Populist Radical Right and the Media from a Swedish Perspective

A study on the news media’s coverage of the Sweden Democrats

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Master’s thesis

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Master’s Programme Communication Science

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24 June 2016
Abstract

In the last decades, Europe has seen a rise in populist radical right parties proving highly successful. With the rising success of the Sweden Democrats from the early 2010’s, this study signifies a much-needed analysis into examining the mediated reality of them. Based on previous research, it has been shown that the media constitute an important role for these parties and that the media, in turn, also has an important role for the parties, however the Swedish media has earlier taken a rather harsh stance towards them making this an interesting case. So far, the literature on the Sweden Democrats has been rather limited and no studies exist with a longitudinal design, to my knowledge, presenting a gap in the research that this study will aim to fill. This longitudinal study analyses the media’s portrayal of the Sweden Democrats in four newspapers through a quantitative content analysis (N=540). The findings suggest the visibility of the SD did increase over the years, however, not linearly. Secondly, they indicated that the tone towards the SD was rather negative. Lastly, the results showed that articles carrying a scandal frame mentioned the SD considerably more than any other party.

*Keywords*: radical right, populism, media, political communication, visibility, tone, framing, Sweden Democrats
According to a recent opinion poll, the Sweden Democrats stand to receive 19.4% of the votes and thereof be the third-largest party in Sweden (Novus, 2015). This represents a major shift in Swedish politics, as no populist radical right (hereafter PRR) party has been successful to the same extent before. This success can be viewed in relation to a larger trend in Europe, where an upsurge of PRR parties has been emerging for several decades. A vast literature has therefore also been dedicated to exploring this phenomenon (i.e., Betz, 1993; Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2009).

The Sweden Democrats (hereafter SD), formed in 1988, were considered somewhat of a racist sect because of their former Nazi associations and extremely strong immigration stances (Widfeldt, 2008). Prior to the 2010 general elections, the Swedish media took a rather harsh stance towards the SD presuming that the lack of media attention could possibly hinder the SD getting past the 4% threshold. TV4, one of the largest broadcasting channels, refused to broadcast their campaign video (Wodak, KhosraviNik & Mral, 2013) depicting women in burkas running towards a table with money (i.e., suggesting it is the state budget) and overtaking an old lady demonstrating their belief that immigrants are expensive and the money should be spent on pensions and elderly care instead (See video: SDReklam2010, 2010). Several newspapers decided to boycott their advertisements following its release (Wodak et al., 2013) attempting to neutralise the party. However, this strategy failed as the SD gained parliamentary success in the 2010 general elections, which subsequently sent shockwaves through Sweden (Mulinari & Neergaard, 2012). Despite their success, political actors have rejected any potential collaboration and the media have repeatedly refused to accept them (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010; Wodak et al., 2013) indicating a strong bias towards them.
Nonetheless, the media have an increasingly important role in society, and they have a responsibility of reporting accurately as they ultimately hold the power to influence the public opinion. As the media are the main source of information, citizens are dependent upon them for this (Strömbäck, 2005), thus representing an important function for them in Swedish society. In this lies also the implication that political actors are dependent upon them to communicate their messages and is also in line with the notion that politics have become mediatized (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2008a).

Scholars suggest that the media also play an important role for PRR parties and that they have even contributed to the success of these parties (Mazzoleni, Stewart & Horsfield, 2003; Mudde, 2007). This can be seen in relation to an overall change of the media towards popular predispositions as evidenced by a growing need for dramatization and scandalization hereby conforming into a symbiosis with these populist movements (Blumler & Kavanaugh, 1999; Mazzoleni et al., 2013; Mudde, 2007). This existence of a popularisation of news has also been established in Sweden in a recent finding (Andersson, 2013).

Prior studies have been conducted analysing coverage of Swedish political parties (Strömbäck & Nord, 2006; Strömbäck & Nord, 2008), however, as Sweden has not had a PRR party before unlike other European countries thereby indicating a new change in Swedish politics, this study contributes with a new perspective to the literature for its focus on the SD. Despite an immense amount of comparative literature on these parties, they have rarely included the SD, although Ignazi (2010) briefly mentions them in his work on these parties (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010; and for an exception see Rydgren, 2010).

Furthermore, by employing a longitudinal design, it will add an aspect that has
rarely been provided in studies on PRR parties. Moreover, this study is the first of its kind, to my knowledge, to study media coverage of the SD in a longitudinal design.

As it has been explicated already, the media hold a great power in society as they can influence the public opinion as they decide what they want to report and how they want to report it, essentially meaning that media content is socially constructed. Normatively, the media should report objectively leaving it up to the citizens to form their own opinions, although it is also no longer seriously discussed if the media is truly objective and ‘mirrors’ reality with little distortion (Reese, 2007).

By analysing media content, it presents an opportunity to examine the portrayal of the SD, as that in turn can influence the public opinion. Furthermore, as the media previously have opposed the SD, an analysis of the coverage will also uncover if this is reflected in the coverage. Moreover, an additional aim is to close the gap in the literature. I therefore set out to study the media portrayal of the SD concerning what was reported and how it was reported in terms of three aspects of coverage, namely visibility, tone and framing, with the following research question:

**RQ: How have the Sweden Democrats been portrayed in the Swedish media over the time period 2005-2015?**

In pursuance of answering the posited research question, a quantitative content analysis was conducted examining news coverage of four Swedish newspapers over a time period of 11 years in order to be able to follow the development of the coverage.

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1 A special thanks to my supervisor Linda Bos and Jesper Strömbäck who provided much appreciated advice.
Theoretical Background

This section will provide a theoretical basis for studying the SD, as the central elements of the PRR parties are uncovered. Secondly, an overview offering the history and current position of the SD. Lastly, the relationship between the PRR parties and the media will be explored ending with a set of hypotheses and a research question.

The Populist Radical Right

The populist radical right (PRR) has gained remarkable support in Europe throughout the last decades. Many scholars have studied this phenomenon (Betz, 1993; Bornschier, 2010; Mudde, 1999; 2004; 2007; Norris, 2005; Wodak et al., 2013; Zaslove, 2009) and attempted to explain its uprising and distinct essential nature. This party family can be considered relatively new or at least resurrected, as they were rather marginalised and ‘de-legitimised’ after WWII (Rydgren, 2005). Rydgren (2005) explains the hibernating PRR with the economic developments at the time that ensured strong bonds to the society for the people and also a high level of political trust. This pattern however changed in the years to come. Whereas in the 1970’s and 1980’s, new political changes were social movements and left-libertarian parties, the PRR parties had its upsurge in the late 1980’s in many countries throughout Europe (Betz, 1993; Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2009) and has as the only one of the new party families since WWII managed to gain support in the whole of Europe (Mudde, 2007). This party family is a fairly heterogeneous group as some such as the Danish FrP (See Appendix B a list of acronyms) started as an anti-tax party, the Italian LN as a regional political movement, and the German NPD had fascist roots (Zaslove, 2009). Despite the parties having one common feature, namely an anti-immigration stance, they had different backgrounds and different characteristics. Pursuant to their
disparities, scholars tend to view and label them differently and a delineation of this type of party is therefore necessary.

The core features of the PRR. Betz (1993) introduced the term ‘radical populist right’ adding ‘populism’ as a feature of these anti-immigration parties arguing that they instrumentalise sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment as an appeal to the common man. Taggart (1995) sustained this notion and described their ideology as right-wing, anti-system and populist – and of the people but not of the system. In Mudde’s (2007) acclaimed framework, he defines the PRR with a maximum definition consisting of three ideological features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Firstly, he defines nativism, the core feature of the larger party family, as: “an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde, 2007, p. 22). This type of nativism incorporates a combination of nationalism and xenophobia also previously discussed by scholars as a feature of the ideology (Mudde, 2000). Authoritarianism refers to the “belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely” (Mudde, 2007, p. 22). Lastly, he defines populism as: “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous groups and antagonistic groups, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite” (Mudde, 2007, p. 23).

