In What Way Do ‘They’ Threaten ‘Us’?

A Rhetorical Analysis of the Sweden Democrats’ Discourse Around Immigration Between 2010 and 2014

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Abstract

This thesis explores discourse of the Sweden Democrats around the issue of immigration and provides an overview of changes that occurred in Sweden Democrats’ rhetoric and argumentation from National election in 2010 until the election in 2014. The study offers an analytical contribution to the field of media and communication and provides readers with the insight of right wing online activism.

Qualitative in its core, and based on the theory of framing, the study analyzed video material uploaded by the Sweden Democrats on their official YouTube channel. Results are organised thematically in the way in which party framed the issue of immigration (threat to a national identity, the cause of criminal actions, unemployment and welfare abuse). The Sweden Democrats use their YouTube page as a tool for alternative political communication. The findings indicate a major shift in their rhetoric about the issue of immigration from sharp criticism of mass immigration on religious and cultural grounds toward criticism based on economical and financial grounds. On their journey towards more adequate democratic norms, the Sweden Democrats sought to give an impression of new, changed party, distant from racial roots by employing ’softened’ rhetoric and blowing a ’dog whistle’.

Keywords
Sverigedemokraterna (the Sweden Democrats), immigration, rhetoric, YouTube, framing.
1. Introduction

After the election in 2010, the Sweden Democrats (SD), the right-wing party, managed to win representation for the first time and occupy 20 seats in the parliament controlling the balance of power. Four years later, the party continued to increase its support and after the Swedish National election in 2014, the Sweden Democrats became the third biggest party in the parliament. Sweden is not anymore an exception when it comes to the rise of right wing and immigration-skeptic parties, but what makes the Swedish case interesting is that country had its long-lasting, liberal immigration policy.

Currently, Sweden is the country with the highest per capita immigration in Western Europe where about 15 percent of the population was born in a foreign country. (Wickström, 2014:12) Just in 2014 Sweden granted a residence permit to more than 81,000 asylum seekers, primarily from Syria where the conflict continues to force people to escape across the borders. (Migrationsverket.se) According to the recent analyses conducted by Swedish Migration Board, incentive for people to flee from conflict areas is not going to decrease in 2015 and 2016, resulting in the prolongation of waiting time and the reduction of accommodation capacities. Additional prognoses included an increase in the number of asylum seekers from Iraq where escalated conflict and the unstable situation may force people to make their way to Sweden. (Migrationsverket.se) Just in June 2015 Sweden scored the highest ever figure recorded in a single month, when 1,447 unaccompanied minors came to Sweden to seek asylum. In addition, number of children coming to Sweden raised up to 93 percent as compared to the same period in previous years. (Migrationsverket.se)

As some scholars argued (Hellström, Nilsson and Stoltz) the Sweden Democrats have based their political ideology on the struggle of returning to a more homogeneous Sweden with significantly reduced immigration in order to defend people’s home. It is the immigration issue that is positioned as the central point of the Sweden Democrats’ ideologies and this issue, more than any other distinguishes SD from any other party in the parliament. In the welfare arena, they are blaming the Social Democrats for the lack of awareness and failure in seeing the connection between immigration and implosion of the welfare system. When talking about culture, SD warns against challenges of multiculturalism and its threat to the Swedish culture. (Hellström, Nilsson and Stoltz, 2012:203)
The Swedish media have turned their coldest side toward the Sweden Democrats according to the party leader, Jimmie Åkesson, who mentioned his experience of being denied access to channels of political information. He believes that other parties sought to ridicule SD, avoiding the fact that SD face discrimination in their political work. During the election campaign in 2010, SD were ignored by the other politicians and frozen out by the media coverage. When TV4 refused to broadcast the election video of SD in 2010 on the ground of racial hatred, the party turned to YouTube platform as a tool for alternative political communication and way to send their message to supporters, in a way they wanted it to be shown. In the present case of the Sweden Democrats, the party turned to cyber-activism and adapted to progressive Internet media technologies to bypass gatekeepers and engage with their supporters. YouTube becomes SD’s magic formula for communicative strategies and the platform for gaining support and growing Internet audience.

Using YouTube as an empirical window and rhetorical analysis as a method, this study aims to explore changes that occurred in Sweden Democrats’ rhetoric and the way in which the issue of immigration was framed during 2010 and 2014. In order to analyze video material from Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel, this study relies on the theory of framing, Atton’s alternative media and Hall’s conception of the ‘Other’. The importance of exploring rhetoric is reflected in the fact that politicians are using the rhetoric as a way to present their views and ideologies with the main goal of persuading audience. For parties, with the negative representation in mass media, such as the Sweden Democrats it is crucial to find alternative ways to get their message out and be clear in explaining what they are standing for. The reasons behind the growing success of the party could be seen in the way SD uses rhetoric to communicate their messages. Consequently, it would be interesting to see what changes occurred in their rhetoric and argumentation towards the issue of immigration, from the election in 2010 to the last election in 2014. These two particular years are selected for a variety of reasons. Firstly, they are election years. Secondly, 2010 was one of the most important years in the history of the Sweden Democrats since they entered the Swedish Parliament for the first time. Thirdly, increased popularity in 2014 suggested changes in the ideology and rhetoric of the party.

Considering that changes in new technological environment occur so rapidly, scholars need to continue to examine the reorganizational effects that this media might have, as well as ways in which citizens participate politically and how candidates campaign and govern. From the election
in 2010 to the election in 2014 the position of the Sweden Democrats in the political landscape shifted, problems changed and naturally, the world changed.

1.1. Disposition
This thesis is organized into five main parts. In the next an overview of right wing parties across the Europe is presented followed with the background of the Sweden Democrats. In the Chapter 3, the previous research in the field are presented and discussed. Chapter 4 provides a basic orientation to the theories and concepts that will be used in this thesis. Chapter 5 introduces the choice of methodology, and the empirical material. Finally, in the Chapter 6 and 7, results and analysis are presented and discussed, divided into different themes.

1.2. Aim of the Research and Research Questions
The aim of this study is to explore how nationalist political party, the Sweden Democrat constructs the discourse around immigration and to investigate (possible) changes over time. In order to do that, this study will look at the YouTube because YouTube might be considered as the tool for alternative political communication, bypassing mainstream media. Using rhetorical analysis as a method, framing and Atton’s theory of alternative media as part of the theoretical framework, this study will analyze 37 videos from Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel.

The Sweden Democrats are particularly interesting from a media perspective since the party claims that they have been victims of mainstream media, forced to face restrictions and silence, given an unfair election coverage and portrayed as being purely xenophobic. Therefore, SD turned towards platforms such as YouTube that provide a venue for the development of certain ideological and helping the party to spread their message on their own terms. YouTube gives the possibility for political parties like the Sweden Democrats to be the producers of the content, which helps them to publish material that follows an ideological framework that is in contrast to one presented in the mainstream media. The success and progressive growth of the party can be seen as a result of carefully planned and structured online activities that replaced one-way communication with an open up a dialog with the public.

This study approaches YouTube as a tool for alternative political communication, focusing on the official channel of the Sweden Democrats and their video material. YouTube is relevant and significant for this study for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the Sweden Democrats argue that their message is not given a fair treatment in the mainstream media and therefore, YouTube is a way to
bypassing it and delivering a message in an unfiltered manner. Secondly, YouTube is a tool that they use to communicate with a particular group of followers who are interested in them.

The present study will examine video material as a central empirical material aiming to understand the party’s rhetorical changes from the election in 2010 until the election in 2014 in relation to the issue of immigration. The study will contribute by adding knowledge to the field of media and political communication since these kinds of research have been primarily conducted in and on the Western hemisphere and often done by scholars based or trained in the US. (Wojciszak, 2012:255) In fact, the analysis of political discourse on various issues has been carried mainly with those of English speaking politicians. (Reyes, 2011:17)

This study will contribute to the analysis of political discourse in Sweden, which opens up a new path for cross-language and cultural comparative studies of political language. Furthermore, the way in which the Sweden Democrats use YouTube can be seen as a base for discussions regarding the role of media in a democracy and journalistic ethic. Despite the rapid growth of the field and the fact that the use of technology is not a major point of my research, I firmly believe that my study can serve as an useful resource for better understanding of complex relationship between YouTube and radical video activism.

Research Questions

*In material uploaded on the Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel, to what extent did their rhetoric and argumentation in relation to immigration shift between 2010 and 2014?*

*How was the issue of immigration framed in these years?*

By answering these research questions we will not just improve our understanding of changes in the party policies connected to a discourse of immigration, but develop a normative perception on possible changes within the party’s policy in the future.

1.3. Limitation of the Research

Material for this study consists of videos uploaded by the Sweden Democrats on their official YouTube channel. There is a time barrier that must be noted as a principal limitation since this study can be conducted only by analyzing material uploaded from the time the Sweden Democrats
created their YouTube channel, which is, from September 10, 2010. Due to the limited time and space provided for this study, only election years 2010 and 2014 are selected for the analysis. These two particular years were of high interest because National elections were held and the outcome of the election was of great significance for the Sweden Democrats. Chosen way of material selection can result in the omission of interesting and rich material for the analysis.

Moreover, I decided not to analyze other digital channels that could be of interest, such as Facebook or Twitter due to the high amount of collected data and limited space provided for this study.
2. Background

This chapter provides an introduction to the political system in Sweden proceeding with the historical background of the Sweden Democrats. The second part of the background chapter deals with the mainstream media treatment towards the Sweden Democrats and is aimed to contribute to an understanding of the need of alternative ways for political communication.

2.1. Political System in Sweden

Sweden is a parliamentary monarchy, which ensures 349 seats in one chamber in the parliament (Riksdagen). Elections have been held on the third Sunday in September since 1994, and this system applies to national, regional and local elections. The Swedish citizens have a possibility to vote once every fourth year considering an exception for referendums and elections to the European Parliament. (Strömbäck, Ørsten & Aalberg 2008:105)

One expectation in a strictly proportional electoral system is the distribution of the seats in the national parliament. In fact, a political party must gain more than 4% of all votes casted throughout Sweden or at least 12% of the votes cast in a single constituency. There are 29 constituencies and the number of the seats depends on the number of eligible voters. People do not need to register in order to vote, and there is a possibility of voting in advance.

Swedish politics is funded from four different sources: member fees, lotteries, sales and donation and public funding which is the most valuable source in the case of Sweden. (Strömbäck, Ørsten & Aalberg 2008:105)

2.2. Background of the Sweden Democrats

The party emerged 1988 from the organization called Preserve Sweden Swedish (BSS-Bevara Sverige Svenskt). Many of Nazi and extreme right supporters found themselves in the newborn party under the leadership of Anders Klarström. (Häger, 2012:17) Prior to his leader position within SD, Klarström was a member of the neo-Nazi party Nordiska Rikspartiet and had a criminal record for vandalism, illegal threats and stealing of ammunition. Other members of the party shared similar background and while some have been part of extreme right movement such as the Vitt Ariskt Motstånd (White Arian Resistance) other emerged from growing industry of white power music (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010:57) The symbol of the party was flaming torch inspired by the symbol of English Nazi organization National Front. (Häger, 2012:17) Since 2006 SD has changed the party logo to an Anemone hepatica flower.
During the 90s party worked very hard to achieve success and develop more respectable facade. In 1998, the Sweden Democrats achieved their best election resolute by winning almost 20,000 votes. (Larsson and Ekman, 2001:177) Since then, the party has continued increasing its voters’ share.

In 2006, Swedish national election, SD received 2.9 percent of votes leading to 280 mandates in municipal councils. In 2010, SD almost doubled its votes with gained 5.7 percent gained in the national election, which secured 20 seats in the Swedish parliament and 612 mandates in municipal councils. (Rydgren & Ruth, 2011:712)

The Sweden Democrats increased their support and success through hard work. They won each of their votes by talking to people, organizing campaigns and net activism rather than relying on exposure in mass media. Their main focus was on the issues they knew people cared the most - immigration, jobs, welfare, pension and criticism of the ‘elite’. They address themselves as people’s party addressing important issues that have been ignored by ‘elite’ in power and media.

2.3. Media Treatment Towards the Sweden Democrats

Movement of the development of media-democracy across Europe prioritizes media-savvy performance over political process. There are several ethical, philosophical and practical issues that can be discussed in relation to this development and law restriction beyond the electoral mechanisms. This means that on one hand the outlawing of such party can be seen as unfair intervention in the democratic process while on the contrary such a measurement might not necessarily result in abolition of party’s attractiveness and popularity. Besides this challenge, there is also a philosophical dilemma whether or not party with undemocratic, discriminatory and exclusionary politics should be seen as a legitimate entity in Western democratic. In other words, should party such as the Sweden Democrats, be allowed to collect power through democratic means? (McNair, 2011)

Åkesson often mentioned the fact that SD face discrimination in their political work and that other parties and mainstream media refuse to collaborate with them.

