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Sweden then vs. Sweden now: The memetic normalisation of far-right nostalgia

by Samuel Merrill

Abstract

This article analyses 262 memes, the majority image-macros, posted to a large Swedish anti-immigration Facebook group in order to explore the memetic normalisation of far-right nostalgia. Through the application of an array of critical visual analysis methods it reveals that the nostalgia that disguises hateful far-right discourses in the group is not merely a reflection of that peddled by Sweden's organised far-right political parties and movements but a complex crowdsourced amalgam involving different nostalgic modes and moods. Unpacking these modes and moods, the article also highlights some of the nostalgic tensions at play in the group, indicating the need to rethink broader understandings of far-right nostalgia and calling for further research into how it can be used to veil hate in digital settings.

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Introduction

Across the world, far-right [1] movements and political parties are gaining in strength, in part because of the nostalgic discourses they peddle. As a Bertelsmann Stiftung report recently acknowledged, the notion that life was better in the past is being used by various political actors as an 'instrument for agitation' and to fuel 'dissatisfaction with present-day politics and anxiety about the future' [2]. The report illustrated just how receptive public opinion has

become to such discourses in Europe. It found that 67 percent of the 10,885 European Union (EU) citizens surveyed could be classified as nostalgic and in turn that 53 percent of those nostalgic citizens identified with positions on the right of the political spectrum. Furthermore, it found that these citizens were more likely to have anti-immigrant opinions, be EU sceptic, and politically prioritise the fight against terrorism. Such views are typically shared by those far-right parties and movements that are also commonly heralded as having effectively leveraged the power of the Internet and social media platforms in order to popularise their political agendas and normalise their characteristic discourses.

These discourses are difficult to isolate and define conclusively but generally they are: ultra and ethno-nationalist, and thus regularly racist and white supremacist; nativist, monocultural and anti-pluralist, and thus often anti-immigrant and anti-multiculturalist; gender conservative and essentialist, and thus regularly sexist, anti-feminist, and anti-LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual); populist and reactionary, and thus often anti-establishment and anti-globalist; and anti-difference, and thus regularly discriminatory against any form of alterity including disability. These discourses intermingle to form what can be pragmatically conceived as a broader far-right discourse. The intermingling of these discourses is especially prevalent in social media settings where they often appear more as a bottom-up crowdsourced phenomena created by numerous individuals with varying degrees of commitment to and knowledge about them, rather than as a result of a fully formed top-down political ideology consensually held by all members to underpin a party or movement. Social media settings also provide an opportunity to discern how and to what extent far-right discourses, nostalgic or otherwise, are being normalised.

This article explores the role that digital images, specifically Internet memes, play in the normalisation of nostalgic far-right discourses within social media and broader digital settings. It studies digital imagery because to date the exploration of far-right discourses on social media and Internet platforms has, with some exceptions, predominantly focussed on the analysis of textual material. Rather than concentrating on the organised visual communication of such discourses by far-right parties and movements, this article is more interested in the discursive (re)production and reception of nostalgic far-right imagery among certain groups of social media users. To this end and using Sweden as a case study, the article seeks to understand the types of memetic far-right nostalgia evident within a large Swedish anti-immigration Facebook group. In turn, it considers the extent to which this nostalgia echoes that which is promoted by the country's far-right parties and movements.

The next two sections of this article review relevant literatures and theories regarding far-right and mediatised nostalgia, and the digitalisation of far-right discourses and memetic hate. Thereafter the article's empirical material, methods and ethical considerations are introduced before its analysis is presented. The article concludes by discussing the implications of its analysis for broader understandings of far-right and mediatised nostalgia and by calling for more research into how nostalgia can be used to disguise digital hate.

Far-right nostalgia in Sweden

Nostalgia, a term coined in the seventeenth century to refer to the psychological symptoms of extreme homesickness, and from the nineteenth century increasingly demedicalised to mean a general romanticism for the past, has been academically scrutinised in its socially constructed sense for some time. In 1979 Davis' sociological study of nostalgia discussed three nostalgic orders. The first and most common, *simple nostalgia*, relates to the unexamined belief that things were better in the past. The second, *reflexive nostalgia*, not only sentimentalises the past but also questions the accuracy of this sentimentalisation. The third, *interpreted nostalgia*, is questioned in terms of its origin, character and significance. Davis also coined a term for nostalgia's opposite: nostophobia — an aversion to the past [3].

Only more recently has nostalgia's significance in political contexts been stressed. Central to this effort was Boym's (2001) distinction between *restorative* and *reflective nostalgia*. The former relates to the nostalgia that 'characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world' and the latter represents a more critical and creative engagement with the past [4]. For the most part the political influence of restorative nostalgia has been stressed in connection to broader state level phenomena like nationalism, colonialism and imperialism (see Bissell, 2005). A number of scholars, acknowledging as von Beyme did that 'right wing extremists want to restore the status quo ante' [5], have also noted the role of restorative nostalgia within far-right parties and movements. Indeed, Boym (2001) herself highlights how restorative nostalgia uses intimate cultural knowledge and sometimes conspiracy theory to differentiate between in- and out-groups, and is particularly attractive to the disenfranchised who seek scapegoats for their actual or perceived misfortunes — qualities that resonate with far-right agendas. The scepticism of such parties and movements towards progressive policies has also been argued to render them backward-looking, and this plus their reactionary character is often connected to 'a deep sense of nostalgia for the good old days' [6]. Taggart discusses the nostalgic 'politics of the heartland' that underpins right-wing populism whereby a singular heartland serves as 'a construction of the good life derived retrospectively from a romanticised conception of life as it has been lived' [7]. Similarly, Duyvendak (2011) considers how, within a broader 'politics of home', far-right parties reinforce and take advantage of the nostalgic public feeling that a previously familiar national home has been lost.

Steenvoorden and Hartevelt (2018) have also explored how the nostalgic tendencies of far-right parties across Europe resonate with contemporary societal pessimism. They connect the electoral gains of far-right parties partly to the way their nostalgic tendencies help mitigate pessimism by promising to restore 'old social, ethno-cultural and political certainties' [8]. Their finding that far-right parties 'cater to the societally pessimistic while mainstream parties attract relatively optimistic voters' [9] does not, however, address whether the nostalgia peddled by such parties also increases societal pessimism (see de Vries and Hoffmann, 2018). Their study, like much of the aforementioned research, also fails to acknowledge how Boym's two forms of nostalgia can become entangled in far-right contexts. As Göppfarth has shown to be the case amongst far-right intellectual activists in Germany — 'reflective nostalgia can be restorative, and vice versa' [10].

