors in the formation of the new school system, which culminated in the new *grundskola* during the 1960s.⁸⁹⁸

The state School Commission, which emanated out of the Social Democratic congress decision, was led by then-Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Tage Erlander and began its work in January 1946. Alva Myrdal chaired the delegation that worked with the content and methods of school teaching, hereby giving her the chance to let the ideas from *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* take practical shape. Arvidson was the secretary of the Commission and the one who authored the forthcoming books that popularized its work and suggestions. The Commission included members from all parties in parliament, plus one representative for universities and one for parents. However, the group was formed so that the number of Social Democrats exceeded all the other participants combined, hereby ensuring a party majority in a potential voting situation within the Commission.⁸⁹⁹ Together with Communist representative Knut Olsson, Myrdal and Arvidson became the centre of the Christianity-critical camp.⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁵ *Skolans inre arbete: Synpunkter på fostran och undervisning*; SOU 1946:31, 17, 23, 32, 88.

⁸⁹⁶ *Congress protocol 1944*, 427f.

⁸⁹⁷ Olivestam, "Idé och politik" 71-73.

⁸⁹⁸ Enkvist, *De svenska skolreformerna 1962-1985 och personerna bakom dem*, 14; Almgren, *Dröm och verklighet*, 113, 120; Hadenius, "Jämlikhet och frihet" 130.

⁸⁹⁹ Stellan Arvidson, *Skolreformen: En sammanfattning av skolkommissionens betänkande* (Lund: Gleerups, 1948), 7f; Olivestam, "Idé och politik" 46.

⁹⁰⁰ Olivestam, "Idé och politik" 285.

The introduction of the report describes the Commission as having worked according to the same democratic principle as the 1940 Investigation. Their ideological basis and conclusions are, however, very different. It immediately appears that the Commission is critical against the historical heritage praised in the Investigation. The pedagogy in the current school is described in authority-critical words as having strongly medieval features, stemming from church and monasteries that raised youth to “obedience and unoriginality vis-à-vis authorities”.⁹⁰¹ Based on this background, the Commission presents a new and much more autonomous school vision. The text states that all modern pedagogical currents express a striving to let the pupils themselves shape activities and initiatives. It is therefore “highly urgent” to introduce methods that “promote the autonomy and critical mindset of the pupils”.⁹⁰²

The Commission report repeatedly moves the pedagogical focus away from the teacher’s authority and towards the pupil’s own interest; the word *intresse* occurs 515 times in the report. Thus, new pedagogical methods are suggested in order to reform the teaching, where individualization, utilization of the pupils’ interests and personal activities, as well as cooperation in group work are key tools.⁹⁰³

The two state reports also displayed clearly differing views on religion. Enkvist argues that in the 1946 Commission, the Social Democrats and the Communist Olsson from the beginning set their aim at the morning devotions, which they considered reactionary propaganda and thus intolerable in the new school.⁹⁰⁴ This matter, along with the teaching of Christianity, was also the area where the battle line would be drawn within the Commission.

The general tone in the Commission report displays a critical approach towards Christianity, describing a history of a growing criticism against the school teaching of Christianity. The report makes a new interpretation of the 1919 teaching plan, arguing that its intention “ought to be” that the school shall not “authoritatively influence the pupils” for one or another view of life.⁹⁰⁵ This anti-authoritarian interpretation and wording, actually not explicit in the 1919 plan, will also become central in future documents and are further strengthened by the

⁹⁰¹ ”lydnad och osjälvständighet gentemot auktoriteterna”, 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling; *SOU 1948:27*, 1f.

⁹⁰² ”i högsta grad angeläget”, ”främjar elevernas självständighet och kritiska sinnelag” *ibid.* 5.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.* 119-131.

⁹⁰⁴ Olivestam, ”Idé och politik” 46f, 55-57.

⁹⁰⁵ ”torde vara”, ”auktoritativt påverka eleverna”, *SOU 1948:27*, 171, 173.

Commission's own view that any teaching of Christianity must be *objective*, in the sense that it does not "authoritatively force a certain view on the pupils".⁹⁰⁶

Despite these considerations, the conclusion of the report surprisingly takes the opposite view, regarding it as granted that Christianity shall remain a subject to be taught in school.

Similarly, the text states that even though the need to preserve freedom of thought has led to demands to make morning devotions voluntary, the Commission still decides not to follow these, and morning devotions shall therefore remain compulsory.⁹⁰⁷

These two decisions reveal a large divide within the Commission and form the basis for a two-decade-long battle on the matter. The exact battle lines are not displayed in the report, but Arvidson gives the background in another publication.

In his 1948 book *Skolreformen*, Stellan Arvidson presents a popularized summary of the School Commission's results. It is noteworthy that Arvidson, in his role as secretary, takes the opportunity to also articulate his personal position. Like the dominating part of the Commission report itself, his text largely follows the line of reasoning in the Myrdals' *Kris* book. The main goal of a reformed school system is described to be the shaping of democratic people, where an autonomous perspective precedes the community-based, stating that the task of a democratic school is to "raise free and autonomous people, for whom cooperation is a need and a joy".⁹⁰⁸ It can be noted, though, that Arvidson here misquotes the wording from the Commission, adding the words "and autonomous" to the original formulation.

In this book, Arvidson also devotes considerable space to presenting the voting results and position of the losing minority on the matter of morning devotions and teaching of Christianity. Arvidson himself was not allowed to vote in his role as secretary, but the balance within the group had shifted slightly when Erlander was appointed Prime Minister in late 1946 and therefore left the Commission without being replaced. When the group cast their votes, Alva Myrdal, the Communist representative, the non-party-affiliated representative Märta de Laval, and three other Social Democrats voted to remove the morning devotion and teaching of Christianity. The representatives from the Conservatives, the Agrarians and the Liberals voted to keep them. However, two of the Social Democrats decided to join the non-

⁹⁰⁶ "auktoritativt påtvinga eleverna en viss åskådning", *ibid.* 173.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 172, 175f.

⁹⁰⁸ "att fostra fria och självständiga människor, för vilka samarbete är ett behov och en glädje", Arvidson, *Skolreformen*, 13f; *SOU 1948:27.* 4.

Socialist representatives and voted against removing these Christian features in school. The defectors were Emil Näsström, member of parliament and chairman on a board for the relief of the poor, plus Josef Weijne, new Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and the Commission's new chairman. In Erlander's absence, the vote resulted in a draw, where Weijne's vote proved decisive.⁹⁰⁹

In his book, Arvidson gives the impression that the vote concerning the teaching of Christianity only concerned the lower classes. The losing position's special remarks in the end of the report reveal, however, that their suggestion applied for all school forms. Their demands were in accordance with the general discussion in the Commission report: reconsider the name and content of the subject of Christianity; infer the rule that communal prayer shall no longer take place in school; replace morning devotions with other types of assemblies and remove the demand of Church membership or confession for teachers.⁹¹⁰

The Dissenter Act Committee of 1949 dealt not only with Church membership but also with the role of Christianity in school. This Committee, appointed by the coalition war government, followed largely the same ideological foundation as the 1940 School Investigation. It is telling, however, how the report reflects on both the 1940 Investigation and the 1946 Commission.

The Dissenter Act Committee affirm the teaching of Christianity as a central feature in school education as a natural way to understand Swedish tradition and culture, and also as a natural consequence of the historically close relationship between Church and school system in Sweden. The report presents practical advice on how mandatory religious education can be secured for families of all confessions.⁹¹¹ It declares that the subject should be compulsory for all pupils, rejecting it as unreasonable to leave "such an important feature in the upbringing and education of citizens" up to individual choice.⁹¹² The report also underlines that freedom of religion does not rest on the obligatory nature of the subject but on the content of the teaching. Here, the text evaluates the different perspectives in the two government reports on

⁹⁰⁹ Arvidson, *Skolreformen*, 102. Weijne's decision was considered provocative within the party, and at the 1948 congress, it was requested that he explained this vote in contrast to the party demand for an unconfessional teaching. Weijne declined to respond to this demand. *Congress protocol 1948*, (Socialdemokraterna, 1948), 180.

⁹¹⁰ *SOU 1948:27*, 503-505. Letters from Alva Myrdal to Stellan Arvidson are preserved at the Royal Library in Stockholm. In these, she suggests strategies for how they ought to put the words in order to win acceptance from the whole Commission. 6 February, 2 March, 3 March, 25 March 1948, Stellan Arvidson's Archive, KB L227:1:1. Letters are, however, not included in the primary material in this study.

⁹¹¹ *Dissenterlagskommittén: Betänkande med förslag till religionsfrihetslag m.m.*; *SOU 1949:20*, 47-51.

⁹¹² "ett så viktigt moment i medborgarnas fostran och bildning", *ibid.* 50.

education, affirming that the 1919 teaching plan and the 1940 School Investigation have found a good balance of securing both the fostering character of the teaching and the preservation of religious freedom.

When summarizing the 1946 Commission, the report focuses on those formulations that are in line with the 1940 Investigation. It does note “some expressions” that “might possibly be interpreted” to point in a new direction, but the Committee argues that it cannot reason based on such an unknown change of direction and instead returns to the Commission’s concluding decision to keep the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions.⁹¹³ Thus, the Dissenter Act Committee takes a more affirming perspective of authority in the form of Christian tradition, while showing reluctance towards the autonomous perspectives presented thereafter.

In 1950, a government proposition for a new school system was adopted, building on all the government reports from the 1940s. Due to compromises along the way, the reforms as well as the plans for future government reports were accepted unanimously by parliament.⁹¹⁴ The most important immediate change was to begin trial versions to replace the seven-year *folkskola* with a more modern system, where all pupils would be in a nine-year comprehensive *enhetsskola*. For this project, however, the interesting discussions are those that deal with pedagogy, the relationship between teacher and pupil plus the roles of norms and values, religion and Christianity.

The government proposition lists opinions raised in response to the School Commission’s pedagogical suggestions. All of these opinions are negative. The National Agency for Education is critical towards the suggested progressive pedagogy, mentioning that the “extreme freedom pedagogy” has resulted in disciplinary problems everywhere it has been tried.⁹¹⁵ A number of diocesan chapters also raise criticism against the Commission’s suggestions to reduce the influence of Christianity, and both the Teachers’ and the Headmasters’ Associations state that if the authority of teachers would be reduced in line with the “almost utopian end goal” of the Commission, this would disrupt the children’s process of growing up into responsible citizens.⁹¹⁶ In his concluding remarks, Minister Josef Weijne presents a middle path, arguing that the new school must introduce new pedagogical methods

⁹¹³ ”Vissa uttalanden”, ”kunna möjligen tolkas”, *ibid.* 51-56.

⁹¹⁴ Stellan Arvidson, Britta Stenholm, and Ivan Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan förverkligas* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1958), 8.

⁹¹⁵ ”den extrema frihetspedagogiken”, Government proposition 1950:70, 66.

⁹¹⁶ ”närmast utopiskt slutmål”, *ibid.* 67-69.

but that “authority cannot be dispensed with” – in upbringing or in society as a whole.⁹¹⁷ The government proposition can thus be argued to display a less autonomous perspective than the Commission report, and it is probable that this upgrading of authority and downplaying of autonomy at least partly is the result of the critical responses to the Commission.

Concerning the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions, the submitted opinions agree almost exclusively with the Commission majority to keep these as before.⁹¹⁸ Minister Weijne builds on these opinions when distancing himself from the minority’s Christianity-critical stance, arguing for a version of historical authority, stating that Swedish society builds on a heritage of values and norms built on Christianity, which society must hand on to further generations.⁹¹⁹ Regarding the role of Christianity, the proposition does give room for the values in the 1940 Investigation, but in its defining views, e.g. on the nature of the teaching, the text follows the 1946 Commission.⁹²⁰

The proposition text follows Weijne’s remarks, stating that the Commission goes too far in defining an objective education, for instance when they reject the description of God as a loving, caring and protective father as contrary to an objective position. However, the proposition uses two formulations from the Commission that would prove to be crucial in following years; that the teaching of Christianity shall be “*objective*” and that the teachers must not through their presentation “authoritatively force a certain view on the pupils”.⁹²¹ All in all, the government proposition presents a view that is more positive to authority and the Sacred than the Commission report is, but in defining wordings on the content of the teaching, the central formulations from the Commission are kept.

Due to the 1950 decision being a unanimous compromise, its formulations were, according to school historian Gunnar Richardson, “so vaguely expressed that it cannot be interpreted solely by a verbal analysis.”⁹²² This left the field open for those who could push the development in the desired direction. Enkvist argues that the centre-right parties imagined the trial schools as a test before a later, final decision on the school system, while the Social Democrats viewed

⁹¹⁷ ”Auktoritet kan icke undvaras”, *ibid.* 71.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 339-349.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 367f.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.* 46-50, 333-336.

⁹²¹ ”*objektiv*”, ”auktoritativt påtvinga lärjungarna en viss åskådning”, *ibid.* 334.

⁹²² ”så oklart formulerat, att det genom en enbart verbal analys inte kan tolkas.” Richardson, *Svensk utbildningshistoria*, 112.

the trial schools as pedagogical tests, carrying on as if the decision to form a new school system was already fixed.⁹²³

10.4 The 1950s interlude

During the trial processes for the new *enhetsskola*, Stellan Arvidson published four books on the new comprehensive school between 1950 and 1961 – the first book as sole author and the three following with two co-authors. Even though published by general or Social Democratic publishers, the content gives the impression of a formal presentation of the political and pedagogical process, rather than personal texts. These books are therefore analysed in this chapter rather than under Stellan Arvidson as individual author.

In 1950, Arvidson's book *Enhetsskolan* (The Comprehensive School) presents the following steps in the school reform process. Like his 1948 book, this one builds on the work of the School Commission but also follows other government reports and propositions; the actual parliament decision was not yet taken when the book was published. The first trial versions of the new school had, however, already begun, initiated by Arvidson himself.⁹²⁴

The ideology in this book largely follows the previous book. The central task of the school is described to be the shaping of personality, defined in building "independence and ability of cooperation", in giving the pupils "an independent view of the [school] work".⁹²⁵ Again, the community perspective appears, but is preceded and overshadowed by the autonomous umbrella. However, these ideological sections are not as elaborate as in the previous book. Arvidson also states that the Commission finds it "a very important task" to change the pedagogy from traditional teaching to new, progressive methods.⁹²⁶

The author also presents some of the reactions on the Commission's suggestions, although by revealing which reactions he supports, by quoting in extenso the reaction from Weijne when he agrees with Arvidson's own views but toning down the negative reactions from churches and teachers, in these cases adding that such reactions have "sometimes" been presented.⁹²⁷

⁹²³ Enkvist, *De svenska skolreformerna 1962-1985 och personerna bakom dem*, 34.

⁹²⁴ Stellan Arvidson, *Enhetsskolan : Riksdagsbeslutet, kommunal planering, försöksverksamheten* (Lund: Gleerups, 1950), 11.

⁹²⁵ "självständighet och samarbetsförmåga", "en självständig inställning till arbetet", *ibid.* 64.

⁹²⁶ "en mycket angelägen uppgift", *ibid.* 69.

⁹²⁷ "ibland", *ibid.* 65-67.

Even more apparent is Arvidson's effort to argue for his own view about the morning devotions and teaching of Christianity. He explains that Christianity has a central role in school but underlines that the teaching must be objective and must not influence pupils towards a stronger faith. He adds that even though the content itself could influence students in this direction, the education shall also contain criticism against the Christian view of life.⁹²⁸ Olivestam notes that Arvidson's description twists the original meaning of the concept of "objectivity", which was previously understood as an unbiased description of different Christian denominations, not as a neutral position portraying every view on religion as equal.⁹²⁹

Arvidson describes truthfully that the majority of the Commission decided to keep the morning devotions obligatory, although stating that this was only for technical reasons. Rather, he adds, the Commission saw a problem in keeping both freedom of religion and morning devotion and that the majority called for large freedom in the content, along with increased possibilities of exemption from the teaching of Christianity. Thereafter, he gives an equally long presentation of the minority position, which criticized both the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions. Arvidson can thus be argued to present a tendentious view on both the Christian elements in school and the Commission's conclusions, giving remarkably large space for the minority position – a view that also happened to be his own.

In the following years, Arvidson continued to argue – both within the party and in more books – for the minority position that lost the crucial vote. In his argumentation, the adopted formulation about an objective teaching of Christianity becomes a central argument, along with the new Freedom of Religion Act. In 1953, 1958 and 1961, the books *Enhetsskolan växer fram* (The Comprehensive School Arises) *Enhetsskolan förverkligas* (The Comprehensive School Realized) and *Enhetsskolan blir grundskolan* (The Comprehensive School Becomes the *Grundskola*) were published. In all these books, the latter two being largely revised versions of the first, the parts relevant in this study are mainly written by Stellan Arvidson, and partly by Britta Stenholm. A few passages from a third author, Ivan Blomberg, are also relevant.⁹³⁰ Concerning pedagogy, the books generally repeat the content

⁹²⁸ Ibid. 71-74.

⁹²⁹ Olivestam, "Idé och politik" 286.

⁹³⁰ Stellan Arvidson, *Enhetsskolan växer fram* (Malmö Gleerups, 1953), 3f, Arvidson, Stenholm, and Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan förverkligas*, 3, Stellan Arvidson, Britta Stenholm, and Ivan Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan blir grundskolan* (Stockholm: Liber, 1961), 4. In following footnotes, references are typically made to the 1958 book. However, most of the relevant quotes appear also in the 1953 and 1961 books.

of the 1951 book, holding on to the same autonomous-leaning perspective.⁹³¹ When describing the pedagogy of the coming *grundskola*, Arvidson discusses along with other factors the need for individualization. The discussion does, however, not display an equally radical autonomous perspective as Alva Myrdal in *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, which is more explicitly reflected in the 1948 book. The reasoning in these three books is rather of a practical nature, dealing with how to help each individual pupil.⁹³²

Still, these three books echo the previous anti-authoritarian perspective. The differentiation of pupils into different types of schools is described as society taking the role as custodian with a self-proclaimed “*right* to hereby decide over people’s destinies” and is dismissed as irrational, clumsy and harmful.⁹³³ The third author, Ivan Blomberg, proposes abandoning the traditional pedagogy for a new one, focusing on method rather than remembering of facts, repeating a statement from Weijne in the 1950 proposition, suggesting “A too heavy burden of material to memorize may become downright harmful.”⁹³⁴ Consequently, Blomberg proposes a new pedagogy for the new comprehensive school, underlining that pupils should *not* (italics in original in all three cases) be drilled in writing traditional essays, *nor* into grammatical correctness, *nor* in traditional tasks in mathematics. Rather, the pedagogy should build on the predisposition and interests of the individual pupil.⁹³⁵ Blomberg proposes a utopian goal where society should by itself bring forth a school without graduations and marks, which would be replaced by the individual’s own interest in progress.⁹³⁶

The presentations of the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions have in these books been pushed slightly to the margins, under a subheading concerning different school subjects. The discussion largely follows the formulations in the 1950 book.⁹³⁷ However, Arvidson’s and/or Stenholm’s presentation of the minority position about the character of the teaching of Christianity is pushed yet another step, suggesting that this should probably be understood as the actual position of the whole commission, stating, “Surely, the majority would not have

⁹³¹ Arvidson, Stenholm, and Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan förverkligas*, 87-98.

⁹³² Arvidson, Stenholm, and Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan blir grundskolan*, 268-270.

⁹³³ “*rätt* att på detta sätt bestämma över människors öden” Arvidson, Stenholm, and Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan förverkligas*, 47, 270.

⁹³⁴ “En för stark belastning med minnesstoff kan bli direkt skadlig.” Ibid. 88. It may be added that Blomberg presses Weijne’s intention considerably. The context surrounding this quote discusses the teaching about current topics where reality changes fast. The advice not to over-emphasize memorizing of fast-changing facts is suggested for this particular instance, but is not used as general advice for the entire school education. Government proposition 1950:70, 70.

⁹³⁵ Ibid. 280f.

⁹³⁶ Ibid. 271.

⁹³⁷ Ibid. 113-116.

had any objections to this wording”.⁹³⁸ This is also argued more as a matter of fact than as an issue of debate, as it is described that the Freedom of Religion Act and the new school regulations had in practice already confirmed that the teaching must be neutral, and it should therefore be fully allowed for schools to arrange completely non-confessional morning assemblies.⁹³⁹

In these books, like the earlier ones, it becomes apparent that Arvidson and/or Stenholm make efforts to present the majority decision of the School Commission as no longer valid and Arvidson’s own position as being practically more or less confirmed. These changes in direction are never presented in direct confrontation against religion *per se*. In practice, however, the descriptions and ideological pushes from Arvidson/Stenholm function as efforts to reduce the influence of the Sacred, although presented under the concept of freedom of religion.

10.5 1955 teaching plan – a slight devaluation of Christianity

Over time, the old teaching plan of 1919 had become so dated that there was a need for a revision, even though no final decision had yet been made regarding the new school system. In the meantime, the 1955 teaching plan was adopted. This largely follows the views of the 1946 Commission and Stellan Arvidson’s line of reasoning, portraying a more autonomous perspective, both in general and more specifically, in the teaching of Christianity.

The preamble to this teaching plan states that the purpose of the *folkskola* is to provide knowledge, develop the pupils’ individual abilities and, together with their homes, shape the young into “independent, responsibility-feeling humans and members of society”.⁹⁴⁰ This formulation summarizes the whole document’s effort to balance autonomy and community, with the former consistently preceding the latter.

This teaching plan states that the teacher is the central person in the school’s work but underlines that the teacher must not put forward any personal view on politics and religion.⁹⁴¹ The text also displays a distance towards authority, although still rather mildly, promoting an

⁹³⁸ ”Säkerligen hade majoriteten ingenting emot en sådan formulering.” Ibid. 113.

⁹³⁹ Ibid. 116.

⁹⁴⁰ ”självständiga och ansvarsännande människor och samhällsmedlemmar”, Undervisningsplan för rikets folkskolor, (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1955), 6.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid. 10.

independent mindset, “also regarding values”, while in the same paragraph directly reminding teachers to warn pupils against inclinations to follow authorities.⁹⁴²

Concerning pedagogy, the text describes a balance between traditional class-teaching and individualized studies, and it is specifically stated that the teacher’s duty is not to interrogate but to explain and supervise.⁹⁴³ The school should teach good manners but should also be very restrictive in giving pupils the mark of “fail” in the two areas *order* and *behaviour*.⁹⁴⁴ These factors taken together display a general opening for weakened authority in school but no full-blown autonomous perspective.

Christianity, still presented first among the school subjects, is described to have the aim of giving the pupils knowledge of the main features in Biblical writings, Church history, non-Christian religions and the religious and ethical questions of the present age in order that the personal development of the pupils should be promoted.⁹⁴⁵ These formulations mirror a further move towards individualism and away from the authority of the Bible and Christian beliefs by including other religions and putting the focus on the pupils’ general development, rather than – as in the previous teaching plan – on the religious and moral level. The same impression is given by stating in the introduction to the subject that the teaching shall focus on the main features, also giving a more distanced impression by repeating for every school year that the teacher should use “some psalms”, “a few central words”, “a selection of texts”, “a brief overview”, et cetera.⁹⁴⁶

In the part about methodical advice, the formulation about caring for the freedom of thought is kept as in 1919, and the passage keeps much of the previous form. Luther’s Small Catechism is mentioned in very short terms as a material where suitable parts shall be studied briefly when studying the Reformation, and it is stated that this shall not contain learning by heart, or any deeper study into the theological content. The morning devotion is kept in the same form as before.⁹⁴⁷

⁹⁴² ”Även i fråga om värderingar”, *ibid.* 6.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.* 15-19.

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 8, 10.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 54.

⁹⁴⁶ ”några psalmer”, ”några få kärnord”, ”ett urval texter”, ”en översiktlig framställning”, *ibid.* 55.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 56-61.

10.6 Paving the way for the *grundskola*

In 1957, a new committee was appointed by government, led by new Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Ragnar Edenman, including representatives from all parties (now with the Communists excluded). This time, Stellan Arvidson was raised to formal delegate, and there were also some non-party-affiliated representatives.⁹⁴⁸ Olof Palme was also appointed delegate, but rarely attended the meetings.⁹⁴⁹ This group would be called the 1957 School Committee (skolberedning). Their results were presented in several reports, the largest in 1961, detailing the full organization for the new *grundskola*.

One practical issue, where Arvidson would present his view in several debate articles during the process, was how to arrange school from the seventh year and upwards. Due to large discipline problems and truancies in the undifferentiated trial schools, most delegates preferred some kind of differentiation of the pupils. Stellan Arvidson stood more or less alone in repeatedly arguing the principle of equality and that no differentiation should be made, stating that the disciplinary problems were due to lack of intellectual stimulation and could be solved by better individualization. In the end, Arvidson's position also gained the majority.⁹⁵⁰

Thus, the balance between equality and freedom of choice was here solved by giving the goal of equality the upper hand. Arvidson's arguments for individualization as a solution to disciplinary problems also points to a non-authoritarian and autonomous basis. The egalitarian perspective also connected to the collective, rather than what in this project is described under the value of community, which points to an education-directed version of a state-individualistic perspective. The focus of freedom in its autonomous version would also gain further strength during the following decade.

