



Introduction

Gaining Credibility in the Public Debate

Scene 1

Sweden. Election day, 19 September 2010. The votes have been counted. In the national elections the Sweden Democrats (SD) did for the first time cross the electoral threshold to parliament with 5.7 per cent of the vote. Lars Ohly, leader of the Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*), is invited on television to comment on the election results. On his way to the make-up room he is accompanied by the popular TV journalist Kristian Luuk. They are chitchatting, a conversation which is broadcast live to the viewers. After a short while Luuk reveals to Ohly that he will not be alone in the make-up room, but be sharing space with Jimmie Åkesson, the SD party leader. When Ohly finds out, he turns around and walks out. Ohly explains his behaviour to the press afterwards: 'I represent all of those who the Sweden Democrats are against and I will never have anything to do with racists' (*Maktkamp* 24, 19 September 2010).¹

Scene 2

In summer 2012 approximately 2000 Roma people without accommodation are seeking refuge in Oslo (*Osloby*, 14 July 2012). Stian Berger Røsland, municipal commissioner for the mainstream-right party *Høyre*, explains his worries: 'The free movement of people is a progress in Europe, and it is good news for all Europeans who wish to apply for a job in another country. But at the same time it requires that everybody can support themselves when they are abroad. Europe is torn by economic and social uneasiness, and it is a difficult time in which to have the free movement of people. The situation in Oslo illustrates the conflict between the different concerns.'

The current leader of the Progress Party, Siv Jensen, agrees with Røsland that the Roma people who cannot afford a living on their own should be sent back home: 'It is people who are not capable of earning their own living that are prone to commit criminal acts. Everybody who follows this case sees what is going on. Enough is enough, set up a bus and send them out' (*Aftenposten*, 16 July 2012).

Scene 3

In 2008 Lene Espersen was elected party leader of the Danish Conservative Party. She was also the deputy prime minister of Denmark. In the coalition government that from 2001 to 2011 ran the country, her party was in the governmental position. In 2009 Denmark hosted an annual climate conference; before the event began, Espersen said: 'If you go around thinking that the greatest threat to our existence is the environment, which threatens to flood your life the coming decades, then you better think again. The greatest threat against Denmark and Danish values is Muslim.'

The excerpts included here concern credibility. In the Swedish case (scene 1), Lars Ohly does not treat the party leader of the Sweden Democrats as a legitimate adversary. Ohly does not see any chance of having a normal exchange of views and ideas with Jimmie Åkesson. The SD is not considered a credible political opponent. The Norwegian case (scene 2) shows that the Progress Party (FrP) leader employs a tougher tone, compared to the representative from the mainstream-right party, based on perceptions of what 'everybody' already knows. Yet they do share similar opinions. In September 2013 *Høyre* won the national elections; but more importantly, they opened the doors for governmental co-operation with the FrP and they now form a minority government together with tacit support from the two other bourgeois parties, *Venstre* and *Kristelig Folkeparti*. In Denmark (scene 3) the harsh tone towards Islam is today used also by mainstream political actors such as, in this case, the deputy prime minister.

Based on these excerpts both the FrP in Norway and the Danish People's Party (DF) in Denmark are seemingly more aligned with their political adversaries, compared to the SD in Sweden. Gaining credibility in the political space requires reaching out with a particular political agenda to presumptive voters. The aim of this book is to explore similarities and differences between the three nationalist populist parties in Sweden, Denmark and Norway in terms of credibility in the public debate. The book deals with political communication and party political dynamics, focusing on three nationalist populist parties that mobilize voters in their countries who are concerned and perhaps worried about increased levels of ethnic diversity in previously more homogenous national states.

Theoretically, I contribute to the literature on various explanations for the rise of nationalist populist parties in established liberal democracies. I here emphasize the structural conditions for national identity formation in the three Scandinavian countries. I present the argument that parties outside mainstream consensus not only have to cross the electoral thresh-

old to affect domestic politics, but also a threshold of credibility; i.e. they have to communicate their political claims from credible *ethos*-positions.

Whereas there are obvious fissures in the public opinion on national identity and immigration, I here presume that a *nationalist* political party needs to tap into popular notions of national identity in order to affect domestic politics. In short, policies cannot be changed until the cultural codes are altered, even if the changes have electoral support. Of course, this is not a zero-sum game. If a 'new' political party gains a substantial amount of electoral fortunes, it can attract other parties to co-operate with them even if the parties do not always agree with each other.

But in order to do so, to provide an impact on domestic politics, the cultural codes need to be congruent with the ideals of the new party. Crossing the electoral threshold is not enough; a political contestant also needs to cross the threshold of credibility. The SD is not there. But the DF and FrP are.

Empirically, the book contributes with an initial test of the threshold of credibility, focusing on the three nationalist populist parties in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. These parties channel demands of the electorate, united in an increased reluctance towards diversity in the Scandinavian welfare states. The test has been conducted through analyses of the party manifestoes (how these parties attract voters and aim to reach the zone of acquiescence by references to popularly held sentiments and dreams of past days' social cohesion) and also through the reactions to the electoral fortunes of the parties under study in mainstream press editorials. The basic argument is that the parties need to be conceived as credible political actors on the editorial pages in order to provide an impact on domestic politics.

The Audiences

Rhetorical claims both presuppose and constitute convergence and a sense of community belonging between the sender and the receiver (Kjeldsen 2013: 185–187). Who is then capable of assessing whether a party falls in either category, of being credible or not? Is it the voters or perhaps instead the political or cultural elites who decide what counts as credible, and what does not? Belisa Marochi (2010: 28) explains in her Ph.D. thesis that 'the audience in which claims are made are crucial for the claim to have momentum'. Important to note is that the stable *ethos*-positions are not necessarily a quality of the sender, but rather attitudes of the receiver(s) who assess the claim (Kjeldsen 2013: 156). In general, our opinions about the claim makers reflect our ability to interpret or accurately assess

the claims being made (ibid.: 127). The sender thus constitutes her or his own audience.

With particular appeals to the people, the sender already decides who the audience(s) is (ibid.: 344). Here I address both the claims made by the nationalist populist parties themselves (see chapter 3 in this book) and also how the opinion makers mediate these claims in the public debate (see chapters 4 and 5 in this book).

The same claims can be seen as valid in front of one audience, while still rebutted in yet another. To illustrate this, the claim that a country cannot handle more immigration can be positively received by the majority of the participants in a discussion forum on the Internet and yet be falsified by most journalists and politicians commenting on this claim in mainstream print media. Instead of discussing one public debate, we should instead refer to multiple publics, recognizing the evolvement of various counter-publics (Fraser 1990; Goodwin 2011). It matters also from which position this claimed is being articulated, the position from where the message is being sent.

Chapter Outline

The book concentrates on a comparison of the nationalist populist parties in a delimited region – i.e. Scandinavia. Hitherto research on this party family has been mainly devoted to country-specific cases, or to comparing two countries.² More generally there are larger studies in which the Scandinavian countries are included (Art 2011; Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Mudde 1997; Norris 2005). However, in such studies the contextual knowledge is, at least to some extent, so forced as to be insufficient. Moreover, these large-N studies are dependent on well-informed single-case studies (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2013). Phrased differently, it is important with so-called thick descriptions of features such as political rhetoric and mainstream reactions to make sure that any type of large-N study makes the correct interpretation of a single case. The other way around, this comparative study contributes as well with more analytical depth for single-case studies that benefit from comparative knowledge.

Given that the Scandinavian countries are fairly similar in terms of demand-side factors (degree of industrialization, levels of unemployment, welfare state systems and so forth), a Scandinavian comparison offers a unique opportunity to isolate the effects of the supply-side factors. In short, supply-side factors emphasize the dynamics of how mass opinion translates into party political preferences (see e.g. Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009; Semyonov et al. 2006).

