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Title: The Life Cycle Model and Press Coverage of Nordic Populist Parties

Abstract: The article traces the life cycles of the Nordic populist parties by exploring the relationship between media coverage and contemporary populist parties in Finland (Finns Party), Sweden (Sweden Democrats), Norway (Norwegian Progress Party) and Denmark (Danish People's Party). Empirically the study is based on a content analysis of 3,337 journalistic articles published in the leading quality and popular newspapers of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark during the first parliamentary elections of the 2010s. The analysis confirms the life cycle model introduced in Mazzoleni et al. (2003) *The Media and Neo-Populism*, which found that parties in their insurgent phase gained more media attention than parties in their established phase. This study found populism currently a more important topic in Finland and Sweden, where populist movements were entering parliament, whereas in Norway and in Denmark, after long-term success, the domestic populist parties had become more mainstream and their media attention normalized. The popular newspapers tended to be more positive about populist parties than quality papers. However, these results can be explained partly by journalistic routines and by country-specific political conditions. Thus, further research is needed to prove the life cycle model.

Keywords: populism, party life cycle, Nordic countries, media, journalism, content analysis

In this era of mediatized politics, the media plays a central role in promoting or preventing political ideas and movements, thus becoming also an essential actor in the process of the development of political parties (Mastropaolo 2008, 43; Donges and Jarren 2014, 188-191). This is especially true of contemporary populist movements, whose success has been claimed to be highly dependent on media attention (Mazzoleni 2003, 10; Mudde 2007; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008a, 221). Thus, the aim of this article is to trace the developments of contemporary populist parties in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark by exploring the media's coverage of them.

The media attention given to populist movements varies according to the particular political contexts and the "life phases" of the movements. Stewart, Mazzoleni and Horsefield, for example, demonstrate the role that the "media factor" plays in the rise and development of neo-populist movements by use of a model that indicates the four major phases in the media's relationship with the life cycles of populist parties, namely "the ground-laying", "the insurgent", "the established" and "the decline" phases (Stewart et al. 2003, 219-224). However, Mazzoleni (2014, 53-54) has more recently called for further research within different national contexts in order to test the life cycle model.

This study examines the life phases of the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset, PS, previously called the True Finns), the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, NFP), the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) and the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) by analyzing newspaper coverage of the first parliamentary elections of the 2010s in each country. The main research questions of the study are: What does the media coverage of the Nordic populist parties reveal about the different stages of their development, and how closely does the development of the Nordic Populist parties conform to the life cycle model?

It is possible to ask if the parties above can be defined neo-populist movements or not since they have quite long histories and most of them have achieved the status of becoming established within their domestic political arena. However, the backgrounds of these parties clearly derive from populist protest and they have generally been discussed as being populists in public

discourse, which makes them interesting targets for the study of the life cycle model. The parties in question have also promoted intense criticism of immigration since the 1990s, while also disparaging the political and economic elites and more established parties, which are actions and stances typical of neo-populist movements. Hence, in many ways, they resemble European neo-populist parties like the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) or Front National (FN) in France (see Arter 2010; Jungar 2010, 211-214; Niemi 2013, 79) which were considered by Mazzoleni and others in their 2003 study.

Paloheimo (2012, 329) remarked that populist movements have been especially successful in consensual multiparty democracies, where a group of established parties that resemble each other in several ways can easily be criticized as an elitist cartel. However, as Niemi (2013, 80) adds, the political discourse in consensus multiparty democracies, such as the Nordic countries, has traditionally been quite moderate and constructive. Therefore, even the populists have had to balance their rhetoric between conflicting and constructive statements.

The Nordic party system has been identified as "enduring" (Sundberg 1999). However, even if it is still fairly stable, Arter (2012) has noted significant fractures as indicated by the "big bang" elections of the new millennium in which the populist parties included in this study have played major roles. The success of PS in the Finnish parliamentary elections in 2011 and 2015, the success of SD in the Swedish parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2014, NFP's triumphs in the Norwegian parliamentary elections in 2005 and 2009, and the victory of DF in Danish EU elections of 2014, for example, have all challenged the established order of consensus party politics in the Nordic countries and the whole structure of the political party arena.

This article empirically studies the life cycles of those Nordic parties considered to be populist by making a content analysis of the leading quality and popular newspapers of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark during the first parliamentary elections of the 2010s. It is recognized here that the "media factor" is just one variable in the phases of the parties and that the elections create a specific moment in their political visibility, but as Mazzoleni (2008) has demonstrated, the media has become more important because public image is such an intrinsic issue for the spread and legitimation of political movements in a mediatized political environment. This is especially true during elections, which are "key moments" in any media-party relationship.