In the Committee's final report in 1961, the goal for the new school is not described as the aim towards particular knowledge – precisely because the *grundskola* is undifferentiated and hosts pupils with unequal intellectual gifts. Rather, the goal of this new school is skill-oriented, resting on the needs of the individual and democratic society, where the latter is described to be shaped by free and autonomous people. The comprehensive nature of the new school is described under the concept of individualizing “*within the framework of the class*” –

⁹⁴⁸ Arvidson, Stenholm, and Blomberg, *Enhetsskolan blir grundskolan*, 21.

⁹⁴⁹ Larsson, *Olof Palme och utbildningspolitiken*, 149.

⁹⁵⁰ Hadenius, "Jämlikhet och frihet" 147-154.

which means to shape the education to each individual in each class according to the pupil's personal interests and needs.⁹⁵¹

The central goal of the new school is distinctly autonomy-oriented: "promote the individual person's free growth and development, assisting him towards autonomy and self-expression."⁹⁵² After this defining statement, the text mentions that independence can only be fully realized in community with others, but in this context, community functions as the means, rather than the goal.

The *grundskola* shall also give an ethical education. The text no longer describes the ethical values as founded on Christianity but on democratic society. When discrepancies in norms appear between adults and pupils, the school ought to make use of the pupils' norms while also trying to level out the discrepancies. This text on the teacher-pupil relationship points towards decreased teacher authority, although yet not an all-out autonomous view.⁹⁵³

A positive view on the family community is displayed in the description that the family is "most important of all the group formations to which the pupil belongs", and the social education in school is to rest on the pupil's experiences from their family.⁹⁵⁴

The main report from the 1957 Committee does not present a syllabus for different subjects; this is included in the accompanying curriculum LGR 62. However, the purpose and content of each subject is briefly described, where the Christian religion and teaching of this is described as a central part of the foundation of the ethical and social values in society. The need for objective teaching is repeated, but the tone is not hostile towards religion or Christianity.⁹⁵⁵

The Committee avoids the hot topic of morning devotions and only briefly mentions that morning assemblies take place in school. This formulation apparently disturbed Stellan Arvidson, who therefore added a special comment to the report stating that, as no other measures were taken, one can expect that prayer, discourse and singing of hymns will occur regularly as an introduction of the school day. He then once again repeats the argument from

⁹⁵¹ "inom klassens ram" *Grundskolan: Betänkande avgivet av 1957 års skolberedning: VI; SOU 1961:30*, 143, 217-219.

⁹⁵² "befrämja den enskilda människans fria växt och utveckling, hjälpa henne till självständighet och till att förverkliga sig själv", *ibid.* 144.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.* 154f, 220f.

⁹⁵⁴ "den viktigaste av alla gruppbildningar som eleven ingår i", *ibid.* 165.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 176.

the minority position in the 1946 Commission and argues that religious content expresses an “outdated view of Christian monopoly” concerning views of life and is contrary to the rest of the general autonomous-directed content of the Committee report and specifically to its call for an objective and non-authoritarian teaching of Christianity.⁹⁵⁶

Together with another Committee delegate, Arvidson also adds another special comment declaring reservation against the suggestions to keep the written remarks about order and behaviour. Contrary to the report’s general view of education, the undersigned call for the removal of these remarks – a factor that further underlines Stellan Arvidson’s critical view of authority.

Thus, the School Committee report can be argued to follow the autonomous line of reasoning in both the 1946 Commission and 1955 teaching plan, although including a diplomatic tone that accepts at least parts of the more traditional and authority-oriented perspective from earlier teaching plans and the 1940 Investigation. Regarding the role of religion in school, the text carefully balances earlier formulations on the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions, while Stellan Arvidson continues his strategy of not abiding with the majority position but carrying on his critical attitude against Christianity. In the long run, Arvidson’s relentless efforts would eventually succeed when the Swedish education policy took an even stronger autonomous direction during the next decade – although after a brief hiatus with the new curriculum of 1962.

10.7 LGR 62 – a balance of ideals in the new school

The 1962 national curriculum (LGR 62) was released along with the School Committee report above and was adopted as the first curriculum for the new comprehensive school, the *grundskola*. This curriculum takes a mixed perspective, sometimes quite far from the autonomous vision in the 1946 School Commission, Stellan Arvidson’s books and to some extent also the vision of the 1957 Committee report. Olof Palme would later describe this curriculum as a political compromise, towards which he and others felt “a restrained discontent”, and wanted to go further.⁹⁵⁷

However, its introduction lies close to the wording in the Social Democratic programme revision of 1960, presenting the aim of the school to promote the pupil’s “personal growth

⁹⁵⁶ ”förläggad uppfattning om kristen ensamrätt”, *ibid.* 833.

⁹⁵⁷ ”ett behärskat missnöje”, SC 1968:41, 68f.

into a free, independent and harmonic human. The school shall provide an individual education.”⁹⁵⁸ This autonomous-leaning passage is in its turn followed by the opposite perspective, highlighting the need to teach the pupils cooperation.

An individualized upbringing is combined with a community-oriented and family-friendly perspective, understood as a need for the school to cooperate with homes with different norms of upbringing. The home is described as having the main responsibility of nurturing and fostering the children, and this point of view should also be the starting point of the school’s social education of the pupils, and the whole school period should contain a training for future family life.⁹⁵⁹ The curriculum explains that developing the pupil’s capacities as an individual and citizen in a democratic society and teaching responsibility towards others are tasks for the new *grundskola*. The pupils will learn more about their environment through studies in Christianity, social and natural science.⁹⁶⁰ The text also underlines the need for an ethical education in the moral norms that “must apply” in a democratic society. When discrepancies occur between norms of pupils and adults, the school should make efforts to level these out.⁹⁶¹

The curriculum raises the point that democratic society must be shaped by “free and independent humans”.⁹⁶² However, it is immediately stated that these factors must not be ends in themselves. “[T]hey must be the foundation of cooperation and joint action”, and the text adds a number of values, whereof the majority can be described as community-based rather than autonomous.⁹⁶³ Even though community-oriented values such as a “feeling of community, cooperation and self-discipline” stand as key-points in the social education in a democratic school, it is also mentioned several times that the education ought to be individualized.⁹⁶⁴

Regarding the cooperation between teacher and pupil, the text argues that the responsibility is shared, and when a strained relationship arises between them, the reason might lie in both the teacher and pupil. The pupil is described as “firstly and lastly an independent individual”, but

⁹⁵⁸ ”personliga mognande till en fri, självständig och harmonisk människa. Skolan skall ge individuell fostran.” Läroplan för grundskolan, (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1962), 13.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid. 14, 18, 25.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid. 15.

⁹⁶¹ ”måste gälla”, ibid. 16.

⁹⁶² ”fria och självständiga människor”, ibid. 18.

⁹⁶³ ”de måste vara grundvalen för samarbete och samverkan”, ibid. 18.

⁹⁶⁴ ”gemenskapskänsla”, ”samarbete och självdisciplin”, ibid. 20.

it is also mentioned that disciplinary actions may be necessary in order to handle problems of order.⁹⁶⁵ Thus, the text reflects an effort to balance autonomy and authority.

When describing methods of teaching, the curriculum mentions both traditional class teaching along with group work. The teacher bears the responsibility, whereas it is described to be beneficial to let the pupils take part in the planning, according to their abilities.⁹⁶⁶ The text also provides extensive information on different forms of specialized classes for pupils who have difficulties in following the pace.⁹⁶⁷

The diminished status of the subject of Christianity is evident by the fact that it has now dropped far down in the list of subjects, instead of being listed first, as in previous teaching plans. The content of the teaching lies close to what is described in the 1955 teaching plan. However, the non-authoritarian nature of this teaching is further underlined, e.g. by introducing that the teaching must be “*objective*”, explaining that it must be arranged so that it “*does not violate the individual’s right to freedom of thought and religion*” and does not “authoritatively try to influence the pupils to embrace a certain view” but instead follows the principle to educate the pupils into independent thought.⁹⁶⁸ Secular worldviews are introduced, although put on a lower level than the religious ones, evident by the description “currents, which have questioned the value of the religious truths.”⁹⁶⁹ The concept “morning devotion” has in this curriculum disappeared altogether and is replaced by a few brief referrals to “morning assembly”, where it is generally underlined that it is natural that the pupils lead these assemblies. These wordings function as simultaneously reducing the role of the Sacred and the authority of the teacher.⁹⁷⁰

Altogether, the 1962 curriculum displays a more community-oriented perspective than the previous teaching plan, both towards the family and between the students and others in school. The document is also less hostile towards authority and the Sacred than in Stellan Arvidson’s preparatory literature, even if a few autonomous perspectives in central areas of education are raised along the way. The role of the Sacred is further reduced, both in

⁹⁶⁵ ”Först och sist en självständig individ”, ibid. 31-33, 53.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid. 44-46.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid. 64-70.

⁹⁶⁸ ”objektiv”, ”icke kränker den enskildes rätt till tanke- och trosfrihet”, ”utan att auktoritativt söka påverka eleverna att omfatta en viss uppfattning”, ibid. 221.

⁹⁶⁹ ”strömningar, som satt de religiösa sanningarnas värde i fråga.” Ibid. 217, 221.

⁹⁷⁰ ”morgonsamling”, ibid. 76, 225, 319.

introducing an even stronger autonomous focus in the teaching of Christianity and by the silent removal of the morning devotion.

10.8 LGY 65 – the secular turn

The next curriculum for the *grundskola* was preceded by a vast public debate surrounding the introduction of the new *gymnasium*. The government report laying the ground for this was commissioned as early as 1960, before the new comprehensive school was introduced. The majority in this committee consisted of non-party affiliated experts appointed by Minister Edenman. Among the Social Democrats, Stellan Arvidson was replaced by Olof Palme.

The main debate about the new *gymnasium* concerned the renaming of the subject of Christianity to *religionskunskap* (knowledge of religion) and the general change of attitude towards religion. The committee report is rather technical, and even though it recommends the teaching to include how “only Buddha’s teaching can provide world peace, while Christianity has failed”⁹⁷¹, it does not display as many ideological tendencies as the forthcoming curriculum. The committee’s description of the new subject gives the impression of having begun from scratch, discussing under what subject to sort issues of religious nature, ending up by not placing it under the subjects of philosophy or history but under the title *knowledge of religion*.⁹⁷² However, the defining ideological shift becomes clearer in the national curriculum, largely shaped by the same committee.

When overviewing the whole curriculum of 1965, it can be seen that the content does not only weaken the position of Christianity, it strongly increases the autonomous perspective in general. As the *gymnasium* has older pupils than the *grundskola*, direct comparisons between their curricula are difficult to make. The autonomous ideology in LGY 65 document is, however, unavoidable, with different versions of the word *självständig* (autonomous) appearing 296 times in the document. The introduction establishes that the *gymnasium* shall give an individual and social education. However, the balance between individual and community is tilted towards the individualistic side.

⁹⁷¹ ” ”endast Buddhas lära kan ge fred åt världen, medan kristendomen misslyckats”. *Läroplan för gymnasiet: 1960 års gymnasieutredning, V; SOU 1963:43*, 187.

⁹⁷² *Ett nytt gymnasium: 1960 års gymnasieutredning, IV; SOU 1963:42*, 356-360.

It is stated that the main objective for *gymnasium* teaching is to “develop an *autonomous* and *critical* view”.⁹⁷³ The traditional authority of school and teachers is replaced by a view where decision power is moved towards the pupils. An organized cooperation is proposed, where the pupils take part in different conferences in school as well as in the formulation of school rules.⁹⁷⁴ The text repeatedly underlines that the pupils shall independently plan their activities and get familiar with the course content.⁹⁷⁵ It is, however, stated that this individualization is limited by the forms of study training provided at the *gymnasium*.⁹⁷⁶

Regarding the role of the Sacred, a remarkable shift of perspective has taken place. Large, obligatory gatherings can take place, but it is expressed that these cannot be shaped in a way that could contradict “certain pupils’ religious or life philosophy”.⁹⁷⁷ This formulation leaves room for interpretation but becomes clearer when the text goes on to underline that if these gatherings contain “e.g. ethical or religious matters, content of confessional nature must not appear”.⁹⁷⁸ This expression displays two features in this curriculum; firstly, that religious matters are not a regular choice to bring up and, secondly, that such content which was previously the central part of devotions is now prohibited. The text does state that gatherings of a religious nature can take place, but they must be voluntary. Also, the school as an authority cannot take part, but this must be “the pupils’ business”.⁹⁷⁹

Regarding religious education, its weakened role is shown by the replacement of the title of the subject, by placing it far down in the list in accordance with LGR 62 and also by devoting fewer pages to it than to other subjects in the humanistic field. Furthermore, the syllabus of knowledge of religion takes a distanced approach to the subject, by putting its focus on moral and religious problems instead than on faith itself, and also by focusing on modern man’s situation rather than putting religion at the centre. Another small, although notable signal in the text can be seen in the description that the teaching will deal not with God or Jesus directly but with “god-faith and christ-faith”, in lowercase letters. The only ones to be named

⁹⁷³ ”utveckla ett *självständigt* och *kritiskt* betraktelsesätt”, Läroplan för gymnasieskolan, (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1965), 13f.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid. 22.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid. 27, 34-36, 40, 42, 45, 53.

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid. 34.

⁹⁷⁷ ”vissa elevers religiösa uppfattning eller inställning i livsåskådningsfrågor”, ibid. 65.

⁹⁷⁸ ”t. ex. etiska och religiösa frågor skall inslag av kännelsekaraktär inte förekomma”, ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ ”elevernas ensak”, ibid.

in capital letters are Feuerbach, Marx and Freud, whose critical views are to be presented as explanations of religion.⁹⁸⁰

The description of the subject mirrors formulations in the compulsory school curricula, describing the aim to “provide knowledge about the content of different views, without authoritatively trying to influence in favour of a particular view.”⁹⁸¹ While earlier syllabuses studied religion in general and particularly Christianity from within, the perspective here is explicitly relativistic and external. The teaching is “*about* ethics, not *in* ethics”.⁹⁸² The distanced attitude in the text sometimes displays a directly critical view towards religion, for instance by portraying the central tenets of the Christian faith as a “complex of problems” that must not be omitted, recommending discussions about “criticism of the so-called proofs of god”, while also stating that the “positive efforts of naturalism (...) should be especially emphasized”.⁹⁸³ The strongest tendency is arguably found in the formulation that the teaching shall discuss the view from depth psychology to consider religion as an “obsessive-compulsive disorder with infantile features”.⁹⁸⁴

In sum, the government report and curriculum for the 1965 *gymnasium* displays a strong autonomous perspective and stress on the pupils’ independence. Moreover, these texts present a very distanced and sometimes directly antagonistic attitude towards religion in general, but most specifically against Christianity.

The criticism against this suggested curriculum became very strong in Swedish society. Mildly formulated dissent was expressed at the end of the government report by Centre Party politician Torsten Andersson and Folke Haldén, director at the Swedish Employers’ Association, who criticised the disadvantageous attitude towards religion in general and Christianity in particular.⁹⁸⁵ Far stronger, though, was the reaction from the general public, which launched the largest petition in Swedish history, with 2,134,513 signatures gathered for preserving the teaching of Christianity. The government agreed to increase the weekly lesson

⁹⁸⁰ ”gudstro och kristustro”, *ibid.* 197f, 202.

⁹⁸¹ ”meddela kunskap om olika åskådningars innehåll utan att auktoritativt söka påverka till förmån för en viss åskådning”, *ibid.*

⁹⁸² ”om moral, inte *i* moral”, *ibid.* 199.

⁹⁸³ ”Problematiken”, ”kritiken av de s.k. gudsbevisen”, ”Naturalismens positiva insatser (...) bör särskilt framhållas.” *Ibid.* 201-203.

⁹⁸⁴ ”en tvångsneuros med infantila drag”, *ibid.* 202.

⁹⁸⁵ *SOU 1963:42*, 923-926.

time for some study programmes, but the criticism of the value-based changes was ignored, and the curriculum was thus implemented.⁹⁸⁶

10.9 The ultra-progressive move

With the new *grundskola* finally realized, Stellan Arvidson lost his previous central role. Instead, he directed his interest towards the education of teachers, and took part in the government committee on teacher colleges, who published their report in 1965. The different chapters are unsigned, but the chapter about the goals in the new *grundskola* and gymnasium and the adjustment of the teacher colleges in this direction clearly bears the mark of Arvidson's reasoning.

The text states that the new school system implies a "dislocation of the goal" in school, where the shaping of personality has replaced the obtaining of knowledge, and where the new goal is to help the pupil to find oneself and its place in life, and turn the pupil into a "harmonic, active, autonomous, warm, open and free human being".⁹⁸⁷

The new secular perspective has still not been introduced in the *grundskola*, but the teacher college report still criticizes old teachers who still find it vital to give the pupils a Christian fostering, basing this critique on the newly adopted pedagogical goals of "self-activity and fostering into autonomy".⁹⁸⁸

Regarding the new individualized teaching, the text underlines that the new national curriculum "does not use (...) the word 'should', but the word 'shall' and 'must'".⁹⁸⁹ To follow these new demands, the teacher colleges must also undergo "a very strong dislocation of the goal", to shape both "will and ability for restructuring and revaluation" of the activities and goals in the new school system.⁹⁹⁰

Long-time Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Edenman considered the formation of the new school as mainly complete when he resigned in 1967.⁹⁹¹ His successor Olof Palme was of different opinion, and emerged as the new leading school visionary. Several of his speeches

⁹⁸⁶ Brohed, 197f.

⁹⁸⁷ "förskjutning av målsättningen", "harmonisk, aktiv, självständig, varm, öppen och fri människa"
Lärarytildningen: 1960 års lärarytildningssakkunniga IV:1; SOU 1965:29, 70f.

⁹⁸⁸ "självverksamhet och fostran till självständighet", *ibid.* 81.

⁹⁸⁹ "använder (...) inte ordet 'bör' utan ordet 'skall' och 'måste'", *ibid.* 92-94.

⁹⁹⁰ "en mycket stark förskjutning i målsättningen", "vilja och förmåga till omstrukturering och omvärdering", *ibid.* 100-102.

⁹⁹¹ Hadenius, "Jämlikhet och frihet" 214.

during the 1960s deal with the school reforms that had been accomplished so far and what still remained to be done. At the 1964 School Week, Palme presented the new school system in materialistic terms, describing the completed reforms as a combination of two aspects; investment and consumption, where the former may very well work together with the latter in creating a larger freedom of choice for the individual pupil. If this philosophy would be introduced throughout the education system, it would have very large effects also in the rest of society, including future work life.⁹⁹²

Before the Confederation of Professional Employees in 1967, Palme praised the success of the *grundskola*, stating that in order to change and democratize society, the school system is “without question one of our finest instruments”.⁹⁹³ The larger societal challenge of the time was, according to Palme, the “closed and authoritarian” society outside school.⁹⁹⁴ Still, if the school reformation process could go ahead as planned, it may have consequences “far more fundamental than its adherents could dream”.⁹⁹⁵

One area of social engineering that Palme mentions in this speech, but which had been rather invisible in the previous process, is the gender issue. Here, Palme imagines the school system to be an “excellent field” for accomplishing radical changes concerning choice of study and attitudes among women, changing “old traditions and prejudices”, which Palme described as remarkably tough to change.⁹⁹⁶

In the mid-1960s, several signs and state evaluations indicated that severe discipline problems characterized many schools with forms 7-9.⁹⁹⁷ When discussing these problems, Palme rejects the word discipline itself as bearing unpleasant connotations of barrack yards and authoritarian ideals. Instead, he proposes an atmosphere of consideration and tolerance, which does not rest upon obedience but on cooperation and community, built on “a mutual feeling of respect and understanding”.⁹⁹⁸ Here, Palme raises community as a value to achieve. However, such a value can only function if authority is removed.

⁹⁹² Olof Palme, "Anförande vid Skolveckan," Speech 2 May 1964, in *Politik är att vilja*, 73, 86.

⁹⁹³ “utan varje tvekan ett av våra förnämsta instrument” Palme, "Anförande vid TCO:s utbildningsdagar," in *Politik är att vilja*, 88.

⁹⁹⁴ ”slutna och auktoritära”, *ibid.*

⁹⁹⁵ ”långt mera genomgripande än dess tillskyndare kunde drömma om”, *ibid.*

⁹⁹⁶ ”ett utmärkt arbetsfält”, ”gamla traditioner och fördomar”, *ibid.* 92f.

⁹⁹⁷ Hadenius, "Jämlikhet och frihet" 216f.

⁹⁹⁸ ”en gemensam känsla av respekt och förståelse”. Palme, "Anförande vid Skolveckan," 98, 102.

This view becomes even clearer when Palme comments on the student revolts around the world; these arise among youths who are “sensitive and sensible” and therefore protest against the world adults have created.⁹⁹⁹ Therefore, the discipline problems in school can only be solved if a more individualized perspective and method of teaching is introduced, “radically breaking the old concept of class”. Here, Palme refers to the ongoing pedagogical projects which he describes as “very promising”.¹⁰⁰⁰

The idea of increasing pupil participation in educational decisions is developed further in Palme’s speech at a school conference in 1968. As the pupils are the *raison d’être* in school, they ought to be more able to shape the school environment. Palme presents examples of already existing committees of cooperation where pupils can present their views. However, he envisions a large expansion of this kind, describing a school where the pupils regularly cooperate in deciding the teaching, what textbooks and other equipment to use, and also plan organization matters such as timetables. Palme expects this process to be “progressively intensified” in coming years.¹⁰⁰¹

According to Karin Hadenius, the goals of the 1969 reforms were threefold – creating a completely assembled nine-year *grundskola*, an expanded participation of the pupils and strengthened ideological training in democracy and equality. Its curriculum LGR 69 also drastically reduced the education of theoretical subjects, giving way to practical subjects and freely chosen activities.¹⁰⁰²

When presenting the 1969 reform in parliament, Palme (now under his revised title, Minister of Education) described four major goals for the education policy – creating profitable socio-economic investment, increasing the opportunities for self-realization for the individual, stimulating a critical analysis of the world and the independent formation of opinion, and finally creating stronger equality and breaking down class barriers. The first of his goals can be argued to display a materialistic perspective, while the other three express an idealistic perspective on education, which Palme describes as a tool to increase the chances of individual self-expression. This is described as a prerequisite for democracy in order to

⁹⁹⁹ ”känsliga och medvetna”, *ibid.* 101.

¹⁰⁰⁰ ”radikalt bryter med det gamla klassbegreppet”, ”mycket lovande”, *ibid.* 104.

¹⁰⁰¹ ”successivt intensifieras” Olof Palme, ”Skolan i 70-talets Europa,” in *Politik är att vilja* (1968, 3 January), 118f. Formalized cooperation of this kind was proposed in government reports, but was later avoided, due to practical difficulties and collisions in labour legislation. Lars Erikson, ”Föräldrar och skola” (Doctoral thesis, Örebro University, 2004), 272-276.

¹⁰⁰² Hadenius, ”Jämlikhet och frihet” 216f, 225.

stimulate independent views and counter authoritarian aspects in society and, finally, as a way to increase equality and break down class-differences.¹⁰⁰³ Minister Palme also declares that the government is “ready for rather radical experiments” regarding the increase of pupil participation.¹⁰⁰⁴

The formulations above reflect how Olof Palme endorsed a stronger autonomous and anti-authoritarian view. Hadenius underlines that none of the goals explicitly state that the school shall provide knowledge, in contrast to the 1950 proposition, which stressed that a central task of the school is to give the pupils knowledge. In this way, she argues that Palme expressed a new view concerning the school’s main task.¹⁰⁰⁵ Palme’s co-worker and school historian Ulf Larsson describes that the exchanges of key words in policy documents, such as replacing *education* (fostran) with *development* (utveckling), was explicitly initiated by Palme.¹⁰⁰⁶

The same year as the new curriculum, the Alva Myrdal Report to the Social Democratic party was presented, portraying a radically autonomous view, paralleling the perspective in LGR 69. The general vision in the Alva Myrdal Report has been discussed above, and the family perspective will be covered below. In education policy, the report takes its starting point in the last decade’s school reforms, setting objectives for even bolder initiatives. There are traces of a community-leaning perspective, such as the need to train pupils to collaborate and work with group assignments.¹⁰⁰⁷ This perspective is, however, expressed under an umbrella of radical autonomy, displayed as hostility towards the Sacred and especially to authority.

Beginning with pre-school, the report displays a state-individualistic perspective, presenting two reasons for a large national drive for nursery schools – firstly, the need for women to have access to a full day of gainful employment and, secondly, the need for children to be under “trained leadership, unbiased and sincere”.¹⁰⁰⁸ Twice, the text mentions the nursery school as an important tool to make children more independent.¹⁰⁰⁹ Experiments should as soon as possible begin with compulsory pre-school programmes for 5- and 6-year-olds.¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰³ SC 1968:41, 66f. Here, (p 68) Palme dates the beginning of the new school system back to a 1944 book by Alva Myrdal, Stellan Arvidson and Hilding Fern. Palme does not provide the title, and no such book is found in the *Libris* database or in the SLMA, but his words underline Arvidson’s and Myrdal’s defining influence.

¹⁰⁰⁴ ”beredda till rätt radikala försök”, *ibid.* 72.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Hadenius, ”Jämlikhet och frihet” 227f.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Larsson, *Olof Palme och utbildningspolitiken*, 189.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Myrdal, *Towards Equality*, 56, 61.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 57.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 57f.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.* 58.