In this introduction I will first turn to the concept of credibility in relation to the structure of political competition. Second, I introduce the general wrapping of my study: how the universal welfare states in territorial bounded spaces manage ideals of multiculturalism and (ethnic) diversity. To this controversy, the three nationalist populist parties offer a particular answer, and I thirdly introduce the labelling issue as it regards this particular party family. Fourth, I turn to the general analytical guise of my own study, drawing on Ole Wæver's (2001) layered discursive approach, to clarify how the basic structure of national identity formation intersects with the nationalist parties' claim-making strategies. From this follows my emphasis on the forms of politics and the main analytical categories guiding the analysis: nationalism and populism as communication strategies. Finally, I make explicit some limits of the study and present a chapter outline for the book.

Credibility

It is not what you say that most matters, it is rather from which position you articulate yourself (Hellström 2006: 19). Provided that the listener/reader shall seriously consider what is being said and/or written, a political message has to be articulated from a credible position. This might not be important for extremist parties or movements, though I suggest that any political party that wishes to allocate a significant proportion of votes needs to cross the threshold of credibility in order to communicate its politics effectively to the audience and, ultimately, have a significant impact on domestic politics.

Credibility is a narrower concept than e.g. legitimacy. Credibility explicitly concerns political language and how we interpret the claims being addressed in the public debate. It concerns the construction of *ethos*-positions in the public debate.

The Swedish case epitomizes a situation where the public discussion is extensively polarized. The polarization in Sweden consists of two contrasting camps. On the one hand, there are those, like Ohly, who actively pursue the argument that the SD is a racist party, deeply ingrained with the legacy of a deplorable Neo-Nazi past.³ On the other hand, the SD voters might think that they vote for a decent party that is being ridiculed and sidestepped by the political and cultural elites of society (including Ohly), all in the spirit of political correctness. Still, the SD gathered enough voters to enter into the national parliament. There is a struggle of meaning concerning what counts as credible and what does not. The art of reproducing the nation features different elements, depending on

the claims of national cohesion made by the sender. Whereas a grand majority of the Swedish population tends to agree with Ohly, there is a significant minority that would contradict this claim and instead argue that only the SD speaks the truth.

In the perspective of the political establishment, the SD does not merely express the wrong views; ultimately, the SD also represents an *evil*. In the mainstream public debate, the SD is viewed as something 'the cat dragged in'. However, some would say that despite this collective denunciation of the party, other parties have taken over the SD's problem formulation; from a party political perspective, the political opponents from the other camp risk being accused of sleeping with the enemy: 'representatives along the political spectrum seek to, on the one hand, distance themselves from SD and, on the other, indicate that perhaps the other camp is to be blamed for the advancement of the SD' (Hellström and Nilsson 2010: 68).

In terms of credibility, the SD is a highly interesting case. A majority of the voters would concur with the (mainstream) media reporting on the party and the unwillingness of the other parliamentary parties to cooperate with the SD. A significant minority of the voters, though, would instead unite against the cultural and political elites to articulate sympathies for the 'radical underdog'.

In Norway the FrP attracted 16.3 per cent of the vote in the 2013 national elections, and the party has a legacy from the early 1970s. In 2013 the party celebrated its fortieth anniversary, and since its inception it has held seats in parliament (Jupskås 2013). It remains clear that the views and attitudes of the FrP are also shared by some of the other parliamentary parties. The party is not 'new' and is certainly big enough to be recognized as a regular political adversary in Norwegian politics. The 2013 national elections led to, for the first time, the party entering into government. As we shall see, in terms of both historical legacy and influence, the FrP is very different compared to e.g. the SD in Sweden. In terms of credibility, it is relevant to ask whether the FrP uses similar rhetoric as the SD.

In the Danish case I deliberately did not choose an excerpt from a DF representative (see above, scene 3), but instead from the leader of the Conservative Party. In the literature, Denmark is usually described as a case in which the other parliamentary parties and many other public actors adapt to the restrictive language of the DF in an attempt to steal back lost votes (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008; Rydgren 2010). In terms of credibility, the DF is closely associated with the general tone of the mainstream debate on immigration in Denmark (see further Hellström and Hervik 2014).

This all perhaps suggests a study of credibility that features an extended time frame, including time periods that precede the initial progress of the FrP in the 1973 national elections, the DF in the 1998 elections in Denmark and the SD in the 2006 national elections.

Of course, I will take into account the parties' different stages of development to explain differences between them in terms of credibility. Faced with internal ruptures and a lack of a solid organizational base, a party is a likely candidate to become a 'flash phenomenon' (Taggart 2002), and thus abruptly suffer from heavy losses in their electoral support after having crossed the initial parliamentary threshold. Many of these 'new' parties mobilize voters around an anti-establishment agenda that helps them to cross the initial electoral threshold.

Antonis A. Ellinas (2010: 15) relies on the Sartorian notion of a 'threshold of relevance'. Once the party has crossed this threshold, it is likely to moderate its claims to address a broader audience, which the mainstream parties will find more difficult to ignore. At this latter stage, it is increasingly important to focus on the internal party arena, i.e. the organizational capacity of the new parliamentary party.

Here, however, I will limit myself to, synchronically, analysing the same period (2009–2012) in the three countries, exploring the status of the three parties only after all parties are in the parliament.⁴

The Zone of Acquiescence

In order to achieve a large enough amount of voters to remain in the national parliament, to gain additional electoral fortunes and provide an impact via e.g. coalition making, it is important to remain within the safe 'zone of acquiescence' – to avoid making claims that are perceived as too extreme, e.g. too leftist or too rightist (Norris 2005: 20). In this comfortable zone the voters would consider what you have to say even if they do not agree with you. Under conditions of perfect competition, Pippa Norris assumes, a majority of the voters prefer parties that operate in the zone of acquiescence, articulating policy proposals that are acceptable to the public, though the receivers do not necessarily have to conform to the content of these arguments. Successful parties thus shape their policy proposals within this zone, as already discussed by Anthony Downs in the 1950s (1957), and they therefore tend to converge at the centre, minimizing the risk of losing votes. I believe that the structure of this zone goes beyond left and right and does not merely correspond to electoral support, but also credibility.

The dynamic of public opinion and the failure of the mainstream parties to notice a shift in the zone of acquiescence – i.e. their failure to fully con-

sider a shift between the voters' (unsatisfied) demands and the supply – provides openings for new political parties to challenge the mainstream parties (see e.g. Rydgren 2004). The zone is never static but varies accordingly, due to what is depicted as extreme or normal in the public's eye. The excerpts from the scenes above indicate that the zone, and thus what is considered as acceptable and normal, varies between these three otherwise similar countries. Importantly, the zone also varies over time. What is depicted as extreme today was perhaps depicted as normal in the 1960s and vice versa. Even if my focus here is oriented towards the early 2000s and on, we should not assume an eternal time perspective. The contours of this zone are never static, but vary in space and in time. Your *ethos* changes every time you open your mouth, Jens E. Kjeldsen (2013: 133) explains.

I here focus on the ambitions of three nationalist populist parties in three similar socio-political contexts (i.e. the three Scandinavian countries) to cross the threshold of credibility in order to establish a credible position from where they can make their voices heard. In order to create a niche in the electoral market, a new political party needs to be recognized as both credible in the voters' eyes and an underdog in relation to the governing elites in public debate. It has to be 'radical' in the sense that it has to answer to voters who are not being satisfied (enough) by the other parliamentary parties. The new party has to establish a niche in the political space.⁵ Otherwise, it will not be perceived by voters as being dissimilar or alternative enough.⁶ Also, considering the recent national elections in Sweden in September 2014, it seems fair to say that all three parties have gained a considerable amount of votes. The SD, however, has – at least not yet – been able to impinge on domestic politics. In terms of policies, Sweden had adopted a more generous asylum policy after that the SD has entered into parliament than before when the country was more in tune with equivalent European countries. This goes against the trend in the rest of Europe (Emilsson 2014).

