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Supervisor: Anders Sannerstedt

Framing the Radical Right-Wing Politics

A Comparative Study of the Sweden Democrats and the
Norwegian Progress Party

Charlotta Spång

Abstract

Over the last years, Europe has witnessed the rise of a new political party family, the RRP (Radical Right Populism). These parties signify a serious challenge to contemporary politics of Europe and raise questions concerning the cause of their increasing electoral success within European politics. By taking departure from previous literature, explaining the emergence of the RRP from a social-movement perspective with focus on collective action frames, this essay presents a comparative analysis of the successful Progress Party in Norway and the so far marginalized Sweden Democrats. To give a more comprehensive explanation of the differences in electoral support, the focus is placed on the two parties abilities to modify and adapt collective action frames in a way that make them appeal to the voters within their specific culture. Conclusion drawn from the analysis states that while the Sweden Democrats practice a collective action frame based on a traditional ethno-national approach, the Progress Party has managed to develop a liberal ethnocratic collective action frame that, by holding tolerance and egalitarian values salient, justifies their politics of exclusion.

Key words: Radical Right Populism, Collective Action Frames, Electoral Success, Sweden Democrats, Norwegian Progress Party.

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 | Related Research | 1 |
| 1.2 | Research Question and Purpose | 2 |
| 1.3 | Disposition | 3 |
| 2 | Theoretical Framework..... | 4 |
| 2.1 | Collective Action Frames | 4 |
| 2.1.1 | Framing and its Context..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | Political Opportunity Structures..... | 6 |
| 3 | Method and Material..... | 7 |
| 4 | The New RRP-party Family..... | 9 |
| 4.1 | Parties of Exclusion..... | 9 |
| 4.2 | Opponents of Multiculturalism | 10 |
| 4.3 | Anti-Establishment Populism | 11 |
| 4.4 | RRP-parties in Norway and Sweden | 11 |
| 4.4.1 | The Politics of the Progress Party..... | 11 |
| 4.4.2 | The Politics of the Sweden Democrats | 12 |
| 5 | Opportunities for the RRP | 14 |
| 5.1 | Political Opportunity Structures..... | 14 |
| 5.2 | Different Frames in Different Settings | 16 |
| 5.2.1 | Towards an Ethno-Nationalistic Frame | 16 |
| 5.2.2 | The Alternative Ethnocratic Frame | 16 |
| 6 | Framing the Politics of the RRP..... | 18 |
| 6.1 | Diagnostic Frames | 18 |
| 6.1.1 | Multiculturalism, National Identity and Values | 18 |
| 6.1.2 | Blaming the Establishment | 19 |
| 6.2 | Prognostic Frames | 20 |
| 6.2.1 | Assimilation or Integration..... | 20 |
| 6.2.2 | Against Discrimination | 20 |
| 6.3 | Motivational Frames..... | 21 |
| 6.3.1 | ‘Them’ as the Cause to all Problems | 21 |
| 6.4 | Collective Action Frames, a Comparison..... | 22 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 7 | Frame Resonance | 24 |
| 7.1 | National Identity, Citizenship, and the Creation of Political Culture | 24 |
| 7.1.1 | Political Culture and the Collective Action Frames | 25 |
| 7.2 | Political Party Adjustment..... | 25 |
| 8 | Conclusion | 27 |
| 8.1 | Final Reflections | 28 |
| 9 | References | 29 |

1 Introduction

There has been a general trend to locate nationalism on the periphery, where nationalism has become the property of ‘others’, not of ‘us’. Recently though, we have witnessed a revival of strong nationalist forces in Western Europe with the rise of the new party family, the RRP (Radical Right Populism) (Özkirimli 2005, p. 4). Even within the Nordic countries, where modern right-wing extremist parties never been rooted in the historical tradition, we are today witnessing a growing influence of the RRP (Karvonen 1990, p. 34; Kestilä 2006, p. 171).

It might therefore be a good reason to focus attention on the Nordic society and the nationalism that takes its forms within the new RRP-movements. The RRP-parties in contemporary Western Europe have tactically begun to frame their politics in a way that enable them to stress the ‘right to identity’ and respect for cultural distinctiveness, as a new way to meet the charge of racism and extremism. The majority of the RRP-parties in Europe has today left the biological type of racism for a cultural racism, which has permitted the RRP to mobilize xenophobic and racist public opinions without being stigmatised as extremist racists (Betz & Johnson 2004, p. 316; Rydgren 2005a, p. 428). But, not only do the RRP-parties stress the right to identity and cultural distinctiveness. By aggressively standing up for Western culture and values, some RRP-parties of today have successfully managed to frame their politics of exclusion as uncompromising defender of the liberal tradition (Betz & Johnson 2004, p. 319).

The aim with this essay will be to stress the importance of framing regarding the RRP-parties ability to gain electoral success. By focusing on the Norwegian Progress Party (Norska Fremskrittspartiet) and the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna), I wish to present a comparative study that reveals differences in their framing abilities that might clarify differences in electoral success.

1.1 Related Research

Before I begin writing about my own findings I will present a brief overview of related literature regarding the electoral success of the RRP-parties in contemporary Western Europe. After having critically discussed previous research, observing contributions as well as scarcities, I will be able to identify the place of my own study in contemporary research.

There has been a notable disagreement among different scholars in the causes of the rise of the new RRP-parties. In search for an explanation for the differences in electoral support for the party family, studies have basically applied two types of complementary perspectives, the demand side arguments versus the supply side

(Eatwell 2003, pp. 48ff). Briefly, the demand side approach has focused on aspects such as the politicisation of single-issues, personal and structural responses to socio-economic changes, as well as the emergence of post-material values (Eatwell 2003, pp. 48ff; Karapın 1998, pp. 214f). On the supply side, attention has been drawn to national traditions within the country, the party platform and its party leaders, as well as the influence of the media (Eatwell 2003 pp. 48ff; Schain et al 2002, p. 12). In search for explanations such as these, researchers have usually turned to single case studies. The different explanations have indeed been of importance for the single cases, but suffered a lack of comparative perspective and left them incomplete (Rydgren 2002, p. 27).

There have been a few comparative studies of the RRP-parties though, seeking to present a more universal theory. Betz (1994) and Kitschelt (1995) are seen by many scholars as the most influential within the field (Karapın 1998, p. 216; Rydgren & van Holsteyn 2005, p. 42). Although their theories differ in detail, they provide similar and complementary theories for the rise of RRP-parties. Betz and Kitschelt are taking their departure from a combined social strain and political opportunity perspective, arguing that the causes behind the rise of RRP-parties are to be found in the established and challenging political parties responses to social and economic changes that came with the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies (Betz 1994, p. 26f; Kitschelt 1995, p. 273).

