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Sailing Along New Cleavages: Understanding the Electoral Success of the Swedish Pirate Party in the European Parliament Election 2009[1]

In the Swedish European Parliamentary Election in 2009 the Swedish Pirate Party took two seats in the parliament and 7.1 per cent of the Swedish voters' support. The party was absolutely new and the usual concept of populist parties does not seem to fit the Pirate movement very well. It is anti-authoritarian and aims to enhance civic liberties for youngsters, to give open access to culture through the internet and to improve personal integrity and human dignity on the World Wide Web. Transnationalism is one foundation for the party but another is a value foundation of universal human rights and individual freedom, disregarding national borders. This article is an investigation of the Pirate Party as a possible new party family, driven by new sociopolitical cleavages in the modern information society.

THE SWEDISH EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE SUMMER of 2009 were the Pirate Party's breakthrough. The party garnered 7.1 per cent of the vote and took two seats in the European Parliament.[2] Some participants in the political debate have attempted to explain the Pirate Party's advances as the outcome of its flirtation with a generation of spoiled young people who want to download music and movies from the internet for free. Others have pointed out the Pirate Party's status as a protest party, a party for voters who want to send a message to established politicians and parties but who cannot imagine voting for the populist Sweden Democrat Party. The aim of this article is to deepen the analysis of the Pirate Party's success in the 2009 European Parliamentary elections based on the new political cleavages of the information society.

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The explosive development of information and communication technologies has created new political issues – privacy and the right to knowledge – that have no obvious position in the left–right dimension that so authoritatively structures Swedish politics. The established parties have underestimated the potential political relevance of their information policies. I believe the Pirate Party is more than merely a fleeting social movement coalesced around a single issue. The Pirate Party is the first and most evolved political manifestation of the new and politically relevant cleavages emerging in the information society, where the conflict about knowledge is becoming increasingly significant to the division of power in society.

The Swedish Pirate Party was the first of its kind to form, but there are now pirate parties all over Europe and in several US states. There are currently (May 2013) about 42 member parties and 12 observer members in the cooperative project Pirate Parties International (PPI). In another development, former party leader and founding father of the Swedish Pirate Party, Rick Falkvinge, has moved from domestic leadership to promoting pirate values internationally.

After the success in the 2009 European election in Sweden, the pirate parties that have met with the greatest success are found in Germany. In Berlin and several of the German federal states, the pirates have managed to win as many as 58 seats and 17 per cent of the votes in local elections. They have also won seats in Austria, Spain and the Czech Republic. The pirate party is apparently not a home-grown Swedish anomaly or fortuitous opportunistic phenomenon in a special election.

NEW CLEAVAGES[3]

According to political sociology, cleavages are the basis for political mobilization, a mobilization that has a long historical phase. A political division must incorporate three distinct elements to be defined as a cleavage: an empirical element that can be defined in sociostructural terms; a normative element that provides a sense of identity and role; and an organizational/behavioural element – a set of individual interactions, institutions and organizations that develop as part of the cleavage (Aardal 1994; Bartolini and Mair 2007: 199f; Denver 2000; Holmberg and Oscarsson 2004; Mair 2006).

This analysis is based on the work of political sociologists Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967), who argued that the origins of politically relevant cleavages of the late twentieth century were in nation building – the 'National Revolution' – and industrialization – the 'Industrial Revolution'. The National Revolution occurred in connection with the breakdown of European feudalism and the formation of nation states. The transition from rival principalities to nation states led to the emergence of the dominant centre–periphery and state–church cleavages. The centre–periphery cleavage developed between the central nation-building culture and the ethnically or linguistically distinct peripheries. The state–church cleavage developed between religious demands for ideological advantage concerning citizens' loyalty and a national state power that called for political subordination in both material and ideological matters. In conjunction with the breakthrough of democracy, citizens were mobilized in line with these cleavages, manifested in political parties or other political movements. The origins of various regional parties, such as the Catalonian Convergence and Union Party (Convergència i Unió), the Scottish National Party and the Sinn Féin of Northern Ireland are in the centre–periphery cleavage, while the European Christian democratic parties arose from the state–church cleavage.