Labelling. Since the parties do differ in some aspects and scholars have dissimilar perceptions, they have been labelled differently as there has been “a lack of a commonly accepted definition, a confusing terminology and a difficulty in the categorisation of the variety of cases” (Anastasakis, 2000). The parties have amongst
other terms been labelled right-wing populist (Rydgren, 2005; 2010; van der Brug & Mughan, 2007), radical right-wing (Betz, 1993; Mudde, 2012; Norris, 2005), single-issue (Mudde, 1999), anti-immigration parties (van Der Brug & van Spanje, 2007; van Spanje, 2010), and populist radical right (Mudde, 2007).

As there clearly is not a commonly accepted definition, it is important to delineate which term will be used throughout in this thesis. Following Mudde (2007), I will use his term populist radical right. ‘Radical’ here refers to an opposition of some key features of a liberal democracy (Mudde, 2007) leaving out former meanings as he pins down that being ‘radical’ is highly dependent on the political culture of a country. However, as these parties are becoming more common and accepted in the whole of Europe, it can be argued that they are becoming less radical as society is adapting to them and they will therefore not be ‘radical’ in its original meaning. Moreover, Mudde uses Bobbio’s distinction between left and right constructed from the idea that it relates to the attitude towards (in)equality denoting that the right sees inequalities as natural and the left sees them as artificial and wishes to reduce them (as cited in Mudde, 2007).

The case of the Sweden Democrats

Firstly, an overview of Sweden and its political scene will be provided in order to put the analysis into a broader context. Sweden is a Scandinavian country, has Stockholm as its capital and a population of 9.8 million (“Befolkningsstatistik, 2016). It is a parliamentary democracy with a multi-party system and proportional electoral system with elections held third Sunday in September every fourth year (Johansson & Mörtenberg, 2013). Riksdag is Sweden’s parliament with a total of 349 seats and the threshold for entering parliament is 4 %.
The SD were established in 1988 but were not successful until the late 2000’s, when they gained parliamentary representation after the 2010 general elections (Bolin et al., 2014). Even though the extreme right was illegitimated after WWII, new groups of neo-fascists/Nazis emerged in the 1980’s as with *Bevara Sverige Svenskt* (BSS) [Keep Sweden Swedish] (Widfeldt, 2008). A group of former members from BSS and a populist ‘discontent party’ formed *Sverigepartiet* in 1986 that then turned it into *Sverigedemokraterna* [the Sweden Democrats] in 1988 (Rydgren, 2002; Widfeldt, 2008). From the early beginning led by Anders Klarström, the SD had extreme right connections to Neo-Nazi movements and *Nordiska Rikspartiet* [Nordic Reich Party] (Widfeldt, 2008). Other members included Nazi veterans, Hitler admirers and former members of *Vitt Ariskt Motstånd* [White Arian Resistance] and *Nationalsocialistiska Arbetarepartiet* [National Socialist Workers’ Party], a Nazi party with Swastika symbols allied with pro-apartheid newspapers in South Africa and a Ku Klux Klan affiliated journal in the USA (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010; Widfeldt, 2008). The party was considered a right-wing sect and had difficulty establishing itself as a serious party, which was also reflected in the results of their first elections (Widfeldt, 2008). A manifestation took place in 1993 celebrating the late King of Sweden, however, ended violently and with Nazi flags hanging next to the flag of Sweden and cheers of Nazi salutes (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). A new populist party, New Democracy, was founded alongside this. The founders, an industrialist and a record company manger, were well known in Sweden for opposing bureaucracy, ridiculing Swedish politicians and criticising food prices (Rydgren, 2002; Widfeldt, 2000). Their campaigning showed a direct mockery of the Swedish establishment and traditional politics by making rallies highly entertaining approaching the audience with stand-up, recording a song for their campaign and having a smiley as a party logo. The NyD
received 6.7% of the votes in the 1991 election gaining 25 seats in Riksdagen only seven months after its foundation; however, the party was short-lived and dispersed shortly after (Rydgren, 2002; Widfeldt, 2000). Nonetheless, Klarström could follow the rapid popularity of the NyD and also attempted to ‘clean up’ the image of the SD by getting rid of extremists in the party despite the obstacle of extremists being a majority of the party (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). The succeeding party leader as of 1995, Mikael Jansson, took a harsher stance by expelling extremists and banning uniforms from meetings (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). It resulted in them joining the European nationalist network alongside Belgian VB and British BNP and also receiving more votes in the 1994 and 1998 election as seen in Table A1 (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010; Widfeldt, 2008).

An important shift for the Sweden Democrats was when current party leader, Jimmie Åkesson, took over in 2005 and thoroughly cleaned the muddy image toning down the racist and Nazi connotations. Åkesson offered a new charismatic, eloquent and professional leading profile for the party (Widfeldt, 2008). He also addressed the ridicule Sweden Democrats were facing from other politicians and the media, stating that “We are the underdog” (Åkesson in Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). The media have also not held back with reminding people of the party’s Nazi associations (Rydgren, 2002) and Åkesson has in an open letter to chief editors in Sweden encouraged them to report on SD as they would for any other party, that they allow the SD to communicate their messages and not exclude them from televised debates, which had earlier been the case (Baas, 2014). Other parties have openly ignored them
continuously throughout the years (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010) and the SD have been able to use this to their advantage and further enhance their position as an anti-elitist party appealing to common people. However, the party still struggles with a grimy image as they are for many Swedes looked upon as racist. Partially because of their past but also because of their concurrent scandals such as the 2012 incident where two SD politicians, Kent Ekeroth and Erik Almqvist, made highly racist comments to a Swedish-Kurdish comedian as well as sexist comments to a woman on a night out and armed themselves with an iron pipe (Hellström, 2012). Other scandals have also ravaged the party and they are assiduously attempting to decrease the racist undertones. Following the iron-pipe scandal, the Nobel prize committee decided to exclude Jimmie Åkesson from the Nobel dinner in 2012, where the royal family, political leaders and other prominent persons attended, further manifesting that the SD is not mainstream and certainly not a part of the elite (Hellström, 2012).

Nonetheless, the support for the Sweden Democrats is increasing and in the 2014 general election, they received 12.9% of the votes more than doubling their votes from the 2010 election. One reason for their apparent success is their willingness to speak about the immigration issue whereas almost all other Swedish parties have earlier refused to address the rising number of immigrations. Immigration is also one of their key issues along with crime and elderly care. They consider themselves a “social conservative party with a nationalistic view” ("Vår politik A till Ö", 2016). The recent refugee influx in 2015 has also contributed to an increased support for SD since many voters have disagreed with the very generous asylum policies the left-wing government implemented in the beginning. However, it should be noted that the government did retract this in late 2015 despite a strong reluctance to impose stricter border control.
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To return to Mudde’s framework on PRR parties, SD can be considered a PRR party in accordance with the maximum definition, as they possess all three ideological features in terms of nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Specifically, populism could be expected to thrive in the third age of political communication that Blumler and Kavanaugh (1999) have argued early on is emerging, marked by media ubiquity, abundance, reach and celerity. This is also demonstrated by the anti-elite popularisation and populism as one of the key features/trends of the third age, which is a feature that inarguably the PRR falls within.