The message echoes the autonomous perspective that Alva Myrdal expressed almost 40 years earlier in *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*.

Regarding the 9-year *grundskola*, the report continues along the anti-authoritarian path. It is noted that hierarchies still exist in school, and these must above all be changed in the classroom.¹⁰¹¹ Individualism is promoted, albeit with the clarification that this must not mean that certain pupils can work through the curriculum faster than others, hereby widening gaps. Instead, the individualization should be aimed at a radical avoidance of authority. Grades “*must as far as possible be replaced by individual reporting*”.¹⁰¹² The same principle applies to higher studies, where people without formal eligibility should be accepted “*without being hampered by formal qualification requirements*.”¹⁰¹³ The understanding of the concept *equality* in the report is thus expressed in a literal sense, where differences in marks or qualifications among pupils and students are basically considered illegitimate.

With this envisioned new school, the teacher’s role “undergoes a fundamental change”, turning the focus of the instruction on the pupil’s interests and involvement, where the main task of the teacher is “not to present himself as a specialist in his subject but to inspire and guide the students and gradually broaden their sphere of interests.”¹⁰¹⁴ The concept of democracy dominates the pedagogy so that all instructions and lessons “*should be designed so that students may participate in the decisions about form and content*”.¹⁰¹⁵ This perspective must also be introduced in teacher training and in the long run end up in changing “*the whole of working life*”. It is underlined as being “*of utmost importance*” that the already initiated efforts with student influence should be “*energetically furthered*” by everyone within the educational system.¹⁰¹⁶

Concerning values, the programme underlines the need for objectivity. Some values are still promoted: criticizing injustice in society, demanding that no distinction between boys and girls is made in school activities, and eradicating traditional assumptions of male and female.¹⁰¹⁷ These wordings indicate that the report considers a critical stance towards authority, even in radical terms, to be neutral ground rather than an ideological steering.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid. 62.

¹⁰¹² Ibid. 61.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid. 68.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid. 61.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid. 62.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid. 63.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid. 63f.

Religion is scarcely mentioned in the Alva Myrdal Report, but under education, the topic comes up indirectly. When discussing textbooks, the authors claim that in religious education, these books “have been found to have a propagandistic bias” and a current debate among student organizations should be encouraged on this issue. Based on this, the report argues the need to “*increase governmental involvement in the production of educational materials.*”¹⁰¹⁸ These wordings indicate a Marxist perspective where the Sacred, or religion *per se*, is considered to be propaganda, which should be replaced with the government’s view, implicitly understood as a more critical view on religion. The Church is also mentioned, along with trade unions and women’s organizations, as a movement that should educate adults, under the demand of “*the systematic reduction of existing inequalities*”.¹⁰¹⁹ Here, too, the Church is designated as one of several actors to convey the expected political message. The authors also point out that children should be given a more independent role in becoming members of religious communities; a formulation that captures the report’s tendency – pro-autonomy that also coincides with a critical stance towards the Sacred.¹⁰²⁰

The radically autonomous perspective in both the Alva Myrdal Report and accompanying LGR 69 may be described as expressions of *ultra-progressivism*.

10.10 LGR 69 – autonomy in full bloom

The 1969 curriculum for the *grundskola*, LGR 69, is introduced only seven years after the last one, and this document takes a perspective distinctly more autonomous and also more antagonistic towards the Sacred in comparison to LGR 62. Its view of society and the human person also reflects the ideas presented in Olof Palme’s speeches and writings of the time.

The text begins by explaining that the individual pupil is at the centre of school activities. The concept from 1962 of developing the pupil into a “free, independent and harmonic human” is repeated. Still, the concept of community appears repeatedly in the curriculum, for instance by continuing the expression above by arguing that the pupil is also a member of different circles of a both national and international community and must learn how to live and function in these communities.¹⁰²¹ It is also stated that the results in school depend on

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid. 65.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid. 65f.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid. 85.

¹⁰²¹ Läroplan för grundskolan, (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1969), 10.

continuous cooperation between people, where community and the striving for good cooperation is a condition for success.

However, the context makes it clear that this is an ideologized view on community, where independence and cooperation rest under the ideological umbrella of equality, and where the pupil understands their independence as combined with international solidarity.¹⁰²² This partly reflects the internationalized kind of state individualism displayed earlier, e.g. by Engberg and Hallén. The LGR 69 description of community also implies a new kind of relationship between teacher and pupil, stating that the adults in school must remember not to allow cooperation to become a monologue but build cooperation with “equal conditions for all”.¹⁰²³

Consequently, the curriculum argues repeatedly for reduced teacher authority, while the pupils receive a strongly increased influence. The school should work according to principles that the pupils accept and rules that they participate in shaping.¹⁰²⁴ In the democratic school, the pupils ought to have influence also when choosing educational materials and pedagogy. This method of decision-making should increasingly be used “in all situations, where this is possible”.¹⁰²⁵

Regarding the family as a unit of community, the curriculum repeats the wording from 1962 that the home has the main responsibility of the upbringing of the children and states that the family is usually the first group formation wherein the child belongs.¹⁰²⁶ However, it also describes the view of relations within the family as having become less traditional and more autonomous. The task of the school is described as to “debate and question current circumstances” in family norms.¹⁰²⁷ The text takes a critical attitude against authority in the form of traditions and norms, stating that children have, from an early age, been “fenced off” into traditional gender roles. Consequently, the school needs to “actively inform on the real circumstances” and work to realize a “more unbiased” and “a nuanced picture of reality” concerning gender roles.¹⁰²⁸ The text presents a vision of social engineering, stating that the school should “presuppose that men and women will have the same role in the future”, and shall work for equality between sexes “in the family, in work life and in the rest of

¹⁰²² Ibid. 14f.

¹⁰²³ ”lika villkor för alla”, ibid. 26.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid. 13.

¹⁰²⁵ ”i alla lägen där så är möjligt”, ibid. 27.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid. 14, 20.

¹⁰²⁷ ”debattera och ifrågasätta rådande förhållanden”, ibid. 14.

¹⁰²⁸ ”avskärmade”, ”aktivt informera om faktiska förhållanden”, ”mer fördomsfritt”, ”en nyanserad bild av verkligheten”, ibid. 37f.

society”.¹⁰²⁹ It goes on to state that children are more preconditioned to understand the importance of life in home and society if this is founded on a cooperation between independent, equal people. In contact with the parents, the school ought to make them conscious of gender roles and emphasize that the young generation has greater opportunities to realize gender equality.¹⁰³⁰

Thus, even though LGR 69 repeats the vision of community, it is described under an autonomous and ultra-progressive umbrella, summarized in the description of the very purpose of the school system: “the final end, the development of the individual into an independent person”¹⁰³¹

This end explains the new perspective, where the authority of the teacher is replaced by the demand to individualize the teaching and promote the autonomy of the pupil. In some ways, this perspective creates dilemmas. Neutrality is for instance proclaimed as the norm – “unless the goals and guidelines in the syllabus, established in democratic order, ordain that certain values are to be stressed and promoted”.¹⁰³² One such example is that the teacher on one hand must not try to influence the pupils to a certain view, but on the other hand, the school must promote equality between sexes and a “feeling of international co-responsibility” but avoid “one-sided nationalistic, Western perspectives”.¹⁰³³ This indicates that a kind of value-based authority is endorsed in school, as long as it is presented under an authority-critical view, e.g. through the ambition to distance itself from the perspective of traditional Western culture.

The removal of the authority of the teacher’s knowledge and experience also implies practical consequences: the curriculum explicitly underlines that there is a risk of the teaching being too much characterized by the adult generation. When the pupils react negatively against society, these reactions are to be met by understanding and respect. Such reactions should form the basis for a constructive discussion, and it is stated that the basis for learning shall be the needs, interests and problems of the pupil.¹⁰³⁴ Consequently, when the text discusses how to deal with pupils who cannot adjust in school, the responsibility for this is mainly laid on the

¹⁰²⁹ ”utgå från att män och kvinnor kommer att ha samma roll i framtiden”, ”i familjen, på arbetsmarknaden och inom samhällslivet i övrigt”, *ibid.* 47, 50.

¹⁰³⁰ *Ibid.* 47f, 50.

¹⁰³¹ ”slutmålet, individens utveckling till en självständig personlighet”, *ibid.* 28.

¹⁰³² ”såvida inte läroplanens i demokratisk ordning fastställda mål och riktlinjer direkt anger, att vissa värderingar skall framhållas och främjas”, *ibid.* 41.

¹⁰³³ ”känsla av internationellt medansvar”, ”ensidiga nationella och västeuropeiska perspektiv”, *ibid.* 42, 48.

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.* 41f

teacher being unable to captivate the pupils or having “too high demands regarding order or achievement, or in other ways creating tensions, e.g. through his behaviour or attitude.”¹⁰³⁵

It is underlined that at the end of the day, it is not the teacher who teaches the pupil, but the pupil, on their own or in cooperation with peers, who acquires knowledge and abilities. It is also mentioned that the pupil ought to meet as few obstacles as possible in their school development. In such a school, the text argues that “traditional *home tasks*” – the word *läxor* (homework) does not appear anywhere in the curriculum – get a subordinate role, and the headmaster is given the responsibility to actualize that home tasks are to the greatest possible extent made voluntary for the pupils so that they instead can devote time outside school to “recreation”.¹⁰³⁶

In comparison with LGR 62, this strong emphasis on the pupil’s autonomy from authorities of different kinds is also mirrored in its increased distance towards the Sacred. Morning assemblies are given a stronger position than in LGR 62. However, the descriptions make it clear that these are understood as normally having a secular nature. Examples suggested for the content of these assemblies are a wide register of cultural expressions, life, friends and society. They shall not contain any “intrusive or propagandistic teaching” but must be made objective and contribute to deepen the values presented in the curriculum. As a final example of possible content, the text states that if religious devotion is included in the morning assemblies, it shall be conducted “in an atmosphere of freedom and broad-mindedness”. This formulation confirms the general anti-authoritarian view in the curriculum, especially in combination with the suggestion that each school should set up a committee to plan the morning assemblies, where pupils ought to be represented along with the teachers.¹⁰³⁷

Among the syllabuses for the different school subjects, the teaching of Christianity is removed. In comparison with LGY65, the role of the new subject “knowledge of religion” is even more reduced, now sorted under the new heading “Subjects of orientation” (Orienteringsämnen). The description of knowledge of religion lies close to LGR 62, but the non-religious views of life are raised to the same level as the religious.¹⁰³⁸ The text avoids the directly anti-religious bias in LGY 65 but underlines that this subject to a high degree must

¹⁰³⁵ ”för stora krav i fråga om ordning eller prestationer eller genom att han på annat sätt, t ex genom sitt uppträdande eller sin inställning till eleverna, framkallat spänningar”, *ibid.* 90f.

¹⁰³⁶ ”traditionella hemuppgifter”, ”rekreation”, *ibid.* 58, 70f

¹⁰³⁷ ” i en atmosfär av frihet och vidsynhet”, *ibid.* 67f.

¹⁰³⁸ *Ibid.* 175.

follow the general principles of “individual activity, independent thought, a self-critical view and a personal standpoint”.¹⁰³⁹

Summary

The change of perspective in the sphere of education during the research period is indeed large. The teaching plan that applied when Värner Rydén was appointed the first Social Democratic Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs was strongly rooted in the centrality of the Sacred, confessional in its nature and closely connected to the Lutheran State Church. The teaching plan of 1919 did, however, open a new direction, removing the dogmatical teaching of Christianity and replacing this with a focus on Jesus’s ethical teaching.

During Arthur Engberg’s ministership, only small measures were taken in education policy. The development during the 1940s displayed clear differences in perspectives, following party lines. The 1940 School Investigation, led by Conservative leader Gösta Bagge represented a positive view towards authority, tradition and Christianity. The 1946 Social Democrat-led School Commission, with Stellan Arvidson as party-associated secretary, instead put forward an autonomous perspective, which in general discussions was distanced towards the Sacred, but in final considerations decided to maintain a friendlier relation. New Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Commission chairman Josef Weijne and one other Social Democrat cast the decisive votes that kept the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions for the next few decades. Apart from this decision, Alva Myrdal and Stellan Arvidson made a defining impact as the religion-critical and autonomous voices in the Commission, and the central formulations of an objective and non-authoritarian teaching would become central in the continued opinion-making during the coming years.

After the two large reports from the 1940s, efforts were made to push the development. Both the Dissenter Act Committee and Stellan Arvidson made opposing efforts to skew the content of the School Commission’s report in the desired direction. The Dissenter Act Committee displayed a welcoming attitude towards authority and the Sacred and made deliberate efforts to downplay the perspective from the 1946 Commission. Stellan Arvidson, on the other hand, actively altered the wordings and intentions of the Commission several times and gave a larger emphasis to the losing minority than the final decision actually gave at hand. He also

¹⁰³⁹ ”självverksamhet, självständigt tänkande, självkritiskt betraktelsesätt och personligt ställningstagande”, *ibid.* 177.

continually pushed the agenda in a more non-confessional direction in his political work and in book presentations of the state school processes.

The 1950 parliament decision to take steps towards a new comprehensive school found more of its motivations from the 1946 School Commission than from the 1940 Investigation. However, leading Social Democrats, especially Josef Weijne, made efforts to distance themselves from the Commission's most autonomous and Christianity-critical viewpoints.

The teaching plan of 1955 and first curriculum of the new *grundskola* in 1962 only followed Alva Myrdal's autonomous views to a limited extent. Arguably, the 1955 teaching plan did introduce a more autonomous perspective, but generally guarded the position of the Sacred as before. When Olof Palme entered the government committees and became Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs – later transformed into Minister of Education – he endorsed an even stronger autonomous perspective. This resulted in a critical perspective against both religion and authority in curriculum and syllabuses for the new *gymnasium* in 1965. In accordance with the Alva Myrdal Report to the Social Democratic party, an ultra-progressive view was included in the new curriculum for the *grundskola*, LGR 69. This combination of autonomous and secular foundations for the new schools is also underlined in the government report about the ideological direction within the new teacher colleges.

A summary of the value-based motives in LGR 69 is a rather positive attitude towards community, although expressed under a strongly autonomous umbrella. It also displays a very strong antipathy towards authority in different forms, an even more distanced approach towards the Sacred, compared to LGR 62.

When comparing the curricula from the entire century all the way back to the 1900 teaching plan, the autonomy of the pupil is lifted higher and higher, inversely connected to an increasingly secular, negative view of authority and the Sacred. Both these processes are considerably speeded up during the 1960s, although with the autonomous perspective momentarily held back in LGR 62.

The individual perspective is more or less invisible in the beginning of the century, where a view of a community under a Christian and authority-based education is presented. Over time, a new perspective is introduced, although sometimes in collective-related wordings. From the 1946 School Commission and onwards, community-oriented formulations, such as group work or international solidarity, are to an increasing extent presented, although under an

authority-critical and autonomous umbrella. This also explains how curricula can contain seemingly colliding views, where community-oriented values mainly take the form of sub-values, as the Swedish school system adopts a strongly autonomous ideology, with the final end formulated to be “the development of the individual into an independent person”.

The tendency towards a more autonomous perspective is also confirmed by a statistical count of community-relating versus individual-oriented words in the curricula during the research period. In 1900, no individual-centred words at all appear. In 1919, the occurrence of community still outnumbers the individual by 42 to 1. In 1955, however, words relating to the individual occur almost as many times as those relating to community. In the three curricula from the 1960s, the individualistic perspective has taken over, with the number of words relating to the individual clearly outnumbering the number of words relating to community.

Such a word count points in the same direction as the qualitative textual analysis: the trend in central Swedish school documents from 1900 to 1969 moves from a focus on community, authority and the Sacred to a new ideal built on autonomy.¹⁰⁴⁰ There is no doubt that the Swedish school system took a secular turn during the research period. A secular-directed change regarding both religious content and religious conditions within the public school system was also a deliberate motive for central actors, most notably Stellan Arvidson.

Autonomy-endorsing values can be argued to have been almost invisible at the beginning of Social Democratic hegemony, and then slowly but steadily rising with a confronting autonomy, from Arvidson typically in opposition to the Sacred and from Alva Myrdal as an affirming autonomy. The latter view would eventually in the late 1960s completely dominate the political documents, propelling the education sphere in Sweden into ultra-progressivism.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Number of words in national curricula beginning with *gemens* (such as *gemensam* and *gemenskap*) and words beginning with *individ*:

	Gemens*	Individ*
1900	7	0
1919	210	5
1955	103	84
1962	205	359
1965	206	219
1969	165	236

11. Family policy

11.1 The introductory phase

The politically ambiguous term *family policy* (familjepolitik) was not in use during the whole research period, but was coined during the 1950s. In the early 1900s, the common term was *maternity policy* (moderskapspolitik), from the 1930s *population policy* (befolkningspolitik).¹⁰⁴¹ These shifts also mirror the writings of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal and display the large impact they – particularly Alva – had during this period.

Family policy during the first decades of Social Democratic hegemony focused to a large extent on the issue of nativity and the urgency for Swedish women to have more children. The Myrdals' *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* had a strong long-term influence and served as the starting signal for the Swedish Population Commission 1935-1938, where the Myrdals' ideas could be used in political reform.¹⁰⁴² Only Gunnar was, however, included in the Commission, to Alva's displeasure.¹⁰⁴³ Therefore, her impact on the Commission reports must be considered merely indirect.

Regarding the role of the state in family matters, there was a divergence between the Myrdals' arguments for the state needs for increased childbirths and the Social Democratic Women's Association, who opposed this, arguing that this ought to be a matter for families and individuals, not for society.¹⁰⁴⁴ All major parties were represented in the Commission, and the Conservatives argued for the need to include Christian ethics in its work. Therefore, the most radical claims in the *Kris* book were not put into practice in the Commission reports.¹⁰⁴⁵

During the period, a lot of the family-political debate would revolve around taxation. The Population Commission began by underlining that suggestions to remove joint taxation must

¹⁰⁴¹ Ann-Sofie Ohlander, "Det osynliga barnet? Kampen om den socialdemokratiska familjepolitiken," in *Socialdemokratins samhälle*, 172.

¹⁰⁴² A summary of the Commission's work in Myrdal, *Nation and Family*, 157-174.

¹⁰⁴³ Yvonne Hirdman, *Att lägga livet tillrätta: Studier i svensk folkhemspolitik* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2000), 128.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ohlander, "Det osynliga barnet? Kampen om den socialdemokratiska familjepolitiken," 182.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Hirdman, *Att lägga livet tillrätta*, 129-147. Political scientist Bo Rothstein is, however, strongly critical against Hirdman's view that Alva Myrdal made a significant impact on the Commission reports. On the contrary, he argues, Minister of Social Affairs Gustav Möller and the rest of government and parliament rejected the Myrdals' radical ideas, and based the reports and legislation on a more traditional perspective. Bo Rothstein, *Vad bör staten göra? Om välfärdsstatens moraliska och politiska logik* (Stockholm: SNS förlag, 2010 (3rd edition)), 217-219.

be strongly avoided and other factors should be considered to ensure marriage does not become financially disadvantageous.¹⁰⁴⁶

The principle of joint taxation for married couples was considered inevitable also in a following government report of 1943.¹⁰⁴⁷ In 1946, another report was commissioned about taxation of married couples. The government directive was open, not arguing for any change, and the report also argued for keeping the joint taxation.¹⁰⁴⁸

In 1954, Ulla Lindström, newly appointed Social Democratic Minister of Family and Consumption launched a family-political committee, not directed towards any changed values. Rather, the Minister gave instructions to follow the view later presented in Myrdal/Klein's *Women's Two Roles*, intended to find ways to facilitate part-time labour for women who wish to combine family care and work life.¹⁰⁴⁹ This government report also maintained a community-based perspective, treating the family as a unit, basing their suggestions for assisting families on the view of the husband as the natural provider for wife and family.¹⁰⁵⁰

The larger family-political debate during this period did, however, reveal influences from the Myrdals. The decisions from the Population Commission opened the way in areas beside economic matters, e.g. through expanded sexual education in school, increased access to contraceptives and abortions, plus partly opening the labour market for women, thus increasing their independence.¹⁰⁵¹ More generally, Alva Myrdal described elsewhere how the underlying autonomous ideology was now for the first time included in state reports, and the need for more radical reforms in the future was underlined.¹⁰⁵² However, the really radical changes had to wait till around 1970.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Betänkande angående familjebeskattningen: Avgivet av befolkningskommissionen; SOU 1936:13, 15f.*

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 134.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Sambeskattningssakkunniga: Betänkande med förslag till ändrade bestämmelser rörande beskattning av äkta makar; 1949:47, 15f, 229f.*

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Samhället och barnfamiljerna: Betänkande av 1954 års familjeutredning; SOU 1955:29, 11.*

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 89-99. At this time, Ulla Lindström sparked a debate for taking an authority-critical stance when she welcomed Queen Elizabeth II and refused to curtsy in front of the Queen. Harrison, *Jag har ingen vilja till makt*, 437f.

¹⁰⁵¹ Myrdal, *Nation and Family*, 178-181, 189-192, 206-209, 410-414.

¹⁰⁵² *Ibid.* 158, 163, 167, 174.

11.2 The early 1960s – the formation phase

In 1959, a new government report was published on taxation for married couples. The directive from Minister of Finance Gunnar Sträng did not contain any demands to reform the view on marriage as an economic unit, but rather intended to remove unjustified differences in taxation between married and unmarried citizens. The report also made its recommendations in the same direction.¹⁰⁵³

At the 1960 congress, when the Social Democratic programme revision embraced the new autonomous focus, a study group on women's affairs was also appointed, later resulting in the report *Kvinnans jämlikhet: Ett framtidsprogram* (Woman's Equality: A Programme for the Future, 1964). Honorary chairman of the group was Prime Minister Erlander, but the acting chairman and leading force was Inga Thorsson, president of the Social Democratic Women's Association. The group's secretary was Maj-Britt Sandlund, later an influential actor in the ultra-progressive move.¹⁰⁵⁴

Before this report was published, the Women's Association published a few pamphlets, gathered in the single booklet *Detta vill vi* (This Is What We Want). These texts lift the need to create possibilities to function as a family in an ever changing time. The general view of this booklet may still be described as community-centred. Its deliberate intention is to create the best possible circumstances for "the family as a unit", starting out from the position that the family is "the natural and indispensable foundation" of society.¹⁰⁵⁵

The booklet presents five family-political goals. The last one is directed at improving conditions for single parents, while the first four propose better conditions for the united family. The text argues, in accordance with the 1960 programme, for a more child-friendly society, for instance by improving education in parenthood. The booklet also provides a guide on consumer issues, explicitly expressing a traditional separation of household duties, where several readers are understood to be housewives with the duty of everyday shopping.¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁵³ *Familjebeskattningen: Förslag avgivet av 1957 års sambeskattningsrevision; SOU 1959:13*, 21-23, 182f.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Anja Hirdman, ed., *Revolution på svenska: Ett vittnesseminarium om jämställdhetens internationalisering, politisering och expansion 1972-1976* (Samtidshistoriska institutet, Södertörn University), 25, *Kvinnans jämlikhet: Ett framtidsprogram* 5f.

¹⁰⁵⁵ "familjen som enhet", "den naturliga och outhärliga grunden", *Detta vill vi*, (Sveriges socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbund, 1962), 15.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 15, 19f, 25-28.

There is, however, a last – unsigned – chapter in this booklet, which opens another perspective. Quoting passages from the 1960 programme, the text argues that prejudices have restricted the freedom of the individual, especially women. It argues for better financial support for those who take care of children, perhaps some kind of “care salary” – a debate that will grow during the coming years.¹⁰⁵⁷ It also reveals the beginnings of an autonomous view, stating that young women of today must shape their future “untied by the values and views of older generations” and also that all parts of society must be taught that the choice of occupation “must in the future not occur according to gender”.¹⁰⁵⁸ Thus, this booklet can be argued to maintain traditional, community-oriented values in most of its content, although in the last chapter leaning over to a more autonomous philosophy.

The community-based perspective would, however, remain for a few more years. At the 1964 party congress, Ulla Lindström stated that an introduction of some kind of care allowance might have work-life effects that some people might disapprove of. Still, society ought to contribute to families “without any secondary aim of pushing the work-force in or out of homes.”¹⁰⁵⁹

The same year, the report *Woman's Equality* was published by the group appointed at the 1960 congress. It argues that the rise of Social Democracy – not the liberal or general women's rights movement – was the last century's most important force for women's rights.¹⁰⁶⁰ The general perspective in this report is materialistic rather than idealistic, and the main demand is to lift women to equality in opportunities.¹⁰⁶¹ Regarding the home situation, the report limits itself to demanding more rational solutions in housekeeping. A more autonomous direction is found in the prediction that the future will require a new family policy enabling a “greater financial autonomy and security for women”, but these visions are carefully presented as predictions, not as demands.¹⁰⁶²

The text further mentions the financial benefits the government has introduced to help families and describes the need for a future care allowance given to parents taking care of

¹⁰⁵⁷ ”vårdarlön”, ibid. 53, 56.

¹⁰⁵⁸ ”obunden av äldre generationers värderingar och föreställningar”, ”ej i framtiden får ske efter könstillhörigheten”, ibid. 60, 58.