Hence, as Rydgren stresses, such explanations with focus on social strain and political opportunity structures, have all in common that they render the emergence of successful RRP-parties possible, only, if embryonic parties manage to present political programs and use rhetoric that might attract support (Rydgren 2005a, p. 425). Rydgren (2005) therefore turns to the study of social movements and explains the rise of the RRP-parties by looking at the emergence of a new master frame within the RRP-party family. The most successful RRP-parties have replaced the old, biologically based notions of racism, with a new, based on the idea of ethno-pluralism (Rydgren 2005a, p. 427). Rydgren stresses that the rise of RRP-parties is the result of a cross-national diffusion of this new potent master frame (Rydgren 2005a, p. 413).

I find this explanation valuable as it provides an alternative explanation for why the RRP-parties have gained electoral success in some countries and less in others, which concerns the question I intend to study. However, although this new master frame explanation showed to be highly persuasive, clarifying the electoral success of RRP-parties in most cases, it cannot explain all. It is from this shortcoming my essay will take its departure.

1.2 Research Question and Purpose

Although the new master profile was highly potent, helping various RRP-parties to escape electoral marginalization, it failed to be so in a few others. Looking at the RRP-parties within the Nordic countries, we will find that parties such as the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti) and Norwegian Progress Party over the

last decade and a half have gained electoral success, whereas in Sweden the Sweden Democrats, although growing, still experience marginalization. The Sweden Democrats experienced in 2001 a development within the party, moving away from a biologically based racism towards a more radical profile founded on cultural differences (Engene 2005, p. 224). Still the party experiences marginalization. This challenges the capability of the new master frame.

The purpose of this essay will therefore be to take a closer look at the framing position within the Sweden Democrats and the Norwegian Progress Party to see whether the different parties have managed to use the new master frame with various results. This essay will therefore be build upon following two research questions:

- How have the Norwegian Progress Party and the Sweden Democrats chosen to frame their politics?
- To what extent can the differences in electoral success be explained by the way the Norwegian Progress Party and the Sweden Democrats have chosen to frame their politics?

My purpose will therefore be twofold. First, I intend to investigate whether the two parties have chosen to frame their politics in different ways. Thereafter, I will examine to what extent the differences in electoral success can be explained by the way the two parties have chosen to frame their politics. As will be shown later on, framing is dependent upon the targeted group and I will therefore focus on whether the parties have managed to use the new master frame in a successful way that might attract the targeted group or not. However to be able to give a fair picture of the RRP-parties success I also have to take factors such as political opportunity structures into account before making statements about the influence of framing. Studying the RRP from this perspective I hope will lead us to an alternative explanation for the differences in success between the two parties.

1.3 Disposition

Here follows a brief review of the structure of this essay to orientate the reader. In the forthcoming chapter, chapter 2, my theoretical framework will be presented upon which my analysis will be based. Thereafter follows, in chapter 3, a discussion of my choice of method and material. Chapter 4 identifies the subjects of my analysis, the RRP-party family. Before moving on to my analysis a brief review of political opportunity structures and framing possibilities regarding RRP-parties are given in chapter 5. The following chapter, number 6, will be reserved for my analysis of the collective action frames within the two parties and will in the next chapter 7, be examined in relation to framing resonance. I will end my thesis by presenting my conclusion in the last chapter 8.

2 Theoretical Framework

The ambition of the following section is to give a basic orientation of the theoretical framework that my thesis will be based upon. My research question raises questions concerning the importance of frame when explaining the success of RRP-parties. Theories regarding frames are sprung from a wide spectra within the social science (cf Payne 2001; Tarrow 1998), but a major focus on the framing process ability to spur mobilization can be found within the theories of social movement. I will therefore turn to the social movement research for a deeper understanding concerning frames. Though, to enable a comprehensive understanding for the differences in success between diverse RRP-parties, previous researches have demonstrated the importance of combining the study on framing with the influences of political opportunity structures (Rydgren 2004, p. 475). I will therefore conclude my theoretical framework by adding political opportunities mentioned within the field. However, as my major focus within this essay will be on the framing process, the political opportunity structures will only be theorised shortly.

2.1 Collective Action Frames

Benford & Snow (2000) have in their studies concerning social movements shown how social movements and political parties are using *collective action frames* as a way of mobilizing political activity. Collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings, which inspire and legitimate their activities and campaigns (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 614). Collective action frames can be understood as a shared understanding of a problematic situation that has been identified as in need of change, given attributions regarding who or what is to blame. Thereafter an alternative to the situation will be articulated to urge others to act in concern to affect change. Benford & Snow have from this perspective divided collective action frames into three core-framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 615).

Diagnostic framing refers to the identification and attribution of the specific problem of concern. This identification of the problem has more than often been articulated into what commonly is referred to as ‘injustice frames’, in which attentions are called to the way different movements usually identify a victim of a special injustice and to enable them to strengthen their victimization. Diagnostic frames does not only point to objective causes of grievance, but also to those responsible for that specific problem of concern (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 615). Relating diagnostic frames to nationalistic movements or parties of exclusion such

as the RRP, this framing task might deal with the identification of the national grievance as well as observing the agents responsible, for instance the established parties, external countries restraining the national self-determination, or foreigners whose presence threatens the cultural homogeneity (Máiz 2003, p. 258).

Prognostic framing refers to the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem and strategies for carrying out the plan. There tend to be a correspondence between the diagnostic and prognostic framings, so that the identification of specific problems and causes tend to constraint the range of possible solutions and strategies advocated (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 616). This prognostic frame may include articulations of a new social order or a new leader of the society that should save the people from repression (Máiz 2003, p.258).

Motivational framing includes the construction of appropriate expressions to motivate support (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 615). A dramatisation of the problem where emotions plays a major role, that functions as stimuli to mobilization. A typical motivational framing within the nationalist movements is the exaggeration of the dimension of problem identified, or of the nations internal homogeneity and of its differences from other nations (Máiz 2003, p. 259).

Collective action frames may vary in degree to which they are relatively exclusive to more inclusive, in terms of the ideas they incorporate and articulate. It is in this latter inclusive frame that the collective action frames may evolve into a *master frame*. In comparison to most collective action frames that are limited to the interests of a particular group, master frames are collective action frames, broad in terms of scope, and functioning as a kind of master algorithm that are utilized by a wide spectra of different movements within a protest cycle (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 618; Swart 1995, p. 468; Zald 1996, p. 269).

When examining the collective action frames used by the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party I will base my analysis on these three core framing tasks articulated by Benford and Snow, as they give a comprehensive insight of the collective action frames used by the two parties. Further, I will relate my findings to the master frames that exist within the RRP-party family to be able to make a comparative analysis of the two parties.

2.1.1 Framing and its Context

For collective action frames to be effective and have mobilizing potency, it is dependent upon its degree of resonance. Collective action frames are affected by its salience to the target of mobilization. The more salient the beliefs, ideas, and values of a movement are to the personal experiences of the targets, the greater probability for mobilization. The domain assumptions and inherent ideology within the culture of the targeted people has to correspond to the collective action frame of the movement (Benford & Snow 2000, pp. 620ff; Zald 1996, p. 262).