Populist Party Life Cycle Model

The discussion about the mediatization of politics has demonstrated the media's increasing importance in politics since the late 1990s (e.g. Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004; Hjarvard 2008; Lundby 2009). The role of the media has been thought to be especially important in the rise and development of the various populist movements (Mazzoleni 2003; Mudde 2007; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008a). Mazzoleni (2003, 10) even argues that neo-populism cannot grow without media attention but does because it "is often the object of intense media attention and can therefore be looked at to a certain extent as a 'product' of the symbolic activity of the news media". According to many scholars, a strong, charismatic leader, who is capable of communicating with "ordinary people" and exploiting the "populist" style that suits the logic of the media, plays an essential role in garnering media attention for populist movements (Mazzoleni 2003, 17; Stewart et al. 2003, 228; Bos et al. 2010, 157-159; Niemi 2013, 80-82).

Mediatization has led to new developments in the communication strategies of political parties in the new media environment. In general, it has meant an increase in the media awareness and professionalism displayed by political parties, which now invest more in understanding and using so-called media logic by employing media professionals to set strategies for political communication and campaigns (e.g. Negrine et al. 2007). Communication strategies and tactics are seen as being especially important to populist movements, whose success is often thought to be dependent on the media attention of a charismatic leader (see Stewart et al. 2003, 227-229). Mazzoleni and others have described the key communication strategies favored by the populists as playing the role of underdog,

using professional expertise, rallies, gaining free media publicity, tagging events, and making tactical attacks on the media (ibid., 230-232; Mazzoleni 2008, 50, 55-57).

Mazzoleni and his colleagues concluded their comparative study with a life cycle model showing the relationship between the media and neo-populist movements. Despite some contextual differences, they found four major phases in the media's relationship with all neo-populist movements: "the ground-laying", "the insurgent", "the established" and "the decline" phases (Stewart et al. 2003, 219-224; also Mazzoleni 2008, 59-62). Essential to the life cycle model is the division between two the main types of news media, namely "elite" and "tabloid" media, suggesting that the former is more mainstream and supports the political status quo of the traditional parties, whereas the latter thrives on sensationalism, scandal and social and moral anxieties to attract mass audiences (Mazzoleni 2003, 8).

The ground-laying phase is characterized by social and political discontent in a country, during which the media tends to create a political climate engendering neo-populist discourse and sentiment, for example, by trivializing and personalizing political issues. According to the life cycle model there is no significant difference between the media types during the ground-laying phase since both "contribute to the diffusion of populist discourse" (Stewart et al. 2003, 219-220).

The insurgent phase is characterized by intense media attention on neo-populist movements because the messages, appearances and rhetoric they promote nurture the journalistic and commercial logic of the media. In general, the tabloid media promotes a more populist discourse, whereas the elite media applies a critical distance (ibid., 221-222). However, the elite media "soften" their policies if they are in danger of losing some of their audience. Both ground-laying and insurgent phases take place during the early growth of populist movements.

In *the established phase*, the neo-populist movement achieves some legitimacy and status as a national political player, but its share of attention in the media usually shrinks. As Mazzoleni (2008, 61) states, this is a critical phase for populist movements, who tend to become disenchanted, especially with the tabloid media, after achieving public legitimization within politics. However, the elite media will often be forced to report on and discuss populist issues because it has to take the populists seriously once they have become established. Nevertheless, if the neo-populist movement really challenges the political status quo and social order, most media, especially elite media, will try to strengthen support for the ruling political parties through hostile coverage of the populists (Stewart et al. 2003, 222-223).

The decline phase refers to the fading of the neo-populist movement from the media, although not all movements confront this phase and may gain new success. Thus, media attention varies from country to country depending on the newsworthiness of the fall of the movement, or whether, for example, a new populist movement arises from the ashes of a former movement (ibid., 223-224). Mazzoleni (2008, 61-62) has pointed out that this phase is not relevant to many European neo-populist movements because they "are still fairly successful and continue to receive significant media attention".

In addition to the life cycle model there are, of course, many other perspectives on party change, including ideological, institutional and organizational approaches (e.g. Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Adams et al. 2004; Horowitz and Browne 2004). Nevertheless, the life cycle model is preferred here for two reasons. Firstly, it especially focuses on populist movements, which are the main subject of this study. Thus, the model can usefully reflect on the "big bang elections" in which the breakthrough of a populist party challenged the status quo of traditional party system (cf. Arter 2012). Secondly, unlike other models it emphasizes the role of "the media factor" that is essential to this study.