Herbert Kitschelt (2012: 237), in his 'minimalist supply-side model', suggests that 'parties' perceived policy positions are not instantly and



Figure 0.1. To have an impact on domestic politics, political parties need to cross the threshold of credibility in order to get access to the zone of acquiescence, thus at the same time gaining support from the moderate voters and also increase possibilities of cooperation with mainstream parties.

freely chosen; they are based on ideology and reputation. Parties build up a cumulative stock of perceptions that shapes people's view of their policy position.' I shall here devote attention to how the three nationalist populist parties go about communicating their politics effectively enough to optimize their voter support.

In the public debate the listeners/readers interpret the articulated messages differently, depending on whether the sender manages to balance on the tightrope between radicalism (potentially in the zone) and extremism (outside the zone) – no matter what is actually being said – and thus adopt a credible and stable position in the zone of acquiescence. This activity is tantamount to what I refer to as the construction of stable *ethos*-positions.

A standard criticism of rational-choice approaches relates to the oblivion of the strong passions involved in e.g. national identity formation (see further e.g. Özkirimli 2010: 124). Instrumental and interest-based rationality – e.g. that all political actors seek to maximize voting support – tends to omit the central functioning of morality and passions involved in political mobilization. This is important, not least since Norris's model on the zone of acquiescence relies on standard rational-choice assumptions (2005: 20): 'The theory assumes that under conditions of perfect competition, rational voters will choose the party whose position is closest to their own ideological preferences and will shun the parties furthest away. ... Rational parties seek to maximize their share of votes and seats by adopting the ideological position closest to the median voter.'

Focusing on credibility in the dynamic of political competition, I thus add to her model, highlighting reasons *and* emotions⁷ and thus the interaction between politics and language. This move invites an understanding that does not primarily engage with a one-dimensional left-right scale, where the median voters prefer politics that are neither too leftist nor too rightist. Conversely, I suggest that the nationalist populist parties need to endorse both reason and emotions to cross the threshold of credibility.

At root here is the question of trust: can we trust the person (or in our case the party or the party representative) making eligible political claims that we are, hypothetically, willing to listen to? This is core for my analysis of the political claims made by the three nationalist populist parties and how these claims are being mediated on the editorial pages.

The *ethos*-position crystallizes in the interaction between how the parties (positively) present themselves and how their antagonists respond to this challenge. For a claim to have its desired effects it needs to be compatible (not necessarily identical) with already existing beliefs and popular notions of e.g. national identity.

In the political communication of the votes the analyst needs to engage with both the content and the form of politics and thus avoid narrowly

focusing on, though not omitting, *logos*. In the analysis of political rhetoric and political persuasion, the three concepts of *Logos*, *Ethos* and *Pathos* are often used to classify and assess, for instance, a political speech (Kjeldsen 2013: 33). *Logos* refers to rational political communication. It is based on facts, and its ultimate virtue is reason. *Ethos* refers to the speaker's ability to establish reliable arguments. The ultimate virtue is credibility. *Pathos* appeals to emotions and the speaker's ability to invoke feelings and generate enthusiasm. The ultimate virtue is passion.

Ideally, a political speech should manage to balance these three virtues. The failure to reach equilibrium may twist virtue into the reverse – i.e. reason risks turning into dogmatism, credibility risks perverting into moralism and passion may degenerate into pathology. In logocentric political argumentation, the distinction between content and form dissolves: the way we talk corresponds with what we intend to say. After the (re)discovery of the linguistic turn in social sciences, though, it is quite ordinary to claim that the way we talk has constitutive effects.⁸ I will not go into further detail on that here, except to emphasize that political communication is ambiguous and thus has productive force.⁹

In democratic societies political authority rests ultimately on the *demos* (the people), and political communication also serves to rationalize and justify political authority in view of the public – thus the need for credibility (*ethos*) and passion (*pathos*).¹⁰ The question of how we authorize political power in representative democracies is balanced between the direct demands of the citizenry and the representative elites' mediated power. I here argue that this basic insight concerns the fundamentals of political research. This is neither necessarily a normative plea to engage with the sociology of emotions (Barbalet 1998) nor a hope for a vision of politics that is perfectly reasonable and thus completely logocentric.

The analytical category of emotions both relates to the moral aspects of politics (*ethos*) and the passionate investment in politics (*pathos*). The language of morality, to do what is right, alluding to *ethos*, and the passions invested in language, alluding to *pathos*, might suggest very different things. In the formation of *ethos*-positions in the public debate it makes sense to conceive of the two rhetorical virtues, taken together, as distinct from *logos*, though. My approach thus endorses both moral sentiments (*ethos*) and passions (*pathos*) in the political language.

The so-called affective turn in contemporary sociology emphasizes how the affective appeals involved in popular culture are being interwoven with everyday politics. As a consequence, there is a growing demand for more emotion in the field of politics: 'Far from being an oppositional dichotomy, the relationship between feeling and reason is one of deep interconnection and works complementarity. To invite emotional engage-

ment is to facilitate rational discourse, not to banish it' (Richards 2004: 340).

Barry Richards explains the intersection between culture and politics in some greater detail (*ibid.*: 342): 'popular culture is increasingly entering and shaping politics, *constituting* everyday politics in the content and channels of political communications, in the dynamics of public opinion, and in the values and decisions of individual citizens'.

Of course, some political observers are reluctant to embrace or worried about this development as it risks the spectralization of politics (see e.g. Wendt 2012; Mazzoleni 2003). Another approach, which is also congruent with mine, would be to acknowledge that the study of political communication has to consider the forms of politics and not merely the content.

I will thus here focus on political rhetoric and not for instance the implicit ideological content; i.e. what can be read between the lines or unveiled as the exact nature of voter demographics. This rhetoric could be focused on maximizing voter support, but not exclusively. The political language adopted by the three nationalist populist parties is employed to enable them to cross the threshold of credibility while still remaining underdogs in the public debate. The three parties put under scrutiny here radicalize mainstream concerns about multiculturalism, the failure of integration mantra and popular worries about extra-European immigration to create a niche in the electoral market (see further e.g. Hellström 2010). All three parties are relatively successful in this regard, but I argue that only two of them (the FrP and the DF) occupy a credible position in the political competition for votes in the early 2000s. This might, in turn, help us to explain their varying electoral fortunes, at least before the 2014 national elections in Sweden (see figure 0.2).¹¹

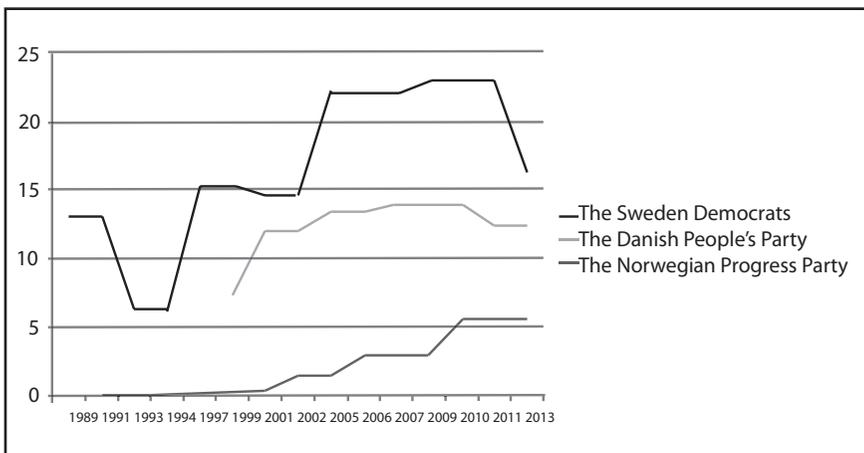


Figure 0.2. Election results for three nationalist populist parties, 1989–2013.¹²

Multiculturalism and/or Welfare in Scandinavia

The debate around the role and position of the three nationalist populist parties in the three Scandinavian countries poses an even larger question about how we live together in increasingly diverse societies. How do the Scandinavian universal welfare states, with historically homogenous populations, tackle challenges of ethnic diversity? Are the ideals of multiculturalism compatible with the welfare states' aims of equal redistribution, bounded by the territorial limits of the national state?¹³

The current economic crisis amplifies differences of positions, attitudes and reactions towards migration into Europe, both within the nation-states and at the European level. While some welcome ethnic and demographic diversification, there is growing concern over the effects of immigration on the economy, on the labour market and on welfare. These anxieties are related to the cultural impact of migration on national identity. But no matter the premises, positions often translate into curbing and controlling migration flows and into demands for political action directed against refugees, asylum seekers and labour migrants.