Little research has explored the adoption and replication of nostalgic discourses by individuals — whether open supporters of far-right parties and movements or not. Individuals outside such movements and parties have however been shown to be susceptible to racist nostalgic discourse as Maly, Dalmage and Michaels' (2012) study of the stories told by white Chicago residents displaced by racial neighbourhood change highlights. These stories hinged on the white nostalgia that covertly constructs and maintains white racial identity within a

supposedly post-racial society and strengthens whiteness by acting as a ‘culturally sanctioned strategy for shoring up white privilege’ [11]. Overall, few studies on the normalisation of far-right nostalgia exist. Any attempt to address this gap, including this article, must be a contextualised endeavour because in each country the idealised past that is emphasised by far-right parties and movements — their nostalgic heartland — is often specific to that national setting (Steenvoorden and Hartevelt, 2018; Taggart, 2004).

Taking Sweden back to take back Sweden

The Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna* [SD]), the far-right populist party that is now the country’s third largest parliamentary party, has its own particular nostalgic heartland. It, like the younger Citizens’ Coalition (*Medborgerlig Samling*) and Alternative for Sweden (*Alternativ för Sverige*) far-right parties, often positions the 1940s and 1950s as a ‘golden age’ of ‘Swedish democracy, socio-economic wellbeing and ethnic homogeneity and cohesion’, while accusing its political opponents of facilitating the erosion of these phenomena through, among other things, the pursuit of liberal immigration policies [12]. The 1940s and 1950s embodies a pinnacle of the Swedish political concept of the ‘People’s Home’ (*Folkhemmet*) as synonymous with the establishment of the Swedish welfare state by the country’s Social Democratic Party between 1932 and 1976. The People’s Home is now the focus of SD’s nostalgic yearnings because in many ways it was a nationalist project involving an ambiguous discourse of ‘us’ and broad forms of social solidarity. This has allowed SD to narrowly redefine the rightful inhabitants of the People’s Home along ethno-nationalist lines to include only those that the party perceives as ‘real’ Swedes. Most often these are white Swedes meaning that the goldenness of this nostalgic past is intimately linked to its whiteness and an imagined absence of foreign ethnic minorities (Elgenius and Rydgren, 2019; Hellström and Nilsson, 2010) [13].

SD’s nostalgic embrace of the People’s Home from the early 2000s onwards contributed to an effort to increase its respectability (Rydgren, 2006; Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2019). Ironically this involved breaking ties with its own past, which until the mid-1990s was entangled with openly antidemocratic far-right movements (Rydgren, 2006). For example, in 2006 the party replaced its burning torch logo, modelled on the emblem of the British National Front, with a blue buttercup flower, native to Northern Hemisphere woodlands. The torch hinted towards a different nostalgic rallying point: the Viking period, as notoriously indexed by an early SD campaign sticker which showed a Viking declaring ‘Keep Sweden Swedish’. The nostalgic longing for the Viking past amongst far-right movements within and beyond Sweden has long been acknowledged. As Fangen (1998) argued, late-1990s American right-wing nostalgia for the codes of honour and qualities that Vikings are imagined to represent went hand in hand with their contempt for other ethnic groups. While these nostalgic associations may have been jettisoned by the SD they are still regularly mobilised by Swedish far-right movements including the Nordic Resistance Movement (*Nordiska motståndsrörelsen* [NMR]) and the Soldiers of Odin (*SoO*) (see Castle and Parsons, 2019; Ekman, 2018; Ravndal, 2018). Kølvråa (2019), for example, has shown how the NMR’s cultural imaginaries draw on the mostly innocuous popularity of Vikings in Scandinavia to produce a Nordic variant of National Socialism that is more palatable to its regional populations. He discusses how Viking references also help the movement to differentiate its racial political aims along paganist lines thus distinguishing it from those far-right movements that are occupied with the defence of European Christian civilisation against Islam [14].

Mediatised nostalgia, digitised far-right discourse and memetic hate

SoO, *NMR* and *SD*, as with their counterparts beyond Sweden, have enthusiastically adopted Internet and social media platforms yet the academic consideration of the sorts of nostalgia that they promote has only sporadically addressed the role of digital media (see Castle and Parsons, 2019; Horsti, 2017; Polletta and Callahan, 2017; Simpson, 2016). A more concerted effort to do this necessitates the acknowledgment that nostalgia, like many other socio-cultural phenomena, is mediatized through social media platforms. Nostalgia's mediatization relates to the media representation of nostalgic pasts but also mediated nostalgic styles (Niemeyer, 2014). As Niemeyer has succinctly put it 'media, and new technologies in particular, can function as platforms, projections and tools to express nostalgia' [15]. Media in turn intersect with what Grainge (2004; 2002) has referred to as different 'modes' of nostalgia. Modes of nostalgia, are culturally specific styles and representational effects which convey those hyperrealised pasts that are the object or 'content of nostalgic longing' [16]. Media can also trigger feelings of nostalgia, or what Grainge (2004; 2002) calls nostalgic 'moods'. In contrast to modes of nostalgia, these moods refer to 'the contentless of nostalgic affect', nostalgia as a cultural emotion of longing [17]. In short, media provide 'cultural artefacts that facilitate nostalgia as a way of feeling and thinking' [18]. Mediatized nostalgia thus results from the interaction of nostalgic modes and moods, and media practices of production and consumption — the outcome, as Pickering and Keightley stress, of 'the reciprocal relationship between audience and media' [19]. Targeting mediatized nostalgia as such can help foreground its political significance particularly at a time when social media platforms with their logics of crowdsourcing and many-to-many communication flows have come to further emphasise the reciprocity between audiences and medias. Foregrounding the political work that nostalgia does is also important given the onset of the so-called 'post-truth era' within which historical veracity and objectivity are losing their epistemological privilege and nostalgic personal beliefs and emotions are gaining influence. The exploration of such matters in relation to far-right discourse connects to a broader interdisciplinary effort to understand the digital normalisation of such discourse.

A mass of research exists on the production of far-right discourse across a variety of regularly evolving and expanding digital platforms from the first- and second-generation Web sites of the Internet to a plethora of social media platforms (for reviews see Bliuc, *et al.*, 2018; Daniels, 2012). This literature has tended to emphasise the digital expression of racist hate speech as a predominant element of far-right discourse whether by individuals and groups who openly identify with far-right parties and movements or not.