_A couple of weeks ago, me and my press secretary Sven Olof, saw that we almost didn’t have any Swedish interviews scheduled but we had seven or eight scheduled with various Danish media channels. It is amazing, but what does it suggests? In Sweden, we are called racists and extremists. In Denmark, it is government policy. (Video 7, 2010)
Åkesson touched upon meetings followed by violent protests resulting in several party members being injured. He concluded with a statement that the party could be seen as ‘underdogs’, that is widely adopted rhetorical figure as democratic victims. The party used every situation to reveal negative sides of multiculturalism and mass immigration claiming to be the only political party that dares to stand out and speak the truth.

There is a unique priority that the Sweden Democrats are doing and that no other party in Sweden dares to, and that is when it comes to costly immigration policy that we are witnessing in Sweden for several decades.-Jimmie Åkesson (Video 3, 2010)
3. Previous Research

In my review of previous research, I have focused on studies centered on right wing parties across the Europe, the Sweden Democrats, and the use of technology. In the paragraphs that follow I will start with the rise of right wing parties across the Europe, proceeding with the current state of research. Finally, I am going to present and position my approach and conclude this chapter with technological adoptions.

3.1. Right Wing Parties Across the Europe

During the past decades, we have been witnessing the rise of radical right parties across Europe as well as in other established democracies such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada. (Rydgren, 2008:737) Moreover, results of the election to the European Parliament in 2009 indicate significant growth in right-wing extremist and populist and some of the examples are Danish Folkeparti (Danish People’s Party), the British BNP, Austrian FPÖ, the Dutch Party for Freedom. To understand the nature of the right-wing populism from a scholarly point of view one must take a critical look at the concept of ‘populism’ and ‘right-wing’ politics. Right-wing populism can be distinguished from other types of populism by its sharp dichotomization of the social into an ‘US identity’ constructed along national, regional, religious and ethnic lines versus ‘Them’ in various ways. (Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013)

The right-wing populist parties can be classified into *three general categories* according to their history, social and political imaginaries:
- Right-wing parties within the context of Western and post communist Europe, which shares, clear past history of fascism;
- Parties without history of populist or revisionist roots;
- Parties, which seems to cut across traditional left and right politics and target a combined electorate.

Regardless of this categorization, most of right-wing parties address the issues of immigration, national identity, welfare and social inequality as central points of their rhetoric. Most of the election campaigns of radical right were accompanied by indirect, explicit, often xenophobic and racist propaganda. (Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013)
3.1.1. Rise of the Right-wing Parties in Nordic Countries

Scandinavian countries have a long history of welfare states with well-established the Social Democratic government. (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010:59) Nordic countries had been considered as a safe haven of liberal tolerance before the rise of far-right parties in Scandinavia and growth of anti-immigrant activism, especially directed towards Muslim immigrants. The parties such as the Sweden Democrats, the Danish People’s Party, the True Fins and Norwegian Progressive Party are opposing the process of integration with EU and are against mass immigrations. Many of the right-wing parties have gained significant headway and have straightened the position and seats in Parliament. Danish anti-immigration party, Danish People’s Party (DPP) entered the parliament in 2001 as the third largest party in the country. Today, this party is underpinning the center-right government coalition, which has created new and tougher asylum policies and ended aid to the developing countries. As from 2014, DDP has won EU Parliamentary elections as the largest party in Denmark by achieving 26.6 percent of the votes. (Ewing, 2014:32)

Similar cases exist in Norway and Finland where the Progress Party and the True Fins, the successor to the Finish Rural Party, developed and increased its electoral support. The success of the Norwegian Progressive Party during the election in 2006 (22%) can be related to the failure of the Norwegian Social Democratic Party to draw the attention of the voters from the working class. (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010:59) Concerns regarding immigration and belief that Islam is a threat to national identity and national values are widely spread among people in Norway who in 2013 voted the Conservative Party into office. (Ewing, 2014:33)

The Swedish right-wing party, the Sweden Democrats gained 3% of the votes in 2006, they managed to secure 20 seats in the Swedish Parliament 2010 and double their number of votes in Swedish National Election 2014. The presence and constant rise in popularity of populist party brings discussions about a democratic dilemma that can be regarded as having two dimensions. According to the first dilemma, considering a strict concept of democracy, populist parties need to be regarded as democratic. The second dilemma and challenge appears when these parties in their rhetoric and policies advocate a society based on ethnic and cultural homogeneity. People with foreign background often get excluded from participating in society while having their right and freedom limited which is in contrast with central principles of today’s liberal democracies (Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013:268)
The new family of right wing parties shares the fundamental core of ethno-nationalist xenophobia giving the priority to social-cultural issues with the major focus on national identity, law, order and traditional family values. (Rydgren & Ruth, 2011: 712)

3.2. History and Understanding of ‘Populism’

‘Populism’ is based on Abraham Lincoln’s understanding of democracy as a ‘government of the people, for the people and by the people’. Intermediary actors would be parliaments and political parties. The modern perception of populism begins with radical understanding of democracy as governing by people beyond destination minority and majority. A major weakness of populism is reflected in understanding of ‘people’: who belongs to the ‘people’ and who doesn’t? What are the criteria for being part of ‘Demos’? These are the questions that any kind of democracy needs to face. (ed. Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013:4)

Populism differs from other political approaches by the self-evidence of inclusion and exclusion from ‘the people’. National and race identities are constructed in order to create an illusion of ‘natural’ borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’. ‘The people’ should exist above class, religion, gender and generation. (ed. Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013:6) The new far right in Western Europe, express their desire to preserve status quo, as it was before mass immigration, globalization and Europeanisation. (ed. Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013:10)

3.3. The Current State of Research

Scholars have been extensively studied right wing parties in various countries and proved the fact that the Internet is considered as a valuable resource for right wing extremism. Its transformation from limited circulation, a low quality and legal restriction to easily accessible, high quality presentation that is at the same time free of regulation is evident in many cases of extreme right parties (Gibson, Nixon, Ward, 2003). Scholarly attention has been mainly directed towards the use of YouTube as the valuable campaign tool and platform that changes the way that politics and its coverage are happening (Grove, 2008). The study pointed YouTube as the world’s largest town hall for political discussions where average citizens are able to fuel new meritocracy unencumbered by gatekeeping ‘middleman’ (Grove, 2008).

Researchers paid special attention to the factors that contributed to the electoral success of the extreme right parties. While some argue that greater unemployment rates have the major influence on an anti-immigration attitude, (Aksoy, 2011) others perceive cultural ethnic threats a stronger predictor of far-right preferences than economic ethnic threats. (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012).
Even if some earlier research often equated immigration scepticism with xenophobia or racism, study conducted by Jens Rydgren has shown that immigration skepticism is one of the main and the most efficient factor for mobilizing voter support for radical-right parties. His study was based on the data from the European Social Survey, including six European countries. (Rydgren, 2008)

Within the field of comparative politics, scholars provided a mapping of the most recent trends in Europe regarding right-wing populism, combining the theory with the in-depth case studies. (ed. Wodak, KhorsaviNik, Mral, 2013) The study provided an overview of the radical right movement with the focus on development and changes in their rhetoric, perspectives and discursive strategies. General European perspective is applied to different case studies, where the unique nature of right-wing parties across the Europe is analyzed and compared. In the case study of the Sweden Democrats, researchers traced party’s growing trajectory in the electoral process from its first movements in 1988 until representation in the Parliament in 2010. It is concluded that the party did not emerge from criticism of high taxes or bureaucracy but rather has its deep roots in racism and Neo-nazism including strong connections to fascist and Nazi ideology. Scholars pointed to the way in which SD moved away from its complex background towards more ‘cleaner’ party. (Oja and Mral, 2013)

The Sweden Democrats have been the main subject of several books (ex. Larsson & Ekaman, 2001) and widely explored by numerous researchers and perspectives. From the ideological point of view, researchers have explored the position of the Sweden Democrats in contemporary Swedish politics (Hellström and Nilsson, 2010) and provided a contextual explanation of variation in electoral support of SD (Rydgren and Ruth). Widfeldt traced the Sweden Democrats background and history, focusing on changes that have taken place to remove the extremist roots. The major changes Widfeldt has observed are related to shift towards national ideological niche that is distant from the other parties but without extremist connotations and strong expression of ethno-pluralism. Although the study was carried out in 2008, Anders Widfeldt mentioned signs of a new organizational strategy with the focus on modern campaign techniques, where the Internet plays a significant part in getting more positive media attention. (Widfeldt, 2008)

From the feminist perspective, researchers studied discourse of the Sweden Democrats with the focus on social differences, power relations and emotions concluding that discourse can be seen as a resistance to change in social realm, placing the figure of heterosexual ‘Swedish’ man in
a major position of power. (Knoblock, 2010) Furthermore, studies with a feminist perspective enabled depiction of the gendered metaphors and the role they play in the articulation of white heteronormative hierarchies. (Norocel, 2013)

When it comes to media and communication perspective, Mattias Ekman explored the online video activism of extreme right-wing groups in Sweden by analyzing more than a 200 videos from YouTube. The study concluded that the extreme right deploys video activism as a strategy of visibility to mobilize and strengthen activists. Ekman concluded that YouTube became a new political arena that could be understood as an anesthetization of politics. (Ekman, 2014) This thesis can be seen as a follow-up on Ekman’s research with the distinction of focus on the Sweden Democrats and importance of the Internet activism for the radical right taken for granted. Similar to Ekman’s selection of empirical material, I will look into YouTube activism of the Sweden Democrats adopting his thematic categories for material selection.

Although I strongly acknowledge Ekman’s focus on the relationship between video content and political sociology of extreme right I decided to concentrate on potential changes in SD rhetoric and argumentation over time in relation to the immigration issue. I approach the Sweden Democrats’ video material and YouTube as a tool for alternative political communication that should be understood in a relation to the broader framework of online communication. Despite the growing body of the research focused on the Sweden Democrats and their mainstream discourse, the little is known about their online activism and there is a lack of deeper exploration of possible changes within the immigration discourse. Videos produced by the Sweden Democrats are of great significance when studying their rhetoric and possible changes related to the immigration subject. My study can, therefore, fill the knowledge gap by adding valuable insights to the research field and expanding the possibility for transnational, comparative studies. Furthermore, the study can bring a significant contribution to the deeper understanding of the development of the Sweden Democrats.

3.4. YouTube as a Tool for Alternative Political Communication

Brian McNair argues that objectivity is hardly achievable in mass media. His criticism is directed towards, in his opinion, often subjective, partial rather than impartial, media’s political reportage. His deliberation is based on Lippmann’s study dating from 1922, where reader’s opinion is considered manipulated and influenced by newspapers. Lippmann states that before the
content reaches its readers, it passes through series of selections, such as, what items should be printed, in what size and position and where the emphasis should be placed. (McNair, 2007:26)

What media report about a politician is not necessarily what the politician wanted to say. For instance, a newspaper will campaign on behalf of their favored party and denigrate the others. The popular tabloid press has more propagandistic approach followed by various distortion, sensationalism and misrepresentation while on the other side, broadsheet newspapers will provide its readers with an outlined view in reasoned terms. What is similar to both types of newspapers is the construction of a particular image (McNair, 2007:69) Politicians often mention the problem of truth and complain about bias in the media. In their opinion, media are ‘witch-hunters’ often opting for a distorted image that serves their interest over the truth (Beard, 2000:17). Before a story is broadcasted on TV, television news team make a number of decisions that will affect the way in which the same story is perceived by its audience. The final image will depend on a number of factors, such as the position of a camera, use of language and sequence in which event is shown. (Beard, 2000:18)

The Sweden Democrats claim that they are unfairly criticized by mass media and that the party’s ideology is misrepresented. In the mainstream media they are discussed, as being xenophobes or racist and all they talk about is immigration. Online platforms such as YouTube provided SD with the whole range of possibilities, putting together blogging, content sharing and engagement with likeminded individuals and groups. In order to avoid ideological view developed by mass media, the Sweden Democrats were quick to turn to YouTube as a way to get their message out to their supporters in a way they want it to be shown. This can be seen as one of the reasons they turn to social media where there is no filter, no gatekeepers and they can present everything that they want to present without editorial interference.