The Industrial Revolution produced two other cleavages: urban–rural and owner–worker. The urban–rural cleavage developed in the conflict between landed interests and the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs in the cities. The Scandinavian agrarian parties (the forebears of the modern Swedish Centre Party, for example) may be seen as offshoots of the urban–rural cleavage. The owner–worker cleavage developed in the conflict between the industrial working class and owners or employers in the form of the industrial or capital-owning class. Workers' parties such as the Social Democrats and the Communists emerged out of this cleavage.

The National Revolution involved power over territory and the organization of the polity. The Industrial Revolution involved power over capital and the organization of material production. Likewise, I believe that the communicational revolution can be said to involve a struggle for power over the word and the organization of knowledge production (Bjereld and Demker 2009, 2010; Bjereld et al. 2009).

The communicational revolution has trumped the struggles over territory and material resources in such a way that new relevant

cleavages are forming around the production, transfer and legitimacy of knowledge.[4] The conflict over knowledge content is about who should have the power to shape the content of knowledge and to decide what is true and what is false. The conflict over the right to knowledge is about who should have the power to attain knowledge. The conflict over the primacy of knowledge is about the endeavour to make knowledge the 'only' legitimate source of power, about giving knowledge a monopolistic position as legitimate authority.[5]

The communicational revolution and the change in beliefs about knowledge and the production of knowledge have given rise to at least two new politically relevant cleavages: knowledge-based and transnational network–nation state. These cleavages are mobilizing actors around the three different manifestations of the conflict about knowledge mentioned above: that is, conflict over the content of knowledge, conflict over the right to knowledge and conflict over the primacy of knowledge.

The knowledge-based cleavage is mobilizing market actors who regard knowledge as a commodity among other commodities, tradable in a market. To them, knowledge is part of a market logic by which its value is determined by supply and demand. In opposition to these market actors, other actors are mobilizing who regard knowledge as a collective process and shared resource that has intrinsic value. For market actors, such as media corporations or information advisers, truth and knowledge become relative, their value determined by the extent to which they contribute to profit making. For others, such as authors, artists or critics ('knowledge actors'), truth is absolute and its value is determined by its capacity to create meaningful interpretations of the world (Bjereld and Demker 2006).

In the interpretation of this cleavage in the making, knowledge is the main subject of political conflict. Of course, these kinds of resource conflicts will be more intense in a society where the allocation of knowledge is more equally shared, as in highly egalitarian and individualistic societies with vast access to information technology and the internet. Because resource knowledge is common, it is thought to be accessible to both market actors and knowledge actors, and there is no explicit system for admission. The competition to have the best knowledge skills or to get the most out of knowledge skills will also be heightened in an individualistic society where everyone can have their share.

The conflict is structured over the content, the right to knowledge and the primacy of knowledge, and it is expected to take the

form of a conflict over whether knowledge should be a profitable commodity or an intellectual capacity intended for sharing and free circulation.[6] The struggle over the content of knowledge is a struggle over true and false, right and wrong and black and white concerning both moral issues and empirical facts. The question is, whose knowledge is to be relied upon? The conflict over the right to knowledge is a fight for information to be free, for knowledge and intellectual efforts to be shared between social classes and between cultures. The issue is often one of intellectual property rights or of control of the flow of information on the internet. The fight for the primacy of knowledge is a struggle towards the acceptance of knowledge as the norm for evaluating political reforms and implementing policy. The aim is to establish empirical facts, 'best practice' or philosophical arguments as the common ground of policy, rather than values, ideology or ideas.