Far-right groups quickly recognised that the Internet could be used to create their own autonomous alternative public spheres and to normalise far-right discourses either overtly or covertly by, for example, using 'cloaked' Web sites which feigned legitimacy and concealed their true origins (Atton, 2006; Back, 2002; Daniels, 2009; Whine, 1999). More recently, social media platforms have been enthusiastically adopted by such groups in an effort to find new digital pathways through which to normalise far-right discourse further (Klein, 2012). In light of this, academic studies into the far-right discourses digitally produced, circulated and consumed by political parties, social movements and individuals have been carried out across an array of social media platforms, including in relation to the Swedish national context.

Horsti (2017) has shown, for example, how Swedish and Scandinavian far-right bloggers have shared digital content in order to intensify and reproduce a transnational Islamophobic imagination. Elsewhere, Blomberg and Stier (2019) have shown how Flashback, Sweden's largest Internet forum, has been used to discursively legitimise and normalise *NMR*'s extremist ideology. Ekman (2014) meanwhile has shown how the YouTube activism of five different Swedish far-right movements has helped them gain visibility and new public audiences. Studies of Twitter have likewise shown how Swedish far-right activists have used the platform to popularise their anti-immigration discourses (Urnias, 2016; see also Åkerlund, forthcoming). Finally, the normalisation of far-right discourse via Facebook has been subjected to particular academic scrutiny. For example, an earlier study of the large Swedish anti-immigrant Facebook group considered further in this article showed how within the group various racist discursive strategies allowed for the normalisation of far-right anti-immigrant discourses (Merrill and Åkerlund, 2018) [20].

Collectively these studies have revealed how social media platforms create, to varying extent, enclaves within which overt or covert far-right discourses and the sorts of hate-speech underlying them can intensify, while simultaneously providing entry points to broader digitally networked audiences that allow the greater acceptance and normalisation of those same discourses (Farkas and Neumayer, 2017; Merrill and Åkerlund, 2018; Chaudhry and Gruz, 2020). Social media platforms are thus not just neutral platforms on which racism is expressed, covertly or otherwise. Instead, through their specific architectures and affordances they provide new means by which their users can disguise racist hate speech and also avoid accusations of racism through, for example, creating digital noise, claiming plausible deniability, and transferring and distributing liability (Ben-David and Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Sharma and Brooker, 2016; Titley, 2016). The result is what Matamoros-Fernández (2017) calls 'platformed racism' — the racism shaped by the corporate policies, regulations, and decisions of social media companies, the algorithms and architectures that they use to pursue their economic goals, and the possibilities that these afford social media users.

In general, the investigation of digitised far-right discourses, nostalgic or otherwise, has mostly relied on the analysis of textual user-generated content. Knowledge about the role that digital imagery plays in the normalisation of far-right discourses is less developed (Bliuc, *et al.*, 2018). Some scholars have however carried out piecemeal analyses of the imagery posted to far-right Facebook groups and Web sites in addition to their primary analyses of textual material (see Awan, 2016; Castle and Parsons, 2019), and one area where the analysis of digital imagery in relation to far-right discourses is more established relates to the study of racist Internet memes. The term 'meme' was coined as a counterpart to 'gene' in order to refer to the units of culture transferred from individual to individual (Dawkins, 1976). It is now commonly used to describe particular cultural ideas spread rapidly through the Internet and social media platforms (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007). Although memes can be textual, audio and gestural, Internet memes commonly take the form of videos, animations (including GIFs) and still images including photographs, artworks and most pervasively image-macros — photographs or artworks with superimposed text that are generally intended to be humorous. Shifman discusses three main attributes of Internet memes: 1) they are created and spread at the level of the individual but scale-up to become social phenomena that shape 'the mindsets, forms of behavior, and actions of social groups'; 2) they are reproduced through mimicry and remix and 'capture a wide range of communicative intentions and actions, spanning all the way from naive copying to scornful imitation'; and 3) they are diffused through competition and selection, varying in their 'level of adaptiveness to the sociocultural environment in which they propagate' [21].

Because Internet memes influence and reflect broader discourses they can be used as ‘discursive weapons’ directed towards certain ends (Nissenbaum and Shifman, 2017). Reflecting this, Internet memes have been studied in connection to racism. Racist memes featuring indigenous Australians have been studied via Facebook groups and meme creation Web sites (Oboler, 2012). Nakamura (2014) has explored the racial violence enacted by scambaiters who coerce individuals into posing for humiliating ‘trophy photographs’ which are then circulated as memes. Critical discourse analyses of racist memes in other contexts have revealed how they can deny the existence of structural racism (Yoon, 2016). Others have shown memes to involve ambiguous and subtle racial microaggressions that can often go undetected (Williams, *et al.*, 2016). Horsti (2017) meanwhile has traced how a single news image was appropriated by white supremacist and counter-Jihadist bloggers and transformed into an anti-feminist and Islamophobic meme. These studies share the acknowledgement that Internet memes represent a relatively new form of visual culture that can be used to normalise racist discourse and enact symbolic racial violence while often hiding behind a facade of humour and/or irony. While some have briefly noted how such racist memes can also convey a longing for some fantasised, lost past (see Horsti, 2017), the means by which racist and more broadly far-right discourses can be veiled in Internet memes via nostalgia rather than humour is yet to be fully explored.

Material, method and ethical considerations

The images analysed here were collected from a large public Swedish anti-immigration Facebook group called *Stå Upp För Sverige* (Stand up for Sweden [*SUFS*]). *SUFS* was created on 5 February 2017 under a different name in order to support a Swedish police officer who had publicly claimed that immigrants were overrepresented within Swedish crime figures (see Merrill and Åkerlund, 2018; Törnberg and Wahlström, 2018). The group, which at its peak had around 220,000 members and at the time of writing had around 163,000 members, was chosen for analysis because of the prevalent anti-immigration attitudes of its members. It was also selected because earlier studies of the group had shown how it could operate as a digital gateway that enabled the normalisation of far-right discourses and how many of the topics discussed in it tended to rely on contrasting ‘nostalgic interpretations of Sweden’s past with dystopic diagnoses and forecasts of the country’s present and future’ [22].

