"On This Issue, We More or Less Agree"

An analysis of how the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse on immigration – and the other parties' role in this

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Abstract

Through Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, I analyse how the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse on immigration. Also, I investigate what the other parties' role are is in this fixation, and how they can limit the Sweden Democrats' influence over the discourse. My material consists of parliamentary debates from 2010 to 2012. My main conclusions are that the Sweden Democrats destabilise the discourse through criticising former immigration policies. After this, they establish their own views by connecting employment, alienation, ethnicity and criminality to immigration. The other parties facilitate the fixation by agreeing with the Sweden Democrats' criticism on former policies, and also by speaking of unemployment and alienation in the same way as the Sweden Democrats. The other parties hamper the fixation by creating a strong barrier between themselves and the Sweden Democrats, making the party stand out as an antagonism in the discourse. More effective ways for the other parties to deal with the Sweden Democrats would be to avoid articulating the same elements as them, and to utilise more hegemonic interventions. Instead of repeating and criticising the Sweden Democrats' statements, the other parties should present their own beliefs on immigration and focus on the elements they wish to include in the discourse.

Key words: the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*), parliamentary debate (*riksdagsdebatt*), immigration, Laclau and Mouffe, discourse
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1   Introduction

In October 2009, the party leader of the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*), Jimmie Åkesson, wrote a controversial article in which he claimed that Muslims are the biggest foreign threat to Sweden since World War II (Åkesson, 2009). In the article, published in the newspaper Aftonbladet, Åkesson explains that the Swedish power elite do not see the dangers of Islam gaining ground and that Islamisation is threating traditional Swedish values. This caused a great debate among other political parties, most of them condemning the politics of the Sweden Democrats for their anti-immigration, xenophobic and populist sentiments (Aftonbladet, 2009). Some of the parliamentary parties responded to Åkesson's article by appointing immigration liaisons, whose main tasks were to 'take the debate with the Sweden Democrats' (Melén, 2009). At the same time, support for the Sweden Democrats was record high at 7 % in polls (Dagens Nyheter, 2009).

Before Åkesson's article, the Swedish political establishment mostly discussed immigration in terms of benefitting the labour market and enriching Swedish culture (Socialdemokraterna 1990:140, 158; Moderaterna 2007). After his article, focus seems to have changed to refuting the arguments of the Sweden Democrats. Common arguments included the costs of the 'mass immigration' being too high (Sverigedemokraterna, 2012a) and Islam being seen as a threat to Swedish culture and safety (Sverigedemokraterna, 2012b). The Sweden Democrats continued to gain national media coverage and the party began to emerge in national TV-debates, constantly frustrating the other parties with their anti-immigrant agenda (Chaaban, 2009). It seemed as though the Sweden Democrats had begun to set the agenda for what immigration issues should be discussed and the other parties seemed to follow their lead. During election night it became clear that the Sweden Democrats had gotten enough votes to overcome the 4 % threshold, and could therefore make their way into Parliament (Widfeldt 2011:1147), as the sixth largest party out of eight (Sveriges Riksdag, 2012).

This method of gaining influence over the immigration debate can be understood in terms of discourse theory. The aim of a discourse is to give each word a specific meaning. In this way, the discourse establishes a so called closure. Also, a discourse is not isolated; instead it struggles in the same terrain as other competing discourses. Here, the discourses try to fill the words with their own specific meanings. Because of this, there is an ongoing struggle of establishing a discourse. In a more concrete way, the political parties wish to establish their views of immigration as valid, and compete with each other over doing this. With the Sweden Democrats bringing new ideas of immigration into the political arena, the parliamentary discourse is now at risk of being changed and undermined by this.

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse how the Sweden Democrats struggle with other parties over fixating the parliamentary discourse on immigration. My aim is to examine how the Sweden Democrats do this, and what role the other parliamentary parties play in the process. My hypothesis is that the Sweden Democrats use certain mechanisms in the discourse in order to establish their views on immigration. I also believe that the other parties, to an extent, facilitate the Sweden Democrats' fixation of the discourse. My desire to examine the Sweden Democrats is developed out of a strong opposition of xenophobia, as well as a personal belief that all humans have equal value. My hope is that my results may be of value to anyone with an interest in how to oppose the Sweden Democrats, in particular, and xenophobic and right-wing radical parties, in general. My purpose can be concretised into the following research questions:

- *How do the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse on immigration?*
- *What are the other parliamentary parties' roles in this fixation?*

Besides answering these research questions, I also wish to examine in what ways the other parliamentary parties can balance the influence of the Sweden Democrats in the discourse. My answer to this will be based on my conclusions from the first two research question. This last question can be related to normative research, in which the researcher answers questions of how something should be (Badersten 2006:7). However, since I discuss and answer the last question based on my findings from the first two research questions, I will not answer it through a normative research. Instead, it is clearly based on my discourse analysis of how the Sweden Democrats fixate the nodal point, and what the other parties' roles are in this.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, a discourse is fixed when each sign has a specific and clear meaning. Also, all moments in the discourse are organised in a clear way around the nodal point (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:31ff; Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:7). This means that all words in the discourse are defined and have a clear meaning. Also, the words have a clear connection to one another. I will explain how a discourse is fixed more detailed in Chapter 3.1.

The research questions above guide my thesis. Also, I have linked my research to Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, and by discussing and problematizing it I participate in a scientific discussion. By taking account of and participating in scientific discussions, my thesis will contribute to existing literature on the subject. Because of this, my research questions meet the criteria for internal scientific relevance (Teorell & Svensson 2007:18f). Furthermore, the Swedish political landscape is affected by the power distribution in Parliament. Understanding how the Sweden Democrats gain influence over the discourse is therefore of importance for both political actors and Swedish citizens. Therefore, I

believe my research questions also meet the criteria for external scientific relevance (Teorell & Svensson 2007:18).

To answer the research questions, I use both discourse as a method and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (2008), which I apply to Swedish parliamentary debates. It is appropriate to use both discourse method and theory, since they are closely linked (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:10). My choices of research subject, theory and method will enable valuable insight in certain aspects of the Sweden Democrats' discourse.

1.2   Disposition

I have now given an introduction to my thesis and also presented my purpose and research question. In Chapter 2, I will describe my theoretical framework based on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. In Chapter 3, I will account for how discourse analysis is used as a method and how I demarcate the discourse and choose my material. In this chapter, I will also discuss methodological issues. In Chapter 4, I plan to analyse how the Sweden Democrats fixate the discourse, and explore what roles the other parties have in this. In the final chapter, I will present my conclusions and propose continued research on the subject. Next, I will present a context to the discourse.

