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The Three Sides of the Equality-Coin

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The Three Sides of the Equality-Coin: A Comparative Media Study of Danish and Swedish Newspapers 1996-2013.

Introduction

Using a big aggregated lens, the Scandinavians – Danes, Norwegians and Swedes - are in existing literature found to be almost exceptionally egalitarian. Existing research has documented a high level of support for redistributive policies and thus an egalitarian distribution of *net incomes* as well as uniquely egalitarian attitudes towards the distribution of *gross pay* in the Scandinavian countries (Ervasti 2008; Kjærsgård 2012b; Larsen 2006). The aggregated picture revealed fits well with a description of the Scandinavians as a rather uniform mass of *homo socialdemocraticus* (Esping-Andersen 1999; Larsen 2006), with in time consistent attitudes legitimising their rather peculiar institutional and societal arrangements known as the Nordic model¹. By *disaggregating* a measure of attitudes towards the distribution of gross pay; (Kjærsgård 2012a) have shown that this *aggregated* picture of similarity hides significant differences between the Scandinavian countries. His results reveal that in the period 1992-2009, the Swedish responses follow a distinctly different pattern than the Danish and Norwegian responses that are more alike. Kjærsgård's (2012a) results show that in Sweden big *between* group differences exist and remain, but at the same time the *intra-group* differences are small, also in 2009. In Denmark and Norway the differences *between* groups are small (with notable exceptions), whereas the *intra-group* differences skyrockets in 2009 for a majority of the groups investigated (more so in Denmark, than in Norway)².

The point of departure of this article is the survey results described above. Kjærsgård (2012a) hypothesises that a possible explanation for why the Swedes responses follow a remarkably different pattern than the Norwegians and especially the Danes; could be traced to a markedly

¹ And a range of other acronyms: “social democratic welfare regime”, “the Nordic welfare regime”, “the Nordic welfare state”, “the universal welfare state”, “the institutional welfare state” and in the Nordic settings simply “the welfare state” (Larsen 2013).

² The between group differences are in all cases measured by comparing the median values of the various social groups. The intra-groups differences are likewise measured by comparing the standard deviations of the various groups.

higher degree of *politicization*, *mobilisation* and *salience* of the issue of class differences and the distribution of income in society³.

The article will conduct a comparative media study of the two Scandinavian “extremes” located in Kjærsgård’s (2012a) investigations – Denmark and Sweden. Following the hypothesis mentioned above the salience of the issue of class differences and the distribution of income in society should be rather low in Denmark compared to Sweden. This article will try and test this hypothesis by investigating how “the rich” have been portrayed in the five main Danish and Swedish national newspapers in the period of 1996-2013. The following section will elaborate on why exactly the media’s portrayal of “the rich” – an under-investigated topic - is a relevant operationalization of the salience of the issue of class differences and the distribution of income in society. Hereafter the next section will elaborate on the main-, as well as alternative hypotheses. These hypotheses will then be tested in the analyses sections of the article. Before that a data and methods section will elaborate on the issues of how to collect the relevant data and how to conduct the investigation.

Existing literature – equality and “the rich” in Scandinavia

When Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) named his three ideal-typical welfare (state) regimes - The liberal-, the conservative- and the social-democratic regime – these names were explicitly meant to reflect the ideologies and ideas of the political actors, who according to Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999), historically had been able to dominate the build-up of the welfare institutions of the various western nations. The welfare institutions in the Scandinavian countries - closest to the social-democratic ideal-type – were accordingly heavily influenced by actors promoting the social-democratic ideology and ideas⁴.

But what is the social-democratic ideology dominating the social-democratic regime then? According to Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) it is mainly a subscription to the value of equality. The understanding or definition of equality is furthermore very encompassing in the social-democratic regime. Equality is also a central value in the liberal regime. But equality here mainly signifies equality of opportunity. In the social-democratic countries the definition

³ Esping-Andersen (1980) reaches a similar conclusion concerning the differences between at the time “two strongholds of social democracy” – Denmark and Sweden (pp. 3). In Denmark, it is argued that the class structure and the nature of social democracy is heavily influenced by a large petit bourgeoisie, causing a weak and steadily fragmented and decomposed working class and social democratic party. In Sweden the opposite is the case.

⁴ There is a wide range of literature concerning the historical roots of the western welfare states. A general conclusion is here that the social democratic actors in Scandinavia – that is the representatives of the workers class and especially the trade unions and the social democratic parties – often engaged in compromises with the representatives of the peasants. These class-compromises are quite unique for Scandinavia (Baldwin 1990; Esping-Andersen 1990; Esping-Andersen 1999; Korpi 1983).

is wider encompassing not just equality of opportunity, but also a goal of a high degree of actual equality of outcomes – including the distribution of incomes in society (Esping-Andersen 1990; Esping-Andersen 1999; Kildal and Kuhnle 2005; Larsen 2013; McCall and Kenworthy 2009).

There are at least two sides of the coin, when a narrow income distribution (equality of outcomes) is sought promoted. It is theoretically and empirically well-established how the social-democratic Scandinavian countries firstly in their *welfare institutions* have been committed to lift the bottom to being on pretty equal footing with the rest of society status- and financial-wise (Esping-Andersen 1990; Esping-Andersen 1999; Goul Andersen 2012; Rothstein and Stolle 2001; Rothstein and Stolle 2007; Rothstein 1998). Second, existing *attitudinal* research suggests the Scandinavians still seem to want the state to take action and try to solve the social problems emerging (Hedegaard and Larsen 2014; Hedegaard Forthcoming; Larsen 2013; Rothstein 2000; Soss 1999). Because these are concentrated on the lower strata of society, this can be interpreted as the Scandinavians still are committed to make lift the bottom into the lifestyle of the middle class.

Lastly there are also indications that the *media* actually portray a different and more positive image of the lower strata in Scandinavian countries, than in other western countries. Whereas the poor or underclass are often portrayed as undeserving, cheaters and lazy abusers of the welfare benefits, the image is more positive in a Scandinavian context. Often the framing is rather that people “got stuck in the system” – the system is the problem, not the dangerous poor (Dejgaard et al. 2009; Larsen 2006; Larsen and Dejgaard 2012; Van Oorschot 2000; van Oorschot 2006). Lundström (2011) has furthermore showed that even when the framing is actually on abuse of benefits in the Swedish context, the connotations are still much more collective than the similar British newspaper stories. The more collectivistic framing again does not seem to the same extent to promote a view of a dangerous underclass morally distinct from the middle class, but rather that the lower strata shares the values with the majority of the population. This discursively seems to lift the bottom into the middle class.

Existing research suggest that the Scandinavian welfare institutions, populations and media all seem committed to promote a high degree of equality in incomes and status by lifting the poor into the realm of the middle class. It is also clear that the field is well-established in many aspects of the relationship between the bottom and the middle in the Scandinavian countries. This is not the case of the other side of the coin – the relationship between the

middle and the top. If one is really committed to securing a high degree of equality of outcomes, one need to lift the bottom, but also to restrain the top.