**Populist Radical Right and the Media**

In Sweden, as well as in other Western countries, societies have become mediatised and so has the political communication. Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) argue that mediatisation has been furthered with the commercialization of media systems. This commercialisation is also what many scholars (Aalberg & Curran, 2012; Brants, 2007; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Umbricht & Esser, 2013) argue leads to a popularisation turning content into softer news and more towards what Hallin and Mancini (2004) label the ‘liberal’ model exemplified by British and US media. This should be viewed in opposition to the ‘polarised pluralist’ and more importantly, the ‘democratic corporatist’ media system that Sweden is categorised in (Brüggeman et al., 2014; Hallin & Mancini, 2004) Characteristics of softer news are demonstrated by the media adapting to popular taste leading to a tabloidization of the press (Esser, 1999). This trend is also evident in Sweden (Sternvik, 2005).

Strömbäck (2008) describes the mediatisation as an evolutionary process. He argues that Sweden is in a late phase of mediatisation, indicating that the mass media is so independent and central that political actors have no other choice than to adapt in order to attempt to influence the news.
Blumler (in Mazzoleni et al., 2003) draws a parallel between populist movements and the modern mass media. Populist movements champion the “people’s” real interests, use emotional, sensational and blunt rhetoric and are steered by a strong leader, which is also in line with other research suggesting that these charismatic leaders suit the media’s high demand for the “spectacular and emotional treatment of social reality” (Bos, van der Brug & de Vreese, 2011). The mass media have implemented new strategies with an increased focus on popular taste/language, scandalisation, personalisation and negativity - again similar to the needs of PRR and parties and it would be expected that the media especially would pay attention to the strong news values these parties hold. Although this appears as an ideal opportunity for the media to continue on their pursuit for popular news, it might not always be the case. Despite the Swedish media system not being considered partisan and having a strong public broadcasting system as a typical democratic corporatist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), they are not as independent as proclaimed. Earlier surveys of Swedish journalists have shown a slight bias towards the political right (Asp, 2000). However, it should be kept in mind that the majority of the Swedish media are still owned by larger corporations (Weibull & Jönsson, 2007), which also influences the news production process at an organizational level (Reese, 2007), as larger corporations typically focus on financial gain.

Mazzoleni et al. (2003) also point out the possibility of the contrary of the aforementioned media-PRR symbiosis happening, namely that if the media belong to the ruling elites of a country, or perhaps are more in line with status quo, they could utilize their power of social authority and instead neutralise the perceived threat. The case with the Sweden Democrats would fall into the latter as they have been neutralised or at least to an extent. They have been refused access as the only party to
advertising space in newspapers, not been invited to televised debates and have been refused by television channels to air a campaign video (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010). Swedish politicians have also implemented this strategy and instead of engaging in debates with the Sweden Democrats, they have officially isolated them much similar to the *cordon sanitaire* implemented in Belgium in 1992 against the VB (See Erk, 2005). The isolation strategy that Mazzoleni et al. (2003) also address and the general difficulty of populist parties to gain access to the “elite media” appear to have backfired considering the rising standing of the Sweden Democrats in the recent years.

Put together, these arguments demonstrate not only the central importance of the media in the mediatised society but also their importance for PRR parties. As the media holds so much power shows how imperative it is to inspect the media content when wanting to gain knowledge about the portrayal of the Sweden Democrats. Because of the media’s previously harsh stance towards the SD, it would be interesting to analyse the coverage. As media content portrays reality and is essentially socially constructed and therefore not a “mirror” of reality (Reese, 2007), it provides a way to see how events/persons are being depicted, and in turn, how the public might perceive the Sweden Democrats.

**Visibility.** Agenda-setting theory has been researched for many decades (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Agenda-setting theory (first-level agenda setting) refers to the notion that the media hold the power to place salience on some topics rather than others and thereby influence the public’s opinion through this practise (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).
This also extends to political parties and actors and for this case it means emphasising some political parties more than others, which then might have an impact on the electorate (Bos, van der Brug & de Vreese, 2011).

As the SD has gone from a minor pariah party to a having a large representation in Riksdagen, I expect the visibility of the SD in the media to increase over time (H1) and especially after 2010 when they gained seats in Riksdagen. This hypothesis is also supported by Mazzoleni et al.’s (2003) theory stating that if a populist party achieves power by democratic means, the media might acknowledge this and report accordingly. As the Swedish media are not considered partisan (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), it could be expected that the neutralisation strategy will subside after the party becomes more established within the political scene.

**Tone of coverage.** Whereas first-level agenda-setting theory refers to the media telling us “what to think about”, second-level agenda-setting theory refers to the media telling us “how to think about” topics (Sheafer, 2007) and is related to how the public evaluates media content. Tone is another aspect of agenda-setting theory (second-level), where it can influence the public opinion into evaluating political parties in a certain way and do, inarguably, in some way exhibit a form of partisanship of the media.

Partisanship of the Swedish media have previously been researched with slight biases as a result (Asp, 2011) as mentioned earlier, however, the Swedish media is generally not considered partisan as a typical democratic corporatist country (Brüggeman et al., 2014; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Despite the fact that the SD have been rejected in society and the media, the Swedish media have a low level of political parallelism and high journalistic professionalism (Brüggeman et al., 2014) and as SD gradually has become a larger and more established, I expect the tone of
the coverage to towards the SD become more positive over the years (H2). With regards to the Swedish political scene and all parties and as the media previously has taken a rather harsh stance towards the SD, I expect the coverage to be more negative towards the SD than towards the other political parties (H3).

**Framing.** How the media interpret reality and report on it has already been elucidated but this section will go more into depth with framing. Framing is a common concept in political communication research and has therefore been researched extensively and conceptualised differently (Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese, 2005). It is defined as “conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret, and evaluate information” (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 60). As the media have a crucial role in society in influencing and forming opinions, framing is therefore a powerful tool.

The aforementioned popularisation of news has also led to a change in the framing of politics with an increase in implementing news values such as personalisation and “horse-race” journalism (Aalberg et al., 2011). This also implies a lesser focus on issue-specific frames and more focus on entertainment-oriented news framing politics as a game or more in the frame of a scandal (Patterson, 2000). The game frame depicting politics as a game, as exemplified by an increased focus on strategies, tactics, “winners”, “losers” and more focused on how politics are conducted and performances of parties and politicians as opposed to focusing on what the policies are and the issues in question (Aalberg et al., 2011). As media content is influential, the game frame is of interest as it can ignite higher levels of political cynicism for the public (De Vreese & Semetko, 2002) and thereby subordinate the issues and political substance.
The game frame is also an extensively researched frame, however more illuminated in terms of different conceptualisations in recent times (See Aalberg et al., 2011; de Vreese, 2005), and some scholars distinguish between the game frame and strategic game (Binderkrantz & Green-Pedersen, 2009; De Vreese, 2005) while others do not (Capella & Jamieson, 1997; Strömbäck, 2001). Thus for clarity, this thesis will not distinguish between the two as this is still common in communication research and they are used interchangeably (Lawrence, 2000). Research shows that the usage of the game frame in Swedish media coverage is increasing but it has not yet been investigated with a focus on SD.

Another frame that is relevant to political reporting, arguably specifically of PRR parties, is the scandal frame, which is increasingly being used by the media pursuant to the commercialisation in order to make stories more compelling. The literature on scandal frames is more limited compared to that of the game frame (for some studies see: Fernandes & Shumow, 2014; Strömbäck, 2007). It is usually defined as a focus on scandalous and norm-breaking statements or behaviour by political actors and the scandal frame in this study has been based on previous research (Strömbäck & Nord, 2008). This frame could be considered especially interesting when studying the Sweden Democrats as the party has been considered norm breaking and it is thus interesting to investigate the differences in scandal frames of SD to the other parties. The media will report on the deviant and newsworthy occurrences such as politicians or parties defying the present order providing them with a stage to communicate their messages (Mazzoleni et al., 2003).