1.3   Context

In discourse analysis, the discourse is always part of a context. This context is important for a deeper understanding of the discourse (Bergström & Boréus 2000:18f) Therefore, I will here present a brief background of the Sweden Democrats and account for the parties in the Swedish Parliament.

The party was founded in 1988, as a successor to the Sweden Party (*Sverigepartiet*). The Sweden Party, in turn, was a fusion of both the Future Party (*Framstegspartiet*) and the xenophobic organisation Preserve Sweden Swedish (*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*). Because of this, the Sweden Democrats were from their beginnings strongly connected to openly anti-democratic, Nazi, and fascist groups (Rydgren 2004:215). The party consisted initially of a small group of people with backgrounds in the Swedish extreme right movement. Several of the party's local representatives were active in both the Sweden Democrats and openly Nazi groups (Poohl, 2012).

In the early 1990s, the party gained their first seats in the municipal assemblies (Lodenius & Larsson 1994:46). In 1995, Mikael Jansson became the new party leader and during the second half of the 1990s, the party started to reform itself. Jansson was active in this work, and he made sure that the party broke with all obvious connections to the Nazi movement and ideology. In 1991,

the party prohibited uniform wearing and in 1996, Jansson openly denounced Nazism (Rydgren 2004:215). This was the beginning of a process of change, in which the party began to actively dissociate from its past. The present party leader, Jimmie Åkesson, has continued this work since he was elected in 2005. The party now expresses less controversial opinions and presents itself as a legitimate political alternative (Rydgren 2004:218). The Sweden Democrats has developed from being a non-parliamentary right-wing extremist party, into a populist radical right party. The party now combines ethno-nationalism, xenophobia, right-wing authoritarianism in socio-cultural issues, and a populist critique on the political system (Rydgren 2004:198).

At present, the Sweden Democrats describe themselves as socially conservative, with basic nationalistic views (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011). Their most important issues are having a responsible immigration policy, making vigorous efforts against criminality, and providing a safe and dignified retirement for elder (Sverigedemokraterna, 2012c). In Parliament, the party has the power to tip the scales between the Government and the opposition. The Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*), the Centre Party (*Centerpartiet*), the Liberal People's Party (*Folkpartiet*) and the Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*) together form the centre-right Alliance (*Alliansen*), now in Government. Besides the Sweden Democrats, the Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokraterna*), the Green Party (*Miljöpartiet*) and the Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*) are in opposition (Widfeldt 2011:1145).

2   Theory

In this part of the thesis, I will account for political theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory, which is the foundation of my essay. The theory, built on post-structuralism and Marxism (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:31f), is mainly described in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, written in 1985. The core of the theory is to explain how a struggle in the discourse in carried out. Since I examine how the Sweden Democrats struggle over fixating the discourse, and the other parties' roles in this, I find the theory relevant and useful.

Before presenting what is meant by the concept of 'discourse', I wish to comment on the books mainly consulted in this chapter. My first contact with Laclau and Mouffe's theory was in Winther Jørgensen and Phillips book on discourse as a theory and method (2000). Here, the authors interpret and discuss Laclau and Mouffe's theory and method. However, I recognised that their interpretation of both the theory and method did not enable all insight needed in order to understand the subject. Therefore, I have also consulted Laclau and Mouffe's own book in various sections of my thesis.

2.1   The Concept of 'Discourse'

The definition of discourse is widely discussed in the comprehensive literature on the subject (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:7ff). However, I will here only give a brief introduction to the definition. Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips give the following definition in their book *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*: "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" [My translation] (2000:7). In discourse analysis, the meaning of the text is in focus, and language is seen as a way to organise this meaning (Bergström & Boréus 2000:21). Language is therefore an important part of discourse analysis (Bergström & Boréus 2000:221). It is through language that we construct the social world, social relations and social identity. Hence, it is through changes in the discourse that the social world changes (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:16).

Michel Foucault developed both discourse theory and method, and is regarded as the most central figure in discourse analysis (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:19). One of his biggest contributions to discourse theory is his theory on power. According to Foucault, power is dispersed throughout social relations, where it enables certain forms of behaviour as well as restricting behaviour (Mills 2004:17). This is made possible because discourses are organised around practices

of exclusion. What is likely for us to say seems natural and is taken for granted, but this is a result of what has been excluded and that is unsayable (Mills 2004:11). The exclusion of certain social behaviour can be viewed as an effect of power (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:44f) where discourses fight over establishing their own meanings and behaviours. This ongoing struggle between discourses (Mills 2004:10) is what I will examine in my thesis. For example, this struggle can be seen in the parliamentary debates. More precisely, it is shown in the parties' disagreements over immigration politics.

2.2   Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory

The core assumption of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is that the social field is made up of many different processes and signs that create meaning (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:32). All objects and actions are meaningful and their meaning depends on the order of the discourse. The general aim of discourse theory is to examine the processes where we disagree over what the meaning of those signs should be. Also, discourse theory explores why some meanings are so conventional that they are taken as natural (ibid.). In Laclau and Mouffe's theory, those meanings are never completed or fulfilled, which allows for an ongoing struggle of defining society and identity (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:31). Because the meanings are never completed, a discourse is not a closed entity. The discourse is always being transformed through contact with other discourses and is always vulnerable to those forces that it excludes (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:4, 9). Therefore, the main concept in this theory is discursive struggle (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:13).

   More concrete, discourses are defined systems of social relations that differ between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. In line with Foucault, both Laclau and Mouffe claim, that because of this exclusion of certain possibilities, discourses always involve the exercising of power. In turn, this use of power leads to social consequences (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:31; Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:4).

2.2.1   The Field of Discursivity and the Order of Discourse

A discourse is established when each sign has a clear meaning in relation to all other signs. Through this, the discourse can exclude all other possible meanings the signs could have had, thereby creating a unifying system of meaning. All those possibilities that are excluded and everything that is outside the discourse is what Laclau and Mouffe call the field of discursivity (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:33f). The field of discursivity brings with it competing practices that can change or undermine the discourse. Since a discourse is constituted in relation to what is outside of it, it is also in danger of being destabilised by excluding factors. In other words, since a closure of a discourse is never completed, the

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discourse is always at risk of being undermined and changed by the field of discursivity (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:34f).