If we follow the same line of argumentation as above, the original social-democratic ideology dominating the creation of the welfare states in Scandinavia was indeed critical of those at the top of society or “the rich”. In the original Marxist version from which the reformed socialist/social democrats owe much legacy⁵, the bourgeoisie (the capitalists or the rich) is the enemy of the proletariat (the working class i.e. the majority) – the capitalists exploit the working class. The superstructure of society (i.e. culture, media, institutions and more)⁶ furthermore promote and reflect the values of the bourgeoisie, preventing the proletariat from realizing their true objective class interests overthrowing the bourgeoisie-rule in the proletariat-revolution (Marx and Engels 1968).

This idea that the power of the capitalists was dangerous did not die out when the majority of the workers movement gradually embraced the representative democracy and the idea of a gradual transformation to a socialist society. The main social democratic political parties in Scandinavia for most of the last century kept some notions of the class struggle against the bourgeoisie as the “class-enemy” at least in their official policy agenda programs (Esping-Andersen 1980; Green-Pedersen 2011). It is always a matter of discussion, how much selected ideological statements of the official policy agenda programs or a few politicians on special occasions, actually meant for the actual policy goals the social democrats strived for, especially in recent decades. No matter what, it is clear that a certain degree of scepticism to the workings, earnings and profits of “the rich” is a part of the ideological legacy of social democrats in Scandinavia. This legacy surely was even more prominent before- and in “the golden age of welfare capitalism” (Flora 1986), when the social democratic actors shaped the social democratic welfare regime. The question is what remains of this legacy today: is it just as strong as the effort to lift the bottom into the middle class or has it eroded - and is the answer to this question different in Denmark than in Sweden?

Theory and hypotheses

The following section first tries to model the different possible *directionalities* of how the media could be framing the rich in Denmark and/or Sweden in general or in individual

⁵ See for example: (Bernstein 1899 [1993]; Kautsky 1932). Esping-Andersen (1980) clearly underlines this point in actually labeling social democracy “revisionist Marxism” (pp. 1).

⁶ Some later Marxist scholars included the welfare system as a crucial part of the deception of the working class, saving capitalism from the proletariat revolution. The original Bismarckian welfare reforms of the late 1800’s were actually explicitly aimed at this purpose (Esping-Andersen 1990).

newspapers in the two countries. As it will be apparent below it is theoretically interesting whether there is difference between the media’s framing before and after the financial crisis. Figure 1 below therefore besides from distinguishing between three different directionalities of the framing also distinguishes between two points in time - the pre- and post the financial crisis situation.

FIGURE 1. *Different possibilities for the development in the framing of the rich in the five main Danish and Swedish newspapers in the period 1996-2013.*

		T2		
		Sceptical/negative	Non-framing/neutral	Positive
T1	Sceptical/negative	1	1.2	1.3
	Non-framing/neutral	2.1	2	2.3
	Positive	3.1	3.2	3

Note: T1=pre financial crisis, T2=post financial crisis

The *first* ideal-typical directionality - indicated by position 1 in figure 1 - takes its point of departure in the general welfare regime theory and the social democratic ideological legacy presented above. The assumption would here be that the Danish and Swedish media consistently have remained sceptical towards and portrayed the rich in a not so positive light. Just as the poor are portrayed in a more positive light in the Scandinavian media and discursively lifted into the middle class, the excesses at the top of society are looked upon with scepticism and sought restrained. Furthermore the financial crisis from 2008 and onwards could possibly have exploited this “capitalist-sceptical” ideological reservoir of the average *homo socialdemocraticus* even further. The assumption must then furthermore be that we expect to see a sharp rise in the amount of critical articles about the rich following the financial crisis.

The *second* directionality (position 3) suggests a radical divergence from the “capitalist-sceptical” legacy: Maybe the rich are not framed sceptically the “class-enemy”, maybe they are instead framed positively the entrepreneurs, who are the future of Denmark and Sweden. Rowlingson & Connor (2011) distinguish between three overall criteria for being considered “deserving rich”. Rewarding merit/hard work, incentives, character. Typical newspaper articles subscribing to this kind of reasoning would emphasise for example how the rich have *worked hard* and struggled to get to where they are now, need *incentives* in order to maximize the benefits for the rest of society in creating wealth, jobs and competitive companies as well as showing restraint in their *character* and consumption, paying their high

taxes with compliance and furthermore giving more money back to society in the form of charity and donations. If this discourse remains strong in the wake of the financial crisis, the discourse could even be reinforced. It is possible the rich could then be framed as our only hope of getting the countries out of the economic turmoil.

Besides the two opposites just presented, there is also a *third* directionality (position 2): Maybe the ideological reservoir or collective memory the Danish and Swedish media exploits is not a “capitalist-sceptical” or a “capitalist-friendly” one. Instead it could be the idea in Denmark and Sweden are no such things as excessively rich people with supernormal profits. Maybe the welfare state is such a success, that the issue of income- and class differences is basically solved. The rich do maybe not even form distinct class in the collective memory of the average Dane or Swede anymore. They just belong to the upper part of the all-encompassing middle class. In this scenario the assumption is that there are very few articles about the rich in the Danish and Swedish newspapers both before and after the financial crisis and the few articles there is are written in a very neutral manner.

The three ideal-typical directionalities of the framing of the rich in the Danish and Swedish media at first glance all seems likely to exist in both countries. But as indicated above, the main hypothesis to be tested in the article is that there are good reasons to suspect that it varies quite a lot, which directionality respectively the Danish and Swedish media mainly subscribes to in the period investigated⁷.

The hypothesis takes its point of departure in the results and interpretations of (Esping-Andersen 1980; Kjærsgård 2012a; Kjærsgård 2012b). Even if the Scandinavians in the big comparative view look like a uniform equilibrium of egalitarianism, the issue of class differences and the distribution of income seem much more politicised and salient in the Swedish context than in the Danish one.

If we start with *Denmark*, the hypothesis is that in general we do not expect to see much portrayal of the rich in the Danish media before or after the financial crisis - compared to Sweden. No matter your search algorithm the thesis is the number of articles about this stratum is destined to be low. The articles you can find is probably also written in a quite neutral manner, not really portraying the rich in a certain light at all (position 2). It seems possible though that this non-framing hypothesis is prone to change temporarily in the wake of the financial crisis. This is firstly because Denmark, at least compared to Sweden, was hit

⁷ The period investigated will in both countries be 1996-2013, why will be elaborated below.

quite hard by the financial crisis and secondly simply because this quite radical change in the economic situation of the country invites a discussion about the distribution of the available resources in society, at that point perceived to be quite scarce. In that case we would see an increase in articles critical to the rich (position 2.1) or an increase in articles positive to the rich (position 2.3). This financial crisis effect will probably fade out quite fast though, and the Danish newspapers should return to the pre-financial crisis non-framing outline. This is simply because the resource distribution discussion is not a crucial political or journalistic cleavage in the Danish media market anymore.