The transnational network–nation state cleavage is emerging because the power of the nation state is based on control over territory; the communicational revolution thus entails a weakening of the power of the nation state in terms of diminished sovereignty and autonomy. The communicational revolution is instead begetting international networks that have no territorial base and are usually held together by the specific knowledge, skills and values of network members. Certainly, these transnational networks sometimes cooperate with nation states in order to accomplish common objectives, but the growth of these networks also entails the emergence of a cleavage between transnational networks and nation states in the conflict over knowledge (Bennett 2003; Eriksson and Giacomello 2009; Manjikian 2010). The struggle between these actors for power over the word and knowledge production includes, for example, the power to determine what knowledge will be the basis for political decisions and the resolution of transnational issues, such as the environment and migration. The struggle also revolves around interpretive primacy with respect to international law, religious issues and moral issues. It is along these new politically relevant cleavages – especially the knowledge-based cleavage – that the Pirate Party is mobilizing voters.[7]

THE CAMPAIGN

Information policy was politicized in Sweden in 2008 primarily through mobilized opposition to the Swedish Signal Intelligence

Act, known colloquially as the 'FRA law'. The FRA law permits the National Defence Radio Establishment to surveil communications over the internet, not only through cable and radio networks. The question of how personal privacy – in accordance with traditional postal privacy – could be upheld after this expansion of powers escalated into a political conflict. The Pirate Party was a unifying force for the opposition to the FRA law. Subsequent to the FRA law, the Swedish government (the executive) sent Government Bill 2008/2009:67 to the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament). The bill was intended to integrate the Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive (IPRED) that had been passed by the European Parliament back in 2004. The directive was adopted in April 2006 and was implemented first in the United Kingdom. The rationale behind the Swedish government's bill was that there were still no provisions in Swedish law concerning who had the right to disclose – and how and when – personal particulars associated with accounts suspected of engaging in file sharing, for example. The Swedish bill was dealt with by the (parliamentary) Committee on Industry (2008/2009: NU11) in late 2008 and was debated in the Riksdag on 25 February 2009. The government bill was ultimately passed with the support of all parties represented in the Riksdag, except the Left Party and the Green Party.

The Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive triggered new mobilization on information policy issues. On the very first day the law took effect, several lawsuits were filed by book publishers who asserted that their audio books had been illegally downloaded and distributed over the internet. As well as being influenced by the Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive, the 2009 election campaign was shaped by the European Parliament's handling of an integrated proposal on competition in the telecommunications market, known as the Telecoms Package. The Telecoms Package had been introduced into the EU almost 10 years earlier as part of the strategy intended to make the EU the most dynamic economy in the world by 2010. The fundamental premise was that all telecommunications operators in Europe should compete on equal terms. The Telecoms Package was revised in autumn 2008 and sent back to the European Parliament in spring 2009. The parliament voted down the proposal.

Perhaps the greatest focus on the information policy was engendered by the 'Pirate Bay Trial'. Proceedings began on 16 February 2009 and ended on 2 March. The ruling was handed down on 17 April – just a few weeks before the European Parliament elections – and ended with a

judgment against the four defendants. They were found guilty of illegal file sharing and given prison sentences and also ordered to pay massive damages to the companies that had sued them. The ruling was appealed and a new trial was held in the autumn of 2010, ending on 26 November with a new judgment against three defendants.[8] For several years, Pirate Bay had stood as a symbol of protest against commercial copyright and as a challenge to liberate culture. In certain circles, the people behind Pirate Bay were seen as heroes in the fight against the establishment.

The Pirate Party is the political consequence of a new political agenda. Since the start of the twenty-first century, the internet and social media have become not only arenas for political mobilization but also the objects of political mobilization (Ringmar 2007). For the younger generations, the internet is a social space where people interact, converse and form opinions. Since, by international standards, Sweden has an extremely high rate of internet usage among all citizens, these issues increasingly apply to people who use their computers for email and to search for information.