Winther Jørgensen and Phillips (2000:34) criticise this definition of the field of discursivity as being too broad. Is the field made up of all unstructured mass of all possible constructions, or is it itself structured by the giving competing discourse? They see this a separation of this as necessary and therefore propose an analytical separation of the two. According to Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, the field of discursivity is all possible and excluded constructions of meaning. Meanwhile, the order of discourse is a limited range of discourses struggling in the same terrain which they compete to fill with their own meaning (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:63f). Thus, order of discourse is also the term for an area of discursive conflict, in my case this area is the parliamentary debates. Here, the parties struggle over establishing their own views of immigration as valid. This discursive conflict is based in a struggle of power, which can be understood from the concepts of hegemony and antagonisms. Hegemony is the solution of a conflict while antagonism describes the core of a conflict (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:63f).

2.2.2 Hegemony and Antagonisms

As mentioned above, an initial idea in Laclau and Mouffe's theory is that a discourse can never be fully established (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:54). The uncompleted closure of a discourse enables the struggle of power to continue. This struggle makes room for both hegemonic practices and antagonisms (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:195; Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:15). In discourse theory, an antagonism can be understood as a conflict (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:180ff). Antagonisms can be found where discourses collide and where everything the discourse has excluded now threatens to undermine its certain fixity of meaning (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:54f). Laclau and Mouffe introduce two terms in order to describe how antagonisms threaten the discursive system (2008:187ff). Through the logic of equivalence a system of differences is divided by instituting a border between the two sides. This is done by creating equivalent identities in a discursive system. Contradicting this, the logic of difference dissolves existing chains of equivalence and incorporates these elements into an expanding order (Chains of equivalence and elements will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.1). Whereas the order of equivalence seeks to divide space by reducing meanings to two antagonistic poles, the logic of difference attempts to weaken a sharp antagonistic opposition (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:11f).

Antagonisms are solved through hegemonic interventions. The aim of a hegemonic intervention is to construct and stabilise the nodal point. Around this nodal point, signs are given a specific meaning and order, by articulating as many available elements as possible (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:15). After a successful intervention, one discourse dominates alone and the antagonisms are solved. To quote Winther Jørgensen and Phillips: "the hegemonic intervention

takes place in an antagonistic terrain and the discourse is the result – the new creation of meaning" [My translation] (2000:55).

Another way to understand hegemony is through the concepts of politics and the objective. In Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, politics is understood as a broad concept. The term does not refer to political parties, for example. It is understood as the behaviour of organising the social world in ways that exclude all other possible options (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:203ff, 207; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:43). A political discourse is thus a discourse which excludes certain opposing forces. An opposite of politics is the term objective. An objective discourse is so firmly established that is appears as natural, given and unchangeable. It seems as though an objective discourse does not derive its meaning from excluding something else, but this is not the case (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:43f). Between 'the political' and 'the objective', hegemony plays an important role. It is because of hegemony that the objective can become political again. Conflicts can disappear and give way to consensus (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:44). I will now turn to discourse as a method, and describe its organisation.

3 Method

In this chapter, I will explain discourse analysis as a method, and I will describe how the theory presented in the former chapter can be used. I will also account for the organisation of the discourse by using Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. After this, I will present the demarcation of my research, and finally, I will end this chapter with a methodological discussion.

3.1 Organisation of the Discourse

Laclau and Mouffe introduce four categories – articulation, moments, elements and nodal points – and a number of terms in order to account for the organisation of a discourse (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:157, 168). Since I use Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, I find it suitable to organise the discourse around the categories and terms they use to examine a discourse.

According to them, a discourse is a fixation of meaning within a certain domain. Articulation is the act of giving a word meaning by positioning it in relation to other signs. The sum of all articulation makes a discourse (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:157ff). All articulated signs in a discourse are moments, and their meanings are fixed through them differing from one another in certain ways. In contrast to this, elements are the signs that are not articulated within the discourse and therefore their meaning has not yet been set. Because of their floating character, elements occur in periods of uncertainty and dislocation (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:7).

Nodal points are the signifiers in a discourse. It is around them that the discourse is organised. The other signs acquire meaning from their relationship with the nodal point. In this way, nodal points account for the structure of a discourse and bind together a particular system of meaning (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:168; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:33f). An essential quality of the nodal point is its emptiness. Various political forces try to fill this emptiness with their ideas, in order to create hegemony (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:8f). Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000:7f) use the word 'Communism' to exemplify a nodal point. In communist ideology, a number of signifiers ('democracy', 'freedom') acquire new meanings by being articulated around the signifier 'Communism'. 'Communism' now occupies the position of the nodal point, transforming these elements ('democracy', 'freedom') into moments within the communist discourse. Democracy now acquires the meaning of 'real' democracy and not 'bourgeois' democracy. Freedom now acquires an economic connotation,

etc. In other words, the signs now acquire new meaning because of the new nodal point 'Communism'.

In Laclau and Mouffe's theory, the elements which are particularly at risk of being filled with different meanings are named floating signifiers (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:169). Floating signifiers are the signs which certain discourses try to fill with their own specific meanings. Nodal points are floating signifiers, but the term nodal point refers to the open point in a certain discourse while floating signifiers refers to the struggle within the discourse of filling important signs (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:35). Further, nodal points which refer to a totality are called myths. The myth is a misconception of society but at the same time it is necessary in order for our actions to be meaningful. Simply, a myth frames what is of importance to discuss (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:47). Discourse analysis examines what types of societal myths that are seen as objective truths. It also look at how the struggle of myths as floating signifiers is given different meanings in order for actors to make their view of society the one that is 'true' (ibid.). Also, through combining and relating the signifiers in chains of equivalence, they are given meaning (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:50). The signs are empty in themselves, and say almost nothing; only in the chains of equivalence are they connected to other signs and given meaning (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:57f).

To sum up this section, I will relate all terms to one another. A discourse aims to give signs a set meaning by turning the elements into moments, thereby creating a closure of the discourse. This happens through articulation. In the discourse, the signs are organised around privileged signs called nodal points, which give them meanings. Signs which are particularly open to different meanings are called floating signifiers. This can also be understood as the discursive struggle of filling important signs with meaning. Nodal points referring to a totality are called myths. The myth is false, but necessary for our actions to be meaningful. Through relating the signifiers to each other in chains of equivalence they are given meaning.