We cannot expect to see large differences between the individual Danish newspapers. This concerns both in the actual number of the articles about the rich per month, but also in the framing in these articles. It is again a possibility though that there could be a temporal change in this following the financial crisis, where the newspapers more or less voluntarily are forced to cover a very hot political issue at the time both globally and nationally and therefore also take a stand on the issue. Maybe the effect of the crisis is therefore to politicise and polarize the media framing of the rich even in Denmark (Hedegaard Forthcoming; Taber and Lodge 2006; Togeby 2004; Zaller 1992)? In this scenario the economically liberal newspapers could then following the crisis enhance a positive framing of “the rich” as hardworking, risk-taking, job-creators (position 2.3). The social democratic oriented newspapers on the other hand could return to a clear critical framing of the rich they historically pursued (position 2.1). No matter what the overall hypothesis is that the effect is more temporal and minor than in Sweden.

In *Sweden* we expect to see more or less the opposite scenario from Denmark. The hypothesis is the issue of class differences and the distribution of income is much more politicised and salient in the Swedish newspapers. This means in general we expect to see more debate and therefore a larger number of articles about the rich per month than in Denmark. These articles can in general furthermore be assumed not to be written in a non-framing or neutral manner, but in either a sceptical or a positive one. The assumption is that because the issue still constitutes a crucial political and journalistic cleavage in Sweden, the economically liberal newspapers will consistently portray the rich in a positive manner (position 3), while the social democratic newspapers will portray the rich in a sceptical manner (position 1). If Esping Andersens’s (1990; 1999) social democratic heritage is still strong in Sweden it is furthermore possible though that the critical discourse is a bit stronger. This means that even if we in general see positive articles in the economically liberal newspapers, the average

number of positive articles per month or per economically liberal newspaper is lower, than the average of sceptical articles per month or per social democratic newspaper.

What can the effect of the financial crisis be then? Two possible conflicting effects can be considered here. First it is possible that we will not see much difference between the pre- and post-financial crisis situation. Compared to most other western countries Sweden was hit very gently by the financial crisis and already in 2010 experienced impressive GDP growth- and falling unemployment rates – A situation quite opposite from Denmark (www.stats.oecd.org). The resources could therefore possibly be experienced as less scarce than in the Danish case, inducing less reason to discuss its distribution. Moreover if the assumption is true that the issue was already hotly debated in the Swedish media before the financial crisis, then the salience could possibly already be near a kind of saturation point, not being able to rise much more. On the other hand the crisis can also be considered a perfect match for the ideological and journalistic profiles of the Swedish media refuelling an already salient debate. Following this argument the financial crisis-effect could also be expected to last longer in Sweden – simply because the issue is assumed to fit with the political and journalistic profiles of the newspapers in Sweden.

Data and Methods

The following section will mainly deal with both the overall design oriented issues and the approach of the article as well as some of the more practical methodological issues arising, when conducting a study of the development of media framing of “the rich” in a Danish and Swedish context, which are not trivial issues.

The selection of search algorithm, newspapers and time period

First and foremost it is by no means straightforward which search algorithm to use to identify the relevant sample of articles concerning “the rich” (McCall 2013). It is simply much more straightforward, which are your relevant keywords, when you are interested in benefit fraud, social assistance etc. More or less you just use these words translated into the relevant languages plus a few synonyms. Hereby you collect your relevant sample of newspaper articles⁸.

As we will show below it is by no means the case, when we are interested in the framing of “the rich” in a Danish and Swedish context. The section above described three overall scenarios of how the rich could be framed in the Danish and Swedish media: sceptical, rather neutral and positive. This ambition of investigating, which of these three scenarios are correct

⁸ See for example (Dejgaard and Larsen 2011; Lundström 2011).

and how it changes over time, causes particular problems. This is because the search algorithm then should capture the articles portraying “the rich” in all three manners and not just the sceptical articles for example. This logically demands a very broad search algorithm, which on the other hand invites a tremendous amount of “noise” in the form of articles not relevant for the topic of the investigation. This trade-off as well as other problems makes the initial step of finding a relevant gross-sample of relevant newspaper articles more difficult than in the other studies.

We have used the online media archives *Infomedia*⁹ and *Mediearkivet*¹⁰ to extract Danish and Swedish newspapers correspondingly. We have chosen the five largest national newspapers in each country for maximum discursive impact. This selection also allows for having variation on both the journalistic- and political profile in accordance with the recommendations and definitions of (Dejgaard and Larsen 2011; Lundström 2011).

TABLE 1. *Classification of the five largest Danish and Swedish Nation-wide newspapers.*

	Social Democratic	Conservative	Economically Liberal
	Danish		
Newsstand Tabloid	Ekstra Bladet (EB)		BT (BT)
Serious Popular			
Semi-Serious	Politiken (POL)	Berlingske (BL)	Jyllands Posten (JP)
	Swedish		
Newsstand Tabloid	Aftonbladet (AB)		Expressen (EX)
Serious Popular			Göteborg Posten (GP)
Semi-Serious		Svenska Dagbladet (SD)	Dagens Nyheter (DN)

Sources: Larsen & Dejgaard (2011); Lundström (2011); Dansk Oplagskontrol (2012); Tidningsutgivarna (2012)

It is clear from table 1 that the five selected newspapers in each country secure variation on both dimensions chosen – journalistic style and political orientation. At the same time these are the five largest newspapers in Denmark and Sweden – except maybe from a few of the freesheets who has been omitted - indicating that these should have a general discursive impact on different strata of the population.

Which time period should be chosen for the analyses then? To identify the general quantified trends in the depiction of the rich in the 10 newspapers a maximum timespan has been chosen (Lundström 2011, 314). If we start with the Danish newspapers: JP entered the archive 9th of

⁹ www.infomedia.dk

¹⁰ <http://www.retriever-info.com/sv/>

January 1996. The four other newspapers entered Infomedia as early as 1990 (www.infomedia.dk). In the Swedish case all the five selected newspapers entered Mediarkivet earlier than 1996 (www.retriever-info.com). Since it was decided to count the number of articles on a monthly basis, the first full month where all 10 newspapers were available was February 1996 – the starting point of the analyses. The last full month available, when the data collection started was April 2013. Therefore this month became the last month of collecting the gross sample of newspaper articles in.

This expansive approach to collect a gross sample of newspaper articles will only be followed in the first part of the analysis. As Lundström (2011) does, we will narrow the focus on specific time-periods of interest later. The two time periods chosen are the periods in which the survey data for the third and fourth rounds of the International Social Survey Program's (ISSP) Social Inequality module was collected in Denmark and Sweden. These results of analysing these survey data i.e. (Kjærsgård 2012a; Kjærsgård 2012b) as described above constituted the empirical and theoretical inspiration for conducting this study. The data collection periods are:

- December 2000 to May 2001 (Denmark)¹¹ + February 1999 to June 1999 (Sweden)¹².
- September 2009 to January 2010 (Denmark)¹³ + February 2009 to May 2009 (Sweden)¹⁴.