¹⁰⁵⁹ ”utan något bisyfte att dirigera arbetskraften in i eller ut ur hemmen”, Quoted in Hinnfors, *Familjepolitik: Samhällsförändringar och partistrategier*, 111.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Kvinnans jämlikhet: Ett framtidsprogram* 15.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid. 27f, 60.

¹⁰⁶² ”större ekonomisk självständighet och trygghet för kvinnorna”, ibid. 99, 109-113.

their small children.¹⁰⁶³ The report also brings up the issue of taxation, lifting arguments both for and against individual taxation. It concludes that such a reform would have unduly negative effects and that a larger review of the tax system is necessary. When discussing marriage legislation, the report proposes improving the financial security within marriage and better juridical assistance in the case of divorces, but does not propose any new autonomous view on relations or the institution of marriage.¹⁰⁶⁴

1964 also saw an extensive government report on tax reforms. The content as well as the directive from Minister Sträng are slightly ambiguous. Sträng does not present any direct opinion on the community-autonomy scale but argues that some problems, especially joint taxation, ought to be resolved in family taxation.¹⁰⁶⁵ The committee report does provide large room for critical economical and value-based comments on the joint taxation, pointing towards autonomous values. Nevertheless, the committee suggests keeping the present model, based on the traditional assumption of “an economic community and an equal mutual standard for spouses”¹⁰⁶⁶

In summary, this period displays a general and traditional Social Democratic line of thought, with its focus on financial security and equal opportunities for work. The view of the family is community-based rather than independence-directed. However, autonomous perspectives were occasionally beginning to shine through, and more radical examples were taking shape elsewhere.

11.3 Grupp 222

Family policy is one of the spheres in this project where Social Democratic and liberal ideologies would find connections. This view was also raised early on, not least by Per Albin Hansson. It was also explicitly expressed at the first meeting of the programme commission for the 1944 revision, where programme chairman Ernst Wigforss described it as possible that the future for the party would lay in “that it is and presents itself as a synthesis of socialism and liberalism”.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid. 114-124.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid. 133-139.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Nytt skattesystem: Förslag avgivet av allmänna skatteberedningen; SOU 1964:25*, 17.

¹⁰⁶⁶ ”en ekonomisk gemenskap och en likvärdig inbördes standard för makarna”, *ibid.* 270-288. Quote on 271.

¹⁰⁶⁷ ”Det är mycket möjligt att den svenska socialdemokratins framtid ligger i att den är och ger sig ut för att vara en syntes av socialism och liberalism.” Programme commission meeting 11 January 1942, SLMA 1889/F/9/2, 5.

In the literature, the typical example of this cross-party alliance is the loosely formed grouping called *Grupp 222*, described to consist of leading Social Democrats and Liberals who shaped a radical individualism that to a large extent would become realized as practical policy in the near future.¹⁰⁶⁸ The central question in this project is whether any such ideological forces can be traced in the source material and, if so, which party representatives appeared to be the leading proponents of such factors.

In February 1963, a number of influential people from different areas in society, including Olof Palme and his wife Lisbet, were invited to dinner at the home of Annika Baude, secretary at the study organization SNS, to discuss Myrdal/Klein's *Women's Two Roles*, a more recent SNS anthology and how a more egalitarian agenda could be introduced in society. The group agreed that the removal of co-taxation would be most important.¹⁰⁶⁹ The group did not regather until a year later, in February 1964, at Baude's home, 222 Alviksvägen, Stockholm, which also inspired their moniker, *Grupp 222*.

The group consisted of Social Democrats, Liberals, as well as other participants. Indeed, the few preserved documents in the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive reveal that the non-party-affiliated participants were in majority. Among those present in this loose group were future Social Democratic ministers Anita Gradin and Gertrud Sigurdson; Maj-Britt Sandlund, future leader of the Social Democratic Women's Association; Liberals such as Gabriel Romanus and Olle Wästberg and several others from different areas in society. The group did not form an organization, and only one protocol plus statutes from 1964 have been found as archived primary sources. The statutes state that the group should work to change traditional gender roles and that the individual should have equal opportunities in society, independent of his or her sex. Olof Palme's name is not mentioned again in the documents, but Lisbet Palme is named as connected to the group.¹⁰⁷⁰

Due to the group's informal character, its actual impact cannot easily be quantified. In secondary sources, Gabriel Romanus explains later that the Social Democrats, being in government, had a larger opportunity to introduce the group's ideas in practical policy. Personally, he brought into his political work the group's ideas about a more relaxed marriage

¹⁰⁶⁸ Berggren and Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?* 279.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Annika Baude, "Inledning," in *Visionen om jämställdhet*, ed. Annika Baude (Stockholm: SNS Förlag 1992), 9-12.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Undated document Grupp 222, SLMA, Annika Baude's archive, (2595/4/1); Medlemmar i GRUPPEN (undated), *ibid*; Program (undated), *ibid*.

legislation with no required formal ceremony but later admits that this idea was “not particularly well-conceived”.¹⁰⁷¹ Anita Gradin states that the family-political ideas of the group were included in the Social Democratic reshaping of family policy in the 1970s.¹⁰⁷² Journalist Monica Boëthius goes further and describes *Grupp 222* as an exceedingly efficient lobby group: as Sweden is not a particularly large nation, and practically all formal and informal decision-makers in leading media and societal institutions were represented in the group, the issues discussed in the group would appear all over society during the following weeks.¹⁰⁷³

The people in *Grupp 222* can thus be understood as having had a large impact on the general debate and also, to some extent, on the political process regarding family and equality. Their dominating idea of introducing individual taxation would also soon become reality.

According to the few preserved documents and later descriptions by its members, the ideas of the group coincided well with ideas already presented by Alva Myrdal. Any influence from the Liberals came from relatively few and not particularly influential actors, and they can thus be regarded as having had limited impact compared to the Social Democratic participants.

11.4 Socialism marrying ultra-progressivism

The radically autonomous family-political step within Social Democracy came formally in the 1975 programme. However, the development between the 1960 and 1975 programme revisions reveals how the new program formulations were not the catalyst of a new political view. Rather, they are consequences of steps already taken.

Up till the mid-1960s, leading voices among both Social Democrats and Liberals argued for more community-oriented solutions, enabling families to plan their joint life. Both Myrdal/Klein's *Women's Two Roles* and the 1964 report *Woman's Equality* argued for the possibility for women to work part-time, in order to pay the necessary attention to the needs of their children. The party also discussed introducing benefits to help parents who took care of their own children, without using public childcare.¹⁰⁷⁴

¹⁰⁷¹ "inte särskilt genomtänkt", Gabriel Romanus, "Ett nätverk för jämställdhet," in *Visionen om jämställdhet*, ed. Annika Baude (Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 1992), 27, 30.

¹⁰⁷² Ranveig Jacobson, "Intervju med Anita Gradin och Gertrud Sigurdson," *ibid.* 42.

¹⁰⁷³ Monica Boëthius, "När kvinnofrågor blev samhällsfrågor," *ibid.* 122.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Myrdal and Klein, *Women's two roles*, 56, *Kvinnans jämlikhet: Ett framtidsprogram* 150; Gabriel Romanus in Hirdman, *Revolution på svenska*, 39.

In 1964, a government report on revised marriage legislation was presented. The justification provided for its enactment was the increasing number of divorces, and the text keeps a community-oriented focus, arguing for different measures to “counteract premature dissolution of marriages, when conditions may exist for continued cohabitation”.¹⁰⁷⁵

However, the following year, the government launched another family-political committee, which opened the way for a new, autonomous perspective. A striking value-related positioning in Family Minister Ulla Lindström’s directive is a materialistic perspective, mirroring Olof Palme’s, arguing that societal reforms directed at children are “the most productive among investments”.¹⁰⁷⁶ This committee resulted in several government reports. A 1967 report on child benefits refers to ongoing structural changes in family relations and discusses the introduction of a care allowance, although without providing a distinct proposal in either Ulla Lindström’s directive or in the committee’s suggestions.¹⁰⁷⁷ Instead, the text points forward to a future government report presenting concrete solutions on the issue. However, such a report never materializes. The text declares that the present situation threatens parents’ freedom of choice on two fronts – it threatens those who wish to remain at home but are forced out, and vice versa. It is, however, evident from the argumentation that a construction with a care allowance would treat family members more as a community than as independent individuals.¹⁰⁷⁸

In the 1968 election, left-wing radicalism struck back at the Swedish Communist Party, giving the Social Democrats over 50% of the votes – an unrepeated post-war success. David Popenoe argues that this victory gave the party the courage to go “full speed ahead” with the family reform programme, which in just a few years moved Swedish families “farther from the traditional nuclear family of earlier decades than had the family in any other society in the world”.¹⁰⁷⁹ The ideological vision behind these plans was, according to Hirdman, to change the pattern of relations between the sexes on a “revolutionary, almost utopian level” and “create a new human being, free from their gender role”.¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁵ ”motverka förhastad upplösning av äktenskap, när förutsättningar kanske finns för fortsatt sammanlevnad”, *Äktenskapsrätt: Förslag av familjerättskommittén. II: Motiv; SOU 1964:35*, 28.

¹⁰⁷⁶ “är de mest produktiva bland investeringar”, *Barnbidrag och familjetillägg: Familjepolitiska kommittén; SOU 1967:52*, 7.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid. 8, 139-143.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid. 141f.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest*, 146, 160.

¹⁰⁸⁰ “ett revolutionärt, närmast utopiskt plan”, ”att skapa en ny människa, fri från sin könsroll”, Hirdman, *Vad bör göras? Jämställdhet och politik under femtio år*, 38.

In 1967, a Social Democratic equality group was formed, with Alva Myrdal as chairman. Parts of their report are analysed above. In family policy, it presents a radically autonomous perspective, here labelled *ultra-progressive*. As a central purpose for increasing the equality between sexes, the report mentions that women should become “more independent financially” and that neither men nor women would be forced into “a pre-determined role”.¹⁰⁸¹ Thus, the right to paid parental leave should for instance be shared between the parents.¹⁰⁸²

The institution of marriage is considerably weakened in the Alva Myrdal report; the wedding ceremony is described as a matter of personal choice. The explicit goal is to “make the marriage formalities freer” under the reiterated idea that every adult individual should be able to support himself or herself and that the “*financial independence of marriage partners*” should “*serve as the basis for future legislation*”.¹⁰⁸³ The report specifically suggests that the tax system should not reward any particular form of cohabitation and states more generally that “[a]dults should be treated in the same way by society whether they live alone or in some form of joint living arrangement.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Thus, adoption for unmarried couples should also be introduced.¹⁰⁸⁵

The report suggests that children should get “*a more active and independent role*”, e.g. by allowing the children, rather than the parents, to report absence from school.¹⁰⁸⁶ It also suggests increasing a community-reducing reform for elderly parents, by abolishing the heir’s portion – the right for children to receive at least half of the inheritance from a parent.¹⁰⁸⁷

Important in this radically autonomous process was also a 1972 pamphlet by the Social Democratic Women’s Association, *Familjen i framtiden – en socialistisk familjepolitik* (The Family in the Future: A Socialist Family Policy). This pamphlet would have a strong impact in shaping the direction of the party. In the congress debate 1975, Lisa Mattson, chairman of the Women’s Association, who also wrote the foreword to the pamphlet, described its

¹⁰⁸¹ Myrdal, *Towards Equality*, 81.

¹⁰⁸² Ibid. 87.

¹⁰⁸³ Ibid. 82-84.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid. 38, 82.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ibid. 85.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ibid. 85.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid. 86.

success, stating that a large part of its suggestions had already been implemented and also accepted by other parties.¹⁰⁸⁸

The introduction repeats the central autonomous-leaning passage from the 1960 programme, with its aim to free citizens from dependence on every kind of power group beyond their control. Based on this passage, the text describes four goals:

- 1) All adults shall be given the chance to develop autonomously according to their interests and wishes in solidarity with others.
- 2) All adults shall be financially independent from their relatives.
- 3) Society shall adopt a neutral stance on people's choice of cohabitation form.
- 4) The child's social, intellectual and cultural development shall be independent of the parents' financial situation.¹⁰⁸⁹

The authors argue against a liberal version of freedom, explicitly stating their family view as resting on a socialist collective-oriented version of independence, clearly indicating a state-individualistic perspective, where the collective overshadows the individual. The text suggests that the primary focus of party policy must be to attack class gaps, and that the individual's right to develop independently must be subordinate to the decisions made by "society as a collective".¹⁰⁹⁰ The pamphlet argues that it is impossible to achieve change simply by influencing people's attitudes or just sitting at home waiting for the revolution to succeed. Instead, the author propose "attacking the foundation and, through gradual reforms, reshaping the power relations in society".¹⁰⁹¹

Parallel to the pamphlet's ultra-progressive perspective, it also displays an authority-critical view of the workplace, which according to the text is characterized by dictatorship and authoritarian employers.¹⁰⁹² In addition, it states that in a modernized home, people must manage their own household tasks, such as cleaning, washing-up, et cetera, and the authors find the idea of hiring help from what they call "servants" as directly "repulsive".¹⁰⁹³

The authors also underline the need to change women's traditional role. Repeating the view that changing attitudes is not enough, they call for greater societal control. This should be

¹⁰⁸⁸ Mattson, Lisa *Congress protocol 1975*, 770.

¹⁰⁸⁹ "Alla vuxna människor skall ges möjlighet att självständigt utvecklas i enlighet med sina intressen och önskemål i solidaritet med andra människor; Alla vuxna människor skall vara ekonomiskt oberoende av anhöriga; Samhället skall stå neutralt i förhållande till människornas val av samlevnadsform; Barnens sociala, intellektuella och kulturella utveckling skall vara oberoende av föräldrarnas ekonomiska förhållanden." *Familjen i framtiden: En socialistisk familjepolitik*, (Sveriges socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbund, 1972), 6.

¹⁰⁹⁰ "samhället som kollektiv", *ibid.* 6-8.

¹⁰⁹¹ "angriper grunden och förändrar – genom gradvisa reformer – maktrelationerna i samhället", *ibid.* 8-10.

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.* 12.

¹⁰⁹³ "tjänare", "motbjudande", *ibid.* 22.

exercised through employees controlling the means of production, “the aorta in every society”.¹⁰⁹⁴ Therefore, the pamphlet recommends changing what is described as a recruitment bias, plus changing the working time legislation in order to give men and women equal access to both full-time employment and child care.¹⁰⁹⁵

Regarding family legislation, the autonomous perspective goes very far. The pamphlet argues that industrialization and family-planning have still not changed either gender roles or financial dependence within the family. Therefore, the text proposes radical changes. The family and the institution of marriage should be made juridically equal to other forms of cohabitation based on the view that community “develops best if it can rest on financial independence”.¹⁰⁹⁶ The text argues that young people of today have “seen through” the idea of marriage as a superior institution and, therefore, they don’t care about “going to the priest or mayor”.¹⁰⁹⁷ All taxation laws and other regulations that “preserve gender roles” and treat married couples as a unit must be overturned in order to reach the final goal: “a society where financially independent and autonomous individuals live in freely chosen forms of cohabitation”.¹⁰⁹⁸

The pamphlet also recommends further measures to increase the autonomy within the family: marriage is to be reduced to a document procedure, where clerical or secular ceremonies lose their juridical meaning; mandatory mediation shall be removed and divorces simplified. The liability of support shall also be removed between spouses as well as between parents and children – a loosening of responsibility that should go in both directions, with society in the long-term perspective taking over all costs for the upbringing and care of children.¹⁰⁹⁹

The pamphlet does, however, reveal a tension concerning responsibility. On one hand, the text follows earlier formulations in school curricula and other documents, describing the family as having the primary responsibility of childcare and upbringing. On the other hand, it states that the family is no longer enough to meet the child’s needs. Therefore, society must now take the main responsibility for social, intellectual and material care. One concrete measure suggested is making nursery school obligatory from the age of three and voluntary from six months,

¹⁰⁹⁴ ”kroppspulsådern i varje samhälle”, *ibid.* 33, 56.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 28-34.

¹⁰⁹⁶ ”utvecklas bäst om den får bygga på ekonomiskt oberoende”, *ibid.* 35.

¹⁰⁹⁷ ”genomskådat”, ”gå till prästen eller borgmästaren”. Latter quote within quotation marks in original. *Ibid.* 35f.

¹⁰⁹⁸ ”konserverar könsrollerna”, ”ett samhälle där ekonomiskt oberoende och självständiga individer lever i fritt valda samlevnadsformer”, *ibid.* 37-39.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 38f, 49.

thereby providing training by “qualitatively eminent institutions”, which would also enable parents to give better emotional care, instead of care too often filled with “spanking, prohibitions and demands of unconditional obedience”.¹¹⁰⁰ Thus, when community-leaning wordings are presented, it is in a very authority-critical context.

The authors conclude by underlining their socialist perspective, repeating that this family policy is built on a new vision, with work life being put at the centre, where employees take the power over production and all (underlined in original) adults take part in the production in society. The text ends by declaring this family programme as the platform on which to build “a socialist family policy and a socialist society”.¹¹⁰¹

A central reason why this ultra-progressive perspective could be included in party policy and legislation to such a large extent was that it was accepted by Olof Palme. His endorsement of the general principles in *The Family in the Future* is displayed in Palme’s speech at the Social Democratic Women’s Association Congress in 1972. He extols the pamphlet and declares, “The principle is plain. Each human shall be treated as an autonomous individual, not as an appendage to a provider.” Later in the speech, he adds that the struggle for women’s liberation deals with creating “economic and social conditions that make her autonomous as an individual”.¹¹⁰²

11.5 The new perspective put in practice

Up till the programme revision in 1975 and the eventual loss of power in 1976, several government reports and legislations were executed that pushed Swedish society in a distinctly more autonomous direction. These reforms were introduced at a rapid pace.

The joint taxation for married couples was mainly abolished and replaced by individual taxation in a larger tax reform in 1971. However, the process preceding this step, so central for *Grupp 222*, was largely effectuated in a more secluded process than usual.

¹¹⁰⁰ ”kvalitativt högtstående institutioner”, ”smisk, förbud och krav på ovillkorlig lydnad”, ibid. 45f, 49.

¹¹⁰¹ ”en socialistisk familjepolitik och ett socialistiskt samhälle”, ibid. 55f.

¹¹⁰² ”Principen är självklar. Varje människa skall behandlas som en självständig individ, inte som ett bihang till en försörjare.”, ”ekonomiska och sociala villkor som gör henne oberoende som individ” Olof Palme, ”Tal av statsminister Olof Palme,” in *Socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbundets kongress, protokoll* (1972, 5 September), 367, 370. It can be added that Palme makes a pause after the second quote, possibly struck by the radical content of his statement, gives a restrained laugh and adds “and in community with other people” (och i gemenskap med andra människor). This addition from the pulpit is, however, not included in either Palme’s written notes or in the congress protocol. Written notes and recorded version received by e-mail from the SLMA 23 August 2019.

A family taxation committee was appointed in 1965, although without explicit directive.¹¹⁰³ A 1967 government report presents different aspects of individual taxation in a generally positive manner and refers, albeit cautiously, to criticism against joint taxation but does not suggest any changes.¹¹⁰⁴

In an unusual procedure, the actual reform was presented not as a government report but as an internal report from the Department of Finance. The committee consisted of non-political experts plus party-affiliated actors such as Nancy Eriksson and Maj-Britt Sandlund, earlier mentioned as prominent Social Democratic proponents of the anti-religious and autonomous perspectives.¹¹⁰⁵

The report's suggestions are based on the ideological principle of transforming the traditional understanding of marriage into a new one, stating that marriage "has been considered to constitute an actual and economic community", and proposes that a married person should now be "generally taxed independently from the other spouse."¹¹⁰⁶ The report argues, however, that such a reform could create practical challenges and therefore suggests a partial reform, although underlining that such a system should "successively approach a purely individual taxation".¹¹⁰⁷

In the following government proposition, Minister of Finance Gunnar Sträng argues briefly for this reform by stating that he finds a taxation system "independent of sex or marital status" natural in today's society, summarizing, "The position of dependence, which co-taxation has given the married woman, should no longer be accepted."¹¹⁰⁸ Hereby, it can be concluded that even though the arguments were formulated in brief terms, the autonomous motive was still central, especially in the internal report.

1972 was also a defining year for the radicalization of family policy, with the publication of several government reports indicating the new direction. The report *Familj och äktenskap* (Family and Marriage) is of particular interest, due to the radical bent of its authors, including actors from *Grupp 222*, such as Liberal Gabriel Romanus, Social Democratic Women's

¹¹⁰³ *Individuell beskattning: Del 1 Motiv och förslag. Betänkande av familjeskatteberedningen; Fi 1969:4, 1.*

¹¹⁰⁴ *Barnbidrag och familjetillägg: Familjepolitiska kommittén; SOU 1967:52, 56-61, 143-147.*

¹¹⁰⁵ Government proposition 1970:70, 41.

¹¹⁰⁶ "Äktenskapet har ansetts bilda en faktisk och ekonomisk gemenskap", "Gift person beskattas i huvudsak oberoende av den andra maken." *Fi 1969:4*. 60, 161.

¹¹⁰⁷ "successivt närmas till en renodlad individuell beskattning", *ibid.* 130.

¹¹⁰⁸ Government proposition 1970:70, 71.

Association chairman Lisa Mattsson and Lena Hjelm-Wallén.¹¹⁰⁹ The content of this report follows several of the concrete legislation suggestions from *The Family in the Future* regarding looser regulations for marriage and divorce.

This report argues that views on family and gender roles are changing, and explicitly refers to the formulations in LGR 69 as foundations for this revised view.¹¹¹⁰ In an unusual connection to an otherwise almost completely invisible topic, the report also discusses religion among the different functions in a family. This paragraph concerning this particular dimension is , however, by far the shortest, merely describing that this dimension was important “while the patriarchal family type was prevalent” and in those days functioned to strengthen the family community and norms. To this is added that secularization and the democratic family type have replaced the patriarchal family and that any religious function nowadays only appears in “strongly religious homes”.¹¹¹¹ This short paragraph is telling as it proclaims how the new, democratic era may replace previous traditions of community, authority and the Sacred, hereby mirroring the Autonomy Model analysed in this study.

The government directive for this committee describes the intention to perform a profound revision of family and marriage, using legislation as one of several instruments to achieve the vision of a society where all adult individuals are equal and can take care of themselves without being financially dependent on their family. Some of the most radical demands are, however, avoided in the text. Nevertheless, the report presents a direct influence from the ultra-progressive perspective of both *The Family in the Future* and the Alva Myrdal Report. These sources are, however, at this stage explicitly described only as material to stimulate discussion.¹¹¹²

The same year, the Nursery School Committee of 1968 published its report. Contrary to the general opinion and a government directive, which was drafted by Alva Myrdal and focuses on society’s and the labour market’s need for childcare, the report text focuses mainly on the needs of the child.¹¹¹³ The two-volume work is quite technical, and the autonomous focus is not as strong as in either LGR 69 or the *Family and Marriage* report. Such a perspective does

¹¹⁰⁹ *Familj och äktenskap: I; SOU 1972:41, 3.*

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 68.

¹¹¹¹ ”Medan den patriarkaliska familjetypen var förhärskande”, ”de starkt religiösa hemmen”, *ibid.* 74.

¹¹¹² *Ibid.* 3f, 89, 253.

¹¹¹³ *Förskolan: Betänkande avgivet av 1968 års barnstugeutredning. Del 1; SOU 1972:26, 18f; Förskolan: Betänkande avgivet av 1968 års barnstugeutredning. Del 2; SOU 1972:27, 568-570.* For Alva Myrdal’s role, see Larsson, *Olof Palme och utbildningspolitiken*, 177f.

appear, though, e.g. in the description of how to assist children from different environments. The text suggests that pre-schools should help children to make use of their inner resources, and thereby be less influenced by tradition, gender-based attitudes or social group.¹¹¹⁴ Concerning the relationship between child and staff, a paragraph primarily discussing practical issues like eating and getting dressed also argues that children ought to gradually learn how to function in an autonomous way.¹¹¹⁵

Here, too, the area of religion is briefly mentioned. The report underlines that pre-school children should understand that some people believe, and some do not, and – just like LGR 69 – the text highlights helping children to make up their own minds on religious and ethical matters as a central aim. Religious matters are also mentioned in a distanced tone, with children's thoughts about God being described as “central to their world of thoughts and fantasies”, and if they do not meet nuanced and objective adults, the children might run into speculations that may not be good for them.¹¹¹⁶

The same year also saw the publication of the government report *Familjestöd* (Family Support) covering a wide range of economic benefits and reforms. This report was published by the committee appointed by Ulla Lindström in 1965 and still begins with the same directive where care allowance for parents is described as an option.¹¹¹⁷ However, the move in an autonomous direction had by now already taken place, and the government report retains this perspective. Thus, when motivating its suggestions, the committee describes the expansion of public day-care to enable paid work for both parents as “at least equally important” as economic benefits to families.¹¹¹⁸ The committee also declares adherence to the general goals to stimulate equality between sexes and “to provide the opportunity for productive employment for every adult”.¹¹¹⁹ Needs of the children or of the family as a unit are no longer mentioned as motivations. A materialistic, autonomous perspective can thus be argued to have replaced a community-based view on the family also in this report.

A 1973 proposition for a revised law allowing maternity insurance to be replaced with a gender-neutral parental allowance describes that the tax system had by now been reformed

¹¹¹⁴ *SOU 1972:27*. 589.