3.2   Demarcation of the Discourse and Material

Before I select my material on the parliamentary discourse of immigration, the discourse will already have been controlled by formal procedures. Regulations on the lengths of speeches, the orders of the replies, etc. will all have an impact of the structure of the discourse (Chilton 2004:92). When it comes to my own demarcation, I have attempted to identify specific shifts during short periods and also focused on a smaller number of important texts (Neumann 2003:79). I have chosen nine debates beginning with the election of the Sweden Democrats to Parliament in the autumn of 2010, until the spring of 2012. The debates are documented word by word in the Swedish Parliaments' protocols. The choice of these debates is based on an overview reading of all parliamentary debates focused on the issues of immigration and integration from the autumn of 2010

onwards. From these I have chosen the ones in which immigration is the main focus of the debates.

The consequence of my selection is that I do not analyse other debates between the parliamentary parties, for example debates in the media. This might seem problematic, since these parts of the struggle have been omitted from the analysis. However, I think it would be even more problematic to choose certain debates that would represent the struggle between the Sweden Democrats and the other parties. In this way, I would have defined the struggle myself, before examining it. With this said, I believe that the material I have chosen will give me a good idea of how the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse of immigration.

Finally, my aim is not to analyse how the parliamentary discourse on immigration has changed over time. Because of this, I will not account for in what way immigration has been spoken of in Parliament before the entrance of the Sweden Democrats in 2010. However, this would be an interesting aspect to explore, but because of limitations in time and space I will not investigate it in this thesis.

3.3   Methodological Discussion

In all literature on methodology, it is necessary that the researcher makes her own scientific and epistemological stances clear (Hollis 2008:8) in order for others to evaluate and replicate her research (Teorell & Svensson 2007:54). Discourse analysis is closely related to hermeneutic research, in which the researcher tries to understand the epistemological problem from the inside with an emphasis on subjectivity (Hollis 2008:16f). As a discourse analyst, one must accept a number of conditions. The main condition is that the world is made up of social constructions and that the truth is produced by discourses (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:28f). As a consequence of this, one problematic aspect of discourse analysis is that it is difficult for the analysis to be replicated (Teorell & Svensson 2007:54). Another aspect is that it lacks objectivity and thus can easily lead to relativism. Also, it is criticised for easily becoming arbitrary since it is based on subjective interpretations (Hollis 2008:203).

To confront this, I have presented my material thoroughly and then referred to it so that the reader can follow my logic, read and interpret the material herself. Also, the quotes I refer to from the debates have all been translated from Swedish into English. An aspect of this translation which may seem problematic is that precision and distinctions risk being lost in translation. To minimise the risk of this happening, I have closely translated the quotes, and also infused my own comments in brackets, in order to distinguish them from the actual quote. Also, I thoroughly refer to the debates and the number of the speeches where I collect the quotes from. In this way, the Swedish reader can interpret the speeches herself. By giving the reader insight into how I have worked, I aim for a strong intersubjectivity (Teorell & Svensson 2007:99ff).

4   Analysis

In this chapter, I will describe the patterns that have emerged in my analysis of the parliamentary discourse on immigration. In the first section, I will show how the struggle between the parties plays out according to Laclau and Mouffe's theory on the logic of equivalence and differentiation (2008). In the next section, I will go into detail of how the Sweden Democrats fixate the discourse and the other parties' role in this process. Finally, I will discuss my results.

I will present the results from the material based on the central concepts I have found in the discourse. The quotes I refer to are those I have found repeatedly in the material, or those which clearly represent how the parties are reasoning. To facilitate the translation of the debates from Swedish into English, I have listed all words and expressions which I have translated in the Appendix, which can be found in Chapter 7. Throughout the analysis, these words and expressions are marked with single quotation marks.

4.1   Logic of Equivalence: Creating Two Camps

In the material I have studied, there is a clear separation made between the Sweden Democrats and the other parliamentary parties. The Sweden Democrats' party is distinguished as different and condemned by the other parties. They create a sense of unity among themselves, since all other parties disagree with the agenda of the Sweden Democrats. On the other hand, the Sweden Democrats separate themselves by stating that they represent another type of immigration policy. By the parties constantly moving away from each other, two camps are created in the parliamentary discourse on immigration. These camps are the results of the usage of the logic of equivalence (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:11f).

To begin with, the parties often differentiate themselves from the Sweden Democrats in explicit ways. They express a clear worry for the Sweden Democrats being in Parliament (Debate 7, speech 122). A member of the Social Democrats says in one debate: "I welcome the varied views on human beings that we have, and which I think permeate seven out of eight parties in Parliament. It is only the Sweden Democrats who do not have the same view on human beings as we do." [My translation] (Debate 5, speech 132). In another example, a member of the Centre Party speaks of the evaluations made on Swedish immigration policies. She finishes her reasoning by saying "On this issue, we more or less agree in this chamber, except for one party which stands out, and that is of course the Sweden Democrats." [My translation] (Debate 5, speech 145).

The quotes above are interesting in two respects. First, the members use the logic of equivalence to differentiate themselves from the Sweden Democrats. As I mentioned in Chapter 2.2.2, the order of equivalence seeks to reduce meanings to two antagonistic poles, thereby creating a border between the two opposites (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:11f). Second, the members appeal to the other parties. They speak of the Sweden Democrats as being different from them, and thereby imply that all other parties are similar. The members also imply that if they unite, together they can create a unified front against the Sweden Democrats.

The differentiation is also done in more implicit ways. In the debates, the parties often mention the political arena in Europe, where right-wing populist parties have entered (Debate 6, speech 42). These parties represent anti-immigration and racist attitudes (Debate 1, speeches 2 & 62) and the Swedish parties who oppose to them often express concern for this (Debate 5, speech 131). In a parliamentary debate from April 2012, a member of the Moderate Party stated that:

> Sweden operates a generous refugee policy - a refugee policy that is more generous than many other countries. It is important to stick to this; especially in these days when dark xenophobic forces are gaining ground in our world. [My translation] (Debate 1, speech 33)

In the quote above, we see how a member, once again, encourages other parties to cooperate. Another example of this is from a different debate in April 2012. Here, a member of the Social Democrats speaks of the emergence of right-wing extremism in Europe. He says that it is important that those who stand up for openness and against racism dare to do so. He sees it as the task of democratic parties to stand against the 'growing right-wing extremism' (Debate 2, speech 142). The Sweden Democrats are not explicitly mentioned here, however, it is my interpretation that the speaker refers to the Sweden Democrats when mentioning the European arena.