Just as the collective action frame is dependent upon its degree of resonance, the master frames have to be modified in a way that make the frames appealing to the targeted within the specific political culture and the political system that are given. Whether an RRP-party will be able to gain success or not will therefore be

dependent upon factors and resources offered outside the party itself (Tarrow 1998, p. 20). At the same time the adopters have to manage to make the master frame adjust to their internal party or movement theory, so that the activists or party members will accept the diffused ideas and practices. Diffused ideas and practices should therefore always be actively modified or even translated to a greater or lesser extent by adopters in order to fit the unique political or cultural context in which they are embedded (Rydgren 2005a, p. 431).

I therefore find it crucial to take the socio-political context, as well as the inner party organisation, into account to enable a deeper understanding of the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party mobilization possibilities and differences in electoral success within respectively environments.

2.2 Political Opportunity Structures

The importance of a winning collective action frames has now been discussed. However, as mentioned earlier, whether an RRP-party will be able to gain success or not will also be dependent upon factors and resources offered outside the party itself. It is therefore of equal importance to assert the significance of the broader political system, to be able to structure the opportunities for the movement or political party (McAdam 1996:2). As first stated by Tarrow (1998) political opportunities will be seen as consistent, but not necessary formal or permanent, resources that are external to the party or movement in question and perceived by the insurgents as important structural changes (Tarrow 1998, p. 76).

In an effort to bring more analytical clarity to the concept, authors have sought to specify what they see as relevant dimensions of a given system's structure of political opportunities (McAdam 1996, p. 26). These dimensions identified are to be found within the field of social movements as well as studies of the RRP-party family, resembling one and other in appearance. The political opportunity structures mentioned as most important within the literature of the RRP-parties of today are; the *emergence of niches* on the electoral arena, *degree of convergence* in the political space, *relative openness in the institutionalised political system*, the presence or absence of *elite allies* and, finally, the *politicisation of a new issue* (Rydgren 2004, p. 476f; Schain et al 2002, p. 10ff).

Yet, as much as the movements' ability to successfully frame politics is dependent upon political opportunities and constraints, political opportunities do not produce success for the party without the right collective action frame. There is therefore a dynamic relation between the two (McAdam 1996, p. 6). Focus within the study of RRP-parties has so far mainly been on the political opportunity structures. My aim will therefore be to complement the studies with a collective action frame perspective. However, before doing so, I will briefly go through these political opportunity structures to demonstrate the scarcities in the narrow focus on opportunity structures, to further motivate my study of the collective action frames.

3 Method and Material

The theoretical model just described, complementing the study of political opportunity structures with a collective action frames perspective, has the advantages of being as suitable for explaining so-called ‘positive cases’ as it is for explaining ‘negative’ ones (Rydgren 2004, 475). This is essential for my analysis since it aims to compare the successful Norwegian Progress Party to the not quite as successful Sweden Democrats. The advantage by comparing a party from Norway with one from Sweden is that few countries can be considered more alike when it comes to the political development and political institutions (Demker & Svåsand 2005, p. 9).

Since this essay’s main ambition is to emphasize the importance of framing, my approach will be to critically review political messages presented by the RRP-parties to observe how the different RRP-parties have chosen to frame their politics. In this way, I will apply a type of idea analysis, referring to the scientific study of political message (Beckman 2005, p. 11).¹ As my first purpose is to describe the way the RRP-parties have chosen to frame their politics, I will begin by adopting an interpretive analysis by using different dimensions. Dimensions can be designed to discern different statements as well as distinguish different stipulations of the same (Beckman 2005, p. 25; Bergström & Boréus 2000, p. 162). In my analysis, interpretation of the material will be necessary. Interpretation includes a certain degree of subjective practice, and the collected material might be influenced by my own prior knowledge and biases (Bergström & Boréus 2000, p. 25). However, this interpretation is essential for my analysis and discussion further on and by using dimensions I hope to be able to avoid any arbitrary discussions and be able to generate a clear and stringent analysis of the framing of the RRP-parties. My dimensions will be based upon the divisions of the core framing tasks previously presented by Benford & Snow (2000); diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing and relate these dimensions to the question of immigration. Basing my analysis on these dimensions I wish to present a comprehensive answer to my first question regarding the parties framing approach.

Turning to the second purpose of my essay, examining to what extent the differences in electoral success can be explained by the way the two parties have

¹ I should already at this stage make clear, that it is the framing I intend to study, not the ideology as a whole. As Oliver and Johnston have acknowledged, there is a tendency within the theory of framing to use frame uncritically as a synonym for ideology. Frame theory, however, revises the intentional ways in which movements seek to construct their self-presentation to draw support from others (Oliver & Johnston 2000:1).

chosen to frame their politics, I will take the context into account when explaining the framing process, relating the political message to different social phenomena within the society. I now have to examine whether the RRP-parties' collective action frames will find resonance in relation to the targeted people within their specific political culture. I also have to take other factors, such as political opportunity structures and the voters' preferences, into account that might influence my research.

My material will be based upon the party programs published by respectively party. However, as this material usually stays pretty basic and unquestioned, I will complement my own findings with previously written literature regarding the Sweden Democrats and the Norwegian Progress Party to enable to present a deeper analysis of the two. The material from the field of RRP-party I aim to combine with the literature produced within the field of social movements regarding collective action frames.

4 The New RRP-party Family

Before moving on to my analysis of the RRP, I find it crucial to clarify some concepts central for my analysis later on. As previously mentioned there is a notable disagreement among different scholars in the causes of the rise of the new far right-wing parties. One of the major reasons for lack of consensus lays in the incomplete definition of this new party family. I therefore find it necessary to identify the RRP. Even though there are scholars arguing there is no common characteristic that allows us to call the new right-wing parties a common party family, most scholars argue that it is possible to place right-wing parties within a distinct common party family (see Zaslove 2004, p. 62; Rydgren 2005b, pp. viif.; Ignazi 2003, p. 18; Schain et al. 2002, pp. 7f). I will argue, together with these scholars, that similarity in structure, ideology, political platform, attitude and common characteristics defines the new right-wing political parties. The most prominent features are that these parties are *parties of exclusion*, opponents of the idea of *multiculturalism* and runs *anti-establishment populism*. After having identified these three features, I will relate these characters to the two parties of my analysis to demonstrate their political affiliation to the RRP-party family.

4.1 Parties of Exclusion

A common denominator for the RRP-parties is that they are parties of exclusion. By offering a vision of national community, based on strong notions of national identity, they tend to exclude immigrants and refugees on the basis of irreducible cultural or biological differences that make them 'inassimilable' (Rydgren 2005b, pp. viif; Schain et al. 2002, pp. 7f). This vision of a national community comes from the theory of nationalism, which is built upon the idea of the nation state. The theory holds that the territorial boundaries of the state shall correspond to the boundaries of the people. However, the conception of the people is for RRP-parties much more narrow than for other parties within respectively system (Ibid).

Parties of exclusion, with their narrow concept of the people, have usually found support within the theories of nationalism. Old racist fascist parties frequently referred to a primordial paradigm, seeing nations and nationality as a natural essence within each human being, to legitimate their exclusion of minority people from the majority (Fennema 2005, p. 9). Biology, psychology, as well as culture have all been convened for support of the idea that nations and national identity should be seen as a natural authentic part of the human history (Özkirimli 2000, p. 64; Spencer & Wolman 2002, p. 28).