Within this context, popular xenophobic sentiments today show different and more dangerous faces. Different kinds of outbursts against people of non-native backgrounds (or members of minority groups) are part of the everyday experiences of many minorities, e.g. Jews and Muslims in Europe, who are subject to various forms of discrimination, exclusionary practices, deprivation and unfair treatment. It is by appealing to these xenophobic attitudes that nationalist populist parties in Scandinavia endeavour to transmute these sentiments into political influence and to mobilize voters on the basis of these issues.

The question of how multiculturalism can best be merged with the universal welfare state has recently gained prominence in the scholarly field (see e.g. Kivisto and Wahlbeck 2013a; Taras 2013). This debate also creates tension in public opinion between those who embrace increased diversity and those who resist it.

The question of how the Scandinavian states have chosen to tackle the challenges of ethnic diversity lies at the center of this book. How do the core elements of the ideology, practices and rhetorical claims of multiculturalism merge with the Social Democratic welfare state, and the visions of a just and equal society (Kivisto and Wahlbeck 2013c: 327)?¹⁴ In order to scrutinize this relationship, one can dig deeper into the various countries' policy making or public opinion. Here I have chosen a different angle: I will focus on discourse and not on policy.

More specifically, I will focus on how national identity (how the state, the nation and the people are merged together) is being reproduced by

the parties and discursively negotiated through public debate. This is both to analyse how the nationalist populist parties in these countries mobilize voters along conflicting notions of national identity and migration and to study the reactions to these claims in the public debate.

This discussion dwells, however, on an even larger philosophical debate between universalism and particularism, between liberalism and democracy. We will explore this further in the next section.

The Paradox of Liberalism and/or Democracy

The paradox of liberal democracy, according to Chantal Mouffe (2000), is that it combines the incongruent ideals of the universal (liberal) rights of the individual to be protected from both state oppression and the 'tyranny of the masses' with the particularistic democratic right of predestined demos to popular sovereignty by means of majority rule. According to Mouffe, this paradox constitutes the dynamic of representative democracy.

The paradox lies at the core of much debate on the challenges of ethnic diversity to domestic welfare regimes; it deals with universalist claims of inclusionary practices in territorial bounded spaces – hence in this case the Scandinavian national states. Seyla Behabib (2001) emphasizes – turning to e.g. Immanuel Kant and Hannah Arendt – that universal principles founded on cosmopolitan rights under the observance of human rights need to be circumscribed within particular civic communities. While scholars have argued over the right balance between universalism and particularism, the proper balance can probably never be resolved in national democracies, however 'its impact can be mitigated through a renegotiation and reiteration of the dual commitments to human rights and sovereign self-determination' (ibid.: 47).

From my point of view, democratic politics always involve negotiations over the balance between universalism and particularism. And the role of and debate around the nationalist populist parties in the Scandinavian states draws on this classic philosophical controversy. It deals with the fundamental question of who belongs to particular communities (Bosniak 2008).¹⁵

One practical implication of this is the reminder that democratic politics, and perhaps migration policy making in particular, is tied up with morality and is thus not merely about administration. Among others, Mouffe (2005) has emphasized that politics today is increasingly being played out in the moral register between good and evil, rather than merely between left and right. To speak the language of morality in the sphere of politics is to make explicit the passions of representative politics; it alludes to instinct rather than to rational deliberation.

Before I continue to further explain my own approach, I will present the objects of scrutiny for this study and thus approach the labelling issue as it regards the three nationalist populist parties.

The Nationalist Populist Parties

Whereas most scholars agree there exists a 'new' party family that pursues a strong anti-immigration stance, there is hardly any consensus on how to label it. Some would prefer the label 'extreme right' (e.g. Goodwin 2011) to signify parties that ultimately jeopardize liberal democratic institutions and values. Others – perhaps more common today – would adhere to the notion of radical populism (or right-wing populism). To name a few examples: 'extreme right' (Carter 2005; Ignazi 2003), 'radical right' (Norris 2005), 'populist-radical right' (Mudde 2007), 'far right' (Ellinas 2010), 'neo-fascism' (Arnstad 2013) and 'right-wing populists' (Ivarsflaten 2008).

In his comprehensive and oft-cited overview of populist radical right (PRR) parties in Europe, Cas Mudde (2007) extrapolates three main components of what – according to him – constitutes the ideological core of the populist radical right – namely, nativism, authoritarianism and populism.¹⁷ Nativism (what e.g. Jens Rydgren [2006] refers to as ethno-nationalism or ethno-pluralism) holds that the natives share devotion to their native country, and that the non-native ideas and people are considered fundamentally threatening to the homogenous national state.

Authoritarianism implies a firm belief in a strictly ordered society based on law and strong family values, sometimes also associated with the reliance on a strong charismatic leader. These parties are right-wing oriented when it comes to socio-cultural issues such as national identity, immigration and queer politics. These parties tend to support socially conservative platforms on issues of e.g. family, religion and also immigration (cf. Akkerman and Hagelund 2007; Zaslove 2004: 74; Rydgren 2012; Norocel 2010).

Finally, populism,¹⁸ in Mudde's framework, suggests a 'thin' ideology (2007; see also Freeden 1998; Fieschi 2004; Stanley 2008) that divides society into two antagonistic homogenous groups, the 'corrupt elite' versus the 'pure people', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté general*. Populism is aimed at surpassing old class cleavages and the classic left-right divide to instead mobilize all kinds of voters along an anti-establishment agenda.

In Mudde's view the PRRs are radical rather than extreme, since they generally respect democratic procedures and pursue their politics through parliamentary channels. They also dismiss violence and other extra-par-

liamentary activities to sustain political change. However, their politics are yet radical in the sense that they are critical of certain fundamental liberal democratic values such as freedom of religion and tolerance of minorities (Mudde 2007: 26).

According to Hans-Georg Betz and Carol Johnson (2004), these parties are certainly opportunistic and claim to represent the true democratic voice of the people, but in their rhetoric a more extreme ideology shows its true face. According to the authors, these parties endeavour to overthrow the current liberal democratic regime and replace it with ethnocracy, a society which shows priority to a particular ethnic collective. There is a risk, Mudde adds, that such analyses, which tend towards the periphery, risk failing to acknowledge the mainstreaming of the extreme at the centre of politics.

Commonly, the prefix 'right-' is added to signify parties that combine neo-liberal policies on socio-economic issues with authoritarian views on e.g. immigration, religion or abortion – Kitschelt referred to this as 'the winning formula' (Kitschelt and McGann 1997). The 'New Right', as it was developed in France under the label *La Nouvelle Droite*, is a composite term for parties and movements that endeavoured to counter the dominance of 'the left' (Declair 1999; Mudde 2007; Hellström and Nilsson 2010: 58). However, among the 'new-right' parties, arguably, there are both welfare-chauvinistic parties and more classic 'neo-liberal', anti-statist parties.¹⁹

Economy is a secondary issue for these parties, Mudde claims (2007: 119). He thus rejects the idea that neo-liberal economies constitute a defining characteristic. The SD, for example, combines Neo-Right rhetoric with a strong defence of the Social Democratic welfare state, which distinguishes it from the more neo-liberal-oriented parties that dominated this party family in the 1980s.

The only thing in common for these parties, Elisabeth Ivarsflaten (2008) holds, is that they mobilize voters along a strong anti-immigration appeal. In the analysis, she tests three grievance models found in the literature dealing with seven so-called successful cases across Europe. The other so-called grievance models, related to e.g. changes in the economy and levels of political corruption, lack significance in the sense that they cannot explain the electoral fortunes of these parties in this oft-referred-to study.