The formation of the Pirate Party put pressure on other parties, and in 2009 the established parties made increasingly frenetic attempts to position themselves in the area of information policy. The Social Democrats, who were behind the origins of the FRA law and several other surveillance laws when they had last been in government, said in the run-up to the 2010 election that they now wanted to repeal the FRA law and amend the Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Directive law. The slogan was '*Riv upp, gör om, gör rätt*' ('Tear it up, do it over, do it right'). On the centre-right of the political spectrum, a rift opened between the parent parties and their youth organizations, which were deeply critical of the trespassing on personal privacy that the new laws had entailed.

On the whole, the Pirate Party's political agenda gained a great deal of attention in the campaign before the election to the European Parliament on 7 June 2009.

THE PIRATE PARTY'S IDEAS AND IDEOLOGY

I believe that the Pirate Party could be a part of a new party family that I have chosen to call 'virtue parties'. In my view, the virtue parties are a party family in the making. It is not the case that we see a number of parties in the world and choose to call them virtue parties. Instead, the new cleavages of the information society have

prompted the creation of parties that work in particular ways; parties that we choose to categorize as virtue parties. Traditional liberal parties in Europe have undergone a change as the political space between left and right has shrunk and they have encountered strong competition from green parties in several European countries. The space for virtue parties – which in fact are a new branch on the liberal tree – has widened in political systems where either the left–right dimension has declined in relevance and/or older liberal parties have lost ideological touch with the information society. Some liberal parties have not managed to cope with the structuring of West European politics since the mid-1980s into two dimensions, the older left–right dimension and the newer cultural dimension (Bornschier 2010). Liberal and universal views came to be a general middle ground in European politics and liberal parties had to find new political agendas that would make them relevant to younger voters. The information society and the war on terror have pushed human rights, individual rights and privacy to a point where few traditionally liberal parties have successfully defended personal privacy and the right to a private life.

Liberal parties such as the German liberals have been pressured by both the Green Party and now the Pirate Party. Liberal parties in the Netherlands and Austria have been overtaken by xenophobic populist parties, and liberal parties in Scandinavia have encountered serious setbacks, even though they have been in government positions. The tree of liberal parties has always included branches of local and temporary parties, and the green parties have been flourishing for a long time now.

The difference between the pirate parties and the green parties – pirate parties are included in the green party group in the European Parliament – is in the emphasis placed on individual rights. Green parties have always promoted liberal values of individuality but their main focus has been on collective gains and means to save our planet. All political parties are to some extent the product of their time, and the greens were founded in the aftermath of a strongly collectivist and materialist epoch in European development. Their societal achievement was to focus on anti-materialist values, which appealed to a younger generation (Inglehart 1977). The pirate parties are much more concerned with the realization of individual liberties such as freedom of speech, opinion and sexuality, and in promoting transnational communities. This is not to say that the

green parties do not promote these things, but they were not the core issues when the green parties were founded in the 1980s.

In my view, virtue parties such as the pirate party may become a permanent branch on the liberal tree. As broadly liberal parties, virtue parties are expected to support an array of liberal rights, such as civil rights and traditional individual rights. The ideological stance of the parties is expected to be in the middle of the left–right scale, but the ideology is intended to build on conflicts concerning the knowledge-based cleavage. Virtue parties should also be distinctly anti-establishment parties, sharply critical of all forms of authoritarian and paternalistic policy, and likewise of corruption and the corresponding abuse of power. Virtue parties reach out directly to the citizenry via social media and online communication and not to special interest groups. Nor will the parties push single issues of local or regional interest.

Ethical norms such as equality, impartiality, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and the right to choose your own life project are at the heart of virtue party ideology. These parties tend to advocate transparency, greater government accountability, protection of privacy, implementation of anti-corruption programmes and higher popular participation in public decision making. The explanation for the spread of the virtue parties can probably be sought in the new cleavage between an epistemic view on knowledge and the market view. As already mentioned, market actors perceive knowledge as a tradable commodity. Military and police intelligence services, for instance, need to gather vast quantities of information to find the few nuggets that can be bartered with other countries. Demands for the surveillance of store entrances, shopping malls and public squares are an expression of the fact that these places are primarily marketplaces, rather than public places for all citizens, regardless of market value. Charter schools[9] attract new students by offering them exclusive access to knowledge in the form of a particular type of educational method, technology or mobility. The point is that this knowledge is exclusive and not for everyone.

