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Nourishing Nativist Appeals in Sweden and Denmark

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**Feeding “the Beast”
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**Anders Hellström &
Peter Hervik**

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“Feeding “the Beast” Nourishing Nativist Appeals in Sweden and Denmark

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Peter Hervik²

The news media is tremendously important as a source of knowledge and opinion about immigrants, refugees and their descendants.³ The media provides a site of public controversy where the cultural foundation of any society can be disputed, renegotiated or celebrated. This continuous debate ultimately devolves into a question of what knits citizens together in a separate community of inclusion, which simultaneously excludes any group of people who do not belong to the community.

The question of what knit citizens together in a distinct, often national, community has recently brought strong repercussions in European politics. Scholars have devoted attention to a value shift in European societies after the Cold War and the coming to the fore of movements (e.g., the Green movement) towards postmaterialism (see Minkenberg and Inglehart 1989) that put greater emphasis on so-called socio-cultural issues and “life-style politics” rather than the socio-economic cleavage between work and capital. On the other side of the political spectrum, scholars have identified a backlash to the postulated erosion of the link between nationality and citizenship following on from processes associated with globalization and the supra-nationalization of the EU. European leaders such as Nicolas Sarkozy in France, Angela Merkel in Germany or David Cameron in Great Britain all have raised doubts about the prospects of multiculturalism in culturally diverse societies.

This complex transformation of European societies has, according to some scholars, generated a identity crisis (Ellinas 2010:22) that prompted various politicians to restore the linkage between the national people and the national territory (Gingrich and Banks 2006), to counter “the fear of the incomplete” and

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to reinstall order by means of tightening the boundaries between “us” and “them” through references to “identity,” “culture” and “civilization” (Appadurai 2006; cf. Žižek 2002).

In this “socio-cultural shift,” issues of national identity are made a source of partisan rivalry. This is particularly evident in countries in which the so-called Populist Radical Right Parties (RRPs) have made and are making headway (Ellinas 2010: 26).⁴ These parties suggest politics that, generally, disfavour the immigrants in relation to the native population (Boréus 2010). To understand the complex transformations of European societies following on from this “socio-cultural shift”, the different roles played by the various RPP-parties in their respective national context are essential in this regard.

Aim of the study

In this paper we shall scrutinize the media exposure of two RRP parties, the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*) (SD) in Sweden and the Danish People’s Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) (DPP) in Denmark. Only recently has a new Populist Radical Right Party (RRP), the SD emerged in Sweden on the national arena. Its presence has raised concerns about its political influence — e.g. whether the relationship between the political parties and the news media will be as intimately linked in Sweden as it is in Denmark. Conversely, the DPP is a loyal, yet demanding, supporter of right-wing coalition and has governed the country since 2001 with an unwavering 12-14 per cent of the voters behind it. These two countries, with their similar socio-political structure, demonstrate two distinct discourses on immigration, we argue. Issues pertaining to national identity are communicated differently in the public debate. Whereas Denmark significantly conforms to a broad support for explicit nativist arguments (Denmark belongs to the Danes) and nativist policies, Sweden does not do this to the same degree.

Kristina Boréus (2010; see also Rydgren 2005) anticipates that the different immigration discourses in Sweden and Denmark can be partly explained by the long-term presence of the Danish People’s Party in Danish politics, which also have had policy implications.⁵ According to Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup (2008), the relative success of the DPP also relates to the fact that the mainstream right-wing parties in Denmark have focused on the immigration issue to win governmental power. Our paper highlights, in this regard, the role and position

⁴ In the scholarly literature, there is neither consensus about the common denominators of these parties, nor which parties should be ascribed to the RPP-family (see further Mudde 2007).

⁵ Boréus further demonstrates that in the Swedish 2006 election campaign no strong anti-immigrant policy positions were proposed by the mainstream parties, although some proposals for exclusion were made.

of the SD and the DPP in the media exposure of the parties in the political competition for electoral support. We will do this, firstly, by means of a quantitative overview of the media reporting of the DPP in Denmark and the SD in Sweden in the run up to the European Parliamentary (EP) elections of 2004 and 2009. Secondly, we scrutinize recurrent frames in the media material in order to determine the role played by the RRP parties in the public debate and the representation of the fine line between the positions of regular political adversaries and ‘political beasts’, structured along various stages of party development.

Our main argument is that the debate climate in Denmark contributes to support for the DPP, although it is not the constitutive reason for its success. If feelings of insecurity and xenophobic attitudes are communicated more widely by the mainstream parties (including the mainstream press) as something salient and actual, this predisposes people to vote for the RRPs (Minkenberg and Perrineau 2007: 42); a process that has been called a mainstreaming of the radical right (Berg and Hervik 2007). An alternative hypothesis suggests that public opinion in Sweden is contained by responsible elites and is simply building up pressure and waiting to explode. We argue instead that the successful use of nativist political rhetoric in the news media enhances the support for the RRPs, which in turn makes other parties compete for these votes as well. “Feeding “the Beast”[what the late Political Scientist Lise Togeby saw as “the inner swine” (1995)] nourishes nativist appeals as well as reactions to these appeals. Unlike Togeby however, we do not wish to naturalize the existence of this imagined animal, but see it as a cultural figure that grows out of the political rhetoric about immigrants, descendants and refugees.

What do we, then, mean by nativist political rhetoric? Nativism holds that the nation-state needs to be protected and reserved for the members of the national group with the specific aim of consolidating political and cultural homogeneity (Mudde 2007:19). Nativist political rhetoric separates between the native and the non-native, by means of demarcating the native culture, including the native people, the native ideas and values, from what is depicted as alien. The rationale behind the nativist message is to maintain that the nation (a distinct territory) belongs to the natives (a distinct “people”). In this sense, nativist political rhetoric is inclusive and aims to attain greater social cohesion. However, it is also highly exclusive as it clearly differentiates between the natives and “the others”. In the next section, we will sketch a background to the positions of the SD in Swedish politics and the DPP in Danish politics.

Background

Nativism constitutes, together with authoritarianism and populism, a key ideological attribute of the RRP party family (see Mudde 2007). Contemporary manifestations of nativism are, however, rooted in a long tradition of safeguarding the interests of the (native) population. Sweden and Denmark are typically defined as strong universal welfare states with long-lasting Social Democratic efforts to control the state, to create a good life for the citizens and protect their lives. In these respects the SD and the DPP claim to be the adequate heirs of the Social Democratic heritage of representing the common people against the elite. Conversely, the Social Democrats of today are accused of having let the native population down (see Bale et al. 2010, Hellström 2010, Marsdal 2008).⁶

It has become increasingly difficult for the Social Democratic Party to maintain the close relation between the people and the elite as a catalyst for progressive politics. While this is largely due to the durable governmental position, it also has to do with the structural changes in the political competition for votes. Peter Mair (2002: 85) points out that the political identities of the mainstream parties seem increasingly blurred. This situation invites new political actors to occupy an underdog position in relation to the established elites (Kitschelt 2002). In turn, the political opportunity structures (increased convergence between the mainstream parties; focus also on socio-cultural issues rather than a mere focus on socio-economic cleavages; more media attention) are considered favorable for new political actors, e.g., the immigrant-skeptics, thus challenging the status quo and the Social Democratic dominance in domestic politics (see Ellinas 2010, Rydgren 2007).

The rise of the RPPs in Denmark and Sweden

Less than two years after its establishment in October 2005, the Danish People's Party (which had taken the same name as the radical right wing, nationalist and anti-Semitic party of 1941-1943) won a stunning 7.4 percent or 13 seats in the Parliament in its first national election in 1998. However, in the period 1998–2001 it had little influence and was often ignored in the Parliament, since it was not considered “house-trained” (*stuerene*), according to the infamous statement made by the then Prime Minister, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen. This changed drastically in the wake of the new Millennium. Two months after the 9/11 incident the parliamentary election gave the right wing party, the Danish Liberal

⁶ There are some important differences between the parties, though. The Danish popular movement of peasants and workers created a separate public sphere and a civic society independent of the state, which stemmed from the nation's failure to establish equal norms for all its citizens. Conversely, in Sweden the Social Democrats pursued nation building through a modernist utopian ideal by uniting the popular movements with the state (Berman 2006; Trägårdh 2002).

Party (*Venstre*) a huge victory. The party went on to join forces with the Conservatives and the DPP as its supporter. By 2001 it was estimated that most Danes and most political establishment shared the view on immigrants, refugees and descendants that necessitated a very restrictive policy.

Conversely in Sweden the mainstream parties have traditionally avoided conflicts on issues pertaining to national identity and immigration. According to Johansson (2008), the mainstream parties in Sweden tend to mobilize voters around an image of Sweden as morally superior, particularly through an emphasis on state policies on immigration. In this regard, the SD challenges the mainstream parties; both the centre-right and the centre-left (See Spång 2008). SD has evolved from, in the view of the public eye, a loud organization of angry young men with clear Neo-Nazi tinges in the 1980s and the 1990s (with e.g. tentacles to the extreme right movement White Arian Resistance) to try becoming a party for ‘the common man’, attracting voters from all the other parties - including those who abstain from voting (Hellström and Nilsson 2010). In 2010, the SD crossed the electoral threshold to the national parliament with 5, 7 per cent of the voters. In the Swedish political debate the mainstream parties are careful not to affiliate with the SD, which means that its position in the domestic political field is weak. At least up to the 2009 EP election the mainstream parties unanimously decided not to co-operate with them and used very harsh language against the party. In the rhetorical struggle for electoral support, the SD is the card that you least want in your hand (see Hellström and Nilsson 2010). In this sense, the mainstream parties frame the SD as “the Beast” in contemporary Swedish politics; an enemy that we may pass moral judgment on and mutually detest.