For Mudde and others (e.g. Stanley 2008) inclined to categorize populism as 'thin ideology', it is not enough to distinguish the PRR party family merely on the basis of its populism, rather it combines elements with other -isms, such as nationalism, managerialism or radicalism, to constitute a full-fledged ideology.

By 'nationalist populist parties', I refer to parties that, more or less frequently, pursue politics and rhetoric around the populist divide between 'the people' and 'the elite' centred on the nation – or rather the nation-state – as an exclusive category of reference (Hellström et al. 2012). Appeals to 'the people' are essential to recognize, and are used by the nationalist populist parties to provide their distinct interpretations of what constitutes national identity.

A Layered Discursive Approach

To establish an *ethos*-position in the field of political communication is, in short, about creating an image of the party that is capable of attracting voters. In my context, this ultimately concerns the rhetorical means by which the three nationalist populist parties aim to present a positive self-presentation.

The party claims evolve in constant interaction with the societal contexts where they are articulated – i.e. what generally have been referred to as political cultures (Edgerton et al. 1994). These political cultures, following e.g. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), have an independent effect on the political structure of representative democracy (ibid.: 20).

Ole Wæver (2001) shows how perceptions of national identity and thus 'the Nordic' people are played out in recent debates over European integration in the Nordic states. There are country-specific discourses of national identity that affect the public opinion and voting preferences and party cleavages in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, as well as in Finland.

This framework, what Wæver (2001: 31) refers to as layered discursive structure, specifies how public debates around Europe are internalized in the domestic structure in the Nordic countries. It is built around three layers. Even if I concur with his reasoning that the debate on Europe is internal rather than external, I will here stick to two tiers, since I am restricting myself to the domestic public debate and how the positioning on the nationalist populist parties in the public debate (second tier) depends on already normalized notions of the state, the nation and the people in the socio-political development of the three countries (first tier). In other words, I am here not engaged with actual policies, neither on the national nor the European levels (cf. ibid.: 38).

What I will show here is that parties eager to play 'the nationalist card' (Ellinas 2010) need to communicate their politics in harmony with popular notions of national identity. This is also how we can analyse domestic reactions to the electoral fortunes of the established actors in domestic societies. According to Wæver (ibid.: 29), discourses on national identity

and thus the negotiations of the proper balance between nation, state and the people elucidate what can be said and done, what statements are eligible and which are not (first tier). To this extent, this book illuminates the 'borders of normality' in the political competition of the votes.

My ambition is to bring to light issues of national myth making in the Scandinavian states (first tier) and analyse how the three parties under scrutiny utilize these myths to mobilize voters and attract attention to their politics, to 'specify change within continuity' (Wæver 2001: 31). Analysing how the nationalist populist parties take advantage of popularly held national myths to attract more voters constitutes the second tier. Since these parties do not operate in a vacuum and my ambition is also to compare their role and position in the domestic public debate, I turn to the mediation of their claims, here focusing on the editorial writers as pertinent opinion makers (see chapters 4 and 5). In the public debate there is a struggle of meaning concerning what constitutes national identity in the first place, and thus national identity formation involves both layers.

In sum, the layered discursive framework features the cultural codes from which new policies can be made. It is both highly dynamic and constitutes the basic structure on national identity, which is how I operationalize the art of reproducing the nation. In more precise terms, this book engages with the negotiation of meaning attributed to the concept of national identity in the three countries. This involves not only the content of politics, but rather the forms – i.e. how politics is being wrapped and presented to the voter.

The Analysis

The first tier of national identity reproduction is presented and discussed in both chapters 1 (more generally) and 3 (more specifically). The analysis of the second tier proceeds in two steps. First, I will assess the parties' self-presentation. In what ways do the parties present themselves in e.g. electoral manifestos and party programmes? This stage corresponds to what the critical discourse analyst Teun van Dijk (1993: 72) refers to in his investigation of elite discourse and racism as positive self-presentation. He shows how the denial of blatant racism is 'the stock of trade in racist discourse' (ibid.: 81) in e.g. parliamentary debates in Western democracies on e.g. minority rights and the refugee situation. This approach is akin to what Ruth Wodak (2008: 55) refers to as an outsider perspective: 'discourses *about* minorities, frequently embedded in the positive self-presentation of politicians which manifests itself, inter alia, in disclaimers and even in the denial of racism'. I here focus on how

the issues of national identity (assumptions of what 'we are') are being negotiated by references to e.g. minorities (assumptions of what 'we are not') in the manifest political language embraced by the three nationalist populist parties.

Van Dijk's argument is, basically, that for mainstream society (e.g. the mainstream parties) it is important that 'our party' and 'our country' are regarded as, comparatively, particularly hospitable and benevolent towards 'the others'. While his study primarily concerns mainstream society's denial of racism, I will here explicitly focus on how the three nationalist parties mobilize voters along a positive self-presentation in the political communication of their policies, focusing on issues of national identity and immigration. The denial of racism and the embracement of liberal values such as tolerance, the separation between the public and the private, the values of gender equality and the democratic principles of self-determination (cf. Delanty et al. 2011: 9–11) are important features of the route from extremism to the mainstream, perhaps especially so for the nationalist populist parties. To gain credibility in the political sphere it is important to recognize these liberal values as salient and worthy of defence. This suggests why these parties, on the one hand, articulate a clearly conservative and essentialist view on gender hierarchies at the same time as the emphasis on 'gender equality' is held against e.g. the Muslim minority population. This is key to understanding how the parties pursue particular interpretations of national identity, which harmonizes well with the first tier of national identity formation.

At this stage of the analysis I am interested in the subjective auto-referential category of self-representation (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 18). The main question guiding my analysis here is: How do the three nationalist populist parties communicate their politics by means of using national myths to gain credibility and thus boost the possibility of allocating more votes?

The ideological positioning of these parties crystallizes in the interaction between the self-images and counter-images adopted by their antagonists (Hellström and Nilsson 2010: 66). In the second empirical section, then, I will focus on how the mainstream actors diagnose and frame their political opponents, in this case the three nationalist populist parties. The media can hinder new political parties from obtaining their goals, but they can also push them forward and thus help them enter into or remain in the zone of acquiescence (Mazzoleni 2003).

At this stage we approach what van Dijk (1993: 84) refers to as 'negative other presentation'. In van Dijk's analytical framework, this concerns subtle but nonetheless derogatory remarks about immigration and the migrants made in order to e.g. 'oppose the taboo and tell the truth about

minorities' (ibid.). The statements build on the assumption that conflicts are unavoidable and certain cultural encounters are impossible to resolve (Hervik 2011: 232); hence, cultural differences are depicted as incomensurable and impermeable.

In the second part of the analysis of the second tier, then, I discuss the reactions to the parties' claims on the editorial pages in each country. My point here is that the negative other-presentation might also concern the nationalist populist parties and their representatives as such (Hellström and Hervik 2014). I have elsewhere argued that the unambiguous resistance of all the other seven parliamentary parties to engaging in dialogue with the SD in Sweden provides the SD with an underdog identity that it can use to actively refute the establishment (see e.g. Hellström et al. 2012; Hellström and Nilsson 2010; Hellström 2010; for a comparison with the Danish case see Hellström and Hervik 2014). The SD is being subject to a *cordon sanitaire* erected by the other seven parliamentary parties (Rydgren 2006).²⁰

In order to operationalize the mainstream reactions, I turn to the continuum between permissive and repressive political environments. The political scientist David Art (2011: 44–49) uses this continuum in his ethnographic study of the party activists in what he refers to as the radical right in Western Europe. His argument is basically that these parties are likely to attract extremists rather than moderates in repressive political environments. This will, in turn, make it less probable for the radical right party to cross the threshold of credibility and attain a larger voter share, since the party activists will continue to generate disapproval among the larger majority of the population and thus obstruct the party ambition to achieve credibility.