As the game frame encompasses how politics is conducted and the scandal frame encompasses norm-breaking statements or behaviour, it would be interesting to explore how the SD are portrayed in terms of framing, following Mazzoleni’s (2003)
notion on how the media focuses on conflicts in relation to populists. A research question is therefore formulated in order to explore the following: To what extent have the Sweden Democrats been portrayed in terms of game- and scandal frames in the media?

**Method**

In order to answer the formulated research question, a quantitative content analysis was conducted. The implementation of this research design was based on the notion that it is the most effective way for a “systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods” (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014, p. 3). The deductive approach applied in this study holds several advantages; it enables easy replication and easy detection of content differences between media (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The codebook produced for this study has been based on other studies analysing aspects of coverage frames as visibility, tone of coverage and frames (Bos, Brug & de Vreese, 2011; Cappella & Jamieson, 1999; Strömbäck, 2001) (See Appendix G for codebook).

A pilot test was conducted beforehand to ensure the validity and reliability of the outcome. One principle coder performed the coding and for the intercoder reliability test, a second coder coded a subset of the data (9.6 %) out of the entire sample (N=540). For measurement consistency, Krippendorff’s Alpha was used, as it is the principal reliability statistic for content analysis (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The Krippendorff’s Alpha (α) showed very satisfactory results for the variables ranging from .6303 to 1.000 and can be found in the next section.

**Sample**
The unit of analysis in the study was weekday articles in Swedish newspapers. Two broadsheets and two tabloids were chosen according to the highest geographical circulation (TS Mediefakta – Dagspress, 2016) taking into account ideological slant. The first broadsheet, *Dagens Nyheter* (DN), is the largest-selling morning paper in Sweden; the second one, *Svenska Dagbladet* (SvD) is the third-largest selling and was selected instead of *Göteborg-Posten* (GP), which is the second-largest selling, however, GP is primarily circulated in Western Sweden and therefore less representative. Furthermore, these broadsheets are the common ones used in other studies along with the two tabloids *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* that are the two largest-selling tabloids (Strömbäck, 2008b). Despite both DN and SvD having changed their format to tabloid, they are still considered broadsheets. In accounting for ideological slant, the four newspapers have different political stances although all of them consider themselves independent but SvD is moderate, Aftonbladet social democratic and DN and Expressen liberal newspapers.

The data comprises newspaper articles published over a time span of 11 years from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2015. The articles were collected on 18-19 May 2016. The incentive to use this time period is because the SD was an insignificant party and Jimmie Åkesson was elected as the party leader in 2005, whereas in 2015 the SD is an established party, has made its way into Riksdagen and is considered one of the largest parties in Sweden. Therefore, this time period is sufficient in order to follow the development of the SD’s portrayal in the media.

As it was not possible to analyse all relevant articles within the scope of this study the study included newspaper articles published from Monday until Friday. In order to distribute the data evenly, a stratified sample was used instead of simple random sampling as it accounts for variation in the content. Two constructed weeks
from every other year were randomly chosen via random.org, starting in 2005, comprising an adequate representative sample (Riffe, Aust & Lacy, 1996) of the media content in these years. The Swedish news archive, Mediearkivet, was used in order to collect all articles with a search string attempting to gather as many relevant articles as possible (See Appendix C for search string).

**Operationalization of variables**

The dependent variables in this research were as aforementioned visibility, tone of coverage and frames.

Visibility was measured on an indicator of whether or not it was mentioned (1=Yes, 0=No) in the article for all parties: the Left Party ($M=.23, SD=.425, \alpha=.8858$), the Green Party ($M=.40, SD=.495, \alpha=.9195$), the Social Democratic Party ($M=.56, SD=.502, \alpha=.8853$), the Centre Party ($M=.35, SD=.480, \alpha=.9134$), the Liberal Party ($M=.44, SD=.502, \alpha=-.8092$), the Christian Democrats ($M=.23, SD=.425, \alpha=.9447$), the Moderate Party ($M=.44, SD=.502, \alpha=.9612$) and the Sweden Democrats ($M=.29, SD=.457, \alpha=.9032$).

The tone of the coverage was measured on an indicator of how a party was evaluated in the article (1=Positive, 2=Neutral/mixed, 3=Negative) for each of the parties: the Left Party ($M=2.33, SD=.492, \alpha=.8296$), the Green Party ($M=2.05, SD=.384, \alpha=.7183$), the Social Democratic Party ($M=2.14, SD=.516, \alpha=.7841$), the Centre Party ($M=2.00, SD=.485, \alpha=.6306$), the Liberal Party ($M=2.04, SD=.475, \alpha=-.7164$), the Christian Democrats ($M=2.17, SD=.389, \alpha=.7677$), the Moderate Party ($M=2.04, SD=.638, \alpha=.7602$) and the Sweden Democrats ($M=2.67, SD=.488, \alpha=.7315$).

Frames was operationalized as game- and scandal frames. The game frame consisted of five items measuring either the absence or presence (1=Yes, 0=No) of
references to winner and losers ($M= .13, SD= .345, \alpha = .8365$), strategies of politicians/parties ($M= .42, SD= .499, \alpha = .9356$), linguistic references to sports/war ($M= .08, SD= .269, \alpha = .8365$) and references to how a political actor works/manages his duties ($M= .50, SD= .505, \alpha = .8857$). The scale, however, had a poor internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.550 ($M= .96, SD= 1.081$). The scandal-specific frame comprised three items also measuring absence/presence (1=Yes, 0=No) in references to norm-breaking or libellous statements by a political actor ($M= .10, SD= .298, \alpha = .8563$), immoral or questionable behaviour by a political actor relevant to their political position ($M= .08, SD= .269, \alpha = .8483$) and immoral or questionable behaviour by a political actor touching upon their private lives ($M= .06, SD= .235, \alpha = .7919$). The scale had a fairly high level of internal consistency as indicated by a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.772 ($M= .07, SD= .373$).

Lastly, article characteristics have been used as explanatory variables. The article characteristics were media, year, page number, word count, type of article and topic. Of the four sample newspapers, type of media was DN, SvD, Aftonbladet or Expressen ($\alpha = 1.000$). Year indicated the year of publishing, page number the page upon where the article appeared ($\alpha = 1.000$) and word count for the total number of words excluding image text ($\alpha = .8642$). Five different types of articles were possible to answer: News story, Reportage/feature, Editorial/column/journalistic commentary, Interview/discussion or Other ($\alpha = .8788$). The topics amounted to 28 in total ($\alpha = .8324$). See codebook in Appendix G for full overview of topics.

**Results**

**Visibility**
To test the visibility of the SD in media over the years (H1), a one-way analysis of variance was conducted with years as the independent variable. Articles mentioning the Sweden Democrats were highest in the years of 2011 ($M=.37$, $SD=.49$), 2013 ($M=.35$, $SD=.48$) and 2015 ($M=.27$, $SD=.45$) and the least mentions occurred in the years of 2005 ($M=.03$, $SD=.19$), 2009 ($M=.07$, $SD=.25$) and 2007 ($M=.15$, $SD=.36$). See Table A2. A one-way analysis of variance was carried out to assess the mentions of the Sweden Democrats by year. A significant, very small effect among the mentions in the different years was found: $F(5, 534) = 5.14$, $p < .001$. $\eta^2 = .11)$. It should be noted that the assumption of equal variances has been violated, Levene’s $F (5, 534) = 63.69$, $p < .001$, indicating no homogeneity of variance.

