



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

Faculty of Social Sciences and Education

Institute of Government and Politics

Center for Baltic Studies

Pauline Court

**PARIAH PARTIES AND THE OUTCOME OF POLITICAL
OSTRACIZATION: THE CASE OF THE SWEDEN DEMOCRATS**

Master's thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Vello Pettai

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This thesis conforms to the requirements for a Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT :

Keywords : Sweden, party system, pariah party, Sweden Democrats, ostracization

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INTRODUCTION:

"We will never ever, never anywhere, never, ever are we going to render ourselves actively or passively dependent on the Sweden Democrats"

Mona Sahlin (2010), former leader of the Swedish Social democrats

On the 19th September 2010, the Swedish general election to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) created a national shock and a historic result: while the Social Democrats recorded one of their worst results since the 1920s, for the first time in history, the Sweden Democrats (SD) passed the 4% electoral threshold with 5,7% and won 20 seats in the Riksdag. Whereas the rise of nationalist and anti-immigration parties in Western European parliaments had become a kind of normalcy, it was a shock for Sweden whose political system has been able to prevent the rise of radical right-wing parties on the national level in contrast to most of its Nordic neighbors.

In a 2012 article the German scholar of Swedish politics Bernd Henningsen (2012), warned the readers against the rise of radical right-wing populist parties in Northern Europe and the end of the myth of "Nortopia". While radical right-wing populist parties have become more and more successful in all of Europe, the Nordic countries seemed to be the last bastions against right-wing radicalization, at least on the general perception. Nevertheless, this vision of Nordic politics has proved to verge more on the myth.

Most academics agree on the fact that "political extremism is most likely a normal pathology of all democracies" (W. M. Downs, 2013) and since the 1990s, Radical Right Wing Populist Parties (RRWPP) have not only entered parliament, some of them have managed to become a support party for parliamentary coalitions or even be part of a governing coalition. This is indeed the case in Denmark, where the Danish

People's Party has been a very important support party the Liberal-Conservative coalition governments under Lars Rasmussen or in Norway where the Norwegian Progress Party joined the governing Conservative and Progress parties after the 2013 general elections. Much more recently in April, the Finnish elections have ended up on the formation of a right-wing coalition with the True Finns party.

In Sweden however, the center-right parties' "Alliance for Sweden" led by Fredrik Reinfeldt, prime Minister of Sweden since 2006, has chosen to form a minority government after the elections of 2010 and has clearly proclaimed its refusal to work with the SD and declined any negotiations with them. If the last elections on 14 September saw the left-wing minority coalition led by the Social Democrats win the government, the SD made an historical result of 12.9% and became the 3 biggest parties in Sweden overtaking by far the Greens and the Centre Party.

Is thus Sweden following the path of its Nordic neighbors regarding the rise of radical right-wing parties and their political acceptance or does it remain an exception?

While many scholars have focused their research on explaining the reason of the rise of RRWPPs and their persistence, less attention has been given to the supply side and the reactions of the mainstream parties towards them.

While the concept of "pariah party" has often been used in the literature about RRWPPs, there is a lack of intelligibility regarding its definition. What is a pariah party? When is a party a pariah? To which extent can a party be labeled as pariah party? The aim of the thesis, thus, is firstly to give a holistic view on the concept of "pariah party" in the academic field but also to analyze the status of the SD in the Swedish party system and find out if it fits the features of a pariah party. Based on the literature regarding pariah parties, we will study the evolution of the SD in Swedish parliamentary politics, the behavior of the mainstreams parties towards it and especially the pursuit of an ostracization of the SD on the national level.

Because of the limits of the thesis, the scope will be reduced to the national level and the period from the last Swedish general election of 2010, marking the first entrance of the SD in parliament until December 2014. The hypothesis is formulated that in Western European politics, most of the parties formerly labeled as "pariah parties" have moved towards the mainstream "both in long-term structure and cultural ways and in the immediate context of party competition and electoral politics" (M. Mikenberg,

2013) and thus, the “pariah party” status should be understood as a stage in the RRWPPs development and access to power. So against the backdrop of many RRWPPs having been able to break out of the “pariah party” status, this thesis will look at whether the SD has achieved similar conditions for such a change and the extent to which mainstream parties are attempting to hold on to the “pariah party” line.

Four leading questions will be examined over the thesis: (1) To which extent can a party be labeled as a pariah party? (2) What are the strategies and arguments used by the pariah parties in their search to become more acceptable and play a role in coalition formations? (3) To what extent do mainstream parties’ reactions have an impact on the “pariah” nature of a party? (4) Which impact does the rise of a “pariah” party have on the party system and political process?

Those questions will be approached qualitatively based on content analysis method and through an analysis of the SD’s evolution and strategic changes structurally and ideologically, as well as the attitude of the mainstream parties towards the SD in the media and in the Riksdag.

The thesis will be divided into four parts: the first chapter serves as a literature review and theoretical foundation to introduce the concept of pariah party and party ostracization as well as its analytical limits. The second chapter will introduce the methodological framework, research questions and hypotheses used to operationalized the analysis. Chapter 3 will be used as a case-introduction chapter to the proper data analysis and will provide the reader with information about the SD and Swedish party system in order to better outline our case study and understand the major challenges of the analysis. The data and empirical results will then be presented and analyzed in chapter four and finally chapter five will feature a discussion on the consequences and implications of the results as well as the major challenges represented by the last Swedish general elections.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims at outlining the different theoretical concepts important to this thesis and thus presents our theoretical points of departure. The case study of this thesis being the Swedish radical right wing party “Sweden Democrats” and the concept of “pariah party”, the whole work will thus focus on those two concepts though a “pariah party” can also be a radical party from the left as well. This chapter will thus start with the conceptualization of a RRWPP (1.1). From that definition, section 1.2 analyses the strategy of political ostracization of a party based on William Downs works, then in section 1.3, we will use coalition theories as a theoretical tool to understand the conditions under which a RRWPP could become a political partner and participate in government formation. In the section 1.4, we will discuss the influence of political convergence in the legitimization of a RRWPP and finally, the last section (1.5) will provide our conceptualization of a pariah party.

1.1. Defining Radical Right Wing Populist Parties

According to many scholars, the SD, which is at the center of our analysis, is a party belonging to the “radical right-wing populist” (Betz H-G., 2005), “populist radical right”(Mudde C., 2007) or simply “populist right” (Widfeldt A., 2008). The denomination is indeed debatable nevertheless we will here prefer the umbrella term of “radical right-wing populist party”, which seems to us semantically more relevant and adapted to our case study and to some examples from other European countries that we

will also regularly use as references. In this part we will thus try to define the main characteristics of a RRWPP based on the literature available on the topic.

1.1.1. Populism

Starting from a pure etymological analysis, the core concept of populism is « the people », here understood in opposition to the ruling elite of the country and often replaced in discourses by the term « ordinary people ». It focuses then on the relationship between the people and the elite that it often pictures as imbalanced.

In this sense, the starting definition of « populism » has been well described by Cas Mudde (2004) as “*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people*”. As a result, political parties using a populist approach would thus explicitly claim to represent the will and interests of the ordinary people in opposition to the unrepresentative ruling elites and social institutions, which they often depict as oppressive.

Moreover, populist parties always refer and identify to a “heartland”, a mythical or “imagined community” as Anderson (1991) would say, that the parties pretend to represent. Nevertheless this “heartland” often remains vaguely defined but mostly constructed in a negative manner and often depends on which other ideology the party is combined with.

In their search of representing the ordinary people’s interests, populist parties will often use different types of strategy and tools such as a charismatic leader, simple and issues oriented discourses as well as a certain type of communication emphasizing the idea of direct relations between the party and the people. Paul Taggart gives us a very comprehensive review of the main features of populism:

“Populism is a reaction against the ideas, institutions and practices of representative politics which celebrates an implicit or explicit heartland as a response to a sense of crisis; however, lacking universal key values, it is chameleonic, taking on attributes of its environment, and, in practice, is episodic”(Taggart P., 2000).

As Mudde (2004) reminds us, populism is «moralistic rather than programmatic» and that is the reason why it can be combined with any different ideology and is, in the words of Taggart (1991), “chameleonic”; if it lacks of definition when it comes to a positive construction of the “heartland”, populist parties often manage to explicitly point out what and who does not belong to their imagined community and that is why, in the case of right wing populist parties it is often linked with some nationalistic or xenophobic ideologies.

1.1.2. Radical Right Wing Parties:

Delimiting the conceptual and theoretical field of “radical right wing parties” is once again not an easy task and remains a highly disputable concept among the scholars. The adjectives “extreme” or “radical” have often been used in an interchangeable way and even though there exists an important semantic distinction between the two terms, we won’t discuss it in this thesis and we will rather chose the term “radical” which seems more appropriate for our case study. It is important to underline the fact that the literature used to delimit this concept has used both “extremist” and “radical” interchangeably.

First of all, on the left-right dimension, our study focuses on parties that are considered to be “right-wing” or at least are classified as such by most scholars and by other parties, however those emerging parties have usually challenged the unidimensional political spectrum especially on the economical level and on the degree of state’s intervention, what is sometimes called “welfare chauvinism”.

Besides, the term “radical right wing parties” is often used as an umbrella name for a group of parties, which actually possesses different ideological variations, which often question the conceptualization of a “radical right wing party family”. Based on Kitschelt and Carter previous studies, Mikenberg (2013) offers a comprehensive four-groups typology of RRWP: *(1) autocratic-fascist (usually including racism or xenophobia) (2) racist or ethno-centrist, but not fascist (3) populist-authoritarian (organized around a strong and charismatic leader and with a diffuse nationalist ideology); and (4) religious-fundamentalist versions (in which nationalism merges with religious rigidity).*

Nevertheless, the lines between the different groups are often blurred and the contemporary RRWPP have often shown a high capacity to change in their core ideology, their core political concern and especially their perception by the public opinion, the other parties and the scholars. What they all share is a certain reductive vision of the nation or the national community, their seek for homogeneity (which can be ethnic, religious, social etc.) and a usually conservative vision of the society and the politics.

Even though most of them could be labeled “anti-immigrant party” as Fennema (1997) or Van Spanje and Van der Brug (2007) have rightly justified, and the anti-immigrant views of those parties remain in most case at the core of those parties’ concerns, we thought that it would be too reductive for our conceptualization of pariah parties to use such a denomination. Besides, in the context of our thesis, we would prefer a less meaningful or at least more general denomination in order to remain as objective as possible and not to fall within the process of “political diabolisation” that we will analyze later.

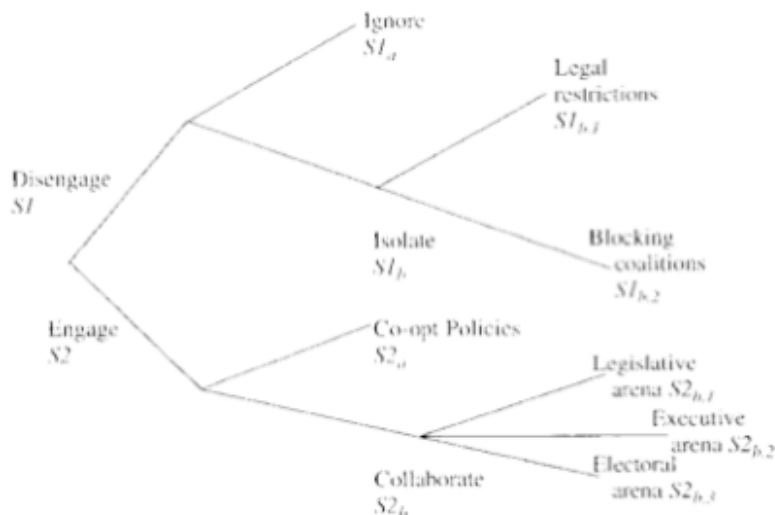
For the purpose of this thesis and to define what we understand by “radical right wing populist parties”, we will thus use the definition of Mikenberg (2013):

“A political ideology, the core element of which is a myth of a homogenous nation, a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism which is directed against the concept of liberal and pluralistic democracy and its underlying principles of individualism and universalism”.

1.2. Political ostracization

As most European countries have seen the development and rise of RRWPPs in the last decades, the reaction of the mainstream parties have been different and have changed overtime. Nevertheless, in most European countries the RRWPPs had experienced, at least at their beginning, a political exclusion giving them thus this status of pariah party. Following the model of “alternative strategies for responding to pariah party” established by Downs (2001), a political exclusion or what we will call here “ostracization”, can take two different forms: ignoring the RRWPP or isolating it.

Figure 2: Alternative strategies for responding to a pariah party (Downs, 2001)



1.2.1. Ignoring the RRWPP

This strategy also described by Downs as “do nothing strategy” has been employed by mainstream parties from the left and right wing in order to decrease the credibility and legitimation of the RRWPPs and their political agenda. This boycott of RRWPPs and their championed issues seeks to prevent a party to attain media and public attention, which are necessary for a political party to stand out; in the case of Sweden, Anders Hellström (2012) recently underlined that “the behaviour of the media as a cause of the electoral fortunes of the SD in Sweden”. The refusal by mainstream parties to have public debate with a RRWPP has also been one tool to diminish a RRWPP’s political legitimacy.

Finally, the mainstream parties can also implement the strategy of the “clean hands” by re-directing the public attention on another issue in order to “play down the salience of the issues championed by the radical right” (Bale T., Green-Pedersen C., Krouwel A., Luther K.R., Sitter N., 2010). One of the main feature of those RRWPPs pointed out earlier, being their populist rhetoric, by preventing them from media and public attention and ignoring them, the mainstream parties can lower the importance of

those parties and their populist views. Nevertheless, this strategy has often shown to be successful for a short period of time and if the RRWPP electoral results are increasing, this strategy would inevitably fail and the mainstream parties will have to use some other tools in order to contain it.

1.2.2. Isolating the RRWPP

When a RRWPP has received enough media attention and even a relevant share of votes, the “ignoring” strategy is not sufficient and the mainstream parties have to develop other methods in order to contain the RRWPP.