During the election campaign in 2006, media turned their coldest side towards the Sweden Democrats. Some of the most popular media decided to ignore the fact that the Sweden Democrats exist in the Swedish political scene. Björn Häger sees it as a reason why election results came as a surprise to many, especially in the Skåne and Blekinge. In fact, after the election in 2006, SD and party leader Jimmie Åkesson become known to the Swedish people. (Häger, 2012:26) Media in Sweden continued to either ignore the presence of SD or mention them in the context of a racist and xenophobic party. During the election in 2010, TV4 refused to air SD’s ad on the ground of racial hate claiming that the ad violated the Swedish law. SVT, TV4 and SR decided not to report
their speeches and debates although opinion polls indicated that SD would make it into the parliament. (Häger, 2012:30) Two days before the election, several newspapers (ex. Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet) denied to take SD’s ad with the title ‘This is your land - Your choice’—defining it as a racist message. On the day of the election, Expressen and Aftonbladet decided to stand against the Sweden Democrats by communicating a message to their readers that those who like Sweden should not vote for the Sweden Democrats. Illustrations connected to the text included Hitler salute, Nazi symbols and races expressions. (Häger, 2012:31)

All of the above mentioned examples explain why YouTube become a major communication tool of the Sweden Democrats for improving ideological position and growing virtual support. Although YouTube is still a platform and by itself might not be alternative, it is the way in which platform could be used that we might think as the alternative.
4. Theoretical Framework

Following section provides the basic orientation to the theories and concepts used in this thesis. My main ambition here is to provide a reader with the map of the journey that follows, and make sure that all possible diversions will nonetheless lead to the right path. I will start by presenting the concept of ‘victimhood’ and metaphor of ‘dog whistle politics’. The concept of ‘victimhood’ is highly relevant for the rhetorical analysis of the Sweden Democrats since the party used every opportunity to couple their rhetoric with examples of violations of democracy directed towards SD. On the other side, their communication often utilizes the strategy of ‘dog whistle’ politics when discussing issues such as immigration or multiculturalism.

In order to identify common patterns in my empirical material and develop deeper understanding of the changes in Sweden Democrats’ rhetoric and argumentation, I opted for a theory of framing. The focus of my study is to understand how and in what way the Sweden Democrats framed the issue of immigration and how it differs in 2010 from the election in 2014.

I conclude my theoretical framework with the chapter that focuses on the YouTube as an alternative platform for political communication and tiny corner of newly development media space open for political debates.

4.1. Language of Politics

Political actors have discovered the importance of the effects of the language use and that ‘politics is very larger than the use of language’. There are varieties of understanding of adaptation of language by politicians and political speeches. As an important aspect of political communication, language can carry the meaning hidden behind political speech and while majority could interpret it in one way, it has an additional and more specific reasoning directed towards targeted group. The Sweden Democrats mastered the use of coded language, known only to their supporters in order to get away with racism. In general, speaking in a code to the selected audience is what Ian Lopez defines as a ‘dog whistle’. (Lopez, 2014) The strategy of ‘dog whistle’ is often present in SD’s rhetoric from 2014 as a way for blaming immigrants for riots, crimes and segregation without explicitly mentioning the word ‘immigrant’. Building upon the previously established notion of ‘deviant immigrant’ it becomes easy for the SD to use these stereotypes as a part of the strategy for gaining votes and power. Stereotypes that link minorities to crime are powerful weapon in the hands of dog whistle racists seeking power and support. (Lopez, 2014:49) Although dog whistle racism is not so easy to spot, it is still racism in the most poisonous core
because it energizes, legitimizes and supports the destructive project of racial division. (Lopez, 2014: 49) In order to fully understand ‘dog whistle’ politics we need to consider racism as a strategic and deeply analyze rhetorical messages sent out by the Sweden Democrats.

Another effective rhetorical strategy widely used by the radical right is performing ‘victimhood’. As defined by Tami Jacoby, ‘victimhood’ is a form of collective identity based on harm perpetrated against person or group. (Jacoby, 2015) Whether an individual or group is recognized as a victim often depends on numerous factors such as abuse of power, perspectives on rights, values, and moral norms as well as other social, political and economical factors. (Jacoby, 2015: 517) Sweden Democrats often highlight their experience of being victimized by ignorance of other political parties and frozen out by mainstream media. Through the combination of carefully selected rhetoric and performance of victimhood, they straighten their relationship with audience claiming that politicians and media promote discrimination against the Swedish people, aiming to ‘silent’ the only party that dears to speak about real problems in society. The recognition of the ‘victimhood’ depends on the relationship between the victim, perpetrator and the audience. Responsibility can be directed towards individuals, groups or even political systems as a whole and be blamed for not preventing or causing harm. (Jacoby, 2015:526) During the process of ‘victimhood’ victim can face three main challenges; Firstly, ‘victimhood’ is tightly associated with the struggle of recognition. Emotions induced by the victim are central to the success or failure of the broader political campaign and they can be anywhere from sympathy to condemnation. Secondly, ‘victimhood’ can be marked by victim rivalries where different parties claim that they are real victims and just they deserve redress. The third challenge is related to the nature of establishing an identity on the grievance. Due to embouchure of ‘victimhood’ and other struggles in society, victims do not always have a possibility to define the circumstances of their own identity. (Jacoby, 2015:528-530)

4.2. Theory of Framing

Political language and communication can be explored through different ways but in this study I opted for the theory of framing. My goal is to identify the common patterns and tendencies occurring in my empirical material and propose more precise understanding. Analysis of the frames is particularly interesting due to its significant influence on behaviors of the audience. The most important benefits of using the theory of framing are the direction of attention towards the
details, provided the notion of dominant meaning and probability that certain meaning will be accepted and congruent with the majority of readers’ opinion. As a base model of the theory of framing I will use Robert Entman's understanding of frame and framing:

*To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.* (Entman, 1993:52)

Framing is, according to Entman primary regarding selection and salience. Under the term ‘salience’ Entman refers to making a piece of information more memorable and valuable to the audience. With the help of framing we can define the problem, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies. (Entman, 1993:52) The concept of framing offers a way in which the power of communicated text can be described and has a significant connection for political communication. (Entman, 1993) Framing plays an important role in the manifestation of political power, identifying factors that dominate the text. The primary premise of the framing theory, according to Chong and Druckman is that one particular issue can be explored from diverse perspectives and constructed as having implications for numerous values or considerations. (Cong & Druckman, 2007:104) The importance of frames is reflected in the fact that public opinion is often built upon the frames that media and elites choose to use.

The focus of my research is on locating and discussing the main frames that could be even more powerful when attached to the issue of immigration, which is one of the central points of the Sweden Democrats’ political ideology.

4.3. ‘Otherness’

In the era of globalization and intensive cultural flows we are confronted with consistent ‘the Other’ reinforcing in the same cases ethno cultural identities and differences. This increased movement of people around the globe raised many cultural and political dilemmas resulting in debates regarding identity and belonging as well as contracting new forms of exclusion (Hopper, 2007:144) The leading British cultural theorist, Stuart Hall addresses the question of ‘The Other’ grounded in racial and ethnic differences. (Hall, 1997) The difference, as Hall states, matters because it is essential to meaning and without it, meaning would not exist. (Hall, 1997:234) We are constructing the meaning by contrasting it with what we are familiar to. In other words,
meaning depends on the difference between opposites. Individuals different from the majority in any way are represented as ‘they’ rather than ‘us’. (Hall, 1997:235) ‘Difference’ is, according to Hall, ambivalent, meaning that it can be seen as a both positive and negative. Both connotations are playing a major role in the creation of meaning, the formation of culture and language, the construction of social identities and self-perception. At the same time, it is threatening, connected to negative feelings, splitting and aggression towards the ‘Other’. (Hall, 1997:238)

Stereotyping is what sets up the social order, defining what is ‘normal’ or ‘deviant’ and who are ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. Within the process of stereotyping connection is established between representation, difference and power. (Hall, 1997:259) Hall refers to power in terms of broader cultural concept including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way. (Hall, 1997)

Besides racial and ethnic differences, religion plays a significant role in the construction of ‘The Other’. According to Zempi and Chakrabort the process of ‘Otherness’ is strongly associated with the Islam, Muslims and the current climate of Islamophobia. They use term ‘folk devils’ to illustrate the prism through which the Muslims in the West are perceived, incompatible difference and self-segregation. (Zempi & Chakrabort, 2014: 24) Within the context of this paradigm, Islam is perceived as the violent political ideology, culture, religion and impersonation of the terrorism. Expressions of Islamophobia provide fertile ground for gender stereotypes. In fact, while Muslim men are seen as the embodiment of extremism, terrorism and fundamentalism, Muslim women are seen as the manifestation of gender oppression in Islam, to a greater extent if they are wearing veil. In that sense, the veil is seen as a marker of gender inequality. (Zempi & Chakrabort, 2014: 2-24) We are witnessing the success of anti-immigration, specifically anti-Muslim parties all over the Western Europe, based on racist messages that expand fear of the minority.

Syed Murshed and Sara Pavan argue that the reference to Muslims as a homogenous group of people becomes the ground of cultural explanations for the progress of Islamic radicalization. By pointing to the danger caused by Islam in general and Muslim immigrants in particular, political parties seek their own political self-advancement. (Murshed & Pavan, 2011:267) Following Murshed and Pavan we can think of the hate messages against Muslim immigrants sent out by the Sweden Democrats, such as spreading fear in relation to Islam as the second largest religion in Sweden and blaming Muslim immigrants for a growing number of rapes and crimes. Fear is the anxiety felt by the majority. It can be seen both as the cause and the effect of fear based messages
represented by attention seeking politicians. (Murshed & Pavan, 2011:274) Right wing politicians are using their rhetoric to spread the fear of Muslims and increase their electoral support, inviting society to take sides either with one group or its opponent. This way allows further segregation where opponents are seen as ‘them’ for what they are doing for ‘us’. The power of emotions in a political framework is recognized by Manuel Castells who points out fear and hope as the two most important emotions. While hope involves projecting behavior into the future, fear follows with the possibility of failing to find fulfillment. Both fear and hope will encourage citizens to plan the outcome of their decisions and choose the option from which they expect to benefit. (Castells, 2009:150)

4.4. Alternative Media Theory

This study approaches online video material and YouTube as a tool for alternative political communication and discusses it in relation to Atton’s theory of alternative media. When Atton started writing, alternative media needed to be organizational and have an editorial structure. Although, this was written in pre-social media era in 2002, we can take some of the Atton’s ideas and think about YouTube being used as a platform for bypassing the mainstream media by political actors.

From the historical reference point alternative media are not a new phenomena. For at least past two centuries, both working class organizations and communities have been producing their own media. Traditions of socialism and anarchism were strongly connected with the development of the alternative media with the political value and we should add to this list publication related to new social movements such as feminism, environmentalism, gay and lesbian movements. (Atton, 2002:2)

But, can we talk about alternative media in the age of cyber activism where anyone can become a producer? In this study I will look beyond paper formats towards video and hybrid forms of communication and media that emerged with the development of Internet technologies.

Atton points out numerous studies that proved how mass media represent and characterize particular social groups, suggesting that those groups are responsible for selected economic and social problems or they favor extreme political or cultural views. (Atton, 2002:10) Those marginalized groups rarely include powerful elites that have access to the media and they are often disempowered by their treatment in the mass media. (Atton, 2002:10) Alternative media theorists are pointing out to the developed space where ranges of voices are able to speak directly about
their ‘knowledge’ and where ‘the Other’ is able to represent itself. (Atton, 2002) Since the Sweden Democrats often mentioned that they had been frozen out by mainstream media, the ‘alternative media’ approach can be seen as suitable for capturing SD video activism. By emphasizing marginalization of mainstream media, the Sweden Democrats invited their audience to move on their YouTube channel where they can get their message out and have direct communication with supporters.

The main aim of the alternative media, according to Atton is not only producing instrumental discourse but also provoking social change through the process of production. This change can be related not only to national, but also to local or even individual level. (Atton, 2002:18) Atton argues that Internet technology opens up a wider range of alternative media formats increasing possibilities for sociality, mobilization, construction of knowledge and direct political action. (Atton, 2002) His theory and communication model draws on six major elements: Content (politically radical, socially/culturally radical) with a news value, form (graphic, visual language, varieties of presentation), reprographic innovations/adaptations, distributive use (alternative sites for distribution), transformed social relations, roles and responsibilities and transformed communication process (horizontal linkages, networks). (Atton, 2002:27) The Sweden Democrats use their YouTube channel as a communicational and informational platform, where they share mobilizing information, alternative news reports and discussion videos with the virtual audience. When it comes to adaptation of YouTube and other digital platforms, they are not unique case in the Swedish political landscape, but what makes their case interesting is the fact, that in contrast to other political parties, they are not able to represent themselves in mainstream media as they would like to. Therefore, YouTube can be seen as an ideal platform for marginalized groups such as the Sweden Democrats.