Furthermore, the fact that the other parties view the Sweden Democrats as a threat to immigration politics is constantly mentioned. For example, a member of the Environmental Party expressed a concern for the Sweden Democrats' role in Parliament as having the power to influence decisions, and being an anti-immigrant party (Debate 1, speech 38). The parties also make it very clear that they do not support the Sweden Democrats. In several debates, the parties speak of how they have to limit the influence of the Sweden Democrats. They also speak of how they together have to stand up for certain values, such as 'humanity', 'charity' (Debate 5, speech 136), 'solidarity' and 'justice' (Debate 6, speech 41). The rhetoric the Sweden Democrats use is not seen as acceptable by the Centre Party (Debate 1, speech 48). By indicating what they dislike, the parties strengthen the sense that they must oppose the Sweden Democrats' policies, since they threaten the political beliefs represented by all other parties.

As presented above, the parties that oppose to the Sweden Democrats clearly show that their views of human beings are not in accordance with the Sweden Democrats' views. They also take a stance against the political ideas the Sweden

Democrats represent. By using the logic of equivalence they create two poles – the Sweden Democrats, and the other parties – each representing two different sets of values in the discourse on immigration (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:11f).

In comparison to the other parties, the Sweden Democrats use both the logic of equivalence and the logic of difference in their speeches. In a debate from November 2010, a member of the Sweden Democrats says:

> Sweden has [now] gotten an opposition in Parliament - a single party in opposition to the failed immigration and integration policies, which other parties have been, and [still] are, strongly agreeing on, but the consequences of this have [the other parties] not taken responsibilities for, been capable to handle or even have the courage to admit. [My translation] (Debate 4, speech 110).

By using the logic of equivalence, the Sweden Democrats clearly show that they are different from the other parties in Parliament. For example, the statement above implies that the Sweden Democrats, in comparison to the 'other parties', provide an immigration and integration policy which will not fail. However, even though the party mostly uses the logic of equivalence, they also use the logic of difference. In a debate from May 2011, a member of the Sweden Democrats said:

> To begin with, there are some claims in which the Social Democrats and the Sweden Democrats stand pretty close together when it comes to labour immigration. Just like the Social Democrats, the Sweden Democrats also want labour immigration in Sweden to be tested. [My translation] (Debate 6, speech 51).

In this way the Sweden Democrats show that they and the Social Democrats have some politics in common and that they do not stand as far from each other as the other parties wish to show. In other words, they soften the antagonistic poles by using the logic of difference (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:11f). As a contrast, in the speeches I examine, none of the other parties in Parliament ever say that they stand close to the Sweden Democrats.

These ways of the parties speaking of two opposed camps – The Sweden Democrats and the other parties – is the core of the discursive struggle (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:15). These results are fundamental for my continued analysis of how the Sweden Democrats fixate the discourse. I will describe how this is carried out in the following section.

4.2   The Struggle of Fixating the Discourse

In this section, I describe how political parties, particularity the Sweden Democrats, struggle over determining the discourse on immigration. I will also present what role the other parties' play in this fixation. I will start by explaining how the Sweden Democrats, theoretically, tie elements to the nodal point.

4.2.1 The Sweden Democrats: Articulating Elements and Creating a Chain of Equivalence

Immigration is a central issue in all the debates I have examined. Immigration is spoken of in relation to everything from unemployment to car fires, shootings and riots in Malmö (Debate 4, speech 168). Immigration is also the topic of many of the debates, which shows its fundamental role in the discourse. I therefore believe that immigration is the nodal point as well as a floating signifier, since it is difficult to say exactly what is meant by it (Laclau & Mouffe 2008:169; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:35). Also, from Laclau and Mouffe's theory, immigration can be understood as a myth, since it is necessary in order for the parliamentary debates to be meaningful (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:47).

Throughout the material, the Sweden Democrats repeatedly criticise the past immigration policies for being 'failed' (Debate 6, speech 43; Debate 1, speech 44; Debate 9, speech 75), 'irresponsible' (Debate 4, speech 160), 'wrecked', 'destructive' and 'dividing society (Debate 6, speech 43). In a debate from November 2010, a member of the party claims that: "The political integration acts can only be summarised as naïve, costly, inefficient, and on the whole, extremely unsuccessful." [My translation] (Debate 4, speech 110). In contrast to the former policies, the Sweden Democrats describe their own immigration policy as 'responsible' (Debate 5, speech 120). Further, the party states that the former immigration policies have resulted in 'mass-immigration' (Debate 4, speech 110; Debate 1, speech 27). Sometimes they even mention 'extreme mass-immigration' (Debate 4, speech 91). The Sweden Democrats also say that the other parties in Parliament operate 'multicultural integration policies' (Debate 4, speech 180). By criticising the former politics, the Sweden Democrats articulates new elements into the existing discourse. As I mentioned in Chapter 3.1, elements are the signs that are not articulated within the discourse and therefore their meaning has not yet been set (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:7).

In some cases, the other parties agree with the Sweden Democrats' critique. For example, a member of the Social Democrats admits that his party's previous policies have brought with them 'big problems' in terms of integration (Debate 2, speech 144). In a debate from November 2010, a member of the Centre Party spoke of failure in a more direct way:

> There is actually a *failure* in Sweden. So far, we have *not succeeded* with our integration policies, because we have wanted to take care of people, and we have not seen these people as strong individuals who can take care of themselves, who can create a decent living for themselves and who do not need to be a burden to society. It is our policies and our system which we have *failed* with. There is nothing wrong with the people. Perhaps it is time for you to start realising that it is us who have *failed* with the policies. [My translation and my italics] (Debate 4, speech 99).

Also, a member of the Christian Democrats states: "The Sweden Democrats say that we have carried out an *unsuccessful* integration policy in the country. I can agree with this. It has *not been successful*." [My translation and my italics]

(Debate 4, speech 179). The words in italics show how the other parties use the same words as the Sweden Democrats. The parties criticise their own policies the same way the Sweden Democrats do, and sometimes even with the same words. In this way, they rearticulate the elements (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:33).