The periods chosen are then:

- **T1**: November 1998 to May 2001 and **T2**: November 2008 to January 2010.

These periods include the whole data collection period for both surveys in both countries plus the three months before the collections starts in either country. These three months were included, because it must be assumed that if the attitudes of the respondents in the survey are affected by the media's framing of the rich, then those attitudes are probably not just affected by the framing of the day the respondent answers the questionnaire, but also by the framing in the period leading up to that. The two selected time-periods furthermore have the advantage of providing a post- and a pre-financial snapshot, important for testing the hypothesis deduced above.

¹¹ <http://www.surveybanken.aau.dk/ISSP+til+universitets-+og+forskningsbrug/>

¹² <http://info1.gesis.org/dbksearch19/Docs.asp?no=3430>

¹³ <http://www.gesis.org/en/issp/issp-modules-profiles/social-inequality/2009/>

¹⁴ <http://www.gesis.org/en/issp/issp-modules-profiles/social-inequality/2009/>

Aggregated coverage of the rich in Denmark and Sweden 1996-2013

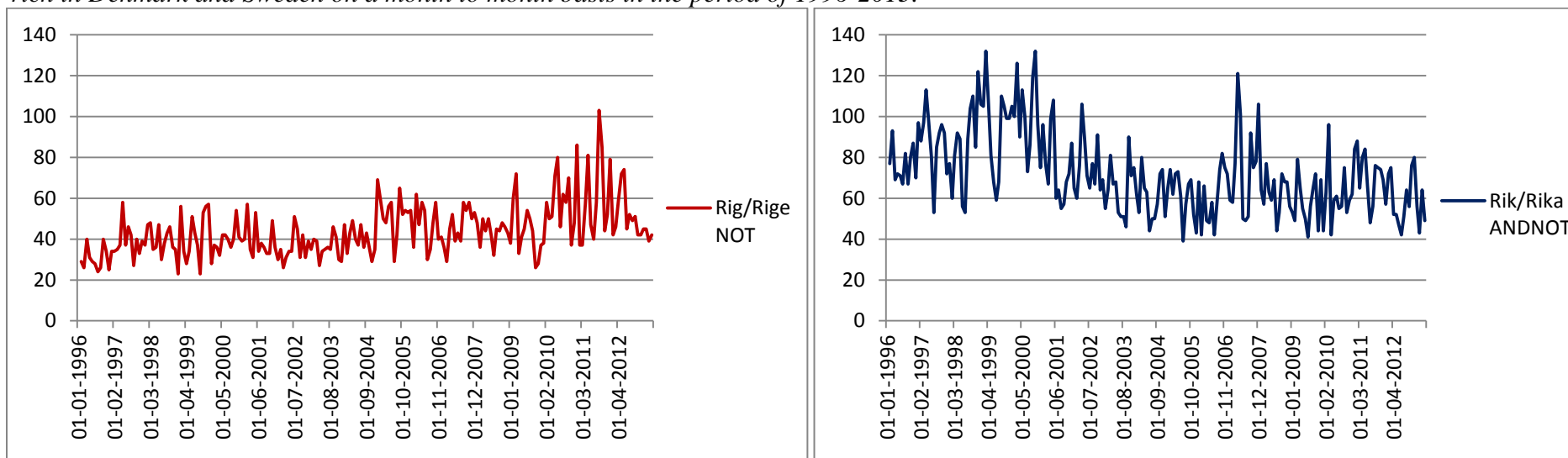
In this section we will empirically deal with the issue of identifying the right search algorithm. The section aims to get a broad overview of the development in the media coverage of the rich the entire period of full months, from which we have the articles of all ten newspapers. That is from 1st February 1996 to 30th April 2013.

How do you identify articles concerning the rich in Denmark and Sweden? The most straightforward option is simply to search for articles containing the word “rig/rik” [rich] or “rige/rika” [the rich] somewhere in the text. The samples obtained hereby are very encompassing, because by searching in the entire text of the articles, we should also be able to capture relevant articles, where a version of the word rich is not part of the headline or manchet of the article, which is quite likely. Unfortunately the vast majority of the articles retrieved this way are not relevant at all, but pure noise.

To eliminate the vast majority of noise-articles we utilised the NOT command in Infomedia and the corresponding ANDNOT command in Mediearkivet. When you utilize this command articles containing the word rig/rik OR rihe/rika and one of the words specified after the NOT/ANDNOT command will be discarded.

To select the NOT/ANDNOT-words we chose a few months from different points in the timespan of 1996-2013 in the two countries and looked for which words actually seemed to appear together with different versions of the word rich in the noise-articles. As it probably can be guessed from the algorithm presented under the graphs below these usually fall under themes as rich in foreign countries, sports, culture and lifestyle-articles:

FIGURE 1-2. The final search algorithms utilised to identify the relevant gross-sample of newspaper articles dealing with the framing of the rich in Denmark and Sweden on a month to month basis in the period of 1996-2013.



Search algorithm of the red graph: ((rig rige) NOT (amerikansk fuglelivet kultur USA ånderne helse Rusland Marokko Osmanniske Sydafrika Hong Kong Storbritannien New York Washington illustreret sport Sydamerika rejsebeskrivelse båd blomsterliv Portugal teater forfatter kunstanm bogannm London Kina film Tyrkiet kornmusiktradition Vesteuropa Byzantiske Rom bøger vesten comedy Iran bopladser pladeann Tyskland kulturarv Guds Hollywood bebyggelser sogn Dante klima Irak vesterlændinge samfund land Frankrig udenlandske encyklopædi EM Oslo EU musik fodbold spil Nazi Østrig Verdens kost russisk hollandsk jul idræt baseball boksning Mexico Amerikanske bundesliga håndbold mesterliga naturfotograf Peking Paris Las Vegas engelske Afrika fauna britisk))

Source: www.infomedia.dk

Search algorithm of the blue graph: ((rik OR rika) ANDNOT American fågellivet kultur USA spirits hälsa Ryssland Marocko Ottoman Sydafrika Hong Kong Storbritannien New York Washington Illustrated Sydamerika reseberättelse blomsterliv Portugal teater författare bokanmälan London Kina Film Turkiet kornmusiktradition Västeuropa bysantinska Rom böcker western komedi Iran bosättningar plattareview Tyskland kulturarv Gud Hollywood socken Dante klimat Irak västerlänningar gemenskap land Frankrike främmande encyklopedi EM Oslo EU music fotboll Spel nazistiska Österrike världens kost Ryska Holländska juli sport baseboll boxning Mexiko US Bundesliga handboll handbollen mästerliga naturfotograf Peking Paris Las Vegas English afrikanska fauna UK)