Recently, a new approach to the theory of nationalism has developed that rejects the primordial essentialism, but at the same time reacts on the total ignorance of the persistence of earlier myths, symbols and values that do exist in different cultures. According to the ethno-symbolists, nations and national identity should be examined in *la longue durée*, meaning a time dimension of many countries (Özkirimli 2000, p. 167, 172; Spencer & Wolman 2002, p. 29). However, this belief in the exceptional persistence and durability of the ethnic ties, which form the basis of modern national cultures, is not world away from the primordial belief in the national essentialism (Özkirimli 2000, p. 216). Today we can therefore see parties of exclusion using this theory to justify a new form of racism, based on ethno-plural distinction, to legitimise a new politics of exclusion (Rydgren 2005a, p. 427).

Similar to the old fascist racism, the new cultural racism based its politics of exclusion on a strong belief in the nation and in traditional, often authoritarian, values. However, another type of RRP-parties has today arisen within European societies, who criticize traditional authoritarian values and instead enthusiastically embrace liberal values. This RRP, described within the literature by the term 'ethnocratic liberalism' appointed themselves as members of the liberal ideological family, embracing the liberal system of the Western societies. But, at the same time these parties accept only one ethnic group as full member of the society by referring to the right to culture, to develop their kind of politics of exclusion (Griffin 2000, p. 173; Betz & Johnson 2004:311).

4.2 Opponents of Multiculturalism

The idea of only including the majority ethnic group as member of the society to preserve a pure homogeneous nation is commonly questioned. As argued by Özkirimli "the nationalists have no country as they know it!" (Özkirimli 2005, p. 2) Cultural minorities have existed in all modern societies and ethnic and cultural pluralism continues to be the norm.

However, it is only within the last few decades these cultural minority groups, or other disadvantaged groups, have begun to raise their voices, stating that the policies of the liberal democratic states have the effect of disadvantaging them. The public sphere, with its intention to treat everyone as an equal, is based on the majority culture and therefore neglects the rights of the minority groups. This approach came to be recognized as the defenders of multiculturalism (Özkirimli 2005, p. 105). Departing from the notion of rights for minority groups and to differences, this doctrine maintains that minority groups have right to preserve their habits and traditions of their home countries (Rydgren 2005a, p. 427).

This multiculturalism is being denounced by the RRP-parties. By taking the departure from the left's notion of rights for difference, on which the doctrine of multiculturalism was based, the RRP-parties stresses that in order to preserve the unique national character of different people, they must be kept apart. For them,

ethnic mixing leads to cultural extinction. Instead, radical nationalism is presented for maintenance of different cultures and ethnicities in the world (Ibid.).

4.3 Anti-Establishment Populism

Moreover, a key characteristic for the RRP-parties is the *anti-establishment populism*. By presenting themselves as a distinct alternative, outside the political class, wanting to give the power back to the ordinary people, the RRP-parties act as a populist party. The political establishment are being accused for being a self-serving political and cultural elite, practising its own narrow agenda without any concerns of the ordinary people. They use a political rhetoric that seeks to mobilize ordinary people against both the established power structures and the dominant ideas of society. The established political parties are held responsible for all the social evils in the society. In most extreme cases they consider the political establishment as technically incompetent and morally corrupt. At the same time, they must be careful not to be seen as antidemocratic, as it might frighten potential voters (Betz & Johnson 2004, pp. 312f; Fennema 2005, p.11).

4.4 RRP-parties in Norway and Sweden

The Nordic countries lack any real legacy for strong Radical Extreme Right parties and movements, as Fascism and Nazism never reached any prominent positions during the 20th century (Karvonen 1990, p. 34; Kestilä 2006, p. 171). However, as part of the Radical Extremism developed into Radical Right Populism, this new party family has grown increasingly strong (Kestilä 2006, p. 170). It can therefore be of importance to look at Norwegian Progress Party and the Sweden Democrats and its relation to the RRP-party family.

4.4.1 The Politics of the Progress Party

The Norwegian Progress Party emerged in 1973 and was originally formed as a liberal anti-tax party, reacting on the rapid expansion of the welfare state². Thirty years later and it is now one of the biggest parties in Norway receiving 22.1 per cent of the votes (Svåsand & Wörlund 2005, p. 254; Progress Party 1). The party was a typical anti-establishment populist party that clearly distanced itself from

² The Progress Party in Norway developed from the former 'Anders Lange's Party'. In 1974, Lange died and from then the party was thorn by several cleavages until Carl I. Hagen became elected in 1978. Hagen kept his unchallenged leader until 2006 when Siv Jensen took over the position as party leader (Hagelund 2005, p. 149,151; Progress Party 1).

the political establishment. It claimed to be the party of the ordinary people and in position of the established parties. Even if the party has managed to obtain a more conventional party organisation during the last decade, it certainly has maintained its position as an outsider and its appearance as an anti-establishment populist party is still strong (Hagelund 2005, p. 149).

Initially the immigration issue was absent on the party's agenda. Not until the mid-80s, the Progress Party emerged on the public scene as an anti-immigration party (Björklund & Andersen 2002, p. 107). Analyses of election campaigns and media coverage shows that first in 1987 immigration became an issue of the Progress Party. This was also the year of electoral breakthrough winning 12.3 per cent of the voters, which indicates the importance of the anti-immigration politics of the party among voters. From now on, we can also see that the most critical voters with respect to immigration were to be found among the once of the Progress Party (Hagelund 2005, pp. 150f). However, even though Progress Party voters definitely are more concerned about immigration than others, it does not have to be the only reason for voting. Nevertheless, the party has certainly presented itself as a party of exclusion, in strong opposition of the prevailing immigration regime and largely conceived as an anti-immigration party (Hagelund 2005, p. 152).

It should also be noticed that the anti-immigration politics of the Progress Party has changed over the last years. The party's exclusion of immigrants started as a problematisation with focus of the costs immigrations represented for the welfare state in the 1980s, but developed in the 1990s into a problematisation of culture. Seeing immigration as a political problem referring to the dangers of cultural heterogeneity, the party is today a strong opponent of multiculturalism (Hagelund 2005, p. 153).

4.4.2 The Politics of the Sweden Democrats

Although populist parties emerged in Norway in the early 70s, it took until the early 90s until a Swedish RRP-party of national significance emerged. The New Democracy obtained 6.7 percent of the votes. However, after Ian Wachtmeister decided to resign from his position as party leader, the popularity of the party fell significantly and by the next election, the party had practically disappeared (Rydgren 2002, pp. 33f).