The SD and the DPP mobilize voters around a core nativist message: Sweden belongs to the Swedes and Denmark to the Danes, multi-culturalism endangers social cohesion and the religion of Islam is incompatible with native values and traditions. Both parties also claim to be friends of the people, in the sense that they stand up for the prudent native worker against the elite (cultural, political and economic). They accuse the Social Democratic parties for not defending the national values against (too much) foreign, especially non-western, influences. This said, their positions in the public debate differ.

The analysis

Our comparative analysis of the media exposure of the DPP in Denmark and the SD in Sweden draws on three interlinked dimensions. *First*, we highlight the role of the media as an explanatory factor for why and when the RPP parties thrive in different countries at the various stages of party development. Jens Rydgren (2004), for instance, suggests that the *cardon sanitaire* strategy adopted by the Swedish media towards the SD, at least before the 2006 national

elections, has contributed to its failure to gain seats in the national parliament before 2010. Conversely, the Danish media publish articles supported and written by the DPP, which then contributed to its electoral fortunes. Following Antonis Ellinas (2010: 3), the media plays a crucial role, especially in the development phase, i.e. before the ‘new party’ crosses the electoral threshold to the national parliament and when it has limited financial and organizational resources: ‘The media controls the gateway to the electoral market’ (ibid: 3). According to Jens Rydgren (2007: 255), ‘to date there has been no systematic study of the role of mass media in the rise of new radical right-wing parties’ in Sweden (Rydgren 2007: 255), whereas studies of the parties relationship to the media can be seen in Danish media studies (Andreassen 2005, 2007, Hervik 1999, 2002, 2011). Our comparative analysis of the electoral fortunes of the SD and the DPP in relation to their media exposure thus seek to fill this gap, emphasizing the role of the media in the competition of the votes (Bevelander and Hellström 2011). Recent research on the RPPs (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008, Bale et al. 2010, Mudde 2008 and Jens Rydgren 2010) suggest increased scholarly attention to the political competition of the voters and the salience of the immigration issue, to understand the emergence and further development of the RPPs, rather than a mere focus on the demand for such parties, following e.g. periods of crisis.⁷

Second, then, we wish to explore the differences between the Danish and the Swedish discourses on immigration, by means of scrutinizing the different roles played by the DPP and the SD in the respective national contexts. To explain the various strategies adopted by the mainstream parties to fight back the RPPs on the political arena also impinge on the official discourses on immigration. Bale et al. (2010) shows how the Social Democratic Parties, traditionally split between progressive- and conservative voters, have responded with rather different approaches to the challenge of the RPPs, to *hold* its initial ‘generous’ approach; to *defuse* the immigration issue; to *adopt* the politics of the RPPs, following the dictum: ‘if you cannot beat them, join them’ (ibid: 423). This paper thus contributes with a greater understanding of the differences between Denmark and Sweden as regards to discourses on national identity, immigration and related issues, by means of scrutinizing the reactions to the roles ascribe to

⁷ Cas Mudde (2008) identifies a paradigmatic shift in the study of populist parties. The argument is that most research on RRP-parties has hitherto been devoted to attempts to explain why certain voters are attracted to these parties. These explanations range from extremism (the view that these parties are antithetical to the core values of liberal democracy) and modernism (that RRP only finds fertile ground during periods of crisis). According to Mudde, these explanations do not stand up to closer empirical scrutiny, since potential voter support for RRP is much larger than is generally accounted for. The paradigmatic shift, he concludes, signifies a shift from normal pathology to pathological normalcy.

the DPP and the SD in the national dynamic of the political competition of the votes.

Third, we wish to contribute to the oft-neglected temporal dimension of *when* the RPPs thrive, thus not only *where* (Meret 2010). Recently, Antonis Ellinas (2010) has suggested a two-stage approach – before and after their initial electoral breakthrough. In the development phase, before the RPPs have grown large enough to play a central role on the electoral market, it is most appropriate to focus on the reactions of the mainstream parties whether they, i.e., choose to ignore, confront or adjust themselves to the political newcomer. In this phase, following Ellinas, the media plays a stronger role in potentially granting visibility, or even credibility, to political newcomers and providing them with the political opportunities to eventually cross the threshold of relevance, and thereby approach mainstream politics.

This phase thus corresponds with the situation of the SD in 2004 and also in 2009. However, after the initial breakthrough, a phase that applies to the DPP in 2004 and in 2009, it is more difficult for the mainstream parties to combat the political newcomer and the media's importance may subside in importance once the newcomer becomes part of mainstream discourse, Ellinas argues (2010: 18). Once the party has crossed the threshold of relevance, it is likely to moderate its claims to address a broader audience and the mainstream parties shall find it more difficult to ignore these claims. At the latter stage, it gets increasingly more important to focus on the internal party arena (cf. Ravik-Jupskås 2011), i.e. the organizational capacity of the new parliamentary party whereas the tactical maneuvering of the political competitors subsides in importance. Adding the comparative dimension, we also recognize the limits of Ellinas' two-stage approach: the SD had neither passed the national electoral threshold in 2004, nor in 2009 (though, the DPP did so already in 1998), yet the significance of the SD as a serious political contender rose significantly between these periods, most distinctively after the 2006 national elections in which the SD gained too few votes to cross the national electoral threshold (2, 93 per cent).

Outline

The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part consists of a quantitative overview of the media coverage in 2004 and in 2009 surrounding the elections to the EP in Sweden and in Denmark. In part two we highlight the recurrent themes in the media material to determine the role played by the RRP parties in the public debate. To be more precise, we identify dominant, sometimes competing, frames in the public debate as manifested in the national news-reporting in order to discern the views and opinions about the SD and DPP and to contrast ideas about national identity articulated from different positions in the debate. We use a mixed methodology - quantitative content analysis and

qualitative frame analysis - to come to terms with the issue at stake; the different discourses on immigration in Sweden and in Denmark and the different functions and roles played by the SD and the DPP in the national political contexts.

“The Beast”

By acknowledging the different positions played by the SD and the DPP in the Swedish and Danish political context, we assume that the positioning of these parties fluctuates from regular political adversaries to “political beasts.” In this regard, we recognize a shift from the latter to the former in the national news reporting from 2004 to 2009. We understand the figure of “the Beast” to be an endemic force that triggers mutual moral disapproval among the established political actors, someone (or something) that “the good democrats” can pass moral judgments on and unite against. “the Beast” triggers fear and unanimous resistance. “the Beast”, as a political actor, not only articulates the wrong views, but also represents an “evil type.”⁸

In popular culture, monsters tend to be both fearsome and evil. We suggest that “the political Beast” represents less of an incarnation of the evil and more of a horrendous presence that challenges harmony and established social hierarchies (see Kearney 2002: 99). In this respect, “the Beast” is not an ordinary political opponent but a political antagonist that needs to be cast off or out; rather like the figure of the scapegoat that is constructed to save the city/state from sin (See Culler 1994: 143).

According to Slavoj Žižek (2000), the RPP party FPÖ (Die Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs), then chaired by the reputable Jörg Haider, that won a seat in the national government in 2000 with approximately 27 per cent of the votes behind it, played a particular role in European politics. Finally, Žižek argues, the mainstream parties found someone to mutually hate and debar. In a corporatist political culture in which the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the leading Conservative Party (ÖVP) together had governed Austria for several years, FPÖ

⁸ Zygmunt Bauman (2007: 65) aptly notes that “the evil” and “the fear” are Siamese twins, or two separate names for the same experience. The evil, following Bauman (as the liquid fear), is frightening because it destabilizes the cognitive frames that make the world appear comprehensive and structured. The secular evil, Bauman continues, is a product of modernity, of totalitarian rationalism covered with reason, enacted by humans – such as the Nazi perpetrator Alfred Eichmann in the post war trials – who is said to have acted out of reason. The face of evil, inspired by Hannah Arendt, takes on the less monstrous figure of the prudent service man, only claiming to answer to the orders given by his employers. In this respect, our approach relates to an understanding of politics as something more than the mere mobilization of interests – as the left-right cleavage covers, to also consider the mobilization of passions and frustrations as an imminent feature of democratic politics (see Hellström 2010, Laclau 2005, Mouffe 2005; Canovan 1999).

(and Haider) was afforded the role of “the Beast”; someone (or something) that the EU-14⁹ could abandon and distance itself from. At the same time, its presence injected a sense of dynamic in the political field (see Hellström 2005; Hellström 2010; cf. Hagelund 2003).

We will refer to “the Beast” as an analytical category that shows different faces in different contexts. Defined as something or someone that the mainstream parties and the mainstream press unanimously reject and mutually debar, this category makes an object of passionate controversy in the public debate, generating repulsion and moral indignation. Our hypothesis would be that the SD is more akin to play this role in the Swedish debate, whereas in the Danish debate we expect to find other objects of moral indignation among the mainstream parties, as the DPP in fact has supported the centre-right governmental coalition since 2001; i.e. the *framing* of “the Beast” differs between Sweden and Denmark.

