We Are a Small Country that Has Done Enormously Lot: The 'Refugee Crisis' & the Hybrid Discourse of Politicising Immigration in Sweden

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Abstract

This paper looks at mainstream political discourses about immigration in Sweden during the recent 'Refugee Crisis' in late 2015. The paper argues that different patterns of politicisation of immigration have traditionally dominated in Sweden and focuses on Swedish mainstream politics where, as is shown, explicit focus on politicisation via (previous as well as current) immigration-related policies still persists. However, as the analysis of Swedish Social-Democratic Party's Twitter discourse shows, a hybrid new discourse of politicisation is now emerging. It allows political actors to legitimise immigration policy with often populist-like politicisation as well as the use of new modes of online political communication.

1. Introduction

This paper, which looks at Swedish political discourse at the time of the recent 'Refugee Crisis'[2], sets out from the argument that a disparity of politicisation patterns with regard to immigration has traditionally existed in Sweden. As it is argued here, in the Swedish context one could traditionally observe differences which were historical in nature and were a matter of a strong impact of two – initially to some degree subsequent – political-discursive traditions of approaching and politicising immigration (incl. asylum/refugee)[3] issues. Those two traditions can be defined as *politicisation*

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[2] Despite its by now widespread presence in public and academic discourse, the notion of 'Refugee Crisis' is approached critically in this article. It is viewed as an ideologically charged notion developed in media & political discourse, also as a recontextualisation of earlier (negativised) descriptions of large-scale developments related to immigration and asylum-seeking (e.g. in the context of wars in former Yugoslavia in early 1990s, etc.). The notion is therefore used in parentheses throughout the paper.

[3] This paper draws on definitions of asylum-seekers / refugees as widely-accepted in the discourse of transnational institutions such as the UN (http://www.unhcr.org/asylum-seekers.html) or the EU (see http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/docs/emn-glossary-en-version.pdf) or of Amnesty International (2016). I am grateful to JIRS Editor-in-Chief Anna Triandafyllidou for her suggestions regarding the issue of definitions.

through policy making and legitimation on the one hand, and as *politicisation through public sphere articulation* on the other.

In the first case of *politicisation though policy* – the further evolution of which this paper highlights in detail below – the politicisation, i.e. as such the process of making a certain issue a significant part of political agendas and debates, has occurred mainly within the realm of negotiating, proposing, passing and eventually legitimising clearly-defined policy solutions. With regard to, in particular, the immigration-related matters, this political as well as discursive strategy is traditionally a matter of those 'in power' and hence of political parties and groups which form governments and have sufficient opportunities to drive national/regional policy-making and implementation. As such, this strategy traditionally boiled down to addressing immigration-related issues not via open, political (and a public-sphere-based) debate but in fact through inter-party and inter-institutional bargaining and the ensuing policy-making process.

Traditionally, the aforementioned politicisation strategy significantly differed from its counterpart i.e. *politicisation through the public sphere.* Within the latter, the focus has been, namely, on a wider politicisation logic whereby not only the political realm but also the wider public sphere (incl. the media, by now both traditional and new/online) would be addressed. These would be 'used' to politicise certain topics, with both top-down and bottom-up political communication mobilised in order to make various politically-driven 'claims' (Koopmans & Statham 2010). In case of immigration, it has by now become a matter of tradition in Europe and elsewhere that especially radical and right-wing populist parties strongly politicise immigration and carry agenda-setting role in immigration-related politics. They thereby spread the often strong up to racist anti-immigration rhetoric and other patterns of mediated politicisation of immigration (see e.g. Buonfino 2004). These are often taken up by other political parties and effectively significantly change the tone of wider public debates making immigration onto one of the central political issues debated within and beyond politics. Hence, while the politicisation through public sphere articulation has traditionally been championed by right-wing populist politics it has also had a spill-over effect onto wider field of politics and has also increasingly become embraced in recent years by the political mainstream (see e.g. paper on Poland, this Special Issue).

It is recognised here that in many national contexts the difference between the two aforementioned 'types' of politicisation might not be very clear and that they have often been part of one, path-dependent politicisation process. The latter would in many cases pertain to subsequent or sometimes even simultaneous articulation of immigration-related views (in the wider public sphere), through its penetration into political agendas up to eventual inscription into the policy frameworks. Hence, the politicisation through public sphere articulation would often precede the politicisation through policy making & legitimation with ideas about, or in most cases against, immigration being first articulated in the public sphere incl. politics and the media and only after entering political and policy making-domain.

However, this paper aims to showcase Sweden as a significantly different case. As is argued here, policy-driven politicisation of immigration driven by the country's political mainstream has in fact for a very long time preceded strong articulation of immigration and refugee/asylum-seeker related views in the public sphere in Sweden (practically absent before the early 1990s; see Rydgren & van der Meiden 2016). This paper hence builds on the premise that, *unlike in many other countries, the policy-related politicisation in Sweden preceded the one based on public sphere articulation and hence was at the foundation of to a large extent reverse overall politicisation logic than has usually been encountered elsewhere*. Hence, as is shown below, in its current form, the policy-driven politicisation of immigration draws extensively on the affordances of political communication in the context of mediatisation (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999, Esser & Strömbäck 2014) and online as well as digital politics (Dahlgren 2005; Vaccari 2013; Chadwick 2013). It is hence a foundation of the, by now, *hybrid politicisation pattern reliant on (esp. online) mediated politicised messages to legitimise policy-based responses*. Its hybridity resides in the fact that the discourse of this pattern of politicisation draws increasingly on combining those 'typical' for several other politicising-discursive dynamics. It is, in particular, realised though the linkage of both governance-driven policy actions/discourses and related discourse of 'policy communication' (Krzyżanowski 2013a) which, including the use of traditional and online media, allows introducing policy-like measure as well as simultaneously creating legitimacy and pre-legitimacy (Krzyżanowski 2014) for the proposed policy solutions.

The analysis below is set in a wider context of ongoing and indeed often radical – especially in comparison to previous years – political change in Sweden. This has to large extent accelerated in the aftermath of the 2014 Swedish national-parliamentary election which brought Social Democrats back to power after almost a decade of centre-right governments. It is also very clearly marked huge electoral gain for the Swedish by now established parliamentary right-wing populist movements, who in recent years have extensively propagated the anti-immigration discourse in Sweden. Finally, this period also coincided with a dramatic increase in the number of asylum seekers, particularly from the war-torn Syria – and culminated in November 2015 with the tightening of the policy regime on refugee entry and residence that was introduced by the Swedish government.