Today the leading Swedish RRP party is the Sweden Democrats with 2.9 per cent of the Swedish votes and Jimmie Åkesson the leader of the party (Sweden Democrats 1). The party was founded in 1988. From its obscure prehistory, with strong connections to the Sweden Party (Sverigepartiet) and racist party Keep Sweden Swedish (Bevara Sverige Svenskt), the Sweden Democrats has had to try hard to maintain a respected façade and to present themselves as proponents of democracy (Rydgren 2002, pp. 33f). Today the Sweden Democrats have managed to twist this discussion into an anti-establishment populism, blaming the establishment to be the ones abusing the Swedish democracy. Instead, they picture themselves as defenders of the free and open democracy and freedom of

speak, as the only party who dares questioning the immigration politics (Engene 2005, p. 236).

Unlike the Norwegian Progress Party, the Sweden Democrats was based on the politics of anti-immigration already from the beginning. However likewise the Progress Party, the Sweden Democrats experienced a major shift within the immigration politics in the 1990s. Until 1995, the party had run its politics in close connection with the extreme right in Sweden. However, since then the party has tried to promote itself as a radical right wing party, basing their anti-immigration politics and as opponents of multiculturalism on a cultural basis (Engene 2005, p. 225,228).

5 Opportunities for the RRP

Before making assumptions about the significance of winning collective action frames due to electoral success, I have to take political opportunity structures that might influence the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats and Norwegian Progress Party, into account. However, as my major purpose will be to examine the importance of collective action frames, I will limit this discussion to the opportunity structures most prominent within the literature and discuss them briefly in relation to the Sweden Democrats and Progress Party. Looking at the rather insufficient explanations given from the study of political opportunity structure adds one more reason for focusing on the commonly ignored potency of collective action frames within the study of the RRP-party family.

From this point of departure, I will continue by showing the different framing possibilities that have been given within the RRP-party family. By looking at the different master frames developed within different RRP-parties, I will demonstrate the possibility to adjust the political message to the specific context by using diverse collective action frames in different settings, to enable mobilization of support.

5.1 Political Opportunity Structures

Political discontent and alienation has been illustrated as important causes of the emergence of RRP-parties as it repel voters from the established parties and, as a consequence, freeing resources and opening up niches for new parties (Betz 1994, pp. 37f). However, comparing the *emergence of niches* on the electoral arena, between the two countries does not give a satisfactory explanation. Even though the increase in distrust came a few years earlier in Norway than in Sweden, the Swedish people's confidence in political institutions has since the late 1960s decreased more than in most western European countries. Even if this decline started from a remarkably high level, are the Swedish voters today at least as discontented with political institutions and politicians, as voters in countries in which RRP-parties have emerged successfully (Björklund & Andersen, p. 195; Rydgren 2002, p. 43), such as Norway. Neither does the *degree of convergence* in the political space, the notion that the established parties are all the same with no essential differences between them, clarify the difference. This may otherwise fuel a popular discontent with politicians and the political parties which may create an expansion in political opportunities that is beneficial to the emergence of a new political party (Kitschelt 1995, p. 276). As for Sweden, the distance between the wing parties has decreased during the last years, while in Norway it has increased.

The same applies for the main rival parties (Denker & Svåsand 2005, p. 31-32). This certainly undermines the presumption. The same goes when it comes to comparison of the to countries relative *openness in the institutionalised political systems*, few countries can be considered more alike when it comes to the political institutions with similar proportional voting system and a threshold of four per cent (Denker & Svåsand 2005, p. 9).

So far, the perspectives taken from the study of political opportunity structures have generated unsatisfactory explanation for the two cases. However, looking at the presence or absent of *elite allies*, whether or not mainstream parties or other actors on the political field decides to cooperate with the emerging RRP-parties, might give us an indication (Tarrow 1998, p. 79). Cooperation might legitimise the RRP-party in the eyes of the voters and will therefore have profound impact on the likelihood of achieving an electoral breakthrough (Rydgren 2006, p. 15). Sweden is unique in this sense, having effectively avoided any kind of collaboration with the Sweden Democrats and managed to repress the party from any major political influence (Rydgren 2006, p. 17). The situation differs in Norway, as the Progress Party already was an established party before adopting the anti-immigration politics. However, the widespread scepticism in other parties against collaborating with the Progress Party has been made clear and the established parties seem unwilling to the prospect of collaborations at national level due to its alleged irresponsibility and position on immigration issues (Hagelund 2005, p. 148). From this point of view can neither the Progress Party be said to have received legitimacy from the politicians in Norway.

I will rather argue that it will be this last political opportunity structure, *the politicisation of a new issue*, which may play a decisive role in the case of Sweden and Norway. The salience of the immigration issue, together with strong support of xenophobic views, has been an important factor for RRP-parties to mobilize support (Betz 1994, p. 103; Kitschelt 1995, p. 276). The immigration issue has not been measured important among Swedish voters (with the partial exception of in 1991 when New Democracy emerged). Compared with other countries where RRP-parties successfully have emerged, the proportion of voters with anti-immigration attitude in Sweden is comparable. However, the immigration issue is not as salient (Rydgren 2002, p. 39). Here we will find the major difference between the two countries. From the 1990s, the rapid growing immigrant population together with attention to, unemployment, and dependence on social security the Progress Party managed to put the issue of immigration permanently on the agenda in Norway (Björklund & Andersen 2002, p. 110).

I will therefore argue that it is merely from this last mentioned political opportunity structure the Progress Party has had an advantage of significance in comparison to the Sweden Democrats. I do not wish to decry its importance. But, at the same time it is related to the subject of my own and a second interpretation could be that it is the very way this politicisation of the issue has been made, which has rendered the politicisation of the issue possible.

5.2 Different Frames in Different Settings

The political opportunities just mentioned all have in common, that they will facilitate for the RRP-party to gain electoral success, only if the party will take advantage of the opportunity given and manage to put forward its political message convincingly. The parties must present their political programs and use political rhetoric that fit the available niches, before gaining any political support. A potent master frame helps the single party to develop such a political profile (Rydgren 2005a, p.477). I will therefore turn to the different master frames developed within the party family of the RRP and demonstrate the importance of modifying the master frame to resonance within its specific setting.

5.2.1 Towards an Ethno-Nationalistic Frame

Rydgren (2005) made an important contribution within the field when examining the development of a new master frame within the RRP-party family. With the electoral breakthrough of the French party Front National in 1984, a new master frame was born. The party had managed to break even from the old ideological master frame based on racism, anti-Semitism, and antidemocratic critique, which had rendered impotent in Europe after the Second World War. The old master frame was now replaced with a new, based on the notion of ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-establishment populism (Rydgren 2005a, pp. 427f).

When Front National chose to leave the biological racism for a cultural racism, it permitted the RRP-party to mobilize xenophobic and racist public opinions without being stigmatised as being racists. Contrary to the old racism, based on the notion that a group of people is superior to another, the new more strategically racism stated that “everyone is equal but not the same” and should therefore be kept apart, served as a more sophisticated devise to meet the charge of racism and extremism³. Instead, the RRP-party has successfully promoted itself as defender of diversity and particularities (Ibid; Betz & Johnson 2004, p. 316). Soon a cross-national diffusion took place where marginalized RRP-parties adopted the new ethno-nationalistic master frame with success (Rydgren 2005a, p. 414).