Video activism of radical right contains many of the features of alternative media. YouTube as an online platform is considered as a one of the predominant spaces in which video is screened and experienced nowadays. Furthermore, YouTube plays a principal role in ongoing reorganization of political space and political engagement in contemporary liberal democracies. (Askanius, 2012) In terms of video production YouTube is an inexpensive way of delivering political messages for marginalized actors that instead of organizational and editorial structure, requires only simple recording equipment and basic knowledge of digital editing. (Ekman, 2014:82)
5. Methodology

This study is qualitative in its core and, therefore, each video is analyzed in details. The methodological framework of this study is inspired by Deanna Sellnow’s approach to rhetorical analysis and Neo-Aristotelian Perspective. My motivation for choosing rhetorical analysis as a method is related to my main goal to understand and explore the rhetoric of the Sweden Democrats. The Neo-Aristotelian perspective is aimed to explore persuasive strategies used by orators and their impact on the audience. As the name of the approach suggests, it originates from rhetorical foundations conceptualized by Aristotle and further developed by a number of 20th-century rhetoricians. Consequently, this approach is often called neo-classical or traditional. (Sellnow, 2014:34)

Discourse analysis could be selected as a method instead, as it has been used in some of the previous research in the field. However, in my research I opted for rhetorical analysis since the aim of this study is to examine the rhetoric of the Sweden Democrats and therefore, I found rhetorical analysis more suitable as the method for my study.

The present chapter provides an overview of the empirical material accompanied by the description of material selection. In addition, followed by the presentation of a research method, an example of how the method has been applied on the empirical material is provided.

5.1. YouTube as a Database

In the paragraphs that follow I will discuss challenges that YouTube brings in terms of data collecting and methodology. Furthermore, I present some of the possible limitation when using YouTube as a primary research database. YouTube is just one of numerous online platforms designed for social networking and entertainment which has become a stepping stone for political activity and engagement. Askanius, reminds us that nowadays we need to think outside the box and beyond traditional political arenas if we are aiming to grasp and understand where the political debate is taking place and how political dispositions are refined today. (Askanius, 2012:36) Without a doubt some of the videos might be found on other websites, blogs, and numerous social media platforms, but above all, those videos are primarily consumed on YouTube. Therefore, video material cannot be seen as an isolated form but rather as a segment of a broader media perspective. The analysis of the official YouTube channel of the Sweden Democrats makes claims of authenticity, accuracy and validity of data. When exploring discourse and online activity of any political organization, the best case would be to include all of the online platforms where the
organization is present, in order to wholly understand the discourse. However, this is not the ambition of my study where the single focus on YouTube certainly limits analytical perspective and deeper understanding of political activities. From a methodological perspective, Askanius points out the importance of taking into account the constant changing interface of the web and its intangible character. (Askanius, 2012: 37)

5.2. Overview of the Material

Before making the final selection of the material, I looked into all videos uploaded on their channel in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The total number of uploaded videos accounts 343 as observed in March 2015.

In the next step, eight different categories are identified borrowing categorization from earlier research on extreme right wing organizations in Sweden, conducted by Mattias Ekman. (Ekman, 2014: 86) The categorization has been adopted according to needs of this particular study and is oriented towards the major features of the content of the each video, which includes visual, textual and audial elements of the text. The videos referring to external activities are categorized as the manifestation video, the confrontation video and the direct speech video. Additionally videos that present explicit internal and external practices are classified into the thematic categories of interview, humor and news videos. Some of the videos are multi-themed but they usually represent only one distinct category.

The table below provides more detailed description of thematic categories and main features of video material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Category</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manifestation video</td>
<td>Public demonstrations and protests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation video</td>
<td>Verbal confrontation (phone calls, public confrontation with adversaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical confrontation (with security guards, police, opponents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct speech video</td>
<td>Thematic and staged direct speech in public spaces, press releases, election announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament video</td>
<td>Video material from the Swedish Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor video</td>
<td>Ridiculing political opponents and police, Slapstick from activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview video</td>
<td>Interviews with activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News video</td>
<td>News items (of amateurish character)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Thematic categories according to the major features of the videos
5.2.1. Selection of the Material

After the categorization is done, the study moves to qualitative aspects of the videos. Due to the limited space provided for this study, I decided to analyze group of videos that fall under the direct speech thematic category. This category includes staged direct speech consisting of public speeches, press conferences and election announcements. I decided to look particularly into direct speech category, because it provides unedited and richest material in the sense of rhetoric and argumentation. Moreover, selected material is significant since it has most likely never been broadcasted or aired on any traditional media and their YouTube channel is probably the only platform where this material can be found.

The time period covered by this study includes videos uploaded on the Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel SDWebbTV in two previous election years, 2010 and 2014 including a total number of 37 videos (23 from 2010 and 14 from 2014). The choice of these two particular years is motivated by the fact that they are election years when rhetoric for persuasive purposes is strongest and these years contained the highest number of direct speech videos.

The video material produced by the Sweden Democrats is specifically interesting because it is intended mainly for their supporters and it should provide and ideological framework for what they stand for. Additional reason for looking into material controlled by the Sweden Democrats is their critic of mainstream media and opinion that party is often misrepresented, so their YouTube channel can be seen as a tool for alternative political communication and way to get their message out to their supporters.

The vast majorities of the videos of Sweden Democrats are in Swedish language and are translated by me. However, since I am non-native Swedish speaker, quotes and each transcript were then checked and revised by two native speakers.

My analysis is limited to the theme of immigration that has been the central point of party’s ideology. Even if the material selection could be done differently, such as focusing only on headlines containing word ‘immigration’, I decided to select my material differently because I believe that all videos of the Sweden Democrats talk about immigration in one way or another. The limitation of this particular material selection is that interesting material can be omitted from the analysis. However, the narrowing down selection of material is necessary due to the limited time and space provided for this study. Table to follow, lists all of the videos used as the empirical material for this study, including year of publishing, title, length and the URL of the each video.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Sverigedemokraternas våldtäktsrapport Del 2 av 2</td>
<td>07:58</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYDyQ4uOsCM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYDyQ4uOsCM</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Sverigedemokraternas våldtäktsrapport Del 1 av 2</td>
<td>14:57</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puVwMrNejeE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puVwMrNejeE</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Presskonferens och presentation av Sverigedemokraternas valfilm 2010.</td>
<td>08:40</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bR9PNOaachtg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bR9PNOaachtg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Sverigedemokraternas Valmanifest presenterades av Mattias Karlsson och Jimmie Åkesson.</td>
<td>10:24</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umLvs7GgxzU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umLvs7GgxzU</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Islamseminarium i Göteborg del 2 av 2</td>
<td>12:13</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SflpccyAq9M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SflpccyAq9M</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Islamseminarium i Göteborg del 1 av 2</td>
<td>14:58</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4EiRn9Ji0M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4EiRn9Ji0M</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkessons tal från Sverigedemokraternas valmöte i Höganäs del 2 av 2</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ghyvpyNdeU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ghyvpyNdeU</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkessons tal från Sverigedemokraternas valmöte i Höganäs del 1 av 2</td>
<td>10:29</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uO5nuRzUeAo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uO5nuRzUeAo</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Björn Söder tal från Sverigedemokraternas valmöte i Höganäs.</td>
<td>06:28</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7nrAni9JaQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7nrAni9JaQ</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Stockholm Stad presenterar sitt valmanifest del 2 av 2</td>
<td>11:20</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkG6PHwopTU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkG6PHwopTU</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Stockholm Stad presenterar sitt valmanifest del 1 av 2</td>
<td>14:35</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7Ur-fe2taE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7Ur-fe2taE</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkesson Torgmöte på Sergels torg del 2 av 2</td>
<td>10:03</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxtt6fAH-A4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxtt6fAH-A4</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkesson Torgmöte på Sergels torg del 1 av 2</td>
<td>10:06</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdNnFJFzjuk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdNnFJFzjuk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkesson på torgmöte i Landskrona del 2 av 2</td>
<td>9:29</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEP4RB-DW1E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEP4RB-DW1E</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkesson på torgmöte i Landskrona del 1 av 2</td>
<td>15:27</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXBXMFiDoTc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXBXMFiDoTc</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Kent Ekeroth talar på mynttorget om den nya grundlagsändringen</td>
<td>14:03</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNg3HrHS84">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNg3HrHS84</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Daniel Assai talar och tackar partiledaren Jimmie Åkesson för valframgångarna</td>
<td>6:28</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYljBlh1F8Rw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYljBlh1F8Rw</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Tal av partiledare Jimmie Åkesson på kommunkonferansen 2010 del 2</td>
<td>10:10</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m33jNA8x7wE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m33jNA8x7wE</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Haro höll föreläsning, del 3 av 3</td>
<td>15:04</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSG3oP23P70">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSG3oP23P70</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Haro höll föreläsning, del 2 av 3</td>
<td>14:58</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5SprDDzGyY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5SprDDzGyY</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Haro höll föreläsning, del 1 av 3</td>
<td>15:01</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-J_9GSnuuGU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-J_9GSnuuGU</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Ian Wachtmeister håller ett anförande på SD kommunkonferens i Älvsjö 2010</td>
<td>41:24</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HjuvS89tE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HjuvS89tE</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkessons tal på valkonferensen 2014</td>
<td>36:59</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTwnV2VmEbY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTwnV2VmEbY</a></td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>SD-Kvinnors tal på valkonferensen</td>
<td>09:44</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFi6myCvZok">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFi6myCvZok</a></td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>SD:s nya talespersoner</td>
<td>18:15</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=linKGJYtLR4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=linKGJYtLR4</a></td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkessons vårtal 2014</td>
<td>40:12</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDSy8Gs98sM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDSy8Gs98sM</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Sverigedemokraternas vårbudget 2014</td>
<td>27:15</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JokGZjd5aOs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JokGZjd5aOs</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Presentation av EU-kampanjen</td>
<td>08:07</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h53s7Oqd5--w">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h53s7Oqd5--w</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Presskonferens: Det organiserade tiggeriet</td>
<td>24:18</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=On-UhPTx1KM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=On-UhPTx1KM</a></td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Sverigedemokraternas EU-valvaka</td>
<td>15:56</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Jimmie Åkesson håller presskonferens om Ackassan</td>
<td>05:10</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTwugdc2zl0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTwugdc2zl0</a></td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Budgetpresentation Sverigedemokraterna</td>
<td>1:23:23</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGOMN9OznZw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGOMN9OznZw</a></td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Mattias Karlsson kommenterar nya valet</td>
<td>02:56</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9AosSW_FS8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9AosSW_FS8</a></td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Mattias Karlsson talar på Sverigedemokraternas kommun- och landstingskonferens</td>
<td>15:40</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqiEXh2EaRY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqiEXh2EaRY</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Björn Söder talar på Kommun- och landstingskonferens</td>
<td>20:23</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg_bHq9DeZM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg_bHq9DeZM</a></td>
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5.3. Rhetorical Analysis

For many people rhetoric is related to negative connotations, something they would rather remove to get a clear message or ‘the fact’. (Longaker & Walkser, 2011:1) This study proposes different understanding of the rhetoric as a significant and the inevitable part of human interaction that can be neither removed nor avoided. The main purpose of the rhetorical analysis is to examine communication content in order to identify and assess its persuasive strategies. (Treadwell, 2014:234)

The very first step towards the analysis is describing the rhetorical situation and reasons the speech was given. This step includes answering series of questions such as who is speaking, where, when, why and to whom is a speech given. (Sellnow, 2014:35) The second step implies speech examination according to five canons of rhetoric. These categories are, according to Sellnow, invention, style, arrangement, memory and delivery. (Sellnow, 2014:12) In the invention phase focus is on speaker’s content or in other words, his or her main arguments. Attention will be paid on claims that the speaker made, the evidence provided to support claim and reasoning used to link the claim and the evidence. (Sellnow, 2014:37) Aristotle identified three artistic modes of persuasion, derived from (ethos) presenting the character of the speaker in favorable light, awakening emotion (pathos) in the audience to stimulate desired judgment and providing logical arguments (logos). (Kennedy, 2007:111) These three main rhetorical modes derive, as Aristotle mentioned, from three primary communicative acts: speaker, speech and audience. Rhetorical modes are created through the rhetorician’s self-presentation, reasoning and a way of handling audience’s emotions. (Longaker & Walkser, 2011:45-48)

During the arrangement phase, the attention will be placed on the way that speaker arranged main points in his message and organizational pattern. In connection with the style phase focus will be on speaker’s choices of words and structure of chosen sentences. When analyzing memory phase the special attention will be placed on the employed strategies and particular segments of the messages that make it memorable. This can be done by using dynamic delivery style, creative style strategies or compelling appeals developed in speech content. (Sellnow, 2014:38) In the delivery phase, the last phase of text Interpretation, focus is placed on the speaker’s presentation and the way in which the voice and the body are used while delivering a message.