The computational collection of the group’s textual user-generated content, carried out on 30 September 2017 (in accordance with the platform’s user regulations at that time), revealed that 9,402 of the 59,489 posts still extant since the group’s creation until 29 September 2017 were image posts. These image posts were then viewed via Facebook’s ‘theatre view’ interface and those that referred to a broadly conceived ‘historical past’ were manually collected. Initially, 306 images were collected and following further review these were reduced to the 262 images considered to be most explicitly nostalgic and thus relevant for further analysis. These images, which originated from 182 unique Facebook users, were then studied as Internet memes — circulating units of digital culture. Each was paired with their post’s textual and metric data by matching the post id numbers in their metadata with the corresponding number in the computationally collected data. This provided a snapshot of each meme’s status on 29 September 2017 and thus reliable and comparable figures for each image post’s metrics including user reactions and comments from that moment in time.

Inspired by Rose's (2016) critical visual methodology, which foregrounds four sites (the image itself, and the sites of the image's production, circulation and audiencing) and three modalities (technological, compositional and social) through which visual materials can be interpreted, a combination of analysis methods were applied to the collected images.

With regards to the sites of the images themselves and their sites of production, qualitative compositional interpretation (see Rose, 2016) was used to group each image, firstly in a thematic manner according to their main subject matter and primary historical reference point — in other words, those hyperrealised pasts central to different broader modes and more specific sub-modes of nostalgia — and secondly, in terms of their primary medium. Overall, three broader modes of nostalgia (further composed of 10 sub-modes of nostalgia), and four mediums of nostalgia were identified in the sample in this way. These are introduced and discussed in more detail in the next section.

In order to understand the sites of the images' audiencing, user reactions and comments to the image posts were approached as proxies for the moods, nostalgic or otherwise, that the memes conveyed or triggered.

In terms of the images' sites of circulation, selected memes were also explored in wider digital settings using Google searches.

Finally, a critical discourse analysis (see Rose, 2016) was carried out across the memes' compositional, technological and social modalities in recognition of these modalities' compatibility with, not only the three main attributes of Internet memes highlighted by Shifman (2013) and discussed earlier, but also the three dimensions of discourse foregrounded by Fairclough's (1989) framework of critical discourse analysis. In short, the memes were approached as discursive texts at micro-level situations that were compositionally (re)produced and (re)interpreted through discursive practices within meso-level technological institutions, namely the Facebook group, to finally be shaped by or shape sociocultural practices at the macro-level of society including the normalisation of far-right discourses (Fairclough, 1989).

While the size and public notoriety of the group prevented its anonymisation, for ethical reasons no information that might identify regular users of the group appears in the following analysis. Although it is harder to guarantee the anonymity of the group's creator and administrators, the public profile they have cultivated as a result of the group's popularity supports their ethical treatment as public figures. All quotes used have been translated and adapted in an attempt to ensure they cannot be used to identify users through Facebook's search function. The memes that are reproduced within the following analysis are so in the same spirit of those fair use copyright exemptions that are likely to have underpinned their creation. The fair use of these memes is further justified by their appearance here in aggregated collages and the article's accompanying analysis. Still, and even though many of the memes posted to the group might be considered 'public' given Facebook user agreements and the group's public status, one photograph of a more personal nature whose relevance and popularity demanded analytical attention was anonymised in ethical recognition that its academic recontextualisation in this article might cause harm (see [Figure 2](#)) [[23](#)].

Results: The modes, media and moods of nostalgia in *SUFS*

Three broader modes of nostalgia relating to war, domesticity and anti-establishmentarianism (and therein 10 sub-modes of nostalgia), and four media (artworks, black and white photographs, colour photographs and image-macros) were identified in the sample ([Table 1](#)). As of 29 September 2017, the sample had collectively garnered 93,046 social media reactions. While the vast majority of these reactions were ‘likes’, indicating a more generic mood of agreement, ‘angrys’ and ‘hahas’ were also common suggesting how the moods generated by these memes involved the intermingling of nostalgia with anger and humour.

Nostalgic Modes / Sub-Modes	Nostalgic Medium					Nostalgic Moods						
	Artworks	Black and White Photographs	Colour Photographs	Image-Macros	All Memes	👍	❤️	😏	😂	😡	😬	All Reactions
War	23	8	14	49	94	31675	570	370	2447	459	7229	42750
Other	4	0	1	5	10	538	16	41	406	57	1138	2195
Viking-Age Conflict	10	1	5	21	37	22173	259	123	1154	245	2286	26240
13th-18th Century Swedish Conflict	6	0	7	3	16	2021	79	23	212	15	850	3200
20th Century Conflict	1	7	1	20	31	6943	216	183	675	142	2955	11154
Domestic	9	19	29	26	83	30937	269	183	907	195	3421	35912
General	0	0	6	7	13	4699	54	17	95	18	226	5109
Parish Life (c.1850s)	1	0	12	0	13	6241	101	40	74	86	512	6054
Modernisation/Industrialisation (1880s-1920s)	7	9	0	2	18	5933	5	17	53	27	536	6571
Welfare State/People's Home (1930s-1950s)	1	10	11	17	39	12064	109	109	685	64	2147	15176
Anti-establishmentarianism	4	1	0	80	85	8931	290	280	1145	163	3575	14384
17th-19th Centuries	3	0	0	5	9	382	8	39	15	9	163	616
20th Century	1	1	0	74	76	8549	282	241	1130	154	1412	11766
Total	36	28	43	155	262	71534	1129	833	4499	817	14225	93046

Table 1: The modes, media and moods of nostalgia in *SUFS*.

War nostalgia

The most prevalent mode of nostalgia identified in the sample related to war, as inferred by visual references to past conflicts, methods of warfare or warrior figures. The nostalgic war memes, which numbered 94 in total, contained sub-modes of nostalgia relating, in chronological order, to: the Viking age of the eighth to eleventh centuries; the Swedish regional wars between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries; and twentieth century conflicts including most commonly World War Two (WWII). A number of further war-related nostalgic visual references were identified and grouped as ‘other’. The war mode memes had the greatest impact on users’ moods generating 42,750 reactions of which 31,675 were ‘likes’, 7,229 were ‘angrys’, and 2,447 were ‘hahas’ ([Table 1](#)). The ten war memes that garnered the greatest number of social media reactions received between 904 and 6,617 reactions ([Figure 1](#)).

Figure 1: The top 10 nostalgic war memes by reaction.