In the view of knowledge actors, the knowledge process belongs to everyone and cannot be severed from the individual. Knowledge is something everyone ought to share and have access to; the purpose is to equip individuals with the capacity (virtue) to exploit their human potential. Demands for openness on the internet, with respect to everything from scholarly journals to computer programs,

Figure 1
Archetype of a Virtue Party

	The Individual	The State	The World
Fundamental precept/ontology	Individualism	Universalism	Globalism
Utopia/vision	Privacy	Equality	Cosmopolitanism
Agency/strategy	Individual rights	Impartiality	Trespassing

file downloads and the distribution of scanned and downloaded books, are expressions of the principle that knowledge belongs not only to those who can pay for it or acquire it through other privileges, but to all humankind. The fight to protect personal privacy on the internet is aimed at giving people the opportunity to develop, without fear of reprisals, by taking in global communication – in the same way that they can go to a play, demonstrate or participate in a book club – without leaving tracks in official registers. The knowledge-based cleavage should be able to generate the requisite conditions for a new party family to grow, just as other cleavages have germinated party families we have become accustomed to, such as social democratic, Christian democratic and liberal parties.

The ideological archetype of a virtue party could be distilled in accordance with the model shown in Figure 1.

The individual is thus the point of departure for a virtue party. The party understands the world as being made up of individuals rather than social groups or classes. Individualism is thus the fundamental precept of the party's view of humanity. The state perspective begins with universalism as the fundamental political norm, which engenders, for instance, sharper focus on procedural fairness in contrast to parties that are primarily outcome oriented. The virtue party embraces a globalist position; in its ideology, the party is not tied to a nation and cannot be persuaded to change its stance based on some national interest. The virtue party embraces a vision of future society where the privacy of citizens determines the measure of the good society, in which equal treatment and equal chances are goals, a world in which national borders and other social boundaries have little effect on an individual's capacity for development. The political agency for the virtue party is to, by all available means, promote individual rights and impartiality in the

relationship between the state and the individual, but also to trespass (by crossing geographical, ethical and legal boundaries) in its endeavours towards a fair and legitimate polity.

The Pirate Party's 'Platform 3.3'[10] was adopted in March 2009, just before the European Parliamentary elections held that year, and fits nicely into the archetypal model of a virtue party. The rights and privacy of human beings must be protected at any price. The Pirate Party emphasizes the rights of the 'consumer' at the expense of companies and organizations. The liberty that the individual is expected to enjoy is first and foremost freedom *from* something, while the so-called freedom *to* something is embedded more implicitly in the text (Berlin 1969). The Pirate Party considers privacy 'non-negotiable'. The party thus paints a picture of a kind of ideal market, as opposed to a market monopoly. The party believes that the individual's participation in society is predicated on preventing the market from creating monopolies and oligopolies so that the opportunity to use the market is open to every individual.

The Pirate Party sees democratic governance as a guarantor of protection of privacy. The role of the state is to protect and respect citizens, not to impose demands on and control them. The Pirate Party writes that 'the individual's right to private life is established in the Swedish Constitution' and notes that from this right 'spring several other human rights'. The state must also be the agency that implements and guarantees the regulations the Pirate Party proposes, often through legislation. The Pirate Party believes, '[D]emocracy cannot stand without vigorous protection of privacy' and stresses that we are now instead living in 'a control society'. At the same time, the party wants the state to assume responsibility for promoting technical progress by outlawing monopolies and patents, for instance. The understanding of democracy harks back to a republican tradition, wherein the party emphasizes that the state's methods 'must be subject to constant reconsideration and review by elected representatives'. This is something that may seem obvious, but is presented in this context in contrast to the 'abuse of power, lack of liberty, and lack of due process' under which Swedish citizens now live. The Pirate Party then refers to how the state is giving aid and shelter to monopolies, copyright and patent rights through current legislation.