Source: <http://www.retriever-info.com/sv/>

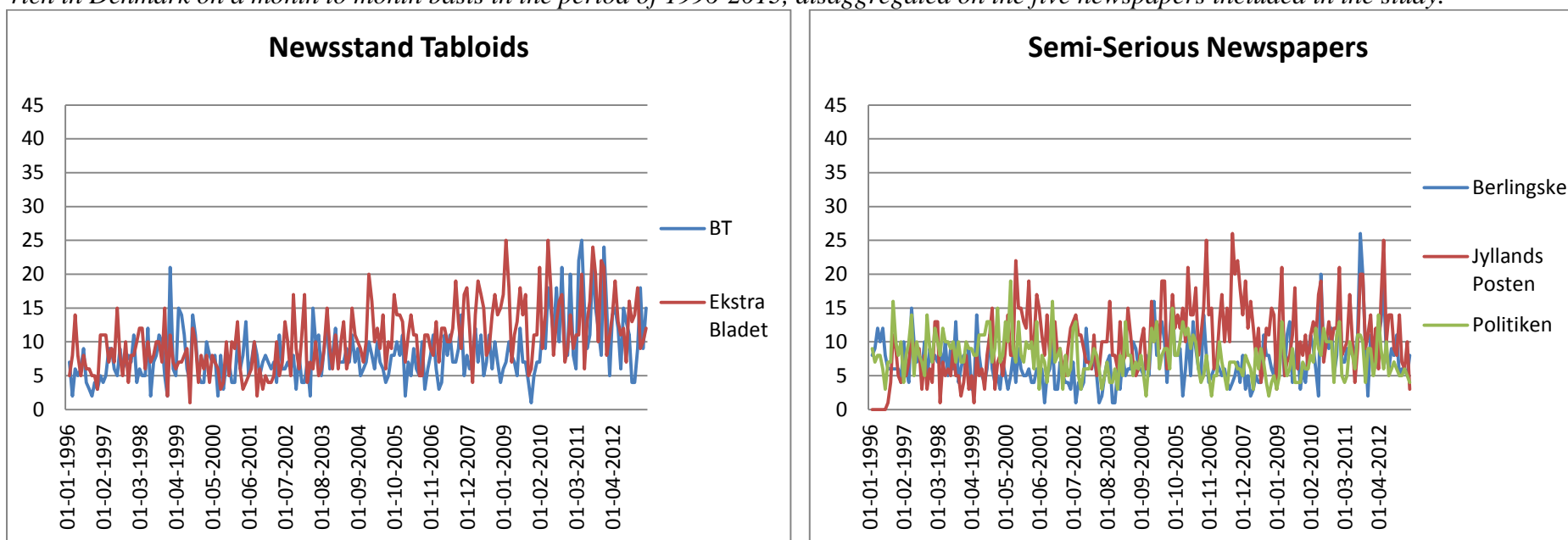
Figure 1 and 2 reveals results, which for Denmark seems to fit with the theoretical expectations deduced in the hypothesis above quite well, while it is not necessarily the case for Sweden. In *Denmark* the average number of articles and thus the salience of the framing of the rich seems to lie at around 40-50 articles per month in more or less the entire period investigated. This is as expected clearly lower than in Sweden, but on the other hand the difference is not overwhelming from 2006-2013. Overall the tendency in Sweden is thus a gradual decline over time starting from an average of approximately 80 in 1996 being reduced to approximately 50-60 in April 2006, followed in the rest of the period investigated by relative stability in the average monthly level of articles. Also as expected for Denmark, we see what seems to be a temporal lagged financial crisis effect from June 2010-May 2012. Only in this period we see a noticeable rise from the general average of 40-50 articles. If this rise corresponds to a debate following the financial crisis there was clearly a two year lag in this effect, and the effect clearly seems temporal. In 2013 the average number of articles per month is down to around 40-50 again.

Sweden does on the other hand not seem to conform to its expected role as more or less a Danish opposite. The general Swedish level is as mentioned higher than in Denmark, but the question is if the minute difference from 2006 and onwards really can be labelled significant. The Swedish story is actually mostly one of much bigger variation over the period than in Denmark. There are remarkable peak periods in Sweden. The first is before the decline sets in, lasting from December 1998-October 2000. In the so called “stable period” from 2006-2013, there is first a remarkable peak from April-December 2007 and second a less dramatic but longer peak from March 2010-January 2011. The financial crisis does therefore not seem to form a crucial event for the debate about the rich in Sweden. This fits with the thesis that there is not much effect, because Sweden experienced a very mild crisis. On the other hand the quite low average at this point does not go well with the argument the additional argument presented above: that the salience of the rich-debate is already at a saturation-point, not being able to rise much more. The debate was clearly more intense from 1998-2000. It is difficult to deduce more or get closer to answering these questions from the aggregated graphs above. The disaggregated- and qualitative investigations below will allow that.

Mapping major trends in news reporting on the rich disaggregated on the five newspapers in the two countries

Below the results of figure 1 and 2 are disaggregated on the five newspapers in each country:

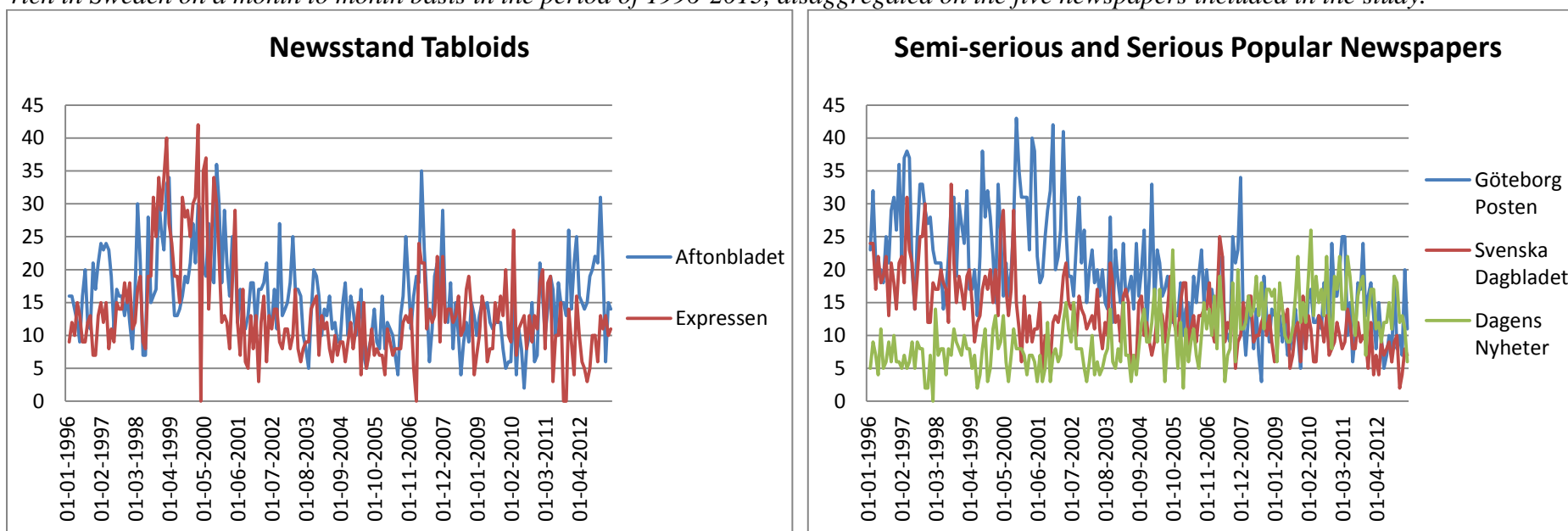
FIGURE 3-4. The final search algorithms utilised to identify the relevant gross-sample of newspaper articles dealing with the framing of the rich in Denmark on a month to month basis in the period of 1996-2013, disaggregated on the five newspapers included in the study.