5.2.2 The Alternative Ethnocratic Frame

Although this new ethno-nationalistic master frame showed to be highly successful, there were still a few countries left where the RRP-parties failed to

³ It should here be noticed that culture and ethnicity are seen as something that is deterministic and chances for individual changes and in-group variations are believed to be just as slight as in the old racism (Rydgren 2005a, p. 427; Betz & Johnson 2004, p. 316).

establish any widespread support. In countries where ethno-nationalism never got any stronghold during the post-war period, the new ethno-nationalistic master frame never gained any influence of significance, as long as ethno-nationalism was the prominent framing feature (Rydgren & van Holsteyn 2005, p. 58).

The Netherlands was one of those countries where ethno-nationalism never got any stronghold, rather the national pride was based on support for the tolerant liberalism that characterized the Dutch culture. It was not until Pim Fortuyn and his party List Pim Fortuyn managed to frame the anti-immigration discourse as a defence of tolerance and socio-cultural liberalism, speaking about women rights or sexual minorities rights, rights to culture etcetera, that the former parties of exclusion earlier had contempt, that an RRP-party could experience electoral success. In this way, List Pim Fortuyn was able to attract voters that never would have been attracted by the RRP-parties socio-cultural authoritarianism of the ethno-nationalistic politics (Rydgren & van Holsteyn 2005, p. 57). This experience of the List Pim Fortuyn has shown that RRP-parties of today manage to mobilize anti-immigration sentiments with support from the new master frame, but without explicitly stressing the importance of ethno-nationalism, framing their politics as defenders of liberalism and tolerance instead (Ibid 2005, p. 58). Today successful radical right-wing populist parties promote themselves as the defenders of a genuine liberal democracy⁴, advocates of ordinary citizens who are betrayed by a self-serving elite who totally ignore their grievances, accorded by the central slogan 'the own people first'. This was the new successful collective action frame of the ethnocratic liberals (Betz 2005, p. 34, 38).

⁴ Central to liberal democracies is their notion that the will of the people has to be reined by constitutional provisions and the rule of law, which protects minorities against the tyranny of majorities. By introducing a true liberal democracy, the RRP reject this conception, which rather makes them fundamentally anti-liberal parties (Betz 2005, p. 38).

6 Framing the Politics of the RRP

As previously discussed, framing can have a major influence regarding electoral success, as it enables political mobilization for political parties. The new ethno-nationalistic master frame facilitated for RRP-parties to make electoral achievements. However, the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party differ largely when it comes to support among the voters. I will therefore examine the collective action frames developed within the two parties; relate them to the ethno-nationalistic as well as the liberal ethnocratic collective action frames described earlier, to see whether we can find some major differences between the two.

6.1 Diagnostic Frames

As previously discussed, problem identification and attribution is one of the core framing tasks constituting collective action frames (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 615). To be able to examine how the problem of immigration been described within the two parties, I will take a closer look at the diagnostic frames within the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party.

6.1.1 Multiculturalism, National Identity and Values

Looking at the Sweden Democrats, the identification of the problem of immigration has been articulated in close relation to the development of the new ethno-nationalistic master frame. The major problem of immigration is to be found within the politics of multiculturalism and its threat against the Swedish culture and ethno-national identity (Sweden Democrats 3, p. 1-4). Following the line of reasoning of the ethno-nationalistic master frame, the Sweden Democrats holds that, multiculturalism within a country is an abuse of the sovereignty of the nation state and its national identity. States holding several ethnic groups within the same area abuses the national principle, as different ethnic groups tend to be mixed up, resulting in elimination of the distinctive cultures and identities. The same applies to supranational governance. External actors governing a nation cause serious threat to the cultural entity as it may force external cultural setting on the sovereign nation state and its people (Sweden Democrats 2, p. 2). According to the Sweden Democrats, the immigrated ethnic minorities, as well as external actors influencing the cultural settings, is today the biggest threat to the Swedish peoples possibility to develop its own national identity, an identity that

has developed during a time dimension of many centuries (Sweden Democrats 2, p. 3).

This time dimension, central within the party's diagnostic frame when it comes to nation and identity, is also related to their understanding of values. The diagnostic frame, identifying the problem of immigration, is related to the breakdown of traditional values. The Sweden Democrats strong belief in traditional values related to law and order, and family policy (Sweden Democrats 2, pp. 4f), also reflects the close connection to the new ethno-nationalistic master frame and its socio-cultural right-wing authoritarian position on these issues.

Looking at the diagnostic frames within the Progress Party the party takes the same point of departure within the politics of multiculturalism, using a diagnostic injustice frame blaming the immigrants for oppressing the right of the Norwegians. The party is using a language of ethnic rhetoric, talking about 'ethnic Norwegians' to emphasise that they have an ethnicity and national identity with claims and rights (Hagelund 2005, p. 155). However, the major opposition against the multicultural society and its immigrants seems not to be based so much upon the decline of the ethno-national identity and its traditional values to the same extent as the Sweden Democrats.

The party has a liberal background and cannot be seen as a radical nationalist party in the same way as the Sweden democrats. The Progress Party is neither against supranational governance such as the European Union, nor defenders of traditional authoritarian values, at the same extent as the Sweden Democrats. Instead of relating the breakdown of ethno-national identity to traditional values, the party has used a diagnostic frame, identifying the problems of multiculturalism as leading to a breakdown of the liberal and egalitarian values that says dominates the Norwegian national identity (Progress Party 3, p. 10,12; Hagelund 2005, p. 156). In this way the Progress Party embraces the liberal system, acting as a defender of the liberal values such as women rights, equal rights and not the least cultural rights, stressing the Norwegians' right to their own culture as a strategy to practice their anti-immigration politics. The Progress Party has managed to, with support from the new master frame notion of multiculturalism, develop a new anti-immigration diagnostic frame based on ethnocentric liberal values.

6.1.2 Blaming the Establishment

The Sweden Democrats as well as the Norwegian Progress Party have both adopted an anti-establishment position characteristic for the new master frame. According to the two parties, the established parties are being accused of being lumped together into one completely political class, without any significant differences separating them from each other. The only true opponents of the political class are the Sweden Democrats respectively the Norwegian Progress Party who dare talk about the failure of the immigration-politics, blaming the establishment for giving away the right of the Swedish and Norwegian people respectively to the immigrants. In this respect, the parties are trying to use a type

of diagnostic injustice frame, and observing the established parties as the agents responsible for discriminating the Swedish people and not giving them the right to protection of their national identity, as they deserve (Sweden Democrats 5, p. 1; Rydgren 2006, p. 27).

6.2 Prognostic Frames

As mentioned earlier there tends to be a correspondence between the diagnostic and prognostic framings, so that the identification of specific problems and causes tend to constraint the range of possible solutions and strategies advocated (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 616). This seems to be the case also for the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party. Turning to my second purpose, to analyse what solutions to the problem of immigration that have been articulated within respectively party politics, I will now move on to their prognostic frames.