¹¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 592.

¹¹¹⁶ “centrala för deras föreställnings- och fantasivärld”, *SOU 1972:26*, 225f.

¹¹¹⁷ *Familjestöd*; *SOU 1972:34*, 49-51.

¹¹¹⁸ ”minst lika angeläget”, *ibid.* 45.

¹¹¹⁹ ”att ge varje vuxen människa möjlighet till en produktiv sysselsättning”, *ibid.* 245.

according to the principle that “every adult – man or woman, married or unmarried – shall provide for themselves.”¹¹²⁰

The autonomous perspective in taxation can be considered fully implemented in a following reform that removed what remained of joint taxation. The preceding government report presents these reforms in a strictly technical fashion and without value-based arguments.¹¹²¹ The government proposition mentions the labour market and equality as the two reasons for the decision to remove a legislation that the government now views as belonging to a past age, stating that “the position of dependence which joint taxation has given the married woman should no longer be accepted”.¹¹²²

In 1972, Olof Palme introduced a state delegation for gender equality, including a trial project to actively encourage women to enter traditionally male-dominated occupations.¹¹²³ Other parties argued that this area should be surveyed by a broader parliamentary committee, but the delegation was placed physically within the Prime Minister’s office and consisted exclusively of Social Democrats. The committee’s report was signed by Minister Anna-Greta Leijon three days before the parliamentary election in 1976. The content is a combination of project report and general reflections, and does not provide any distinct suggestions for legislation. It does, however, fill a function as a reflection of the last decade’s dramatic changes in perspective and society.

Most interesting for this study is the paragraph titled “Individens autonomi och kollektiv värdegemenskap” (The autonomy of the individual and collective community of values”). This is also the first and only instance during the period of this study when the exact Swedish concept *autonomi* appears in a central passage.

The text states in a philosophical tone that even though the labour movement managed to solve material needs, the present age has proved it impossible to agree on what the *good life* is. The authors state that there is no meaning *to* life. Neither god (with lowercase g), nor state nor world revolution can provide this; it is up to the individual to find a meaning *in* life. Here, the autonomy of the individual becomes a central tool, and the text mentions three collective

¹¹²⁰ ”varje vuxen – man eller kvinna, gift eller ogift – ska försörja sig själv”, Government proposition 1973:47, 35.

¹¹²¹ *Skatteomläggning 1976: Delbetänkande av 1972 års skatteutredning; SOU 1974:103*, 12, 54.

¹¹²² ”Den beroendeställning som sambeskattningen gett den gifta kvinnan borde inte längre accepteras.” Government proposition 1975-76:77, 47.

¹¹²³ Hanna Antonsson, *Kartläggning av ett halvt sekels jämställdhetsinsatser i Sverige*, Vinnova (Stockholm, 2008), 17.

values to direct towards others in order to defend the autonomous individual's search for meaning: non-harm, securing the autonomy of others and promotion of the "higher needs" of others (quotation marks in original). The passage ends in a discussion giving the impression of having gone the full circle of reasoning, suggesting that autonomous individuals are still "*carriers of social patterns*". It also states that different political solutions seem to be in conflict with one another, and therefore future research needs to study the individual and family in their larger social relations and what this might imply for the development and self-expression of the individual.¹¹²⁴

This government report, the very last published by the Social Democratic government, ends with a few interview quotes about visions for the future from young participants in the trial project for gender equality. The examples given are remarkably traditional and community-oriented: a small farm with animals, marriage, children. The very last quote comes from 20-year-old Malena who, in a secularized search for a Sacred realm, states that she had written a request to the horoscope page in a magazine asking them about the future but never got a response. To this, she adds the reflection: "There may very well be a destiny..."¹¹²⁵

This government report thus presents autonomy as a basis for modern society. Still, there is a tendency towards critical evaluation, where the text also searches for more community-oriented ways to manage this new autonomy-based society.

Summary

Family policy is an area where the values studied in this project are particularly manifest in the source material. The ideological processes during this period typically and increasingly centre around the dialectical tug-of-war between community and autonomy.

The realm of the Sacred appears rarely in the sources on family policy. When it does, it is generally portrayed as something outdated, which applied only to an earlier time and culture.

Authority is a theme that occasionally appears in the material. The texts sometimes follow the same pattern as the Sacred, signifying that authority in different forms is something related to a distant past. More often, though, family matters are discussed under a socialist ideology of

¹¹²⁴ "högre behov", "bärare av sociala mönster", *Roller i omvandling: En rapport skriven på uppdrag av delegationen för jämställdhet mellan män och kvinnor; SOU 1976:71*, 194-198.

¹¹²⁵ "Det kan ju finnas ett öde...", *ibid.* 228.

equality, where authorities in society are viewed as enemies to be battled. This ideal is expressed both in the workplace and within the family. Thus, the struggle against authority and quest for equality take more or less the same practical role.

The most decisive change during this period was from a community-centred view, with the family as a central and coherent unit in society, to an *ultra-progressive* view with individual autonomy as the all-encompassing value. The large change did, however, appear rather late in the process. The early exception from the otherwise traditional view was Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's influence, especially with *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*, whose autonomous ideology was very strong already in 1934. This perspective was, however, only partly used in the state Population Commission in the late 1930s.

After this, family politics stood quite still until the Social Democratic party congress in 1960, when a more individualistic party programme was adopted and a study group on women's affairs was appointed. However, this group maintained a largely community-oriented view, describing the family as a unit, showing large acceptance of traditional gender roles and rejecting the idea of individual taxation.

Nonetheless, during these formative years, a shift to a more autonomous, shortly thereafter ultra-progressive ideology took place in numerous ways. Some may be argued to emanate from general cultural changes, but it is evident that individual actors who adopted and proposed an increasingly autonomous perspective also pushed family politics in a more radical direction.

One reason found in the source material is for instance the founding of the informal *Grupp 222*, which had a large societal influence, and where Social Democratic politicians played a distinctly more influential role than Liberal ones. Central influence also came through the mandate given to the Alva Myrdal Report in the late 1960s as well as Olof Palme's acceptance of the ultra-progressive ideas. This, combined with the explicitly socialist version of family policy in *The Family in the Future* pamphlet, also became a way to introduce the ultra-progressive ideas in government reports and legislation.

In the late 1960s, there was an apparent battle over whether to maintain a community-oriented view of the family or fully accept the autonomous perspective. The government reports during the period reveal an effort to balance these two contrasting forces, and sometimes both perspectives were displayed in the same report. Finally, though, a decisive move was made

into the autonomous position. Especially in the shift from joint to individual taxation, the sources reveal an apparent effort to perform the reform cautiously, possibly in an attempt to forestall the large reaction that followed the removal of the teaching of Christianity a few years earlier.

The socialist basis for family policy was particularly central in *The Family in the Future* from the Social Democratic Women's Association in 1972. This document joined forces with the Alva Myrdal Report in voicing criticism against authorities in different forms and strongly endorsing an all-encompassing autonomy, especially within the family. Both these documents criticize personal or patriarchal types of authority, but also impersonal types, such as old family norms or pre-determined roles in the family. In a speech endorsing *The Family in the Future*, Prime Minister Olof Palme also presented the family-political changes as a means to rescue the woman from being "an appendage to a provider".

Not all of the most radical autonomous ideas were realized, such as the practical abolition of marriage and of the mutual responsibility within the family. In the international perspective, however, the end of the research period saw the actualization of some of the most radical family reforms in the world. The values presented deal only *indirectly* with the Sacred (portrayed as belonging to a distant past); *more* with the rejection of authorities of different types, and *very strongly* with a wish to replace the traditional family community with an ultra-progressive vision of individual autonomy.

This view was also to a different extent reflected in government reports on family policy. The very last government report before the 1976 election was an evaluation of the project for equality, which to a large extent consisted of a philosophical and self-reflecting discussion along with interviews discussing both pros and cons of the new family-political reforms.

Three days later, 44 years of Social Democratic rule was over, and Sweden had become a very different nation than when the party gained power in 1932.

12. Concluding analysis

The aim of this historical-descriptive study has been to analyse how positions on *autonomy* were expressed in the political discourse during the Social Democratic hegemony in 20th century Sweden, and what possible implications this may have had for a process of secularization. This aim has been fulfilled through a qualitative textual analysis, performed with a methodology of grounded theory. This way of addressing the research questions has been a valuable tool to provide a deeper understanding of the role of values in the political discourse, by coding material from different genres of public political texts. The many texts from different actors, periods and genres secure a good research reliability by providing a large, but still clear picture, and they also strengthen the validity of the conclusions.

Disparities and tensions undoubtedly appear in the texts, but the general pattern in the whole body of texts from the hegemonic party is still more characterized by unity than by disparity, with a defining change occurring around 1960.

This concluding analysis begins with painting the general pattern emerging from the empirical analysis. The first three empirical research questions are discussed under headings 12.2 through 12.4, and the fourth, theoretically oriented research question under 12.5.

The central time frame has been 1932-1976, a period of uninterrupted governance under only three Social Democratic Prime Ministers. However, defining value-related reforms took place already before 1932, most notably when the party gained hegemony over the State Church and school system under the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, which first came under Social Democratic control in 1917. Some other relevant sources have also been studied from the 1910s, most notably from the debate on theological departments and the initial writings and activities from Arthur Engberg and Harald Hallén, the two main actors in Social Democratic church-political processes of coming decades.

In this dissertation, the methodological focus has been to analyse the sources on the *textual level*. Occasionally, perception and decision mechanisms among collective and individual actors shine through, especially in the background material for the Social Democratic programme revisions. Such information may reveal deeper ideological motives for the actors' considerations. Such considerations have not, however, formed the centre of the textual analysis; focus is on those values that are actually expressed in the texts.

The analysed sources are schematically separated into *visionary*, *opinion-making* and *legislative* texts. The visionary texts, most notably expressed in party programmes, display clear party-separating differences in values, and are discussed in chapter 12.1 and 12.2. These texts both influence and are influenced by the opinion-making texts from leading individual actors, discussed under 12.3. Finally, values are also expressed and realized in practical policy through legislative texts, discussed in 12.4.

There is a distinct shift over time, both regarding what values and spheres appear at the centre of the political discourse and what roles different actors take during different periods. The value-based landscape in Swedish politics can roughly be argued to consist of two periods: before and after the time around 1960.

12.1 The general pattern

Sweden's development into what at the turn of the millennium had become the world's most striking example of secular-individualistic values cannot reasonably be explained as the result of one single factor. More political or cultural factors from periods before or during the Social Democratic hegemony may also have contributed to this process. In this particular project, though, the political process is put at the centre. This is both due to the ability of politics to influence large parts of society, and also due to the fact that no previous comprehensive study has been undertaken on the political processes that influenced the value system of such a striking example as Sweden during some of its most formative years – a period also characterized by 44 years with one political party at the helm of power.

The methodology and selection of sources used in this study matches well with Seixas' concepts for historical research. The evidence is taken from primary sources from the individual and collective political actors at the centre of the political discourse during the research period. These findings have historical significance, as they display the values in the central political processes relating to the society-defining spheres of church, education and family. Due to the long time frame, my findings reveal which actors represent continuity or value-based changes in society. By covering such a large source material, it can also be established with a high degree of certainty which collective or individual actors were most influential in causing the value-based political changes that moved the political discourse in an increasingly secular and individualistic direction.

The use of grounded theory as research strategy has been valuable in order to maintain the necessary distance between researcher and texts, which is central in this type of research. This model has also had the function of bringing the texts into the foreground and revealing the central concepts and values, their internal relationship and development over time.¹¹²⁶

This way, grounded theory has been a helpful approach to establish which texts in the vast source material that proved most central in the political discourse, for instance when locating processes of pivotal change within the parties, and how the defining battles between opposing values were resolved in the three political spheres. Hereby, this study also contributes to painting the bigger picture of political change, where a secular perspective is communicated by the vast majority of Social Democratic actors in opinion-making texts, such as newspaper articles, speeches, other book contributions et cetera. This secular perspective is sometimes expressed openly, sometimes communicated by the silence on matters relating to the Sacred in the sources. The defining change into an affirming autonomy within visionary texts appears in party programmes, most notably the Social Democratic programme of 1960.

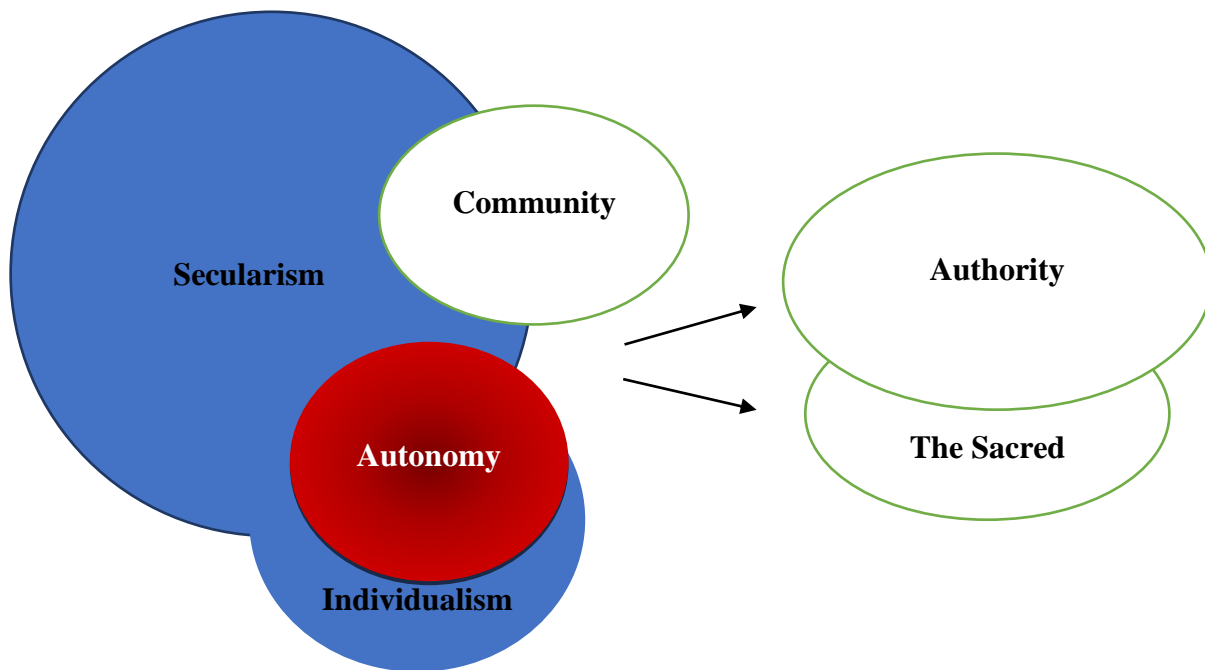
The large source material also sheds light on the intertextuality, context and representativity of different texts, showing which texts or parts of texts that prevailed over time. E.g., if Alva Myrdal and her ideas had not later received such strong influence in Swedish policy, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* might have remained a peripheral book, but instead its values became highly influential for future policy. Similarly, the value content in the 1946 School Commission report were initially highly controversial, but turned influential over time. However, its actual decisions about preserving Christianity in school would later be overturned, due to Stellan Arvidson's texts and other factors that kept pushing secular values.

The central values most emphasized by the political leadership during the research period can roughly be separated into two periods. One leading up to the 1960 revision of the Social Democratic party programme, and one from around 1960 up till the loss of power in the 1976 election.

Obviously, these two periods also reveal disparities within themselves. The patterns described in the two diagrams below display the dominating values within the top political leadership. This does not imply that all individual actors and all political parties embraced these values similarly; the deeper patterns are further developed below.

¹¹²⁶ Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, 86f.

Diagram 6: The build-up phase, 1910s to around 1960. A not yet full-blown autonomous culture.



This diagram illustrates that during the first phase of Social Democratic hegemony, the criticism was primarily directed against authority, and secondly against the Sacred. During this build-up phase, autonomy was generally not yet proclaimed in its affirming version, but rather as a *confronting autonomy*. This confrontation was, however, unevenly distributed towards the threefold antithesis. The left-hand side of the diagram shows that during this phase, secularistic strivings were much stronger within the political leadership than those strivings that promoted an affirming autonomy.

In this early phase of confronting autonomy, the hostility among the governing Social Democrats was clearly directed rightward in the diagram. Values of affirming autonomy were still weak among the party leadership, and the hostility towards the threefold antithesis was mainly expressed by secular motives, and only to a small degree as individualistic ones.

What stands out as striking in comparison to the model used in this study is that during this build-up phase, community was generally not opposed among the Social Democratic leadership. This leads to the question whether the model itself can be considered flawed, or whether this early period of Social Democratic leadership was actually characterized by other political values than after 1960. The aggregated historical picture points to the latter,

underlining the conclusion that this early period did not yet express a full-blown autonomous political vision, but rather a defence of classical Marxist values.

The values expressed during this build-up phase included strong antipathy towards authorities, but the top leadership still refrained from expressing an affirming autonomy. This is evident in the *folkhem* vision, with several community-based facets, being so openly put at the centre of the party's vision from Per Albin Hansson's speech in 1928, during the crisis periods of the 1930s and -40s, and also during the first decade or two after the war. The prominent exception to this pattern was Alva Myrdal, who, sometimes together with husband Gunnar, propagated a radical autonomous perspective where community, especially in the family, was considered threatening to individual autonomy. Apart from this, Social Democracy during this period generally expressed itself as a reformist version of Marxism, where community-oriented values were stronger than those promoting the individual. The following period expressed partly different values, as will be illustrated in the diagram of the ultra-progressive phase below.

Neither from other individual actors nor in the party programmes up till 1960 do we find a full-blown autonomous perspective. The main theme among the political leadership during this period was rather an opposition to authority. This factor did not apply for all political parties, though, but was central for the dominating party. In this and other areas, there were remarkable ideological differences between the parties, as will be discussed below.

Hostility towards the Sacred was rarely articulated explicitly among the top leadership. When this was expressed, it was generally by actors just below the top. In these cases, opinions were expressed with great force, especially by the younger Arthur Engberg and Stellan Arvidson. It can be underlined that when negative views appeared regarding the Sacred, these were more often directed as opposition towards authorities of different kinds than towards the Christian faith and its truth claims *per se*, even if both the younger Engberg and Arvidson were also openly arguing for atheism. The political rhetoric against religion was rather expressed as a wider opposition to authority in general. It also appears as values of this kind were more successful than deliberately anti-religious confrontations aiming to secularize the State Church and school system.

Outspokenly autonomous values were occasionally lifted also by other actors than Alva Myrdal, although not with equal force. Individualism, on the contrary, was occasionally

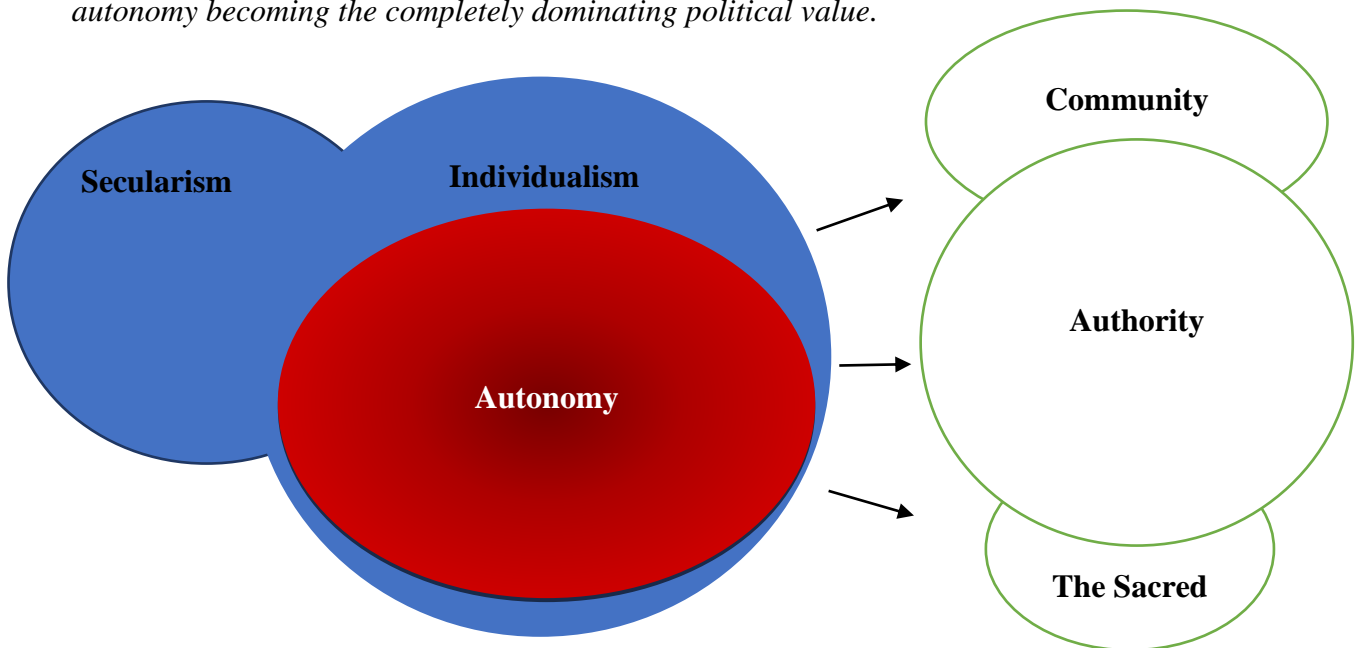
opposed, especially when it could be understood as connected to capitalism. Apart from this exception, though, individualistic values were very rarely promoted by Social Democracy prior to the 1950s.

The political processes of change during this period of strong opposition towards authority dealt more with secular values and the aim to secularize Swedish society. Even if the Prime Ministers were hesitant to voice any deliberately secular positions during this period, actors beneath them were very active in promoting a secularizing agenda. This emphasis is also reflected by the order of when large reforms took place within the three spheres. In family policy, only small steps were taken during the build-up phase. Instead, the first major alterations of the conditions of faith took place in Church policy, followed by education policy. In both these spheres, a sometimes secular, sometimes autonomous, but, above all, authority-critical view dominated the political discourse within Social Democracy.

Thus, there is good evidence that the secularization process in Sweden was indeed the result of deliberate political considerations and actions, built on the values presented in the analysed texts. Therefore, secularism cannot be understood as just *correlating* with the political and cultural changes in 20th century Sweden. Rather, it may to a large degree have been *caused* by the political discourse. This conclusion, in line with the market model in secularization theory, was achieved in different ways in different spheres: in church policy by changing the organization and system of decision-making, and in education policy by changing the content of the education. The most telling sign of this deliberate strategy is Arthur Engberg's open acknowledgement in both writing and in parliament remarks that his political ambition was to let the State Church "take on the duty of dechristianization" and to "dechristianize the people". That this goal was actually achieved is also confirmed in government reports towards the end of the research period.

The beginning of a new phase arguably begun around the launch of the 1960 programme revision, and its definite conclusion can be argued to have occurred with the *gymnasium* curriculum LGY 65, where a secular perspective had finally taken over in education policy after decades of tug-of-war. After this, the focus of values among the political leadership made its definite leap over into another centre. From around 1960, and gradually growing during the decade thereafter, *autonomy* as a positive factor, not only as opposition towards authority, grew to be the dominating value in Swedish political leadership.

Diagram 7: The ultra-progressive phase, early 1960s-1976. Community now opposed, and autonomy becoming the completely dominating political value.



This diagram illustrates that during this period, the criticism was directed against all three values on the opposite side of the model, with autonomy became a dominating value. The most notable change in comparison with the previous diagram is how an *affirming autonomy* eventually prevailed in the political discourse. During this phase, the secular strivings were not as active as previously. The definite move into what I call *ultra-progressivism* came when the secular ideals had already gained their largest victories and the realm of the Sacred would for the remainder of the period typically be regarded with disinterest, with the secular victory understood as a necessary and uncontroversial result of the modern project.

The opposition to authority remained, but during this period, community – especially within the family – definitely moved over to what in this model finds its role of an antithesis to autonomy. This further underlines my conclusion that the previous phase was mainly characterized by a confronting, rather than an affirming autonomy. Individualistic values tended during this later period to be used equivalently to autonomous values, and they were therefore not criticized as contrary to Marxist views, like Per Albin Hansson and Tage Erlander used to do. This also meant that classical socialism faded more into the background, to be replaced by an autonomous or individualistic perspective, taking inspiration also from a liberal view of society.

Two concrete formulations in the 1960 party programme turned out as particularly central to future development. The reason why these quotes are considered so defining is that they were

repeatedly cited, either verbatim or paraphrased, by actors pushing the political discourse further into an autonomous direction: that Social Democracy ought to reform society so that the citizens are “liberated from dependence on any kind of power groups beyond their control”, and that this society ought to “shape free, independent and creative human beings”. Therefore, these formulations in the Social Democratic party programme can be argued to have had a causal effect on the following ultra-progressive movement.

These conclusions are a few examples of how this methodology, based on grounded theory, has been able to locate and establish a pattern within the political discourse in 20th century Sweden, where certain values and text passages stand out as central and can thus cast light over the political discourse in large. This dissertation has used many different kinds of sources, spanning over many decades. In a study such as this, such a wide range of source material of different genres could entail a challenge to provide a coherent analysis. However, this large number of texts rather takes the function of widening the scope of discussion and reducing the risk of arbitrary selection of texts or arguments.