The most radical strategy that can be used is a legal restriction of the party, which, according to Downs (2001), can take three different forms: “outlawing the party completely, raising thresholds for representation in electoral laws, and restricting voice”. The most striking case has been the legal restriction of the Flemish Bloc in the Netherlands, which opposed one of the strongest legal restriction when in 2004, the Court of Appeal declared that the party breached the 1981 anti-racism law and the party dissolved. This process has been the result of a long politics of containment established by the all the Dutch parties represented on the national level through an agreement in 1989 to establish a strong “cordon sanitaire”. In this case, mainstream parties used legal and institutionalized structures in order to diminish and delegitimize (if not abolish) a RRWPP, but the result is not always the one expected and such process can also reinforce the position of a RRWPP electorate and be seen as not so democratic. Before the presidential elections of 2012 in France, Marine Le Pen, leader of the Front National (FN), experienced a lot of difficulties to gather the 500 needed signatures from officials and mayor in order to become official candidate. She denounced this nomination rule has un-democratic and a form of political manipulation, especially because of the 1976 amendment which stipulated that the list of officials who sign must be made public. This reinforced an increasing skepticism towards traditional parties within the public opinion and strengthens for a part of the electorate the appeal of the populist agenda.

Another less radical alternative to contain a RRWPP would be the formation of a broad political “block” between the main parties in order to prevent the RRWPP to gain power, it can be by establishing a grand coalition, which also has its own political risk

for the parties in the coalition. Most of the time, the tactic used by mainstream parties has been, unlike the “ignore them” strategy, to broadly or individually denounce the RRWPP as a political threat (anti-democratic, anti-immigration etc.) and to demonize the RRWPP through the mean of the media and parties’ political image. The demonization process also goes along with a clear stand from the mainstream parties of refusing any kind of collaboration or linkage with the RRWPP.

Ostracization can thus broadly be defined by a political strategy used by the mainstream parties in order to delegitimize, boycott and demonize a RRWPP in order to diminish it, so to say, containing the spread of its populist agenda and prevent it from power. Nevertheless the history has shown us than ostracization can also failed especially regarding a change in the political game and social context of a country. We should also be aware that some RRWPPs have also, at least at some point, ostracized themselves voluntarily, keeping their status of protest party and refusing any collaboration and compromise with the mainstreams what did the Danish Progress Party for a long time.

1.3. The “rule of the game”: coalition and partnerships strategies

If we have talked about the issue of ostracization as a response from the mainstream parties to the RRWPPs, we should not forget that the reaction is dichotomous (Fennema 2003) and mainstream parties can also see the RRWPPS as viable partner and chose to pursue a strategy of partnership. Those strategic choice, ostracization or partnership, can of course evolve and change over time and even though the thesis is focus on the ostracization of RRWPPs, it seems however important to have an understanding of the opposite reaction. Acknowledging the idea that “parties are not only ideological creatures” and electoral ambitions remain one important factor, it seemed reasonable to give a quick overview of coalition formation strategies as a tool to understand the potential changing position of a mainstream party towards a RRWPP in order to gain parliamentary victory. With an increasing electoral performance of RRWPPs, it is not un-reasonable to question a potential change of strategy from the mainstream parties in order to get more support, especially in a time where traditional parties support

decreases. Finally, we will analyze also the different “engagement” strategy that can be taken by the mainstream parties.

1.3.1. Coalition formation theories

The major theories of coalition formation are based on the claim that there exist some “political parties are utility maximisers and they seek to maximise either office or policy”(de Lange S. L., 2012). Scholars have thus divided those theories into two types: the office-oriented theories and the policy-oriented ones.

Office-oriented theories

This type of theories has been described as a “winning game”, where the payoffs are constant and in this case parties will seek to form the smallest coalition in order to maximise their payoffs. If this minimal winning theory postulated by Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944), remains quite general and could be apply to a wide range of situations, some authors went further in the conceptualisation of the office-oriented theory and allowed a more deductive approach, adding that maximising the payoffs is not the only factor shaping a minimal winning coalition. In 1970, Leiserson indeed postulated that “bargaining factor” is also decisive, with less actors and parties the bargaining and negotiations will be facilitated and there is more chance of maintaining the coalition in the long run.

Policy oriented theories

For other authors, the office-oriented theories often overlooked the importance of parties’ policies preference and thus the role of the ideological position of the parties.

In its “minimal connected winning coalition” theory, Axelrod (1970) assumes that a coalition will form between actors that are adjacent on a policy scale and can also include “unnecessary actors”. That is to say, the main factor of coalition formation is based on the policy orientation of its members, allowing less conflict of interests and thus maintaining connection in the coalition.

De Swann even specified in his “minimal range theory”(1973) version that not only a coalition will form based on a policy scale distance but more precisely on ideological distance. The coalition should thus minimize as much as possible the ideological distance between the two furthest actors.

This quick overview of some of the most famous coalition formation theories, we can already see that despite a possible “perceptions of ‘democratic responsibility’” (Downs 2002), the reaction of mainstream parties towards RRWPPs can also be driven by other factors. We agree on the idea that every party has a potential of “coalitionability” and on Tim Bale’s (2003) statement that *“as much as there is a trade-off between democratic responsibility and electoral ambition, then the latter is proving more powerful than the former”*.

1.3.2. Engaging the RRWPPs

In his work, which classified the different reactions of mainstreams parties towards the RRWPPs, Downs describes two different strategies used to engage them: “co-optation” and “collaboration” strategies.

Co-optation

This strategy defines by Down (2001) as the “co-optation of the policy positions that won the pariah its seats”, is not a direct engagement strategy and is often less obvious than the others. In the case of the RRWPPs, it means that the mainstream parties will adopt a very close position than the pariah party’s one on its most successful issues such as, for instance, the policy position towards immigration. This strategy often pushes right-wards the political position of the mainstream parties in order to appeal to a larger electorate on the right wing. However, a lot of cases have proved to be very risky, it can blurred the lines between the parties and used on the long term might have the opposite effect than expected. By repositioning its policy closer to a RRWPP and using the same main issues and rhetorical tool, it would only give more legitimacy to the RRWPP and its discourse, effect that has been largely diffused in Europe during those last decades and which results appeared clearly on most of the recent elections. Finally, it also gives the RRWPP and its political agenda more visibility and publicity on the media level, which becomes often a very powerful electoral campaign tools.

Collaboration

The most obvious strategy to engage RRWPPs is a direct and opened collaboration between them and the mainstream parties. This collaboration can take different forms and be applied on different political levels.

As we saw already regarding coalition formation, the mainstream parties can see in the RRWPPs a viable partner for political collaboration which can be expressed first by a government coalition as it happened during the last Norwegian general elections (November 2013), when the FrP entered the government as part of a right-wing minority alliance with the Conservative and supported by the Liberals and the Christian People's Party.

The other collaboration possibility is to include a RRWPP as a support party for a minority government as it has been the case in Denmark since recently between the former right-wing governments and the DF. In exchange of its support, the RRWPP can obtain the implementation of some of its key demands and in this case the RRWPP can no longer be considered as a pariah party.

Legislative coalitions

The "coordination" between the cabinet parties and the opposition is necessary in the case of a minority government; it will thus lead to legislative bargaining between the cabinets and the other parties. This system of "contract parliamentarism" (Bale T. and Bergman T., 2006) might be on the one hand seen as a more balanced and representative system. It indeed implies the fact that in order to pass a law, the cabinet's parties will have to build up some legislative coalitions and enter negotiations with some parties of the opposition to get enough votes to pass the policy. The government is thus forced to cooperate and compromise on some special issues with the opposition and it could thus also boast the will of opposition parties, even the smaller ones, to enter legislative coalitions by seeing some opportunities to have greater influence on policy-making and "get out while the going is good".

On the other hand it can also benefit the government and not only regarding a purely numerical argument but also because it allows a wider scope of legislative coalition opportunities and more flexibility on the term of the agreements than it could be with some government coalition partners. Legislative agreements are the result of

bargaining between the government and the opposition and the scope and forms of those agreements can vary a lot: “Legislative agreements are defined as agreements between the government and at least one party not in government on a policy decision. Empirically these agreements vary from informal oral agreements to very formal written document” (Christiansen F. J., Pedersen H. H., 2014).

In democracies where minority governments have become regular, those agreements tend to become more and more detailed and can be arranged before the elections. In Denmark for example, the liberal- conservative governments of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (2001-2011) made some legislative agreements with the Danish People’s Party and in exchange of its support, the radical right- wing party managed to obtain the implementation of some of its key demands and policies on immigration. Indeed, the case of Denmark with its highly formalized “package deals” between the government and the legislative partners has shown that in order to keep influence on the policy-making process and not being completely marginalized, opposition parties would be more motivated to enter legislative coalitions. It also showed that through the game of legislative bargaining, any kind of party can at some point become a support party and thus enter the political game without necessarily entering a formal coalition.

So if on the one hand, minority governments have formally prevented some RRWPPs to enter coalitions, as it was the case in 2010 in Sweden when Alliansen¹ won the elections and preferred to form a minority government rather than to negotiate a coalition with the SD; on the other hand, it still allows those parties to play a strategic role in the legislative game and obtain some of their political claims through bargaining, as the case of the Danish People’s Party has proved. Moreover, a minority government can lead a RRWPP to become a real pivotal party if it has obtained a certain percent of votes and even if they remain ostracized by the main parties as coalition partners.

In this part we tried to put into context the potential for collaboration of RRWPPs and the way it could be done. Electoral weight appeared of course as one important factor explaining the political and strategic weight of RRWPPs, nevertheless it does not necessarily prevent them to remain ostracized. . In its research about the FrP accession to government in 2013, Anders Jupskås (2014) underlined accurately that electoral

¹Alliansen (The Alliance) was the center-right coalition headed by Fredrik Reinfeldt and consisting of the

weight but also ideological convergence are the main factors driving this rapprochement, a convergence that is often two-way.

1.4. Parties' political shift

In its researches about the extreme right in France and Australia, Aurélien Mondon (2013) underlines two major developments that have to be taken into account in the understanding of a pariah party's persistence and legitimization: *"The first is that the extreme right has begun to reassess its programme, ideology and rhetoric, and adapt to its time and place in order to compete for power. (...) The second is the rightward move and even radicalisation of the discourse and politics of the mainstream parties, particularly those on the right of the mainstream spectrum"*. As we already saw when analyzing the different forms of reactions of the mainstream parties, the persistence and legitimization of a pariah party in the political arena is challenging the mainstream parties strategy and positions, and as Mondon claimed, the legitimization of one RRWPP, formerly pariah party, often comes from the convergence of mainstream parties and RRWPPs, so to say a mainstreaming of the RRWPPs and the radicalization of the mainstream parties.

1.4.1. Political convergence of mainstream parties

Many studies that analyzed the rise of RRWPP concluded that one reason for their emergence has been the political convergence of the traditional parties to the center, thus creating some "niches" which became the political opportunity for the RRWPP to distinguish them on the political scene. In most of his studies about the radical right, Herbert Kitschelt uncovered the different political opportunities that have supported the emergence of RRWPPs and how they got rid of their pariah status. According to him, those parties managed to emerge thanks to the central convergence of mainstream parties, thus creating some free "niches" that they have often successfully exploited.

If indeed a political convergence of the traditional parties to a centric position has been often a factor of the emergence of the RRWPP and has, for example, motivated protest votes; it cannot alone explain the persistence of RRWPPs and the legitimization of their

ideas. In his article *Radical Right Populism in Sweden: Still a Failure, But for How Long?*, Jens Rydgren (2002) justly highlighted the specificity of the Swedish case where the theory of Kitschelt can find some limits: in Sweden, the economic cleavages and an enduring class loyalty remain pretty important and the degree of convergence between the parties (especially the Social Democrats and the Moderates) remains pretty low.

In our analysis of “pariah parties”, Kitschelt’s general idea that “the fortunes and behaviour of a political party are dependent not only on the presence or absence of an electorate close to its party position, but also on the strategic interactions of political parties in the competitive system” (Kitschelt H., 1995) remains relevant. However, in order to understand the persistence and legitimization of RRWPP in politics, we should rather analyze the convergence of the mainstream parties, especially right-wing ones, and the RRWPPs towards each other.

1.4.2. Mainstreaming the radical:

Once they get enough electoral supports to become a “relevant” party, most of the pariah parties have to face the question of rather remain in their status of protest party risking to lose their position on the electoral scene, ostracized themselves and be only a “one-time” event, whether they have to play the political game and try legitimized themselves in the eyes of the public opinion and especially in the eyes of the other political parties. The strategy adopted by a pariah party to improve its image can take very different features from change of party leader, change of party’s name to ideological variations. This trend has been recently called in the medias as a “de-demonization” of a party, especially in the case of the Front National whose change of party leader, from Jean-Marie Le Pen to his daughter Marine Le Pen, has gone with a change of rhetoric and, it is debatable, some ideological change. One other important instrument in the “moderation” of a RRWPP and its strategy to reclaim political legitimacy can be the “purge” of the party from the most extreme person, those openly supporting revisionist views or source of scandals regarding xenophobic actions etc. Even though RRWPP’s key themes remain, as Mudde (2007) calls them, the trinity – corruption, immigration, security –; a strategy of “mainstreaming” could also include

the “diversification” of key themes and the moderation of their championed issues as it has been the case with many RRWPPs shifting to a so-called “welfare chauvinism” or their criticism towards “illegal immigrants” more than “immigration” itself.

Finally, the mainstreaming of a party can also come along with the change in the relationships or views towards the traditional parties or so to say the moderation of the anti-establishment views, by assuming the possibility of political collaboration with the traditional right-wing parties. In the case of Denmark for example, there has been an obvious conflict between two tendencies among the populist radical right on the issue of mainstreaming at the time of the Danish Progress Party of Morgen Glistrup. Under Glistrup’s leadership, the party kept its opposition and protest party position till the leadership of Pia Kjaersgaard who tried to lead the party towards more institutionalization and collaboration with the right-wing parties (support for budget etc.). Nevertheless her politics met numerous opposing voices in the party, which ended up in the creation of the splinter party the Danish People’s Party by Kjaersgaard and other former members, despite a clearer “radical-right wing” ideology, by accepting to support other right-wing parties and collaborate with them, the Danish People’s Party became very successful whereas the Danish Progress Party fell out of the polls. However, if in the case of Denmark the success of the DF has been helped by its mainstreaming and its moderation towards establishment, the main factor for its legitimization has been on the other side, the “radicalization” of the mainstream right-wing parties on issues such as immigration.