The third and the last step includes the evaluation of the overall effects and implications. After the speech is examined according to 5 above-mentioned canons, the critic must be applied
on the overall effects of the message. In this step, a question regarding the achieved goal should be answered. When studying the online data, which is the case in this study, this goal can be seen through the number of views, shares, and tweets. (Sellnow, 2014:39) Political activity does not exist without the use of language. (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002:3) When analyzing political speeches one must keep in mind that such speech is rarely spontaneous but rather prepared for delivery for purpose on a political occasion (Charteris- Black, 2014:13)

5.4. Application of the Research Method

Paragraphs to follow will provide a brief example of how rhetorical analysis has been used in this study, as described in Chapter 5.3. The video sample selected for this purpose is *Mattias Karlsson’s speech at the municipal and county council conference.* (Video 36, 2014)

5.4.1. Describing Rhetorical Situation

This 15:40 seconds long video was published on the YouTube channel of the Sweden Democrats 7 of December 2014. The public speech was given by, at the time, acting leader of the Sweden Democrats, Mattias Karlsson (as party leader, Jimmie Åkesson was on sick leave) during the party’s municipal and county councils days in Västerås, held 6-7 December 2014. Intended audiences for this speech were supporters of the Sweden Democrats, which, according to the description of the video, counted almost 900 individuals.

5.4.2. Interpretation

In terms of content, the main points of the Karlsson’s speech are party’s rapid growth towards becoming the second biggest party in the Swedish political landscape, sacrifice that Åkesson and other members of SD needed to make Sweden better place and improve welfare. Furthermore, harsh criticism is directed towards Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, who is accused of unprofessionalism in handling budget disagreements and parliamentary crises. Karlsson concludes his speech highlighting that the Sweden Democrats are not single-issue party anymore, mentioning proposals for investments in heath care, the elderly, school, improvements of working conditions and security on the street and squares.

Karlsson opened his speech mentioning the success of the party and its rapid growth. In his speech, he uses numbers and statistics to make a connection between his claims and evidence and provide a logical argument. The use of numbers and statistics in persuasive purposes can help the person to look knowledgeable in the eyes of the audience.
17.7% ... Now, the battle for second place in Swedish politics begins! Now we are moving! Now we are drawing the political map! Now we are beginning the real change!

Karlsson emphasizes ‘ethos’ when reminding the audience of Jimmie Åkesson’s achievements and qualification. Employing inclusive language such ‘we’ and ‘us’ Karlsson tends to make the emotional appeals to the audience by creating a sense of solidarity and responsibility.

*We really have a party chairman to be proud of...Jimmie has taken so many fights for Sweden on our behalf. Now it's time to pay back and show our gratitude. Now it's up to us to take the brawl in his place. And when he comes back, we will give him such a warm welcome to the roof lifts!*

In contrast to positive words such as *highest score, growth, popular support* that are used in relation to the SD as a party, negative phrases and words such as *unprofessionalism, awkwardness, disappointment*, are used when referring to other politicians and parties. For instance, Karlsson blames Stefan Löfven for the outcome and parliamentary crisis, constructing a ‘we’ versus ‘them’ argument, alluding that his government does not serve the interest of Swedish people.

*I have witnessed, with the surprise, the awkwardness and unprofessionalism in the way that Stefan Löfven has handled the recent weeks parliamentary crisis. My surprise and disappointment have not been reduced by the fact that the only thing Prime Minister seems to come up with before the election is, to use bad words for his opponents. I would respond by calling the Social Democrats for a new tragi-comic party, observing that the person, who is in this kind of situation not able to get out of the sandbox, might be staying there. One such person is not in any case worth to lead our country.*

Karlsson continues to influence emotionally audience by using the strategy of humor and referring to the Social Democrats as a tragi-comic party. To illustrate his thoughts, Karlsson compares the party behavior to comedy movie *Dumb and Dumber 2*. By using humor and sarcasm, Karlsson develops engaging and friendly tone, persuading the audience to dismiss opposing view and share his opinion.

*I would like to compare the idea of a resurrected S - MP government (Social Democrats-Green Party) with the movie Dumb, Dumber 2. I am sure the main characters have a nice time together, and it is not missing humoristic points. However, another sequel would just be tragic.*
In terms of *speech arrangement*, the focus has been oriented mainly towards positive aspects and achievements of the Sweden Democrats and failure of Social Democrats and Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The first part of Karlsson’s speech is devoted to the rapid growth of party position in opinion polls. This message, illustrated with carefully chosen numbers and statistical data implies that competition for second biggest party begins and that the Sweden Democrats have a great chance to score it. In the second part of the speech, Karlsson tries to constructs even more positive image of the Sweden Democrats by criticizing and degrading work of others and making claims that Prime Minister cannot keep his promise and stick to the truth.

*In addition to bring the debate to a decent and objective level, it should also be possible to require a prime minister to stick to the truth. This criterion, however Löfven could not managed to fulfill. There is only one person responsible for the current situation, and that is you Stefan Löfven! You have failed to rally a majority behind your policy. You have refused to even speak to Sweden's third largest party.*

When it comes to *style*, Karlsson adopts aggressive style when referring to the government and Prime Minister blaming them for the parliamentary crisis.

In terms of *memory*, Karlsson employs emotions to make his message memorable. Firstly his choice of words intends to show that he is similar to average Swede from working class and that he understands the everyday life of people in Sweden.

*I would also like to make one thing perfectly clear. I do not care about these people. I love them. They are my flesh and blood. Their well-being is the starting point for all my political involvement. I would never betray them and I know that my party never would.*

Secondly, Karlsson talks about his family members, calling upon reader’s deep emotions, opting for an emotional argument over the logical. The purpose of such expression could be seen as relating the discussion to personal feelings and evoking strong emotional feelings in the audience.

*Nothing could be more wrong. A great role model in my life, my grandfather is sick, retired industrial workers with low pensions. Her wheelchair is bound and worn out early by poor work and repetitive tasks. My father was recently retired and despite a lifetime of hard work, he is worried about not having enough money for going forward. My best friend was some time ago extremely close to losing his job at the Volvo factory and live with a constant uncertainty. My girlfriend, who is trained truck driver, stayed without work for some time; my mother and my sister work every day as a rescue angels in health care, despite musculoskeletal injuries, low pay and poor working conditions. My eldest son goes to a public school and my youngest son in the municipal childcare, where the lack of resources makes it difficult.*
When it comes to speech delivery, I would describe Karlsson as a dynamic and self-confident speaker. He speaks slowly and clearly. From the style in which his speech is delivered, one could conclude that he addresses the audience mainly composed of the Sweden Democrats’ supporters. In favor of this claim we can add Karlsson’s aggressive approach towards government’s decisions and behavior.

5.4.3. Evaluation and Implications

To sum up, we can say that Karlsson speech was mainly based on delivering hate arguments against Prime Minister and Social Democrats in front of the party supporters. Although, the speech was healed two months after the National election in 2014, the main goal of the speaker was to convince undecided voters and keep previous supporters for a possible upcoming election, as a result of budget disagreement. However, a strategy that focuses primarily on blaming others for problems, instead on focusing on significant issues might as well turn undecided voters toward the rivals that focus on important issues rather than the construction of positive self-image.

In his speech, Karlsson stick to the proven success strategy based on ‘us’ versus ‘them’ argumentation, emphasizing that the Sweden Democrats are the only party that cares about the Swedish people while others oppose interest of the working class. This is even more highlighted with the adaptation of inclusive (we, us) and exclusive (they, their) language, with the purpose of creating a common sense of responsibility.

Karlsson often opted for emotional argumentation instead of logical. Words are carefully chosen to illustrate his opinion. While positive words are related when referring to own party and supporters negative words are adopted when talking about rivals.

5.5. Validity and Reliability

The standard concepts of validity and reliability could be seen as problematic for rhetorical analysis for various reasons. Firstly, subjectivity is often involved in rhetorical analysis challenging strongly value of objective assessment in social science research. Although reliability and validity are not major concern of rhetorical critics as the case is with social scientists, there are still steps to follow to assure that results are valid and that other interested scholars can follow the study. (Whaley, 2014:291) I carefully followed Sellnow’s steps mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter, in the process of conducting rhetorical analysis, to assure that the results will be consistent.
As the main focus of rhetorical analysis is to provide a meaningful interpretation of the rhetorical act, criticism is often directed toward strengths of claims. Therefore, traditional discipline needs to be followed or author might find him unable to convince others to read, interpret or understand object of the study in a same way as the author. It is, therefore, the most important to develop good argumentation to persuade others to see the importance of the study and agree with the claims and analysis. (Whaley, 2014:291)

It is important to note that reliability in the qualitative studies cannot be seen in the same way as it is in quantitative studies. Qualitative research, such as this study, are not seeking to establish the ‘laws’ with the focus on measurements, but rather to provide an understanding of the world from a perspective of those in it. (Merriam, 1995:56)

The main challenge that this study faced was when deciding on a specific empirical material. Using videos from the Swedish Parliament was one of the ideas, but the choice to look into public speeches, press conferences and election announcements was made because those videos were most likely never broadcasted on television and were filmed and created by the Sweden Democrats. The additional difficulty with the performance of the study was constant changing and evolving nature of YouTube. What I mean is, that content, used as the empirical material of this study, can be renamed, moved or even deleted from the Sweden Democrats channel, making it impossible for someone else to check or carry out study using the same empirical material. In such case, the study can be perceived as vulnerable and its integrity can be threatened. At this point, we cannot affect changes that occur in digital media world, but what I can do is to make sure that if somebody else performs the same study, there will be no significant differences in the results.
6. Results

My analysis and presentation of the results are organized thematically, focusing on four different thematic categories in which the Sweden Democrats framed immigration and problems caused by immigrants. When analyzing my empirical material I have been looking for particular patterns repetitive in their rhetoric and argumentation. The selection of these patterns has been made in relations to the topic of immigration and the way it is presented in their rhetoric in the election year 2010 and the year of the last national election in Sweden, 2014. The four major ways in which the party framed immigration and immigrations problems are: as a threat to national identity, cause of the rise of criminal actions, a cause of unemployment among young people and as the abusers of the welfare. The first two frames indicate that different ethnicities should not mix with each other, while the second and the third frame two point out the rivalry between Swedish citizens and immigrants for the limited economic resources.

In the chapters that follow, I will present the results illustrated with the quotes of the Sweden Democrats, proceeding with the analysis and discussion. Each section begins by giving a short summary of major findings and continues with detailed result presentation illustrated with quotes from the videos.

6.1. Immigration as a Threat to National Identity

The first section of my results focuses on framing immigration as a threat to national identity. In 2010 cultural frame includes Muslims and immigrants coming from geographically distant countries as the ‘Other’ that are, in terms of both culture and religion considered to be unable to assimilate into Swedish society. In contrast to their argumentation in the 2010, in 2014 religion angle and the critique of Islam are excluded from the debate and replaced with criticism towards selected EU nations and intolerance towards multiculturalism. In both 2010 and 2014 repeating patterns are law, order, welfare and traditional family values.

A national identity is according to the Sweden Democrats the most important part of the society. Sweden became a country where ‘natives’ suffer while immigrants benefit. In their public speeches they try to take advantage of economic and social fears, trust failure and growing ‘Islamophobia’ in public discourse where ‘elite’ in power is blamed for closing their eyes to danger of Islam and Islamization. In fact, immigrants from countries that are more culturally distant from Sweden are seen as a greater threat as compared to immigrants coming from European countries. (Ex. video: 1, 2, 5, 6)
In August 2010, the Sweden Democrats held its annual seminar about Islam in Göteborg where the speakers Nicolai Sennels, Danish psychologist, Farshad Kholghi, Danish, Iranian born, debater, actor and lecturer and Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff, Australian lecturer on Islam and situation in Austria were invited. The seminar was closed for public and media and open only to supporters and members of the Sweden Democrats. Location of the event was kept as a secret and could be revealed only by emailing directly Kent Ekeroth, a member of the SD.

_Muslims say one thing but do another thing’ - Nicolai Sennels, said Danish psychologist and speaker for SD’s seminar about Islam, concluding in his speech that Muslims have different view on aggression and that they are more open to criminal activities. (Video 6, 2010)_

In the Sweden Democrats’ rhetoric during 2010, Muslims are often portrayed as one homogenous group of people, rather than individuals, who are unable to integrate into the Swedish society and are a threat to Swedish national identity. Although the issue of immigration has been the central point of SD political ideology, in 2010 rhetoric regarding mass immigration is generally referred to Muslims and fear that Sweden will become rootless and lose national identity. Islam is portrayed as gender segregation, terrorism and a threat to the Swedish culture. The homogenous group composed of Muslim people is contrasted with Christianity, foundation of the Swedish culture.