Framing

In this article we draw on frame analysis to reveal views and attitudes that affect popular opinion and voters’ support for the RRP parties. In this context, framing refers to the manner in which the media organizes communication in order to invoke a certain interpretation in the reader, such as voter support. We assume that media exposure and framing affects popular opinion, whether this be problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation or the recommendation for certain action to take place (Entman 1993: 52).¹⁰ Even if journalists comply with the news genre’s rules of objectivity, a journalistic article still engages a story by means of selection and thus presents certain aspects as more salient than others.¹¹

Since framing is selective and varies in the saliency assigned to stories, we take it that framing operates differently in the Danish and the Swedish news media. Whereas major newspapers in Sweden tend to be in mutual agreement about not siding with the SD, the situation in Denmark is more complex, given that some

⁹ The EU-14 stands for the then member-states of the European Union, with the exception of Austria, that decided to boycott Austria from bi-lateral deliberations. Anniken Hagelund (2003) argues in a similar vein that in the 1999 national elections the Norwegian RRP party, ‘The Progress Party’, represented the indecent other in Norwegian politics, thus providing the negative meaning to the ‘decency’ of the mainstream parties (see also Hellström and Nilsson 2010).

¹⁰ Frames only make sense against a more comprehensive background of cultural knowledge, organized as figured worlds or cultural models – the subject of which is beyond the remit of this article.

¹¹ In addition, editorial writers, various experts and political representatives might exercise control of public opinion in editorials, chronicles and debate articles; i.e., to determine the major manifestations of public opinion and popular will (Entman 1993: 57).

newspapers, e.g., *Jyllands-Posten* and *Ekstra Bladet*, occasionally applaud DPP initiatives. Furthermore, the DPP is now an established political actor in Denmark, while the SD balances on the fringe of the acceptable. In the 2010 national elections as the SD entered the national parliament, Swedish newspapers now have to recognize that voters chose to vote for the party.

We shall scrutinize competing frames around the construction of the nature of “the Beast” in the media coverage; frames about strategies how to render “the Beast” harmless and frames that provide explanations for why “the Beast” remains attractive. We will assess the fine line between the morally accepted position of regular political adversary and rebukable political beast, arguing that the DPP is framed closer to the former position than the SD, especially in 2004. Before dwelling further into this issue, we will turn to the initial quantitative overview of the positioning of the DPP in Denmark and the SD in Sweden. From our initial argument follows that the acceptance of nativist rhetoric and politics are more accepted in Denmark than in Sweden, in turn, we hypothesize that the linguistic tone used towards the DPP in Denmark differs from how the Swedish newspapers talk about the SD (both in 2004 and 2009), and secondly, that the Danish newspapers frame DPP views in a more positive and balanced way, compared to Swedish news reporting of the SD (both in 2004 and in 2009).

Quantitative overview

The body of material in our study consists of 573 articles from five Danish and five Swedish newspapers.¹² We identified the articles by searching the Swedish media database Mediarkivet and its Danish counterpart Infomedia.¹³ The analysis covers the news reporting in two specific periods: 2004 (13/4/2004-13/10/2004) and 2009 (7/4/2009-7/10/2009).¹⁴ Table 1 shows that very few articles deal with the SD in 2004, though evenly spread between the newspapers.

¹² The criterion used to select the newspapers is based on the circulation rate. The material includes both dailies and tabloids.

¹³ We have thus not attempted to cover the whole debate on immigration during this period, but have limited ourselves to the SD and DPP debates on these issues, including perceptions of the people and popular attitudes.

¹⁴ For the Swedish case, we chose the articles included in the sample using the following search criterion: Sweden Democrats AND (svenskar OR folk* OR väljare OR muslim* OR invandrar* OR Europaparlament* OR integration). For the Danish case, we used the following search criterion: Danish People’s Party AND integration* AND Indvandre* eller muslim* OG eu OR folk* OR vælger* OR dansker*. We have also elaborated a common coding scheme (see Appendix 2), and developed more detailed coding instructions in order to strengthen the reliability for each separate study. For this purpose, we also conducted a preliminary coding to set the parameters for the full inquiry. In the coding scheme we also included a set of variables relating to different perceptions of the people, although only a limited number of articles addressed these concerns.

Almost half of the articles in Sweden and more than 60 percent in Denmark are news articles, and the remaining material is divided into chronicles, op-eds and editorials. This selection of articles corresponds with the trend towards more opinionated news-material.¹⁵

In 2004 the SD was still a marginal phenomenon in Swedish politics and was positioned in the murky domains of the far right. However, after its relative success in the general election of 2006, news coverage expanded rapidly and has continued to do so (see Appendix 1). In Denmark, the DPP was already an established actor in 2004 and there is therefore no such discrepancy between 2004 and 2009.

Table 1. Sources of Data, Swedish newspapers

	News article/News item	Chronicle	Editorial	Op-eds	Total	2004	2009
Expressen	25	29	16	6	68	11	57
Dagens Nyheter	38	39	17	8	76	7	69
Svenska Dagbladet	26	17	3	2	43	3	40
Aftonbladet	22	1	0	6	44	6	38
Göteborgsposten	32	1	6	6	62	7	55
Total	143	87	42	28	293	34	259

Table 2. Sources of Data, Danish newspapers

	News article/News item	Chronicle	Editorial	Op-eds	Total	2004	2009
Jyllands-Posten	68	29	0	0	97	65	32
Politiken	46	39	3	2	90	43	47
Berlingske Tidende	43	17	3	0	63	30	33
Ekstra Bladet	12	1	1	1	15	6	9
B.T	15	1	6	0	22	17	5
Total	184	87	13	3	293	161	126

¹⁵ According to Karina Horsti (2010), newspapers are increasingly used for communicating views, rather than mere news.

In the 2004 EP elections in Sweden the Social Democrats were in a government position. Most of the mainstream parties lost considerable electoral support in the elections, while the new EU-skeptic party, *Juni-listan*, gained more than 14 percent of the votes. The SD did not gain more than approximately one percent, however. The 2009 elections were quite a contrast. EU-sceptic parties lost electoral ground and instead a new party, the Pirate Party, gained two seats in the EP, emphasizing questions of integrity and internet independency. The SD almost tripled its votes from the previous elections in 2004, though, and was also constantly exposed by the news media agenda which – all things considered – may have generated more voting support (Ellinas 2010).

In the Danish 2004 EP elections, the Social Democrats (five seats) and the mainstream right party *Venstre* (three seats) together acquired more than 50 percent of the total votes. The DPP marginally raised its share from 5.5 to 6.8 percent. In the 2009 elections in Denmark almost 60 percent of the voters went to the polls (over 10 percent more than in the previous elections), which made it the third highest voting figure in the EU. Together with the Socialist People's Party, which doubled its votes from the previous elections, the DPP was the main victor with more than 15 percent of the voters behind it.

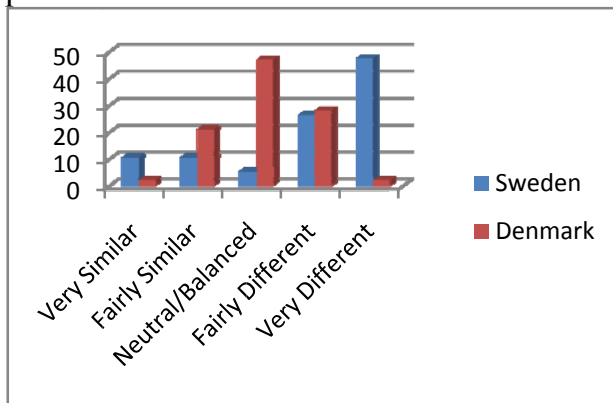
Language

“The Beast” is someone or something alien to the mainstream parties. Is it, then, the case that the DPP and the SD are presented as very different to the mainstream parties, or does the national media coverage instead portray these parties as fairly, or even very similar to the mainstream parties?¹⁶ Table 3 shows that almost half of the articles in Sweden frame the SD as very different to the mainstream parties and almost three quarters of the articles (73.7 percent) frame the SD as either fairly or very different from the other parties. In Denmark only 2 percent of the articles frame the DPP as very different (28 percent as fairly different) compared to the mainstream parties.¹⁷

¹⁶ We use a five-range scale to code articles about SD and the DPP as 1) (alien to/very different from the traditional parties); 2) (fairly different); 3) (balanced, both different and similar); 4) (fairly similar); 5) (very similar). In practical terms, e.g. articles that very clearly separate between the traditional parties, on the one hand, and the RPPs on the other hand, are thus coded as ‘very different’ on this variable. On the other side, e.g. articles that suggest that e.g. the traditional party X now has imitated the politics of the SD (or the DPP) or vice versa are coded as fairly similar, or even very similar depending on the content, and the language used (e.g. ‘which adjectives’ are ascribed to the RPPs). Coding the material, we have also let a ‘second reader’ code a limited amount of articles, to control for reliability.

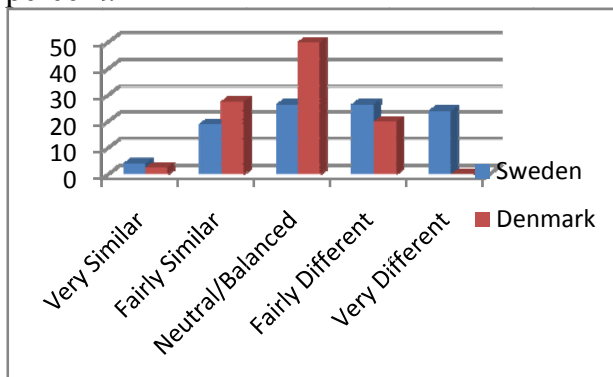
¹⁷ We use a five-range (1-5) scale to code articles that present the DPP or the SD from 1) (alarming threat/made fun of/very negative), 2) (fairly negative), 3) (balanced/neutral/both positive and negative), 4) (fairly positive) to 5) (very positive).