1.4.3. Radicalising the mainstream:

For a long time, the studies on RRWPPs have been influenced by the theory of “Normal Pathology” of Scheuch and Klingemann (1967), which considers the values promoted by the RRWPPs to be unfamiliar and incompatible with those of the mainstream parties. In 2010, Case Mudde revised this theory by proposing another perspective on the question through its “pathological normalcy” theory:

“The populist radical right constitutes a radicalization of mainstream views (cf. Betz 2003; Minkenberg 2001). The empirical argument is that key aspects of the populist radical right ideology are shared by the mainstream, both at the elite and mass level,

albeit often in a more moderate form”.

With the electoral success of RRWPPs in Europe, some scholars have shown that a lot of right-wing parties have experienced a positional shift to the right after having lost some electorates in favor of a RRWPP, or what is also described as “the contagion of the right”. Not only those parties have tried to focus on the championed issues of the RRWPPs but also they have radicalized their ideologies and sometimes even used some of the populist rhetorical tools.

In a recent article, Aurélien Mondon (2013) indeed analyzed the obvious shift of the French right-wing party Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) under the leadership of Nicolas Sarkozy towards a focus and more radical views on the questions of immigration and security and through a populist rhetoric. In its study of the emergence of RRWPPs in Denmark, Rydgren (2007) also assessed that “*another reason why the immigration issue has come to dominate Danish political and mass media discourses since the mid-1990s is that some of the established parties have joined the discourse*”. As Down underlines it, the “co-option” strategy of mainstream parties and their appropriation of the RRWPPs’ issues in order to regain some electorate has given more legitimacy to the RRWPPs and their ideas rather than benefiting rather to benefit the mainstream parties to give more legitimacy to the RRWPPs and to their radical ideas.

In this party we tried to make the point that the legitimization of a RRWPP, which could thus lead to the loss of its “pariah” status, is indeed due to political convergence not necessarily towards the center, but between the mainstream right-wing parties and a RRWPP. We thus assume that the study of the legitimization (or not) of a pariah party should be also done through the analysis of this double convergence.

1.5. The concept of pariah party

The term pariah has been generally used to define a person, according to Webster’s dictionary, “who is hated and rejected by other people”. More interestingly, the Cambridge online dictionary, adds up to this definition the concept of trust, the pariah is rejected “because he or she is not liked, respected or trusted”. In political science also

the term has been recently associated to political parties but the literature on the topic remains pretty recent and narrow. Some scholars such as McDonnell and Newell (2011) have preferred the term “outsider” to describe those kinds of parties, nevertheless for the purpose of this thesis we prefer the use of “pariah” because it adds a more negative feature to the concept. Semantically we thus consider the term “pariah” as more relevant for this thesis than other terms often used as synonym.

The concept of pariah party has been only recently at the center of some academic studies and it seems that William Downs has been the pioneer with its article “Pariah in their Midst: Belgian and Norwegian Parties React to Extremist Threats”, putting the concept at the center of his study. One factor explaining the lack of literature about this concept could be found in the academic shift in the analysis of pariah parties such as RRWPPs from a “demands” perspective to a “supply” one, then less focus on the reasons why people vote for them but how such parties manage to get supports and sometimes become part of political alliances. If most of the scholars working on “pariah parties” agree on various features, it is difficult to find a general definition on which they all agree and a lot of questions regarding the concept of “pariah party” remain unanswered.

Following some of the broaden definition given by scholars, we will try to be as comprehensive as possible in our conceptualization of a “pariah party”. The main and broaden question would thus be what is a pariah party? To which extent can a party be still labeled as pariah? Is the “pariah” status a stage in the political development of a party?

We can already find in William M. Downs’ work (2013) one of the most detailed definition of the concept:

“In political terms, the pariah party is ostensibly an untouchable, beyond the pale of political acceptability. The pariah party is, at least initially, ostracized, demonized and rejected as unacceptable by most other actors in the system.

The pariah is an “anti-“ party in some fashion: anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, anti-system, anti-capitalist or anti-establishment.

Pariah parties come in left and right varieties, and they embody a diffuse alienation and distrust of the existing political system. While they seek to achieve their goals through

conventional channels of electoral contestation, they may have parallel organizational structures”.

More generally a party is considered as a pariah when it is labeled as such and “demonized” by the mainstream parties as well as the civil society. Even though the concept of pariah party goes beyond the left-right dimension and could be apply to some parties from the left or from the right wing, for the purpose of this analysis and the case of the Nordic countries we will focus on the anti-establishment and populist parties from the radical right-wing, which have been the center of much attention during the last years, especially considering their growing success.

As David Art (2007) and Anders Hellström (2012) remind us in their respective articles, the role of the media in the process of “demonization” or “de-demonization” of a party is very important.

If most scholars agree on the importance of the role of other parties in the “pariah-making” process, there are some slight divergences. For instance, for Van Panje and Van der Brug (2007), it is possible to talk about a pariah party and ostracization “if it was boycotted and denounced as “anti-democratic” by the main right-wing party” and if the right-wing parties are rejecting clearly any cooperation with this party and do not start using the same language and rhetorical tools. Those cases are rare though, and the history of the Danish Progress Party and its splinter party the Danish People’s Party has shown that in order to institutionalize and strengthen its political role, an “anti-establishment” party has to “play the political game” and to move toward the mainstream. Thus a starting assumption would be that a party is considered as a “pariah” when it is firstly labeled negatively and perceived *salonfähig* through the media, the public opinion and the political discourses of the traditional parties, and secondly, on the political level when the mainstream parties do not consider the party as coalitionable nor as an acceptable partner because of the ideas and values it promotes.

Moreover, as we already talked about, despite some difficulties to clearly place some of those parties on a left-right dimension regarding socio-economical issues, they remain “right-wing” in their approach to socio-cultural issues, which are the key planks of their program. This being set down and our study being focused on the RRWPPs, we assume that the reactions of the mainstream right-wing parties towards a RRWPP are

the main factor to be looked at. The reaction of traditional socialist and left-wing parties, can of course, tells also a lot about the ostracization of a RRWPP, however the empirical facts have proved that the European RRWPPs that managed to become legitimized political parties in European and especially in the Nordic countries, entered or supported right-wing alliances and coalitions on the national level and as we saw earlier regarding the “radicalization of the mainstream”, it is the shift from the tradition right-wing parties to a more radical right side that has been the main factor of the legitimization of RRWPPs and should be analyze in the broaden context of electoral game and party competition.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The idea for the thesis' topic emerged from a personal interest in the debate and when starting to investigate the more general topic of RRWP, it appears that most of the literature or research on the topic has been focused on the demand perspective and why RRWPP have encountered more and more electoral success in Europe. For this thesis, it has been decided to take a different approach to the case of the SD and to analyze it from a supply perspective. Moreover, as it has been mentioned in the theoretical part, many different variables should be taken into account in order to determine if the SD can be still considered as a pariah party or not, that is the reason why the qualitative research method has been favored and the research questions try to cover the different variables as every one of them is needed to really assess the pariah party concept.

2.1. Research questions and hypotheses

The aim of this work is to determine if the SD is what we define as a “pariah party”, especially since its entrance into the Riksdag during the last general elections in 2010, their recent results in the September 2014 elections. I will thus build my research in the time frame built around the different events that happened following the 2014 elections until the end of December 2014.

In order to build a comprehensive and holistic view on the research topic, here are the different research questions that will be asked:

- 1) To which extent can a party be labeled as a pariah party?
- 2) What are the strategies and arguments used by the pariah parties in their search to become more acceptable and play a role in coalition formations?
- 3) To what extent do mainstream parties' reactions have an impact on the “pariah” nature of a party?
- 4) Which impact does the rise of a “pariah” party on the political scene have on the party system and political process?

The discussion part of this thesis will indeed attempt to figure out if the last election results might have definitely propelled the SD out of their pariah status but also we will discuss more broadly which impact does the “pariah” parties’ rise on the political scene have on the Swedish party system and if its “salonsfähig” status can be put into questions for the next elections.

2.2. Empirical data

The concepts of “pariah party” and “political ostracization” involving different parameters and variables, this work will thus use some very different sources of data in order to answer the research questions.

First of all, the official archives of the Riksdag are a very rich source for analyzing the role of the SD in parliament since 2010 through their different motions, votes and involvement in the work of committees. All those documents can be indeed found in the online archives (“Documents and acts”) of the Riksdag at the following address: <http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/>

A particular attention will later be given to the election manifesto (valmanifest) from the SD for the 2010 and 2014 elections.

Finally, regarding the reaction of the mainstream parties, because of the limitation of the work, we will focus on the analysis of the coalition choices made by the 2010 and 2014 governments to not include the SD as coalition partners and will base our analysis on articles, especially from Swedish national newspapers such as the Svenska Dagbladet, Dagens Nyheter and also the English speaking “The Local Sweden” as well as the different documents from the SVT (Swedish National Television).

Finally, because the case studied is a contemporary actor of Swedish politics, it has been decided that this work would focus on the data available until the end of 2014, but some few recent data can be still use in the discussion part and the conclusion in order to have an overview on how events have evolved since the end of 2014 and on their contemporary consequences.

2.3. Methodological approach

In order to explore our topic, the thesis will follow the classical qualitative case study approach. According to Yin (2009a, p18) the case study method can be defined as:

« An empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a “case”), set within its real-world context—especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident »

This method has been indeed chosen because it allows the triangulation of data and the study of our phenomenon in its context, which we consider as an integral and necessary part of the research in order to understand it and capture all its complexity.

Following Klein and Myers' (1999) assumption that “our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artifacts”, the use of interpretive case study method seems more accurate for the purpose of this research.

For this thesis, we have chosen to use a single-case study method because the case selected – the SD and its ostracization – has been considered until nowadays to have followed a very different path from its Nordic or European counterparts. A single-case study can thus allow a more in-depth analysis but an embedded approach will be used to our single-case study as the concept of ostracization and “pariah” party necessarily involved to analyze also the reaction of other Swedish parties.

If the main question leading this research is “Can we still consider the SD as a pariah party?”, the case study approach is important because it will help to analyze the reasons why it could be label as a pariah party but also to what extent the SD can still be labeled as a pariah party. More generally the analysis is also focused on the processes by which the SD is trying to get rid of his pariah status along with the importance of the election results and their new places in the Swedish political space and in the Riksdag. For those reasons, the interpretive single case study method has been considered as the best research method to investigate our case especially because of the need of triangulation of different sources to better understand the topic and the context in which it has evolved.

Because of the quite limited literature on the concept of “pariah party”, this thesis has also the ambition to propose a more accurate definition of the concept and for this reason this case study approach will be more “instrumental”. This case study type is used, according by Stake, “to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps the researcher pursue the external interest. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other cases”.

2.4. Problems with the research design

This work should be seen as a preliminary research on the SD change of status and role in Swedish politics, but the author acknowledges the fact that further and deeper research should be done on the topic including all the relevant variables linked to the concept of pariah parties. Nevertheless, the aim of this work is mainly to put into question the status pariah party associated with the SD and to provide an insight into how and why a pariah party can be able to enter the political game and maybe become acceptable even in a long-lasting party system model such as the Swedish one. Here are thus the different limits acknowledged by the author that should be taken into account while reading this work.

First of all, as we will see with the theoretical conceptualization of “pariah party”, this thesis has focused on certain key aspects of the concepts. Because of the length restriction of the thesis, it has been decided to focus first of all only on the national and parliamentary level, which means we decided to analyze the overall status of the party, it is nevertheless important to notice that on the local level, this status might have already been overtaken and the SD might have already become a “normal” party on some localities political scene: “In the national election of 2006, the party received 2,93 per cent of the votes (...) however, it claimed 16 county councils seats and 281 municipal seats the same year, in some municipalities reaching more than 20 per cent of the votes” (Dandoy R. and Schakel A., 2013).

Secondly, as we will see in our conceptualization of “pariah party”, it would have also been very interesting to analyze more deeply the evolution of the SD on a pure marketing-based analysis: from the “neo-Nazi” to the “social conservatives” denomination (as they call themselves), their de-demonization effort or victimization- but for this limited work, we preferred to focus on the more political aspect of the ostracization process.

Finally, it is important to specify that most of the data could be accessed only in Swedish; the author has thus done herself translations of most of the quotes of the data analysis chapter.

CHAPTER 3: OUTLINING THE CASE

In order to better understand the issues analyzed in this work and their consequences, the choice has been made to write a separate chapter to outline the case. It seems indeed necessary for a reader not familiar with Swedish politics to get an overview of the Swedish party system functioning and also of the SD party and its origins, before proceeding to the empirical part of this work.

3.1. The Swedish Political Model and Party System

3.1.1. General Information

Sweden is a parliamentary monarchy with a unicameral legislative branch, the Riksdag, composed of 349 elected members. The executive power is represented by the Government and it consists of a Prime minister and around 20 ministers appointed by him. The Prime minister himself is appointed by the Speaker of the parliament and appointed following a vote in the parliament. The Prime Minister has traditionally been the leader of the biggest party in the government but can be removed with its Cabinet following a vote of confidence:

“The Government must enjoy the support of, or at any rate be tolerated by the Riksdag, otherwise it may be forced to resign. Whenever it wants, the Riksdag is free to hold a vote of confidence to see whether the Government still enjoys the Riksdag’s support” (Sveriges Riksdag, The Riksdag in Swedish Society).

The legislative power is represented by the 349 MPs of the parliament and in order to facilitate the decision-making process, the decisions are prepared in the 15 parliamentary committees: “Each committee is responsible for policy areas: issues relating to defence are for example assigned to the Committee on Defence, while

healthcare issues are dealt with by the Committee on Health and Welfare” (Sveriges Riksdag, How the Riksdag works). Each committee consists of 17 MPs divided up between the different parties according to their strengths in the parliament.