Mazzoleni (2014, 53) has stated that "in the four phases of the life cycle of populism, the causal relationship between media output and the rise of populism has been assumed but not proven". However, several studies have indicated a positive relationship between an increase in media attention and the success of populist movements and their leaders (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart

2007; Koopmans and Muis 2009; Bos et al. 2010; Roodjuin 2014), although there are also studies which challenge that argument. Bos and Brants (2014), for example, demonstrate that the populist styles, ideas and policies presented in the media might be far less prevalent than often claimed. Some studies stress that media coverage is essential for the public image of all political leaders, regardless of affiliation (Bos et al. 2011). Pauwels (2010) also reminds us that media effects should not be overstated in the development of populist movements.

Research that resembles the life cycle model and its findings with regard to describing the sensationalist and emotional populist discourse in popular journalism can also be found (e.g. Fiske 1992; Jungar 2010). For example, there are several empirical studies on the British tabloid newspapers that lend credence the link between the tabloid media and populism (e.g. Birks 2011; Cross 2014). However, there are also studies that found no anti-elite or populist bias in popular newspapers (e.g. Akkerman 2011; Bos and Brants 2014). On the contrary, Akkerman (2011) discerned that the British and Dutch tabloids were even more oriented towards presenting elitist perspectives than the quality press.

The life cycle model has not been tested with reference to the Nordic populist parties yet because the majority of the research conducted within the Nordic countries has focused on the ideological or social dimensions of populist movements (e.g. Arter 2010; Jungar 2010; Rydgren 2010; Jungar and Jupskås 2014). In Finland and Sweden the media's portrayal of domestic populist parties has generally been analyzed as part of the overall coverage of an election (Pernaa and Railo 2012; Ljunggren and Nordstrand 2011). However, research that uses material found in the media when focusing on Nordic populist movements often considers their use of "neo-populist" right-wing extremist, racist, xenophobic and anti-immigration rhetoric (e.g. Rydgren 2004; Hellström and Nilsson 2010; Horsti and Nikunen 2012; Niemi 2013).

The Nordic Populist Parties

Populism is a slippery concept that covers a variety of political movements on both the left and right of the ideological spectrum, making it difficult to define (Taggart 2000, 1; Mazzoleni 2003, 3-4; Canovan 2005, 79-80). Historically, populism has worn so many different faces that finding any consistent characterization of the phenomenon is difficult (Canovan 1981; Taggart 2000; Andersson 2009). Canovan (1999, 3) states that an appeal to "the people" and opposing the establishment and the dominant values of society are the most common features of populism in modern democracies.

To separate historical and agrarian forms of populism from the current era, many scholars describe neo-populism as a specific phenomenon of contemporary Western democracies (Taggart 2000; Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Mudde 2007; Andersson 2009). Neo-populism is characterized as a protest movement criticizing bureaucratized states and the alleged corruption of established parties (Taggart 2000, 75; Andersson 2009, 48-54), although several scholars especially connect it to the "nativist ideology" of the anti-immigration policies, xenophobia and racism of extreme or radical right-wing movements (see Taggart 2000, 76-83; Rydgren 2004; Mudde 2007; Andersson 2009, 64-76).

The Nordic populist parties (see Table 1) contradict and such neo-populist definitions do not fit well with all of their actions and policies (Andersson 2009, 73-76). SD can most easily be defined as a neo-populist movement due to the party's background in National Socialist movements, which ties its history to "nativist" ideology (Niemi 2013, 79; Baas 2014). The backgrounds of the contemporary Norwegian, Danish and Finnish populist parties date to the 1970s or even earlier (e.g. Paloheimo 2012, 330). In fact, DF and PS are resurgent versions of former populist parties; DF developed from the Danish Progress Party, established in 1972, while PS's roots are in the Finnish Rural Party (SMP), established in 1959. NFP has a 40 year history as a genuine political movement and it is the most established and perhaps also the most mainstream of the parties in question (cf. Jungar and Jupskås 2014).

Table 1 around here

NFP, PS and DF started as protest movements against strong taxation and state intervention, while also appealing to "the people" and presenting themselves as an alternative to corrupt elites. However, all of these parties have a unifying factor in that they have promoted intense criticism of immigration since the 1990s, and some of their most radical representatives have faced political scandals and even court cases for making racist, pejorative or discriminatory statements. DF also promoted very strict immigration policies when assisting the conservative coalition government in Denmark between 2001 and 2011 (see Rydgren 2010).