Search algorithm of the red graph: ((rig rige) NOT (amerikansk fuglelivet kultur USA ånderne helse Rusland Marokko Osmanniske Sydafrika Hong Kong Storbritannien New York Washington illustreret sport Sydamerika rejsebeskrivelse båd blomsterliv Portugal teater forfatter kunstanm boganm London Kina film Tyrkiet kornmusiktradition Vesteuropa Byzantiske Rom bøger vesten comedy Iran bopladser pladeanm Tyskland kulturarv Guds Hollywood bebyggelser sogn Dante klima Irak vesterlædinge samfund land Frankrig udenlandske encyklopædi EM Oslo EU musik fodbold spil Nazi Østrig Verdens kost russisk hollandsk jul idræt baseball boksning Mexico Amerikanske bundesliga håndbold mesterliga naturfotograf Peking Paris Las Vegas engelske Afrika fauna britisk))

Source: www.infomedia.dk

FIGURE 5-6. *The final search algorithms utilised to identify the relevant gross-sample of newspaper articles dealing with the framing of the rich in Sweden on a month to month basis in the period of 1996-2013, disaggregated on the five newspapers included in the study.*



Search algorithm of the red graph((rik OR rika) ANDNOT American fågellivet kultur USA spirits hälsa Ryssland Marocko Ottoman Sydafrika Hong Kong Storbritannien New York Washington Illustrated Sydamerika reseberättelse blomsterliv Portugal teater författare bokanmälan London Kina Film Turkiet korntmusiktradition Västeuropa bysantinska Rom böcker western komedi Iran bosättningar plattareview Tyskland kulturarv Gud Hollywood socken Dante klimat Irak västerlänningar gemenskap land Frankrike främmande encyklopedi EM Oslo EU music fotboll Spel nazistiska Österrike världens kost Ryska Holländska juli sport baseboll boxning Mexiko US Bundesliga handboll handbollen mästerliga naturfotograf Peking Paris Las Vegas English afrikanska fauna UK

Source: <http://www.retriever-info.com/sv/>

Figure 3-6 portray really interesting and especially for Sweden surprising results. If we nevertheless again start with *Denmark*, the results are to a large extent in accordance with the thesis deduced above. Compared to Sweden we do not see very big differences between the Danish newspapers in any period investigated. Instead they seem to follow the overall trend quite well. Important differences maybe hide in the detail though. Whereas Berlingske and especially Politiken vary very little in their average coverage in the whole period, Ekstra Bladet and especially Jyllands Posten vary much more¹⁵.

What about the temporal lagged financial crisis effect identified above then? Actually Ekstra Bladet seems to react already in the months followed directly by the financial crisis, while BT follows in late 2009. Jyllands Posten and Berlingske also follow in 2009 and 2010 correspondingly, but only in a few selected months. The only semi-serious, social democratic newspaper Politiken apparently does not alter its average in the whole period investigated. If the thesis is right that the temporal lagged effect of the financial crisis is characterised by a temporal return to the historical political profiles on the issue of the various newspapers, it seem that only Ekstra Bladet holds the old sceptical social democratic banner high. Only the later analyses will reveal this though.

Sweden portrays very different results than expected. Most importantly we see that the end of the decline identified in figure 2 to be in 2006 corresponds to a virtual convergence of all five newspapers of around 10 articles on the subject each per month. Although we as expected see quite big differences between the different newspapers before 2006; after this time they are much smaller and actually comparable to the Danish differences. If we follow the individual newspapers, we also see very clear and interesting trends throughout the period. Whereas Göteborg Posten and especially Svenska Dagbladet continue to decline throughout the period, Dagens Nyheter continue to rise actually becoming the highest scoring semi-serious newspaper from 2009 and forward. Even if the tabloids generally follow each other quite well, Aftonbladet from 2011 and forward clearly seems to increase their coverage of the subject. Except from a few peak months directly following the financial crisis by Göteborg Posten and Aftonbladet the general effect of the financial crisis on the debate in Sweden seems to be almost non-existing. These patterns are therefore interesting and not as expected. A surprising interpretation could be the Swedish media's framing of the rich from 2006 and

¹⁵ It should be mentioned at this point that Infomedia distinguishes between the different local sections of Jyllands Posten from December 2004 and forward. In counting the total number of articles for this newspaper, we have added all these up. The high average value from 2005-2008 for this newspaper could therefore be seen as a bit inflated, at least all of them have not been available to all readers of the paper.

onwards more and more start to resemble the corresponding Danish (and therefore possibly non-framing pattern). Before 2006 all semi-serious newspapers except Dagens Nyheter and both tabloids hotly debated the issue. After 2010 only Aftonbladet holds the old sceptical social democratic banner high. Their new “capitalist positive” counterpart could be the liberalistic Dagens Nyheter.

The framing of the rich

The graphs thus far have left many interesting indications. In order to really investigate the development of the framing of the rich in Danish and Swedish nationwide newspapers, we need to investigate the actual content in the articles and not just count them. We have decided to narrow the focus even further on the articles actually mentioning “the rich” (de rige/de rika), because these articles explicitly focus on the rich as a group. Table 3 below portrays descriptives about the amount of Danish and Swedish articles in each of the two time-periods selected, with this rather narrow search algorithm:

TABLE 2. Number of references to “de rige” in the five Danish newspapers and to “de rika” in the five Swedish newspapers in the two periods selected.

		T1*	T2**	Total
Danish	-Frequency	147	124	271
	-Percentage of total number of references	54 %	46 %	100 %
	-Average number of articles per month	4.7	8.3	
Swedish	-Frequency	386	101	487
	-Percentage of total number of references	79 %	21 %	100 %
	-Average number of articles per month	12.5	6.7	

* T1=01.11.1998-31.05.2001; **T2=01.11.2008-31.01.2010.

Table 2 confirms the development seen above, but is maybe even clearer. While the average number of references to the rich per month nearly doubles in Danish newspapers from T1-T2, it nearly halves in corresponding Swedish. The Danish and Swedish levels are actually almost alike in T2, whereas the debate was much more intense in Sweden than in Denmark in T1. The question is still what these debates contain though, and what the reason is for the surprising decline in Sweden and maybe not so surprising rise in Denmark. In table 3 below the references above are coded into categories elaborated in figure 1: sceptical/negative, non-framing/neutral and positive:

TABLE 3. Number of references to “de rige” in the five Danish newspapers and to “de rika” in the five Swedish newspapers in the two periods selected, coded into three broad categories.