3.1.2. Swedish party system

The Swedish party system can be actually described through the concept of Scandinavian party system model from which it has kept most of the main features. According to H. Bergström (1991), the Scandinavian party system model can be considered as “the simplest in any of the democracies” and is based on Berglund and Lindström’s five-party Scandinavian model (1978). We can retrace the historic period of party building in Scandinavia between the 1880s and the 1920s, process which had been influenced by different historical events that Rokkan and Lipset (1967) classified as 4 formative revolutions: the early Religious revolution or protestant Reformation, the National revolution, the Industrial revolution and the Proletarian revolution. Those different events indeed had a strong impact on the molding of the Scandinavian parties and the model of the 2+3 party system model: 2 socialist parties (usually communist and social democrats) and 3 non-socialist ones (usually Agrarians, Liberal and Conservative). What make the Scandinavian party system very special are also its unidimensionality, the lasting strength of the social democrats, the relative strength of agrarian parties and the strong political cohesion of social groups. The beginning of the 1970s represents a political turning point in party politics and 4 new party families emerged: eco-socialist parties, Green parties, new Christian parties and populist entrepreneur parties.

What makes the Swedish party system very peculiar is that since the World War II, even though they are losing some electorate, the main traditional political parties still register some high scores especially in comparison with other European traditional parties: *“more than three in five Danes, Finns and Norwegians and almost three in four Swedes have backed one of the three pole parties over the period since the Second World War testifies to the resilience and durability of the core electoral parties in post-war Scandinavia”* (Arter D., 2011).

This system has thus very slowly and not often gotten an important place for new

parties to emerge and for a very long time the Social Democrats had been the main party of the country. Nevertheless, the last decades have seen the emergence of minority government in Sweden, which has pushed the parties to change their practices and seek for different forms of support.

3.2. The Sweden Democrats

3.2.1. The Sweden Democrats, an “anomaly” in the Swedish political space?

If in 1991, the party New Democracy (ND) – a RRWPP on the model of the Norwegian Progress Party- managed to enter the Riksdag. ND’s experience did not last long as the party did not manage to remain in parliament after the 1994 general elections and eventually was dissolved in 2000. The experience was thus short and did not have much influence on the Swedish political landscape so unlike its neighbors; Swedish political landscape has been historically quite preserved of the presence of RRWPPs.

Nevertheless, in September 2010, the SD constituted a surprise and entered for the first time the parliament by reaching 5.7 % of the votes, in a party system historically dominated by the traditional two socialist parties and three non-socialist ones (2+3 party system model). Whereas the party has been most of the time called “right extremists”, “radical right-wing” or “anti-immigration” party, the SD defines itself as a “social conservative” (Sverige Demokraternas principprogram, 2011) party: “We are the Swedish-friendly alternative. We care for the work of the older generations and look after what will be soon passed down to the next one. We are the party of Sweden as a whole and we believe in change forward” (Sverige Demokraterna, Vårt Parti).

If the SD has been usually placed on the radical right fringe of the Swedish political scale, it should be mentioned that regarding certain issues such as economy, the SD is politically more left-wing than any parties of the mainstream right-wing parties, it is also a strong supporter of the welfare state and the mythic “Swedish Social Democracy”, but of course it also has some strong conservative and nationalist views and can be also described as an anti-immigration party which has had for influence to blur the lines between the usual left-right political cleavage and has been one of their strength.

3.2.2. The SD “from a party of “skin-head” to a party of older bald-headed men” (Hellström and Nilsson, 2010)?

The SD is a young party, which was formed in 1988 as the successor of the Party of Sweden (Sverigepartiet), a nationalist party which was itself the merger of the Swedish populist progress party (Framstegspartiet, FrP) and Keep Sweden Swedish (Bevara Sverige Svenskt) an ultra-nationalist party.

If the SD can not be considered as a neo-Nazi party, it is nevertheless important to notice that it took obviously its root in Swedish fascism and, at least at its beginning, the party had very close affiliations to a network of white supremacy movements, neo-Nazi fringes and Nazi parties all over Europe. Because of those close ties to those radical movements, the SD did not manage at the beginning of the 90s to get electoral success, especially on the national level where they never scored more than 1% until the 2006 elections.

Despite some difficulties on the national level representation, the SD was gaining relative success, step by step, on the local level. It is really in the mid-90s that the party started to polish its image in order to enter the political game and to gain greater influence, thanks to its new leader Mikael Jansson, who, unlike the previous SD leaders had no connections with radical movements and as a former member of the Centre Party, was a politically more moderate person. Jansson started to change the image of the party to make it look like a more respectable and less radical one, at least by all appearances. If the party distanced itself from radical racist movements, it remained very close to radical right wing movements all over Europe and got support from other rising RRWPPs such as the French National Front, the Freedom Party in Austria or the Danish People’s Party among the closest ones.

3.2.3. The SD in the Riksdag

Finally, under the influence of its new charismatic leader Jimmy Åkesson, the SD managed to reach 2.9% of votes in the 2006 national elections, a success that has doubled 4 years later and allowed the SD to enter the Riksdag on the 19th September 2010 with 5.7 % and received 20 seats, one more than for the Left Party or the Christian Democratic Party, which both scored only 5.6% (European Election Database, Sweden parliamentary elections 2010). If Swedish politics has been shaken by this result and despite the rising attention given to the SD, this result had first been broadly compared to the 1991 New Democracy experience, and it was difficult to imagine at that moment that the SD would become, 4 years later, the third biggest party in Sweden. And indeed, on the 14th September 2014, the SD became the third Swedish party at the general elections, with 12.9% of the votes (49 seats) and beating up by far the other parties such as the Greens, the Centre Party, the Left Party or the Christian Democrats. By becoming the 3 biggest parties in Sweden, the SD also received one of the 3 the vice deputy speaker positions of the parliament, a very symbolic event which has also been seen as a political chock and proves the rising importance of the SD on the political scene.

If the SD scored pretty high, the Social Democrats and the Moderates, the historically two biggest parties, had difficulties to maintain their scores. Eventually, the Social Democrats, which got the highest score with 30.7% of the votes (112 seats) decided to build a minority government in coalition with the Greens.

Figure 1: Results of the SD at national elections since its creation:

Election year	Results (%)	Number of seats in the Riksdag
1988	0.0	0
1991	0.1	0
1994	0.2	0
1998	0.4	0
2002	1.4	0
2006	2.9	0
2010	5.7	20
2014	12.9	49

Sources: Dahlstrom, C. ; Esaiasson, P. (2013) and European Election Database

By challenging the left-right cleavage of Swedish politics, the SD is thus trying to look for cooperation and coalition within the biggest parties, from the left or from the right. Nevertheless the SD has not been asked yet to be part in a coalition, neither under the last center-right government, nor under the new center-left one, but its involvement in Swedish politics and its success might change the perception of the SD by the other parties and also change his role in Swedish politics as we will try to analyze in this work.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA

At the initial step of retrieving empirical data, different sources have been selected and have been processed altogether in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the different variables' analysis and to answer the different research questions of this work.

4.1. The SD on the path of normalization and moderation?

As we quickly explained in the introduction, the SD is a young party, which encountered numerous changes as much ideological as structural in order to institutionalized and fit better in the party system. Like most of the successful European RRWPPs, the SD has tried, in order to appeal more voters, to distance itself from the anti-democratic and radical image it was spreading at the beginning. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that in comparison with its Nordic counterparts, the SD has been more complicated to classify in the political landscape and its particular ideology has raised many issues on the theoretical level as well as on the practical one. Those peculiarities that we will analyze in the coming sub-chapter can explain some of the reasons of its success within voters as well as some of the failures of the party to get accepted by the other parties on the national and on the European one.

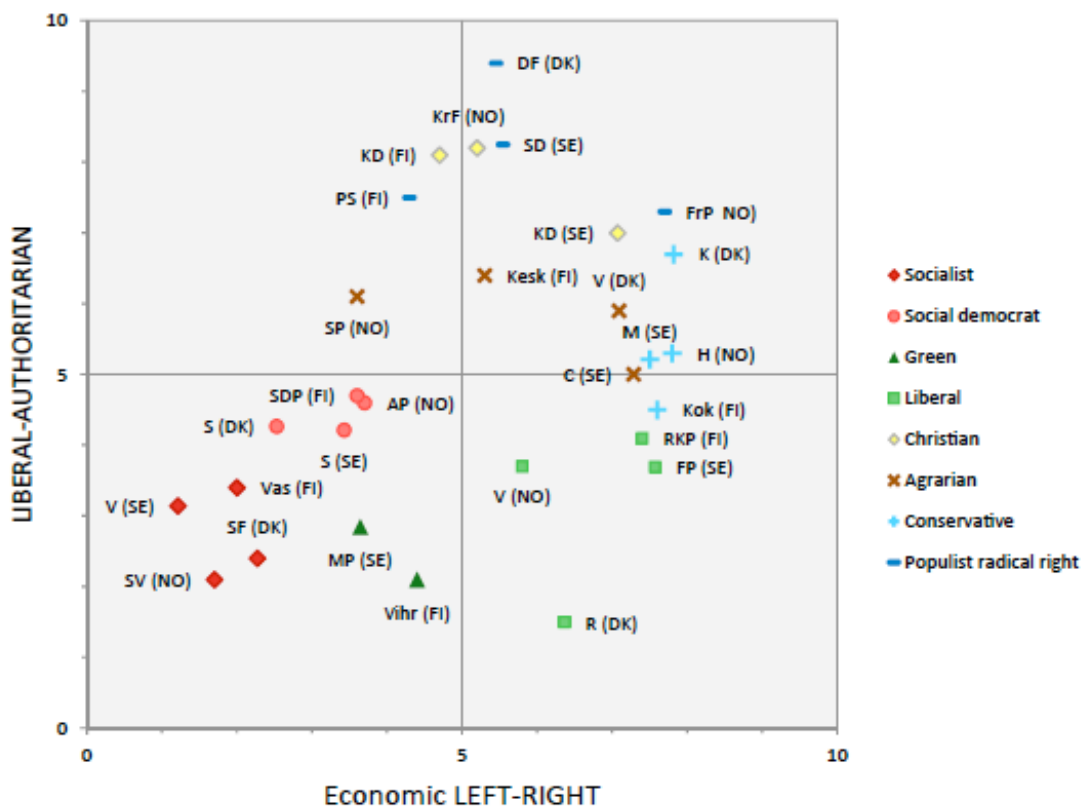
4.1.1. A “social-conservative party with a nationalist foundation”

In 2011, a bit more than one year after its entrance in the Riksdag, the SD adopted a new “Principe program” and following the proposal from the party chairman Jimmie Åkesson, the party members decided to re-define the party as a “social-conservative party” which was even refined by Åkesson as “*a social conservative party with a nationalist ideology, and considers value conservatism and the maintenance of a solidary welfare as the most important tools for the good society*”. This new ideology title has been one of the many attempts to change the radical and xenophobic image of

the party among the Swedish electorates but also among the other parties.

On the one hand it is arguable that this definition fits quite well the ideology of the party since 2010 and manage to combine what makes the party difficult to classify: its central-left position on the socioeconomic dimension and its conservative/authoritarian one on the value-based dimension:

Figure 3: Party Positions in two dimensions: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2010



Unlike the other Nordic RRWPPs such as the Danish People Party and the Norwegian Progress Party, the SD ideology has managed to promote the legacy of the social democracy and Nordic model in the current ethno-nationalist discourses, what Hellström and Wennerhag (2013) analyzed in their article *National myth making and populist mobilization in Scandinavia*: “In term of re-appropriation of the Social Democratic heritage, the SD stands out as the party most explicitly linking myths of national belonging to the ‘old’ Social Democracy”.

The concept of the “People’s Home” (Folkhemmet in Swedish) first mentioned by Rudolf Kjellèn (1916) and later made famous by Per Albin Hansson (1928) -the so

called father of the Swedish Social Democracy- has been one of the most important pillar of the Swedish nation building and remains a very important part of the Swedish national identity. The image of Sweden and Swedish people as a big family, had been the basis of the Swedish welfare system and mostly promoted by the Social Democrats from the 1930's as an ideology of solidarity, class collaboration, democracy and citizenship:

“Our Swedish people is essentially democratic. It loves freedom and hates oppression ... it is with every reason that we Swedes are proud of our country. It is a country where democracy is rooted not merely in the constitution, but also in our traditions and in the disposition of the folk”².

If this image became the most spread one, it is important to recall that the early “Folkhemmet” concept, presented by Kjellèn, himself a conservative politics, was no more than a form of national socialism, mixing conservative values with social reforms in order to bring the people together and form a stable and united nation. Even in the speeches of Hansson, nationalism and Sweden's pride remain pretty important and contained a civic as well as a communitarian vision of the society.

As already mentioned, the SD took its roots in Swedish fascism, the ethno-centrist ideology evolved during the 1990s and already in the 2010 party manifesto (Sverige Demokraterna, Party Manifesto 2010), it became obvious that the focus of the party ideology has been given to the promotion of the traditional Social Democracy with a strong focus on the Swedish culture, nativism and national cohesion:

“ In our Sweden citizens will feel a cultural affinity and therefore a natural trust in other citizens (...) In our Sweden freedom and openness are primordial. In our Sweden we defend the Swedish cultural heritage, a welfare state built on a common set of values and the Swedes' rights to develop their culture on its own terms. In our Sweden, we help people in need, but the Swedish welfare and the country's well-being come first.”

² Per Albin Hansson, Folkhemstalet, Tal vid andra kammarens remissdebatt (1928) ; transcription found in the article of the Göteborg Posten *Sommarserie del 3 : Per Albin och Folkhemmet*, <http://www.gp.se/nyheter/ledare/1.960-sommarserie-del-3-per-albin-och-folkhemmet>

The 2014 manifesto³ went even further in the parallel with the traditional Swedish Social Democracy concept and really insisted on it as the title of the manifest on the front page already highlights - “WE CHOOSE WELFARE!”.