_Due to the mass immigration we have around half a million Muslims in Sweden, and Islam is Sweden’s second largest religion (Video 6, 2010)_

Although SD often mention numbers in relation to Islam as a religion, it is important to note that at the time, official statistics regarding religious affiliation in Sweden do not exist. The estimated number of individuals with a Muslim background is collected by analyzing the size of people coming from the countries with a large Muslim population and therefore cannot be considered as the most accurate and precise statistical data. (Cato, 2014:267) The skepticism of Islam is highlighted by Iranian born speaker, Farshad Kholgh, who talks about his life experience and view on Islam. In his speech he refers to Muslims as a homogeneous group aimed to take over the world and abuse western values of freedom. Islam is conceptualized as a totalitarian regime and in contrast with democratic values. As a word of warning, Kholgh talked about Iran and
changes brought by Shari’a laws where Muslim immigration in Sweden will result in invasion and war. Islam and Islamization are seen as a threat to national values, freedom and human rights.

Submission, what does it mean? It means Islam. People say, Islam is peace. No, Islam means submission.... Do you like our values? Do you like our values of freedom? Do you like our values of having the right to sit here together, men and women?... Yes. So, what do we do? We have to stick together. We have to start fighting. We have to be a little bit more aware of what we have and what can be taken. (Video 6, 2010)

Muslim immigrants are represented as the ‘other’ in terms of both culture and religion. A clear distinction is made between ‘their values’ and ‘our values’ where the lack of human rights and freedom in the Muslim world is highlighted. In their speech from 2010, immigrants, often referred to individuals coming from Islamic countries are discussed in relation to numerous negative attributes and as a primary cause of social problems, lack of integration, welfare abuse and criminality. (Ex. video: 1, 8, 12, 14, 15) The Sweden Democrats call themselves people’s party and friends of Sweden, alluding to the elite as blind followers of western interest. This group is in contrast to what SD stands for, and is in favor of multiculturalism and immigrants from Muslim countries. The critique in 2010 is directed towards government and parties in parliament, blaming them for irresponsible, and an extreme mass immigration policy that causes enormous problems. (Ex. video: 9, 13, 17, 18, 19) As an example of such a statement, we can take Ian Wachtmeister speech at municipality conference in Älvsö:

The problem of immigration is an issue that the government and parliament ignored for a long time. Not only ignored, but concealed and swept under the carpet. This is a big problem today and I believe that this approach is indecent. (Video 23, 2010)

As SD opposed immigration and immigrants in their speeches a statement of one of the party members, Ian Wachtmeister represents some of the SD’s darks sides. One may ask who fits into Sweden Democrats’ image of a Swede and who is the ’other’?

It is about people who have to take care of themselves and live on the same terms as Swedes. I mean, one would think that everyone in Sweden can write, right? I support that. It should be manifestly that they can manage their own life under the same conditions as the Swedes and accept how things work in this country, where they are going to continue their life (Video 23, 2010)
The year 2014 brings new problems and new, softened rhetoric. Word ‘immigrant’ is often replaced by ‘foreigner’ and statement ‘we need to close the borders’ has evolved into ‘we need to discourage abuse of freedom of movement’. Their rhetorical message suggests that they do not oppose immigration but they stand against the threat to national identity, safety issues and the Swedish welfare system. (Ex. video: 24, 26, 28, 30) Although softened, law, order, traditional family values and welfare are still the central focus of SD’s rhetoric and argumentation. Discussions related to religion have been put aside in favor of skepticism towards multiculturalism.

*We want to enhance and protect our borders. We want to discourage abuse of the freedom of movement. It doesn’t matter if it is related to the case of begging, arms trade or whatever else it might be. (Video 30, 2014)*

EU election in 2014 opened space for discussion against multiculturalism and freedom of movement in favor of straightening the sovereignty of the Swedish state. Power, according to SD should be brought back from Brussels to Sweden. Multiculturalism and freedom of movement inside the EU are placed in the position of scapegoats for everything that does not function, as it should. (Ex. video: 24, 26, 27, 29, 31, 34)

*One of the EU founding pillars enables people to travel freely within the Union. It has resulted in the increased movement of goods and services but this open movement has its drawback. Several drawbacks! It is something that we in Sweden are forced to face just for being a part of the Union, for instance, people from poorer parts of Europe travel to Sweden to beg, sometimes to commit crimes. There are also individuals forced into the world of prostitution, and so on. (Video 30, 2014)*

The Romanians and the Bulgarians are separated from the other citizens of EU, developing a framework for discrimination, cultural racism and a new category of citizens belonging to ‘unacceptable’ migrants. Their image is built in relations to organized crimes, lack of integration and violence. (Ex. video: 24, 27, 30, 34) Their discussion is placed into the context of law and order discourse as well as the cultural discourse digging up the question of equality among nations as a foundation stone of European Union.

The situation in the country of the migrant’s origin is used to illustrate living conditions in Sweden, considered to be difficult for Swedes to understand. Furthermore, this way of
representation contributes to the categorization of people into two different groups: the Romanians as the ‘outsiders’ and the Swedish citizens as the ‘insiders’.

_There are countries that have had problems with EU nationals who settle in a particular area over a long period of time without access to toilets, without access to showers, laundry facilities, and garbage collection. And there is nothing to suggest that this problem could be solved. On the contrary, these settlements seem to get bigger._  (Video 30, 2014)

The alignment of the Romanian citizens with the organized crimes, illegal immigration and abutment of freedom of movement is what makes an additional distinction between ‘Us’, the Swedish citizens and ‘Them’, the migrants. The anti-immigration discourse switched from a national point of view towards economic perspective, society changes and future of the country. The Sweden Democrats adopted the rhetoric of describing itself as the only party that dares to describe reality, bring real solutions and share beliefs of people. (Ex. video: 24, 35, 37)

_We are the only party that has consistently spoken of the need to focus our resources on the defenses of our own country. The others, they laughed at us. They laughed at our analysis of our society, they laughed at, and mocked our priorities. Now, they are not laughing anymore. Instead they are queued for the chance to pick cheap political points in a situation where uncertainty and instability are prevailing in our immediate vicinity. And the most tragic is, that they will come away with that._  (Video 24, 2014)

The adaptation of terms such as ‘defend our country’ suggests that multiculturalism can be aligned with the highest level of threat that must be stopped. In that situation, SD blames other parties for not taking any decisions on complex phenomena such as immigration and not protecting Sweden in the national terms. (Ex. video: 23, 24, 35, 36, 37)

6.2. Immigration as a Cause for Rise of Criminal Activities

The following result section is engaged with framing immigration as a cause for various criminal activities. While in 2010 welfare was central to SD’s political discourse, the relationship between immigrants and crimes have had a prominent place in the debates. The Sweden Democrats argued that immigrants committed crimes and raised conflicts due to insurmountable cultural differences and impossibility of understanding western values. Sex related crimes have become significantly important and linked to African and Arabic immigrants. In contrast to predominant religion frame in 2010, the security frame that links criminal activities with EU
citizens, dominated the discussions in 2014. More specifically, the Sweden Democrats connected crime and violence with indigenous minorities (specifically the Roma). Furthermore, selective crime statistics from unknown sources in 2010 are replaced with carefully chosen statistical data from police sources.

During the election campaign in 2010, SD used every opportunity to present their selective crime statistic which shows that immigrants, in particular, the Arabs and the Africans committed the highest number of crimes while blaming ‘elite’ for not taking responsibilities for actions they caused and not taking care of their own citizens. (Ex. video: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 17, 19) In they rhetoric they are referring to the fact that individuals coming from distant countries are too different to adopt the Swedish culture and assimilate. By mentioning the particular homogenous group of immigrants coming from African or Arabic countries they are making a clear distinction between ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ immigrants.

...Almost half of the rapes were committed last year by foreign born. It is an important fact.... The only reasonable explanation why these particular groups are overrepresented, especially groups from the Middle East and northern Africa is that they stick to the view on women they have, where, in some parts of the world it is even ok to commit rape. These are the values we imported to Sweden and exposed Swedish women to the rape. (Video 2, 2010)

As a reason for an increment of criminal activities conducted by immigrants, the Sweden Democrats refer to their culture, especially when it comes to the culture of the Muslim countries. To prove the statement, they are pointing out facts obtained in their research, which allocates the group of people ‘born in Iraq’ as the most violent one. However, besides statistics obtained from their research, there are no any other scientific evidences indicating a positive relationship between committed crimes and immigrants.

We looked at the group ’born in Iraq’ because it stands out so distinctly in this poll and we can see that this group, which represents approximately 1,3% of the population and 10,5% of those who committed rape, which indicates overrepresentation of about 8,4 times. (Video 2, 2010)

SD’s 2010 election campaign is filled with problems of immigrants and immigration in favor of native inhabitants. The rhetoric and created the notion of ‘Muslim criminal immigrant’
contributed to the development of the perception that immigration is a threat to the Swedish society and its citizens. (Ex. video: 1, 4, 10, 11) Denmark and Finland, where right-wing parties have made its way through, are often presented as good examples of well-developed and stable immigration policy. Denmark and Sweden share numerous significant aspects such as welfare system, social similarities, secularism and history of the Social Democrats domination. Since right wing has proven itself highly successful in Denmark it is not surprise that SD take this country as a good example when it comes to immigration policy.

*Compare Swedish immigration policy with Danish or Finnish, and so on. Swedish immigration policy, observed from an international perspective, is extreme... We need to limit immigration so that we can end up like Denmark, like Finland, and have some serious chance to deal with the problems that mass immigration caused in recent decades in Sweden. I am talking about security problems, social problems, exclusion and segregation in suburbs, above all (Video 15, 2010)*

The words such as ‘segregation’ and ‘exclusion’ are often linked to immigration to demonstrate a clear connection between a high percentage of immigration and a high degree of segregation in Sweden. Segregation and exclusion illustrate Sweden as a divided country where crimes and conflicts in the suburbs and ghettos are the result of failed mass immigration policies. (Ex. video: 8, 15, 18)

While the main priority areas in 2010 were welfare and reducing the cost of immigration, the one of the major priority areas in 2014 appears to be safety and security. During the election conference speech in 2014, Åkesson made a connection to the immigrants associated with negative connotations such as crime and riots, without explicitly mentioning the word ‘immigrants’. By making the use of previously established notion of ‘criminal immigrant,’ softened rhetoric in 2014 made it possible to associate with recognizable notion of stereotypes previously established in people’s heads without making explicit reference to certain group of individuals.

*In our Sweden, party friends, the police and emergency service are citizens’ friends and in our Sweden, we do not throw stones on our friends. (Video 24, 2010)*

‘Immigrants’ are not anymore considered individuals coming from geographically distant countries. Immigrants are given labels such as the Romanians, the Bulgarians, beggars, indicating
that there is being a view of all EU immigrants fitting into one category. This categorization can be interpreted as a part of ‘Othering’ process where EU immigrants are not just the Romanians, the Bulgarians, beggars and homeless but they are also different from the Swedes. Statements in SD’s rhetoric describe reports on surveys, criminal activities and criminalization of begging activities evoking negative feelings towards immigrants among Swedes.

‘A person may be forced to beg during the day and commit crimes during the evening.’
(Video 30, 2014)

Apart from numerous similar statements, SD present statistical data associated with begging and criminal activities involving EU citizens. The major responsibility is in most of the cases placed with Romanian citizens, while other EU citizens are mentioned as a secondary source. In fact, surveys pointing to the high percentage of organized criminal activities among the Romanians in Sweden are used as argumentation to confirm statements of the Sweden Democrats.

*One thing I also want to say and it is very important to emphasize, that, neither I nor the Sweden Democrats have ever claimed that all the begging in Sweden would be linked to criminal activity. We have never claimed. However, there is a representative of the police who have said it before. It is not us.* (Video 30, 2014)

Through the informative presentations and police statements as a source, the Sweden Democrats created prejudices and conducted a negative stereotype in relation to the Romanian citizens, taking no risk of being accused of racism or religious intolerance. A larger part of their argumentation regarding the Romanians is based on, as they noted, information from defendant police authorities, municipalities and NGOs. Accusing ‘white’ and ‘Christians’ made it easier to blame immigrants for the variety of problems that occurred in Swedish society. They have become a threat not only to national identity but also to country’s prosperity and safety. (Ex. video: 24, 25, 30, 32, 34)

### 6.3. Immigration and Unemployment

This section is related to economic frame and the connection between immigration and unemployment. The major findings indicate that in 2010 immigrants are depicted as a financial weight to a welfare state, unwilling to work and fully supported by taxpayers. Immigration is framed as a threat to country’s prosperity and responsible for economical drawbacks and strongly
contrasted to the welfare system. In 2014 focus was instead placed on reverse discrimination in a labor market where immigrants enjoyed instant benefits and were taking jobs from the Swedes.