Table 3. Degree of Difference in Sweden (N=19) and in Denmark (N=100), 2004, percent.



Note: The Vertical axis shows the percentage of each category (the horizontal axis).

Table 4. Degree of Difference in Sweden (N=121) and in Denmark (N=40), 2009, percent.



Note: The Vertical axis shows the percentage of each category (the horizontal axis).

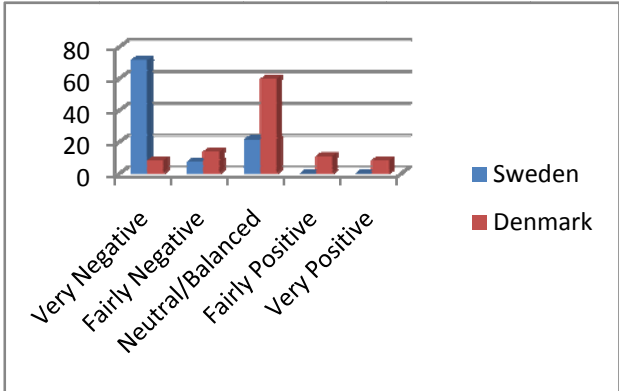
Table 4 shows that in 2009 half of the articles in Denmark frame the DPP as neither different nor similar in relation to the mainstream parties. It is more common in the national media coverage to frame the DPP as fairly- or very similar (30 percent) than to frame it as fairly- or very different (20 percent). There is no significant difference compared to 2004 (when the figures were more or less reversed). These results indicate further that the DPP, rather than being presented as a ‘Political Beast’, is normalized in mainstream politics.

In the Swedish case, the difference between 2004 and 2009 is considerable. Whereas approximately half of the articles frame the SD as fairly- or very different from the mainstream parties, almost one quarter (23.1 percent) of the articles frame the party as fairly- or very similar in relation to the mainstream parties in 2009.

In Tables 5 and 6 we test the journalistic tone of language used to describe the DPP and the SD. In 2004, more than 3 out of 4 articles use a fairly- or, more

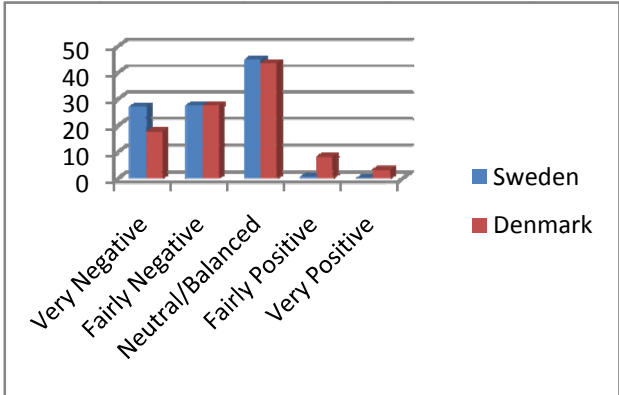
common, very negative tone towards the SD in the Swedish newspapers. Even in the genre of ordinary news articles, journalists tend to apply labels such as “xenophobic” to define the SD. In the Danish case, approximately 6 out of 10 articles use a balanced/neutral tone to define and discuss the DPP, whereas approximately 2 out of 10 use a fairly- or very positive tone.

Table 5. Journalistic Tone of Language in Sweden (N=28) and in Denmark (N=111), 2004.



Note: The Vertical axis shows the percentage of each category (the horizontal axis).

Table 6. Journalistic Tone of Language in Sweden (N=192) and in Denmark (N=62), 2009.



Note: The Vertical axis shows percentage of each category (the horizontal axis).

In 2009 it is obvious that the journalistic tone towards the SD in Sweden has changed to be more balanced/neutral compared to 2004.¹⁸ In 2004 more than 7 out of 10 articles used a very negative tone towards the SD; in 2009 less than 2 out of 10 articles did that. Yet, hardly any articles (less than 1 percent) use a positive tone towards the SD and more than half of the articles use a fairly- or very negative tone. However, the disparity between the journalistic tone in Sweden and Denmark in 2009 is not great. In Denmark less articles use a fairly-

¹⁸ For the development of value-based and opinionated journalism in Denmark see Hervik 2011 and Hjarvard 2006.

or very positive tone towards the party (1 out of 10) in 2009 compared to 2004. It is also interesting to note that more articles use a fairly- or very negative tone towards the DPP (approximately 45 percent) compared to 2004. While the DPP is certainly a prominent voice in the Danish debate, it is controversial and often criticized. Our quantitative measurements indicate that the SD was attributed to the role of “the Beast” in the 2004 elections (perceived as very different and attributed to very negative remarks in the limited exposure). However, in 2009 it approached the position of becoming a regular political adversary.

In Sweden, all the newspapers (including the tabloids) take a firm stance against the SD, at least in the editorials and on the cultural pages. In Denmark, the media landscape is more divided. In Sweden the tabloids, predominantly *Aftonbladet*, tend to be more negative towards the SD compared to the daily papers. Also in “neutral” genres, SD is frequently described as an alarming threat (see e.g., *Aftonbladet* 26 May 2009), or at least portrayed in a negative way. We could also add that more than 3 out of 4 editorials use a very- or fairly negative tone towards the SD, whereas approximately 6 out of 10 news articles use a balanced tone.

In Denmark, *Politiken* adopts a rather negative tone towards the DPP (more than half of the articles are either fairly- or very negative), whereas *Jyllands-Posten* tends to be more positive than negative. *Berlingske Tidene* and *B.T.* are somewhere in between, whereas *Ekstra Bladet* is more similar to *Jyllands-Posten* in this regard. More than 7 out of 10 news articles use a balanced tone towards the DPP, whereas the editorials and the chronicles, perhaps less surprisingly, use a wider spectrum of negative and positive remarks to describe the party. In comparison with the Swedish case, only 4 out of 10 editorials use a very- or fairly negative tone towards the DPP.

The SD is both framed as ‘very different/alien’ to the other parties and is portrayed very negatively as e.g., an “alarming threat”; i.e. “a political Beast” - an extremist party with extremist views. There is reason to assume that articles that adopt a very negative tone towards the SD/the DPP also try to distance themselves and the mainstream parties from the RRP parties - to demarcate the “decent parties” (regular political adversaries) from the “extreme right” (the political Beast). We therefore decided to test the relation between the degree of difference and journalistic tone. Is it the case that those using a very negative tone towards the SD and DPP also consider the parties to be quite distinct from the mainstream parties?

Table 7. Degree of difference and journalistic tone, number of articles (percent) in Sweden, 2004 and 2009.

Journalistic Tone/Degree of Difference	Very Similar/Fairly Similar	Neutral/Balanced	Very different/Fairly Different	Total
Very Negative/Fairly Negative	18 (62.1)	13 (44.8)	55 (83.3)	86
Balanced/Neutral	11 (37.9)	16 (55.2)	11 (16.7)	38
Total	29 (100)	29 (100)	66 (100)	124

Table 8. Degree of difference and journalistic tone, number of articles (percent) in Denmark, 2004 and 2009.

Journalistic Tone/Degree of Difference	Very Similar/Fairly Similar	Neutral/Balanced	Very Different/Fairly Different	Total
Very Negative/Fairly Negative	14 (46.7)	10 (15.6)	8 (17.8)	32
Balanced/Neutral	16 (53.3)	48 (75)	17 (37.8)	81
Fairly Positive/Very Positive	0 (0)	6 (9.4)	20 (44.4)	26
Total	30 (100)	64 (100)	45 (100)	129

The results indicate that articles that frame the SD as different to a great extent also (83.3 percent) use a fairly negative/very negative tone towards the party. It can also be noted that articles that frame the SD as similar to the other parties to some extent also frame it with more negative than positive wording (62.1 percent). In the first case, at an aggregated level the SD is framed more or less as an anomaly or as contributing to the destabilization of mainstream politics. The problem is regarded as the SD and what the party is said to represent. The remedy to this challenge is that the mainstream parties should do everything in their power to debar the party from formal influence. In the second case, an alternative frame suggests that the problem is that the mainstream parties copy SD politics and views. An editorial in *Expressen* (8 May 2009) by Ann-Charlotte Martéus is illustrative of the first position, though she is also concerned about the compromising forces in mainstream politics:

Two forces guide the Sweden Democrats: hatred of foreigners and thirst for power. The rest is emptiness, concealed by sentimental national romanticism. It is not possible to compromise with that potion. You cannot and you may not. The only decent thing to do is to remain a counter force.

Other voices tend to stress the similarities between the SD and the traditional parties, such as the journalist Isobel Hadley-Kamptz who (*Expressen* 13 June 2009, op-ed): “The established parties conform, in principal, to the SD-idea that Sweden was better off before, something which constrains them in all discussions.”