While this paper certainly aims to avoid making simplifying, causal arguments, it is contextually particularly vital to foreground the increasing role of (radical) right-wing as well as populist politics and discourses in the overall politicisation of immigration in Sweden (see below), and especially in the rise of anti-immigration public attitudes (though these, to be sure, still remain relatively moderate if compared to other EU countries; see Demker & van der Meiden 2015). It is therefore also recognised here that the by now long-lasting presence of right-wing populist politics on the Swedish political arena has led to the fact that many views have eventually been 'normalised' as 'standard' immigration-related arguments (Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup 2008; Odmalm 2011). This has been significantly fuelled by the growing presence of the radical right-wing views embodied by the, by now parliamentary, party politics of the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna;* see below and Rydgren 2005, 2006, 2008;

Rydgren & van der Meiden 2016; Oja & Mral 2013; Sannerstedt 2015). However, the process has been even more radically reinforced by the widespread presence of the 'uncivil society' (Ruzza 2009)[4], which in the Swedish context has recently been particularly eager to utilise widely-read right-wing web platforms to disseminate and even further radicalise the anti-immigration messages incl. via often outright racist and discriminatory discourse (Ekman 2014; Krzyżanowski 2018, Krzyżanowski & Ledin 2017).

However, this paper contends that arguments that immigration was not, until recently, politicised in Sweden – incl. due to the general lack of parliamentary right-wing populist politics (until the early 1990s) as well as of wider political and public sphere debates on immigration (Dahlström & Esaiasson 2013; Ivarsflaten 2008; Odmalm 2011; Rydgren & van der Meiden 2016) – need further elaboration. They need to be supplemented by an in-depth look into selected strands of Swedish politics to recognise the salience of area-specific discursive traditions of politicisation despite now increasingly 'borrowing' some discursive elements from one another, indeed as a token of discursive & political 'hybridity' highlighted above). The above is especially vital as far as mainstream politics is concerned. It is within the latter, as is shown below, that the policy-oriented politicisation has been incepted, indeed long before the public-sphere oriented politicisation has developed in Sweden esp. under pressure from Swedish right-wing populist politics. By the same token, the analyses of politicisation of immigration in Sweden proposed to date require empirical analyses that would show whereby a very significant duality – and lack of otherwise typical temporal subsequence (see above) – must be recognised to fully understand the logic of politicisation of immigration in Sweden.

In order to capture a significant part of the aforementioned, complex dynamics of politicisation of immigration in Sweden on the example of the recent 'Refugee Crisis', this paper analyses discourses that can be deemed prototypical for the Swedish contemporary political mainstream. It looks specifically at the discourse of Swedish Social Democratic Party (*Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti,* SAP) whose political ideas and narratives are analysed as a token of immigration-related views typical for a mainstream party which, while historically opting for policy-driven patterns of politicisation, still constructs its discourses strictly in relation to policy yet by now in a close combination with the wider discourse of policy legitimation or pre-legitimation (Krzyżanowski 2014), especially as augmented and communicated by the use of social/online media.

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[4] Although he acknowledges a wide array of types of contemporary uncivil society movements, Ruzza (2009: 88) sees uncivil society as primarily "groups which have a self-professed antidemocratic and exclusionary political identity" and in a prevalent majority of cases are associated with political incl. radical right. Whereas they can be prototypically defined as a form of civil society (especially due to its closeness to the 'social' base), the uncivil society movements are significantly different from the civil society inasmuch the former: (a) act against – rather than for the benefit of – common good and democratic principles and (b) are, even if unofficially, often closely linked to political parties and groups rather being voluntary bottom-up organizations and effectively a 'voice' of the civil society.

The paper hence looks at SAP views as that of Sweden's government party and analyses its ideas as a token of those that underpin current policy landscape and wider governance-related discourse in Sweden. But, to be sure, the focus on the SAP also has a wider historical meaning as it is the *Socialdemokraterna* who have shaped the majority of Swedish post-war politics. SAP has also long been assumed the standard bearer of core ideas related to Swedish world-famous welfare system based on the now gradually dismantled Swedish 'strong state' (Andersson 2007; Lindvall & Rothstein 2006) or the internationally renowned Swedish social-democratic model also known as 'people's home' or *Folkhemmet* (Andersson 2009; Östberg & Andersson 2013).

On the example of the SAP in the context of 'Refugee Crisis', the paper hence looks in detail at Swedish mainstream-political, self-mediated discourses on the microblogging platform Twitter. As is shown below, the social/online media discourses are very efficiently used by the SAP to introduce and familiarise its immigration- and asylum-related policy changes in the context of the 'Refugee Crisis'. The paper hence analyses discourses from the period of November & December 2015 i.e. at the time when it was claimed that the Swedish state system could no longer 'cope' with the large volume of incoming refugees. The paper shows that the mainstream SAP effectively constructed 'the crisis' in its discourse chiefly to legitimise – as well as often indeed pre-legitimise – the turn in immigration/refugee policy as a strategy of coping with the alleged crisis situation.

2. On Politicisation of Immigration in Sweden

Sweden is a multicultural country that is often an international example of openness to diversity and equality. Since the beginning of the post-war period, it has been an obvious case of a country of immigration rather than emigration (Abiri 2000) with, at present, over 20% of Sweden's inhabitants of foreign origin and Swedish as one of the most diverse European societies (Schierup & Ålund 2011). Sweden is also known globally as a country driven by principles of international engagement that, despite its relatively small size (as far as population), over most of the post-war period has often provided some very extensive humanitarian help to, and received thousands immigrants from many countries across the globe torn by social conflict and political unrest (Östberg & Andersson 2013). Such has also been the case in the course of the most recent 'Refugee Crisis' when as many as 80 thousand asylum seekers were registered in Sweden alone throughout the months of October & November of 2015 with their overall number reaching over 170 thousand until the end of 2015 (UNHCR/Global Trends 2016). This was the biggest number of asylum seekers ever received in Sweden, surpassing even the previously historically-largest group of Balkan region migrants in the early 1990s (see below).