Let us now look at what elements the Sweden Democrats infuse in their own discourse. The meanings of these elements are more or less stable, but they are all tied to immigration. The elements I have found the most important are unemployment, alienation, ethnicity and criminality. The figure below clarifies the connection between these elements and the nodal point immigration. Immigration is placed in the bubble, because it can be seen as a floating signifier with many different meanings.
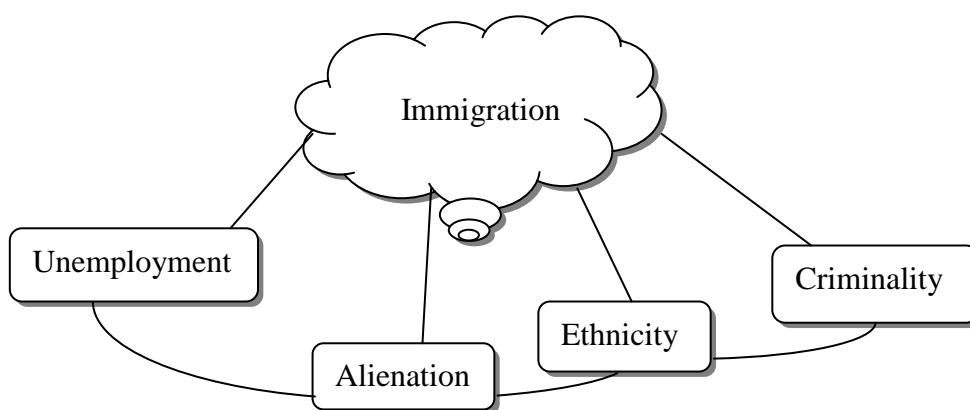
Source: My construction[1]

The lines drawn between the elements represent their connection in a chain of equivalence. In this chain, the elements are given meaning by relating to one another, and to the nodal point (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:50). To see how this chain is formed, I will explain how the Sweden Democrats link these elements to each other and to immigration, beginning with unemployment.

Unemployment is spoken of by the Sweden Democrats in almost every debate. According to the party, mass-immigration has brought with it 'a comprehensive unemployment' (Debate 7, speech 79). The connection between mass-immigration and unemployment is mentioned throughout the material (see for example debate 5, speech 120). Unemployment is the element which is most often tied to immigration, and at the same time, other elements are often tied to unemployment.

The Sweden Democrats often link unemployment with 'alienation' (see for example debate 9, speech 82). By this, the party argues that a large number of those who come to Sweden end up being alienated and unemployed (Debate 5, speech 120). In one speech, a member of the party says: "[I]mmigration leads to alienation and unemployment" [My translation] (Debate 5, speech 127).

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[1] Inspired by Ylva Thor's bachelor thesis, where she examines the construction of identities in the Liberal People's Party's discourse on alienation (2011).

In another example, a member of the party criticises the former policies for increasing alienation and creating unemployment (Debate 4, speech 91). It seems that unemployment and alienation are closely related. In a debate from November 2010, a member of the Sweden Democrats says that:

> It is quite obvious that if we have high unemployment, which we have, and on top of that a large number of people with poor language skills and low educational levels arrive on top of this, for which there are no jobs in the labour market, these people will be alienated. Consequently, unemployment will increase. [My translation] (Debate 4, speech 152).

The party member means that as long as unemployment leads to alienation, alienation will lead to unemployment. However, the connection between the two elements is not the same in all speeches. In a debate from December 2010, another member of the Sweden Democrats says:

> There are official statistics, where one can see and measure the consequences of migration [!] to Sweden. Some groups end being alienated. This can involve very high unemployment, high criminality or a general tendency to want to segregate oneself. [My translation] (Debate 7, speech 95)

Here, it is alienation which can cause unemployment. As mentioned, it is a bit unclear how the connection between the two elements is created. Also, in the quote above, criminality is tied to unemployment and alienation. Throughout the material, criminality is most often mentioned in relation to these two elements. In the speech above, the member does not define what type of crime he refers to. However, in the following quote, the element is slightly more defined. Another member of the Sweden Democrats speaks of immigration policies in the following way:

> We see example after example throughout this country, in suburb after suburb, in municipality after municipality, how you [the other parties] have totally failed with the policy you represent. You are totally perplexed. It is throwing stones, gang fights, shootings and gang rapes. All this is a consequence of the policy that you represent. That is why I stand here today, in opposition to this totally insane policy. [My translation] (Debate 4, speech 93).

In the speech, criminality is defined as throwing stones, gang fights, shooting and gang rapes. The aspect of a criminal being in a gang seems important. So far, the chain of equivalence can be understood as meaning that the same group of people who are unemployed and alienated, are also criminals. Who are these people, and where do they live? In the following quote, a member of the Sweden Democrats makes it clearer:

> Many of them, too many, have immediately fallen into unemployment and
> alienation and have settled in segregated areas and formed ethnic enclaves within the
> borders of our country, which in turn have increased the risk of gangs, criminality
> and other ways of living, which is destructive for the society. [My translation]
> (Debate 1, speech 27).

Both ethnic enclaves and segregated areas seem to be where these people gather. Let me first draw your attention to the segregated areas mentioned in the speech. Throughout the material, segregated areas are often mentioned in connection to alienation. Malmö is often referred to as a segregated area by the Sweden Democrats (Debate 8, speech 59). As a result of immigration to Malmö, there is organised crime (Debate 3, speech 145), car fires, shootings and riots in the city (Debate 4, speech 168). Speaking of segregation in general, the Sweden Democrats explain that the large amount of immigrants who come to Sweden, and settle in already segregated areas, increase the segregation (Debate 6, speech 45).

By mentioning ethnic enclaves, the member of the party ties ethnicity to unemployment, alienation and criminality. But the type of ethnicity referred to is not made clear. In the following quote, another member of the Sweden Democrats clarifies what types of ethnicity the party implies:

> Studies in Sweden show that immigration costs huge amounts of money. I am not
> talking about Norwegians who come here. I am not talking about Finns who come
> here. I am talking about immigrants from the Middle East and Africa first and
> foremost. It costs a huge amount of money. [My translation] (Debate 4, speech
> 98).

This quote can be understood in relation to what I discussed in Chapter 4.2. Here, I explained how the parties opposing the Sweden Democrats differentiate themselves by arguing that they have another view of human beings than the Sweden Democrats. In the quote above, the Sweden Democrats make a clear difference between people, based of national origin.

The Sweden Democrats constantly refer to people from these parts of the world. In another speech, a member of the party explains that the immigrants from Muslim countries in Africa and the Middle East are the ones who have been 'significantly harder to integrate' (Debate 8, speech 59). Also, the party states that immigrants from outside Europe, especially from African and Arab countries, have led to increased criminality (Debate 7, speech 79). In this way, the dimension of ethnicity is connected to criminality. The chain of equivalence is now completed and unemployment, alienation, criminality and ethnicity all connect to each other.