It is also very interesting to see some great similarities between the expressions and images used in Per Albin Hansson speeches and in this manifesto.

- P. A. Hansson: *“for good reason, we Swedes are proud of our country. It is a beautiful and good country. It is a country with liberty for the people and popular self-government with democracy anchored not only in the constitution, but likewise in our traditions and disposition”*
- SD 2010 manifesto: *“We are proud of our country and our welfare (...) Sweden is still a beautiful and fantastic country on many levels”*

Even if social democratic values seem to be anchored in the SD ideology it has to understand through the light of nationalism and conservatism.

4.1.2. Analysis of the party manifestos of 2010 and 2014: towards institutionalization and less radicalism?

In order to find if the SD has started the institutionalization and moderation process, it is important to analyze the use of certain ‘key words’, their recurrence, as well as the form of the manifestos. Although this analysis would remain quite general, it will provide a good overview of the evolution of the party manifestos between 2010 and 2014.

Form of the manifestos

Communication and marketing has been one of the most crucial point for many RRWPPs and the form of a manifesto can tell also a lot about the strategy of a party to get rid of its pariah image. In the case of the SD, we can already notice an important evolution through the form of the manifesto.

³ SD 2014 party manifesto, from the official webpage of the SD:
<http://sverigedemokraterna.se/valmanifest/>

On the one hand we have the 2010 manifesto “99 propositions to improve Sweden”, which title bears a pretty populist stance, through which it is implied that the party knows exactly what are the solutions to improve the situation of the country and they would be even listed in the manifesto point after point. On the other hand, with the title “*We choose welfare! Sweden Democrats manifesto - 2014 elections*”, the 2014 manifesto flaunts the attachment of the party to the traditional “welfare system” and once again blurs the lines of its political space.

Then looking at the form of the documents themselves, we notice first of all that the 2010 manifesto with about 1800 words is three times shorter than the 2014 manifesto (about 5500 words). This is a significant change, while the 2010 manifesto was still looking like a populist protest-party manifesto with pretty simple and comprehensive propositions but lacking at the same time of content and proper knowledge on the economic issues, the 2014 one looks more like other mainstream party manifesto with different categories, propositions and explanations.

One last small but interesting detail regarding the evolution of the manifesto’s form is the pictures, absent in the 2010 manifesto but illustrate almost every pages the 2014 manifesto: they are still pretty “nationalist-orientated” and clichés with white and blond people, red wooden houses, Swedish flag and traditional Swedish dishes; and thus serve one more time the strong nationalist orientation of the party.

Manifesto 2010/2014: towards moderation?

According to the Comparative Manifesto Project, a project created to record and analyze the contents of the election manifestos, it is possible to classify certain words or expressions according to the left/right dimension. Without entering details, it was nevertheless interesting to compare the two manifestos by looking at the occurrence of some of those key words.

Figure 4: left/right dimension of words according to the CMP

GENERAL LEFT Decolonization; Military negative; Peace; Internationalism positive; Democracy; Regulation of capitalism; Economic planning; Protectionism positive; Controlled economy; Nationalization; Social Service Expansion positive; Education Pro-Expansion, Labour Groups positive	GENERAL RIGHT Military positive; Freedom and Domestic Human Rights; Constitutionalism positive; Government Effectiveness and Authority; Enterprise; Incentives; Protectionism negative; Economic Orthodoxy and Efficiency; Social Service Expansion negative; Defence of National Way of Life positive; Law and Order; National Effort/Social Harmony
ECONOMIC LEFT Regulation of capitalism; Economic planning positive; Protectionism positive; Nationalization; Marxist Analysis; Social Justice positive; Service Expansion positive; Labour groups positive	ECONOMIC RIGHT Decentralization positive; Enterprise; Incentives; Protectionism negative; Economic Orthodoxy and Efficiency; Social Service Expansion negative; Labour Groups negative; Middle Class and Professional groups positive
LIBERTARIAN Military negative; Peace; Democracy; Freedom and Domestic Human Rights; Traditional Morality negative; Multiculturalism positive; Underprivileged Minority Groups positive	AUTHORITARIAN Military positive; Defence of National way of Life positive; Traditional Morality positive; Law and Order positive; National Effort/Social Harmony; Multiculturalism negative

source : Comparative Manifesto Project

The differences between the two manifestos regarding those key words are not so high; nevertheless we notice a slight decline in the use of these words in the 2014 manifesto.

Figure 5: analysis of key words in the SD manifestos of 2010 and 2014

	Valmanifest 2010 occurrences of words in % (and number)	Valmanifest 2014 occurrences of stopwords in % (and number)
SECURITY	0.5% (10)	0.4% (23)
WELFARE	0.25% (5)	0.21% (12)
DEMOKRATI	0.15% (3)	0.09% (5)
(cultural/Swedish) HERITAGE	0.25% (5)	0.14% (8)
CULTURE	0.50% (10)	0.45% (25)
NATION	0.25% (5)	0.11% (6)
IMMIGRATION	0.25% (5)	0.22% (12)
FAMILY	0.15% (3)	0.11% (6)
FREEDOM	0.10% (2)	0.05% (3)
RESPECT	0.20% (4)	0.14% (8)
CRIME	0.30% (6)	0.27% (15)

Sources: Sverige Demokraterna Party Manifesto 2010 and Party Manifesto 2014

On the content itself it appears that most of the topics covered in the 2010 manifesto are re-used in the 2014 one and only a bit deepened. We can find the usual categories - safety / health / unemployment / work / education / environment / Europe / defense - prioritized in most of party manifestos but also some new ones (compared to the 2010 ones) and some very specific to the SD.

On the welfare value, the 2014 manifesto insisted more on the democratic stance of the party and their openness: *“increased support for unemployed”*, *“A good, fair and accessible health care”*, *“A realistic and sustainable environmental and energy policy”*, *“A politics of strengthening support to vulnerable groups”*, *“Infrastructure for more homes, better growth and a cohesive Sweden”*, *“A gender policy for the real people”*, *“A living countryside and an animal-friendly society”*.

On the other hand, some traditional radical right-wing and/or authoritarian key themes are still present:

- *“A close European cooperation without the supranational”*: as most of the RRP in Europe, the SD is euro-skeptic and despite the use of moderate expressions such as *“European cooperation”* or *“common European culture heritage”*, they still focus on the necessity to distance from the EU in order for Sweden to become more independent politically, economically and culturally.
- *“A wide, Swedish and accessible cultural life”*: in this party the SD is deepening their long-living idea of the Swedish cultural canon and the importance of Swedish cultural heritage and its defense by opposition to multiculturalism.
- *“Sweden is worth defending!”*: on the more authoritarian dimension, the SD are preaching for a bigger and stronger national army (re-introduction of obligatory conscription) in order to protect Sweden and to make it independent.
- *“A safe, Swedish and knowledge-oriented school”*: this might be one of the point where the ethno-nationalist views of the party are best represented with the immigration one. Sweden has 5 official minority languages and since 2010, a new Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages has strengthened the protection and promotion of National Minorities culture and languages, giving them also the rights to influence and access political issues, education in the minority language etc. As a nationalist party, the SD is rigorously against this act and the promotion of any kind of minorities or minority languages, seeing multiculturalism

and multilingualism as a threat to national cohesion and welfare.

- *“An immigration policy that promotes unity and welfare”*: despite a title which tries to look more moderate with the reference to welfare, the SD has not changed his view on immigration by promoting a more restricting immigration policies and assimilation politics instead of integration. But on the contrary of some RRP's speech about immigration, the SD is trying to moderate their own by using double standard: on the one hand Sweden is ready and opened to *“help so many needy people in the world as possible”* but on the other hand, re-affirming that national interests and Swedish national identity, national cohesion and welfare remain the priorities: *“immigration is an asset and not a burden on society”*.

-

Just looking through the first page of the 2014 manifesto, it appears clearly that the SD remains a populist party with its references to the “heartland” - *“Sweden is in many ways unique, and we have our own distinctive culture and history”* - but also their skepticism towards institutions and other politics - *“Unfortunately, we are experiencing, however, that over the past decades the governing politicians, through their division policies and wrong priorities, have made Sweden a bit less fancy and a little less amazing years after years”*- and present themselves as the voice of the normal people who truly care about their country and their fellow citizens on the contrary of the other politicians : *“we love Sweden and the people who live here. For real.”*. This first page is the one of the ultimate proof that despite some changes, the SD remains a very populist and nationalistic party, especially with the image of the perfect country of Sweden which has deteriorated because of bad governance, and the use of a wide lexical field of the emotions: *“it makes us sad, worried and anxious”* , *“we love Sweden”*, *“we are proud”*, *“we feel respect”*, *“we are grateful”*, *“we are happy”* etc.

Finally, despite some important changes in the form of the manifestos or the effort to deepen their arguments and projects we could argue that the SD manifesto is moving towards a more normalized form and is looking less radical than the previous ones. Nevertheless they remain very focalized on the same issue - country's cohesion through promotion and protection of the Swedish cultural heritage and restricted immigration policy – the same single-issue seen negatively by the other parties, and thus highly

contributing to its pariah label.

4.1.3. Intra-party dynamic

Another important indicator of the institutionalization of a party is its degree and its form of internal organization: “To be able to fulfill representative functions, to govern and to act as channels or intermediaries between the state and the society, political parties need to organize themselves”

Internal organization

According to many theories, RRWPPs are expected to have a pretty hierarchical and linear (top-down) form of organization with in most of the case one individual at the head of the party, with a certain personality and charisma; what is also underlined by K. M. Johansson (2014) in his study of RRWPPs internal organization:

“These parties are expected to have light or small organization, simple structure with few intermediating constraints on leadership, high level of centralization and dominance of the party leader and of the party in central office. Forming around a charismatic personality, populist parties may even be without a proper party organizational structure extending beyond the central office”.

For Johansson the SD might be considered as an exception in the landscape of European RRWPPs as according to him, there is no charismatic leader at the head of the party. If it is true that the SD’s organization might differ from other RRWPPs in the way that it has firstly counted on local and regional organizations, we do not entirely agree with him regarding the role of the leader. Jimmie Åkesson, the official leader of the SD (right now in sick-leave but still officially leader), might not correspond to the traditional “charismatic leader” that we could see in other RRWPPs and as we can see currently with his sick leave, the party manages to survive without him. Nevertheless, it is Jimmie Åkesson, which has mostly helped the party to get where it is now and manages also to change its image. Åkesson was actually a member of the Moderates till the 1990’s, so choosing him as a leader can firstly give the appearance of a moderation of the party. Then he really worked a lot on the marketing image of the party, changing

symbols, vocabulary and also with its own image: a young, “normal” Swede who likes football, BBQs, his family and his country (Sverige Demokraterna, Jimmie). So behind an image of a simple leader, we could also see the whole populist machinery and marketing of the SD to show Swedes that the SD is like them. And despite what could be seen as a lack of charisma, Åkesson has managed to get the image of the needed leader and his convalescence has scrambled the party and in every meeting we can see banderols with “Jimmie, come back!”.

If earlier, the lack of organization of the SD was one of its biggest problems, the new leadership with Åkesson at his head has since the 2005 also focused on centralization of the authority and develop an effective party organization, on the local and regional level as well as on the central level. Thanks to electoral success, finances have also improved and the party has thus been able to engage in strengthening its organizational and communication strategies.

Finally the new leadership of Åkesson and the so called “Scania gang” (Jimmie Åkesson , Björn Söder, Mattias Karlsson and Richard Jomshof) have tried since 2005, to normalize the party apparatus and has managed to strengthened the leadership as well as the organization of the party on every level. According to Johansson, “the SD can be regarded as a centralized party” and the internal organization changes that occurred during the last decades have tended to institutionalized the party and make it look more able to govern.

Elimination of the most radical fringe of the party

One can also be one of the most important evolution of the party towards moderation and institutionalization is the important “purges” that have been going on since 2005 and that have tried to get rid of the most extremist fringes of the party. If the SD is the successor of the Swedish party, known for its very conservative and xenophobic views, it has tried to distance itself from this image and to “de-demonize” itself, especially since the leadership of Åkesson, himself former member of the Moderate Party.

In the recent years, the party has indeed suffered from several scandals, which have pushed the leadership to take clear and strong stances towards the members involved. Year 2012 has been especially a crucial year for the SD, which had to deal with the misdemeanor of several members and representatives of the party. After the

scandal and eviction of a local SD politician from Halland who posted anti-Semitic and xenophobic words on his personal webpage, Jimmie Åkesson wrote an open letter to the party where he stated that “*for now on, the zero-tolerance (abr towards racism) and the efforts to cleanup the party have become the highest priority*” (SvT Nyheter, *Åkesson städar upp i SD*, 2012).

He openly and officially warned every representatives of the party that any misconduct regarding this zero-tolerance would irremediably lead to the eviction of the party.

Few weeks after it, a new scandal actually blew up, the so called “Iron pipe scandal” when some videos recorded in 2010 were released by the newspaper Expressen showing 3 of the 20 SD members of parliament, Kent Ekeroth, Erik Almqvist and Christian Westling threatening physically and verbally some people with very racist and sexist words. While Almqvist was forced to step down after the scandal and finally quit its seat and the party, Ekeroth remained in parliament despite his time-out. And again, few months after that, it was the turn of another MP, Lars Isovaara to resign from its seat after the police reported him for racist abuse and he put together and lied about his own aggression by some immigrants.

Despite the “zero-tolerance” politics of the party, we can retrace many small scandals related to members and local representatives of the SD having been accused of xenophobic and racist words or being active in some radical groupuscules. Moreover, in February 2015, the Dagens Nyheter Daily reported that Erik Almqvist -whose eviction has been waved as the model of the “zero-tolerance” policy of the party- has kept a leading role in the Sweden Democrats (SD) media project Samtiden, information which was confirmed by the MP Martin Kinnunen, also chairman of the newspaper. Last January, the “acting” SD leader Mattias Karlsson who has replaced Jimmie Åkesson during his sick leave, himself sparked off a scandal when he declared that although Nazism is “terrible”, Islamism is “perhaps greater than from Nazism today” (SvT Nyheter, *Mattias Karlsson: Islamism större hot än Nazism idag*, 2015), especially when knowing the roots of the party he is representing.