The Bonferroni post-hoc test showed significant differences for each of the six years. Significant differences for the year of 2005 were found with mentions in 2011 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.335$, $p < .001$), mentions in 2013 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.315$, $p < .001$) and mentions in 2015 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.235$, $p < .001$). For 2007, the differences mean was significantly different between this year and 2011 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.216$, $p < .05$) and 2013 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.195$, $p < .005$) and for the year of 2009 with 2011 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.304$, $p < .001$), 2013 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.283$, $p < .001$) and 2015 ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.203$, $p < .005$). No significant difference was found, respectively, between 2005 and 2007, 2005 and 2009, 2007 and 2009, 2011 and 2013, 2011 and 2013, and lastly, 2013 and 2015.

As the results show, the visibility of the SD did increase and was much higher in the years of 2011, 2013 and 2015 than it was in the previous years, which supports H1 stating that the visibility did increase after the SD gained parliamentary seats in Riksdagen. However, there is a small drop in visibility in 2009.
In order to control for other variables and as the dependent variable is dichotomous, a binary logistic regression was conducted to predict the probabilities of either mentioning the Sweden Democrats or not mentioning in an article with the explanatory variables of media outlet, year, word count, page number and topics.

When testing the full model against a constant-only model, it was statistically significant, thus, indicating that the predictors as a set reliably distinguished between mentions and no mentions of the Sweden Democrats, $\chi^2(19) = 128.738, p < .001$. The pseudo $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) showed that the model explained 34% of the variance in the dependent variable and also it overall correctly categorised 82.8% of the cases.

Mentions of the Sweden Democrats were 34.3% and no mentions were 94.9%, positive predictive value was 62.7% and negative predictive value was 85.2%.

When testing each individual variable with the Wald test, it showed that several of the variables added significant contributions to the prediction, however, only the year of publishing and topics contributed and not media outlet. It should be noted that type of article was also initially included but showed no significant effect and was consequently excluded. The number of topics was rather large and therefore only topics with significant results and also interesting topics with regards to the Sweden Democrats are included in the analysis (See Table A3). However, for the full model see Table D1 in Appendix D.

Of years, 2007 ($b = 2.489, se = 0.803, p < .005$), 2011 ($b = 3.381, se = 0.809, p < .001$), 2013 ($b = 3.664, se = 0.791, p < .001$) and 2015 ($b = 2.994, se = 0.802, p < .001$) contributed and out of topics, there were seven topics that significantly and positively contributed to the prediction: Healthcare/insurance ($b = 3.249, se = 0.947, p < .005$), Integration/migration ($b = 2.388, se = 0.621, p < .001$),
Government/parliament ($b = 1.723$, $se = 0.471$, $p < .001$), Election ($b = 3.968$, $se = 1.429$, $p < .005$), Other ($b = 2.169$, $se = 0.868$, $p < .05$), Political culture ($b = 1.378$, $se = .418$, $p < .005$) and Terror ($b = 2.375$, $se = 0.838$, $p < .001$).

The results clearly show that year functions as a predictor for the mentioning of the SD, which has already been explored in the one-way ANOVA. Type of media outlet does not have a significant effect. Word count and page number also do not have a significant effect. In the table above, only topics with a significant effect is showed alongside the topic Equality as it could be expected that it would have a significant effect with a PRR party. Not surprisingly, in articles with the topic of Integration, one of the party’s main issues, the SD is more often mentioned than in other articles, Articles with the topic of Healthcare have also had a significant effect, which is not surprising either, as one of the SD’s main issues are elderly care, which for some articles can be found within Healthcare. The topic Opinion polls also had a significant effect and can perhaps be seen as an indication of media outlets intensely following the SD’s rise in the polls. Government/parliament, Election, Political Culture and Other were also significant, however, they were rather dominant for all parties. Lastly, Terror was the most significant and the SD was almost the only party mentioned in articles with this topic.

**Tone of coverage**

To test H2, which stated that the tone of coverage towards the SD would become more positive over time, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to compare the means of the tone of coverage of the Sweden Democrats by year.
tone of coverage by year did not differ considerably, $F(5, 102) = 1.900, p=.10$. The tone of coverage was lowest and thereby most positive in 2005 ($M=2.00, SD=.00$), where after it increased in the following years, 2007 ($M=2.41, SD=.51$) and 2009 ($M=2.83, SD=.41$), only to decrease in 2011 ($M=2.25, SD=.44$) and then increase again in 2013 ($M=2.46, SD=.56$) and 2015 ($M=2.56, SD=.58$), respectively, suggesting a more negative tone. 2009 was thereby the year where the SD was portrayed the most negative. However, these results do suggest a rather negative tone towards the SD generally. See Chart E1 in Appendix E for gradual development of tone towards the SD. The assumption of equal variances has been violated, Levene’s $F(5, 102) = 7.249, p < .001$.

It is rather surprising that the tone of coverage has not changed much over the years, as it could be expected the tone of the coverage to change since the SD has transformed from a small party with a truly poor reputation to a more established party within the political scene and a party with the third-largest number of seats in Riksdagen. As already hypothesised, it could have been expected the tone of coverage to become more positive (H2), however, there is no support for this hypothesis judging by this bivariate analysis.

In order to account for other explanations, a linear regression was conducted to test if article characteristics had any impact on the tone of coverage towards the SD. The assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals and independence of errors were met. The independent variables statistically significantly predicted the tone of coverage, $F(10, 97) = 2.379, p < .05$, adj. $R^2 = .114$ and they explained for 11.4 % of the variance in the tone of coverage towards the SD. Of the predictors, only one added statistical significance to the prediction namely the article type of Interview/discussion ($b = .976, se = .491, p = .05$). See Table A4.
Moreover, H3 stated that the tone towards the SD would be more negative than the tone towards the other parties. In order achieve this and test the tone of coverage towards the political parties with a focus on the Sweden Democrats, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to pair the Sweden Democrats with each of the other seven parties. From viewing the means of the seven pairs, slight differences can be seen but yet nothing can be concluded. However, the paired-samples t-test (See Table A5) shows only one significant result when comparing the Sweden Democrats to the Green Party ($p = .50$) indicating that here lies the biggest contrast in tone of coverage when the Sweden Democrats are mentioned in articles along with other parties. The SD paired with the Left Party (V) is marginally significant and might have been significant with a larger sample size.

As can be seen in Table A5, the means were generally higher for tone towards the SD suggesting an overall more negative tone towards the SD, however only one showed a significant effect and as the degrees of freedom are rather low at 30, the hypothesis should not formally be rejected as it is in line with what I expected. It should be acknowledged that the sample size is rather small and it could be speculated that more pairs would show significant results if it had been larger. However, one was significant, namely the SD paired with the Christian Democrats (KD), in which the KD have been portrayed more negatively than the SD when mentioned in the same article. The KD is a rather small party and lying fairly still just above the 4%
threshold for Riksdagen. It could be speculated that since a negative tone also
includes references to a party losing a fight for votes or is on its way down, this could
be a reason for the tone towards KD to be more negative than the SD.