The moderates, who are sincerely concerned about the non-political costs of joining the party (such as fewer job opportunities and fear of personal injury), feel less inclined to engage with a party that is not regarded as credible in the eyes of the general public (i.e. the 'average voter'). As a consequence, it is much easier, Art argues, to recruit skilled and educated activists to these parties in Norway and Denmark than it is in e.g. Sweden (cf. Ivarsflaten and Stubager 2012).

In sum, Art's analysis suggests that the political environment is, comparatively, more permissive in Norway and Denmark in relation to the FrP and the DF, respectively, which contributes to the relative success of those parties, in contrast to the SD in Sweden. Yet the demand for a more restrictive or 'responsible' immigration politics is salient in all three countries. This continuum thus explicitly refers to the degree of openness in the public debate for the three nationalist parties in the three countries and is thus not a general assessment of the public debate as such.

According to Art (ibid.: 46): 'A strong cordon sanitaire will lead to a larger percentage of extremists within the party, as well as those who have little interest in achieving high office at all. ... When a cordon sanitaire is not in place, however, joining a radical right party can be an attractive option for moderates and opportunists.' I will use the same continuum somewhat differently, focusing on the political rhetoric rather than the activists' incentives to become members of the party. I will nevertheless scrutinize to what extent the political environment, ranging from repressive to permissive, affects the opportunities for the nationalist populist parties in Sweden, Denmark and Norway to cross the threshold of credibility in the electoral market.

Art notes that very few studies deal with the reactions to the radical right (ibid.: 47). I believe it is important to assess both the self-presentation and the political environment in order to provide an accurate assessment of the ideological positioning of the party in the electoral market. The central question guiding my analysis at this second stage is: How do the editorial writers in each country react to the challenges posed by the nationalist populist parties in parliament? In chapters 4 (mainly quantitatively) and 5 (mainly qualitatively) I will explicitly address these concerns. Given the fact that the general framing of this study deals with how the issues of welfare and/or multiculturalism are played out in the Scandinavian context, this question addresses concerns about national identity and the art of reproducing the nation, in relation to the three nationalist populist parties.

In order to proceed with this task, I will next make explicit the analytical categories of nationalism and populism as particular communication strategies guiding the subsequent analysis.

Nationalism and Populism as Communication Strategies

Nationalist movements and nationalist ideologies tend to be associated with secessionist movements. Alternatively, nationalism is seen as residue from a violent twentieth century and its remnants today are merely manifest in various extremist groupings. These views, following Michael Billig (1995: 6), fail to acknowledge the nationalism of our common sense: that nationalism can be banal, non-violent and possess a reassuring normality (cf. Hellström et al. 2012: 191).

With nationalism, I here refer to how the nation is continuously imagined as a cohesive whole. It happens now and here, not merely before or elsewhere. Nationalism in the political communication of the votes refers to claims of community cohesion centred on 'the nation' as a common frame of reference. In a famous essay from 1882 the French historian

Ernest Renan argued that the nation is a daily plebiscite (Renan 1994). Now, in the art of reproducing the nation the nationalist populist parties address claims to social cohesion in the nation against 'the other'. At the same time, their antagonists are reproducing the nation in the way they react to the claims articulated by these parties. The nation is a daily plebiscite in the sense that it constantly reproduces itself. It is dynamic and thus its features are open to changes. According to Craig Calhoun (2009), nationalism is a discursive formation that signifies a particular way of thinking around social solidarity and continuously reproduces national self-understanding (cf. Özkirimli 2010: 187).²¹ Following Calhoun, I understand nationalism as rhetoric, a discursive formation, which 'takes shape within history and informs history' (Calhoun 2009: 9).

Following Umut Özkirimli (2010: 206–209; see also Hellström et al. 2012), nationalist claims provide a communication strategy that: (1) divides the world into homogenous and fixed identity positions; (2) creates a temporal linkage from the past through the present and by way of extrapolation into the future to demonstrate the diachronic presence of the nation; and finally (3) is based on a preoccupation with the national territory, imagined or real. In this vein, it is nationalism that creates the nation and not the other way around. Nationalist claims reify and naturalize the nation as something natural and commonsensical.²²

I do not suggest that the nationalist populist parties are the only parties using nationalist claims in their political rhetoric, but when the nation acquires a political roof, 'it becomes absorbed into the environment of the established homeland' (Billig 1995: 41; see also Özkirimli 2010: 171). It should come as no surprise if the parties employ nationalist rhetoric (second tier) so as to present a positive self-presentation, which taps into popular conceptualizations of the balance between the state, the nation and the people (first tier). In the art of reproducing the nation, and thus the negotiation of meaning of national identity, these parties represent a prominent voice and argue against multiculturalism, but are, in general, positive of national welfare (for the natives). In sum, I conceive of nationalism as a particular communication strategy, tying together, discursively, the two layers of national identity formation.

Populism is frequently used as an insult in political speech (Oudenampsen 2010; Hellström 2010). It connotes demagoguery, opportunism and politics as form devoid of content and so forth. This is confusing. Populism is a vital concept in political theory (Canovan 2004; Hellström and Lennhag 2011; Hellström 2013; Hellström and Kiiskinen 2013) and concerns fundamental ambiguities latently present in our representative democracies. It relates to direct appeals to 'the people' (versus 'the elite') and 'therefore tests the tolerance of representative politics', as argued by

e.g. Paul Taggart (2000: 114). Populism might be both a corrective and a threat for democracy, as suggested by Mudde and Cristóbal R. Kaltwasser (2013).

What I will focus on here is that the concept of populism signifies an essential aspect of political messages, rather than a defining characteristic of the sender as such (Rooduijn et al. 2014). These messages convey a certain conceptualization of, or appeals to, 'the people' against 'the elites', on the one hand, and those parts of the population that are not considered part of this well-respected group, on the other – i.e. the silent majority. Merijn Oudenampsen (2010: 11), for instance, argues that the 'tea party' used a particular notion of 'the people' to speak against 'the elite'. In our case, we would see more directly that the immigrants, hypothetically, are excluded in the populist claims for national cohesion. In other words, the immigrants are not part of 'our people' and are thus deprived of political legitimacy (ibid.).²³

A populist movement might rely on a certain ideological populist position, against the elites, embrace a particular populist style to attract voters or pursue the populist logic between the people and the elite to gain credibility for a particular political programme. It is easy to get sidetracked here, as populism can mean different things for different populists (see endnote 16). It is also a contested issue between academics. Populism, in my view, refers to appeals to the people, morally detached from the elite, in the everyday political communication between the elected representatives and the citizenry (Hellström 2013). However, rather than finding the 'best' definition, I here envisage populism in the political communication between the mediated elite and the people in the public debate (see further ibid.).

Recently, Matthijs Rooduijn and Teun Pauwels (2011: 1272) have addressed 'the methodological issue of how populism could be measured'. They suggest that populism can be measured across time and space by both classic and computerized content analysis. Here I am not primarily interested in measuring different degrees of populism in e.g. electoral manifestoes; rather I focus on the manifestation of populism in the political communication between the people and the mediated elites. Focusing on particular appeals to the people provides a means to analyse articulations of populism in democratic action, devoid of normative presuppositions. I do not intend to solve this issue by e.g. calculating the amount of references to 'the people' in the parties' rhetoric, but rather by scrutinizing how 'the people' is posed against 'the elite' in the parties' self-presentation. Analogously, I do not intend to measure the degree of nationalism in the parties' manifestos, but to recognize nationalist claims in the political communication of the votes. In the analysis I thus conceive of both

nationalism and populism as particular communication strategies, and seek to assess the congruence between the two layers of national identity construction in the three countries.