Above, I have presented how the Sweden Democrats disrupts the discourse by articulating new elements, and also how the party creates a chain of equivalence. I will now turn to describing the other parties' roles in this fixation.

4.2.2 The Role of the Other Parties: Rearticulating Elements

Throughout the material, the other parties often speak of unemployment. In a debate from March 2012, a member of the Moderate Party said that immigrants have come to Sweden and have been affected by the high unemployment rate in the country (Debate 2, speech 147). The same member speaks of unemployment in the following way:

> People born abroad do not join the workforce to the same extent as those born in the country do. Their social situation is more difficult. If we look at Swedish statistics, we can say with ease that this is true. It is true that immigrants, certainly to some extent, have been over-represented in alienation. If we look at long-term unemployment, we see that soon the half of all those [long-term unemployed] in Sweden will have been born abroad. [My translation] (Debate 2, speech 147).

The member explains that the unemployment rate is higher among people who are born abroad, and that immigrants who come to Sweden often become unemployed. These statements are coherent with the ones made of members of the Sweden Democrats, who argues that immigrants to a larger extent than Swedes are unemployed.

Regarding alienation, the Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, also a member of the Moderate Party, says that the Government is constantly working to limit alienation, especially among people who are born abroad (Debate 5, speech 161). The Government often stresses that it is actively working to decrease alienation in Sweden (Debate 7, speech 115; Debate 4, speech 84). These actions it has taken have and will continue to decrease alienation (Debate 4, speech 90). The Minister for Migration also says that the Government is ready to admit the challenges that Sweden faces when addressing the alienation among the people who are born abroad (Debate 8, speech 67). Further, the Minister says the following about areas where alienation is comprehensive: "The question of alienated areas is a question I myself am familiar with, since I come from Malmö." [My translation] (Debate 5, speech 163). In this way, the Minister confirms that there are problems with alienation, and that the Government actively works to get rid of the problems. As I mentioned in Chapter 4.2.1, the Sweden Democrats often refers to Malmö as a segregated area with various types of criminal gangs. However, by the other parties rearticulating unemployment and alienation, the words are given meanings, and are fused in the discourse (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:33).

In the material I have studied, the other parties never connect criminality to immigration. Nor do they connect an ethnic dimension to immigration. Rather, they make it very clear that discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual preference and age should be condemned. Also, a diversity of experiences and knowledge will make Sweden a richer country (Debate 5, speech 119). A member of the Moderate Party has said that when unemployment and alienation are connected to ethnicity, there is a real problem (Debate 2, speech 147). At the same time, a member of the Centre Party states that, of course there are problems

in many places in Sweden, but the problems do not have anything to do with the fact that the people living there have a certain ethnicity or religion (Debate 6, speech 76). The other parties are very careful not to connect ethnicity with criminality. By not mentioning ethnicity and criminality, the meanings of those elements are not set, and they are not fused in the discourse (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:7).

4.3   Discussion

I have now analysed and accounted for the ways that the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse on immigration. Also, I have discussed the role of the other parties in this fixation. In Chapter 4.1, I used Laclau and Mouffe's concepts of equivalence and differentiation to explain how a border is created between the Sweden Democrats and the other parliamentary parties. In Chapter 4.2, I described how the Sweden Democrats destabilise the discourse by tying elements such as 'failed' and 'wrecked' to it. Also, by tying together the elements of unemployment, alienation, ethnicity and criminality, the party creates a chain of equivalence. Regarding the other parties role, they articulate the elements of unemployment and alienation in a similar way to the Sweden Democrats, and thereby strengthen the chain of equivalence. However, they do not articulate the elements of ethnicity or criminality at all.

To begin with, the struggle between the parties of fixating the discourse is the core of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:13). Therefore, the wish of the Sweden Democrats to establish their own discourse is central for the understanding of my analysis. Also, the entrance of the Sweden Democrats into Parliament is inevitable; as a discourse is threatened by what it excludes (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:4, 9). With the Sweden Democrats entering Parliament, they become part of the order of discourse. Here, a number of parties struggle in the same terrain, which they compete to fill with their own meaning of immigration. At the same time, the parliamentary debates are an area of discursive conflict, in which antagonisms exist (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:63f).

The Sweden Democrats manages to fixate the discourse in several ways. When members of the party criticise former immigration policies, they tie elements such as 'failed' and 'wrecked' to the discourse. By doing this, they destabilise the discourse, since these elements create uncertainty in a discourse (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:7). After disrupting the discourse, the Sweden Democrats introduce their own views on immigration. In the debates, members of the party create a chain of equivalence, in which immigration is tied to the elements of unemployment, alienation, ethnicity and criminality. In this chain, the elements are given meaning by being connected to one another (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:50, 57).

Also, the chain of equivalence is given meaning in relation to the elements tied to the former immigration policies. Unemployment, alienation and criminal

behaviour among certain ethnic groups are seen as a consequence of the 'failed' and 'wrecked' immigration policies, set up by other parties in Parliament. In other words, by criticising, and thereby disrupting, the meaning of the discourse, the Sweden Democrats make it easier to incorporate their own views of immigration in the discourse. In this way, all of the logic used by the party connects to one another. As the Sweden Democrats tie elements to the other parties' previous immigration policies, they also tie elements to their own views of immigration.

Many of the parties opposing the Sweden Democrats agree with the party's criticism of previous immigration policies. Also, members of the parties speak of unemployment and alienation in the same way as the Sweden Democrats. By doing this, they rearticulate elements that have already been articulated by the Sweden Democrats. When an element is articulated many times, it becomes a moment, and its meaning is clear (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:33; Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:7). Therefore, unemployment and alienation are moments, since they have clear meanings in the discourse. However, the meanings of ethnicity and criminality are not fixed, and therefore I see them as elements. By rearticulating elements into moments, the other parties facilitate the Sweden Democrats' fixation of the discourse.

The transformation of unemployment and alienation into moments, also affects the rest of the chain of equivalence. This since all elements or moments in a chain acquires a specific meaning in relation to the other signs in the chain (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:57f). Because of this, there is a possibility that the behaviour of the other parties will make it easier for the Sweden Democrats to transform ethnicity and criminality into moments, even though this is not the intention of the other parties.