Frames

A research question was formulated in order to explore to what extent the SD
have been portrayed in the media in terms of game- and scandal frames. One-way
analyses of variances showed that articles with a game frame roughly had mentions of
all parties and the game frame mean for the SD did not differ notably when compared
to the game frame means for the other parties. See Table F1 in Appendix F for game
frame means and scandal frame means for all parties. However, when examining
articles with a scandal frame for the SD, it was much more likely that the article
would mention the SD \( (M=.3056, SD=.75) \), differing from not mentioning the SD
\( (M=.0162, SD=.13) \), \( F(1, 538) = 57.398, p < .001 \). On the basis of this, the SD being
mentioned the most in relation to articles with a scandal frames, a further study into
the scandal frame could prove interesting. Furthermore, this was also due to the rather
low internal consistency of the game frame as mentioned earlier.

A regression model was therefore carried out to explore the scandal frame
with article characteristics and whether or not each party was mentioned as predictors.
The linear regression was run to explore the effect of media outlet, year, article type,
word count, page number and mention/no mention of each party. The assumptions of
linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals and independence of errors were
met. The independent variables significantly predicted the scandal frame, \( F(22, 517) = 6.341, p < .001 \), \( \text{adj. } R^2 = .179 \) and thereby explained for 17.9 % of the variance in
the dependent variable, scandal frame. Four of the variables added statistical
significance to the prediction hereunder the media Aftonbladet \( (b = .146, se = .044, p \)
<.005), word count ($b = .000, se = .000, p < .001$) and mention of the SD ($b = .241, se = .040, p < .001$). The strongest relationships for the scandal frame are therefore with Aftonbladet and mention of the SD, not surprisingly. As Aftonbladet is a tabloid medium, it could be postulated that their articles carry more scandal frames than the broadsheets, however, the same strong relationship is not found for the second tabloid in this study, Expressen. The same strong relationship found for predicting the scandal frame with mentions of the SD are not unexpected as the Sweden Democrats have been involved in several scandals, however, it is still noteworthy that they are continually mentioned. In Table A6, it is also clear that the SD is the only party out of all eight when testing for articles carrying scandal frames. Lastly, the number of words also has a significant effect. A summary of the regression analysis can be found in Table A6 below.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how the Sweden Democrats have been portrayed in the media. As there is much research on the relationship between the PRR and the media and literature also exists on the role of the media in Swedish politics (Strömbäck & Nord, 2008), this study adds to existing literature with a narrower focus combining these aspects and investigating the change in Swedish politics with a successful PRR party and the subsequent socially constructed images in the media.

This research was carried out by measuring visibility, tone and frames, produced by four Swedish newspapers. Firstly, it was predicted that the visibility of
the SD would increase from 2005 to 2015. In this study, the visibility did increase and it clearly shows a higher visibility of the SD in later years and the most mentions for the first period (2005, 2007, 2009) and the second period (2011, 2013, 2015) are 2007 and 2011, respectively, which could potentially be caused by post-election coverage as these are the years after the 2006 and 2010 general elections. It is highest for 2011, where after it drops, which initially could indicate that the SD in this period became more legitimised and less isolated by society and the media. The findings could be considered consistent with Mazzoleni et al.’s (2013) notion that although a PRR party might be isolated, the media will accept it if they gain power by democratic means despite the imposed *cordon sanitaire*. However, when taking into account that the tone towards the SD have been mostly negative, it does not support the notion that the media then would accept them as Mazzoleni et al. (2013) proposed. Largely, these results do indeed indicate an increase in mentions of the SD, however, it has also been suggested by the findings that this increase might be caused by a larger amount of negative portrayal than positive.

In articles with the topic of *Political culture* SD was mentioned more often than not and it could represent a possible explanation for the negative coverage. As the success of a PRR party in Sweden has not existed before to the same extent, one explanation is that the ideology of an anti-immigration stance has been widely discussed and at times opposed. Furthermore, they were also often mentioned in articles on *Terror*, which is conceivably because the sample included articles from July 2011 coinciding with the 2011 Norway terror attack committed by the far-right Anders Breivik and was mainly the focus in articles on *Terror*. The SD were repeatedly linked to far-right organisations and debates concerning how dangerous the far right is, clearly demonstrating that the SD was not considered mainstream in 2011,
which other PRR parties in Europe also experienced with the terror attack (Keskinen, 2013). *Terror* therefore presents another possible explanation for the negative coverage.

The SD were also mentioned greatly in articles on the topics of *Integration/migration*, not surprisingly, and *Healthcare*. As the latter topic also included articles related to elderly care, one of the SD’s main issues, it could perhaps indicate that the SD cannot be considered a single-issue party, which supports the findings of Erlingsson, Vernby and Öhrvall (2013) suggesting that the single-issue label is a poor fit for the SD. Furthermore, it is also in line with the notions of Mudde (1999) and Ignazi (2010) who do not believe that parties with such a distinct nature can be categorised as single-issue parties. Scholars have also tentatively argued that increased media attention for immigration issues for these parties could be part of their success (Boomgaarden & de Swert, 2014) suggesting that despite the tone towards the SD being rather negative and not yielding more positive in later years, thus rejecting H2, the articles still mention them in relation to immigration issues potentially influencing their success positively. Moreover, this could be viewed in relation to the much-researched area of issue ownership (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen, 2004; Walgrave & de Swert, 2007; Walgrave et al., 2009). As the SD, inarguably, have had the sole ownership of the issue of immigration, since other parties have more or less refused to address it, they have been able to cultivate it, which could be suggested to have had yielded positive results. The media would then in turn have reported upon it also in line with the notions of Boomgaarden and de Swert (2014). As articles with the topic of *Immigration* mostly mentioned the SD, it could be speculated that this could be the reason for the negative coverage towards them as it was tentatively suggested that the tone towards them was more negative
than the tone towards the other parties. The hypothesis stating that the tone would be more negative towards the SD than the other parties were not formally supported, although it was in line with what I expected. Another indication from the result, other than the SD paired with Green Party (MP) yielded a significant effect, was that in articles mentioning the SD paired with the Left Party (V) showed marginally significant results. As mentioned earlier, it should be stressed that a larger sample size could possibly have generated more significant results, as the direction was fairly clear. The MP and the V are two of the parties that differ the most to the SD in terms of immigration policies, which also support the result for the SD being paired with the MP. As the MP was a governmental party in the later period when the SD was mentioned in the most articles, it could thus be suggested from this result that the media have been more satisfied with status quo and therefore reported on the tone accordingly.

What could further support the results of the SD being portrayed in a more negative way are the findings that suggested that the Sweden Democrats were mentioned more in articles carrying a scandal frame than its political counterparts. Interestingly enough, earlier findings suggest that scandals created by the mainstream parties have made voters seek towards the PRR parties (Betz, 1993; Plasser & Ulram in Mazzoleni, 2003) contrary to other findings suggesting that PRR parties are much involved in scandals (Ruzza, 2008). However, the latter is supported more by the findings in this study as the SD have been portrayed more in a scandal frame, although, this is still merely the media’s portrayal of events and does not ‘mirror’ reality (Reese, 2007). As the scandal frame inarguably is not a preferred frame for any party, it establishes further support for the earlier proposed notion that the media portrays the SD in an unappealing way.
This study also offered a perspective into articles carrying a game frame and indicated that articles that they did not mention the SD more than the other parties. However, it should be noted that the internal consistency for the game frame scale was rather low and no substantive conclusions can therefore be drawn. Yet as articles carrying a game frame mentioned all parties more often than not, it could indicate that the game frame is often used in Swedish media also consistent with earlier findings (Strömbäck & Luengo, 2008). It could be postulated that this is also pursuant to the notion that media content generally have become more popularised as scholars have argued and politics are more often portrayed as a game between the players contrasting to that of the issue-frame (Aalberg, Strömbäck & de Vreese; Esser, 1999; Umbricht & Esser).