Although the SD has officially adopted a zero-tolerance policy and tried to get rid of the most extremist part of its party, the task proved to be more complicated than expected and questions also the will and the motivations behind it. With many local scandals related to SD representatives regarding xenophobia, it seems that the party is

still linked with some radical ideologies and radical members, who still remain an important electoral support for the party.

To conclude this analysis, we can thus confirm that the SD is trying to institutionalize and moderate its image in order at the same time to legitimize itself as a proper party and also to look more moderate at the eyes of the public and the other parties.

Nevertheless it seems that this normalization and moderation is still in the process and the SD is still keeping some of the features of a radical and populist party and in this sense might still be considered not moderate and institutionalized enough to distanced itself from the pariah status.

4.2. Reaction of the mainstream parties

4.2.1. Ignoring and stigmatizing the SD:

Since the SD appeared on the political scene, its presence on the political landscape and in the media has been quite weak, even when the party started to get more and more votes and also despite its breakthrough the Riksdag in September 2010. It is thus quite obvious that the party has been for a long time ostracized by the different other actors and through different manners.

Ostracization by the mainstream parties

From its first apparition on the political scene, the SD has been ostracized from the other parties. At the beginning indeed, the SD was considered as a new kind of “New Democracy” experience, and was seen as another short-lived breakthrough.

All the mainstream parties adopted pretty much an “ignoring” strategy at the beginning, but in 2010, when they eventually entered the Riksdag, the attitude of the other parties started to change.

First of all, every parties stated before the elections and afterwards that they would not enter any form of cooperation with the SD, which means no coalition or no “agreement” which would make the SD a support party. In 2010, the Alliance for Sweden, managed to build a minority government and though the SD was expecting at

least to be called by the Alliance for negotiations, Fredrik Reinfeldt, the leader of the M and then Prime Minister clearly re-assess its refusal to have any form of discussion or negotiation with them; even if it meant for the Alliance to rule as a minority government. As for the mainstream parties from the left wing have been also pretty clear that any kind of cooperation with the SD would not be possible. It has thus become very clear that all the mainstream parties of Sweden have then tried to prevent the SD to have any influence in the Riksdag, especially through two main events.

First of all, following the elections, the 7 other parties discussed the possibility of decreasing the number of members in the different Riksdag committees from 17 to 15, which would thus prevent the SD to enter most of the committees as *“Each parliamentary committee is made up of 17 members of the Riksdag. Their composition reflects the relative party strengths in the Riksdag. The largest party in the Riksdag also has the most members in each committee”* (Sveriges Riksdag, How the Riksdag Works, Committees). The idea was nevertheless abandoned, as it was too controversial. It raised many criticisms from different party members regarding the “undemocratic” dimension of it and the question of whether or not it would help to prevent the SD to gain influence and not on the contrary contribute to its “martyr” image.

The second event happened in 2011 when Reinfeldt’s government and the Greens made a historical agreement. In order to block the SD to have any influence on its single issue – immigration- the Alliance managed to pass a legislative agreement with the Greens, pro-immigration party, to ensure majority when voting on immigration issues. Finally, despite the growth of the SD in the opinion polls, all the parties categorically refuse to engage in any public debate with them especially regarding immigration and when mentioning the SD, they kept on calling them “racists”, “neo-fascists”, “right-extremists” etc. So from the beginning, the SD was considered as a pariah by the mainstream parties in their whole. As they imagined that the SD would not last long on the political scene, they started to ignore the party, but as we saw in 2011, this strategy started to evolve towards a more isolating one.

Ostracization by the media

In the case of the SD's ostracization, it is also worth to look at their boycott by the Swedish media regarding the fact that, media are very important in political process, especially during election campaigns. Considering medias as an important tool during elections, it seems still accurate to mention their reaction in connection with the political ostracization of the SD.

The treatment of the SD by the medias in Sweden has been indeed very different than for the other parties and can be described as a boycott:

- Difficulties to make advertisement: the newspaper Expressen for instance openly banned the SD's from advertisement.
- Non diffusion of SD's party video on airtime
- Difficulties to enter debate pages
- Negative labeling

It has been admitted that the treatment of the SD in the medias has not been fair regarding journalistic neutrality and has been very criticized by the defender of freedom of speech.

As already mentioned, the SD describes itself as a national-conservative party and in their "de-demonization" process they tried to get rid of any of their negative labels. Although, in 2013, after a journalist has been sued for having called the SD a xenophobic party, the Swedish Broadcasting Commission (Granskningsnämnden för radio och TV), a government agency, stated "the Board sees no reason in the light of the 2011 Program principles, to change the assessment that it is not contrary to the requirements of impartiality and objectivity to describe the SD as a xenophobic party" (Myndigheten för radio och tv, Beslut, 2013).

Eventually, negative labels such as "neo-Nazi", "neo-fascist", "xenophobic" or "anti-immigration", are very recurrent in articles dealing with the SD and also in the mouth of many representatives of mainstream parties even in the mouth of the new Prime Minister Löfven who re-launched the debate on how to label the SD when he wrote in a debate tribune for the Dagens Nyheter : "Here we have a small neo-fascist party that believes that they will have a decisive influence and set the agenda for the Swedish policy" (*Dagens Nyheter*, 'Även Löfven kallar SD nyfascistiskt', December 2014).

To conclude, the SD has been from the beginning clearly politically ostracized and also stigmatized by the other politicians and the media.

Nevertheless, if this “ignoring and stigmatizing strategy” might have prevented the SD to have influence in the Riksdag; the long-term result of such a strategy is more questionable and the SD might have gained from it. First of all it has consolidated the SD’s rhetoric of victimization and also legitimizing their anti-elites discourse. Finally, silencing the SD on their single-issue and not confronting them could passively legitimizing their discourse, or at least letting them on the monopoly of the issue.

The result of the 2014 elections have indeed proved that the strategy of ignoring and stigmatizing the SD have had the intended consequences and mainstream parties might have to re-think their approach towards it.

4.2.2. From “ignoring” the SD to isolation strategy: The December Agreement

After the political turmoil created by the rejection of the budget proposed by the freshly formed Löfven cabinet at the beginning of December, Sweden was preparing itself for a snap election in March 2015.

Despite some difference in prognostics about the new election, all showed the stabilization of SD’s position as 3rd biggest party and maybe an increase in its score.

The SD made it clear, right after the announcement of new elections that they would push their single-issue as the main topic of the elections as Karlsson the SD’s interim leader stated during a press conference: “The Swedish Democrats want the election to be a referendum on immigration” (Presse Conference, 3rd December 2014). The SD indeed saw the new election as a possibility to push even more their issue on immigration and to turn it as a “de facto referendum” about immigration. Nevertheless, at their biggest surprise, on December 27th, Löfven cancelled the snap election and after secret negotiations between the leaders the Greens, the Centre Party, the Moderates, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats, an historical agreement was adopted, the so-called December agreement:

“The political conditions prevailing in Sweden means that it is likely that Sweden will be governed by minority governments in the coming years, but it has become more difficult than before. Against this background, we make an agreement to make Sweden possible to govern”

December agreement (see appendix 1)

This agreement is firstly an agreement on new voting practices applied at least until 2022 and on the practice it means that the smaller political forces or blocks would abstain for voting for their own budget proposal if it threatens to bring down the main political force’s proposal in the main voting. What it means for Sweden right now is that the Löfven government will thus continue to assume its role when the other parties would make it easier for them to pass their budget and to ensure the good functioning of the Sweden’s government.

This agreement was very controversial and seen as an undemocratic deal, especially by the two parties that where not invited to the negotiations: the Left and the SD. The SD’s reaction was very strong and it accused the mainstream parties to go one more time against the will of the people and the democratic game, putting back the debate about party ostracization and minority government as Karlsson told the Tindnigarnas Telegrambyrå news agency: *“I think it's startling that they go against the fundamental principles of democracy. What it's done is introduce a set of rules where a minority can control a majority”* (‘Sweden Democrats blast election U-turn’, *The Local Sweden*, 2014).

The agreement of course raises many debates and discussion about political practices, but it is mostly a strategy to avoid the SD to threaten the functioning of Swedish politics by bringing down every minority government, which does not meet its political views, so to say any government that does not curb rising immigration: *“It is clear that they are attacking us. Now there are six parties in government and one opposition party”* (ibid.). The December agreement should thus be seen as an historical event in Swedish politics as for the first time in the parliamentary history of Sweden, the mainstream parties clearly created a “cordon sanitaire” and from a strategy of “ignoring the pariah party” they switch to the strategy of political isolation. Though it does not take the form of a proper parliamentary coalition, it can be related to a form of

a context-linked legislative agreement, some academics such as Jacob Christensen (2014) sees in it a “curious creature” which could be compared to a derived form of grand coalition: *“It is a grand coalition with regard to constitutional matters which attempts to cancel the impact of the Sweden Democrats”*. In any case, this agreement is definitely a form of “cordon sanitaire” as the mainstream parties together and despite their very big divergences decided to block any attempt from the SD to fail again a government.

If to some extent it shows the determination of the mainstream parties to contain the SD’s influence on Swedish politics, the risk remains that it would only strengthen the position of the SD in the electorate and if so far the other parties managed to find a compromise and are mostly rejecting any possibility of cooperation with the SD, future political and social context could change this new status quo.

4.2.4. An unanimous political ostracization?

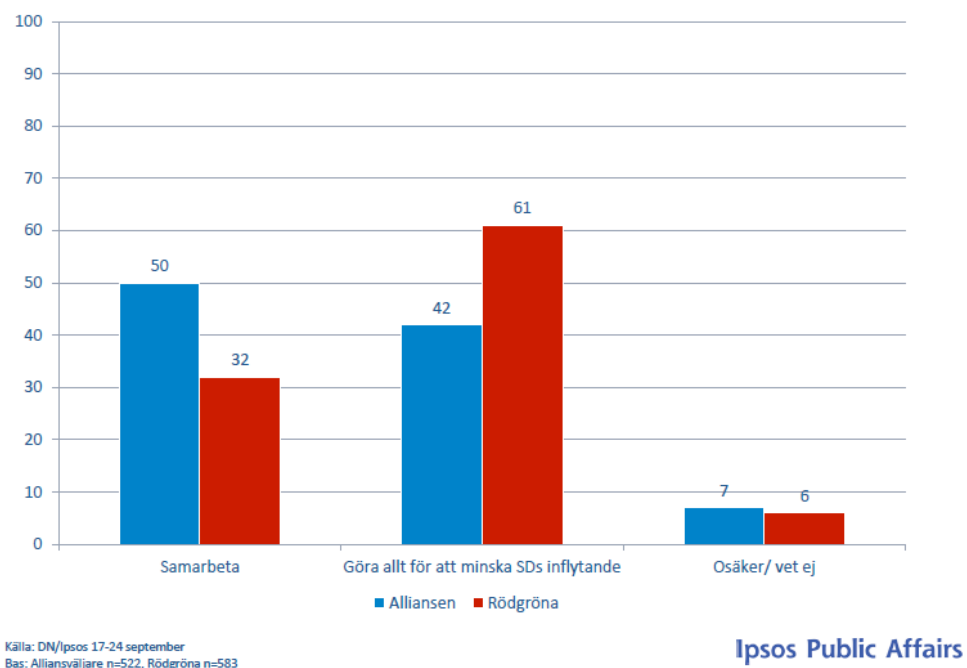
Although every party have openly and strongly confirmed their opposition to any kind of discussion or alliance with the SD during the election campaign and after the results, some voices have raised from mainstream parties about considering the possibility of a coalition with the SD during the government formation period.

One of the most surprising and somehow unexpected reactions came from within the Social Democratic Party. In October 2014, the social democrat Widar Andersson former leader of the parliament (1994-1998), former EU MP (2004-2009) and chief redactor of the newspaper Folkbladet wrote an editorial, which shacked the S. In this article, the politician criticized the exclusion of the SD from any coalition discussion and advised the future Prime Minister Löfven to “let the anxious and politically correct considerations away” (Friatider, ‘S-bråk om samarbete med SD’, October 2014) and start engaging discussion with the SD.

Moreover, though the political leaders of the Alliance parties remained pretty clear on their rejection of cooperation with the SD, some statistics show that their voters have another opinion on the question. According to the public opinion research center IPSOS Sweden, it appeared that voters from the different mainstream parties have different perception on the issue of cooperating or ostracizing the SD as we can see in

survey results published by IPSOS in September 2014 answering the question “Do you believe that the other parties in parliament should cooperate with the Sweden Democrats on issues where they have similar ideas or do you feel that you should do everything to reduce their influence in parliament?”:

Figure 6: IPSOS 2014, “Red-green (S and G) voters believe more often that the parties should do everything possible to reduce the SDs influence in parliament”⁴



The results are pretty surprising when compared with the discourses of political representatives, and as it was mentioned in the theoretical part, the right-wing voters are more appealed by cooperation with the SD, nevertheless the result of the Red-green voters stating that the parties should cooperation in the parliament with the SD is surprisingly high.

Those results raise many questions on the future of the SD’s ostracization. With growing votes for the SD, disappointing scores in the elections for the mainstream parties and an increase of mainstream parties’ voters thinking that the parties should collaborate with the SD, it seems that the ostracization of the SD might not last long.

⁴ legend: “samarbeta”= to work with ; “göra allt för att minska SDs inflytande”= “to do everything to reduce the influence of the SD”; “osäker/vet ej” = do not know

To summarize the analysis of the political ostracization of the SD, it appears clearly that the mainstream parties are still officially ostracizing the SD and they even changed their strategy and hardened it by creating a “cordon sanitaire”. According our conceptualization, the SD remains thus a pariah party that every other party is trying to prevent from political influence. Nevertheless some important signs are showing that this ostracization is fragile in the sense that voters’ opinion on the attitude to adopt towards the SD is changing and balancing towards cooperation. By supposing that the SD will improve its scores, for how long will or can this political “front” against the SD last? According to the different coalition theories, can Swedish parties continue to reject partnership with the SD at the risk of losing power or governing with weak minority government? It thus seems that in the coming years, if the mainstream parties’ results remain low and the SD continue to rise, we might expect a change in the official position of the mainstream parties towards the SD.