In the Danish news reporting, the articles that frame the DPP as different only to a low degree employ a negative tone towards the party (17.8 percent). Conversely, 46.7 percent of the articles that posit the DPP as similar employ a negative tone towards the party, and among those that posit the DPP as different, 44.4 percent of the articles use a fairly- or very positive tone. The results show that articles that frame the DPP as similar to the established parties also tend to use a negative tone towards the DPP. We can understand this in the light of the DPP’s role as government supportive party, which implies that negative criticism of the DPP is sometimes akin to explicit criticism of the government’s politics:

The main reason for the upbeat coverage and debate in the Danish media is political: The Danish People’s Party has made Islam and Muslims a central theme in the so-called war of values, which has unfortunately rubbed off on the other parties with the government in the lead. The theme is therefore itself the foundation of the political power in Denmark. This is a sad and polarizing development of the society, but it is almost impossible for the media to downgrade an area, which has such a high political attention (Birthe Rønn Hornbech, *Politiken* 9 May 2009, commentary).

Contrary to what we expected, articles that frame the DPP as fairly or very different tend to use a positive tone towards the DPP. This result indicates that the DPP, despite its strong position in domestic politics, is sometimes attributed to the position of a radical and invigorating underdog. Certainly, the DPP feeds on that image. In its response to an appeal to participate in the celebration of Ramadan at Christiansborg,¹⁹ the party makes a clear statement (*Jyllands-Posten* 15 September 2009):

¹⁹ Christiansborg is a castle in Copenhagen that houses the Danish Parliament, Folketinget, and other important political institutions. By way of comparison, traditionally, all the Party leaders who are represented in the national parliament are invited to attend the annual Nobel Prize ceremony. After its entry in the Swedish Parliament in 2010,

... all members of the Parliament have received a written invitation, but none from the DPP has accepted it. And that is no coincidence, explains the party's spokesperson on social affairs, Marin Henriksen. He says: 'It is absolutely crazy, and one should ask oneself, whether this is not an expression of misperceived integration, when you use the facilities of Christiansborg to mark a Muslim religious celebration.

Dominant Frames

So far we have verified the proposition that the Swedish newspapers use a more negative tone towards the SD in Sweden compared to the Danish media's framing of the DPP. We notice a difference in time in the sense that the Swedish newspapers tend to apply a relatively more neutral tone when they define and discuss the SD in 2009 compared to 2004. These results were expected and correspond well with the various stages of the party development of the SD and the DPP, as well as to the different discourses on immigration in Sweden and in Denmark. However, we have yet to explore the dominant meanings in the communicative texts, and intend to do this by identifying different frames of interpretation in the newspapers. We do not by any means suggest that the frames are absolute. They co-exist and are unfolded or compressed to different degrees, often in the same statement. Nevertheless, the separation of frames helps us to produce a better sense of which frames are in play, and which ones are weak and strong. We identify the frames by means of condensing recurrent claims in the media material. In this sense, the frames refer to a set of claims that are repeatedly used and returned to in the public debate.

This second section is divided into three parts. The first part concerns frames that answer the question: *what is the nature of "the Beast"*? How is "the Beast" constructed in the two national settings? What faces does it show? Is it the case that the SD/ DPP is defined as an anomaly in contemporary Swedish politics/Danish politics or is it the case that these RRP parties are defined and recognized as regular/normal/normalized political adversaries?²⁰

The second part concerns different frames that answer the question: *how to contain "the Beast"*? If recognized as a problem, what is then *the solution* to the RRP parties' progress in Sweden and Denmark? In this regard, mainstream political actors use different strategies to either ban or copy RRP policies.

however, Jimmie Åkesson (the leader of the SD) did not receive a letter of invitation from the Nobel Foundation.

²⁰ We start this section by considering frames on the RPPs as 'Political Beasts, though in the Danish case, in the debate on the DPPs, we soon came across other frames, hinting at yet another Beast in the public debate; i.e. "Islam".

Additionally, what frames, in the media coverage, are invoked to fight back other kinds of Beasts?

The third part concerns different frames that answer the question: *why is “the Beast” so attractive?* This section involves frames that define and discuss what constitutes a fertile soil for the further progression (and possible decline) of the RRP parties in Sweden and in Denmark. This also opens for frames that construe the attractive force of other potential Beasts, especially so in contexts where the RPPs are considered tamed into regular adversaries.

The nature of “the Beast”: Sweden.

In 2004 the public debate in Sweden demonstrated a unanimous framing of the SD as the unwelcome Beast. By 2009, however, the SD was no longer itself an object of news coverage and indignation. One strong frame does persist in the media coverage, though, which is that the SD represents a devil in disguise. Underneath the polished facade they are still the same xenophobic movement. According to an editorial in *Expressen* (8 April 2009): “Surely the Swedish Democratic right arm still gives a twitch, even if it is nowadays tugged in a Dressman-suit instead of an armet.”

In this frame, the SD ambition to moderate its image is discredited. However, a second equally strong frame suggests that the SD ideological message is embedded in a deeply rooted nationalist tradition of protecting the People’s Home against nonnative elements; hence, a party that attracts discontented Social Democrats who are concerned about the deterioration of the Welfare State. They feed on a perception that “we” (as in “we” the native Swedes) were better off before. Some commentators, such as the journalist Dilsa Demirback-Sten in *Expressen* (7 August 2008, op-ed) even suggest that: “If it was not for the xenophobia, their programme could be any badly prepared collage of ideas, in the spirit of the ‘People’s Home’, intended to illustrate the excellence of the welfare state.” In this frame, the SD is radically (some would say extremely) nationalistic.

Finally, the third frame that defines the nature of the SD locates the party closer to the bourgeoisie camp. In a debate article (*Dagens Nyheter* 17 September 2009), the leader of the Christian Democrats (KD), Göran Hägglund, construes a populist divide between the people and the elite and suggests that he represents “the reality people” who are constantly sidestepped by a radical elite who refuse to accommodate the views and interests of “ordinary people.” This article, with its rather explicit populist appeal, provoked several critical comments, an editorial in *Expressen* (18 September 2009) says:

Wake up, Göran, you are in the government! You cannot attack “the elite” from an underdog perspective. You are the Minister for Social Affairs, lad. You make propositions that become laws that decide what “common people”

should do. You are part of the elite, Göran Högglund. And you are obviously prepared to play on vulgar populist strings to remain in power.

In another editorial in *Expressen* (8 July 2009), it is suggested that Högglund's populist rhetoric about the need to confront real problems instead of discussing gender issues, queer theories or depraving norms is very similar to that of the SD. The SD radicalizes populist demands of social cohesion also articulated by the mainstream parties. Hence, this frame suggests that the SD consists of radical populists, though not extremists.

In the news reporting on the SD, the party is akin to the figure of the political Beast in contemporary Swedish politics. Some commentators warn that this Beast is about to change into a Trojan Horse in Swedish politics, just like the DPP in Denmark, though. The journalist Ronnie Sandahl claims that:

For a long time the major Danish parties said that they refused to collaborate with the Danish People's Party. This is exactly what the Swedish parliamentary parties in Sweden say today [...] It did not take long. Now most parties are firm critics of immigration [in Denmark] (Aftonbladet 31 August 2009).

The nature of “the Beast”: Denmark

In Denmark the DPP became an established fact in the election of 2001 when the party became the supporting cast of the government. Instead of the party being the object of news, a substantial number of themes have emerged as the outcome of political initiatives. Ideas like the banning of the burqa, marriage restrictions between close relatives (cousins or parents' cousins), and parents sending their children to far away countries to be re-educated, all became dominant media themes that were not backed up by surveys, factual evidence or background analysis. The re-education stay is a theme that has popped up in the tabloids every June since 1999, but always flounders due to a lack of evidence (see for instance Hervik 2002). The ban on the burqa was proposed by the Conservatives as part of an effort to re-emphasize the party's active role in the war of cultural values and to compete for votes. Representing Muslims as a danger creates fear and allows a party to present itself as a hero that defends democracy through restrictive identity politics against the Muslim presence (Berlingske Tidende 22 August 2009, see also Betz and Meret 2009).

The nature of “the Beast” is ambivalent. One frame in the Danish news reporting suggests that the DPP, rather than being seen as a Beast, is regarded as a regular political adversary. Voters who are currently attracted to the DPP may have voted for other parties in the past and these parties now seek to lure them back to the fold through political appeals. Some members of the Conservative Party

united in an informal network to distance their party from the DPP. Peter Norsk, a member of the party's board, maintains that: "We make up an informal network of people, who believe that we should no longer compete with the Danish People's Party in talking rubbish about Muslims" (Jyllands-Posten 14 February 2010).

Rhetoric that begins with a direct criticism of DPP often ends up sharing views and policies, however. One example is the New Alliance (*Ny Alliance*), which moved away from the Social Liberals (*Det Radikale Venstre*) with an enough-is-enough agenda (*nok-er-nok*) referring to the lack of direct criticism and resistance of the Danish People's Party's anti-immigrant rhetoric. However, its leader – who originally claimed that the party was established as a guarantee of a resistance to the DPP – joined the Conservatives within two years. *Berlingske Tidende* (18 September 2009) suggested that his ideas about this and related matters were identical to those of the DPP.