The platform is less expansive in the area of international relations and deals primarily with patent rights in relation to

innovations and creativity. Here as well, the Pirate Party believes that the legal avenue is the most appropriate means to the end, with the EU a central actor. The Pirate Party asserts that EU decision making and administration must be 'characterized by transparency and openness' and that the EU should move towards 'the Swedish principle of public access to official records' (freedom of information).

The Pirate Party departs from the archetype on a few key points. It cannot be said to have any clear notion of equality in its future state, nor can its members be deemed pronounced globalists if you look at their fundamental values. Nor does the party proffer any explicit cosmopolitan vision for the world.

In its platform, the Pirate Party thus puts more energy into outlining a future state with heavily regulated institutions than into promoting equality among the citizenry. It emphasizes innovation, markets and competition as central elements of a good society – and despite a strong focus on both multiculturalism and cultural openness, the ideal of equality seems overshadowed by other ideals.[11]

The Pirate Party demands universal legal regulation, but it is difficult to find any arguments for cosmopolitan citizenship. Nor are there any traces of how the party views humanity per se. Are people in need of care and protection so that they can grow, or can individuals achieve their potential only if they are liberated and given the opportunity? The Pirate Party is more preoccupied with eliminating constraints – and devising new systems that prevent these constraints from recurring – than with carving out and making concrete the opportunities open to the liberated individuals.

THE PIRATE PARTY'S VOTERS

The majority of Pirate Party sympathizers are young, male and educated in the sciences or technology (Oscarsson and Persson 2009). We also know that they occupy the middle of the left–right scale (Erlingsson and Persson 2010). File sharing was far and away the most important issue for Pirate Party voters, an issue on which they differ markedly from other parties' voters. The file-sharing issue was, according to Erlingsson and Persson (2011), the critical factor in the decision to vote for the Pirate Party in the election to the European Parliament, and not what is sometimes called protest voting or backlash voting.

Respondents to the E-Panel survey in the run-up to the 2009 European Parliamentary elections were afforded the opportunity to state their reasons for choosing a party in an open response. They could thus write in their own words why they intended or did not intend to vote for the Pirate Party in the upcoming election.[12] The third E-Panel survey returned 191 people who intended to vote for the Pirate Party, of whom 151 chose to explain the reasons behind their choice in free text.

The Swedish European Election Survey, carried out with interviewers and standard question forms, asked people to give their opinions on predefined issues. The only issue that can be said to be inside the Pirate Party's political arena was the question Erlingsson and Persson (2011) used – that of whether or not 'allowing file sharing, free downloads of movies, music, etc., from the internet' was a good idea. This was also the issue with which many voters associated the Pirate Party. As we saw above, the Pirate Party's ideology is considerably broader and, in particular, more socially relevant than the mere issue of downloading music for free.

That said, what do voters actually think of the Pirate Party's broader agenda? Is it true that file sharing is the deciding issue? Or are there other patterns? I have analysed the 151 open responses, both qualitatively and quantitatively.[13] There is reason here to recall that more than 10 per cent of respondents to the E-Panel were Pirate Party sympathizers – a substantial over-representation compared with election results.[14] It is also possible that the 151 who took advantage of the opportunity to explain their choice in free text are more committed party sympathizers than the other 40, indicating that their responses are more representative of a committed core group than of the voting group as a whole. Finally, it should be noted that the E-Panel is a result of self-selection, and not a representative sample.

I chose to analyse the responses in terms of the following categories: privacy and internet policy, file sharing and copyright, protest voting, and a catch-all category, miscellaneous. The results show that of the responses Pirate Party sympathizers gave in the internet survey, 44 per cent were related to privacy and internet policy in Swedish and European society. Only 19 per cent of panel responses more specifically stated file sharing or copyright as a reason for voting for the Pirate Party. Protest voting was stated in 12 per cent of the responses, while 25 per cent of responses could be categorized as miscellaneous.