In the initial stages of the post-War period, the so-called guest-worker schemes – similar to those elsewhere in Western Europe – supported Swedish economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s (Östberg & Andersson 2013) and made the Swedish

immigration policy very liberal (Hinnfors, Spehar & Knapp 2012). At the same time, asylum application numbers – especially those issues under Geneva Convention rules – remained relatively low in Sweden. However, starting from the early 1970s when the – especially economic immigration rules have become tighter and largely limited to family members of those immigrants admitted to Sweden before the late 1960s – the number of asylum applications started to increase (for details, see overview in e.g. Schuster 2000). This trend was also augmented by Sweden's increasingly verbal engagement in international affairs: with Swedish leaders often opposing authoritarian and colonial politics in many countries, Sweden, as a token of support, was offering shelter to political and other refugees from, in particular, the late 1960s onwards (Östberg & Andersson 2013). This trend continued well into the 1980s and especially the early 1990s (Balkan refugees) as well as, most recently, from 2014 onwards.

Only from ca. the 1970s onwards, Swedish immigration policy moves into the focus of national political actors who increasingly look for various ways to regulate both temporary and long-term immigration. Interestingly, they in most cases manage to do so as part of government politics and administration and whilst quite effectively keeping the topic to large extent away from public-wide debates. From the early 1980s onwards, asylum policy follows suit (Abiri 2000) with its ever-stronger focus on temporary rather than long-term forms of protection or the eventual refugee integration and naturalisation. While this trend was to some extent stopped in the early 1990s – when Sweden proved very generous to thousands of asylum seekers from the war-torn Balkan region (ca. 100 thousand in 1991 and 1992 alone; see Schuster 2000 and below) – from mid 1990s onwards Swedish policy became ever-tighter (although still remaining relatively more liberal in this respect than other, developed, Wester-European countries). This to some extent also happened as part of the process of adjustment of Swedish laws to EU regulations upon Sweden's EU accession in 1995 (Schierup & Ålund 2011; Schuster 2000).

It is rather difficult to overlook that a very prominent role in the process of policy-based politicisation of immigration in Sweden has historically been played by the Swedish Social-Democrats (SAP). Many SAP immigration policies concerned both immigrant entry (Hinnfors, Spehar & Knapp 2012), asylum (Abiri 2000; Eastmond & Ascher 2011) or immigrants' social and welfare rights in Sweden (Schuster 2000; Sainsbury 2006; Eger 2010; Schierup & Ålund 2011). Despite being a social-democratic party with 'ideological foundation on public sector support, solidarity, inclusiveness and socialism with international roots' (Hinnfors, Spehar & Knapp 2012: 586), the SAP often legitimised its immigration policy with its role as defendant of interests of Swedish national community – as part of its key idea of Swedish *Folkhemmet* (Pred 2000; Andersson 2009). SAP has also often emphasised its strong reliance on trade unions and trade union associations whose main interest has often been in protecting the already existent collective agreements built on the demands of national work force.

The initial post-war SAP immigration policy seems to be very strongly underpinned by the logic of (political) economy. While in 1954 the SAP was behind a relatively liberal Aliens Act passed at the time when Sweden was in great need of foreign workforce,

the economic logic also prevailed when SAP actually out a stop to the guest-worker schemes via a number of policy decisions taken in 1972. Similarly, in 1979, the SAP stood behind provisions which eventually excluded many immigrants (esp. non-citizens) from pension and other welfare provisions in Sweden. This moment also constituted a significant shift in SAP immigration politics traditionally in favour of limited entry for migrants yet rather generous welfare provision to support integration of the foreigners incl. refugees already residing in the country (Hinnfors, Spehar & Knapp 2012; Schierup & Ålund 2011).

While political economy was the driving force in Swedish immigration policy of the still 1980s, from the 1990s onwards one can observe – similarly to elsewhere in the social-democratic systems in Europe (see Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2009)_the increase of strictly political considerations regarding immigration. At this time, the SAP was, *inter alia,* the driving force behind the passing the widely-discussed 1997 Aliens Act. Interestingly, in this and other cases the SAP legitimised its legislative initiatives by real-world occurrences such as the Swedish economic downturn of the early 1990s, the huge increase of both asylum seekers and refugees of the same period, or the Swedish eventual 1995 EU accession. Most of those occurrences, however, to large extent took place still during centre & right wing governments that preceded SAP's returned while during SAP's renewed government tenure the number of immigrants and especially asylum applications in Sweden started to fall rather sharply as opposed to other EU countries (see Hinnfors, Spehar & Knapp 2012: 13).

The period of mid/late 1990s continues the above trend with immigration politics in Sweden underpinned by, in particular, arguments on the necessity of adjusting Swedish immigration and asylum policy to the EU legal framework (Schierup & Ålund 2011). However, it is rather obvious that the ongoing and in fact at that time increasing wide politicisation of immigration in Swedish politics and the public sphere was related to the emergence and electoral success of Swedish right-wing populist parties such as the New Democracy (*Ny Demokrati*) in early 1990s which made immigration and asylum into widely-debated issues. Those developments often quite explicitly posed a requirement to the mainstream parties to 'respond' or at least 'take a stand' and present as well as legitimise new, often harsher policy solutions. In the end effect, the political mainstream in fact came with several responses and policies (Abiri 2000). These were, including in case of the SAP, often spiced with 'objectifying' claims that immigration & asylum situation in Sweden since 1980s 'beyond control' and thus had to be regulated (NB: Some of those arguments were, as is shown below, recontextualised in the 2015 discourse on the 'Refugee Crisis').

In the 2000s, largely recognised as a period of further politicisation of esp. labour immigration by the Swedish political mainstream (Widfeldt 2015), the SAP continued on both its traditional policy-oriented path of politicisation as well as by making its claims ever-more visible in the wider public sphere incl. the inter-party competition and media discourse. Still before its eventual departure from the government in 2006, the party continued its policy even if in an often ambiguous manner i.e. while restricting the Swedish labour market to third-country nationals while at the same time liberalising

other policies of e.g. labour market access towards the EU citizens (Hinnfors, Spehar & Knapp 2012). Similarly, upon its eventual return to power in 2014 – the moment that coincided with the further rise of esp. asylum applications and the heyday of the current 'Refugee Crisis' – the SAP continued immigration-related policy of previous years. It mainly focussed on the issues related to entry and temporary residence laws regarding esp. asylum seekers.