The large source material from both collective and individual actors, consisting of visionary, opinion-making and legislative texts, displays a general ideological pattern, and underlines the dominating perspective of a growing secular individualism in 20th century Sweden. Thus, there is good reason to consider the birds-eye perspective in this study as a valid picture of which positions on autonomy that dominated the political discourse. The findings in this multitude of sources from several genres are described thematically below, and provide valuable evidence for the ideological changes over time described in the diagrams above.

When relating theoretical perspective to source material, the content of the political texts does indeed fit well with a methodology according to grounded theory, as well as with an antithetical understanding of the concept of autonomy not only as an affirming value, but also in a confronting function as a threefold antipole to autonomy. The methodology to analyse all sources according to this double understanding of autonomy has also had a clarifying function for the analysis. It has also been a valuable tool to dismiss those parts of the material which prove irrelevant to discussions on autonomy and secularization, while simultaneously providing a way to capture those passages which may not use the particular *words* in question, but still reveal positions on the *concepts* of autonomy, community, authority and the Sacred. E.g., the protocols from Social Democratic congress debates reveal not only the programme formulations but also the generally negative attitude towards Christianity and church within

the party; Olof Palme's published speeches on school policy display where he positions himself on the line between autonomy and authority, even when these particular words are not mentioned; and government reports on taxation reveal whether they lean towards a community- or an individual-based view on the family.

Grounded theory has been a helpful tool when analysing texts of very different genres under a common theoretical umbrella. Hereby, it becomes clear how sources in all categories tend to go in the same direction, moving the nation in a more secular and individualistic direction. Indeed, differences exist in wordings and communicated strategies, but when overviewing the general pattern, the ideological direction is clear within the political discourse in 20th century Sweden. Below follows a more thorough summary and analysis of how this pattern evolved among parties, individuals and political spheres.

This match between theory and sources indicates that my definition of autonomy has served well in capturing the political discourse and changes in 20th century Sweden, and might thus serve as a key to interpretation also in other nations. Several factors may explain this change of perspective. The autonomous move in the entire West, as well as cultural influences outside the political realm, can surely be an explanation, but as Sweden is described as a leading nation in the radical 1960s and -70s, some specifically Swedish factors ought to be considered decisive for the move into ultra-progressivism. The successful completion of reform processes within church and school system arguably played a part in paving the way for the next step. Actor-based explanations, such as the more radical Olof Palme gradually moving out of his predecessor Erlander's shadow, along with Alva Myrdal returning to Sweden and finally receiving political office, may also have been important, along with the crucial move into an autonomous direction in the Social Democratic programme of 1960, followed by further moves in the same direction among other actors – all this contributed to Sweden turning into a culture that can be described not just as generally autonomous, but even ultra-progressive.

Olof Palme's quote in the American anthology on family policy illuminates the utopian vision which may possibly have facilitated the radical changes in all three political spheres. In the quote which has provided the name to this dissertation, Palme explicitly explains his utopian vision: "to make reality move closer to the ideal".

This historical development also highlights the theme which stands out as probably the most striking paradox in this study: the victory of strongly individualistic values in an inherently collective Social Democracy. This apparent contradiction may be explained by at least two factor: one actor-based, and one foundationally ideological.

Firstly, some leading individual actors, most notably Alva Myrdal, give the impression of having autonomy as their central motive, rather than a traditional Marxism. For these, Social Democracy largely appears as a means to realize an authority-critical vision, rather than an ideological goal in itself. Still, there are also outspokenly socialist texts which point towards an individualistic view, most notably the pamphlet *The family in the future* from the Women's Association. This ideological combination may be one explanation of the general party trend, away from collective and towards individualized views.

Secondly, the values communicated in the texts indicate what may also be a larger ideological trend, connected to the parallel secular and authority-critical wave over the whole post-war West. A recurring theme in the sources, specifically highlighted by Tage Erlander, is that when the material needs in society are fulfilled, a striving arises for a renewed political vision. While Erlander expresses hesitancy towards progressive measures, other actors take the leading role of pushing the political discourse further into individualism and eventually into ultra-progressivism.

The post-war texts, starting with the 1946 School Commission, display an increasing leaning towards authority-critical and autonomous views, rather than towards collective or community-based values. Even though central texts from the party and its leading actors repeatedly tried to balance between collective and individual, this search for a new, prevailing Social Democracy meant a move away from the class-based views of traditional Marxism, instead adopting distinctly more individualistic ideals. Some pre-war texts gave hints towards a state-individualistic perspective, intended to dissolve the individual's ties to family and civil society and instead connecting the individual closer to the state. This perspective would later become more outspoken and also put into practice, most notably in family policy. This trend became especially prevalent from the 1960 party programme and onwards.

Based on this, one possible conclusion is worth discussing, based on the Swedish example. It appears as a conscious campaign of a confronting autonomy, expressed for instance in a Marxist ideology but also in certain versions of liberalism, may have a tendency to roll over

into the affirming version of autonomy, and – if unchecked – eventually also into ultra-progressivism. It cannot be established with certainty whether this outcome is unique to the Swedish example, or a particular tendency for the whole Social Democratic movement, or possibly a basic feature within cultures of a confronting autonomy as such.

This also connects to another adjacent possible conclusion: the tensions in the material, not least in Odhner's book preceding the 1960 programme revision, indicates that secular socialism may contain an internal struggle, where the ideological vision shares some features with individualistic liberalism. Signs of this inner tension are found in the first decades of Social Democracy, from the first programme of 1897 which declared religion as a private matter, through the highly church-antagonistic programme of 1920. This effort of balancing the religio-political strategies within classical Marxism and Liberalism indicates that a liberal-leaning outcome of an initially socialist view may indeed have been in the cards early on.

For a more developed discussion on how a collective vision of Social Democracy could transform into a largely liberal version of individualism, there is good reason to test this on other examples, e.g. other Scandinavian nations with a similar history and culture, other nations with strong Social Democratic parties, or other authority-critical movements in society.

12.2 Parties as collective actors

My empirical investigation begins with an analysis of the party programmes applying between 1932 and 1976 for the four dominating parties during the period, where the Social Democratic programmes receives special attention. Therefore, the archived material on the preparation processes and congress debates for the programme revisions of 1920, 1944, 1960 and 1975 are also included in the analysis.

A general question relating not only to this study but to general historical research concerns whether processes are mainly actor- or structure-driven. My empirical analysis deals mainly with an actor-based perspective. Party programmes can, however, be argued to display parties as collective actors but also reflect larger structure-driven perspectives.

For all parties striving towards a utopian vision, there is a need to balance this utopia with what is considered practically feasible. This factor applies differently for parties with government power and parties in opposition; it becomes even more urgent for a party in

power to balance their vision with the realities of the time as well as what is viewed as politically attainable. This wish is clearly expressed by Per Albin Hansson in the beginning of the process for the 1944 revision, as well as Tage Erlander for the 1960 revision, although not explicitly by Olof Palme for the 1975 revision. On the contrary, Palme more than once underlines his ambition to let a utopian vision alter reality, rather than allowing reality to shape his political ideas.

With the exclusion of Per Albin Hansson's war coalition government, including all parties but the Communists, only the Agrarians had the chance to share government power some years under Erlander. For the Liberals and the Conservatives, the central considerations therefore dealt mainly with balancing their vision with what appeared as attainable. For the other parties, the largest change in values took place during the 1960s and 1970s.

A central question when analysing party programmes, especially for a party in power, is whether their programmes mainly reflect a desired change of direction, or whether it is more of an adaptation to structural factors or political decisions already completed. In 1941, Alva Myrdal described Sweden as having the perfect prerequisites to perform a "bold experiment in Social Democracy".¹¹²⁷ This also appears to have been the vision for several of the central actors.

Among the Social Democrats, there are some areas of special interest in this study. Their position on religion and Christianity remains remarkably stable during the period. Changes of strategy or positions are more a matter of pragmatic reasoning. The large debate about the State Church at the 1944 congress is a telling example of the need to balance vision and feasible goals. The programme commission suggested removing the demand to abolish the State Church, motivated both by the lack of such demands among the population and a wish to retain political control over the Church. Behind the scenes, Prime Minister Hansson also motivated this position with the pragmatic view that this was a demand that the party did not intend to fulfil anyway. However, the congress majority decided, for socialist-inspired ideological reasons, to maintain the demand for abolishment. Here, ideological vision took precedence over pragmatism. Still, this demand would in practice be disregarded by the government and was consequentially removed in the next programme revision. This congress decision can thus be understood more as a reflection of an ideological Utopia, rather than having a direct political effect.

¹¹²⁷ Myrdal, *Nation and Family*: 10.

The 1920 Social Democratic programme arguably has the clearest Marxist perspective during the party's history. This perspective is toned down in 1944, but the community-oriented foundation remains. The central value-change in the 1960 programme revision was the turn from a community-centred Marxist approach to a more autonomous view on individual and society. To what extent this move was inspired by general culture goes beyond the scope of this study. The source material does, however, not reveal any external political inspirations. The move from a traditional Marxist perspective, defended by Ernst Wigforss and to some extent also Tage Erlander, into an individual-focused view largely appears to have arisen during the revision process. Which individual actor that provided the strongest push into an autonomous position is unclear. There are signs from Kaj Björk, Hilding Johansson, Hjalmar Mehr and Nils Erik Odhner, but also of Olof Palme exercising influence during the process, but this is not clearly proven in the archived material.

The move into the autonomous vision in the 1960 programme had a large effect also on future policy, as subsequent political documents frequently refer to the formulations about the citizens being “liberated from dependence on any kind of power groups beyond their control” and the goal to “shape free, independent and creative human beings”. These passages also capture well the remarkable process when an inherently social and community-related Marxist utopia adopted an individual-centred vision.

The strongly autonomous move in family policy in the 1975 programme was largely the effect of radical events that had already taken place during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This course of action actually contradicts the remaining community-focused formulations on family policy in the 1960 programme. Nancy Eriksson's prediction at the 1960 congress about the family-political implications of the new autonomous focus did, however, turn out to be very accurate.

Another telling pattern during these processes is that the Christian Brotherhood movement played a rather reclusive role whenever a possible conflict between a Christian and a secular view arose. Some individual representatives occasionally voiced their perspective, but these actors rarely received any significant attention. Their general influence during the period must therefore be described as weak, and from the 1950s onwards, practically invisible.

The differences in value-based messages become even clearer when comparing with the non-Socialistic party programmes. The most striking difference is how the parties view

Christianity. During the whole period, the Social Democrats keep a very consistent position: religion is to be made private and is not to be associated with public institutions, such as schools, and the religious authority of the State Church. At first, this was expressed under the goal of disestablishing the Church of Sweden, but after the 1944 debate, the view gained ground that the best way to exercise political influence over religion and secure a democratic, non-authoritarian stewardship over the Church would be a continued state control.

The Liberals followed the Social Democrats' example of keeping their basic views over time. Their view on Christianity is slightly more positive than the Social Democrats, even if a slightly more distanced and more secular view appears along the way. Here, it can be noted that the secular Liberals from the beginning were more successful in forming the party's ideological vision than the free church-based influences within the Free-minded National Association.

The most remarkable changes over time occurred, however, among the Conservatives and the Agrarians. During the first decades of Social Democratic governance, the opposition parties kept a very endorsing view of Christian faith and values in society. Over time, however, these very positive views of the Sacred lost power. To some extent, this occurred already in 1959 in the first programme after the Agrarians' transformation into the Centre Party, after several years in coalition with the Social Democrats. The distinctly secular turn in the programmes from the Centre Party in 1970 and the Conservatives turned Moderates in 1969 was, however, more decisive. At this stage, their views on religion moved close to those positions that the Social Democrats defended during their whole history. This may be explained by several factors, but a probable explanation is the secular breakthrough that gained ground during the 1960s, especially in the school system.

This comprehensive overview of the parties' views on religion indicates that especially the Social Democrats functioned as a collective actor that, due to their consistency, worked as a secularizing factor. The Christianity-defending opposition from Agrarians and Conservatives was indeed distinct, but could not in the long run stand against the secularizing pressure, especially as a more secular perspective from the beginning gained the upper hand among the Liberals. This comparison also illustrates how large the differences initially were between the conservative opposition and the Social Democrats, but also of how ready the political opposition were to move their positions when the cultural environment shifted very far away from their views.

Regarding autonomous or general individualistic values, there is also a difference, not least in use of words. The Social Democrats, the Liberals and the Conservatives use common political words such as freedom, equality and independence very differently. The Social Democrats initially understand these words as community-oriented under a Marxist worldview, where the envisioned liberation is interpreted under a class-based socialist perspective. The Liberals and Conservatives, on the other hand, understand these concepts in a sense where the independence of the individual is to be guarded – although not against power groups in general or class-based groups in particular, but rather against the state. Thus, these parties display another version of individualism that is not autonomy-connected, but rather – especially for the Conservatives – connecting to authority and the Sacred, finding a basis in the family community. The Agrarians, in their turn, also proclaim freedom as a central value, although under an umbrella of responsibility and adherence to tradition and Christianity, especially in the early period. The state individualism that grew stronger during the research period can hereby be understood as primarily a Social Democratic idea.

There have also been instances where the word independence has been used in different senses, depending on what foundational value is invoked. For the Social Democrats, it was considered vital to keep the State Church under political control, while both the Liberals and the Conservatives underlined the need to preserve the independence of the Church from the state. In the latter case, these values displayed a wish for the Church to operate according to its traditional authority within the Sacred realm – thus expressing an endorsement of the Sacred perspective rather than of autonomy.

Finally, regarding autonomous-individualistic values in general, the Conservatives and the Centre Party followed along in the autonomous turn taken in the late 1960s, although this change was not as radical as their secular turn during the same period. This pattern once more underlines the conclusion that Social Democratic values and legislation influenced the other parties, not the other way round.

This conclusion also applies for the informal *Grupp 222* during the 1960s. The description of this group as a political melting pot for Social Democrats and Liberals appears overstated. In reality, the majority of the involved actors were not party-affiliated, and among those who were, the Social Democratic representatives were both in clear majority, and also in higher positions, providing a larger opportunity to put the group's ideas into policy.

To add to this pattern, the early 20th century with its several short-lived governments showed a clear party-based pattern. Liberal, Agrarian and to an even stronger extent, Conservative governments and ministers continually held back or sometimes even reversed secularizing or authority-challenging moves, especially in the spheres of Church and education. The Social Democrats went the opposite way and pushed secular and autonomous measures forward where such opportunities arose. Examples of this are the rapid steps forward when the party could form new one-party governments, both after the Second World War, and when the Agrarians left the coalition government in 1957.

This does not mean that the autonomous trend only appeared within Social Democracy. Such ideals were reflected also in other parties, most notably the Liberals. Indeed, leading Social Democratic actors suggested several times during the early part of the research period that a Social Democrat-Liberal cooperation based on similar ideological views appeared as natural. A common view on autonomy as well as a general secular-individualistic perspective would, however, get the upper hand also elsewhere from late 1960s onwards.

This emphasizes the point that hegemony is not synonymous with monopoly. Other parties participated in the political discourse during the period, but over time, the Social Democratic view on religion, and also their changing view on individualism would gain acceptance within the other parties as well. This description of Social Democracy leading the direction among the other parties was confirmed by Olof Palme in general terms in 1956 and by Lisa Mattsson at the Social Democratic congress of 1975, in the latter case specifically regarding the family-political reforms.

It is worth noting that during the build-up phase, the Agrarians and the Conservatives expressed completely opposite values than in the Expanded Autonomy Model, where they opposed secular and individualistic values, and defended community-, authority- and Sacred-oriented values. The Social Democratic hegemony and gradual change of society can, however, be argued to have influenced a change of position among these parties, so that they towards the end of the period moved over into a more accepting view on the autonomous perspective. Worth noting is also that the most sidelined party, the Communists, would gradually gain influence in the late 1900s by moving inwards from the opposite end – from an even stronger Marxist radicalism and into an already established societal vision.

These findings reflect a central function of a political hegemony: it does not exclude all other parties from the scene, but it sets the stage. This is reflected in how the other parties gradually adapted to the Social Democratic views, and that their continued opposition found its place under the values shaped by Social Democracy. Such a strong political hegemony creates a cultural environment which in the Swedish example became strongly characterized by secularism and autonomy. In such a hegemonical situation, it becomes very difficult to participate in the political drama without adjusting to the scenery set by the Social Democrats.

12.3 Individual actors

During the research period, structural factors did indeed influence the political processes, most notably illustrated by how the international crises during the 1930s and early 1940s put larger political reforms on hold. Still, this study reveals that individual actors played a large role in how debate and political decisions evolved and permeated society.

The 44-year Social Democratic governance was led by only three Prime Ministers. Particularly the first two did not actively push the agenda in an affirming autonomous direction when holding the highest political office. There may be practical-political reasons for this, such as the responsibility attending the office of keeping both government, party and nation together.

Per Albin Hansson displayed during his time in office a distinctly Marxist perspective. He cannot be described to argue for affirmingly autonomous values, although he continually endorsed a view on authority that is generally critical, especially described in class-based terms. This value was, however, toned down considerably when he became Prime Minister. Hansson repeatedly proposed community-oriented values, under a Socialist, sometimes nationalistic but also pragmatic umbrella, expressed under the *folkhem* vision. It can be noted, though, that Hansson's endorsing view on duties in home, school and society would later be thoroughly changed into a new, more autonomous direction.

Tage Erlander initially followed in Per Albin Hansson's ideological footsteps, although toning down the Marxist ideology, presenting a vision that may be argued to be mainly community-based. Over time, especially in the aftermath of the 1960 programme, Erlander adopted a more positive view on autonomy, although in a cautious version. It cannot be either proven or excluded that this change of position came under the influence of his secretary Palme. More

evident, however, is that this view comes as a consequence of the autonomous turn in the 1960 programme revision.

Erlander's initial position on authority can be described as mildly critical, but during his time in office, this view was very rarely expressed at all. What is even more notable is how he towards the end of his office expresses a critical evaluation on how the old community has been broken, without being replaced with a new one.

Olof Palme, in his turn, differs considerably from his predecessors, regarding passion for autonomy-related values. Palme's initial view appears to have been more traditionally Marxist, with a leaning towards community-oriented values. Around 1960, however, Palme adopted an increasingly autonomous view, a position he continued to express and develop also after succeeding Erlander in 1969.

Olof Palme's position towards different types of authorities is consistently critical. He is also the Prime Minister who provides the most elaborate argumentation and description of the autonomous perspective, accepting large parts of the ultra-progressivism that would gain strength in party and government policy during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This view also includes an endorsement of a collectivistic version of individualism, where the individual is more closely connected to the state. This way, Palme rejects other – especially conservative – versions of individualism, and hereby becomes an important voice for the state-connected version of individualism that would eventually gain such influence.

The developed thinking in Palme's texts may also be a reason why the inner contradictions in terms appear as more striking for him than for other actors. For instance, Palme several times argues for the collective as the means to secure individual autonomy. It is, however, not evident in his texts which factor assists which, and whether this is actually feasible. Another example is how Palme repeatedly expresses his opposition to authorities, even though Palme himself could reasonably be regarded as the highest political authority in the nation, as the leader of Sweden's dominating political force since almost half a century. This paradox highlights how Social Democracy during its ultra-progressive phase under Palme were ready to affirm certain authorities, but combat others – i.e. those that appeared to threaten the independence of the individual.

Palme's way of conveying different meanings in central political terms may also explain the differing views on his legacy. In contrast to other scholars' description of Palme's time of

leadership as very radical, Sejersted describes Palme as less radical than other Social Democrats. This difference may be explained by Sejersted's more materialistic context, in this case dealing with nationalisation of banks, rather than with Palme's radicality as idealist.¹¹²⁸

Several reasons could explain why Olof Palme took such a radical perspective. It may emanate from the changing cultural perspective in the whole Western world, but it may also be the result of the many years during which Palme was able to develop and convey his ideological thinking as a leading Social Democrat without having to bear the responsibility of holding together government and nation. Regardless of the reason, Palme's reasoning assisted in completing Sweden's move over into ultra-progressivism.

Concerning the realm of the Sacred, the three Prime Ministers show a similar attitude. Religion is either a factor to distance oneself from or a factor to disregard altogether. Per Albin Hansson expresses this view on a few occasions, but his general lack of discussion reveals his disinterest or hostile attitude in the matter. After the formation of the association for Christian Socialists, Hansson establishes that their goal is to influence the Christians with Social Democracy, not the other way round.

Tage Erlander shows a similar disinterest in religious matters, even though he is very cautious about expressing this view openly. Behind the scenes, however, he expresses a deeper distance from religion, for instance when resigning from tasks related to Church policy or when criticising Dag Hammarskjöld's Christian religiosity.

Also in religious matters, the strongest reactions come from Olof Palme, who expresses strong disdain towards religion and Church. Being the last Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, with responsibility over Church matters, he still considers the Sacred realm to be of no interest in modern politics.

Regarding individualistic and autonomous values, particularly Per Albin Hansson expresses dislike towards those versions of individualism that resemble egoism and capitalism. This critical attitude becomes slightly weaker from Erlander, and even more from Palme, where an affirming autonomy instead grows very strong. It may be noted that Palme repeatedly praises values that appear non-individualistic, especially solidarity. This value is, however, generally expressed towards groups in other nations that can be described to live under some form of

¹¹²⁸ Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, 335.

authority. Thus, the autonomous perspective can be argued to form a basis also for community-relating concepts, e.g. solidarity.

When it comes to secular values, these appear to be a foundational view for all three Prime Ministers, insofar as they make it clear that religion does not have a place in 20th century Sweden. This is often done by evading religion and Christianity altogether in their reasoning, and especially Palme explicitly expresses in public how unimportant he considers religion to be. This way, the 44-year hegemony of Social Democratic leadership can be argued to have had a secularizing function, just by dismissing the Sacred perspective that was so central to other political parties, especially during the build-up phase.

The four other central individual actors have been selected because of their large political and ideological impact in the three spheres analysed in this project. Due to professional background and ideological focus, their rhetoric took slightly different paths. Arthur Engberg changed his position most during his active period from the 1910s to the 1940s, while his most frequent church-political opponent, Harald Hallén, unwaveringly maintained his reasoning during his half-century-long career as member of parliament. Before Stellan Arvidson received political influence as secretary in the 1946 School Commission, he generally kept a low public profile, except for anti-religious remarks when possible. From 1946 though, he continually pushed education policy in the secular direction he wishes. Alva Myrdal, finally, held on to a similar ideology from the 1930s to the 1970s, although with a long mid-term hiatus with fewer book publications and milder argumentation while holding international offices.

The arguments, emphases and strategies among these four differ, but some common themes appear. The most distinct common denominator is a generally negative view on authority. Despite their slightly different angles of criticism, these actors still spend the dominating part of their public publications expressing a negative view on authority in a broad sense – sometimes described in a traditional Marxist class perspective, sometimes towards traditional Christian ethics and traditions, sometimes towards an unspecified authority *per se*. For Hallén and Engberg, the authorities in question are most frequently found in Church and occasionally in school. For Arvidson, the balance is the opposite, with religious authorities within school the most important to battle. For Alva Myrdal, the authorities to be attacked are mostly found in norms and traditions applicable in the family sphere.

Another central part in their reasoning is an autonomous perspective. However, differences appear in how this ideal is proposed. Alva Myrdal provides the most thoroughly conceived and most consistently promoted autonomous philosophy. This applies all the way from her early uncompromising endorsement of the autonomy from all factors that may threaten individual independence.¹¹²⁹ Her early writings, especially *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* reflects a mindset resembling the perspective adopted in the 1960 party programme, fully pronounced in the Alva Myrdal equality report to the Social Democratic party. Finally, Alva Myrdal's endorsement of autonomy is also mirrored in her critical attitude towards the whole threefold antipole of community, authority and the Sacred, making her the most wide-ranging and arguably also the strongest source of influence for autonomy in this study. Here, it is particularly telling how the Alva Myrdal Report explicitly describes how Social Democracy is supposed to be the replacement for these three opposing values.

Apart from Arvidson, who almost never touches upon the theme of community, the three others distance themselves from a traditional community, especially as expressed within the family. Instead, they propose a traditional Marxist perspective, where community is expressed under a socialist umbrella. Alva and Gunnar Myrdal explicitly propose a new kind of collectivistic community that resonates with what is here described as state individualism.

The general view of the Sacred among these four actors may at a political level be described as rather similar, although with substantial differences in rhetoric. Hallén quite naturally voices the most respectful attitude towards the Christian faith, given his priesthood. Still, he underlines from the beginning that his theology is of a non-authoritarian, liberal kind. His view tends to become more traditional and less authority-critical over time, though.

Alva Myrdal, for her part, consistently distances herself from traditional religion, explicitly denouncing all religious expressions that counter her autonomous and non-authoritarian perspective. She also suggests a new form of religion without dogmatic content or authorities. With minor exceptions, she does not engage in directly hostile reasoning towards religion. In the School Commission, however, Alva Myrdal belongs to the camp arguing for the removal of the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions, and when appointed the first Minister of Church Affairs, she affirms the State Church and other Christian denominations when, and only when, they follow Social Democratic ideals. Her focus in these public speeches also

¹¹²⁹ Sejersted's short explanation of why gender relations were less radical in Norway than in Sweden highlights the centrality of individual actors: "Norway had no Alva Myrdal." *The Age of Social Democracy*. 92.

captures the party's vision of the State Church mainly as an arena to realize their own political programme.