6.2.1 Assimilation or Integration

Even though the two parties may differ in details regarding the solution articulated for the problem of immigration, they do share the core prognostic frames. A restrictive immigration politics is announced, meaning an immigration stop to exclude newcomers, assimilation of the once already living in the country to prevent a further breakdown of the national identity, and returning of the immigrants refusing to adjust to the society (Progress Party 3, p. 52; Sweden Democrats 4, p. 2).

At first glance, there seems to be a difference between the two parties when it comes to assimilation. While the Sweden Democrats openly proclaim assimilation as a demand for allowing immigrants to stay, the Progress Party emphasizes integration (Sweden Democrats 4, p. 3; Progress Party 3, p. 52). However, integration has in general been described as a shared adaptation process where immigrants can maintain their own identities within the framework of the countries law and regulations. It also gives everyone the same opportunities, rights, and duties to participation in the society irrespective of ethnic origins (Hagelund 2005, p. 155). Thus, looking at the demands stressed by the Progress Party, a one-side adaptation of Norwegian norms and values are required, the politics takes more the forms of assimilation (Progress Party 3, p. 52).

6.2.2 Against Discrimination

The Sweden Democrats, together with the Progress Party, proudly declares that they oppose any kind of discrimination related to gender, religious, political, or ethnic belonging (Sweden Democrats 2, p. 1; Progress Party 2, p. 6).

Normally this kind of discrimination has been applied as a protection of minority rights, since the construction of the public sphere generally has been based upon the majority culture, and therefore has an ability to marginalize minority groups (Özkirimli 2005, p. 105). However, the two parties have managed to twist this argument on the behalf of the majority group. According to the two parties, the majority ethnic group in Sweden and Norway respectively are the ones being discriminated as affirmative action, giving minority groups extended access on the labour market or education system, has been taken. The two parties are now demanding changes in institutional arrangements to withdraw any kind of affirmative action, discriminating the native population (Sweden Democrats 3, p. 3; Progress Party 3, pp. 51f). The Sweden Democrats justify this politic by stating that “Sweden is the country of the Swedish people”, whereas for the Progress Party it has more been articulated as a defence of genuine liberal democracy, stressing the importance of equality within the society (Ibid.). Nevertheless, it stands clear that the two parties are demanding far reaching changes in institutional arrangements just mentioned, as well as a major shift in governance by bringing the ‘voices of the people’ back into the politics represented by the to RRP-parties.

6.3 Motivational Frames

The last framing task to be examined will be the motivational collective action frame, concerning the construction of appropriate expressions to motivate support (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 617). Here follows a description of the specific terms used and stimuli used to achieve support for their immigration politics, some of them already mentioned within the discussion of diagnostic and prognostic collective action frames.

6.3.1 ‘Them’ as the Cause to all Problems

As earlier mentioned, a strategic motivational frame is the dramatisation of the problem identified (Máiz 2003, p. 159). The two parties both have a strong tendency to exaggerate the problem of immigration as leading to serious social conflicts within the near future. According to the Sweden Democrats, the immigration politics run by the established political parties has seriously damaged the Swedish national identity as well as the identity of the immigrated population. This confusion of national identity will create conflicts and instabilities between the groups resulting in major social problems (Sweden Democrats 3, pp. 1f). Similar to the Sweden Democrats, the Progress Party dramatises the immigration issue, stressing that a continued immigration of refugees, will lead to serious opposition and conflicts between different ethnic groups in Norway (Progress Party 3, p. 52).

Probably the most salient motivational framing of the RRP-parties is their exaggeration of the distinction between ‘them’ and ‘we’. By generalizing all immigrants into one homogeneous group, without any within-group variation acknowledged, and equating all immigrants or ethnic minorities with ‘Muslim fundamentalists’, the Sweden Democrats as well as the Progress Party, manage to distance the native people from the immigrants (Rydgren 2006, p. 21).

There is an interesting difference between the two parties in this process though. To enable to distance the Swedish people from the immigrants, the Sweden Democrats demonstrates a nostalgic belief and longing for the (imagined) fellowship of the past, illustrated as ‘myth of the golden past’, free from conflicts and social problems (which no longer exist because of the immigrants). ‘Let Sweden remain Sweden!’ (Låt Sverige förbli Sverige!) is the motto for the party to keep the immigrants on distance (Sweden Democrats 2, p. 4). This, again demonstrate the Sweden Democrats’ close connection to the ethno-nationalistic master frame.

On the contrary, the Norwegian Progress Party is blaming the immigrants for being the backward culture, living in the past, and immune of any progress potential or adjustment possibility to the liberal society of the western world (Hagelund 2005, p. 156). ‘Tolerance’, ‘liberty’, and ‘equality’ are three watchwords of their own politics, incompatible to the generalised authoritarian illiberal values of the culture of the immigrants, used to distance the Norwegian from the immigrants (Ibid.; Progress Party 3, p. 10,12) . This reveals the Progress Party association to the more liberal ethnocratic frame.

6.4 Collective Action Frames, a Comparison

To summarise, the two parties are using very similar collective action frames. However, there are some differences of significance. Within their diagnostic frames, the both parties are blaming the establishment as the agents responsible for discriminating the Swedish and Norwegian people respectively for not giving them the right to protection of their national identity. The problem of identification is the immigrants and the multicultural society, causing the breakdown of national identity. The difference between the two parties lies in the breakdown of the national identity, where the Sweden Democrats predict a breakdown of traditional values, whereas the Progress Party foresees the breakdown of liberal and egalitarian values. The prognostic frames within the two parties are pretty much the same, apart from the Progress Party’s ability to frame its assimilation politics as integration politics. Both are demanding far-reaching changes in institutional arrangements by abandoning affirmative actions, as well as major shift in government by bringing the voice of the people back into the politics, represented by the RRP. Finally, the motivational action frames are similar in that sense that both parties have tendencies to exaggerate and dramatise the problem of migration. They are both trying to distance the immigrant population from the natives, but here again we see that the Sweden Democrats are

using the tradition and the common past whereas the Progress Party uses terms such as tolerance and equality and liberal rights to motivate support for their politics.

The Sweden Democrats therefore demonstrate a collective action frames that are closely linked to the ethno-nationalistic master frame with its strong beliefs in tradition and common past, while the Progress Party seems to have developed this master frame into a more liberal ethnocentric collective action frame in favour of tolerance and equality.

7 Frame Resonance

As noted earlier, a collective action frame cannot be considered successful by itself. It has to be related to the context in which it operates. When studying the potential of collective action frames it is not sufficient to look at the framing per se, two supplementary features must be taken into account. Firstly, how the parties manage to modify their collective action frames in a way that appeals to the voters within their own political culture characterizing their political system, and secondly, how the party manage to adjust to the new frame without getting on the wrong side of the party members already identifying with the party movement (Rydgren 2005a, p. 431). In the following section, I will therefore relate the findings regarding the differences between the two parties collective action frames to the political culture in which they operate as well as to the organisation of the specific party, to see if this might clarify the differences in voting support between the Sweden Democrats and the Norwegian Progress Party.