Also, as I explained above, the Sweden Democrats connect 'failed' immigration policies to the chain of equivalence. In this way, all of the elements infused by the Sweden Democrats connect to each other. Because of this, when the other parties help to transform unemployment and alienation into moments, they also strengthen the logic used by the Sweden Democrats.

As I have demonstrated, the parties who oppose the Sweden Democrats use the logic of equivalence to create a frontier between themselves and the Sweden Democrats. Using the logic of equivalence has shown that there are antagonisms in the discourse (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:11f). This can also be understood as a hegemonic intervention, in which the other parties aim to dissolve the antagonism, in this case, the Sweden Democrats. According to Laclau and Mouffe, a hegemonic intervention is seen as successful when the antagonisms are solved, and one discourse dominates alone (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:43f). If the intervention is successful, the new dominating discourse is seen as objective (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:44). Also, a discourse which is political includes antagonisms (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:43f). Because of this, the hegemonic interventions made by the parties opposing the Sweden Democrats, cannot be seen as successful. Thus the parliamentary discourse on immigration is political.

5   Conclusions

In this final chapter, I will present my conclusions of the previous analysis. In the initial chapter, I presented my research questions which I wish to answer in my analysis. These are:

- *How do the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse on immigration?*
- *What are the other parliamentary parties' roles in this fixation?*

Based on my conclusions of these two research questions, I will also explain in what ways the other parliamentary parties can balance the influence of the Sweden Democrats in the discourse.

In the next section, I will answer these questions through my conclusions and present a final reflection on the research. Finally, based on the work of this thesis, I will account for further research on the subject which I consider relevant.

5.1   Conclusions and a Final Reflection

In the analysis, I have showed that the Sweden Democrats fixate the parliamentary discourse in various ways. By criticising the past immigration politics, they disrupt the discourse and challenge it by introducing their own views of immigration. They establish their beliefs by creating a chain of equivalence, in which I found the most important elements to be employment, alienation, ethnicity and criminality. In turn, this chain is connected to the elements they tie themselves to former immigration policies. The 'failed' and 'wrecked' policies have thus led to immigrants of certain ethnic groups being unemployed, alienated and engaged in criminal behaviour.

Regarding the other parties' roles, they both facilitate and compound the Sweden Democrats' fixation of the discourse. Throughout the analysis, I have explained in what ways the other parties in parliament more or less agree with the Sweden Democrats in the issues of immigration. To begin with, the parties rearticulate elements used by the Sweden Democrats. This is done when they agree with the Sweden Democrats' criticism of former immigration policies, and when they speak of unemployment and alienation in the same way as the Sweden Democrats. In this way, the opposing parties help the Sweden Democrats articulate the elements into moments. The conclusion is that the other parties' assist in making unemployment and alienation into moments. Since these moments are fused into a chain, there is the possibility that ethnicity and

criminality will also become moments. Because the Sweden Democrats tie elements such as 'failed' to the chain of equivalence, the other parties might also strengthen the logic of the Sweden Democrats.

The parties hamper the Sweden Democrats fixation of the discourse by using the logic of equivalence. By doing this, the parties who oppose the Sweden Democrats create a strong barrier between themselves and the Sweden Democrats. I see this as a hegemonic intervention, which aim is to dissolve the antagonism, the Sweden Democrats.

My conclusions from the first two research questions enables me to answer the third question, namely how the other parties can limit the influence of the Sweden Democrats. By using the logic of equivalence, the parties create a united front against the Sweden Democrats. Through doing this, the party stands out as an antagonism in the discourse. Also, the Sweden Democrats articulate new elements into the discourse which the other parties rearticulate. Instead of doing so, the parties should focus on what elements they wish to connect within the discourse. In other words, instead of repeating and criticising the Sweden Democrats' statements, the parties should present their own beliefs on immigration.

The hegemonic interventions, and the usage of the logics of equivalence and difference, show that there are antagonisms in the discourse. Because of this, I cannot draw the conclusion that the Sweden Democrats manage to fixate the discourse entirely. They do, however, disrupt the meaning of the discourse and introduce their own, competing discourse.

5.2   Continued Research

In the process of writing this thesis, I have found a number of suggestions for further research within the field. To begin with, it would be interesting to analyse how each party interacts with the Sweden Democrats and enables a fixation of the discourse. At a broader level, it would be interesting to examine what enables right-wing populist parties to gain influence over a political scene. Is it the existence of right-wing parties in general that makes it easier for populist parties to emerge? Or is it the absence of strong left parties, who have traditionally been the main opponents of xenophobia? Also, to examine how the discourse influences other areas, such as the media, and how it affects actual political decisions is necessary for a further understanding of the social consequences created by the discourse.

The Sweden Democrats have now been in Parliament for two years' time, and they have already managed to fixate the discourse in various ways. Time will tell if, and how, this fixation will continue to unfold. Meanwhile, I hope that, on the issues of immigration, the other parliamentary parties will agree less and less with the Sweden Democrats.

6 References

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7   Appendix: Word List

A comprehensive unemployment – En omfattande arbetslöshet
    (Debate 7, speech 79)

Alienation – Utanförskap
    (Debate 9, speech 82)

Big problems – Stora problem
    (Debate 2, speech 144)

Charity – Medmänsklighet
    (Debate 5, speech 136)

Destructive – Destruktiv
    (Debate 6, speech 43)

Dividing society – Samhällssplittrande
    (Debate 6, speech 43)

Extreme mass-immigration – Extrem massinvandring
    (Debate 4, speech 91)

Failed – Misslyckad
    (Debate 6, speech 43; Debate 1, speech 44)

Growing right-wing extremism – Den växande högerextremismen
    (Debate 2, speech 142)

Humanity – Humanitet
    (Debate 5, speech 136)

Irresponsible – Oansvariga
    (Debate 4, speech 160)

Justice – Rättvisa
    (Debate 6, speech 41)

Mass-immigration – Massinvandring
    (Debate 4, speech 110; Debate 1, speech 27)

Multicultural integration politics – Mångkulturella integrationspolitik
    (Debate 4, speech 180)

On this issue, we more or less agree – Där är vi tämligen överens
       (Debate 5, speech 145)

Other parties – Övriga partier
       (Debate 4, speech 110)

Responsible – Ansvarsfull
       (Debate 5, speech 120)

Significantly harder to integrate – Betydligt svårare att integrera
       (Debate 8, speech 59)

Solidarity – Solidaritet
       (Debate 6, speech 41)

Wrecked – Havererad
       (Debate 6, speech 43)