The two most radically anti-religious actors in this study are Stellan Arvidson and the younger Arthur Engberg. Both these express a direct hostility towards Christianity, regarding faith content, Church authorities and role in society. Gradually, Engberg would take a more nuanced and eventually positive position towards those values and institutions he so strongly rejected in younger years. This may partly be described as a growing personal piety, but, at least during the 1920s, it may be interpreted as a strategical way of reaching a political and ideological goal. This is most clearly pronounced in Engberg's explicit ambition of letting the Church take the office of dechristianization, as described in his 1918 book on the abolition of the State Church, transforming it into the "Royal Bureau of Salvation Matters" as he argued in Parliament and General Synod about a decade later.

When Engberg assumes a more neutral tone, Stellan Arvidson takes over his position as the strongest critic of Christianity within Social Democracy. He presents this view in congress remarks, books, in launching a new religion-critical association and, last but not least, in his position as secretary in the School Commission. Arvidson's influence is also remarkable due to his habit of continually pushing the content of terms and decisions towards his ideological direction, including the meaning of the so central term *objective* teaching, changing this from denominational neutrality to a distancing from Christianity *per se*. The openly hostile attitude to religion, as well as Arvidson's praising attitude to Communist dictatorship, disturbed other party officials, including Prime Minister Erlander, and Arvidson was eventually removed from his position as parliamentarian.

Thus, Stellan Arvidson never reached the highest formal level of influence within the party or the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Similar situations applied for all these four actors: they never reached the absolute top of the party and were never included in the executive committee of the party board. Hallén gained large influence in parliament as chairman of the Standing Committee on the Constitution, and Arvidson received the influential position in the School Commission, but these were still not official positions of power within the party. Even if Engberg and Alva Myrdal were appointed ministers, they were so during periods where central changes in accordance with their ideology had already largely taken place.

The main secularizing influences of these individual actors can be described as twofold: Their early propagation of autonomous and Christianity-critical values opened a new perspective in Swedish political leadership, and thus pushed political and popular debate into a more radical direction. They also gained influence by taking part in party-internal and official government reports and practical policy and were thus able to exercise very large influence in the three spheres studied in this project, without being subjected to the same critical evaluation that actors in the highest political office are exposed to.

As a consequence of the values described above, these four actors do not express any particular leanings for or against individualism as separated from ideals of autonomy. Rather, individualistic values are typically used almost equivalently to autonomy.

Regarding secular ideals, the values and strategies in their respective texts do not follow the positions of the three Prime Ministers, who appear to view secularization as such a natural consequence of modern society that it is rarely worth mentioning. On the contrary, these four actively work in a secularizing direction, under the arguments of autonomy and criticism against authority.

Admittedly, Hallén occasionally worries about the secular development in Sweden, but when weighing pros and cons in the reform of the General Synod, he openly describes the democratization and replacement of Church authorities with elected laypersons to be of such importance that secularization is a tolerable consequence.

For Alva Myrdal and the older Engberg, secularization does not appear to be the primary end. Rather, it appears to be a desired consequence of a larger goal of removal of authority and introduction of autonomy. For Arvidson and the younger Engberg, secularization in all the three senses in Taylor's definition is more than an acceptable consequence; it is a goal in itself. This can also be seen in Engberg's active support for other actors who work in a secularizing direction, and in his church-political programme of 1925, intended to complete a full de-authorization and secularization of the State Church before its final abolishment. For Arvidson, the secularizing ideals are especially manifest in his books on the school reform process, where he focuses particularly on the Christian content in school and continually pushes in the direction of reducing this content. Altogether, though, all four of these arguably had a direct impact on different aspects of secularizing their nation.

Apart from these four dominating actors, some other individual politicians appear more briefly in influential political positions. Most often, these convey secular ideals or criticism of the Sacred along with autonomous values, particularly exchanging the traditional community within the family with more autonomous, non-authoritarian alternatives. These actors are sometimes even more outspoken in their anti-religious views than the four prominent ones, hereby giving further strength to the secular perspective in the political discourse.

This overview of individual actors indicates that these played a defining role in the process of secularization in 20th century Sweden. This was accomplished both by participating in realizing the retreat of religious influence in society, and by changing the general conditions of belief, especially in Church and school system, but also in public debate and central political documents. Typically, the first two Prime Ministers were reluctant to take a strong stand in ideological and larger reform processes. The largest influence from Per Albin Hansson and Tage Erlander rather rested on how they gave space for the other central actors to influence policy with their more authority-hostile and autonomous visions for church, education and family policy. Olof Palme's influence is doubly profound, as he could first spend several years developing and communicating his own autonomy-influenced vision, and then continue in this general vein in his role as Prime Minister, while also providing room for even more radical actors to influence the political process.

Several actors tend to adapt their messages, depending on audience or time in life. It is not unusual that actors adjust their messages to the audience they address; particularly telling examples given are Per Albin Hansson, Alva Myrdal and Olof Palme. Before audiences that can be expected to be more conservative, a more traditional tone is used, and vice versa for more radical audiences.

These differences in tone could, however, be better explained as a strategy to give a good impression before each audience than an actual ambivalence of opinion. My analysis of the source material rather indicates that individual actors displayed stronger ideological coherence than ambivalence. The most obvious exception is Arthur Engberg, whose position towards the Sacred changes considerably over time. The general conclusion is, however, that most actors maintained a consistent line of reasoning regarding autonomy during their active careers.

One interesting phenomenon, although in the periphery of this study, is the reflections several of the actors in this study share in old age, sometimes critical towards the effects of their reforms, or occasionally changing views altogether. Alva Myrdal discusses how the new school programme has resulted in lower responsibility and a weakened basic knowledge among Swedish school children.¹¹³⁰ She also reflects critically on how the radical feminist struggle has turned into man-hating, lesbian movements, and how women in their quest for independence have come to portray the life at home as too boring, and also on her own career choice to spend so much time away from her own children.¹¹³¹

Liberal participant in Grupp 222 Gabriel Romanus also admits when analysing the long days, large groups and tough environment in his grandchildren's nursery that this made him change his mind concerning childcare.¹¹³²

After having left office at the beginning of the World War, Arthur Engberg's previous hostility towards Church and Christianity, which during the 1930s had changed into a more diplomatic relation, metamorphosed into friendship.¹¹³³ During the 1940s, he presented speeches and texts that were distinctly positive towards faith and awe before a creator God, a spirited preaching in churches, the value of studying the Bible and "a deep and irresistible truth in the Christian doctrine of salvation".¹¹³⁴ When Arthur Engberg passed away at the young age of 56, the local priest stated that Engberg died as a Christian believer, after having received communion.¹¹³⁵

These examples are not mentioned to argue that these actors would have rejected their previous arguments, but at the very least, it signals that politicians' positions may change over time, and the radicalism of younger years sometimes appears to change after leaving a political office.

¹¹³⁰ Lars G Lindskog, *Alva Myrdal: Förnuftet måste segra!* (Stockholm: Sveriges Radios förlag, 1981), 80.

¹¹³¹ Interview in *Sociologi i dag* 2:1979, in Åse and Hirdman, *Alva Myrdal: "Något kan man väl göra"*, 80f, 86.

¹¹³² Hirdman, *Revolution på svenska*, 62.

¹¹³³ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 256.

¹¹³⁴ "en djup och oemotståndlig sanning i den kristna frälsningsläran" Radio speech 12 April 1941; articles in *Vecko-Journalen* 7 September 1941, 23 August 1942, 27 September 1942. In Engberg, *Tal och skrifter*, III, 287-304.

¹¹³⁵ Beltzén and Beltzén, *Arthur Engberg – publicist och politiker*, 256.

12.4 The three spheres

Values in Swedish 20th century politics did not merely exist on paper, they were also embedded in practical political change. Here is where the values expressed in party programmes and by individual actors could be put into practice in legislative texts. The three spheres where the value-based development around autonomy, secularism and its threefold antithesis had their strongest implications are church, education and family policy.

The major church-political processes took place from the time when the Social Democrats first gained control over the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, up to the 1958 confirmation of the political decision to introduce female clergy. The school reform processes began in the early 1900s, but did not gain traction until after the Second World War, coming to full fruition with the second curriculum for the new *grundskola* in 1969. Family policy, finally, did not see any ground-breaking changes until the latter half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s.

In these spheres, the direction of the political discourse depended on several factors, including visionary and opinion-making texts, as well as larger structural and cultural changes in society. The processes in government and parliament can still be considered vital, not least because this is where the actual legislation took place.

In Church policy, the Social Democrats entered government power with a Marxist-influenced view on religion, along with a particularly Swedish view of the State Church as a reflection of reactionary and authoritarian forces. This, combined with the personal convictions among leading individual actors made Church policy an area where arguments and actions to a large extent would rest on party politics.

Some changes in the Church of Sweden were due to a general need for modernization of the organization, not dependent on government colour. The argumentation behind these reforms did, however, reveal different values. Liberal and, to an even greater extent, Conservative governments up till 1932 made efforts to roll back Social Democrat-initiated changes, motivating this with a wish to preserve the authority of church tradition and letting the Church adhere to its central mission. Social Democratic initiatives did, however, rest more on arguments critical towards both authority and the Sacred. This became especially notable in the 1950 government report on female clergy. All pushes for female clergy were not based on secular motives; female pastors had been common in several free churches, and some

arguments were based on Christian arguments. Crucial in this study, though, is how the leading political actors repeatedly stated that Scriptural authority could no longer be considered a valid base in church-political decisions

Over the decades, a debate recurred on the autonomy of the State Church. This discussion may at first glance give an impression contrary to the general pattern. However, even when autonomous values are embraced by leading Social Democrats, these still tend to oppose the autonomy of the Church, while the non-Socialist parties tend to defend this. The reason for this seemingly reversed argumentation is that in this example, the particular *word* is used differently, but the *concept* remains the same: the Social Democratic church-political vision is to disconnect the Church from the Sacred-based authority of Scripture and church tradition and reform it according to the same structure as secular society. Several actors state explicitly that this would be the most efficient way to exert a Social Democratic influence over the State Church institution.

A clear church-political programme was formulated by Arthur Engberg in 1925, when his most vitriolic rhetoric had given way to a more strategic effort to reform the State Church. His programme took actual effect as follows:

1. Merging of the civil and the clerical municipalities: a process where local decision-making within the church was adapted to the secular legislation step by step.
2. Allowing the right to freely leave the State Church: introduced in the Freedom of Religion Act of 1951.
3. Abolishing the veto of the General Synod: also a process repeatedly proposed by leading Social Democratic actors, with a vital step taken in 1949 when lay majority was introduced in the Synod, practically realized in 1958 when a new Synod accepted the government's suggestion and reversed its previous rejection of female clergy.
4. Removing the constitutional demand of the confession of the pure Evangelical creed: also included in the 1951 Act.
5. Reshaping the teaching of religion in schools in order to teach this subject on the same principal foundation as other school subjects: a process from the 1946 School Commission, realized through gradual moves and then finalized in the curriculum for the new *gymnasium* in 1965 and four years later in the *grundskola*.

6. Disestablishing the State Church: Engberg's final step, when all the others were accomplished, was postponed due to political opposition after Alva Myrdal's report but eventually realized in 2000.

Just before the disestablishment of the State Church, the last minister for Church Affairs, Social Democrat Marita Ulvskog, who declared herself an unbeliever, participated in a conversation with Archbishop KG Hammar. Here, she declared twice that the main fear before the disestablishment was that the Church of Sweden would be transformed from a *folkkyrka* to a church "only for believers" and that the urge to avoid this had been central in government policy.¹¹³⁶ This indicates that Engberg's vision, which in central areas coincided with Harald Hallén's, was central in this process also during the period following this study.

A striking factor in the political discussion is how invisible the free churches are, given the strength of the revival movement during especially the first half of the 20th century. The explanation seems to be that the Social Democrats have difficulties relating to this sphere, which functions largely unconnected to the political world. Still, the free churches often agreed with the Social Democratic ambitions to reduce the influence of the State Church. It is thus possible that the free churches made small relative gains in influence, compared to the Church of Sweden, but simultaneously they may also involuntarily have assisted in the party's larger vision of secularization.

One other recurring theme in Social Democratic church policy is their strategy of communicating the gradual reduction of clerical authority in deliberately soothing words, explaining the often unpopular changes as ways to reduce workload and assist the Church. Such conscious diplomatic efforts, apparently intended to calm opposition, were not equally frequent in education and family policy. The process of replacing a Divine authority over church matters with an autonomous-democratic authority, was however applied also to the school sphere.

Unlike the church-political processes, education policy did not primarily deal with changes in organization, but rather in content. Indeed, the formation of a new comprehensive primary school was central, but ideologically, this could not be separated from value-based proposals. Therefore, the textual analysis in this sphere does not deal solely with government reports and parliament actions, but to a large extent on national curricula.

¹¹³⁶ "för enbart bekännare", Kerstin Vinterhed, "Framtidens kyrka – En medvandrare," in *Fri att vara kyrka* (Regeringskansliet: Kulturdepartementet, Svenska kyrkan, 1999), 11-14.

As in Church policy, the school-political development followed party-political lines. From Värner Rydén and the first Social Democratic-shaped teaching plan of 1919, a tug-of-war arose over which view would get the upper hand in reforming the Swedish school system and its content. Also in this sphere, Liberal, but especially Conservative actors tried when in control over the department of Ecclesiastical Affairs to push policies in a direction more positive towards authority in the form of Christian tradition and the teacher as professional.

As in Church policy, larger school reforms were put on hold during the 1930s and early 1940s. Alva Myrdal continued her radically autonomy-proposing writing, and the real beginning of the reform process was the 1946 School Commission. Here, though, the division along party lines became less clear. This was especially decisive in the crucial vote within the Commission, when two Social Democrats, including new minister Weijne, who replaced Erlander as chairman, voted to preserve the role of the Sacred in school. This kept the teaching of Christianity and morning devotions for two more decades.

Following this, particularly Stellan Arvidson made continuous efforts to move debate and opinion away from the Commission's actual decision. His efforts proved successful, insofar as his Christianity-distanced position gradually gained strength. This was also the case with Alva Myrdal's more autonomous vision. Both of these were gradually included in the teaching plan of 1955, and to increasingly greater degrees incorporated in the curricula of 1962, 1965 and 1969. The inclusion of words such as "objective" in reference to the teaching of Christianity and the teachers' general obligation not to "authoritatively force a certain view on the pupils" proved crucial, as especially Arvidson got the opportunity to shape the practical interpretation of these, building on his own position.

Thus, an increasingly secular or Sacred-distanced as well as autonomous mindset gradually grew stronger in the legislative documents during the 1950s and 1960s. A pivotal moment in the process appears to have been when the Social Democratic government disregarded the very large popular reaction where over 2.1 million people – equalling 42% of Swedish voters – signed the petition to keep the teaching of Christianity. The secular leap was particularly strong in the first curriculum for the new *gymnasium* in 1965, and the autonomous leap strongest in LGR 69. This transition into autonomous and secular values is mirrored also in the reformation of teacher colleges, where Stellan Arvidson played a prominent role. This ultra-progressive view was supported by publicly expressed values from new Prime Minister Palme as well as from the Alva Myrdal Report to the Social Democratic party, which in its

turn reflected the autonomous vision from *Kris i befolkningsfrågan*. This outcome reflected the visions for education presented in the Social Democratic party programme during the whole period.

In family policy, the process of change remained slow until the mid-1960s. Thereafter, the development was pervasive. The autonomous values in Alva Myrdal's publications were only partly included in the population reports of the 1930s. In the early 1960s, the traditional, community-based view of the family as a unit still dominated Social Democratic policy and documents. The 1964 report on women's affairs did however, despite its general community-oriented perspective, present a small opening for a more autonomous perspective.

In the mid-1960s, the Social Democratic family policy finally tipped over into the autonomous values proposed in the 1960 programme and in the writings from Alva Myrdal and Olof Palme, who had also come to adopt the autonomous position. Along with the Alva Myrdal Report, the explicitly socialist booklet *Familjen i framtiden*, government reports and other contributions, Swedish family policy developed an ultra-progressive perspective. This was also a position the other party programmes would draw closer to towards the end of the research period. The influence from the mixed *Grupp 222* may, based on the archived information, mainly be considered to be indirect. The group was dominated by Social Democrats, and only to a smaller degree influenced by Liberal politicians.

The ultra-progressive view included a rejection of authority in upbringing, a very strong endorsement of personal autonomy and of the independence of family members from each other, especially in financial terms. This materialistic view of the family is also reflected in the description of the Sacred as a feature belonging to the past, the few times it is mentioned.

However, it is worth noting that the three spheres contain a tension regarding what direction to take: the Social Democratic policy on church and school was that religion should be kept in the private sphere, and they also took defining steps to disassociate church and school from the public religious authority. Their position towards families, though, went in the opposite direction, where family and upbringing of children was gradually moved from the private into the public sphere. Here, the autonomous motive became the litmus test for deciding how a particular sphere ought to be reformed: any change that could make the individual more autonomous from community, authority and Sacred would typically gain support, regardless of what practical direction it took.

Altogether, the general pattern displays a development where the dominating values during the first decades of Social Democratic hegemony reflected an anti-authoritarian and view that pushed society in a secular direction. These values remained also in the 1960s, meanwhile the autonomous perspective began to outgrow other values, replacing a Marxist-based positive view of community with the independence of the individual gradually taking the role of the most central value of all.

These values were most influentially proposed by Alva Myrdal, Stellan Arvidson and Olof Palme, and appear to have been realized in church, education and family policy when – although not before – it appeared politically feasible to move forward. As soon as such a situation arose, a Sacred, authority- and community-founded basis for these spheres was swiftly exchanged for opposite values of secularism and autonomy.

12.5 In relation to previous research

12.5.1 General trends

In the early 1900s, Sweden was an agriculturally dominated nation with a strong Lutheran heritage. A century later, this nation had adopted what in the WVS stands out as the world's arguably most secular-individualistic values. This development calls for a deeper analysis of how the Swedish example and its political discourse relates to previous research, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the development in 20th century Sweden, and thus also of value changes in other nations.

During the Social Democratic hegemony, Sweden went through a process of change that may be likened to Ronald Inglehart's term, a "silent revolution". The shift into a culture that, at least in some aspects, may be considered ultra-progressive did not arise through popular rebellion and change of power. On the contrary, it came into effect within a democratic system, led by a strong governing party.

This historical-descriptive study shows that the Swedish political discourse expressed an active striving to shape a Swedish culture that Thurfjell, Berggren/Trägårdh, Petterson and others describe as particularly individualistic – both in a general and a more specific, religious sense. They also confirm a striving towards what for example Inglehart/Welzel and Kittelmann Flensner describe as a present-day secular mindset, combined with an individualistic view on religion. This analysis on political values also complements Jens

Ljunggren's study on political emotions within Social Democracy. Both our studies show distinct changes in how the party leadership expressed values and emotions: during the opposition years, anger and utopian Marxism remained at the centre of Social Democracy, but was replaced by Hansson's pragmatism and later Erlander's and Palme's different strategies to reform society, while managing dissatisfaction and worry, and still succeeding to stay in power.

Part of this "silent revolution" correspond to value changes that Inglehart notes in other nations. Some of the Swedish value changes originated in cultural spheres outside of politics. Some political initiatives, especially the autonomous focus, rested not only on socialist, but also on liberal ideals. However, it is beyond doubt that Social Democracy played a defining role in the process when secularism and autonomy gained their positions as central political values in Sweden.

An evaluation of how these processes relate to similar ones in other nations goes beyond the scope of this study. However, Hans Keman describes the Swedish Social Democratic Party as internationally unique in terms of opportunity to govern and realize their policy over such a long period. He also describes the Swedish party as very far left-wing, being even further left-wing radicalized from 1960. This description of the Swedish example corresponds well with the source material, not least from the radicalization during the 1960s. Given the party's long hegemony and its strategies and perseverance when moving the political processes forward, the Swedish Social Democrats were indeed very successful in accomplishing legislation and reforms in both church, education and family policy, thus realizing the visions presented in party programmes and by leading individual actors.

Indeed, there are areas where values seem to collide, a theme also touched upon by other scholars. One is the apparent paradox of the autonomy, with a basic vision that can arguably be described as liberal, rather than socialist. Both Heywood and Keman argue that there are ideological strands in Social Democracy, especially in its individual-centred versions, which lie close to central liberal values. This view corresponds well with the Swedish example of individualizing school and family.

In comparison with Bellah's four strands of individualism, it is evident that the Social Democratic leadership in Sweden never connected to a Biblical version of individualism. Rather, they repeatedly reacted negatively towards political values understood as resting on a

Biblical basis. Bellah's second, republican strand is less relevant in the Swedish context, but there are clear connections with his description of a utilitarian or expressive individualism, as Social Democracy from the period around the 1960 programme revision distanced itself from a traditional Marxism and took on a new, more autonomous value culture.

It appears striking how such a left-wing-oriented party could take on such an individual-oriented vision, which intuitively lies much closer to liberal ideals. This example opens up for a scholarly discussion on the deeper relationship between socialist and liberal ideas, and also whether Social Democratic and authority-critical ideals, if these gain the upper hand in the political process, may carry a tendency to tip over into autonomous and eventually ultra-progressive views. Here, there is good reason to further develop Esping-Andersens schematic picture of Sweden as a socialist nation, compared to a conservative Germany and a liberal USA. It is evident that 20th century Sweden took several steps in a direction motivated by socialism. It is, however, also evident that some of these steps, especially in education and family policy, were built on ideals also found in liberalism.

During the latter part of the research period, Social Democracy turned away from a community-oriented understanding of Marxism, into a more autonomous version. This also constituted a disconnection from what Keman describes as possible connections to Christian ideals, most notably community, along with a continuous secularizing process moving over into an ultra-progressive position, where Christian arguments disappeared from the political discourse, and where religion was described as only belonging to the past. This move into an outspokenly autonomous position also meant that Social Democracy largely abandoned the community-centricity that otherwise could have functioned as an essential common factor between an anti-Christian Marxism and Christendom, further distancing the former vision from the latter.

The source material from *Grupp 222* reveals some informal connections to Liberal politicians, although the Social Democratic actors consistently stayed in control of the political processes. It is also evident how the party programmes of the two conservative Parties, later renamed the Centre Party and the Moderates, followed along in a secular-individualistic direction, especially towards the end of the period. This confirms Hylén, Aronson and others who present similar conclusions about how these parties adapted to the cultural shift during the 1960s and 1970s. As the Social Democrats played such a leading role in Swedish politics, and carried out their reforms in church and education policy, they can be argued to have used this

hegemony to alter the basic values in society and among the other parties, replacing a positive view on authority and the Sacred with a more secular and autonomous perspective.

This conclusion also connects to the market model, which suggests that secularization of a culture does not arise primarily as the result of a weakened demand, but as the result of actions weakening the religious supply in a nation. This was evidently the case in the school system, where both party programmes and individual actors proclaimed an explicitly secularizing aim. In Church policy, the process was rather a case of secularizing the Church of Sweden from within by altering the supply, replacing a Sacred-oriented focus based on the authority of Scripture and church tradition with a new democratic, autonomy-leaning foundation.

This pattern corresponds to Norris and Inglehart's conclusion that when religious institutions experience an enlarged pluralism and autonomy *from* the state, this provides a stronger religious supply, and thus becomes a secularism-reducing factor.¹¹³⁷ This also underlines the need to establish whether an alleged autonomous striving has a deliberate secular-individualistic motive, or whether it is actually an aspiration to liberate religion from politics and put it under its traditional Sacred canopy. Here, Norris and Inglehart explicitly mention Sweden as an example of the former.

12.5.2 The example of Swedish state individualism

One paradox that regularly appears in the material is the combination of a strong individualism coupled with an equally strong connection to the state. This practical solution, by Berggren and Trägårdh labelled the *Swedish state individualism*, is promoted in the political discourse, although not under this explicit wording.

Throughout this period, different understandings of individualism appeared among the Social Democratic leadership. The scholarly discussion of different forms of individualism also applies to the political discourse in Sweden. During the build-up phase, leading Social Democratic actors, especially Per Albin Hansson, criticized individualism when understood as egoism or capitalism. Not until a new, autonomous understanding of individualism was introduced and adopted did individualism change from an opposed to an endorsed value. Both these understandings differ from cultures with other views on individualism, for instance the

¹¹³⁷ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 229f.

United States, where the individual typically connects to the Sacred and smaller communities, while the Swedish individualism under a collectivist vision took the form of state individualism.

The non-socialist parties did, however, endorse other types of individualism, with the Agrarians and Conservatives proposing a conservative-leaning individualism, and the Liberals a liberal type. It is, however, noteworthy that Social Democratic actors leaning towards an affirming autonomy endorsed a version of individualism that could match both a liberal and a socialist understanding. This future merge of socialism and liberalism was strikingly well predicted by Ernst Wigforss in the early 1940s. Gradually, this individualism, attached to and guaranteed by the state, gained force and eventually became hegemonic within Social Democracy and thus also in Sweden.

The Swedish example mirrors Inglehart and Welzel's analysis that a rejection of authority, which proved so central in this process, typically comes in two steps: first comes a secularization *of* authority which, along with rising self-expression values, tends to lead to a second step of emancipation *from* authority. This also connects with Inglehart and Welzel's view that a secular culture does not automatically reject all forms of authority; it just changes from a religious authority to a bureaucratic state. Family policy was one area where this view was most clearly communicated.