The most politically significant of the policy solutions proposed by the current SAP-led government to date – and indeed those that constitute the main reason for discourses analysed below – were those introduced on November 24th, 2015, when regulations concerning asylum-seeker entry and temporary residence were restricted by way of introducing several temporary (in most cases, initially 3-year) exemptions from the Aliens Act. The exemptions have to large extent revived previous SAP ideas about the further differentiation between 'quota' (or Convention) refugees and the newly arriving ones who, according to the current as well as previous SAP proposals (see above), would in most cases only be granted a 'temporary protection' status. The proposals also stipulated that the temporary refugee status can be transformed into a permanent one providing refugees receive employment (a requirement that is very difficult to fulfil). It also increased the age level for spouses in family reunification to 21 years of age. Finally, the new regulations also restricted refugee-children laws to those who at the moment of granting status would not exceed 18 years of age and included provisions on medical age-checks for asylum-seekers not holding relevant documents. The regulations also imposed temporary ID checks on all modes of public transport entering Sweden.

3. Design of Study and Methods

The analysis below is performed on material collected in a period of six weeks between 01 November and 15 December 2015. This is the period when, in the aftermath of the peak of the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe (throughout October 2015), the number of refugees arriving in Sweden rose very sharply. As a result of that, midway through the period of investigation, the change of refugee- and asylum-related policy is announced (on Nov 24th, 2015) resulting in furthering of the debate about how Sweden (and Swedish politics) should shape its immigration and asylum policy. The period is also marked by the terrorist attacks in Paris (Nov 13th, 2015) quite obviously reflected in the government and mainstream political discourses and their focus on security and related matters. Paris attacks were also well visible in the right-wing populist discourse of the same time often conflating anti-refugee expressions and Islamophobic expressions.

The analysis has a dual focus. On the one hand, it focuses on the SAP Twitter discourse and examines – at first by means of topic-oriented analysis – the overall development of key themes and frames of SAP's own mediated political discourse in the studied period of six weeks. On the other hand, a closer look is also taken within the Twitter analysis at the strategies of social media discourse of one selected day – Nov 24th, 2015 – when the SAP announced tightening of asylum-seeker regulations.

Within that second step of analysis, the focus is on how policy and related political action is discursively legitimised by the SAP as a political actor behind the policy changes with the sample discourse approached as, again, to large extent prototypical for the politicisation discourses within Swedish political mainstream.

In line with the Discourse-Historical tradition in Critical Discourse Studies (DHA; see, inter alia, Wodak 2001; Krzyżanowski 2010) this study follows a general perception of discourse as a social practice. The focus is on how social phenomena – in our case those related to immigration and specifically the 'Refugee Crisis' – are constructed and represented linguistically, in this case in political discourse. This allows seeing discourse as a carrier of different forms of legitimation of discursively constructed forms of political identity and agency. In fact, this study builds on the previous work on politics, radical right-wing populism and anti-immigration discourses and mobilization in Europe (Krzyżanowski 2012, 2013a; Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2009) as well as on media and migration (Krzyżanowski 2014, Bennett et al 2013). In general terms, it analytically follows the DHA of right-wing populism and anti-immigration rhetoric (esp. Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2009; Wodak 2015) which focuses extensively on the deconstruction of various discursive strategies deployed in political language and discourse in order to expose their role in real-world political incl. politicisation strategies and actions. In the current paper, the focus is, in particular on strategies of legitimation and how the latter are deployed in policy-driven discourses to both present – or recontextualise (Bernstein 1990; Krzyżanowski 2016) – policy and to legitimise its social and political validity.

The analysis will specifically rely on categories of critical discourse studies of right-wing populism and anti-immigration rhetoric (Krzyżanowski 2012, 2013b; Wodak 2015). It will follow a multilevel pattern of analysis originally introduced by Wodak (2001) and later elaborated by Krzyżanowski (2010) and will distinguish between the *entry-level* (thematic, topic- or content-oriented) and *in-depth* (strategy-oriented incl. argumentation-oriented) analysis. Within the former, the focus is mainly on *discourse topics* that allow mapping the key tendencies in the contents of analysed mediated texts and to sketch tendencies in overall framing of the discussed issues. The in-depth analysis, on the other hand, will focus on key patterns of argumentation. It will rely on the notion of discursive strategy as introduced by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) and thereby on the category of *topoi* (or argumentation schemes; Krzyżanowski 2010) especially in the forms known from public and political anti-immigration discourse and as art of wider sets of discursive strategies[5].

As this study is mainly interested in how political (and esp. policy) action is represented and legitimised, its overall DHA focus on political discursive strategies is supplemented by a number of categories that help identifying different, often overlapping types of legitimation. Here, the study will follow van Leeuwen's (2007) analysis of *strategies of legitimation* that have previously been effectively combined with DHA-driven

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[5] For a more-in-depth explanation of these key analytical categories see Krzyżanowski (2018) or Krzyżanowski (2010, Chapter 2).

examination of public discourse (see van Leeuwen & Wodak 1999; Krzyżanowski 2014). Specifically, the analysis will focus on the so-called '*authorisation strategies*' (van Leeuwen 2007: 96 ff) wherein various forms of authority are used to yield legitimacy to social actions. Here, the difference will be followed between what van Leeuwen saw as 'impersonal authority' (of laws, regulations, acts or facts), 'personal authority' (of individual & collective social actors) and authority of tradition (highlighting the salience of path-dependency in social action). On the other hand, the analysis will also showcase strategies of '*moral legitimation*' (ibid: 98ff) which highlight the salience of evaluative – and indeed often value-laden – language and discourse strategies (pertaining to e.g. positive or negative assessment of past/present/future actions) or those that construct analogies (e.g. between current and past actions) thus also allowing for their positive/negative valuation and thereby legitimation.