			T1*	T2**
Danish	<u>Sceptical/negative</u>	-Frequency	37	49
		-Average number of articles per month	1.2	3.3
		-Relative development***		+174%
	<u>Non-framing/neutral</u>	-Frequency	70	55
		-Average number of articles per month	2.3	3.7
		-Relative development***		+62%
	<u>Positive</u>	-Frequency	21	11
		-Average number of articles per month	0.7	0.7
		-Relative development***		+8%
Swedish	<u>Sceptical/negative</u>	-Frequency	108	31
		-Average number of articles per month	3.5	2.1
		-Relative development***		-41%
	<u>Non-framing/neutral</u>	-Frequency	155	35
		-Average number of articles per month	5.0	2.3
		-Relative development***		-53%
	<u>Positive</u>	-Frequency	32	19
		-Average number of articles per month	1.0	1.3
		-Relative development***		+23%

* T1=01.11.1998-31.5.2001; **T2=01.11.2008-31.01.2010; *** ((average number of articles per month in T2-average number of articles per month in T1) / (average number of articles per month in T1)).

First of all table 3 shows the remarkable rise in the average amount of articles in *Denmark* is reflected in a relative rise in all three categories. Clearly most remarkable is the rise among the sceptical/negative articles, contrasted by a virtual standstill among the positive articles. In obvious contrast, the likewise stark *Swedish* decline identified in table 2 translate into a general decline among the categories, only the amount of positive references holds the line and actually rise 23%. In T2 we actually see an almost equal share of references among the three categories in Sweden, while this not at all the case in either of the two periods in Denmark or in T1 in Sweden. Table 4 below will focus on the remarkable results of table 3: the development of sceptical/negative articles in Denmark and the development of positive articles in Sweden.

TABLE 4. Number of references to “de rige” in the five Danish newspapers and to “de rika” in the five Swedish newspapers in the two periods selected and focusing on the categories sceptical/negative and positive.

			T1*	T2**
Danish: Sceptical/negative	<u>Jyllands Posten</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	10 0.32	5 0.33
	<u>Politiken</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	7 0.23	4 0.26
	<u>Berlingske</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	4 0.13	4 0.26
	<u>Ekstra Bladet</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	8 0.26	25 1.67
	<u>BT</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	8 0.26	11 0.73
Swedish: Positive	<u>Dagens Nyheter</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	2 0.06	3 0.20
	<u>Aftonbladet</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	5 0.19	3 0.20
	<u>Expressen</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	7 0.23	11 0.73
	<u>Göteborg Posten</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	4 0.13	0 0.00
	<u>Svenska Dagbladet</u>	-Frequency -Average number of articles per month	14 0.45	2 0.13

* T1=01.11.1998-31.5.2001; **T2=01.11.2008-31.01.2010.

Table 4 show results that are not in good accordance, with what we suggested above. First, the rise in the sceptical/negative articles about the rich in the second period in *Denmark* is clearly driven by the two tabloid newspapers Ekstra Bladet and BT. Not surprisingly it is the social democratic tabloid (ex post in table 1) Ekstra Bladet whose development is most dramatic, but the supposedly economically liberal tabloid BT also triple their average number of sceptical/negative articles per month. The serious-popular newspapers on the other hand do not seem to have reacted on the financial crisis by being more critical to the rich at all. It is therefore clearly the journalistic style rather than the ex-post political profile of the newspapers that mattered for how the Danish newspapers responded to the financial crisis. It

could be plausible that these sceptical articles therefore are an expression of rather short term indignation among the working class readers of the two tabloids to the misbehaviour of individuals or groups of “the rich” before and into the financial crisis. This critique could be grounded in an almost silenced working class identity as in opposition to the rich, but the non-response of all the semi-serious newspapers on the other hands suggests this debate did not materialise into a critique of the rich on a more abstract and structural level. As hypothesised this is probably because resource distribution is not a crucial political or journalistic cleavage in the Danish media market anymore. It is therefore also not surprising the increased salience fades out after May 2012 (see figure 1).

Second, we hypothesised above that because the issue of class differences and the distribution of income is should be much more politicised and salient in the *Swedish* newspapers, than in the corresponding Danish, there should be clear proponents of both positive and sceptical views of the rich. It is therefore not surprising that the *Swedish* rise in positive articles is born by the two main economically liberal newspapers Dagens Nyheter and especially Expressen. Actually it is more surprising that only Svenska Dagbladet really took up that position in the first period. As it was seen in table 4 the positive references constituted really the minor part of the total number of articles about the rich in T1, suggesting a strong social democratic, critical hegemony. It is therefore even more surprising that we seem to see no “critical”-effect of the financial crisis. Rather the results in table 4-5 and figure 2, 5-6 rather support a gradual change from a critical hegemonic situation resembling the Danish.

The results above leave open the question of whether the Swedish newspapers simply have become Danish, debating anything but the rich in society, and if they are framed in articles, it is only on special occasions or mostly in a rather neutral manner? To investigate these propositions we will look qualitatively on the content of the two “critical cases” identified in table 5: the references coded as sceptical/negative in T2 in Denmark and the references coded as positive in Sweden in T2. In both cases we will compare them with the corresponding situation in T1.

Starting with the Danish sceptical/negative references in T2 a very clear pattern appears. Even if the references should be focused on the rich as a group, a vast majority have some kind of *collective* framing attached. Most dominantly more than half of all these articles describes how the rich “gets” or “has been given” something that others in society – lowly paid or everybody else – have not. What “has been given” is typically tax deductions or advantages in connection to reforms of taxes or the existing tax system. These are not the

only examples though, also exemptions from cut-downs, better access to (private) healthcare, dentistry and a worry-free pension is mentioned. Sometimes there are explicit references to, who the “giver” is: the politicians, the state, the government, named politicians or even “us”. Other times the references are not explicit, but implicitly the address is the same.

The second most frequently seen reference is equally collective and related to the first type. Here the call is that the rich in different ways “could” and “should” pay more back to society. This is first and foremost to pay higher taxes¹⁶ or it is by accepting user charges for them for certain public benefits. The quote below exemplifies a typical form of the collective reference we have sought to describe:

“I am so tired of listening to the rich bastards talking about lowering the top-tax. Just the other day Nasar Khader (politician who shifted political party and opinions red.) started bleating along the same lines. Why not lower the bottom-tax. That would benefit more people and the consumption in society would be increased considerably, because the ordinary Dane does not have too much to live by from day to day as it is now. An increased consumption would also create more jobs, and it is about time the lowest paid will be favoured. (Serwin, *Ekstra Bladet*, 2009) [Our translation].