7.1 National Identity, Citizenship, and the Creation of Political Culture

In the commonly cited volume *'The Civic Culture: political attitudes and democracy in five nations'*, Almond and Verba defines political culture "the term political culture /.../ refers to the specifically political orientations - attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" (Almond & Verba 1963, p. 13).

Kuisma (2007) has demonstrated how the political culture of the Nordic states, commonly described as 'the Nordic model', is founded upon the social history of citizenship and national identity. The development of national identity, the concept of rights and responsibilities, as well as citizenship as members of a specific community, has shaped social and economic policy by giving their allegiance to the norms, beliefs, and practices that are embedded in the political institutions. In this way, institutions reflect the shared understanding of what it means to be a citizen and part of the national identity and vice versa (Kuisma 2007, pp. 87f).

When it comes to the political culture of Sweden and Norway, they are both Nordic welfare states as well as nation-states with high degree of ethnic homogeneity. The Nordic model has generally been treated as synonymous with the Nordic welfare states, largely based on the social democratic economic and social policies. This Nordic Model within the literature of political culture has therefore been linked to values such as solidarity, egalitarianism, and tolerance

(Bergman 2007, p. 82; Gullestad 2002, p. 46). The political culture and national identity within the two countries are thus relatively young, a result of the political nation building during the last century, and is more a result of pride in civic virtues, based on values such as tolerance and equity than on an old tradition of ethno-nationalism (Rydgren & van Holsteyn 2005, p. 58).

7.1.1 Political Culture and the Collective Action Frames

The fact that the political culture and national identity within the two countries are considered relatively young and more a result of pride in civic virtues, based more on values such as tolerance and equity than on an old tradition of ethno-nationalism could give us an indication for why the Progress Party has gained a wider support in comparison to the Sweden Democrats. The Sweden Democrats, and the way they have framed their politics in close relation to the ethno-nationalistic master frame, might experience harder resistance among the Swedish voters. As the political culture is very much based upon values such as equality and tolerance, the pronounced traditional and often discriminative values of the party will find a hard time finding resonance.

Unlike the Sweden Democrats, the Progress Party has managed to frame their politics with strong resonance with the political culture in which it operates, even though practising a party policy very similar to the Sweden Democrats. By adjusting the ethno-nationalistic master frame to an ethnocratic collective action frame with strong connection to the liberal values, the Progress Party manage to gain the voters support. The party has managed to practice their politics of exclusion, by at the same time framing its politics as defender of the liberal heritage, stressing their commitment to the liberal tolerant and equalitarian values, prominent also within the Norwegian political culture and its citizens.

7.2 Political Party Adjustment

As previously demonstrated, political parties will always try to make use of master frames and strategies already developed by successful parties, which they thereafter try to modify in ways to fit their specific political and cultural context (Rydgren 2004, p.477). However, the frames still have to attune to the party organisation and its political programs of origins. By taking a closer look at the two parties the Sweden Democrats and Progress Party respectively, we might get a deeper comprehensive understanding for the differences between the two parties collective action frames appearance.

The Norwegian Progress Party has always been a liberal party. The anti-immigration politics entered the politics much later. The new ethno-nationalistic master frame could not fully justify the anti-immigration politics of the Progress Party, as the party was based upon liberal values rather than ethno-national (even if nationalism has indeed been prominent). Instead, the liberal ethnocratic politics,

similar to the ones developed within the politics of List Pim Fortuyn, could justify the Progress Party politics of exclusion by stressing the party's protection of the liberal heritage of the Western world.

Contrary, the Sweden Democrats started out as a party with strong association with the extreme right-wing ideology and with party leaders belonging to extreme right-wing groups and Nazism. Even though the party in the 90^s decided to expel the extreme racist party members and base their politics on the new notion of ethno-pluralism in an attempt to present a more respected and modern image of their party (Engene 2005, p. 224,226), there are still voices from within the party organisation opposing the abandonment of old ideological principles, which has caused serious problems for the party's credibility (Rydgren 2006, p. 28). Apart from all problems trying to maintain a respected façade, the Sweden Democrats clearly demonstrates strong association to the ethno-nationalistic master frame with its nationalistic ideology and strong beliefs in traditional values. It is therefore hard to expect the party to, at the same extent as the Progress Party, can develop an ethnocratic liberal collective action frame, which easier might have found resonance among the Swedish voters.

8 Conclusion

The purpose of this essay was to draw attention to the important, but often overlooked, collective action frames when explaining the success of contemporary RRP-parties. By making a comparative analysis of the Sweden Democrats and the Norwegian Progress Party, my first intention was to examine how the two parties had chosen to frame their politics. My study showed that while the Sweden Democrats had developed a collective action frame based on the ethno-nationalistic master frame, the Progress Party had chosen to base its politics on a collective action frame that was closer related to a liberal ethnocratic collective action frame.

These findings were of major relevance as I moved on to the essays' second purpose, to study to what extent the differences observed between the two parties collective action frames could explain the variations in electoral success. Previous research has shown the importance of framing resonance, when it comes to political parties reaching success. The contextual settings were therefore brought into my study, comparing the political culture in which the two parties are operating to the collective action frames outlined by respectively party. It showed to be a significant resonance between the political culture within the Swedish and Norwegian countries and the liberal ethnocratic collective action frame developed by the Norwegian Progress Party. Values defined as salient within the political culture, as well as within the Progress Party collective action frame was liberal rights, tolerance, and egalitarianism, even though referring to very different true meanings of the words. The ethno-nationalistic collective action frame adopted by the Sweden Democrats on the other hand, with its traditional authoritarian based values, found less resonance within the Swedish political culture, which also reflected the support among the voting population.

Looking at the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party from this perspective has offered an alternative explanation for the differences in electoral success compared with the ones derived from the political opportunity structure approach. However, before making assumptions about the collective action frames influences over electoral results, we should not forget to take factors such as political opportunity structures into account. Nevertheless, these two approaches are most fruitful represented together. Thus, in the case of the Sweden Democrats and the Progress Party there seems to be grounds for a major focus at the influence of the framing process.

8.1 Final Reflections

The future of the ethno-nationalistic politics of the Sweden Democrats seems to be rather limited within the Swedish democracy. However, even though the party largely relies on the ethno-nationalistic paradigm, a development towards the ethnocratic has recently been observed. The Sweden Democrats has abandoned its most extreme position, such as abortion ban, and decided in 2003 to include the UN declaration of human rights into the party principles (Rydgren 2006, p. 27 Sweden Democrats 1, p.1). This, together with the demonstrated success of the Progress Party, shows that the major challenge within the Swedish and Norwegian politics probably lies in the ethnocratic liberal doctrine. This doctrine, noted by Rodger Griffin, which has the ability to destroy the liberal system, not from without but from within, by practising its politics of exclusion at the same time as enthusiastically embracing the liberal system, are probably the biggest threat to the liberal democracies of today (Griffin 2000:173). Further research within the field of the RRP, discussing the possibilities of an increasing ethnocratic influence within the politics of Sweden where it so far has been limited, should therefore be requested, as well as possible ways for the political actors to meet the new challenges of the ethnocratic liberalism.

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