Typical reasons within the framework of privacy policy were 'That they are going to fight idiotic restrictions of people's right to exchange thoughts, ideas and words – without surveillance', or 'I think personal privacy is so important that a working democracy is impossible without it'. Consistently, individualism was the point of departure for reasons stated in the privacy category, and the perceived threat was a combination of the new laws (such as FRA) and policymakers who were too ignorant to understand the situation they were helping to create.

The reasons attributable to file sharing and copyright were sometimes personal – such as 'the right to download music' – and sometimes based on principle. Notable among the principle-based arguments were ' . . . have gone too far in the witch hunt for file sharers' and criticism of 'patent abuse'.

People who said they were voting for the Pirate Party in protest stated reasons such as 'in protest against established parties', 'because they are needed in a frightening EU', or 'the broken election promises of many other parties – a ''protest vote'''. Vaguer reasons for voting for the Pirate Party, along the lines of 'cool party', 'nothing', 'everything' and 'if I can't find a ballot for the Sweden Democrats', ended up in the miscellaneous category.

Comparison of the expected ideology of a virtue party – with which the Pirate Party aligns to a great extent – and the explanations stated in the E-Panel survey indicate that it is the view of the individual (first column in Figure 1) that is most clearly articulated in the reasons. Explanations in the two other arenas ('the state' and 'the world') are less explicit. Those that refer to the state generally deal with 'established parties' or 'politicians', rather than issues of equality, impartiality or universalism. Explanations within the arena of 'the world' are conspicuous by their almost total absence.

What emerges in the analysis of the 151 reasons is a yearning for individual liberty at the expense of the market and the state. Several of the stated explanations included sharp criticism of established social actors who are deemed to understand neither the technology nor the challenges to liberty and privacy that the internet may entail. Opinions such as believing that the Pirate Party is the only party that 'takes civil rights seriously', or that the Pirate Party is a counterweight to 'the copyright industry and all its lobbyists' or that the party 'welcomes new technology' are often coupled with criticism – explicit or implied – of other actors. On the whole, the responses

constitute an articulation of demands that have nothing to do with classic issues of distribution of resources or general discontent with politicians. Instead, a picture begins to take shape of an antagonism between established social actors who either do not understand internet usage or exploit their position in relation to it, and a group of individuals who see themselves as competent and discerning, and who feel that their individual liberty is under threat. The threat to individual liberty is linked in the responses that raise issues of civil rights, private life and creativity within the virtual space.

It is not particularly difficult to see in these explanations a mobilization of one side of the new knowledge-based cleavage discussed earlier in the article. The knowledge actors are gathering, they believe themselves to have a common interest and they are trying, in the form of the Pirate Party, to advance their interests vis-à-vis established social actors.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus far, the Swedish Pirate Party has had two seats in the European Parliament, seats occupied by Christian Engström and Amelia Andersdotter, both of whom are members of the European Parliament in the green bloc of the parliament. Things went less well for the party in the Swedish general election held on 19 September 2010, when the Pirate Party received only 0.65 per cent of the votes – an upturn of 0.02 per cent since the 2006 election. Since the 2010 election, the Pirate Party has been the largest party with no representation in the Riksdag; its vote count increased from 34,918 in 2006 to 38,491 in the 2010 election.

The party's strength is that its members are held together by an ideological conviction related to an issue on which the party faces no competition from other parties. The Pirate Party 'owns' its issue. But the reluctance of other parties to make privacy a political issue is a disadvantage to the party. The instant that information policy becomes a political dimension within the existing parliamentary party system, the Pirate Party will benefit. Another of the Pirate Party's strengths is that it is organizing a bloc of young and knowledgeable individuals, often in highly specialized technical occupations, to whom information and communication technology is the stuff of everyday life. There is much to indicate that

sympathizers and the membership see their engagement in the Pirate Party as an extension of their (future) personal professional identities.