Concerning visibility and the tone towards the SD, type of media did not have a significant effect, interestingly enough. Scholars have argued that tabloids provide an ideal scene for populist parties to communicate their message (Sparks & Tulloch, 2000), that PRR parties would be more prominent in tabloids (Mazzoleni et al., 2003) and earlier findings have suggested that tabloids have been more positive towards PRR parties than broadsheets (Akkerman, 2011; Bos et al., 2010; Bos and Brants, 2014). However, this was not the case despite common belief, although possibly in line with research suggesting slight hints of a convergence as broadsheets are increasingly becoming more ‘tabloidized’ (Esser, 1999) that is also evident in Sweden (Andersson, 2013), which could be the reason for broadsheets and tabloids not differing in terms of visibility and tone in this study. Another possible explanation could be that the media have attempted to neutralise the SD to such an extent that the type of media simply do not differ in this context. However, when examining the frames, the medium Aftonbladet, was a clear predictor of scandal frames, which is in
line with the previously mentioned notions of popularisation of news and tabloids’ unquenchable thirst for dramatization (Mazzoleni et al., 2003). An alternative explanation could be the political stance of the medium as Aftonbladet is self-proclaimed ‘independent social democratic’ suggesting that from a political perspective they are the furthest away from the ideology of the Sweden Democrats and could therefore place a stronger emphasis on the scandals surrounding the Sweden Democrats.

For practical matters it is important to emphasise the possible implications for the study with a small sample size of articles mentioning the SD as it might have had an influence of the results. However, for a comparative perspective, it was necessary to include and analyse coverage of all parties, which did result in a fairly large sample considering the scope of the thesis (N=540) but the subsample of which mentioned the SD was rather small (n=108) and could potentially have influenced the results. However, this can also be viewed as a result in itself as the SD was the party mentioned the least times, which was also revealed when examining the game and scandal frames (See Table F1 in Appendix F).

Further research on the Sweden Democrats could continue in several directions. Despite personalisation being of major importance to radical right populist parties this was consequently excluded, as this is an extensively researched topic within the literature and the focus were therefore laid elsewhere. However, as the SD are a party with a newly found success, further research into the media portrayal of Jimmie Åkesson could prove to be interesting to see if the leader has become the personification of politics as scholars suggests (Eatwell, 2002). Lastly, for a cross-national perspective, a most-similar design could be carried out comparing media portrayal of the SD with the Danish People’s Party and the
Norwegian Progress Party providing the literature with a comparative study on the Scandinavian countries.

In conclusion, this study did provide some interesting insights into how the media have portrayed the Sweden Democrats over the years. The longitudinal design is also, to my knowledge, the first of its kind to focus on the SD contributing to the existing literature. Ultimately, two of the most interesting findings were the high correlation of scandal frames to the SD and also the coverage leaning towards a more negative stance. Despite this having been suggested, it has not yet, to my knowledge, been empirically tested.

References


POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT AND THE MEDIA FROM A SWEDISH PERSPECTIVE


Symposion


Bristol: Intellect


Appendix A

Table A1

Riksdag election results for the Sweden Democrats (1988-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4,889</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>13,888</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>19,624</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>76,300</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>162,463</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>339,610</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>801,178</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Source: The Swedish Election Authority (http://www.val.se/)

Table A2

Mentions of the Sweden Democrats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.03ₐ</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>.15ₐ</td>
<td>.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>.07ₐ</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>.37₉</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.35₉</td>
<td>.479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.27₉</td>
<td>.446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Different subscripts indicate significant post-hoc mean differences, p < .05
## Table A3

Predicting probabilities of mentions/no mentions of the Sweden Democrats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
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<th>SE</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media: SvD</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
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<td>Media: Aftonbladet</td>
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<td>.353</td>
<td>2.800</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>1.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media: Expressen</td>
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<td>.345</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>1.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2007</td>
<td>2.489</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td>9.612</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>12.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2009</td>
<td>1.288</td>
<td>.868</td>
<td>2.204</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>3.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2011</td>
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<td>.809</td>
<td>17.484</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>29.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2013</td>
<td>3.664</td>
<td>.791</td>
<td>21.480</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>39.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2015</td>
<td>2.994</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>13.949</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>19.966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word count</td>
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<td>3.140</td>
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<td>.275</td>
<td>1.015</td>
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<td>11.771</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001**</td>
<td>25.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.621</td>
<td>14.782</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>10.894</td>
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<td>.765</td>
<td>2.368</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>3.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: opinion polls</td>
<td>1.113</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td>4.467</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.035*</td>
<td>3.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: government/parliament</td>
<td>1.723</td>
<td>.471</td>
<td>13.369</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>5.604</td>
</tr>
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*Note: N=540, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

## Table A4

Predicting tone of coverage towards the SD
### Table A5

Comparing tone of coverage of the Sweden Democrats to other parties

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*Note: *p = .05

### Table A6

Predicting scandal frames based on article characteristics and mentions of the SD

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Note: N=540, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Appendix B

Abbreviations, country of origin and names of political parties mentioned

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<th>Party name in English and original language</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
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<td>FrP</td>
<td>Progress Party [Fremskrittspartiet]</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>NPD</td>
<td>National Democratic Party [Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands]</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>LN</td>
<td>Northern League [Lega Nord]</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>VB</td>
<td>Flemish Block [Vlaams Blok]</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>British National Party</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPÖ</td>
<td>Freedom Party of Austra [Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs]</td>
<td>Austria</td>
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Appendix C

Search string used in Mediearkivet

Vänsterpartiet OR Vänstern OR Miljöpartiet OR Socialdemokraterna OR Centerpartiet OR Centern OR Folkpartiet OR Liberalerna OR Kristdemokraterna OR Moderaterna OR Sverigedemokraterna
Appendix D

Table D1

Predicting probabilities of mentions/no mentions of the Sweden Democrats (full model)

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*Note: *p*<.05, **p*<.01, ***p*<.001*
Appendix E

Chart E1

Tone of coverage towards the Sweden Democrats
Appendix F

Table F1

Mean game frames and mean scandal frames for all parties

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<th>Scandal frame (mean)</th>
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Appendix G

**Codebook**

**Media portrayal of the Sweden Democrats 2005-2015**

**Selected media:** Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Aftonbladet, Expressen  
**Time period:** From January 1, 2005 until December 31, 2015 (11 years)  
**Unit of analysis:**  
1. Whole article  
2. Only articles concerning domestic politics (e.g. exclude articles mentioning German Social Democrats)  
3. Only include journalistic pieces  
4. Don’t include articles from the ‘celebrities’ or ‘sports’ section, obituaries

**ARTICLE CHARACTERISTICS**

1. **Coder name**  
   1. Sophie  
   2. Other

2. **Media**  
   Select the corresponding number of the newspaper the article appears in:  
   1. Dagens Nyheter  
   2. Svenska Dagbladet  
   3. Aftonbladet  
   4. Expressen

3. **Code number for article**  
   Each article is given its unique code according to its previous number:  
   100-- Dagens Nyheter  
   200-- Svenska Dagbladet  
   300-- Aftonbladet  
   400-- Expressen

4. **Headline**  
   Insert the exact headline – if there is no headline, write down a short summary of the article.

5. **Day**  
   The day the article was published e.g. 04

6. **Month**  
   The month the article was published e.g. 10

7. **Year**  
   The year the article was published e.g. 2007

8. **Page number**
9. **Word count**
Please indicate the number of words in the article excluding image text.

10. **Type of article**
Please indicate which type of article it is.