Increasing rates of unemployment among young people in Sweden and number of immigrants are points widely discussed in SD’s speeches. Although not one of the main priority area discussed in 2010, a relation between immigrants and increase of unemployment is often mentioned in SDs rhetoric. Mass unemployment is represented as a direct consequence of mass immigration. When giving a speech at SD kommunkonferans, Wachtmeister stated that Sweden had had well-functioning labor market until it was destroyed by LO and the Social Democrats blaming them for developing aggressive immigration policy and allowing immigrants to take jobs from the Swedes:

*Sweden had well functioning labor immigration for five hundred years, until it was destroyed by LO and the Social Democrats, because you do not want people who compete with Swedish works and only way is to lock labor from the outside. Instead, they opened the borders and created a very strange immigration policy that has since been applied.* (Video 23, 2010)

A common argument for high unemployment rates among immigrants are high financial support for unemployed, equal to one they would have if they find a job. Unemployment among immigrants and their financial support provided by taxpayers are often noted as a reason for unrealistically high taxes for pensioners. (Ex. video: 10, 11, 12, 14, 16) The solution presented by SD in 2010 is to develop revenue for abolition of taxes for pensioners just by restricting immigration to Sweden:

*We have revenue for the entire abolition of the taxes for pensioners that exist today, by just strongly restricting immigration to Sweden. And this is the calculation that we support, both from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise and one week later the Social Democrats who referred to the figures of around 20 billion a year that we could save directly in the first year just by sharply limiting immigration according to Sweden Democrat’s policy.* (Video 3, 2010)

An additional element often linked to immigration is cost either in the form of calculated numbers or using words such as economical drawbacks or spending of tax revenue. In 2014 a new concept of ‘discrimination against individuals with Swedish background’ was adopted. In fact, SD refers to a governmental proposal in which immigrants can enjoy the instant jobs, housing and
other benefits. The proposal is seen as a policy based on discrimination where the Swedes are victimized and immigrants prioritized, which is something that the Sweden Democrats will never support. (Ex. video: 24, 27, 29, 31, 36) In one of the public speeches, Åkesson expressed opinion in relation to discrimination of Swedes in favor of immigrants:

*Regarding the extreme range policy, in the form of mass immigration, which contributes to displacement of weaker groups in the labor market, and so called entry level jobs and other measures that discriminate workers with the Swedish background, have been strongly supported by the government. (Video 27, 2014)*

Beside restriction of immigration, as a consistent priority area, the party demonstrated desire to establish themselves in the labor market policy. Particularly, focusing on suggestions for improving working conditions in the public sector, health benefits and social care.

*We want to develop a Sweden with safe and healthy workplaces. We want to build a Sweden where one can live on their salaries. A Sweden, where everyday heroes and heroines in the public sector, are not forced to early retirement due to the poor working conditions, stress and understaffing. We want to enable more people to work to the extent that one desire. (Video 24, 2014)*

Instead of blaming immigrants for taking jobs from the Swedes, Åkesson referred to the not so bright labor situation as the fault of the Social Democrats and their policies, resulting in high unemployment rates, despite shortage of human resources in certain areas. SD leader has previously challenged the leader of the Social Democrats, Stefan Löfven on a debate, without positive response. During the speech in Långholmen, Åkesson took up a chicken costume to further demonstrate Löfven’s cowardice to participate in a debate. When referring to the government, Åkesson used the term ‘bourgeois’ to emphasize that it opposes the interests of working class:

*It is evident that the bourgeois government, during its eight years being in power, failed miserably, in one area after another. They have completely failed with jobs; they have completely failed with integrations; they have completely failed with school results; they have completely failed with healthcare; they have completely failed with elderly care; they have completely failed with defense; they have completely failed to combat crime; Party friends, Reinfeldt’s government is the worst government that Sweden has ever had. (Video 27, 2014)*
Instead of adopting rhetoric from 2010 and arguing for closing the borders to immigrants who are unwilling to work and enjoying financial support by taxpayers, in 2014 the Sweden Democrats are focusing on changes in labor policies and education for deficit professions.

*If we need a doctor, we need to train the doctors. If we need a teacher, so we train teachers. If we need a plumber, so we get to train plumbers and if we need property technicians then we damn well educate property technicians! It is not a solution to send our own people in unemployment and then hope that the skills we need will come here from other countries. (Video 24, 2014)*

6.4. Immigrants as the Abusers of Generosity of the Welfare State

The following section of results deals with framing of immigration as a threat to the Swedish welfare system. Out of all previously mentioned themes, (religion, culture, economy and security) welfare theme has been one of the most adopted, consistent and fundamental point of the party’s ideology. The Sweden Democrats’ rhetoric in 2010 dominates the sharp contrast between mass immigration and the welfare state. This conflict is illustrated by the competition over resources among Muslim immigrants and pensioners. In 2014 discussion shifted from religion based to a nation based, suggesting that other nations should not be entitled to the benefits. The argument provided here is related to fear of growing unemployment and violence.

The welfare state is the globalized world with open borders and the constant flow of population. The Sweden Democrats keep striving towards homogeneous Sweden seeing multiculturalism as the biggest threat to the welfare. Immigrants are perceived as the greatest challenge to the welfare system where the central question is *why should ‘we’ provide for ‘them’?*

In the election 2010, the Sweden Democrats launched an election film that raises many discussions in the media. The video reached half a million views in just a few days pointing out major issues behind party’s ideology. In their speeches in 2010 the Sweden Democrats pointed out the important of prioritizing one of the two choices: welfare or mass immigration. There is no third choice. On the one hand there is welfare, something important and positive, while on the other hand, there is immigration, often discussed with prefix ‘mass’, associated with a large quantity, hard to control. The adaptation of typical right ideologies on the one hand (law, order and tradition) and combination with left values (society caring, solidarity, security) become central core of their ideological position and rhetoric in 2010:
We see a gigantic conflict today between mass immigration on the one hand and welfare on the other hand. Friends of Sweden, you cannot have it both. You have to choose, and for us, the priority is quite obvious. We choose to restore and develop the Swedish welfare system in contrast to a costly, inefficient, rehearsed mass immigration policy. (Video 12, 2010)

The welfare state is according to SD, threatened by mass immigration. (Ex. video: 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18) Putting immigration issue against pensioners is what position the Sweden Democrats between left and right. ‘Islamophobia’ on the one hand and welfare on the other represent the strong connection between being culturally conservative and warm hearted when it comes to weak and elderly people.

....Our resources are not infinite and all politics is about prioritizing. And, in that conflict, the Sweden Democrats prioritize welfare and security in contrast to the mass immigration. (Video 14, 2010)

The contrast between welfare and immigration has been made even clearer with the emphasis on the importance of distinguishing real refugees in need for protection, from the immigrants who come to Sweden to exploit the welfare system. The label ‘genie refugee’ is used to illustrate the conflict between people who sought protection and are fleeing due to the war, persecution or discrimination based on sexual orientation and people aimed to abuse the generous Swedish system.

It is also an important initiative for us today, and a major effort to emphasis the importance of helping genuine refugees. (Video 4, 2010)

Besides the most basic concern that immigrants will take jobs from the Swedish citizens, high level of unemployment among immigrants is seen as a reason for the budget shortage in the welfare sector. The welfare sector is clearly considered as a both exclusionary and inclusionary, meaning that it should belong only to the citizens of Sweden. Economic aspects play a principal role in the exclusion of immigrants from the welfare state in favor of the older generation who built the country.

Immigration brake or pension brake. This is a way to illustrate the conflict that exists between mass immigration and welfare. (Video 14, 2010)
The ultimate and the only solution suggested by the Sweden Democrats was the sharp restriction of immigration to Sweden in order to create revenue for the entire abolition of the pensioner taxes. Such solution is seen as a great respect for the elderly who have built the country and provided prosperity Sweden enjoys today.

With the growing numbers of EU migrants in 2014 in Sweden, SD adopted rhetoric that includes a fear of unemployment, warnings about abuse of the welfare system and immigrants who will tend to turn to begging and violence if they cannot find a job in Sweden. (Ex. video: 24, 27, 30, 32, 34) The public debate regarding foreigner begging included a clear emphasis on begging to be Romanian. The Sweden Democrats proposed a solution that included distancing from the responsibility and banning of foreign begging in Sweden.

*We want to ban begging for foreigners. (Video 30, 2014)*

The categorization of foreign beggars and the Swedish citizens opens discussion of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, who are not entitled to benefits. Additional reason signaling that EU migrants should not be eligible for benefits is a lack of inclusion of housing or social assistance in the debate. Instead of discussing possible solutions for inclusion of migrants in the welfare system, SD provided solutions that included banning and deportation in the country of their origin. The immigrants were still blamed for negative aspects in the society but discussion shifted from the religion based to nation based issue.

*There are so many groups of beggars and those who sell something simple, or play music, to gang’s crime and burglary. The Romanians are also the world leader in skimming. (Video 30, 2014)*

The construction of the violent and crime oriented migrant is what makes easier for SD to argue towards welfare nationalism and exclusion of ‘others’ from the utopian state of the welfare system. Their tendency could be seen as a creation of the Swedish society where those who are not productive enough will not be eligible to enjoy benefits on the system. The policy of welfare is promoted through the frame of ethno-nationalism where the nation is defined in terms of ethnicity rather than citizenship.
7. Analysis

The ambition of this chapter is to help us to better understand how immigration is framed using the Hall’s concept of the ‘other’ as the analytical entrance point. Secondly, I will discuss changes that occurred in representation and construction of the Sweden Democrats’ self image accompanied by the struggle for recognition and ‘victimhood’. Lastly, I would like to express analytical concerns in relation to the broader frame, which include the use of technology for itself.

7.1. Framing the Other

‘Swedes’ and ‘Immigrants’ are two groups of individuals defined in different ways and discussed in relation to set of properties that can be associated with membership in any of these groups. Immigrants and Swedes are two sides of the same coin where the distinction is made based on identities, belonging, religion and life preferences. In other words, the immigration is framed and structured by, what Hall defines as a set of binary oppositions. (Hall, 1997) In SD’s rhetoric there is powerful distinction between a ‘Swede’ (educated, white) and ‘Immigrant’ (violent, dangerous, uneducated). While the distinction between immigrants and the Swedes can be seen as consistent and present in both 2010 and 2014 election years, shift between Muslim immigrants and immigrants in general clearly stands out. In other words, the discussion related to religion is replaced by the discussion of immigration in general.

Marked ‘difference’ is, as Hall points out what defines who belongs to ‘us’ and who are ‘them’. (Hall, 1997:230) This ‘difference’ signals particularly Muslim immigrants as ‘The Other’ in 2010, a substantially different and threatening to the Swedish national identity and citizens’ safety, based on incompatible cultural differences and inability to assimilate into society. As Paul Hopper has observed, numerous European governments are expressing concerns that Muslims will remain ‘outsiders’ in society due to their inability of cultural assimilation. (Hopper, 2007:130) While religion plays an important role in the ‘Othering’ process, it is Islam and Muslims immigrants that are placed under the siege. (Zempi and Chakrabort, 2014:24) In several videos in 2010, Åkesson pointed out that Muslims are cultural ‘Other’ involved in a process of changing the Swedish national identity, values and culture. To mention some examples, change will occur according to the Sweden Democrats, in freedom of speech, gender relations and citizens’ safety. Islam is framed as something opposite to Western values and as a totalitarian political ideology, religion and oppressive culture. (Zempi and Chakrabort, 2014:24)
Fear of Islam as the second largest religion in Sweden, mixed with racist elements is used in rhetoric of the Sweden Democrats to signalize the fact that Muslim immigrants are unwelcomed in Sweden. Numerous scholars (ex. Murshed and Pavan, 2011, Castells, 2009) recognized implementation of fear strategies in political rhetoric as the powerful tool for increasing electoral support and encourage citizens to opt for option they can benefit from.