These findings also highlight the complexity and ambiguity of autonomy as a political value. Even though Sweden is a nation deeply influenced by autonomy, its double consequences may be a subject for further discussion. Autonomy may evolve into an individualistic secularism within the borders of human freedom. It may, however, also have a tendency turn into uniformism and intolerance, and the need to handle such tendencies could be a central discussion in democratic societies worldwide.

The Swedish example deepens Seligman's idea of how individual liberation from authorities may ultimately collapse into either a totalitarian collectivism or individualistic liberalism. Here, the Swedish state individualism may explain how a new vision can be realized in a culture – in this case a socialist version of individualism, building on collectivistic values and measures, but partly also on liberal ideas. Robert Nelson has portrayed Social Democratic values as materialistic, rather than idealistic, a description which matches well the materialistic perspective that particularly Olof Palme communicated strongly. Nelson's

description of how the Swedish Social Democrats despite popular opposition could introduce radical governmental measures by pointing to a new unifying faith also connects to my findings that the party used different strategies to handle opposition in each sphere.

Consequently, state individualism could also be a strategy to manage opposite political values. Olof Palme stated that the question is not whether or not we should have collectivism, but rather what *kind* of collectivism we should choose. Palme repeatedly moves back and forth between double goals: Sometimes, he paints a basic goal of collectivism, eventually finalized in an individualistic version, while at other occasions, he expresses the autonomous goal as most central.

Such efforts to balance apparently contradictory ideals reflects a challenge for state individualism. This also illustrates how the relations between individual, family and state (as illustrated in diagram 4) underwent changes in Sweden during the period, continually binding the individual closer to the state, while simultaneously distancing the individual from family and other non-stately communities. Here, Palme's transferral of solidarity away from the local and family-connected context over to a global context – indicating a worldwide, yet more impersonal version of community – also resonates with David Martin's picture of how an individualistic and atomistic religiosity downgrades solidarity on the local level.

This particularly Swedish attachment between individual and state also provides an explanation to why Inglehart's hypothesis about value changes in advanced industrial societies does not apply in all societies. Inglehart predicts a decline in hierarchical authority – which is evidently the case in 20th century Sweden – and also a declining confidence in national institutions. In a state-individualistic perspective, the latter does not automatically follow when the individual becomes closely connected to the state and its institutions. Such a decline may indeed appear natural for institutions associated with authority, but not in public institutions upholding the system of state individualism.

In order to follow how the autonomous concept evolved during the research period, it can be noted that central political terms can carry different meanings. Words like democracy, freedom and solidarity may be understood under a community-centred umbrella. This is also how these terms were used during the earlier, more orthodox Marxism, e.g. by Per Albin Hansson. Such political terms may, however, as Keman states, also be understood as resonating with a Christian worldview. This interpretation appears most notably in the party

programmes from the Agrarians and Conservatives. Among the governing Social Democrats, though, this understanding is avoided. Over time, e.g. from Palme and in the formation of the ultra-progressive school, words like freedom and democracy moved over into an authority-critical and autonomous context, generally disconnected from the Sacred or the smaller community, such as the family.

12.5.3 Political values in interplay

This defining period in Swedish history was shaped by actors with sometimes very different deliberations and values, from Stellan Arvidson's radical East Germany-related socialism, to pragmatic and sometimes reform-reluctant actors like Tage Erlander. For actors like Alva Myrdal, secularism, individualism and autonomy were deliberately propagated values. For others, like Ernst Wigforss, such values were indirect parts of a general promotion of other values, such as equality, solidarity, or an endorsement of Marxism as such.

It can, however, be underlined that value-related words can take different meanings. My analysis has shown that it is possible to distinguish between such different meanings. Sejersted's reflection that Per Albin Hansson never expanded what he meant by the very central term *democracy* can be used also for several other central terms in this study, such as freedom of religion, which is commonly used, but never thoroughly defined.

Freedom in general is a central word for in several ideologies, and can thus carry very different meanings. As Sejersted notes, Social Democracy harbours several understandings of freedom, similar to Berlin's discussion on differing concepts of liberty. Party programmes and other texts display somewhat differing interpretations of the term. Early on, freedom is typically described in economic terms, but the autonomous understanding of the concept clearly grows over time, most distinctly captured in the key phrases in the 1960 party programme.

Equality is a central word in Social Democracy during the whole period. During the build-up phase, the sources mainly express the word in its Marxist meaning, but over time, a more liberalism-inspired, autonomous understanding becomes more important when proposing equality, e.g. in school and family. Indeed, Alva Myrdal's report titled *Equality* builds strongly on autonomous values. This indicates that also in areas focusing on economy and other traditional Marxist issues, autonomous values tend to dominate all political areas during

the ultra-progressive phase. This is also evident in the pamphlet *The Family in the Future*, which highlights a socialist version of equality both in the workplace and in the family.

Karin Hadenius and Francis Sejersted are two of the scholars who most distinctly point out the continuous struggle between the opposing values of equality and freedom – the latter typically described as freedom of choice, or, in Sejersted's words, "the liberation of the individual". This struggle reflects the relationship between autonomous and community-oriented values that is central in this study. The process of freedom replacing equality that other scholars describe during the 1960s and 1970s, is mirrored in what I during the same period describe as the triumph of an affirming autonomy, where community-oriented values were replaced by individual-oriented values in Social Democratic policy.

Authority stands out as a focus of criticism during the whole research period, although quite differently communicated among the actors. For some, such as Ernst Wigforss, his opposition was mainly expressed in Marxist terms, and directed against financial authorities, while others, like Alva Myrdal directed her opposition against all factors that could function as authorities above the independent individual. Especially for Prime Ministers, certain types of authority could also be defended, at least when understood as protecting the nation and democratic system.

Towards the end of Seligman's *Modernity's Wager*, he returns to the relationship between autonomy and authority, arguing that if future generations wish to build a more rigorous and morally thick notion of autonomy, it needs to take authority seriously. If the secularization paradigm is indeed incorrect, Seligman argues, a sustainable return to religious orientations must be accompanied by a sustainable *heteronomous* authority, instead of the individual-centred authority so central in the late-modern autonomous project.¹¹³⁸ His conclusion is not to be evaluated here, but it shows that the word authority can be used differently, depending on whether it denotes an external or an autonomous authority.

Community was also articulated differently by different politicians. During the build-up phase, Per Albin Hansson and others promoted a *folkhem* community, built on class and nation, but also of family. Decades later, Olof Palme argued for a global community with the oppressed, for instance in Vietnam, meanwhile separating the local community of the family. Here, the *folkhem* community was compatible with a conservative view, while the Palme's globalized

¹¹³⁸ Ibid. 125f, 141.

community coincided more with an autonomous perspective. Likewise, the meaning of *individualism* changed during this period, from being described as an egoistic, capitalist value, it later became a positive value, incorporated into the autonomous ideal.

Even the term *autonomy* itself must be analysed to see whether it expresses truly autonomous ideals, or the opposite, e.g. when Social Democrats oppose the autonomy of the Church to follow a higher, non-political authority, or when Sejersted describes the Myrdals' family vision as disregarding autonomy, in the sense of hindering the family unit to be autonomous from state interventions.¹¹³⁹ Here, too, it becomes vital to evaluate whether an affirming autonomy is proposed, or if it is rather a wish to connect closer to opposing factors of community, authority or the Sacred.

All this illustrates that political communication can emphasize values very differently, depending on time and situation. Traditional socialist values such as equality were proposed by leading actors during the whole period, although sometimes with different meanings. Over time, traditional Marxist interpretations from e.g. Wigforss and Hansson gave way for new interpretations, e.g. from Alva Myrdal.

A central question in this study has been whether autonomous motives were propagated in a political discourse covering multiple areas, arguments and deliberations. This has raised the need for a tool to analyse underlying values, sometimes veiled under other terms. The content of political terms may differ strongly, and words which may at first glance appear similar may conceal underlying opposing values, and vice versa. My hope is that the model used in this dissertation may provide a deepened understanding of political values in a very secular-individualistic culture. It is impossible to understand the values among the political leadership in what would become the world's most secular-individualistic nation without taking autonomy into the picture.

12.5.4 Correlation or causation between values?

Regarding possible causal connections between secular and autonomous values, the source material does not give a straightforward answer, even if some trends appear. Sweden's role as a particular example of secular individualism – as described by Bjereld/Demker and others on a general level and by Popenoe, Eberhart and others within family policy – does not come into full bloom until around 1960. Up till then, at least two leading political parties strongly

¹¹³⁹ Ibid. 242.

proposed a Christian basis for society, while the Social Democratic reform process mainly operated within Church policy. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, the secular-individualistic vision expanded greatly also within education and family policy.

The Inglehart/Welzel chart shows that other Protestant nations have a cultural trend similar to – although not as strong as – Sweden. Scholars such as David Martin and Robert Nelson also point out how the rise of a modern secularized view of the individual has taken inspiration from Christian, particularly Protestant roots. All in all, previous research points to a correlation between Protestantism and secularism. This study does not aspire to prove a causal relationship between these. At the very least, though, my findings show that even though the Social Democrats built on a distinctly secular mindset, one of the central spheres to express this was in relation to the Lutheran state church. Moreover, the party utilized the church to exchange a Bible-based authority for a new, political vision for clergy and church organization, resembling those within secular authorities.

This project does not primarily focus upon Charles Taylor's first two aspects of secularization in terms of religion's retreat and decline in public and individual life, but focuses on his third aspect – the change in the conditions of belief, which may obviously eventually end up in the first two aspects. A deeper such analysis lies beyond this project, but the evidence from the WVS gives good reason to describe Sweden at the turn of the millennium as not only a very individualistic but also a very secular nation.

More interesting in this project is Taylor's viewpoint that a secular turn is enabled by the rise of a humanist alternative. Such a striving appears as central in the texts from this period, proposed with particular force by Arthur Engberg and Harald Hallén in the early part of the period and by Stellan Arvidson in the latter part. Despite differences in their framing of arguments in Church and school policy, the adoption of a secular humanist alternative was still performed, although in quite different ways. It is also notable how two opposite individualizing trends within Christianity played a significant part in this battle between authorities and the path towards secular individualism. From Jarlert's description of one trend in Swedish religiosity with an increased focus of personal faith, and another with a liberal understanding of Christianity, partly developing towards atheism, it appears clear that the second trend, mediated through Social Democracy, got the upper hand in the Church of Sweden during this period. Such a development was also fully in accordance with the demands from Engberg and other actors during the first half of the century.

The argumentation from parties and individual actors during the research period points to a new vision, pushing the Church away from Divine authority to a democratic one, increasingly based upon the idea of autonomy. This confirms D.E. Weston's suggestion that the Social Democrats were so successful in secularizing the Church because the transition into a new source of authority was negotiated so smoothly, without large conflict.

Finally, it can be underlined that public political texts, ranging from party programmes, opinion-making from individual actors, as well as government reports and other legislative documents reveal that secularism and autonomy were indeed communicated publicly in the open political discourse in 20th century Sweden. Further studies in non-public sources, such as diaries, private conversations et cetera may provide deeper insights in the political actors' actual motivations and relations between cause and effect – motivations which may in actuality have been even more important in the political actors' tactical considerations. Such motivations also appear in internal sources used here, e.g. in the internal protocols from the Social Democratic programme revision processes.

12.5.5 Influences upon church, education and family policy

These three areas in society were not only central in Social Democratic political discourse. There are also repeatedly highlighted in earlier research as central spheres for societal change, with school and family in Sejersted's words being "the two most important arenas of socialization".

The scholarly view of early 20th century Church policy as largely a struggle between Arthur Engberg and Harald Hallén has strong support in the source material. However, their actions in parliament and government reports indicate that their differences were more of a practical nature, and their views also tended to merge over time. Engberg soon altered his initial suggestion of immediately abolishing the State Church, and adopted his own version of Hallén's proposed aim for democratization, where the leadership within the theological departments and the Church of Sweden could be exchanged for people less rooted in Lutheran orthodoxy. Hereby, the Church was moved away from the authority of the Sacred into a new authority of human democracy. This new authority also appears to have been decisive in the reform that gave rise to the largest Church-related debate after the World War, namely the introduction of female clergy.

An overview of the defining church-political discussions on party congresses and in parliament validates Björn Ryman's description that the organization of the State Church and the appointment of clergy were the dominating themes during this period, and that the pushes for change came from party-political actors, not from theologians or the Church itself. The development within Church policy also indicates some truth in Annelie Winell's point that the deregulation of institutional religion forms a basis for individualization, not least in religion. Such a deregulation also took place during the period, as the decision power over the Church was gradually moved away from traditional and Sacred authorities over to political and secular authorities.

It is, however, apparent how autonomous ideals continually seem to run parallel with the privatization of religion, expressed already in the first Social Democratic programme. Together with the further programmes' consistently distanced view towards the Lutheran State Church, this indicates that both a confronting and an affirming autonomy were used by the Social Democrats to secularize the State Church, by democratizing it and dethroning possible authorities therein. This strained relationship between Social Democracy and Protestant churches may well have appeared also in other European nations, but Sweden is of particular interest, as the political takeover of the Church was effectuated both on congregational and national level, and because the combination of autonomous ideals and religion-hostile secularism took such a central role in this nation.

Robert Nelson argues that Social Democracy aspired to provide a new secular salvation to replace the old Lutheranism. He and Daniel Alvunger use almost similar expressions – a *secular Lutheranism* or a *secularized Lutherdom* to describe how a new Social Democratic ideology connected to the existing Protestant heritage. Such an expression is a valid description of how secular political values took over in the State Church. There are, however, also clear disagreements between Christian and secular worldviews; by Stellan Arvidson described as “incompatible”.

Therefore, the relationship between Lutheranism and Social Democracy may be described as displaying both continuity and contrast. There are connections to a Christian framework, most clearly through the ambition to use the State Church as a tool for societal reform. The reform ambitions were, however, of such anti-religious nature that the contrast to a traditional Lutheran worldview can be considered more prevalent than any features of continuity.

In education policy, the Sacred perspective did indeed win the crucial vote in the 1946 School Commission by the narrowest of margins. Still, the impact especially from Arvidson ended up creating a secular basis for the school system, where the individual pupil was eventually made the new authority, replacing older ones, rooted in religion and the authority of the teacher. The change of content in the national curricula substantiates Åke Isling's view that democracy, understood as equality, gradually became the dominating norm in school. Formulations from the School Commission and national curricula indicate that these values first appeared as criticism towards authority, and later as an affirming version of autonomy.

These findings underline Karin Hadenius' discussion on the dilemma of how the emphasis on autonomy made it difficult to combine equality with freedom of choice. Inger Enkvist argues that this balancing exercise ended up leaning towards a socialist version of collectivism. However, the ultra-progressive vision in LGR 69 arguably increased the emphasis also on liberal ideals. An overview of the actual development points to a political wish to resolve school-political challenges by continually pushing anti-authoritarian and autonomous values, arguing that this would eventually lead to the desirable consequences – thus displaying a utopian perspective.

The more radical demands towards the end of the research period confirm Jon Pierre's description that activist individual actors received a larger influence towards the end of Social Democratic government. An overview of the whole research period indicates that the ultra-progressive vision, most strongly proposed in family policy, slowly gained force in the background meanwhile an increasingly autonomous perspective got hold over other spheres of society. This suggests that Hirdman is correct in claiming that the extensive family-political turn was a natural next step in the larger vision of political reform, as a new field for the art of social engineering. This could also be described as a reason why the course of events were realized in this particular order: first tearing down authority within the State Church, then reducing religion and authority in the school system, and finally, in line with a growing push for autonomy, the step over to an ultra-progressive view on the family takes the function of a final link in a long chain.

12.5.6 Final conclusions

Altogether, these findings affirm the scholarly view that autonomy and secularism continually interplay with each other. This study does not intend to provide a comprehensive analysis of

the causal connections between values. It is, however, evident that there was a deliberate striving among leading actors to move Swedish society in a secular and individualistic direction. The secularizing moves in Sweden took part before the political leadership moved towards an affirming autonomy. A general pattern of secularism preceding individualism can therefore be considered possible, but not proven; the opposite relationship is also possible. Phillip Hammond's view that autonomy and secularization are closely related values is clearly confirmed in the Swedish political discourse. Based on this study, his view that it is primarily autonomy that drives secularization, rather than the other way round, can be assumed but not proven. Further empirical studies into these matters could shed more light on such causal relations.

It is, however, apparent that these two factors closely correlate with each other. Hammond suggests that autonomy finds a natural field of influence in the Sacred realm, in the form of a move from a "collective-expressive" to an "individual-expressive" church. In the Swedish example, this took place by a secular development preceding the autonomous, i.e. if autonomy is understood solely in its affirming version. Autonomy can, however, as in this project, also be understood as the opposition to a threefold antithesis. If so, then the authority-critical rhetoric within early 20th century Social Democracy took the shape of a confronting autonomy, which over time took a directly secularizing function, ultimately ending up in ultra-progressivism. Based on this historical experience, a possible way to describe the correlation between these two values may be to view them as closely intertwined, exercising a causal effect on one another: when autonomous values are endorsed in a society, secularization typically follows, and when secularism is promoted, autonomy also appears to follow in its steps.

A similar question applies to the difference of opinion between Popenoe and Eberstadt, debating whether it is primarily family decline that drives secularization, or the other way round. This study cannot establish with certainty which factor drives which. It is, however, evident also here that these values correlate. It is noteworthy that a 1972 government report argues that the secularization of the family went hand in hand with the abolishment of a patriarchal family type. Chronologically speaking, the Swedish example displays a secularization of church and school predating the individualization of the family. This fact also corresponds to Magnus Hagevi's description of how a secular value formation in young age may a generation later result in a weakened demand for both religion and family relations.

Accordingly, it can be considered probable that the leap into ultra-progressivism was facilitated by the previous triumph of the secular project.

While proponents of secular and autonomous values reached positions of influence in the political discourse during the period, these values gained larger influence within the Social Democratic party, where secularism and autonomy propelled each other forward. The initial focus on a confronting autonomy, including its secular strivings, was hereby intertwined and eventually completely included in an affirming autonomy, in the 1970s transformed into ultra-progressivism, where the secularization process was viewed as mainly completed.

When evaluating the political discourse, it becomes apparent that each sphere had one defining battleground, where a Sacred or community-based authority was replaced by a secular or autonomous one: in Church – the introduction of female clergy; in school – the abolishment of the teaching of Christianity; in family policy – the introduction of individual taxation. Each battleground involved a decades-long vivid debate between opposing values. On each battleground the governing Social Democrats applied different tactics to accomplish their goals, and each victory appears to have been considered pivotal by both proponents and critics.

To sum up, this textual analysis makes it clear that autonomy and secularism are closely intertwined values, engaged in a mutual striving, as was expressed by William H. Becker in 1970. Especially when autonomy is understood as an opposition against authority, autonomy and secularism worked closely together during the build-up phase. When the secular reform was largely completed in Church and school, the Sacred realm was soon discarded as unimportant, with a humanist-materialistic perspective taking over also in areas such as family policy.

With the Swedish example in mind, there is good reason to agree with the many sociologists of religion who argue that the secularization paradigm is in need of revision. Here, Taylor's model of secularization resting on a change in the conditions of faith fits well with the Swedish example. However, this study also provides strong support for a central part of Steve Bruce's position. Even though he defends the paradigm that modernization necessarily leads to secularization, he understands autonomy to be a very central part of this modernizing process, going as far as to state that as long as individual autonomy remains a central value in

a community, secularization must be seen as irreversible. This position captures well the intertwined values expressed in the source material.

Finally, when evaluating this dissertation's scientific ability to answer the research questions and contribute to the academic discussion in relevant fields, there is good reason to consider the selected theoretical and methodological tools useful. Barney Glaser, the main inspiration behind grounded theory, states that criticism has been raised against this methodology for producing an unsystematic or flexible coding, but this criticism falls short. The strength in grounded theory, e.g. in a study such as this, lies in its ability to provide a reliable and valid coding, to locate patterns within the source material, to correct possible inaccuracies of data and to produce relevance to the area it purports to explain.¹¹⁴⁰

This is also how I view the findings in this dissertation. The content in the source material sheds light on other content, but also on the larger picture of societal change. The threefold antithetical model building on Adam Seligman has been a valuable tool when analysing the spheres and values in the political debate relating to autonomy in 20th century Sweden. The continuous antipathy towards different aspects of authority, along with the increasing struggle for autonomy, is simultaneously reflected in a distance towards the Sacred and a growing distance from community, instead connecting the individual closer to the state. Hereby, this model might be valuable when studying and comparing aspects of secularism and individualism also in other nations, values where Sweden has become a leading example.

Several previous studies have been done on narrower parts of this project, but this is the first comprehensive study on a wider scale of how value-related factors within the political discourse contributed to Sweden's move into what at the turn of the millennium had become the world's arguably most secular-individualistic nation. Hereby, I hope that this study can provide an understanding of both past and present, and also be beneficial for future studies in Sweden and elsewhere.

¹¹⁴⁰ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 223f.

13. Looking forward

This project has been a defining journey, for myself as an individual and a scholar, but it also analyses a defining journey for a whole nation. The historical process I have analysed may, as David Thurfjell suggests, be described as a self-rewarding story for the Swedish people:

I say *story* (...) Everything that happened earlier in history leads – so to speak – up to the society and values we have today. This story will thus get a self-exalting function. The post-Christian, secularized Swedes will hereby become the most modern people in the world, and Sweden the best nation in the world (...) It is in this story the picture of our irreligiosity and far-reaching secularization fits.¹¹⁴¹

When a government or a philosophy gets enough time and hegemony to change central nation-influencing institutions, such as church, school or family, it appears very difficult to roll the cart back again for anyone who wishes to do so. This may also be the reason why the following non-Socialist governments did not rewind the direction to any larger extent.

The secular-individualistic value system has seemingly proved efficient in influencing the values of a population. Whether this development gives reason for applause or dismay obviously depends on what philosophy one endorses, but also on how one evaluates the consequences of the political course of action. For anyone wishing to influence society in one direction or another, this study may be of use. For international readers who wish to study the possible impact from a government with a strong focus on personal autonomy, this study may also serve as an example. Whether this impact should be considered fruitful or frightful, must obviously be up to the reader to evaluate.

This long research period and coverage of political processes in the world's arguably most secular-individualistic nation may pave the way for future research on several levels:

The international level: How does the Swedish example of the relationship between politics and Church compare with other nations with a Lutheran national church and nations with a different religious structure? And how have Social Democratic parties or governments in other nations positioned themselves in comparison to the areas presented in this study?

The model interpreted: If other spheres, times and cultures were studied through my lens of a struggle between autonomy and its threefold antipole of community, authority and the Sacred

¹¹⁴¹ Thurfjell, *Det gudlösa folket*, 111.

– how would these values appear elsewhere? Where does the emphasis lie, and how and why do values change over time?

The actor-structure level: Which other actors or structural processes can be argued as influential in shaping the secular-individualistic values in Sweden and more generally in the whole West, and how do these relate to my conclusions? How did other actors, such as the free churches that typically did not wish for a secularization, react to these processes, and how effective were their reactions?

The philosophical level: The increased emphasis on autonomy bears resemblance to other philosophical trends in the post-war West. How does the autonomous perspective and the political processes studied here relate to other concepts such as a general post-modernism, a narrower Marxist autonomism, or to radical gender and queer philosophy of later decades?

The continued political process: Almost half a century has passed since the Social Democrats lost power in 1976. To what extent has the pattern analysed here been followed by later governments, actors and processes within these spheres? Did the political discourse follow the same pattern or did other values arise? Did the future development appear to follow from the influence of Social Democracy or from other underlying, structural factors?

The cultural pendulum level: With the ultra-progressive perspective having gone as far as it did in the mid-1970s, did it continue in the same direction or did a backlash in the general culture arise, swinging the pendulum back? What values or possible counter-arguments were expressed during the following decades?

The pluralistic level: At the end of this period, Sweden was still a rather homogenous nation, ethnically and culturally. How have the other sociological changes, such as immigration and the rapid rise of Islam affected the values and processes for or against autonomy?

A moral perspective may be relevant to several parties: How do Social Democrats in Sweden and elsewhere evaluate this historical example? And how do the other political parties look upon the development and their own choices of path? Was the ultra-progressive turn necessary, beneficial or problematic? Similar reflecting questions can apply to school and Church, as well as families and other communities in civil society. What lessons can be learnt from past events; to what extent has the pattern in this study appeared in other periods, sectors

of society and nations, and would other nations take similar or different value-influencing measures in order to follow or avoid the Swedish example?

The tug-of-war between competing values will probably continue also in coming years. For the general culture, I hope that this study can provide a valuable background to our present-day debate about which values serve best in building the society of the third millennium. Seligman argues that after a strong emphasis on the liberal individualistic form of modernity, this “calls forth its own antithesis”, where some kind of revolt is bound to arise.¹¹⁴² What direction the debate and culture will take during coming decades is an open question, but one conclusion from this study is that individual actors indeed have the possibility to influence the direction of a nation. I therefore leave it to all readers in Sweden and elsewhere to evaluate my conclusions and use them wisely when continuing to develop the culture in which we all live.

¹¹⁴² Seligman, *Modernity's Wager*, 10.

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