However, according to the European Social Survey (ESS), the opinions of the Nordic populist parties' supporters are quite different to extreme right or autocratic governance supporters in Western or Eastern Europe (Mesežnikov et al. 2008) since they rely on a democratic society and its political system and want to be integrated into society (Paloheimo 2012, 337). In many cases, the populism of the Nordic populist parties has not been as radical or offensive as in countries where the political arena has traditionally been more adversarial. Thus, Nordic populism has been described as "toned down" (Widfeldt 2010, 179).

In spite of their longish histories, these parties are relative newcomers to national and parliamentary politics and their populist rhetoric has been given a critical reception, leading to them usually being excluded from government. Furthermore, since populist parties criticize established power, joining a coalition government may be contradictory to their interests (Niemi 2013, 80, 87). However, their success in parliamentary elections means their status as legitimate political players has grown, and some of them have turned into rather established political players in their national contexts.

For example, when DF assisted the coalition governments from 2001 to 2011, they gained a share of the votes that varied between 12% and 14% in Denmark's parliamentary elections. In the 2011 elections, the party lost 1.5% of its vote and was excluded from the left-wing government coalition. However, DF gained 27% of the vote in the 2014 EU elections to become the largest party representing Denmark in the European Parliament, and in the 2015 parliamentary election the party got 21.1% of the vote being the second largest party. Thus, it would seem that DF has become a mainstream player within Danish politics and is enjoying its established phase.

NFP was the most popular party in Norway in 2008, gaining 30% support in election polls. In the 2009 parliamentary elections, NFP received 22.9% of the vote. Nevertheless, it was not until the 2013 elections that the party was brought in to government alongside the conservative right-wing Høyre, even though NFP had lost 12 seats in parliament and seen its share of the vote fall to 16.3%. Furthermore, the massacre perpetrated by Anders Behring Breivik in Oslo and on Utøya Island in the summer of 2011 had negative effects on the popularity of anti-immigrant rhetoric (Wiggen 2012; Figenschou and Beyer 2014), which helped cause a 6% fall in NFP's support in both the local elections of 2011 and the parliamentary elections of 2013.

In Finland, PS received 19.1% of the votes in the 2011 "big bang" parliamentary election and became the third largest party. It negotiated to join the government, but chose to exercise populist politics from the opposition benches instead. However, in the 2015 parliamentary election the party became the second largest in parliament, although its percentage of the total votes cast was down by 1.4% on the 2011 total. Despite that lower percentage, PS entered into a conservative coalition government and moved off the opposition benches. According to the life cycle model, PS lived its insurgent phase during the 2011 election, and it can now be claimed that it has entered its established phase.

In Sweden, SD received 5.7% of the vote in the 2010 parliamentary election, surpassing the 4% threshold value for a seat in parliament. In the 2014 parliamentary election the party gained 12.9% of the vote, which resulted in public protests and media boycotts of the party. In Sweden, the

established parties have refused to collaborate with SD, isolating it in a so-called "cordon sanitaire" (Rydgern 2005, 117), which explains why SD can still be regard as being in the insurgent phase.

All parties have charismatic leaders in accordance with "the standards of populist leadership" (see Table 1). However, the leader of PS, Timo Soini, is the only "founding father" in the contemporary Nordic populist parties, indicating that the parties are perhaps not as tied to their leaders as theories of neo-populism claim. In Norway, NFP was led for 28 years by Carl I. Hagen but it was Siv Jensen who took the party into government. Sweden's SD gained its electoral success with its second leader Jimmie Åkesson. The situation in Denmark is slightly different as one of DF's founders, Pia Kjærsgaard, stepped aside after the losses of the 2011 election, which is something quite common amongst all political parties. However, the new leader of DF, Kristian Thulesen Dahl, is also a founder member of the party.

Methods and Materials

The relationship between the media and the Nordic populist parties is studied here via a quantitative content analysis of the leading quality and popular newspapers published in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The Nordic countries do not have the same kind of tabloid papers as those found in the Anglo-American or Central-European context. Sparks and Tulloch refer to the Nordic popular papers as the "semi-serious press" in their pioneering analysis of "tabloidization" because these papers also publish serious news content, resembling that found in the quality press (Sparks 2000, 15). The term "tabloid" is also quite confused, since many of the quality papers have more recently changed their physical format from broadsheet to tabloid. Thus, tabloid media refers more to the journalistic style and topics of entertainment than to the concrete page format (Mazzoleni 2003, 8). The journalistic style of the Nordic popular newspapers makes them a particular variety of tabloid media; the style being compared to populist rhetoric or communication (Jungar 2010, 215-216).