The 10 memes coded under ‘other’ included references to the European religious crusades of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, as well as to Native American, Spartan and Samurai warriors. One crusade’s image was among the mode’s top 10 memes (Figure 1), revealing similarities between the group’s visual discourses and those of the far-right Norwegian and English Defence Leagues (see Gardell, 2013). These movements have used crusader imagery within their broader Islamophobic discourses in order to convey the idea that Christian Europe is being invaded by Muslims and that the warrior instincts of crusaders must be rekindled in order to avoid defeat (Gardell, 2013). Four of the crusader memes were artworks but one was a colour photograph that revealed discursive links to the *SD* insofar as it showed an *SD* campaigner dressed as a crusader with the party’s logo on their tunic.

While the crusader memes serve to discursively unify a white Europe including Sweden (despite the country’s minimal involvement in the Eastern Mediterranean Crusades) against a non-European Other, a further sub-mode of war nostalgia composed of 16 memes contradictorily referenced the wars and battles that Sweden was involved in with its regional neighbours between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. These memes attempt to discursively assert Sweden’s military strength in a heroic manner through the use of artworks and colour photographs of both historical re-enactments and physical memorials. However, at least one image-macro from this sub-mode (with 1,309 reactions including 985 ‘likes’) was more nostrophobic in nature. It showed the Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Löfven as one of the greatest tragedies to befall the country alongside the country’s defeat to Russia at the battle of Poltava in 1709 (Figure 1).

Despite Sweden’s non-involvement, 31 memes related to twentieth century conflicts and most regularly WWII. These often conveyed a more confused mode of nostalgia that was also mixed with nostrophobia and the desire to escape a negative past. For example, in a discursive manoeuvre designed to discredit Sweden’s contemporary political and media mainstream, a number of memes equated them to Nazis. Illustrative of this, one image-macro (with 1,153 reactions including 1,024 ‘angrys’) featured Joseph Goebbels alongside a quote insinuating

that the mainstream media served as a propaganda machine for the political elite ([Figure 1](#)). Memes were also used to highlight Sweden's and the Social Democrats' historical connections to Nazism. Illustrative of this was a historical black and white photograph of a Swedish sign denying Jewish people entry to a shop. This nostrophobically served to inoculate the group from accusations of racism through comparisons with the negative historical actions of mainstream political parties, but for some users with more extreme viewpoints, it also resulted in neo-Nazi nostalgic moods. For example, one user commented:

‘time to return to the old’.

Thirty-seven memes visually referenced Viking age conflict. These received well over half of all of the war mode's reactions of which 22,173 were 'likes' ([Table 1](#)). They also contributed five memes to the mode's top 10 memes by reaction ([Figure 1](#)). The Viking memes sampled from *SUFS* were overwhelmingly but not exclusively masculine in character. However, they were also posted by Facebook users who identified as female including one of the group's administrators who posted 10. This suggests a somewhat intentional effort by at least some group administrators to channel and spread the sorts of nostalgic discourses that are also peddled by far-right movements like *NMR* and *SoO*. These visual references to the remote Viking past like those that featured crusaders often necessarily relied on artistic renderings either alone or integrated into image-macros. Also present were a number of photographs, again alone or as part of image-macros, of actors in Viking regalia including stills from the popular television series *Vikings* (see Kim, 2019). The memes themselves serve a far-right discourse that pitches Vikings, imagined as a homogenously white group, against non-European ethnic and religious enemies, and more often than not, Islam. One meme (with 1,375 'likes' and seven 'loves') showed an artistic rendering of a male Viking holding two axes with the caption 'Allah?! Never heard of her!' ([Figure 1](#)). This meme effeminates a racialised Islamic Other through a process of gendering thinly veiled as humour. Further memes used Viking references to distinguish between Nordic countries and the rest of Europe and to reject EU membership ([Figure 1](#)), thus highlighting again links between nostalgia and euro-scepticism (see de Vries and Hoffmann, 2018).

Domestic nostalgia

A second mode of nostalgia identified in the sample related to domesticity, inferred by references to ways of life considered specific to Sweden. These memes contained three sub-modes of nostalgia relating to the forms of parish life evident before roughly 1850; examples of modernisation and industrialisation from between roughly the 1860s and 1920s; and expressions of the welfare state and the People's Home from the 1930s until roughly the 1990s ([Figure 4](#)). In addition, a number of more general domestic-related nostalgic visual references were identified. The 83 memes in this mode generated 35,912 reactions including 30,937 'likes', 3,421 'angrys' and 907 'hahas' ([Table 1](#)). The 10 domestic memes that garnered the greatest number of social media reactions received between 766 and 5,700 reactions ([Figure 2](#)).

Figure 2: The top 10 nostalgic domestic memes by reaction.

Thirteen memes reflected a generalised domestic nostalgia for an unspecified time when Sweden was considered safer. Characterised by references to an older, better and safer Sweden these memes included Swedish parodies of the ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan that instead declared ‘Make Sweden Safe Again’ and ‘Make Sweden Adequate Again’ (*‘Gör Sverige Lagom Igen’*) [24]. Given their contextual setting (an anti-immigration Facebook group), these memes’ use of nostalgia implies that recent immigration to Sweden has had exclusively negative effects. For example, one image-macro contained the caption:

‘I am of the opinion that the old Sweden, without gunfire, murder, robbery, assault and rape was a better society.’

The nostalgic character of ‘old Sweden’ is further indicated by the three other sub-modes of domestic nostalgia.

Thirteen memes indicated the parish life (-1850s) sub-mode. Eleven of these were colour photographs of people in Swedish or Nordic folkdress including one of Jimmie Åkesson, the leader of *SD*, with his partner that received 5,700 reactions (including 5,619 ‘likes’) making it the most reacted to image in the domestic mode (Figure 2). While the reaction to this image was exceptional and likely the result of Åkesson’s popular appeal within the group, it clearly exemplified the connections between this mode of nostalgia and the *SD*.

Eighteen memes in the domestic mode related to the country’s period of modernisation and industrialisation (1860s–1920s). These memes included artworks from Swedish artists of this period but mostly black and white photographs showing, for example, men working in the timber industry, quarrying stone and building railways. The latter played on the assumed historical authenticity commonly attributed to black and white photos, a tactic also suggested by the heavier appearance of this medium in the twentieth century conflicts sub-mode of nostalgia. As Grainge states ‘monochrome is an aesthetic of the authentic figured around a basic quality of pastness’ which, in turn ‘suggests an image has cultural significance in the

broad construction of historical identity' [25]. These particular black and white photographs are more white than black, overwhelmingly featuring white men and thus further indicating the sorts of nostalgic identity constructions underpinning the group. One user even commented:

‘oh just white men!’.

