

Another chapter in Swedish political hypocrisy (2007 edition)

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Raymond Chen

A few years ago, Gudrun Schyman, then-leader of Sweden's left-wing party, Vänsterpartiet ("The Left Party"), was forced to resign after it was revealed that she had been cheating on her taxes for at least five years, specifically by claiming fake deductions. This was particularly ironic because, as the left-wing party, Vänsterpartiet is heavily pro-taxation. The latest news from Sweden comes from the opposite end of the political spectrum. The far right-wing party Sverigedemokraterna ("The Sweden Democrats"), which has an anti-immigrant platform, have complained that 10% of immigrants live on government assistance, double the rate of native Swedes. Swedish tabloid Aftonbladet did some legwork and calculated that nearly 20% of Sverigedemokraterna members live on government assistance, and over a third receive partial government assistance. (In English, and less sensationally written.) If you dare to click through to the Swedish version, I can at least try to translate the chart: The left hand column shows the average annual income of members of the various parties (sd = Sverigedemokraterna) in Swedish kronor. The right hand column shows the percentage of members with, um, something; having trouble translating. It literally means "payment notices" but I'm not sure what that means. The white boxes marked "Riket" show the national averages. And the little graph in the lower left corner shows the percentage of sd members (compared to the national average) who owe money to the Swedish Enforcement Authority, which collects fines, fees, taxes, legal judgments, and similar monetary obligations. No scandal article from Aftonbladet is complete without some mean-spirited fun, and in this case, they decided to add some new data to a bar chart taken from one of Sverigedemokraterna's political pamphlets. **Nitpicker's corner**

There's plenty of hypocrisy in United States politics, too.

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