Limitations of the Study: What the Readers Should (Not) Expect

The first wave of Nordic populism arrived in Finland in the late 1950s with agrarian populism (Fryklund and Petersson 1981). The Finnish Rural Party, under the leadership of Veikko Vennamo, mobilized rural smallholders with anti-establishment rhetoric combined with criticism of the processes of urbanization and modernization and how they threaten the ways of living and values of the rural population. The Finnish Rural Party, the predecessor to the True Finns, had its parliamentary breakthrough in 1966 and was a member of government from 1983–1990. The party went into bankruptcy in 1995 and the True Finns party was formed from the ashes of the populist agrarian party with both personal and organizational continuity. Recently, the True Finns party has gained significant electoral fortunes and has a salient, potentially credible, voice in the debate on national identity and immigration in Finland (Jungar 2012; Norocel 2009). The party is from May 2015 in the Finnish government and its' party leader, Timo Soini, is the country's foreign minister.

For these (and possibly also other) reasons, it would have made sense to also include the True Finns in this study; however, I have chosen not to include Finland. Firstly, it is not possible for a non-Finnish speaker to engage closely enough with the tone of their debate. Secondly, Finland's political history differs from the other three cases: in Finland there was a civil war in 1918 and from this followed a special relation to the rising Soviet empire, and in Finland there has historically been a strong presidential power. For future research, however, I consider it useful to also incorporate the Finnish case in my comparative approach.

In this book I engage with political rhetoric in general terms and, more specifically, in terms of credibility. I will leave aside a number of relevant aspects of the progress and further development of the nationalist populist parties in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Let me mention a few of these before I move on to my own analysis:

- (1) While I focus on the manifest messages provided by the parties themselves and how their opponents react to their presence, I will not reveal any secrets of what is meant behind the rhetoric and what allegedly can be read between the lines. This is rather commonsensical, as put by Ole Wæver (2002: 26) in outlining a post-structuralist

understanding of identity construction: 'Discourse analysis works on public texts. It does not try to get to the thoughts or motives of the actors, their hidden agendas or secret plans.'

(2) My book makes use of some basic features from the field of rhetorical analysis, but I do not intend to make a particular contribution to this field.

(3) I do not engage with policy transformations; e.g. how the Danish policies on immigration and integration have been affected by the long-term presence of the DF in Danish politics (Boréus 2010). In terms of influence, the reader of this book should not expect any qualified stipulations or answers to the question of how the actual policies in the country have changed due to the varied presence of the nationalist populist parties.

(4) I will pay less attention to public opinion, and the nature of the demand for restrictive immigration policy as such, for instance the attitudes towards immigration (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009), changing levels of trust in the political institutions (Rydgren 2006) or poll surveys about how the nationalist populist parties position themselves on the right-wing scale (Sannerstedt 2015; Holmberg 2007; Meret 2010; Marsdal 2008).

(5) What is the relation between the party leader and the party members? This book does not deal with organization, or interviews with e.g. party representatives to increase the knowledge. Organizational characteristics appear to be intrinsically linked to ideology (Zaslove 2008; Taggart 1996). This might also dovetail with an emphasis on the gender dimension of populist authority, which I thus leave aside here (see further e.g. Norocel 2010, 2013; Meret 2015).

(6) There are obvious limits to my context-sensitive approach. While I focus on the appeals to 'the people' in the rhetoric of the three nationalist populist parties, it could have been interesting to also engage with e.g. the Social Democratic parties.

(7) While I contribute with knowledge of the public debate around the claims made by the three nationalist populist parties in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, my material is limited to the editorial pages and thus I can only capture a small fraction of the public debate.

Chapter Outline

In the first chapter I will, in brief, discuss the socio-political context (the dominance of social democracy, the development of the universal welfare state and so forth) and current changes – i.e. from the stable five-party regime to the socio-cultural shift and the present-day multi-dimensional party space. This corresponds to the first discursive layer. I will also here

introduce the historical legacies of the parties put under scrutiny in this study. The chapter then continues with a brief discussion on the explanations (supply and/or demand) given in the literature to explain the relative fortunes of these parties in the national parliaments. Here I make explicit my own contribution to this field: national myths as political opportunity structures.

In the second chapter I explain which analytical concepts I will use in the subsequent analysis, and most importantly how. The chapter also discusses some methodological issues, such as a reliability test, related to the analysis.

I argue that the three parties put under scrutiny radicalize mainstream concerns about what unites the natives into one nation against the political and cultural elites to create a niche in the electoral market. In more precise terms, I here analyse if and how the nationalist populist parties in Sweden, Denmark and Norway use myths of national exclusiveness and myths about the common man to radicalize popularly held sentiments to attract votes; i.e. appealing to 'the national people' and 'our' shared history. I consider national myths to be a relevant political opportunity structure in the political competition of the votes. This is the first section of the second discursive layer.

The second chapter also lays out the analytical framework for the study of the mainstream reactions in the political debate and in the media debate, the second part of the second tier. What are the roles and positions of the three nationalist populist politics in the domestic public debates? I shall identify dominant, sometimes competing, frames in the public debate, as manifested in the national news reporting, in order to discern the views and opinions about the SD, the DF and the FrP to contrast ideas about national identity, articulated from different positions in the debate. The material that is collected for this analysis is based on an initial statistical overview of the tone towards the party and the topics dealing with the parties on the editorial pages in each country.

The third chapter deals with the uses of national myths in the party programmes of the SD, the FrP and the DF. This analysis explicitly focuses on the positive self-presentation of these parties and their endeavours to cross the threshold of credibility in the political competition of the votes.²⁴

Naturally, the potential reactions of mainstream society to the presence and development of these parties varies over time. The zone of acquiescence and thus the borders of normality in the public debate are dynamic. The fourth chapter compares, synchronically, how these parties and their claims are negotiated on the editorial pages in four leading newspapers in each country during four years (2009–2012). The analysis is, firstly, based on descriptive statistics to provide a general pattern of

the tone used towards the parties and which topics are discussed. From this quantitative analysis, we then proceed with a frame analysis of the selected material, to provide a deeper understanding of how national identities are negotiated and from which positions (chapter 5).

These two chapters (4 and 5) are written in collaboration with Anniken Hagelund and Susi Meret, two country specialists with in-depth knowledge of the public debate in Norway and Denmark, respectively. The book's conclusion sums up our main findings, taking me back to my general focus and bringing attention to the struggle of meaning of what constitutes the 'the common man' as essential for the art of reproducing the nation in Scandinavia.

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NOTES

1. All quotes in the book, if not otherwise stated, are translated into English by the author.
2. There have been no systematic comparisons of the nationalist populist parties in Scandinavia since the seminal study by Björn Fryklund and Tomas Peterson (1981) in the early 1980s and shorter articles by Arter (1992), Svåsand (1998) and Widfeldt (2000) about one and a half decades ago. More recent research is limited to either Norwegian-Danish comparisons (Bjørklund and Goul Andersen 2002; Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 1990), Norwegian-Swedish comparisons (Svåsand and Wörlund 2005), Swedish-Danish comparisons (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008; Hellström and Hervik 2014; Rydgren 2010), Denmark compared with other countries (Meret 2010), Norway with other countries (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007), or single-case studies (Hagelund 2003; Hagelund 2005; Hellström and Nilsson 2010; Hellström et al. 2012; Rydgren 2002; Taggart 1996).
3. It is, however, possible to vitalize and reinvigorate parties, as in the less amenable fascist past, which e.g. the Italian example shows (see e.g. Fella and Ruzza 2011). Italy represents, however, a completely different socio-political context compared to what we are dealing with here.
4. In chapter 3 I will extend this time period to also include material that leads us further back to the inception of these parties.
5. In the literature the term 'niche-party' is used to categorize parties that mobilize voters along a single issue (Erlingsson et al. 2014).
6. From a Laclaudian (Laclau 2005) perspective, the 'new' party makes coherent a set of fragmented demands, unanswered by the established parties, via a chain-of-equivalence. From this operation, on the basis of these demands the 'new' party offers a 'new' political programme that is attractive to voters who, supposedly, are tired of the established parties. The 'new' party might as well be able to attract 'new' voters.