The quote clearly illustrates that it is not the rich individually or as a group in itself that is the main framing and concern in the sceptical/negative articles of T2. Even when focusing just on references to “the rich”, it is not the rich as a group in itself that is important, it is their “contributions” vs. “given rights” compared to the rest of society and therefore ultimately the level and manner of inequality in society that is framed.

If we compare these results to the sceptical/negative Danish references we similarities, but also differences. In T1 a large part of the articles are also the rich “gets” or “has been given” type. The only real difference is the subject. In T1 the dominant subject is the housing market and mostly in Copenhagen in different ways described as being consciously benefitting the rich by the politicians. Also taxes, health- and home care are mentioned. But in contrast to T2 the second largest group of references actually describes the rich as a group in itself. The themes vary, but the general conclusion is the rich are portrayed as a group of immoral, selfish and snobbish people. The apparent sceptical/negative Danish rise from T1-T2 is therefore put into a new light: where substantial parts of the sceptical/negative framing of the rich in Danish newspapers in T1 actually distinguish and are critical to the rich as a group, in T2 clearly the main concern is not the rich in themselves, but questions about redistribution and inequality in resources and opportunities in society.

¹⁶ Also the infamous millionaire-tax which was eventually scrapped.

The *second case* we will look into is the positive Swedish references in T1 and T2. In both T1 and T2 we see a stark difference from the strong collective and inequality framing identified in the sceptical Danish articles. Almost every Swedish article in both periods refers explicitly to the rich as a group, often taking up a defensive stand against an existing critical discourse. Typical themes for this defence in both T1 and T2 is firstly arguing that most of “the rich” are giving a lot or too much back to society in the form of paying taxes and “we” should be grateful rather than critical. In T2 the criticisms are often aimed explicitly to the social democrats proposal for a new “millionaire tax”. It is secondly arguing that “the rich” targeted in debates or policies are often not exceptional, but rather ordinary responsible swedes – for example small house owners having paid of their debt. Lastly there is a group of references especially prominent in T1 arguing that it is benefitting everybody that the rich are buying many apartments in central Stockholm. These references argue that the housing problems there are not caused by too little intervention and regulation, but by too much making it not possible for the free market to work its wonders. The second most prominent type of positive Swedish references is “red carpet”-like descriptions and portraits of the life of “the rich and beautiful”. Describing their homes, where they spend their holidays etc., but also how they enjoy simple things and give to charity.

The Swedish explicate framing of the rich as a distinct group is in striking contrast to the Danish collective framing identified above. This tendency is not limited to the positive references though, not surprisingly a majority of the sceptical frame the rich in the same “group-wise” manner. Even among the references coded as non-framing/neutral, although not a majority, but a significant share also adhere to this framing:

“...Joakim Palme narrated how the class-cleavages in society endure, that people on average have gotten lower incomes during the 90’s – but only the rich earn more. The cleavages have increased especially in recent years...” (Wångersjö, *Expressen*, 2000) [Our translation].

A similar Danish reference typically refers to firstly “the differences between the rich and the poor” instead of “people vs. the rich”. Second, instead of labelling “the rich” a similar Danish reference would refer to for example “the highest income groups” or the “higher income deciles”.

Conclusion

Scandinavian egalitarianism is a well-known and supposedly well described concept. The Scandinavian welfare institutions are famous for promoting equality and the Scandinavian people and media in general support the endeavour. A closer look at this literature reveals the

Scandinavian egalitarianism to be mainly defined in terms of the poorer strata and their relations to the rest of society. This is only one side of the equality-coin though. The second side of the equality-coin concerns the richer strata and their relations to the rest of society. This paper has sought to improve our knowledge Scandinavian egalitarianism in relations to this more forgotten side of the equality-coin.

Although sceptical frames of the rich are part of the ideological legacy of all three Scandinavian countries and their media historically, the paper has found the remains of this legacy to differ quite a lot in Denmark and Sweden in modern times – although not quite in the way it was expected.

The *Swedish* results were in many ways surprising. In contrast to the hypothesis deduced on the basis of existing research, the quantitative results did not seem to portray a steadily salient and politicised debate over “the rich” in society. Instead from 2006 and forward the graphs looked mysteriously like the Danish graphs, both in aggregated terms and disaggregated on newspapers, and even the financial crisis did not seem to have much effect. Also when focussing just on the references to “the rich” in particular, the Swedish newspapers neared a Danish average level in T2, with a clear decline in the average level of both the sceptical/negative and the non-framing/neutral references from T1 to T2. The closer qualitative analysis of the positive Swedish references clearly revealed that this was not the whole story. A large part of the Swedish references including the ones coded as positive refer explicitly to the rich as a group, and in the case of the positive often take up a defensive stand against an implicit or explicit existing critical discourse.

In *Denmark* we did see a short but clear lagged effect of the financial crisis from June 2010-May 2012. The lag was probably caused by the fact that it took the public and the media some time to realise how severe the Danish crisis actually was also compared to most other western countries. Once this shocking truth became widespread knowledge, it would be strange not to see at least some effect on the amount of references to the rich in any context. Therefore it is actually not surprising the amount of references sceptical/negative to the rich was clearly higher in the second period sampled in the later analyses (T2), than in the first (T1). What is surprising is that even under these very special circumstances only the two “newsstand-tabloid” newspapers Ekstra Bladet and BT reacted by printing substantially more sceptical/negative references to the rich in T2 than in T1. Even more surprising was the qualitative nature of these sceptical/negative references. Almost without exception these did not really discuss the rich as such as a group or individually as in the Swedish case. Instead

the reference was relational, collective and actually focused on issues of inequality and redistribution at large, rather than the rich as a group or a social class in society.

These results lead to two rather surprising conclusions. First, even if Swedish newspapers individually and collectively on the surface seem to debate “the rich” less as time passes. And even if the debate is also becoming less non-positive as time passes, the issue of “the rich” can still be characterised as a salient and politicized issue in 2013. Because a large part of all the Swedish references refer explicitly to “the rich” as a group or individuals herein as distinct from the middle class and the rest of society, this framing equals a social construction of an “us-and them” cleavage in society in precisely the same way, as Rothstein (1998) proposed residualised/targeted benefits do in Anglo-Saxon countries or as Lundström (2011) or Gilens (1996) claim happens in relations to the media’s portrayal of poorer strata.

If we turn to the Danish case an almost opposite conclusion can secondly be made. Even if we clearly see a sceptical/negative reaction once the severity of the financial crisis is realised, “the rich” are not really a salient and politicized issue even in this extraordinary situation. This is in opposition to Sweden, because “the rich” or individual rich people are almost never constructed as being really distinct from the middle class and the rest of society. Instead Danes – even when your search algorithm concerns the rich – debate the overall distribution of resources and opportunity in society. Even the sceptical/negative Danish references are therefore really non-framing the rich.

The results mark a peculiar continuity from the differences between Denmark and Sweden Esping-Andersen (1980) identified more than 30 years ago. Also there really seems to be three- and not two sides of the equality-coin: the bottom-middle relationship, the top-middle relationship and in the Danish case the middle-middle-middle relationship.

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