4.3. The influence of the SD in the Riksdag and on the party system

4.3.1. The SD legislative influence: 2010-2014

With only 20 MPs in the Riksdag between 2010 and 2014, it is easy to imagine that the influence of the SD has not been so strong, except if they would have been the support party of another party.

Through the official documents of the Riksdag, we can already provide a brief outlook of the influence and role of the SD.

- **Votes of parliament proposals:**

According to the document summarizing the votes of the 20 SD MPs⁵, we can already draw a general overview:

- In total the SD voted 2426 times out of 2701 for or against a proposal, which means that they abstain (by absence or abstention) 275 times.

⁵ all the results from votes, the questions to the government, the interpellations and the motions have been found on the official archives of the Riksdag taken between september 2010 and september 2014, available from : <http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/>

- They voted 829 times against the winning majority (against motions proposed by the government and later adopted by the Riksdag)
- They voted 1597 times for the winning majority
- They voted 4 times against a proposal from the government which was later not adopted
- They voted also 4 times in favor of a proposal from the government and which has been rejected by the Riksdag

- **Questions to the Government**

The SD asked 53 “Questions to the Government” (frågot) from a total of 3003 questions asked (1.76%)

- **Interpellations**

They made 42 interpellations of the Parliament from a total of 1948 interpellations (2.15%)

- **Motions**

- The SD took part in 1271 motions, so almost 8.9% of the motions presented to the parliament.
- In the 1271 motions, 1074 were proposed by the SD as a party or by one of the SD MP (84.5%)
- No motions were proposed in cooperation with another party.

First, according to the votes, it seems that the SD’s influence on motion votes has not had a strong impact on the final votes. Then, looking at the different statistics for motions, interpellations and questions, we can state that SD’s participation has not been particularly dynamic. However, if we take the statistics from the other two smallest parties which were in the parliament, the Vänsterpartiet (the Left or V) and the Christian Democrats (CD), we should underline that SD has been more active regarding production of motions, though most of them have not led to any “followed motions” (följdmotioner).

So, to dress a general assessment, we could say that the SD’s influence and role in

the Riksdag between 2010 and 2014 has not been particularly strong, which of course comes out mostly from the few number of MPs. It is nevertheless interesting to notice that for an opposition and anti-system party, the SD abstained to vote only 10.2% and moreover they voted almost 59% of the time for the winning majority. We can thus notice that for a an opposition party, the SD has not especially played the game of opposition and shows actually one more time the single-issue profile of the party whose most of the motions, interpellations or questions have been related to immigration.

Finally, most of their motions have not been supported by other parties, thus without any backing from other parties, a small number of MPs and a weak position regarding other issues than their “champion issues”, the SD thus appeared to have had a weak influence on the legislative process.

4.3.2. September 2014: A new “earthquake election”?

Results’ analysis

In 1973, during the so called “earthquake elections”, Norway and Denmark have seen the emergence of two RRWPPs - the Danish Progress Party and the Norwegian Progress Party-, an event that deeply shook the party system of the two countries. Afterwards, the two parties became an integrated part of the political landscape whether by integrating a ruling coalition or by becoming an important support party for different governments. So can we consider the last Swedish election an earthquake election? Has the SD benefited from the results and managed to get rid of its pariah status by becoming the third largest party in the country?

On the 14th of September, Sweden national elections have shaken the whole country and Swedish politics. First of all those elections saw the defeat of the center-right “Alliance for Sweden” coalition with 23.3% - 7% less than in the 2010 elections. With 31.0%, the Social Democrats became the first party in Sweden and after 8 years of opposition, it had finally the possibility to form a government but after days of negotiations, they only obtained the participation of the Green – which got 6.9%- in a minority coalition government. The real winners of those elections have not been the Social Democrats, still registering one of their lowest scores in history, but the Sweden

Democrats, which more than doubled its score with 12.9%. Except of the Left party, which gained 0.1 % compared to the last elections, all the other main parties of Sweden registered also lower results than in 2010.

Figure 7: Results of the 2014 elections

Party	Results in %	Seats won
Social Democrats	31.0	113
Green Party	6.9	25
Moderates	23.3	84
Centre Party	6.1	22
Liberal People’s Party	5.4	19
Christian Democrats	4.6	16
Sweden Democrats	12.9	49
Left Party	5.7	21
Feminist Initiative	3.1	0

Sources: Valmyndigheten available from: <http://www.val.se/val/val2014/valnatt/R/rike/>

The task was difficult for the Social Democrats to form a government but eventually, on the 3rd of October, Stefan Löfven, leader of the S and appointed new Prime Minister, managed to form a two parties minority government with the Green party, the weakest minority government in the history of Sweden with roughly 37.9% of votes and 138 seats in the Riksdag (only 39.5% of the seats). It is also the first time in history that the Greens make it to the government and the first time that the S has to govern with a coalition. The choice to rule with such a weak coalition has been difficult and controversial, the S having received on the one side a coalition rejection from the C and having made the choice not to form a coalition with the Left and with the SD.

The last elections have thus shown a more polarized vote and Swedish politics, historically based on two-block politics with most of the votes going to the two biggest traditional parties – the Social Democrats and the Moderates – seems to sway. It is also important to notice that even smaller parties such as the Greens registered some low scores in comparison with “newer” parties such as the SD or even the very young Feminist Initiative.

Outcome of the election for the SD

Despite the strong rejection to form any kind of partnership or coalition with the SD, it is there are some evidences of the advancement of the SD in its institutionalization and maybe its slow acceptance.

First of all, with almost 13% of the votes, the SD has been granted, though with reluctance, one of the three deputy speaker positions (andra vice talman) in the Riksdag as traditionally the positions should be granted to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th biggest parties in. The Riksdag describes in this terms the role of the Speaker (and thus according to that to the vice-speakers):

“The Speaker is the Riksdag's principal representative, and as such directs and organises the Riksdag's work procedures.

The Speaker's tasks include presiding over the meetings of the Chamber. He is assisted by three Deputy Speakers.

The Speaker is the Riksdag's principal representative, and as such directs and organizes the Riksdag's work procedures. The Speaker's tasks include presiding over the meetings of the Chamber. He is assisted by three Deputy Speakers.” (Sveriges Riksdag, How the Riksdag works, The Speaker).

Björn Söder became then the second deputy speaker⁶, which is clearly making the SD more visible in the new parliament and give them a greater influence. This choice has been very controversial and some politics from different parties have reacted strongly to it or are not recognizing him as their deputy speaker especially after several very controversial declarations of Söder. Despite the fact that the selection of deputy speakers is only a political and historical “practice”, not following it and refusing to grant one position to the SD might have been very controversial too and seen as un-democratic. Nevertheless, despite the “practice rule”, the vote for the second vice deputy speaker, vote that should be made within different candidates of the 3rd biggest party, had shown the reluctance of other parties. It took indeed three rounds to elect Söder -only candidates- the two first rounds being based on the majority support. It is

⁶ see official report from the Riksdag ; http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Kammaren/Protokoll/Protokoll-2014151-Mandagen-d_H2091/

only after the third round based on ballot that Söder was elected and received 52 votes against 292 blank votes. The result was inevitable as Söder was the only candidate of his party to stand for the vote and as the other MPs had only the choice between voting for him or abstaining. This election can already prove how complex it can be to ostracize a party that entered the system and a parliament while respecting the system rules and the political practices. If the high number of blank votes was mostly symbolic, it showed the deep reluctance of other parties to accept the SD, but it is important to mention that, nevertheless, on the 52 votes for Söder, only 46 could come from the SD MPs (only 46 of them were present that day)⁷, which still let us with 6 MPs from other parties that have voluntarily voted for him and could thus show that within the other parties, some people might have started to consider the SD as normalized.

Moreover, with its high score during the last election, the SD has also increased its presence in the committees and is now on represented by 6 MPs out of 17 committee members. A committee only has the responsibilities of preparing cases on its specific area and making reports with proposals for parliamentary decisions, although with a bigger number of MPs present in each committees, the SD is firstly much more visible and has more chance to influence the process if possible.

Thanks to the Riksdag's practices and its electoral results, the SD has thus managed, despite the political ostracization to reach symbolic and nonetheless important positions in the Riksdag and then paved the way towards more institutionalization.

4.3.3. The budget adoption issue

With such a weak minority, the Löfven government was aware from the beginning that it would be a difficult task to pass its own budget. Nevertheless, the result of the votes proved to be much more crucial and the consequences much more negative than expected as it brought down the government.

It was clear since the election campaign that whatever the result of the elections, the Alliance would in any case submit their own budget proposal and vote against the one from the winning coalition, which eventually happened. On the other side, the SD

⁷ statistics found at <http://www.dn.se/valet-2014/bjorn-soder-ny-vice-talman/>

also submit its own budget proposal and voted against the one proposed by the government as the SD strongly opposed the part of the budget accorded to immigration and asylum policies.

The first round of the vote thus saw no adoption of budget and call for a second election which would become much more crucial and would show the complexity of political cooperation and strategies. Several options were possible if Löfven lost the second vote, but much of them, though possible on the paper would not be acceptable in the practice. The first one was to rule with the opposition budget a scenario, which was ruled out by Löfven and seen as not so probable to happen. The second one would have been to accept bigger compromise to deal with the Alliance at the risk of losing the Green support. Finally the last one was to call for a new national election in a short timing, which would be very risky considering the already low scores of the S during the last one.

During the second round of budget vote, the SD happened to not follow one of the traditional “political practices” and in spite of only voting against the government’s budget, they voted instead for the Alliance budget and this brought down the Löfven government. This historical event is not only proving the growing influence and power of the SD, it also raised some important issues regarding the game theory and coalition strategy.

On the one hand, the SD took also a risk by bringing down the government and going back to elections, but as a pariah party there was no possibility at this stage to enter any discussions with any of the other parties. Moreover, if Löfven did not call for new election but decided to re-negotiate with the Alliance, Löfven would have had to resign and the Green must have been out of office, an important victory for the SD.

In an article following the budget vote, Nicholas Aylott made a very precise analysis of the results and the events, eventually stating, “*Sweden’s battle over the 2014 budget was part of a struggle for the orientation of the Swedish party system. In this struggle, the Alliance accepted the attendant risk of provoking a new election. In the end, so did the Social Democrats*” (Aylott N., 2014). With their two-block conception of the party system, we might wonder if the mainstream parties have understood the new issues that the SD results have raised and their consequences for Swedish politics and political system.

4.3.4. The end of the Swedish party system model?

There is no point to deny that the last decades have been a period of important political changes, nevertheless, as Peter Mair argued in *Party system change, approaches and interpretations* (1997), the notion of “party system change” has to be taken very carefully and not confused with other political changes which mirrored the changes in social structures. They reflect an important change in the electoral behavior and the structural change of the society: the process of partisan de-alignment has become more and more important, electoral volatility is high and the confidence in parties decrease for the benefit of non-mainstream parties.

There is also a change in political practice with a tendency to shift from “class politics” to “issue politics” but also in the political communication, campaigns and images, which had also evolved in parallel with the society and the new mods of living and new technologies and communication; nevertheless the systemic impact of those changes should be put into perspective. First of all, despite the general trend of partisan de-alignment and trust in parties, the parties as institutions remain extremely dominant in elections, which can be also seen in the changes in the anti-establishment or anti-party parties which, in order to gain political influence and role, have to institutionalize and to adapt into the classical form of political parties.

A party system, as Mair reminds us, “clearly involves more than the sum of its component (party) parts, and incorporates some element of understanding of the mode of interaction between these parties”, thus regarding the current Swedish party system, the extent of “party system” change should not be exaggerated. So there have been some changes in the electoral behavior and in the number of parties but it should not be considered as sufficient to talk about change in party system. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge a strong core persistence of the three traditional class parties since the World War II, even though they are losing some electorate, they still register some high scores especially in comparison with other European traditional parties.

But once again, what makes the concept of “party system change” a complex issue is the fact that it has often been confused with “electoral change” and “party change”, both notions that can hardly be considered as stable as they are reflecting also

the changes in society. Nevertheless, as Arter highlights in the article *“Big Bang” elections and party system change in Scandinavia: Farewell to the “enduring party system?”* (2011), the concept of frozen (Rokkan and Lipset) or enduring Scandinavian party system (Sundberg) should also be put into question. As Mair eventually underlines, testing a party system change should focus on the “pattern among the parties”. Thus, indicators such as electoral volatility, party changes, ideology changes or new parties could get systemic relevance and influence on the interactions between parties. The growth of support for populist anti-establishment parties has shown an increasing polarization of the party system.

Besides, the emergence of a party difficult to place on the left-right scale such as the SD, proved the switch from a “unidimensional” to a “multidimensional” party system and, thus challenge the traditional pattern of coalition formation. It is also important to underline that the events following the 2014 elections have proved the tricky use of “practices”, which despite being traditional and historical, are not written anywhere. These are those practices themselves, which benefited the SD whether by forcing the other mainstream, in order not to look un-democratic, to follow them and grant some key positions to the SD; or by being bypassed by the SD during the vote of the budget for instance.

All in all, the extent of party system change in Sweden remains a very difficult issue to determine. The recent political developments could prove that the Swedish system is not anymore such a stable or “frozen” party system. Despite changes in social structures and political behaviors or parties, we might indeed keep in mind the exceptional core persistence of the traditional parties in the electorate and in history as well as on the policy-making process in the system, and thus the extent of party system change in Sweden should not be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the results of the last elections, seeing new and recent parties remaining in the Riksdag such as the SD and V, proves that changes are occurring on the electoral and party level, which might lead in the near future to a definitive party system change.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1. The SD: kingmakers or troublemakers?

When the first election results came up during the night of the 14th of September, the excitement was at his height within the SD members. The party scored indeed 12.9% and became the third biggest national party: “we are the absolute kingmakers now” (*The Local Sweden*, ‘Reinfeldt steps down after election defeat’, September 2014) told Åkesson to the reporters right after the results.