1. News story
2. Reportage/feature
3. Editorial/column/journalistic commentary
4. Op-ed
5. Portrait
6. Interview/discussion
7. Other

11. **Type of news**
Please enter which type of news the article is according to the values below. An article with domestic news would be exclusively about Sweden such as a political event in Jönköping. An article with mixed news would be about foreign news in which Swedish actors are mentioned such as the refugee crisis where European actors are mentioned along with Swedish politicians. An article with foreign news would be primarily about a foreign country/countries such as political actors or happenings in Denmark. Also check in which section the article is placed.

1. Domestic news
2. Mixed news
3. Foreign news

12. **Topics/issues**
The article might contain more than one topic/issue. It is important the topic is repeated in the article and not only contained in a single sentence. If this seems difficult, do read the article again to better find out which topic is the main one present and also see in which section the article is placed. Also do notice that the same event may be portrayed differently in media and may therefore be coded differently. Please enter the values as accordingly:

1. Employment/unemployment/labour market
2. Healthcare/social security/health insurance/dental
3. Crime/punishment
4. Integration/migration
5. Taxes/budget
6. Accommodation/housing
7. Equality (gender, sexuality, quotas etc.)
8. School/education
9. EU and European affairs (as an organisation)
10. Business
11. Environmental/climate policy and energy/electricity
12. Infrastructure/communication/transportation
13. Culture
14. Foreign policy
15. Swedish economy
JOURNALISTIC FRAMES (Adapted from Strömbäck, work in progress)

13. **Journalistic frames in the bread text (not quotes from people)**

By bread text, it means the article’s actual content excluding headline, first paragraph or finishing paragraph. There are four primary possible answers: ‘Issue-specific frame’, ‘game-specific frame’, ‘scandal-specific frame’ and ‘Other’. There is also a possibility of answering ‘Not applicable’ if the article does not contain bread text. With game-specific frame it means that the article focuses on politics in the form of a game, strategy, relations between political actors and HOW politics are done. Keywords are words such as “winner”, “loser”, sports- and war-metaphors. Bread texts that consider partisan polls should be coded as game-specific frames. If it focuses on politicians as people rather than as representatives for certain policies, it should be considered a game-specific frame. The same applies for bread texts regarding turnout if it is related to certain successes or setback for the parties. With issue-specific frames, the bread texts considers WHAT has happened, WHAT someone has proposed or WHAT someone has said as long as it considers policies. For a bread text to be coded as issue-specific frame, it has to be related to a policy’s factual content or factual relations in reality with relevance for the content of the policy. That means that bread texts concerning turnout should be coded as issue-specific frames if they do not relate to the turnout’s meaning for something or any of the political parties. Articles concerning opinion polls should be coded as issue-specific frames. For scandal-specific frames, bread texts should be coded as such if they focus on scandals or moral or legal blaming. For Other-frames, the bread texts should be coded as such if none of the above options fit and there is no association to politics.

1   Issue-specific frame
2   Game-specific frame
3   Scandal-specific frame
4   Other
5   Not applicable (Only if article is missing breadtext)

14. **Dominant journalistic frame in whole article (including headline, lead paragraph)**
This can be answered with either issue-specific frame, game-specific frame or Not possible to assess. The last option should only be used in cases where it is almost impossible to determine. See variable 14 for additional information on the frames. The purpose is to assess which frame dominates the article.

1  Issue-specific frame
2  Game-specific frame
3  Not possible to assess

Game-specific framing

15. Are there any references to ‘winners’ or ‘losers’ among the political parties or politicians concerning battle for votes, debates in political assemblies, negotiations between political parties of in politics in general?

0  No
1  Yes

16. Are there any references to politicians’ or parties’ strategies for winning elections, negotiations or debates meaning campaign strategies, negotiation tactics or how they conduct politics?

0  No
1  Yes

17. Are there any linguistic references to sports or war?

0  No
1  Yes

18. Are there any references to how a political actor appears, work or manages his/her duties?

0  No
1  Yes

19. Are there any references to the significance of the media in politics or in political campaigns and/or the relation between political actors and the media?

0  No
1  Yes

Scandal-specific frames

20. Are there any references to any unintentional or wrong sayings or statements that are treated, as they are norm breaking, libellous or scandalous?
21. Are there any references to immoral or questionable behaviour of political actors that are relevant with regards to the political position they hold such as tax evasion?

0  No
1  Yes

22. Are there any references to the immoral or questionable behaviour of political players that touches upon their private lives such as infidelity or alcoholic abuse?

0  No
1  Yes

PARTISANSHIP

23. Is Vänsterpartiet (or V) mentioned in the article?

24. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?

The important aspect is the journalistic portrayal of the party and if the party itself would consider this desirable. Examples of Positive are articles picturing the party as it has good proposals or that in any way are doing well. Examples of Negative are articles picturing the party as not having any proposals or only bad proposals or if it is criticised in any way. If the party is merely not portrayed in a specific way but the article merely states what the party has done, it should be coded as Neutral/mixed. If the article is portraying both well and poorly equally, it should as well be coded as Neutral/mixed.

1  Positive
2  Neutral/mixed
3  Negative
4  Not applicable/not mentioned

25. Is Miljöpartiet (or MP) mentioned in the article?

26. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?

See variable 24.

1  Positive
2  Neutral/mixed
3  Negative
4  Not applicable/not mentioned

27. Is Socialdemokraterna (or S) mentioned in the article?

28. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?

See variable 24.
1 Positive
2 Neutral/mixed
3 Negative
4 Not applicable/not mentioned

29. Is Centerpartiet (or C) mentioned in the article?
30. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?
See variable 24.

1 Positive
2 Neutral/mixed
3 Negative
4 Not applicable/not mentioned

31. Is Folkpartiet/Liberalerna (or FP/LIB/L) mentioned in the article?
32. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?
See variable 24.

1 Positive
2 Neutral/mixed
3 Negative
4 Not applicable/not mentioned

33. Is Kristdemokraterna (or KD) mentioned in the article?
34. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?
See variable 24.

1 Positive
2 Neutral/mixed
3 Negative
4 Not applicable/not mentioned

35. Is Moderaterna (or M) mentioned in the article?
36. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?
See variable 24.

1 Positive
2 Neutral/mixed
3 Negative
4 Not applicable/not mentioned

37. Is Sverigedemokraterna (or SD) mentioned in the article?
38. If yes, how does the story evaluate the party?
See variable 24.

1 Positive
2 Neutral/mixed
3 Negative
4 Not applicable/not mentioned
39. Which party is the dominant one in the article?
If it is not clear which party is the dominant one, try and assess this by looking at which party has been given the most attention and thereby space in the article.

1. Vänsterpartiet (V)
2. Miljöpartiet (MP)
3. Socialdemokraterna (S)
4. Centerpartiet (C)
5. Folkpartiet/Liberalerna (FP/LIB/L)
6. Kristdemokraterna (KD)
7. Moderaterna (M)
8. Sverigedemokraterna (SD)
9. Other party (e.g. Feministisk Initiativ)
10. Not possible to assess/several parties share the dominant frame

PRESIDENTIALISATION

40. Politician
19 political leaders can be coded as seen in the list. If the ‘prime minister’ is mentioned, do code the politician that at the time of publication was the PM.

1. Stefan Löfven
2. Håkan Juholt
3. Mona Sahlin
4. Göran Persson
5. Fredrik Reinfeldt
6. Anna Kinberg Batra
7. Jimmie Åkesson
8. Peter Erikkson
9. Maria Wetterstrand
10. Gustav Fridolin
11. Åsa Romson
12. Maud Olofsson
13. Annie Lööf
14. Lars Ohly
15. Jonas Sjöstedt
16. Lars Leijonborg
17. Jan Björklund
18. Göran Hägglund
19. Ebba Busch Thor