4. The SAP Social Media Discourse: *@socialdemokrat*

4.1. Key Themes and Overall Dynamics of the *@socialdemokrat* Discourse

The analysed Twitter discourse of *@socialdemokrat* was produced in the relatively high level of account activity – with 201 own Tweets (Ts) and Retweets (RTs) in total for the 45-day period of analysis. Within that period, the account was indeed very interactive with number of RTs (141 in total / 70% of all) clearly outnumbering that of Ts (65 / 30%). As for the RTs, they originated in a variety of sources. The main ones were individual Twitter accounts of key SAP politicians (esp. of the widely known Swedish Foreign Minister @margotwallstrom), of their aides (e.g. @nataliesial, press secretary of Minster for Employment) or from various Ministries and Government Agencies (@FinansdepSv, @Migrationsverk, etc.). Thus, although coming not from the main account in question, the RTs were still focally very close to the Ts as both the former and the latter focussed in most cases in a positive manner on government actions and policies.

Other RTs also originated in EU-related Twitter accounts of e.g. EU commissioners (@avramopoulos) but also, vice versa, of Swedish EU representations (@SwedeninEU) or of foreign embassies in Sweden (e.g. @FranceinSweden). RTs from media organizations were also frequent (@Expressen, @SvD, @dagensnyheter) and they played a very specific function – they particularly intensified in periods before official government and related statements were issued and Tweeted (so e.g. in the early phase of the Paris attacks of 13/11/2015), hence, at the time when the media voice was used instead of that of the politicians.

The Twitter discourse of the SAP reveals that the *@socialdemokrat* is mainly interested in immigration- and refugee-related actions of the Swedish government and thereby of the key Social-Democratic officials. Table 1 illustrates the key 'target' semantic fields of the @socialdemokrat Twitter discourse as represented by hash-tags (theme-markers) used in both Ts and RTs (though it must be mentioned that only ca. 30-40 % of Tweets and Re-Tweets were effectively tagged). As the hash-tags depict, the discourse was visibly strategically organised into two areas: domestic and

international thus showing both local and transnational salience of Swedish government politics with regard to immigration and asylum-seekers / refugees.

As far as 'domestic' or Sweden-related tags and topics were concerned, these were clearly led by the (#svpol), a generic tag used in debates related to Swedish politics (though widely known to be a tag used especially by the political right). Further to that, general tags related to Swedish immigration policy were used (#MigPol) on a par with tags referring to government policies and actions specifically concerning the refugee crisis, e.g. government's refugee settlement programme (#etableringspaket) or a programme aiming at fast-tracked skills and education recognition of refugees (#snabbspår). Further to that, both policy areas (#utbpol, education policy) and corresponding specific areas of socio-economic reality (#skolan, #jobb) were tagged in order to broaden the scope of wider efficiency of the governmental immigration- and refugee-related activities. These were often supported by a more generic, one may say problem-specific tags such as, e.g. (#flykt), or by means of tagged references to social initiatives such as those directed against refugee-oriented hate actions and hate speech (#mothatbrott, #NoHateSE). The latter, though not originating within government politics, were presented as if being intact with relevant government activities.

The last vital area of the domestic themes are references to the Swedish media which are thereby not only mentioned by means of account-names (@aftonbladet) as one would expect but are instead tagged and made into topics of Tweets. It seems the tabloid (#Aftonbladet) was mentioned most commonly in such a way – apparently as the main agora for immigration-related discourse of the Swedish media. Similarly, the Swedish public TV broadcaster SVT was mentioned, yet mainly by means of building references to its specific TV shows (#svtnyheter, #svtagenda), mostly at times of Swedish government officials' appearances therein.

While the domestic framing above seems relatively broad and mainly issue-centred, the internationally-tagged Ts and RTs were mostly event-related. Such was the case with all tags that thematically marked as (#Paris, #Parisattacks and #terroristattack) which referred to the Paris terrorist attacks of 13/11/2015 i.e. the main international event in the period of investigation. Other than that, EU-related events were tagged, mainly by means of abbreviated references to various meetings within EU council, though with a quite obvious preference to those in which Swedish government ministers took place.

The timeline of @socialdemokrat Tweets in the period of investigation (see Figure 1) indicates that the discourse peaked at several occasions, two of which clearly stand out. The first peak fell onto the day immediately following the Paris terrorist attacks (i.e. 14/11/2015) and marked a period where, at first, Swedish media and international reactions (mainly via RTs) and then government response (via Ts) were communicated.

4.2. 'Refugee Crisis' & the Hybrid Discourse of Policy-Legitimation: The Case of *@socialdemokrat*

The second event that produced, indeed, the most significant peak of @socialdemokrat Tweets, is dated 24/11/2015 and relates directly to the press conference in which Social-Democratic Swedish Prime Minister and his Deputy (from the traditionally immigration-friendly Green party) announced a significant change in immigration and asylum-seeking as well as refugee regulations in Sweden. The event was widely televised and broadcast online and is probably remembered not only for the fact that new, stricter immigration and refugee policy was announced but also for the fact that, 'deeply disappointed' with the need to introduce such policy, the Deputy Prime minister Åsa Romson broke into tears midway through the conference [6]. Contrary to Paris attacks' coverage above, the 24/11 Government press conference was mainly communicated by means of own Ts by @socialdemokrat – with some interesting interplay of RTs (see below). Overall, it constituted a political (incl. policy) communication attempt that used Twitter as a channel for explaining as well as to large extent legitimising the political actions (to be) undertaken.

Looking more closely incl. at the in-depth qualitative features of Twitter representation of the aforementioned press conference of 24/11/2015, it becomes evident that, probably just like the event of announcement the policy change itself, its reporting on Twitter by @socialdemokrat was very well planned and executed as a token of mediatised political communication. Hence, the @socialdemokrat Twitter discourse of 24/11 evolved gradually, mainly as a result of using solely Ts and obviously avoiding RTs (which could not be sequentially ordered). Such 'staging' of the press conference on Twitter – by now a recurrent feature of press conferences that are not only performed 'live' but also online (Ekström 2016) – could, in fact, be clearly divided into three stages (see Figure 2):

- *Part A (Setting the Scene)* in which the conference as such is announced
- *Part B (The Announcement)* in which the statement on the policy changes by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven takes place
- *Part C (The Follow-Up)* in which reactions to the government statements and follow-up interpretations are provided

As far as Part A was concerned, this was rather straightforward and consisted of two own Ts announcing the Press Conference. The only interesting aspect of this part was that the Tweets were actually posted immediately before the press conference was about to start with the second of them even starting '*Just nu*' (right now) indicating the event was already in progress. Also, both of the tweets of the first part included link to the main Swedish government website (regeringen.se) Press Info [7] yet without

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[6] See: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/24/sweden-asylum-seekers-refugees-policy-reversal , last accessed 21/07/2016

[7] See: http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2015/11/regeringen-foreslar-atgarder-for-att-skapa-andrum-for-svenskt-flyktingmottagande, last accessed 19/06/2016

specifying whether the link is referring to the live stream of the video conference or the actual policy documents.