As it has been explained in the data analysis, despite some high results and the coalition deal proposed by the SD, the Social Democrats chose without any hesitation to refuse it and rather lead an uneasy minority government with the Green party.

For the second time (first in 2010), the SD was expecting the call of the winning party to make a coalition and did not get it, but as Jimmie Åkesson pointed out, they became an important force in the Swedish political landscape and a new pivotal party.

Theoretically, a minority government can successfully lead a government; nevertheless the second vote of the budget and the fall down of the government following the vote of the SD showed the weakness of the Löfven minority coalition.

Can we thus see the SD as the new kingmaker party or has it been only a political “troublemaker” opposition party?

On the one hand, the budget adoption proved that the SD had the power to bring down a government and to force new elections to happen. On the other hand, the concept of “kingmaker” might be exaggerated because not only the electoral weight of a party should be taken into account.

First of all, the December agreement and the “cordon sanitaire” built up by the other mainstream parties have proved that the SD has not yet reached a level of political acceptance from the other parties and is still not considered as a potential coalition partner neither an acceptable support party.

Secondly, looking at the data of their role in the Riksdag between 2010 and 2014, it appeared that the SD only had a very weak influence, not only taking into account the

fact that they had only 20 MPs. This can be related to the fact that, except on the topic of immigration and nationalism, the SD has shown a lack of political content regarding other issue areas.

Despite some evolution in the elaboration of its political program, the SD remains a single-issue party and in order to become a real “kingmaker” in the Riksdag it will need to develop deeper its ideology and policy program, maintain its high scores in the polls, as well as continue to distance itself of its negative image. Nevertheless, the growing importance of the SD is undeniable and it raised many questions regarding the approach to the Swedish party system as a whole.

5.2. Class-de-alignment, party polarization and ostracization: how to tackle the rise of a pariah party

If it might be too early to talk about a big change in Swedish party system itself, the rise of the SD has forced the mainstream parties to confront new issues and to re-think their political strategies.

In a study published in January 2015 - *Room for re-alignment: Working-Class sympathy for Sweden Democrats* – Maria Oskarson and Maria Demker underlines different reasons that have benefited the rise of SD during the recent years.

First of all, as it was already mentioned, there has been an obvious change in political alignment of voters in Sweden and the decline of class voting in a country where “the association between voters class positions and party sympathy has long been among the strongest in the Western world” (2015), especially looking at the decline of the Social Democrats and their recent results.

Secondly and most importantly for our purpose, this re-alignment is also the result of the current change in party system, especially the weakening of mainstream parties’ polarization. Still according to the study of Oskarson and Demker, the last decades have shown a polarization of the mainstream parties in Sweden, especially the two biggest ones the Social Democrats and the Moderates regarding market economy and welfare:

“Altogether, the ideological climate, with increasing similarities between the major left and major right parties on the supply side, combined with remaining attitudinal

cleavages (rather than decreasing tolerance to refugees) on the demand side and the decrease in traditional class voting, could be seen as providing a favorable opportunity structure for the Sweden Democrats”.

So what to preconize to the mainstream parties? Has ostracization been the right strategy to employ? The debate remains open but looking at what happened in other European countries and taking into account the specificities of Sweden we can still find some food for thoughts.

If the “isolation”/“ignoring strategy in Sweden has permitted for some decades to maintain RRWPPs out of the political game, the situation has changed with the SD and this long lasting ostracization strategy might have given more attention to the SD as it was actually planned and expected. The SD has indeed well used the victimhood argument pointing out a lack of democracy and the limitation of their freedom of speech by being excluded from the public debate and the media as well as being always associated to neo-Nazi, fascist and xenophobic labels. This “victimization” of the SD, associated to the general decrease in political trust and the populist strategies employed by the SD could have thus created also certain sympathy towards it in opposition to the mainstream politics and parties, as Vidhya Ramalingam underlines:

“SD have demonstrably gained from some elements of their stigma, exemplified by the Danish call for election observers to monitor violations of democracy against SD and the increased audience the party received after their election film was banned from Swedish television stations” (Ramalingam V., 2012).

Moreover, by avoiding the debate on immigration, the mainstream parties have led a room for the SD to spread their views on the issue in a context rather favorable for them with the number of asylum seekers growing and the controversies of some riots in some neighborhoods with a high number of immigrants. Even in the December agreement the issue of immigration has been avoided and it might, in the near future, lead to more frustration and misunderstanding in the public opinion.

If it seems easy to affirm that the mainstream parties should right now discuss the immigration issue but the way to do it is much more complicated and tricky as the

experience of other European countries can show. There is a high risk that by doing it in a wrong manner it could rather benefit and legitimize the SD. In France for instance, in response to the growing number of people voting for the Front National, a RPP with a strong anti-immigration even xenophobic discourse, some mainstream parties have made the mistake to tackle the topic by using the same rhetoric strategies and vocabulary to “catch-up” voters from the FN as Aurélien Mondon (2013) analyzed it with accuracy in his study of the 2007 national elections when despite the FN low score (at least lower than expected), the co-optation by mainstream parties of FN’s rhetoric gave credit to their ideas or how “*an electoral defeat proved an ideological victory*” .

One of the biggest mistake made by some mainstream politics was thus to try to catch voters from the RRWPPs by using the same rhetorical tools as them and putting electoral ambitions as a priority. If the strategy seems at the beginning to work, looking at polls results, the ideological consequences are much more negative. A shift from the mainstream parties towards a more right-wing politics concerning nationalism and immigration, associated to the moderation (at least on the appearance) of RRWPPs leads to a convergence that could only benefit the RRWPPs at the end make them become potential coalition partners and definitely get rid of their pariah status. If so far, this convergence has not yet happened in Sweden, the way mainstream parties will deal or not with immigration issue will be crucial.

CONCLUSION:

In 2010 Sweden has experienced the breakthrough into the parliament of a radical right-wing populist party, the Sweden Democrats. Since its creation at the end of the 80s, the media as well as the mainstream political parties have ostracized the SD, ostracization that consists mostly in ignoring the party and stigmatizing it. In the following elections, instead of decreasing, the SD obtained much more votes than in 2010 and managed to become the 3rd biggest party in Sweden.

From what could have been seen in 2010 as a one-time event, turned to be really different as the SD established itself quite comfortably in the polls and in the parliament. Although the SD never managed to enter any form of political cooperation with the other parties, which still considered it as a radical and non-acceptable partner, it still managed to create a political crisis following the budget adoption vote and brought down the already fragile Red-Green governing coalition.

The main question of this work was thus to see if the label “pariah party” can be applied to the SD and to which extent. It has been firstly found out that the SD is in the process of institutionalization but it remains mostly a single-issue party with a lack of proper content and policies regarding other issues. Secondly, despite trying to improve its image and “de-demonize” itself, the party is still struggling to get rid off its negative image and labels within the media and the politicians. Moreover it appeared that the SD has not yet sufficiently institutionalized in order to have a real weight in the parliament as we have observed through their role in the parliament between 2010 and 2014.

By analyzing the attitude of the mainstream parties towards the SD, it appears clearly that all the parties are still ostracizing the SD and have used different strategies to prevent its influence in the political game and eventually the main parties, despite their political and ideological disagreements, managed to pass in 2014 an agreement and form a new type of “cordon sanitaire” against the SD.

According to our conceptualization of “pariah party”, we can thus confirm that

the SD is still a “pariah party”. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the SD is willing to bypass this pariah status and might in the near future become a potential cooperation partner. The breakthrough of the SD in the polls especially in September 2014 has proved that the long lasting “Swedish party system model” is shaking and slowly changing from a unidimensional to multidimensional system. Parties that used to comfortably share the majority of the votes and manage to govern even with a minority government are experiencing decreasing scores due to their polarization and class-de-alignment. It appears also that mainstream parties’ own voters’ attitude towards the SD is changing, especially for the voters’ of the center-right Alliance for Sweden (see appendix 2: graphic from IPSOS published in April 2015), and the trend is balancing toward an acceptance of the SD as partner.

The 2014 election has also given the SD a better visibility in the parliament, they gained for instance the position of vice Deputy Speaker and they also had the opportunity to place more of its MPs in the different parliamentary committees. Those elections and the events following it have shown the capacity of the SD to play with the parliamentary practices at their own benefit.

Finally, it is difficult to really assess the positive consequences of the SD’s political ostracization on the long-term, and so far it has proved to block them to increase their influence in the parliament but not in the public opinion as the growing polls can show. One crucial issue for the mainstream parties in the future will also be to finally handle the topic of immigration but in an intelligent way, which means by avoiding to legitimize the discourse of the SD on the issue but on the contrary to deconstruct it. Finally, it is also time that mainstream parties re-think their vision of the Swedish party system and understand that Sweden is slowly moving from a unidimensional party system towards a multidimensional one.

The SD thus remains a “pariah party” but one might not predict if this status will last for long and looking at the political trend in Europe or in the other Nordic countries, it is not improbable to imagine the SD as support party or coalition partner for a Swedish government in the near future.

ABBREVIATIONS:

C	Center Party
CD	Christian Democrats
DF	Dansk Folkeparti or Danish People's Party
FN	Front National
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
FrP	Fremskrittspartiet or Norwegian Progress Party
G	Green Party
M	Moderates
ND	New Democracy
RRWPP	Radical Right-Wing Populist Party
SD	Sweden Democrats
V	Vänsterpartiet or the Left

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: December Agreement

(<https://www.socialdemokraterna.se/upload/Decemberöverenskommelsen.pdf>)

ÖVERENSKOMMELSE

Socialdemokraterna, Moderaterna, Miljöpartiet, Centerpartiet, Folkpartiet och Kristdemokraterna har den 26 december 2014 träffat följande överenskommelse.

Sedan enkammarriksdagens införande har Sverige, med få undantag, styrts av minoritetsregeringar. Regeringsformen utgår också ifrån att Sverige ska kunna styras av en minoritetsregering. Det tar sig uttryck i att en statsminister inte behöver stöd från en majoritet av riksdagens ledamöter. En rad beslut har också fattats för att minoritetsregeringar ska kunna få igenom sina budgetar i riksdagen och därmed kunna genomföra sin ekonomiska politik. Samtidigt har Sverige också haft en politisk tradition av att samarbeta över blockgränsen i frågor där det är viktigt med långsiktighet.

De politiska förutsättningarna i Sverige gör att det är sannolikt att Sverige kommer att styras av minoritetsregeringar även de närmaste åren men att det blivit svårare än tidigare. Mot den bakgrunden gör vi en överenskommelse för att göra Sverige möjligt att regera.

Överenskommelsen innebär följande:

- Den statsministerkandidat som samlar stöd från den partikonstellation som är större än alla andra tänkbara regeringskonstellationer ska släppas fram.
- En minoritetsregering ska kunna få igenom sin budget.
- Utbrytningar ur budgeten ska inte vara möjliga.
- Överenskommelsen pekar ut tre politiska områden för samarbete och samtal.

De i överenskommelsen ingående partierna värdesätter den tradition vi haft i Sverige när det gäller blocköverskridande överenskommelser om försvars- och säkerhetspolitik samt pensionssystemet. Ett förändrat och försvårat säkerhetspolitiskt läge understryker vikten av samverkan kring försvars- och säkerhetspolitik.

När det gäller pensionsöverenskommelsen vill vi så snart som möjligt se till att arbetet i pensionsarbetsgruppen kan fortgå. Det är naturligt att Miljöpartiet, när det ingår i regeringen, har möjlighet att bidra och medverka i pensionsgruppens viktiga arbete.

Långsiktighet inom energiområdet är eftersträvanvärt. Med start i februari kommer alla partier som slutit denna överenskommelse att delta i en Energikommission.

Med partikonstellation nedan avses partier som samverkar i regering eller om budgeten.

Vad avser formerna för riksdagens arbete är vi överens om att:

- Den statsministerkandidat som representerar den största partikonstellationen släpps fram vid omröstning om talmannens förslag. Det sker genom att övriga partier som står bakom denna överenskommelse lägger ned sina röster. Detsamma gäller vid omröstning om sittande statsminister efter ett val.
- Förslaget till rambeslut samt riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken från den partikonstellation som är störst släpps fram vid budgetomröstning i kammaren. Om det finns en risk för att förslaget annars skulle falla avstår övriga partier som står bakom denna överenskommelse från att delta i omröstningen. Detsamma gäller även vid beslut om ändringsbudget och vårproposition (inklusive riktlinjer för den ekonomiska politiken).
- Efter att förslaget till rambeslut har antagits gäller följande.

- Förslag till anslagsfördelning inom utgiftsområdena från den partikonstellation som vunnit omröstningen om rambeslutet släpps fram vid omröstning i kammaren. Det sker genom att övriga partier som står bakom denna överenskommelse inte lägger reservationer utan särskilda yttranden vid utskottsbehandlingen av anslagsfördelningen, och därefter avstår från att delta i omröstningen i kammaren.
 - Den lagstiftning som krävs för att utgifter och inkomster ska falla ut på det sätt som framgår av den enligt ovan antagna statsbudgeten släpps fram vid omröstning i kammaren. Det sker genom att övriga partier som står bakom denna överenskommelse avstår från att delta i omröstningarna.
 - Regeringen följer och verkställer riksdagens budgetbeslut. Utskottsinitiativ gällande lagförslag eller förslag till ändringsbudgetar som, om de antogs, skulle innebära förändrade inkomster eller behov av ökade eller minskade anslag i förhållande till den beslutade budgeten, läggs inte fram av övriga partier som står bakom denna överenskommelse.
- Inleda en översyn av gällande regelverk med uppgift att se över budgetprocessen, på basis av det arbete som genomfördes i budgetprocesskommittén och i förra mandatperiodens RO-översyn. Detta arbete sker inom ramen för en utredning.

Denna överenskommelse tillämpas för första gången i samband med att regeringen i april 2015 lägger fram vårpropositionen. Överenskommelsen gäller till och med valdagen 2022.

Appendix: Voters' opinion on cooperation with the Sweden Democrats in parliament, in April 2015 (archives from IPSOS.se)