The media coverage in both periods reveals a political competition in which similarities between the DPP and the mainstream parties are highlighted. The DPP shares common values with *Venstre* (Politiken 23 September 2006; Politiken 28 April 2007) and individuals such as Naser Khader (Member of the Conservatives in 2009, Social Liberal in 2004), Lene Espersen (C), and Karen Espersen (V), in being encouraged to join DPP on account of their anti-Muslim proposals (Jyllands-Posten 19 August 2009; Ekstra Bladet 19 August 2009; Ekstra Bladet 17 February 2009, see also Ekstra Bladet 3 September 2000). Criticism of the DPP is often a criticism of the government and even of the Social Democrats, since they support many of the proposals on integration (Jyllands-Posten 17 August 2009). A sub-frame that emerges from a news analysis is that the DPP owns the immigrant-refugee issue. "The debate is pushed to the edge of what can be implemented. And here the DPP always wins" (B.T. 19 August 2009), and "A debate about immigrants and refugees always, always! benefits the DPP. No one can pass them on the right side." (Politiken 28 August 2009).

Mainstream actors produce counter frames that construct the DPP through its extreme nature, thus a second less dominating frame suggests that the DPP stands for Extreme Nationalism. When referring to former "good guys" among the Conservatives and *Venstre*, Svend Auken (S) writes: "At that time there was no flirting with the DPP and radical right-wing populism" (Jyllands-Posten 10 August 2004). In addition, Mogens Lykketoft, also from the Social Democratic Party, declared in the annual meeting that: "Some would say we have taken over right-wing attitudes towards foreigners and integration. This is totally wrong. We find it despicable when DPP and *Venstre* pursue a politics based on biases and fear" (Jyllands-Posten 10 September 2004).

For those who have experienced a strong anti-Semitic tone, which characterized the Nazis, then I can understand, if they see some connection between the way DPP talks about foreigners and immigrants and the way that certain groups were earlier targets of derogatory speech (Bald cit. in Jyllands-Posten 10 September 2004).

However, these statements are fairly benign compared to the DPP's own words and objectives. Pia Kjærsgaard writes: "The solution is that large numbers of foreigners must be sent home and this repatriation will be the DPP's most important political theme in the coming years" (Berlingske Tidende 26 July 2004). In the 2009 sample we occasionally find other slogan-like utterances, such as: "The Danish People's Party is the occupational force, we are the resistance movement" (Politiken 23 August 2009) and "I will not comment on the Danish People's Party's anti-Islamic, xenophobic and at times racist politics, because everyone knows their attitudes" (Politiken 9 September 2009).

A third frame, referred to as "the Beast" is Islam, is arguably the most dominant frame in Denmark. During the debate at the opening of the Danish Parliament in October 2001, Pia Kjærsgaard declared war against Islam. Although she was reprimanded by the party leader, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, (*Venstre*), they joined forces a few months later in a governmental collaboration that was based on the same idea but with a slightly less direct tone. Yet, Lene Espersen's declaration about Islam being the greatest threat of all in the world (Christian Hüttemeier, Politiken 16 August 2009, see also Metro-Express 23 April 2009) kept the image of what the real Beast is about alive. Mogens Camre, an MEP representing the DPP, said: "Because of their culture Muslims are a big problem in Western countries. Few of them want integration, since they have come with a culture, which they believe must conquer the world" (Berlingske Tidende 1 June 2004). Others simply noted that: "Today most Muslim immigrants feel unwanted. They experience that the number of people with Islam critical and racist attitudes is increasing. Many are tired of the comparison between Islam and terrorism" (Knudsen et al. Politiken 9 May 2009).

The nature of "the Beast" in Denmark makes up two weak frames and a strong, dominant one. The DPP is not identified as radically different in Denmark as it is in Sweden. It is spoken of as a political opponent (first frame) and a party of extremist views (second frame); particularly its view of human nature (*menneskesyn*). "The Beast" is not the party, but Islam (third frame). Of course there are those in Sweden who articulate a similar message, although – in general – they represent a marginal position; such as the SD representatives themselves. Conversely, in Denmark actors who talk from a legitimate and a more privileged position also communicate a similar message. In this frame,

“the Beast” is Muslim and non-western migrants whose culture, values, beliefs, attitudes and identity are regarded as incompatible with the distinct Danish culture (Betz and Meret 2009). They are to be controlled (see e.g., Berlingske Tidende 20 April 2004). Their numbers must be limited and the number of new migrants coming in should be carefully monitored. “the Beast” is “the others”; those who are also the object of restrictive policies.

How to contain “the Beast”: Sweden.

The SD is widely recognized as a problem in the public debate in Sweden. Political groups of various kinds mobilize to obstruct the SD from gaining seats in the national parliament. In 2004 this was not really an issue, since at that time the party was not recognized as a potential threat. However, in 2009 it could be argued that the question of how to confront the SD became a political issue in its own right. Some champion the freedom of speech to engage in open dialogue with the party, whereas e.g., the editorial writer Lena Andersson suggests (Dagens Nyheter 17 September 2009, editorial pages) that: “To remove the famous cover and let the hatred boil over will only lead to more contempt and brutality, as the Danish example shows.”

In a survey of the Swedish members of the national parliament only three percent preferred to meet the SD with silence, whereas a majority of 59 percent instead wanted to engage in open debates with the party (Göteborgs-Posten 17 August 2009). Evidently, there are two distinct frames here about how to contain “the Beast”: with silence or with open dialogue. However, the SD press secretary, Jens Leandersson (ibid), shared his view about what the open dialogue approach has implied in practice: “It is as though everyone is talking about Santa Claus without anyone ever actually seeing him. The parties say they are willing to engage in the debate because that is the answer that one is expected to give, but after that nothing happens.”

Another frame that is related to how to contain “the Beast” is the strategy of taming. If the mainstream parties also recognize the “problems” of integration and immigration, discontented voters may yet again consider the mainstream party to be a valid option in the forthcoming elections. The Conservative Party (*Moderaterna*) (M), asked a special committee to lay out the contours for a new immigration policy. In their report, the committee chose to: “face the truth” and recommended a “balanced view of the multicultural reality.” According to the Conservative Party, integration politics had, shifted from almost assimilationist politics to misguided caring (The New Moderates (*De nya moderaterna*) 2009: 6; see also Hellström 2010: 147-149). This frame suggests that, “we” (as in “we” the mainstream actors) must seriously consider the “real” problems with the reverse side of integration; otherwise voters may turn to the SD. If “the Beast” cannot easily be demolished, this frame suggests transforming “the

Beast” into a pet. In Denmark, the strategy of taming has been used for quite some time.

How to contain “the Beast”: Denmark.

The Social Democratic Party, the Socialistic People’s Party, and the Red-Green Alliance lost a substantial number of voters to the Danish People’s Party in the 1998 and 2001 parliamentary elections. Ever since then these parties in particular have tried to recapture the voters. There is general agreement that if the parties use words like “nationalism” and “racism”, criticism easily backfires and more voters risk joining the DPP, since they fear a new tolerance of non-Western migrants. If, on the other hand, “the Beast” is seen as being Islam and Islamism, this frame suggests that the way to combat these is through restrictive policy and zero-tolerance practice.

It is not only the government parties that support the DPP ban on Muslims. The Social Democrats also support new legislation e.g., against the wearing of the burqa in public places: “We cannot ban what people wear at home. There you can be naked or wear the burqa. But the Social Democrats support banning it the moment you step out of the front door, says political spokesman Henrik Sass-Larsen” (Ekstra Bladet 17 August 2009).

As mentioned earlier, the Social Democrats changed their opinion when it was discovered that a ban would be unconstitutional. While Social Democrats rhetorically speak against the Danish People’s Party and the government, in the end they often vote for many of their proposed policies. For its part, the DPP generally supports the government because the government is intent on carrying out restrictive policies:

If the government does not guarantee a restrictive immigrant policy, the DPP threatens to end its close collaboration with the government. The restrictive immigration policy is the reason why we support the government of Anders Fogh Rasmussen. In principle there are no other reasons, says DPP foreign policy spokesman, Søren Espersen to Ritzau. (Danish Radio 22 July 2008)

The most dominant frame on how to deal with the “first Beast”, the DPP, is through verbal resistance, whereas the “second Beast”, Islam, and to some extent non-western migrants, is to suggest and support restrictive migration policies such as those of the government. In the fear of losing votes, few dare to question these policies. There also seems to be a consensual agreement about the need to support and sustain national values, the national cultural canon, and citizenship testing.

Why “the Beast” is so attractive: Sweden and Denmark.

The bestiality of “the Beast” is attractive in a political landscape in which the differences between right and left vaporize, at least in the public eye (Mouffe 2005). Depicting something (or someone) as a “Beast” is a way of augmenting moral values in the field of politics. “The Beast” is attractive in the eyes of the political antagonists because it represents the moral evil that “we” (as in “we, the members of the mainstream parties) condemn and can mobilize against.” Following Richard Kearney (2002: 121): “What monsters reveal (*monstrare*) to us is nothing less than our craving to put a face on phobia.” The obvious side-effect is that the underdog, interpreted as a “Beast”, can use the same moral arguments to blame the elite for not listening to the views and the needs of the “man on the street.” The RRP parties thus aspire to be the only political movement that challenges the consensual views of the political establishment, which they consider to be not only politically naïve but also morally wrong, since they distance themselves from people at large. In this frame, the attraction of “the Beast” lies in the incapacity of existing liberal democratic regimes to deal with politically incorrect views. This is the taboo frame, which is equally strong in Sweden and in Denmark. The correspondent Nathan Shachar writes in a chronicle (Dagens Nyheter 25 September 2009):

The most dangerous thing is not failures and difficulties in relation to immigration, but the feeling that the politicians, over the voters’ heads, withdrew the issue from the agenda and turned it into taboo. In Austria, where immigrants are less marginalized than in Sweden, this is what – more than any real disasters – paved the way for the FPÖ.