The Sweden Democrats framed Islamophobia as something natural and not related to negative connotations. When the issue of Islam and democracy were addressed, negative examples from countries with the antidemocratic Islamic regime are highlighted as a model and example of what could happen to Sweden in a recent future. Preaching the danger caused by Islam is what Murshed and Pavan observe as a way of gaining political self-advancement. (Murshed and Pavan, 2011:267)

Identification of Islam and Muslims as a homogenous group rather than heterogeneous gives an impression that all Muslims are involved in criminal activities and spreading fear that Islam is soon to become the dominant religion in Sweden. Representation of Islam and Muslim immigrants is based on stereotyping, where confronted boundaries between ‘normal’ and ‘deviant’, ‘Swede’ and ‘Muslim immigrant’ are present. Hall defines stereotyping as the essential part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It shows us what is ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ to society, and what ‘belongs’ and what does not, or is the ‘Other’ (Hall, 1997: 258) Whatever falls into category of the ‘Other’ is considered to be polluted and dangerous, associated with negative feelings. (Hall, 1997) Arguments against Islam are rather normative than analytical, meaning that they are not based on facts but on empty signifiers without the referents. When talking about ‘Muslims in Sweden’ rather than ‘Swedish Muslims’ the Sweden Democrats are creating a manifestation of Islam that is social undesirable and impossible to be accepted as a part of the Swedish culture. Islam is violent, dangerous and a threat to national values and freedom. Rhetorical messages permeated with fear and hate speeches against Muslim immigrants are not directed only towards violent Jihadi extremist, but also towards non-violent Muslim immigrants, starving to develop more homogenous view. (Murshed and Pavan, 2011:268)

Four years later, understanding of immigration as the external threat to Sweden remains, while Islam and religion discussion become a silent issue. ‘The Other’ involved not only immigrants from geographical distant countries but also EU citizens. In other words, individuals that are in any way different from the majority would be classified as the ‘other’ rather than ‘us’.
A common argument from the Sweden Democrats related to their EU election campaign in 2014 was that foreign beggars, mainly referring to the Romanian citizens are coming to Sweden to abuse the welfare system and commit crimes, which is in contrast to the Swedish moral values and social behavior. The most common words used to portray Roma people in their rhetoric are ‘criminals’, ‘beggars’, ‘scammers’, which illustrate how are ‘they’ different from ‘civilized’ Swedes. This ‘spectacle of the other’ confirms Hall’s perception of construction of common national identity, which is not built on question ‘who they are’ but rather ‘who they are not’. (Hall, 1997) As the nation state plays a significant role in the Sweden Democrats’ political ideology, it helps to understand why geographical space and imaginary cultural boundaries between individuals serve as a main argument against multiculturalism. Hall propose two possible solutions in response to weakening of a nation state; turn towards aggressive nationalism and defense or integrative action that implies the strategic application of new cultural patterns. (Hall, 1997) The Sweden Democrats opted for aggressive nationalism including arguments related to criminal activities carried out by Muslims and loss of national identity in 2010, while in 2014 they were touching upon economic sphere, problems related to welfare system, organized crimes, begging and immigration costs.

The constriction of ‘difference’ in the process of representation engages emotions, feelings and mobilizes fear and anxieties in the viewer. (Hall, 1997:226) Although their rhetoric and argumentation makes it clear to understand what groups are ‘different’ and who cannot be associated with the privileged category of being ‘Swede’, what still remains unclear is who can fall into this category according to SD? The question of ‘Swede’ is complex and not easy to answer but one of the possible solution could be seen in the use of terminology such as ‘our culture’, ‘our identity’ and ‘our tradition’ meaning that belonging to the Swedish nation is not the same as holding the Swedish citizenship.

7.2. Constructing Self Image

From 2010 until 2014 party was in the process of transformation towards more adequate democratic norms. They played the card of ‘victimhood’ and used their image of the ‘underdogs’ as a powerful political motivator. Victimization and politics are going hand in hand, and it is nearly impossible to separate the victim from politics, especially if they are part of a broader political campaign. ‘Victim’ placed into political contexts represents ‘real’ people but it can also be adjusted to promote numerous political or ethical goals. (Jacoby, 2015:512) According to
Jacoby, the process of victimhood begins with an act of harm within particular political context and follows the injured party through judgment of the harm as a wrong, potentially resulting in reaching the level of recognition of a grievance-based identity. (Jacoby, 2015:518) If we apply this to the case study of the Sweden Democrats and consider the fact that in 2010 party was often sidestepped and ignored both by media and other parties, it does not come as a surprise that the Sweden Democrats established themselves as the *victims of democratic regime* and the party of the people’s voices. The Sweden Democrats sought to develop an image of the people’s party that strongly criticize consensual elite that refuse to collaborate with SD and engage the party in a democratic dialogue. (Hellström & Nilsson, 2010:60) In the process of the victimhood, the injured party creates awareness that caused violations are both unacceptable to them personally and to society’s normative framework. The developed sense of injustice is used for the support mobilization on the basis of a combination of grievances and aspirations. (Jacoby, 2015:521) The Sweden Democrats have used every opportunity to criticize mainstream media sharply accusing them of censorship and selective decisions regarding election information served to the voters. They have seen themselves as ‘Swedish friends’, a silent majority addressing the issues that no other party dares to. As Jacoby noted, in order to recognize a victim it is crucial to determine who is responsible. This responsibility can be seen in individuals, groups or political system as a whole. (Jacoby, 2015:526) In the case of the Sweden Democrats, mainstream media and elite in power are seen as responsible and cause of the harm, ignorance and injustice. Frequently adopted rhetorical figures in their argumentation were ‘elite in power’ and ‘bourgeois government’, terms often used to illustrate governing against the interest of people.

The growing popularity of the Sweden Democrats in 2014, as well as increasing numbers of seats in the Parliament singled the silent shift in the construction of party’s self-image. Playing card of ‘Victimhood’ was not enough for securing a place in the Swedish political landscape and moving away from dark roots. In order to continue its growth, keep old supporters and gain new ones by avoiding offending those whom the messages would not appeal, they turned towards ‘dog whistle’ politics. The metaphor of ‘dog whistle’ politics refers to speaking in a code to target audience. (Lopéz, 2014:4) An example of how deeply embedded this strategy was, are repeated messages about violence in suburbs without explicitly mentioning words such as ‘immigrants’ or ‘Muslims’ while powerfully communicating message about threats of immigration and spreading fear. Those blowing a ‘dog whistle’ are seeking to furtively communicate support to a limited
group of voters whose commitments are not broadly accepted by the body of the politics. (Lopéz, 2014:4) Furthermore, an adaptation of dog whistle politics often hides racism even from those in whom it awakes powerful reactions.

**7.3. From Alternative Media to Mainstream Success**

Up to this point I have primarily been interested in the rhetorical content of the videos and frames, but now I would like to consider it as a whole, link it together including YouTube as a platform and think about SD’s rhetorical and political communication strategy. I am interested in looking into a bigger frame, which also includes the use of technology for itself.

The entrance of the Sweden Democrats into the Parliament in 2010 came as a surprise to many but however, they did not achieve success over the night. In fact, their success can be seen as a final result of a process that has been going on for a longer time. Although, media ignorance can be linked to a negative connotation, I believe that it resulted in a party growth and media breakthrough. Namely, when SD’s election video was rejected by TV4, the public attention was paid to the Sweden Democrats, and their YouTube channel. The Sweden Democrats are a good example of how mainstream media strategy of exclusion and ignorance can have a boomerang effect. Instead of excluding them from power, act of ignorance evoked curiosity about the party. This confirms Atton’s understanding of YouTube as the valuable tool for alternative communication, used by far right actors in order to bypass mainstream media where they have limited or no access at all. (Atton, 2002) If we apply Atton’s typology of alternative media (Atton, 2002:27) on the case of Sweden Democrats we can see that they carefully employ most of the elements from Atton’s model of alternative media. The Swede Democrats use their YouTube channel as a communicational and informational medium, where they share press releases, news reports and discussions with the virtual audience.

Carefully chosen content with news value uploaded on their YouTube channel contains many aspects of the alternative media. One of them is the strategy of direct communication with the virtual supporters and deployment of pronoun ‘you’, such as ‘you need to decide’, or ‘you have to make the right choice’.

Another distinctive feature of alternative media according to Atton (Atton, 2002) is the form, variety of presentation enriched with strong visual elements. The Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel employs a variety of videos ranging from participation in public meetings, press conferences, protest movements, social activities to speaking directly to the virtual viewer. Video
activism of the Sweden Democrats is about achieving and growing its public visibility. Atton (Atton, 2012) points out networking and linking as one of the significant characteristics that contribute to transformational potential of alternative media. Videos from SD’s YouTube channel are circulating on the other platforms such as blogs, social media profiles, websites and etc. Ekman argues that organizations are able to showcase a diversity of practices and identities seeking to modify the perception of radical right politics by publishing video material on YouTube. (Ekman, 2014:95)
8. Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to explore how the Sweden Democrats framed the issue of immigration and changes that occurred in their rhetoric and argumentation from the National election in 2010 until the National election in 2014. In the very beginning of the study, YouTube is considered as a platform with the elements of alternative media. The videos from the Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel, used as the only empirical material of this study, revealed that significant changes occurred not only in their rhetorical strategies but also in the way their self-image is constructed. In the paragraphs that follow I will present my major findings in relation to the research questions and emphasize concluding points that emerged from this study.

In material uploaded on the Sweden Democrats’ YouTube channel, to what extent did their rhetoric and argumentation in relation to immigration shift between 2010 and 2014?

Results of this study suggest that political discourse of the Sweden Democrats appears to be directed towards the more adequate democratic norms. The discourse of multiculturalism in 2010 includes deployment of negative representation of the ‘Other’ in a struggle of returning to the ‘old’ and ‘better’, infused with the fear of change. A tendency of the development is directed towards positive self-image and the ideological framework where racism appears as commonsensible and natural. SD’ use of language in 2014 revealed broader shift in rhetoric, giving an impression of new, changed party, democratically oriented. This study pointed out numerous rhetorical examples where two differently communicated messages refer to the same meaning: ‘immigrants are not welcome to Sweden’. But does dressing in a new ‘outfit’ mean that antidemocratic ‘costume’ is left aside? Do changes in rhetoric affect changes in policy?

Criticism toward the political Left is equally employed in the rhetoric of 2010 and 2014, where the Left is often ridiculed and accused for not defending the interests of people and country. Although this study provided insight into changes and development within the party between 2010 and 2014, taking visual aspects of empirical material in consideration would have a significant contribution to the findings.
How was the issue of immigration framed in these years?

Overall, the discourse of the Sweden Democrats has proven to be highly rhetorical. The major change in the framing of immigration issue occurred in SD rhetoric between 2010 and 2014 is a shift between ‘we are losing our identity’ towards ‘our economy is suffering’. National identity and cultural belonging as well as the meaning of the ‘Swede’ has been the central issue of the SD’ rhetoric in 2010. The new dialog in 2014 has marked a turn away from the sharp and open criticism of mass immigration on the national and cultural grounds primary emphasizing unstable economic climate as a result of migration waves in Sweden. Religion discussion and linking Muslims to criminal activities has been replaced to economic failure putting the blame onto immigrants in general and abuse of the welfare system. Anti-Muslim discourse shifted towards a new wave of migrants coming from Eastern European countries, particularly from Romania and Bulgaria, mainly because they eligibility of having the right to social security and health program as the EU citizens. Immigrants are remaining to be ‘undesirable’ and ‘other’ but reasons for non-acceptance shifted from insurmountable cultural differences and nationhood towards economic problems and financial support.

If we move toward the broader discussion of transformative potential of YouTube we would be able to identify the utopian and dystopian perception of ongoing change. When we look at YouTube as platform for alternative political communication from an optimistic side, we can see a space for development of democracy, providing marginalized and excluded groups, such as the Sweden Democrats, with the ability to communicate with their supporters, unfiltered by gatekeepers and unaffected by negative coverage in mainstream media. This utopian view can be illustrated by McLuhan’s concept of global village, united global space providing individuals with the opportunity of instantaneous communication and news sharing.

In contrast to this utopian view and McLuhan’s idea of global village stands pessimistic side in which virtual audience can be seen as passive receivers of radical right rhetoric of spreading hate messages and creating gated communities. Instead of a place for unity and democracy, YouTube could be seen rather as the place of division and tool for personal interests.

Instead of picking a utopian or dystopian approach of the transformative potential of online platforms and complex, unpredictable relationship between media and politics, this research suggest a further focus on a single cases and excluded groups that are making a significant
changes in the political systems. Although ongoing changes in media technologies pose a challenge to journalism and political elites, we need to bear in mind that politics also take place in an offline environment, on the streets and screens.

**8.1. Further Research**

This study pointed out the development of the Sweden Democrats with the main focus on the rhetorical shift that occurred from 2010 until 2014. Considering findings of this study, it would be interesting to follow the Sweden Democrats’ rhetorical path and its development in election years to come. Moreover, a comparative analysis of rhetorical messages of the Sweden Democrats based on empirical material from mainstream media may reveal different findings, contributing to the better understanding of party’s development.
9. References


9.1. Web Sources

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