That the nostalgia indicated by these photographs is predominantly white and male-dominated reflects the historical links between ideas of Swedishness, whiteness and masculinity (see Mattsson, 2005). Some of these photographs also reflect the sorts of nineteenth century rural nostalgia linked to ‘an appreciation of the pristine quality of nature and the ability to live off the land’ that has been discerned within the discourses of far-right movements elsewhere in Europe [26], highlighting again nostalgia’s potential role in the normalisation of such discourses.

Thirty-nine memes related to the period from the 1930s to roughly the 1990s and indicated notions of the Swedish welfare state and the political concept of the People’s Home. This sub-mode contributed seven memes to the domestic mode’s top ten memes by reaction (Figure 2). References to the idea of the People’s Home were not limited to the period of the 1940s and 1950s prioritised by the *SD*, indicating the more pluralistic nostalgic modes and moods of *SUF*S. For example, one user posted a colour photograph from their youth in the 1970s (anonymised in Figure 2) along with the caption:

‘The happy seventies! Then it was quiet and peaceful in our country. I wish that my children and grandchildren could have a safe childhood!’

This post received 1,930 reactions, of which most 1,874 were ‘likes’ and 32 were ‘angrys’. It also triggered the following comment from another user:

‘it is our duty to change Sweden back to the country in which we grew up. How will we be able to look our children and grandchildren in the eyes when they ask: why didn’t you do anything?’

This comment indicates how this sub-mode of domestic nostalgia created nostalgic moods connected to more aspirational ends than the other domestic sub-modes and the war mode in general. In other words, group users conveyed a literal rather than merely symbolic desire to return the country to a past nostalgically perceived as safer and more peaceful. Such intentions were also conveyed by black and white photographs of the Swedish police from earlier decades. These visual references, unsurprising given the origins of the group in supporting an outspoken senior police officer, invoked a time when, in the absence of serious crime, a gentler more humane policing style was possible, when police officers were more respected.

Anti-establishment nostalgia

A third mode of nostalgia identified in the sample related to what can be broadly understood as forms of anti-establishmentarianism whether indicated by references to historical moments

of social and political change or historical personalities famous for expressing revolutionary and anti-establishment ideas. The 85 memes in this mode could be further divided into two sub-modes of nostalgia relating to the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and the twentieth century. While the anti-establishment mode featured a similar number of memes to the domestic mode it generated fewer reactions (14,387). These included 8,931 ‘likes’, 3,575 ‘angrys’, 1,145 ‘hahas’, 290 ‘loves’, 280 ‘wows’, and 163 ‘sads’ (Table 1). The top 10 nostalgic anti-establishment memes by reaction garnered between 395 and 1,799 reactions.

Figure 3: The top 10 nostalgic anti-establishment memes by reaction.

Eight of the anti-establishment nostalgic memes referenced the period between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries but none generated sufficient reaction to enter the modes top ten memes by reaction (Figure 3). One image-macro featured an image of Johan de Witt, the Dutch political leader, assassinated in 1672, with the caption:

‘In 1672, a mob of angry Dutch killed and ate their prime minister. Options. Just sayin’.’

Others included artworks depicting the French revolution and memes of famous nineteenth century philosophers including Friedrich Nietzsche accompanied by quotes of an anti-establishment nature.

This particular quote-based genre of image-macro, which was also present to some degree in the other modes of nostalgia, strongly characterised the anti-establishment mode accounting for 72 of the 80 image-macros identified. Seventy of these quote memes referred to twentieth century figures whose words had been decontextualised and appropriated, seemingly to insulate group users from accusations of spreading far-right discourse and to lend strength to their truth claims. This tactic also helped group users to frame themselves as victims, a discursive strategy common within far-right movements and parties (see Merrill and Åkerlund, 2018). Among the most regularly featured internationally known anti-establishment figures were Martin Luther King (7), Mahatma Ghandi (6) and Albert Einstein

(6). The invocation of these historical figures and their anti-racist politics can be interpreted as an effort by users to veil far-right discursive elements whether consciously or otherwise. This is lent credence given that these figures appear alongside a meme featuring George Lincoln Rockwell, the founder of the American Nazi Party.

The three most commonly quoted individuals in the sample were George Orwell (15), Vilhelm Moberg (15) and Astrid Lindgren (13), which collectively contributed nine of the modes top ten memes by reaction ([Figure 3](#)). The quote memes that these three featured in stressed the revolutionary power of truth, the influence of the media and the corruption of the political mainstream. For example, the quote memes featuring Moberg, a Swedish anti-Nazi author and journalist, included those related to the Swedish portmanteau that combines the words democracy and dictatorship (*demokratur*):

‘In a *demokratur*, general and free elections prevail, freedom of opinion prevails, but politics and the mass media are dominated by an establishment that considers that only certain opinion should be expressed. The consequence is that citizens live with the understanding that they receive an objective and comprehensive picture of reality. The perception of repression is well hidden, free debate is strangled. It should be added that the definition of a *demokratur* includes the fact that the majority of the people in this social state do not perceive themselves to live in a *demokratur*.’

Another example is the oft repeated quote meme ([Figure 3](#)) featuring Lindgren, the famous Swedish children’s author, and the citation:

‘When people with power, stop listening to people. Then it is time to replace them.’

When this meme first started circulating in November 2015 it attracted public attention because of doubt over whether the quote was actually from Lindgren (Omerspahic, 2015). In March 2017 it became the centre of further controversy when a *SD* politician used the quote in anti-immigration brochure leading to rebuttals from Lindgren’s family company (Ek, 2017). While the modes of war and domestic nostalgia that underpin the discourses of far-right social movements and parties may have trickled-down to be replicated in the Facebook group, suggesting the social media platform’s role as a conduit for the normalisation of far-right nostalgic discourses, this particular example implies that the modes of anti-establishment nostalgia evident in the group may also have trickled-up to influence politicians seeking to take advantage of the nostalgic moods of certain sections of the Swedish population. In short, the digital spread of far-right modes of nostalgia is not one-directional.