7. Analysing e.g. collective material experiences of colonial oppression, for instance post-colonial feminists, shows how the post-colonial subject articulates its identity through both material experiences and discourse, through both reason and emotions (De los Reyes 2012: 15). Structural phenomena (such as colonial hierarchies) are potentially being internalized by both the oppressors and the oppressed. How we come to being as people clearly intersects with how collective markers of identity are being transmitted in the first place (Hellström 2006: 46).
8. As noted by, among others, Jacques Derrida (2004: 365), there is no undivided point of reference (logos) from which we can derive unbiased facts, but supplements to temporarily compensate for this 'lack'.
9. Consequently, the role of the elites is not to simply represent the words and interests of the constituency. In the act of representation, 'the people', as an object (and subject) of popular mobilization, is constituted as a consequence (Canovan 2005). This perspective on representation enables us to see that the role of language extends beyond the mere mirroring of real events and real relations. There is an infinite struggle of meaning and there is no final and definite answer or solution of the proper meaning of a given concept; any articulation takes place in a 'field of discursivity' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 105; Hellström 2006: 56). Furthermore, following Richards (1965), we need to abolish the vain belief in the doctrine of correct usage of language – there is none. From this perspective, metaphors are not simply ornamental uses of metaphors used for decorative purposes in e.g. political speeches. Rather, the sometimes contrasting and competing associations connected to particular uses of metaphors constitute meaning (see further Norocel 2013).
10. In this literature, it is common to refer to the mild emotions as ethos and the more strong feelings as pathos (Kjeldsen 2013: 125). I here choose not to separate the two, emphasizing the emotional investment embedded in political communication. Jorinde Seijdel argues (2010: 20): 'Some may have forgotten, but politics still involves more than public management, the capacity to dream collectively, to tell stories; politics still contain a form of mythology.'
11. In the elections to the national parliament in September 2014, the SD did very well, with approximately 12.9 per cent (49 seats) of the total votes, and almost caused a re-election. In the epilogue of this book I discuss further this and other recent events in Scandinavian politics.
12. The Danish and The Norwegian Progress Parties secured their first seats in the national parliaments in 1973. In the most recent elections, held in September 2013 in Norway, the Norwegian progress party dropped significantly (16, 3 per cent of the total votes from 22, 9 per cent of the total votes) and 29 seats out of 169 in total, but remains highly influential and despite its losses it still ended up in the government. The 1998 national elections in Denmark were the first elections in which the Danish People's Party participated. They gathered 7.4 per cent of the votes and gained thirteen seats in the parliamentary assembly. Their election results have been relatively stable since. In

the national elections in Denmark June 2015 the DF with its' current leader Kristian Thulesen Dahl achieved 21, 1 per cent of the votes (37 seats out of 179). In Sweden the SD has attracted more and more voters but is yet (at least before the 2014 national elections) considerably smaller than the other two parties. In the elections to the national parliament in September 2014, however, the SD scored 12, 9 percent (49 out of 349 seats in the national assembly) of the total votes and almost caused a re-election. This was avoided in the last minute due to the so-called December compromise, uniting all the parliamentary parties excluding the Left party and the SD in order to make minority governance possible. In October 2015 the compromise was, however, abandoned. Worth mentioning is that in Finland the True Finns grew from approximately 4 per cent in the 2007 elections to approximately 19 per cent in the 2011 elections. In the elections for the European Parliament in May 2014 both the True Finns (12.9 per cent) and the Sweden Democrats (9.7 per cent) increased their voting results compared to the previous elections to the European Parliament. At the same time, the Danish People's Party became the largest party in Denmark with 26.6 per cent of the votes. Since Norway is not a member state, the Norwegian parties did not run for the European Parliament.

13. My focus on immigration policy in this regard bears considering how we view ourselves in relation to others, as put by Kivisto and Wahlbeck (2013c: 332): 'Immigration policy is precisely the policy area where the tensions between diversity and universalism has manifested itself most forcefully' (cf. Borevi 2013).
14. The path chosen by the Scandinavian states was the implementation of multicultural rights to the old indigenous populations but less so in relation to the 'new' immigrants. This corresponds to the much-cited distinction of Kymlicka (1995) between indigenous groups and 'new immigrants' in the debate over multiculturalism. My particular contribution, in this regard, rests on the role and positioning of three nationalist parties in Scandinavia over the continuous reproduction of the nation, tackling ethnic diversity in this region, balancing claims of multiculturalism and welfare.
15. The issue of citizenship lies at the core of this debate, and while scholars could argue that aliens also need to enjoy rights attributed to 'equal citizenship' (Bosniak 2008: 15), the underlying ideology underpinning the three parties put under scrutiny in this study rather argues that citizenship status should be reserved for the natives within the nation-state.
16. In order to facilitate understanding I will use this abbreviation in the book.
17. Mudde uses this definition to classify approximately one hundred political parties as Populist Radical Right, both in Western and Eastern Europe. My approach is limited to three PRR parties in Scandinavia. For instance, it is much debated in the party politics literature (and also within the party as such) whether the FrP should be labelled nationalist-conservative or rather

- (neo-liberal) populist (see further Ravik Jupskås 2013; Jungar and Ravik Jupskås 2014).
18. The concept of populism has been ascribed to a diverse set of parties and movements, such as Péronism in Argentina, the US People's Party in the late nineteenth century and the narodniki movement in Russia, that differ drastically from the populism of Jörg Haider, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Pim Fortuyn, Silvio Berlusconi and so forth (see further Canovan 2004; Westlind 1996; Canovan 2005; Hellström 2013).
 19. Paul Taggart (1996) applies the term 'new-populism' to separate immigration-sceptic parties that oppose the system from historical fascism, and yet Piero Ignazi (1992) uses the term 'neo-right' to instead stress the continuity between historical fascism and the neo-right parties. Anders Widfeldt (2000) suggests that notions such as 'extremism', 'right-wing radicalism' and 'populism' are all problematic, as these labels are generally used pejoratively and rarely shared by the parties themselves. However, as the label 'populism' connotes 'friends of the people', more and more parties tend to use this label themselves. The term 'racism' is definitely even more controversial, but likewise there is hardly any consensus when it comes to this concept. Biological racism is contrasted with e.g. 'cultural racism' (Taguieff 1990), 'racism without races' or 'neo-racism' (Balibar 1991) to signify political controversies that are not, at least any longer, played out as differences between races, but instead between cultures or civilizations.
 20. Yet this position of stigma (Ramalingam 2012) is used by e.g. the SD to renegotiate the moral virtues of Swedishness to 'performing their own victimhood' (ibid.: 18). Vidhya Ramalingam (ibid.: 21) concludes: 'Shame and other emotions employed in social exclusion and stigma, are powerful political tools that may be manipulated both by the stigmatizers and the stigmatized.' The threshold of credibility crystallizes in the interaction between how the parties present themselves and how the mainstream political actors react to their presence. The structure of political competition is highly dynamic and fluctuates in time (also within the same country) and also in space (between the three socio-political contexts). In turn, the political climate can be more or less polarized at various instances of time.
 21. We do not necessarily live in a 'post-national' era, and nations still categorize our experiences and shape community bonds and social cohesion, whether we like it or not.
 22. Michael Billig's (1995) much-referred-to notion of banal nationalism suggests that nationalism can be banal, non-violent and possess a reassuring normality. By means of banal nationalism we, the citizens, are constantly reminded of our membership in the nation and our loyalty to it.
 23. The rhetorical figure, part of the whole, is generally referred to as a synecdoche. It means that a particular section of 'the people' is used to represent the whole. Since not all claims are politically represented, as the society can

never be grasped in its totality (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 127), these claims are the source of political dissatisfaction. The nationalist populist parties in our study might, hypothetically, organize otherwise fragmented claims of political dissatisfaction into a cohesive political programme, via a chain of equivalence (Laclau 2005; Laclau and Mouffe 2001). 'Thus populism revolves around the transformation of singular democratic gaps into one collective gap, a crystallization point of political dissatisfaction' (Oudenampsen 2010: 12).

23. The empirical analysis derives from an article published in *Partecipazione et Conflitto*, written by myself and a colleague (Hellström and Wennerhag 2013).