In Denmark, framing Islam as “the Beast” is integrated with the politics of fear that extends, intentionally or not, radical Muslim terrorism to all Muslims. The association of Islam with terrorism was uppermost in *Jyllands-Posten*’s cartoon project and cartoonist Kurt Westergaard’s drawings from at least 1997 to the bomb-in-the-turban cartoon of 30 September 2005 and later drawings (Hervik 2011). According to a Danish bishop, the perception of Islam in Denmark is almost entirely negative (Termansen, Berlingske Tidende 19 September 2004).

Not surprisingly more than half of the Danes believe that there is an overwhelming probability that Denmark will become the object of terrorism. Berlingske Tidende interprets these answers in a heading ‘Increasing fear of Muslims and Terror.’ In the same newspaper on the same day a text underneath the picture of Pia Kjærsgaard says: ‘Islamists threaten our democracy.’ (Politiken 25 September 2004)

The cartoon conflict illustrated the sacred nature of freedom of speech among journalists and politicians. We also learned that freedom of speech became a lever for anti-Islamic policy and practice – something that was far from the

founding fathers' original vision of using freedom of speech to protect vulnerable minorities against power-holders like the state and the press (Bjerre 2009; Hervik 2011). Today this use of the notion of free speech goes hand in hand with the construction of a politically correct taboo, according to which the "truth" is hidden from Danish politicians. Appeals during the Muhammad cartoon conflict for social responsibility and a more lenient treatment of Muslim and other migrants were met with accusations about covering up the true nature and danger of the Muslim presence in the country.

In a recent course Hervik held for Scandinavian journalists, this conflict appeared as one between Danish and Swedish news journalists. While the Danish journalists wanted to indiscriminately publish extremist statements to celebrate freedom of speech and democracy, their Swedish counterparts instead insisted on their democratic right and professional duty to reject anti-democratic radical rhetoric for the sake of preserving democracy and practicing a freedom of speech that was socially responsible. The claim of speaking the truth, of calling a spade a spade, is a discursive tool that is used by the person who claims to know the truth while the opponent is hiding it. The practice of speaking straightforwardly has its price, however, as the journalist and author Lena Sundström aptly noted: "Biases are not dissolved by being aired in public [...] But I do not believe one becomes happier by articulating one's biases. Or, that we get rid of biases in this way" (Politiken 17 August 2009).

The taboo frame is adjacent to another common frame in the public debate – one that suggests that the SD gains electoral ground because the electorate is afraid and insecure about what is going on around them. In a debating article, the journalist Lars Åberg writes (Göteborgs-Posten 23 August 2009):

Out of the will to help and support, without getting on the wrong side of someone, a politicized and moralizing culture of insecurity has been established, which has led to educating public officials in anti-discrimination and sighing over the Sweden Democrats instead of taking on the conditions that constitute their soil.

In this frame, the progress of the SD in Sweden is understandable due to current upheavals in the suburbs, which are directly or indirectly connected to the "new multicultural" Sweden that some native-born Swedes are, allegedly, afraid of. The message is, then, that these issues need to be recognized as "real" problems. Our quantitative measurements indicate that to a great extent people are framed as either fairly or very insecure/afraid (93.5 percent in Sweden and 95.1 percent in Denmark). This in turn implies an explanation for the problems of racism and xenophobia as the product of what e.g. the RPPs would refer to as "mass-immigration" (see Hellström 2010). This frame, to a lesser extent invoked also

in the mainstream press and further radicalized by the RPPs, link presumed high rates of criminality and societal disturbances with immigration and the acceptance of multi-culturalism in the everyday life of the natives. Nourishing nativist appeals, in this way, provide the RPPs with a fertile soil to further exploit popular fears and gain electoral fortunes.

A final, less strong, frame concerns the idea that “the Beast” does not only feed on people’s fears, but also on a growing feeling of resentment and indifference. In this case, however, several commentators blame the mainstream parties for nourishing these feelings. Our quantitative measurement does not reveal unanimous support for the claim that people are perceived as indifferent to politics.²¹ Instead it would seem to be the lack of political vision to spur people’s imaginations that is considered as the main problem. In his writings, Niklas Ekdal says (Dagens Nyheter 13 September 2009, op-ed):

The progress of the Sweden Democrats is a sign that we have given up, that no-one expects it to get any better, but everything is now a zero-sum game about a shrinking welfare-cake where one gang of cuckoo kids stands against the other.²²

Furthermore, the rise of the SD is not considered to be a problem that is associated with growing feelings of xenophobia among the Swedish electorate. Recent polls actually indicate that Swedes are more pro-immigration today than before the general election in 2006, when the SD became an issue of public controversy (see Demker 2008). In other words, the SD attractive force cannot be explained, solely, by reference to anti-immigration attitudes among the population. However, the framing of public opinion as insecure and afraid persists. In the news reporting this perception is also framed as a determinant factor for the progress of the DPP and the SD. This is nothing new and is certainly not unique to Scandinavian politics.²³

²¹ Less than fifty percent of the articles alluded to the view that the people are very or fairly indifferent to politics in Sweden. In Denmark seventy five per cent of the articles depicted the Danes as either fairly-, or very interested in politics.

²² The Muhammad crisis (2005/6) led to the Danes being tired of debating Muslims: “As many as 61 per cent of the Danes think that Islam and Muslims take up too much room in the Danish media” (Politiken 9 May 2009).

²³ In the process of consolidating common asylum- and immigration policies for all the EU members states, the European Union Commission sets the agenda for combining “the European ideals of solidarity and hospitality” with enhanced efforts to combat e.g., illegal immigration; hence, the dual strategy of boosting belonging and securitizing migration. This development risks fuelling perceptions that it is the immigrants who are the problem (Hellström 2008: 40).

In 2009, Anders Fogh Rasmussen stepped down as the Danish prime minister and handed over the position to the unproven Lars Løkke Rasmussen. The Socialist People's Party had successfully carried out more restrictive measures against migrants and migration policy, which in turn had given it a huge boost at the polls. With this boost and the weaker new prime minister, the opposition – the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party – began to sense that they could possibly form the next government together. That is what perhaps makes the construction of “the Beast”, here Islam, attractive. This development goes hand in hand with the politics of fear that intensified after 9/11. Although this fear has become more and more real, (see Hervik 1999, 2011), it is important to stress that fear and insecurity are the long-term results of the contentious efforts of political and media entrepreneurs. Today, a widespread popular anti-Islamic sentiment towards Islamic culture in Denmark forms the dominant frame and reveals the attraction of this Beast.

Final Reflections

This paper has assessed the fine line between political competitors as regular political adversaries and political Beasts. We have shown how the journalistic language in the Danish newspapers towards the DPP in Denmark differs from that in the Swedish newspapers towards the SD. The DPP might be a foe in Danish politics, but the SD is – to a large extent – still “the Beast” in Swedish politics, albeit much less in 2009 than in 2004. The dominant frames in the Swedish newspapers indicate that “we” (as in “we, the good guys”) need to do everything to prevent “the Beast” from entering the national parliament and impinging on mainstream politics.

The mainstream – left and right – parties in Denmark continue to approach the DPP, by means of verbal resistance to the party as extremely nationalistic. However, our findings verify the proposition made by e.g., Ellinas (2010) that it is harder for the mainstream parties to combat the politics of the political newcomer after its initial breakthrough, in this regard to articulate a strong counter-position to the DPP. One possible implication of this is that “the Beast” in Danish politics is increasingly projected onto the Islam community in Denmark, which is said to jeopardize social cohesion in this context. Mainstream actors in both Sweden and Denmark tend to justify the use of nativist rhetoric to avoid losing votes to the RRP parties and an increased support for nativist policies in general. However, our study suggests that the further acceptance of nativist rhetoric feeds the RRP-parties and helps them to grow stronger. Furthermore, even if our results verify Ellinas' claim that the media's role subsides in relation to the political newcomer as its organizational capabilities and internal party cohesion become more relevant, this is not the whole story. The media also plays a significant role in attributing validity to the Islam-critical stances of the DPP after its initial breakthrough. In this regard the

Danish media provides opportunities for the DPP to capitalize on popularized demands for opposition to Islamism (and also Islam) in order to gain electoral support.

“The Beast” represents some kind of archaic force that challenges the stability of representative politics, which for some voters is considered too technocratic and perhaps also too dull.²⁴ According to Chantal Mouffe, the RRP party family – as representing this archaic force – is the only movement that challenges the status quo (Mouffe 2005: 69-70). Some five years after the publication of Mouffe’s book “On the Political”, these parties are no longer referred to as extreme, but as radical populists. We have also seen how RRP parties in e.g., Denmark occupy an established, yet controversial position in domestic politics. In addition, the language of fear, commonly invoked in the DPP rhetoric, is now common goods in the news-reporting repertoire. One explanation why this development has gone further in Denmark is that legitimate actors in the public debate have adopted the language of the DPP. This is not the case in Sweden; at least not to the same extent. Both the DPP and the SD, though heavily criticized, tend to set the tone in the partisan rivalry over national identity issues.