Part B, which consisted solely of a series of @socialdemokrat own Ts, was supposed to serve as announcement of the new policy. However, throughout the part – consisting almost solely from edited statements made by Swedish SAP Prime-Minister Löfven during the actual press conference (with almost all of them heavily tagged with the generic #svpol) – no details of the new policy were actually announced. Instead, the majority of Tweets focuses on describing Sweden's past actions towards refugees and asylum seekers as a way of legitimising why tighter immigration regulations must now be imposed. This way of discursively legitimizing future/imagined actions with traditional legitimation tools – also known as *pre-legitimation strategy* (Krzyżanowski 2014) overtly resembled the aforementioned Press Information published at www.regeringen.se, which also focused in its majority on mentioning previous rather than current refugee-related actions.

In Part B, the Tweets, quite surprisingly, moved away from looking at refugees or asylum seekers and their plight and instead focused on creating the image of Sweden as not only refugee-friendly but also globally-responsible. This was evident in one of the opening Tweets that argues "*Löfven: Sverige tar sin del av det globala ansvaret för människor på flykt. #svpol*" (*Löfven: Sweden took its part of the global response to people in refuge*) and follows the 'impersonal authority' (of previous actions) legitimation strategy. A tweet that immediately followed, continued the previous argumentation but turned to 'Swedish people' as its subject. There, it was claimed that: "*Löfven: Det svenska folket har visat och visar en stor solidaritet i denna tid. #svpol*" (*The Swedish people have shown a huge degree of solidarity at this time*) thus presenting government – impersonated by the Prime Minister – as speaking for all Swedish. At the same time, 'legitimation through evaluation' took place here, with the evaluative 'huge degree of solidarity' being deployed, as well as augmented by the 'personal' authority-based legitimation through the reference to 'the Swedish people' in the nominal position. Such references to Swedish collective 'us' were further constructed in one of the central Tweets where Löfven is quoted as saying "Vi är ett litet land som har gjort en enorm insats, och vi har visat stor solidaritet i en svår tid" (*We are a small country that has done enormously lot, and we have shown great solidarity in a difficult time*). Here, the first part continues the legitimation through personal authority logic (by referring to, yet again, collective Swedish 'We'), whereas, overall, the Tweet deploys a number of strongly evaluative statements ('enormously lot', 'great solidarity', 'difficult time') to support the overall legitimatory claims.

However, it was in the following Tweet that one was able to eventually see where the statements were aiming. In the Tweet "*Ingen kan tvivla på Sveriges vilja att hjälpa flyktingar. Men just nu klarar vi inte mer. Fler måste söka sig till andra länder. #svpol*" (*Nobody can doubt in Sweden's will to help refugees. But right now we cannot handle more. More must search their place in other countries*), it became obvious the previous statements were just a foundation for the change of not only policy but also government

rhetoric which here draws on an analogy-based strategy (of legitimising current actions by referring to previous ones) as the main tool.

Yet, from here onwards, only general statements are made and, in fact, no details of the new policy are still explained in detail except for a few (and still mostly legitimatory) statements that the 'level' of asylum-seeker intake in Sweden should match that in the other EU countries. The Tweet "*Lagen ska tillfälligt anpassas till miniminivån i EU i syfte att fler ska välja att söka asyl i andra länder. #svpol* (*The level is to be temporarily adjusted to minimum level of other EU countries with the aim of more – MK: refugees – seeking asylum in other countries*), now legitimising through impersonal (fact-based) reality, reflects the overall logic of the discourse in focus. It scarcely describes action towards refugees yet reveals its overall aim i.e. to radically (yet, as is claimed only 'temporarily') limit refugee intake and re-direct asylum-seekers to other countries. However, quickly after the statement above is made, most Tweets return to the legitimation pattern indicated above whereby the focus is yet again on creating analogy between current actions and what Sweden has done in the past. One of the Ts argues "*Vi har tagit emot 80 000 asylsökande under de senaste 2 månaderna och så många barn att det motsvarar minst 100 nya skolklasser i veckan*" (*We have taken in 80k asylum-seekers in last two months and large number of children that corresponds to at least 100 new school classes per week*) providing more facts (numbers) to the overall pre-legitimation yet still failing to provide details of the new policy.

Part C of the press conference, or the *Follow-Up*, finally, consist in the SAP Twitter discourse mainly of RTs from other government officials and staff interspersed with further Ts from @socialdemokrat (which repeat some of the messages already Tweeted about in Part B, above). Interestingly, it is only in this final part that we find out the actual links to the newly announced immigration and asylum policy. Those links are not provided by the focal account but via RT from Swedish Ministry of Justice account (@Justitiedep). In fact, they are repeated once again in a very peculiar Tweet from Swedish Foreign Minister (@margotwallstrom) who not only provides the link to the policy but also legitimizes its introduction with a short preceding statement that "*En akut flyktingkris kräver politiskt ansvarstagande*" (*An acute/grave refugee crisis merits taking a political responsibility*). This Tweet – drawing on the evaluative legitimation strategy which constructs the crisis as 'acute/grave' – is particularly vital as it originates from the account og SAP's Margot Wallström, indeed an internationally recognized 'icon' of Swedish international and humanitarian policy. Wallström's voice, hence, leans further legitimacy to the government policy and its change.