Discussion: Us vs. Them/Then vs. Now

The three broader modes (and the ten sub-modes) of nostalgia conveyed by the sample of memes from *SUFS*, each with their different temporal foci and particular motifs, are founded in and feed a generalised nostalgia amongst the groups users that is captured most concisely in recurring user comments to the effect that it was ‘better before’ or ‘better earlier’.

Within this *simple nostalgia*, as Davis would term it, the before and earlier in question is primarily the time pre-dating the recent increase in non-European immigration to Sweden from roughly 2015 onwards as a result of the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’. Rarely if at all is there evidence of the group’s users questioning this nostalgia in terms of its accuracy, origin, character or significance in ways that might indicate Davis’ (1979) *reflexive* and *interpreted nostalgia*. Instead, and at the expense and exclusion of the country’s historical forms of cultural diversity, the nostalgic modes and moods at play in *SUFS* are uncritically directed towards historical periods when the group’s users perceive Sweden to have been whiter or even homogenously white — whether they be the period between the 1930s and 1990s or the more remote Viking age. The latter contributes to a symbolic and war-infused nostalgia trained mostly on a distant past, without necessarily a real intention or hope to retrieve this past in an all-encompassing manner. It does however contribute strongly to the percolation of the discourses of violent masculinity and chauvinism that contemporary far-right movements attempt to channel in order to resist what they deem to be a hostile Muslim invasion of Europe. The former appears as the strongest element within a domestically rooted nostalgic target longed for as a time perceived as free from the serious crime that has purportedly only accompanied recent non-European immigration to Sweden. It is, in this sense, a nostalgia that is explicitly anti-immigrant, ethno-nationalist and racist. This more recent past features less as a symbolic focus of nostalgic longing and more as an actual target which users believe can be returned to by, in turn, nostalgically invoking and emulating anti-establishment pasts and personalities from Sweden and beyond [27]. In short, it is this period that serves most as a focus for what in Boym’s (2001) terms can be perceived as the *restorative nostalgia* of *SUFS*’s users. With its pursuit wrapped in a third mode of anti-establishment nostalgia these users fall under the category of nostalgics that rarely ‘think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe their project is about truth’ [28].

Rather than simply being a symptom of a ‘defeatist attitude to the present and future’ [29], these modes of nostalgia combine to actively serve their purveyors’ attempts to construct a dystopian present and future. The belief that everything was better before or earlier, in other words, serves an important goal for those with anti-immigration viewpoints and particularly far-right movements and parties. By contributing to the rubbishing of the present and future it helps fabricate and overemphasise contemporary problems in order to gain political leverage. These dystopic imaginations of the future also found visual expression in the group’s image posts. While these were not part of the sample selected for primary analysis given that they looked forwards as opposed to backwards in time, discursively the two sets of memes worked together. One such image shows a photoshopped scene of burning Swedish landmarks while a figure, labelled with the logos of the mainstream press, directs their attention solely towards a cartoon image of multicultural children dancing together beneath a rainbow. Another example, is an image-macro that features a photoshopped colour photograph of a small white, blond child surrounded by a crowd of Indian children and the caption: ‘Sweden 2030 — Where do you come from?’ These particular memes convey a sense not of Sweden’s past as a foreign country (*cf.*, Lowenthal, 1985) but of its present and future as one — if that foreignness is determined by the colour of one’s skin and one’s religion. These ‘dystopias’ connect with conspiracy theories of white genocide and the replacement of so-called ‘real Swedes’ — again as primarily determined along ethno-nationalist lines. They are discursively

echoed in the group by references to Europe as Eurabia and to Sweden as ‘Swedenstan’. The nostalgic mood at work in the group thus revolves less around a homesickness for a lost Sweden caused by geographical or even temporal dislocation but rather by the projection and perception that Sweden is being negatively changed beyond all recognition in the present by non-European, non-white immigrants and the political and media establishments that welcome them.

In this manner *SUFS*’s nostalgic mood also provides a means by which to spread anti-immigrant sentiments and indeed covert racism. In essence, in many of the memes analysed, the *Us vs. Them* distinction that is so crucial to far-right discourse is veiled via its transposition on to the *Then vs. Now* distinction. This is made most evident by the *Sweden Then vs. Sweden Now* genre of image-macros that appear in *SUFS*. Such image-macros continued to be posted to the group after the sampling period and continue to circulate digitally beyond the group, as a search for similar memes using Google indicated ([Figure 4](#)).

Figure 4: Sweden Then vs. Sweden Now image-macros. The top row comes from the main sample of memes. The bottom row appeared later in *SUFS* or were found using Google.

When considered collectively, it is evident that the sorts of nostalgia captured and conveyed by these particular image-macros are not merely white and racist but also patriarchal, sexist, misogynist, heteronormative, authoritarian and populist. Like many of the image-macros associated with the Viking sub-mode of nostalgia, they also commonly appear in English both within and beyond the group highlighting how these sorts of far-right nostalgia are also likely projected onto Sweden from elsewhere in the world. Indeed, it is possible that the *Sweden Then vs. Sweden Now* genre itself did not originate in Sweden. As Google searches indicated, some of the genre’s earliest examples, roughly traceable to the years between 2008 and 2011, appear on predominantly English language platforms like Reddit. These may well have replicated the nostalgia modes and moods that have long been discursively pinned to Sweden and the Nordic region by far-right movements and parties in other countries (see Fangen, 1998; Simpson, 2016). Lending credence to this and indicating further the sorts of transnational memetic adoption and mimicry at play, the previously mentioned image-macro

featuring a blond child surrounded by Indian children actually originated in Germany (see *Spiegel Online*, 2016).

Conclusion: Remixing the past for a restorative future

This article has revealed how the nostalgic modes and moods indicated by the digital imagery of a large Swedish anti-immigration Facebook group recreate and thus help to memetically normalise many of the forms of nostalgia that underpin the discourses of the country's most prominent far-right movements and parties. Particularly pronounced in the group were visual nostalgic references to the Viking past and the period associated with the pinnacle of the Swedish welfare state and the concept of the People's Home — periods which have regularly been invoked within the discursive strategies of Swedish far-right movements like *NMR* and *SoO* and Swedish far-right parties like *SD* respectively. However, in the Facebook group these particular nostalgic reference points appear less coherently than they do in the discursive repertoires of these movements and parties. They jostle with many others associated with broader modes of nostalgia focused on war and domesticity. Furthermore, they are joined by a third mode of nostalgia, characterised by anti-establishmentarianism, which is yet to feature substantially in the discourses of the country's far-right movements and parties. As examples analysed above suggest, this may soon change with this mode of nostalgia having the potential to trickle-up from grassroots digital settings, like *SUFS*, to influence the discursive strategies of Sweden's far-right movements and parties.