The DPP and the SD test the limits of freedom of speech by means of vulgar proposals or election films²⁵ that stigmatize the Muslim minority population. They do not always succeed of course, and verbal resistance is often strong. Despite this, however, the anti-Islamic discourse continues to grow. The socio-cultural shift has triggered political movements and parties to mobilize supporters along contradictory ideas. On the one side, these ideas champion cultural diversity and a progressive life-style. On the other side, there are movements that seek refuge in solid hierarchies and, ultimately, resist the blending of “cultures” - as these are interpreted as impermeable.

²⁴ Margaret Canovan (1999) elaborates on populism as a permanent feature of democratic politics, a ‘shadow cast by democracy’. Following Canovan, representative politics is ambivalent and split between the redemptive ambitions of fulfilling demands of popular sovereignty and the pragmatic ambitions to maintain solid institutions. Certainly, fascist leaders in history have benefited from the redemptive side of democratic politics. But also in mature democratic systems redemptive politics gains attraction in political systems that are (too) biased towards pragmatic politics; hence, when politics is reduced to technocracy and reduced to the equal distribution of goods and resources, this might not have a take on peoples’ imaginations and emotions and thus potentially pave the way for new political contesters.

²⁵ The Swedish channel (TV 4) first refused to broadcast the SD election campaign film that showed burqa-wearing women with pushing prams and chasing an elderly ‘native-looking’ person. However TV4 changed its mind and instead broadcast a slightly adjusted election film before the 2010 national elections. If anything this turmoil accredited the SD with additional media exposure.

The nature of “the Beast” has shifted, though, from the evil extremist on the right side of the political spectrum to an emphasis on social cohesion, cultural congruence and a pre-occupation with how people migrating from non-western countries might jeopardize community stability. In the debate about the DPP and the SD in the media, “the Beast” shows two different faces in Denmark and Sweden respectively. In Denmark, non-western migrants are framed as some kind of existential threat that endangers the survival of the national community (cf. Huysmans 2001), which enables the “good guys” to mobilize against poorly integrated immigrants as morally evil, alternatively culturally determined victims. In Sweden, the SD represents a threat to the endemic perception of Sweden as a tolerant, non-xenophobic political community. The “good democrats” in Sweden thus present a positive self-image of Sweden as tolerant and open-minded, in a spirit of colour-blindness, as they mirror themselves against SD nationalism as hostile and malignant. One could also say that we are confronted with a two-faced Beast that feeds on perceptions of the people as ultimately afraid of what are not recognized as native goods.

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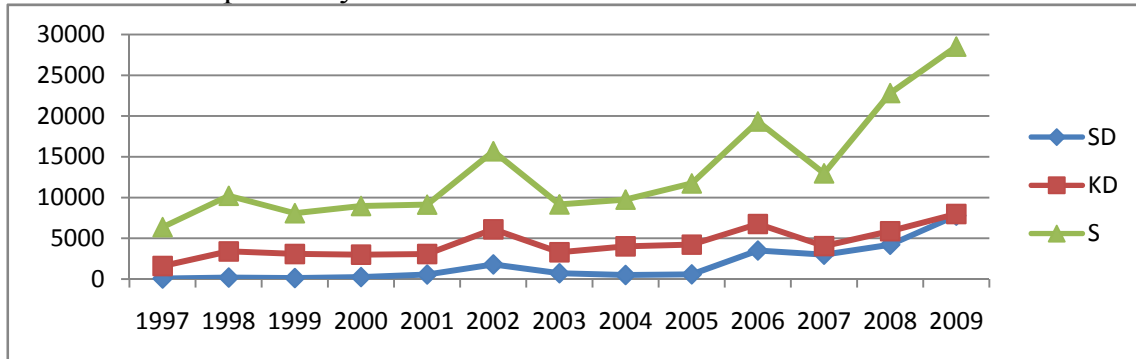
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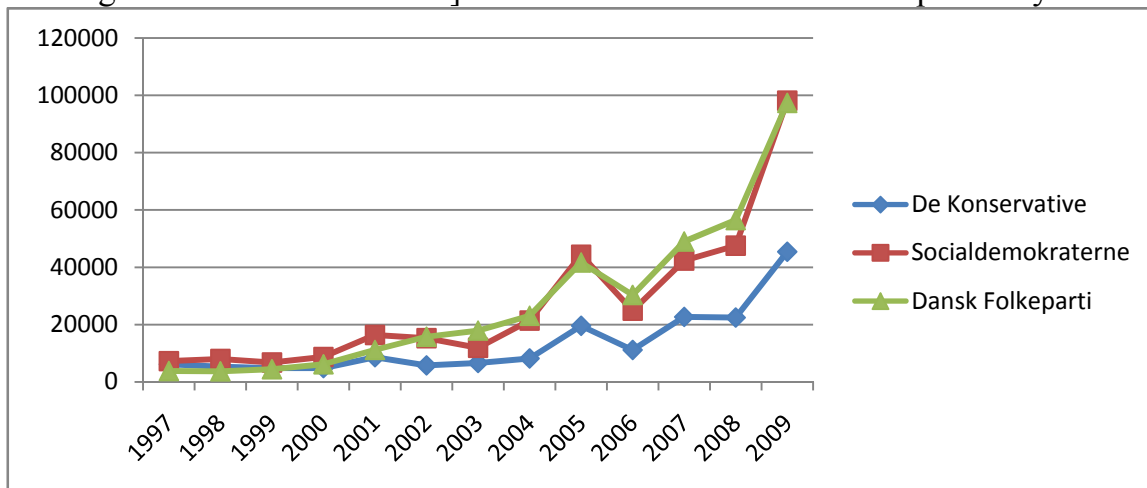
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Appendix 1

Media coverage of *Sverigedemokraterna* (SD) in Mediearkivet (2010) from 1997 to 2009. The Social Democrats (S) and the Christian Democrats (KD) are included for the sake of comparability.



Media coverage of the Danish People's Party [depicted in the diagram as Dansk Folkeparti] in Infomedia from 1997 to 2009. The Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet 1997-2002; Socialdemokraterne 2003-2009) and the Conservative Party [depicted in the diagram as De Konservative] are included for the sake of comparability



Appendix 2: Coding Scheme (Sweden, Denmark follows the same pattern)

Variable Number	Variable	Values
1	Year	2004 2009
2	Month	1-12
3	Day	1-31
4	News Paper	1 EXP 2 DN 3 SvD 4 AFT 5 GP
5	Article Size	1 Small 2 Medium 3 Large
6	Author	1 Journalist 2 Editorial writer 3 Independent writer (e.g., guest columnist, journalist/author) 4 Other (e.g., researcher, politician...)
7	Genre	1 News article 2 Chronicle (also reportage and column like articles) 3 Editorial 4 Op-eds/letters to the editor (both “DN-Debatt” and common letterstotheeditor) 5 News item
8	Section	1 News Section 2 Domestic (can be coded as 1) 3 Editorial

		4 Cultural Section 5 Other
9	Arena	1 Sweden-Domestic 2 Sweden-EU 3 EU/Europe 4 Sweden-Other (e.g., Sweden-Denmark)
10	The SD is different/similar in relation to the other domestic parties	1 Very similar 2 fairly similar 3 Neutral both/and (neither/nor) similar and different 4 fairly different 5 Very different
11	The SD (tone)	1 Very negative/alarming threat/made fun of 2 Negative 3 Neutral (neither negative nor positive) 4 Positive 5 Very Positive
12	People (in general) are afraid/insecure - secure	People are very secure (not afraid at all) People are fairly secure Neutral - people are both secure and insecure People are fairly insecure People are very insecure
13	People (actual or potential) who vote for the SD are afraid/insecure-secure	See 12
14	People (in general) are positive/negative to immigration	People are very positive to immigration/multiculturalism People are fairly positive to immigration/multiculturalism Neutral

		<p>People are fairly negative to positive to immigration/multiculturalism</p> <p>People are very negative to positive to immigration/multiculturalism</p>
15	<p>People (actual or potential) who vote for the SD are against immigration</p>	<p>(same as 14)</p>
16	<p>People (in general) are positive/negative of the establishment</p>	<p>People are very positive to the establishment (the established order/established values)</p> <p>People are fairly positive to the establishment (the established order/established values)</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>People are fairly negative to the establishment (the established order/established values)</p> <p>People are very negative to the establishment (the established order/established values)</p>
17	<p>People (the actual or potential) who vote for the SD are positive/negative of the establishment</p>	<p>(same as 16)</p>
18	<p>People (in general) are indifferent/anti-political – interested in politics</p>	<p>People are very interested in politics</p> <p>People are fairly interested in politics</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>People are fairly indifferent to politics</p> <p>People are very indifferent to politics (anti-political, do not care at all)</p>
19	<p>People (actual or potential) who vote for the SD are</p>	<p>(same as 18)</p>

	indifferent/anti-political – interested in politics	
20	<p>People are different (the natives are (not) like the non-natives). E.g., the immigrants do not behave/think/act like the natives.</p>	<p>The natives are very much like the non-natives</p> <p>The natives are fairly (to some extent) like the non-natives</p> <p>neutral</p> <p>The natives are fairly different from the non-natives</p> <p>The natives are very different from the non-natives</p>
21	<p>The potential or actual SD voters are (not) like the average voters</p>	<p>The potential or actual SD voters are very much like the average voter</p> <p>The potential or actual SD voters are fairly like the average SD voters</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>The potential or actual SD voters are fairly different from the average voters</p> <p>The potential or actual SD voters are very different from the average voters</p>

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