Part C also includes further legitimating voices, mainly by means of RTs of positive statements about the policy announcement. For example, an RT from Social-Democratic politician Matilda Ernkrans (@ernkrans) is retweeted in which it is stated, in a very declarative/speculative tone otherwise characteristic for Part B above, that "*Regeringen visar ledarskap i ytterst svår situation. Står upp för asylrätt och sätter press på gemensamt ansvarstagande inom EU. #svpol*" (*The government displays leadership in utterly difficult situation. Standing up for asylum rights and putting pressure for response across the EU*). The first part of the Tweet above follows the

evaluation-based legitimation by describing the current situation as 'utterly difficult' and thus discursively constructing the call for political action. On the other hand, the second part of the Tweet seems equally legitimatory in nature as it claims that being for asylum/refugee rights might also mean, as is the case in Sweden, tightening the immigration and asylum laws (and hence using impersonal legitimation through facts to present current actions as allegedly logical conclusions of the former).

Further legitimation is also provided in Part C by RTs from the account of Swedish Social Security minister Annika Strandhäll (@strandhall) which to large extent recontextualise Löfven's earlier statements. They do so, for example, with regard to his earlier statements about 80k refugees already accepted in Sweden (see above) yet this particular number is then given new textual context, as in "*Man ska se regeringens åtgärder mot bakgrund av att Sverige nu tagit emot 80 000 flyktingar på två månader. Inte ett normalläge*" (*One should see government's measures against a background of the fact that Sweden took in 80k refugees in two months. That is not a normal situation*). Especially the latter part of the Tweet seems very strategic as it not only intensifies/fortifies the statement by an evaluative legitimising claim but also implies that restoring 'normal situation' must entail harsher immigration and asylum policy.

5. Conclusions

As the analysis above indicates, the recent 'Refugee Crisis' has been fully entangled in Swedish politics in discourses that belong to the country's long-standing traditions of politicisation of immigration and, in particular, to the mainstream-political tradition of politicisation though policy. Indeed, the centrality of policy and policy-driven solutions is still very obvious in the analysed material, as would be to large extent expected of the mainstream Swedish political discourse in general as well as the SAP discourse in particular. As has been shown above, both of these discourses have traditionally been centred on governance-driven solutions and have long been constructing preference towards migration-oriented policy rather than addressing immigration in the process of wider claim-making and debated in the Swedish public sphere.

What remains, however, very interesting about the analysed material is the fact that, while the SAP discourse as such is still constructed around policy-based ideas, especially at the thematic level the majority of that discourse's argumentation is, in itself, mainly legitimatory or pre-legitimatory in nature. It is hence very explicitly focussed on legitimising policies sometimes to such an extent that the actual details – or contents and provisions – of the policy are almost completely omitted. This, as has been shown, is largely strategic in nature as it allows communicating policy almost irrespective of its actual contents and its de facto impact on those concerned, in the current case migrants in general and asylum-seekers/refugees in particular. Indeed, as the analysis shows, while produced and set strongly in the context of the 'Refugee Crisis', the examined discourse is almost not at all primarily focussed on refugees or their plight but on Swedish politics and its apparent efficiency in dealing with the 'Refugee Crisis'. This shows the overarching role of 'policy communication'

(Krzyżanowski 2013a) in contemporary politics of immigration increasingly focused on those who undertake actions (esp. mainstream politicians) rather than those who are directly affected (migrants, refugees). As such, this is also a typical feature of key public discourse on politics/policy which often strategically and purposefully omit or silence the 'benefactors' of political and in particular policy solutions (Krzyżanowski 2016).

Hence, as the analysis indicates, the 'Refugee Crisis' has been constructed in the Swedish political mainstream – in this case the governing Swedish SAP – within a very hybrid mode of politicisation. The latter, while relying on policy yet mainly as a certain largely undefined and vague idea that emphasises political actors rather than action, extensively draws on the affordances of mediated political communication and hence, to large extent, on aspects of the traditionally distinct form of politicisation in/via public sphere. Such hybridity of the deployed politicisation strategy is certainly very efficient: it allows the studied mainstream politics to address as well as shape not only policy-based solutions but also wider debates which are thus informed by a huge amount of actions undertaken by, in this case, the SAP. Hence, in doing so, the political mainstream clearly moves beyond its traditional scope of action on immigration and also aims towards the wider public-sphere politicisation of the issue traditionally reserved for non-mainstream and right wing populist politics.

As has been shown, although seemingly focussed on (policy) actions and (policy-based) response, the discourse of the SAP is very strongly ideological in nature. It namely, almost irrespective of the refugee-related policy, focuses on the discursive construction of the Swedish national 'in-group' and serves highlighting both current and past refugee-related actions as positive and thus sustaining especially the SAP's political identity. It is, as such, also a very hybrid case of the use of social/online media in the context of political communication (Krzyżanowski & Tucker 2017). The social media are, effectively, entangled here in a top-down political communication process and strategy which only use channels of social/online media to create the image of openness and interactivity. They also allow portraying organised political action (cf. the process of 'staging' of the press conference, above) and thus wins legitimacy for the presented political actions.

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Tables & Figures

Domestic Themes / Tags		International Themes / Tags	
#svpol	*Swedish politics*	#Paris	-
#MigPol	*Swdish Immigration policy*	#Parisattacks	-
#sverigetilsammans	*'Sweden together' refugee programme**	#terroristattack	-
#etableringspaket #etablering	*Govt. refugee settlement programme*	#JHA	*EU Justice & Home Affairs Council*
#snabbspår	*Govt. refugee skills recognition fast-track programme*	#FAC	*EU Foreign Affairs Council*
#eupol	*Swedish EU policy*	#security	-
#flykt	*Refuge / refugees*	#youth	-
#mothatbrott #NoHateSE	*Actions against hate attacks in Sweden*	#migration	-
#jobb	*Jobs*	#firearms	-
#skolan	*Schools*	#borders	-
#utbpol	*Swedish Education Policy*	#Ukraine	-
#aftonbladet	*The Aftonbladet*	#ASEM	
#svtnyheter	*SVT – Swedish public TV news*		
#svtagenda	*SVT evening news broadcast*		
#Stockholm	-		