Overall then, the nostalgia revealed by this article's digital visual analysis of *SUFS* memes is an amalgam of at least three broader modes and ten sub-modes of nostalgia. Consequently, it is rife with contradictions and tensions including: the incompatibility of invoking past regional wars while stressing regional unity; the incongruity of visually identifying with both medieval Christian Europe and Viking Scandinavia in an attempt to oppose a perceived Islamic threat; and the irony of channeling deceased anti-establishmentarians in order to restore the results of a past political establishment. Such contradictions and tensions are the combined result of the transnational dynamics that involve the cultural projection of far-right nostalgia onto Sweden (and Scandinavia) from beyond the country and the digital architecture of Facebook which allows users from Sweden and around the world to post memes to the group in a way that creates a crowdsourced and remixed nostalgia. While only a cursory consideration of the transnational characteristics of the *Sweden Then vs. Sweden Now* image-macro genre was possible in this article, there is a need for future research that, in line with Rose's (2016) methodological concern for the sites of an image's circulation, considers how nostalgic memes move across cultural and national contexts and the political and social consequences of their travels (see Merrill, 2020). Such research might further illustrate the sorts of nostalgic incoherency that at times characterised *SUFS*.

This incoherence suggests that the group's users might also be approximated to nostalgics of, in Boym's terms, the reflective sort in as much as their modes and moods of nostalgia are more creative and individualised, 'ironic, inconclusive and fragmentary' [30]. This forces the recognition that *reflective nostalgia* might not be the preserve of progressive politics and that *restorative nostalgia* might not be the only nostalgic terrain of the far-right (see Göppfarth, 2020). Boym notes that restorative and reflective nostalgia can overlap in terms of the pasts

they reference but not in the stories they tell [31]. Yet in attributing the capacity of the past to ‘open up a multitude of potentialities’ and to ‘awaken multiple planes of consciousness’ only to *reflective nostalgia* [32], there runs the risk of failing to acknowledge how these same capacities may also serve the goals traditionally conceived as limited to regimes of *restorative nostalgia*. The Sweden of Then and The Sweden of Now that are visually indexed by the imagery that circulates digitally and has found one resting place in the Facebook group analysed here, in other words, can be considered the outcome of the blended forces of restorative and reflective nostalgia — a creative amalgam of discordant nostalgic references to war, domesticity and anti-establishmentarianism drawn from Sweden and beyond to serve the same general recuperative goals that are pursued by far-right movements and parties and are underpinned by, amongst others, discourses of racism, sexism and anti-immigration.

Such insights have added significance in light of the increased measures taken by Facebook since April 2019 to ban far-right extremists from its platform (see Hern, 2019) and the legal prosecution of *SUFS*’s creator one month later for failing to remove racist posts from the group (see Israelsson, 2019). These stricter controls are likely to encourage those Facebook users who wish to normalise far-right discourses to perfect their means of doing so in a deniable manner. Nostalgia and the transposition of *Us vs. Them* onto *Then vs. Now* discourses provide such means and thus understanding how nostalgic modes and moods may be used to veil far-right discourses is critical to continuing the fight against hate-speech of all kinds on social media platforms like Facebook and within society at large.

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Notes

1. This article most consistently uses the term ‘far-right’ but debates regarding the definition and respective merits of different political labels including ‘far-right’, ‘far-right extremist’,

‘radical right populist’, ‘right-wing’, ‘right-authoritarian’, ‘neo-fascist’, ‘fascist’ and many others should be noted (see Mudde, 1996).

[2.](#) de Vries and Hoffmann 2018, p. 3.

[3.](#) Davis, 1979, p. 15.

[4.](#) Boym, 2001, p. 41.

[5.](#) von Beyme, 1988, p. 1.

[6.](#) Betz and Johnson, 2004, p. 324.

[7.](#) Taggart, 2004, p. 278.

[8.](#) Steenvoorden and Harteveld, 2018, p. 29.

[9.](#) Steenvoorden and Harteveld, 2018, p. 45.

[10.](#) Göppfarth, 2020, p. 3.

[11.](#) Maly, *et al.*, 2012, p. 758.

[12.](#) Elgenius and Rydgren, 2017, p. 355; Elgenius and Rydgren, 2019.

[13.](#) *SD*’s nostalgia for the People’s Home also relates to a patriarchal order considered lost and longed to be re-inscribed (see Mulinari and Neergaard, 2014).

[14.](#) Kølvråa (2019) also argues that Viking references allow NMR members to perform a hyper-masculine identity.

[15.](#) Niemeyer, 2014, p. 7.

[16.](#) Grainge, 2002, p. 6.

[17.](#) *Ibid.*

[18.](#) Pickering and Keightley, 2006, p. 930.

[19.](#) *Ibid.*

[20.](#) Facebook groups and pages run by far-right activists or characterised by far-right discourses have been studied in relation to a number of other national contexts (see Ben-David and Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Burke and Goodman, 2012; Farkas and Neumayer, 2017; Oboler, 2008).

[21.](#) Shifman, 2013, p. 365.

[22.](#) Merrill and Åkerlund, 2018, p. 341. In this sense the group can be approached as a nostalgic affective public and not only one constructed around anti-immigrant sentiment (see Papacharissi, 2015; Ekman, 2019).

[23.](#) For further discussion of the ethics of studying this group see Merrill and Åkerlund (2018).

[24.](#) 'Lagom' in Swedish has a connotation that conveys moderation to the point of equilibrium.

[25.](#) Grainge, 1999, p. 385.

[26.](#) Simpson, 2016, p. 44.

[27.](#) Of course, it should be noted that the domestic and anti-establishment modes of nostalgia, like the sub-mode of Viking nostalgia (see Kølvrå, 2019), have wider appeal for different constituencies including for example those concerned with the neoliberalisation of Swedish society since the 1990s. Still, given the anti-immigration profile of *SUFS*, in this context these modes of nostalgia can be interpreted as more indicative of far-right discourses and motivations.

[28.](#) Boym, 2001, p. 41.

[29.](#) Pickering and Keightley, 2006, p. 920.

[30.](#) Boym, 2001, p. 50.

[31.](#) Boym, 2001, p. 49.

[32.](#) Boym, 2001, p. 50.

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