The party's weakness is that it has no clear position on the left–right scale. The Pirate Party also lacks credibility on political issues outside its own arena. Even if the party has chosen to formulate a political platform only in the areas related to its core values (privacy, culture, knowledge), over the long term it is going to find it difficult to establish itself as a viable political alternative for broader voting blocs if the party's ideological perspective is not allowed to impregnate other issues. The organizational strength of the party is not sufficient to enable it to put information policy on the political agenda by itself. It is instead dependent on external events such as the lawsuit against Pirate Bay or public outcries of the kind seen in connection with the FRA law. Nor is the Pirate Party as interesting in the framework of media logic as the Sweden Democrats have been; consequently, the Pirate Party is accorded very little media coverage.

The Pirate Party is mobilizing along the emerging knowledge-based cleavage. Those who are active in the party are the knowledge actors, while the market is being mobilized largely through the established parties. In this sense, the Pirate Party is a radical challenger party. Information policy is an area where the role of the state and the rights of the citizenry are brought to a head. The issue has been politicized – during the FRA debate, for example – but has receded. There is much to indicate that information policy will rise again as a central mobilization issue along the knowledge-based cleavage and thus provide the Pirate Party further opportunities to solidify its position as a relevant political power. The crucial question is whether or not the party has adequate resources (money and staff) and persistence to hold out until the time and situation are at hand. In 2014 the Pirate Party will have to defend its two seats in the European Parliament for the first time and, three months later, try to achieve representation in the Swedish Riksdag for the third time.

NOTES

[1] A Swedish version of this paper was published in Oscarsson and Holmberg (2011).

[2] At first, the Pirate Party gained one seat in the European Parliament, occupied by Christian Engström. After the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the European

Parliament passed an amendment in May 2010 that adjusted representation in the European Parliament, resulting in a total of 20 Swedish seats, instead of the former 18. The additional MEPs included another Pirate Party representative, Amelia Andersdotter, and she has been able to participate in the parliamentary work since 2012.

[3] See Bjereld and Demker (2008) for an in-depth analysis of the new cleavages.

[4] Studies with the same point of departure but slightly different interpretations are Kriesi et al. (2006) and Stubager (2008, 2009). See also Castells (1996–8, 2009) and Florida (2002, 2004).

[5] The struggle for the loyalty of the citizenry and for truth was also central to the tug-of-war between the emerging nation state and what the transnational church was then. Today, the struggle is focused on the status of knowledge, the boundaries of the truth and religious pretensions to knowledge in general.

[6] This triptych was inspired by Foucault (1971).

[7] On technology change and politics, see Carpentier et al. (2008).

[8] The fourth defendant was scheduled for a separate trial because of illness. But, though he did not show up for his trial in 2011, the judgment from the lower court was confirmed. All other three defendants got their sentences reduced in the higher court in 2010.

[9] Swedish charter schools are publicly financed but are private market companies. The students have in effect a public voucher for their education.

[10] Available at http://sv.wikisource.org/wiki/Piratpartiets_principprogram/3.3.

[11] Although the Pirate Party is a political party in line with the accepted vocabulary, it can be said to be on the verge of being a social movement, a movement that belongs to the people who are shaping the social capital of the future in a democracy. See, for example, Kittilson and Dalton (2008).

[12] Survey 3, which I have used, was distributed one week before the election. The survey asked, 'What might persuade you to vote for the Pirate Party in the election to the European Parliament?' This question was asked of people who had in answer to a previous question said that they were thinking about voting for the Pirate Party.

[13] I have interpreted the stated explanations in light of several conceivable categories that I derived from the public debate about privacy and the internet. I have also tried to point out any divergent arguments that occur.

[14] See also Dahlberg (2011: 197, Table 13.2) on the representativeness of the E-Panel.

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