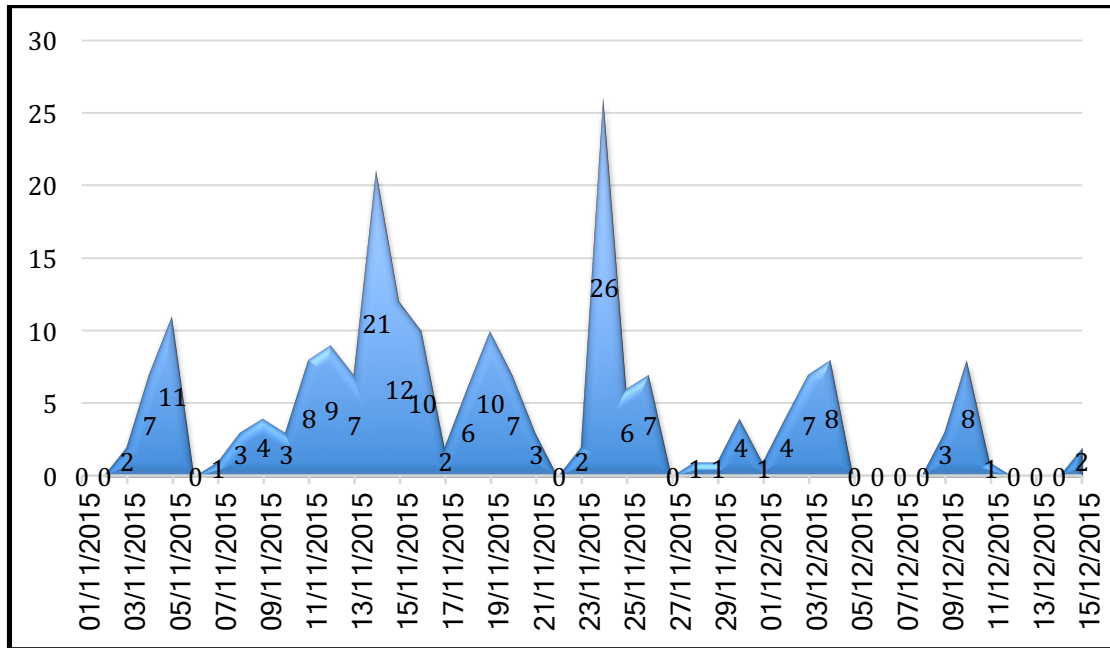*Table 1: Key Hash-Tags @socialdemokrat (Ts & RTs), 01/11-15/12/2015*

Figure 1: Twitter Timeline of @socialdemokrat (Ts & RTs), 01/11-15/12/2015

24/11/15		PezhmanFivrin	Utrikesminister @margotwallstrom träffar kollegan Soini i Finland. Flyktingkrisen, Paris & bilaterala fr på agendan
Part A: Setting the Scene			Pressträff kl 15:00 med Stefan Löfven & @asaromson om migrationsfrågan. Följ direkt på http://regeringen.se/ #svpol
			Just nu: Regeringen presenterar åtgärder med anledning av flyktingsituationen. Följ direkt på http://regeringen.se/
Part B: The Announcement			Löfven: Sverige tar sin del av det globala ansvaret för människor på flykt. #svpol
			Löfven: Det svenska folket har visat och visar en stor solidaritet i denna tid. #svpol
			Ingen kan tvivla på Sveriges vilja att hjälpa flyktingar. Men just nu klarar vi inte mer. Fler måste söka sig till andra länder. #svpol
			Nuläget är inte hållbart. Vårt system håller på att brista, personal går på knäna, centrala samhällsfunktioner är hotade. #svpol
			Vi måste agera – och få övriga EU att ta sitt ansvar. #svpol
			Löfven: Om alla EU:s medlemsländer tar sitt ansvar kan vi hantera denna situation på ett helt annat sätt än vad vi kan idag. #svpol
			Sverige har tagit störst ansvar i EU för att hjälpa flyktingar nu måste fler söka hjälp i andra länder. #svpol
			Löfven: Syftet med de föreslagna åtgärderna är att skapa ett andrum för svenskt flyktingmottagande. #svpol
			Lagen ska tillfälligt anpassas till miniminivån i EU i syfte att fler ska välja att söka asyl i andra länder. #svpol
			Vi är ett litet land som har gjort en enorm insats, och vi har visat stor solidaritet i en svår tid. #svpol
			Löfven: Om vi i Sverige samarbetar på riktigt så är det få saker vi inte klarar - och vi kommer att klara detta också. #svpol
			Vi har tagit emot 80 000 asylsökande under de senaste 2 månaderna och så många barn att det motsvarar minst 100 nya skolklasser i veckan.
			Löfven: Avsikten med förslagen är att kraftigt minska antalet som söker asyl i Sverige. #svpol
			Löfven: Ska vi ha ett hållbart mottagande måste vi få ett andrum nu. #svpol
			Vi är ett litet land som gör en enorm insats och det svenska folket visar stor solidaritet i en svår tid. #svpol
Part C: The Follow-Up		Justitiedep	Regeringen föreslår åtgärder för att skapa andrum för svenskt flyktingmottagande. http://bit.ly/1MOXW3Q #migpol
		ernkrans	Regeringen visar ledarskap i ytterst svår situation. Står upp för asylrätt och sätter press på gemensamt ansvarstagande inom EU. #svpol –>
		ernkrans	Sverige ska ta ansvar för människor på flykt. Men också ge en god framtid för de 200 000 människor vi välkomnat. Det håller mig uppe. #svpol
			Det här är svåra, men nödvändiga åtgärder som krävs att få ner antalet personer som söker asyl och värna asylrätten. #svpol
		margotwallstrom	En akut flyktingkris kräver politiskt ansvarstagande. http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2015/11/regeringen-foreslar-atgarder-for-att-skapa-andrum-for-svenskt-flyktingmottagande/...
			Regeringen vill anpassa asylreglerna till EU:s miniminivå: https://www.socialdemokraterna.se/Pressrum/nyheter/Regeringen-vill-anpassa-asylreglerna-till-EUs-miniminiva/... #svpol
		strandhall	Vi är ett litet land som just nugör en enorm insats. Svenska folket visar stor solidaritet i en svår tid.
		strandhall	Man ska se regeringens åtgärder mot bakgrund av att Sverige nu tagit emot 80 000 flyktingar på två månader. Inte ett normalläge.

Figure 2: Sequence of @socialdemokrat Tweets of 24/11/2105