The papers analyzed are *Helsingin Sanomat* (quality) and *Ilta-Sanomat* (popular) from Finland, *Dagens Nyheter* (quality) and *Aftonbladet* (popular) from Sweden, *Politiken* (quality) and *Ekstra Bladet* (popular) from Denmark and *Aftenposten* (quality) and *Verdens Gang* (popular) from Norway. There are no clear political affiliations in these papers, although the quality papers usually represent more "liberal" and the popular papers more "conservative" values. However, the popular papers tend to be more conflicted regarding the political and economic establishment, whereas the quality papers tend to maintain the social status quo by supporting the mainstream parties (cf. Mazzoleni 2003, 8). Although the newspapers deem themselves politically independent, their histories indicate left-of-center tendencies: *Politiken*, *Ekstra Bladet* and *Aftonbladet;* and right-of-center tendencies: *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftenposten*.

The sample consists of a total of 3,337 stories discussing the first parliamentary elections of the 2010s in the four Nordic countries (Sweden 2010, Finland 2011, Denmark 2011, Norway 2013), and spans a one-month period around the elections (precisely 30 days, separated into16 before and 13 after the election date). The Danish papers published 1,073 articles discussing the elections in that period. The Swedish papers published 903 election-related articles, followed by the Norwegian (698) and Finnish (663) papers. The leading quality paper in all the countries published from 21% to 27% more election stories, indicating a major difference between the paper types; quality papers invest more in political coverage than the popular papers. The details of the sample are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 around here

The coding of the stories was carried out between October 2013 and April 2014 by reading facsimiles of the printed papers published in digital archives. The coding was done manually and no search

words were used; the coders gathered all the stories discussing the parliamentary elections by reading the papers, guaranteeing no valid stories were missed.

Coding was performed by one or two native research assistants from each country who had good track records in media and political studies.[1] The research assistants were trained by the author of this article, and the coding book was completed in accordance with specific instructions to ensure the uniformity of coding. Because of the differences between the electoral systems, only the stories explicitly discussing the parliamentary elections were included in the coding. The inter-coder reliability percentage among the two Danish coders varied from 0.75 to 1, depending on the variable, with the mean value being 0.95 (according to the Holsti formula). With regard to the variables discussed here, the inter-coder reliability percentage varied from 0.6 to 0.92 with a mean value of 0.75.

The coding book included three sections. The first concerned basic information about the material, such as the publishing days, genres, sizes, sections and writers of the articles. The second group of variables focused on the content of the stories, mapping the main themes and actors, and asking whether the article explicitly discussed a populist party or its representatives. If it did, it was determined whether that portrayal was positive, negative, neutral or something else (ambivalent). The third section of the coding book concentrated on those newspaper articles that explicitly dealt with the word "populism", the meanings the specific newspaper gave to populism and the tone in which populism was discussed in the election-related stories. The third section of variables is analyzed elsewhere.

More than 45% of the 3,337 stories were news articles. The second most common type, with a 21% share, was columns, opinions or commentaries written by editorial staff or external experts. About 9% of the stories were editorials. The remaining 25% was composed of interviews, features, news flashes, headline stories and quotations taken from other media. Letters to the editors were left out of the sample to focus on "journalistic" material only. There were no significant differences between the countries in this, with the papers being very similar in their distribution of genres. However, particularly in *Verdens Gang*, the percentage of columns, opinions or commentaries was relatively high. Special election sections were popular, especially in the Danish papers, which carried 45% of the stories. In the Norwegian and Finnish papers, election sections were also common. Almost 72% of the stories were written by the respective newspaper's staff, and 12.3% of the stories were written by non-staff authors, such as freelance journalists or experts. No writer was credited for 9.5% of the stories. More detailed information about the articles can be found in the Appendix.

Findings

From a total amount of 3,337 election stories 1,315 (39.4%) mentioned the domestic populist parties. In the Swedish (43.1%) and Norwegian (44.3%) newspapers, election stories mentioning SD and NFP were close to the average. However, in the Finnish papers, election stories that mentioned PS (59.1%) comprised almost two-thirds of all stories, while in the Danish papers DF (21%) was in just over one-fifth of all stories. There were no other significant differences among story types, except that the populist parties were discussed relatively more often in editorials than in other types of articles.

Figure 1 around here

The result is even clearer when the published stories are compared before and after the election date. In Finland, Norway and Sweden, significantly more articles discussed the successful populist party after the results had been counted than before the election date (see Figure 1). In Denmark, there was no such difference; the same amount of stories mentioned DF before and after the election date.

There were also significant differences among the countries when comparing the evaluations of the domestic populist parties in the press coverage (see Table 3). In general, neutral

evaluations (43%) were most common, which can be explained by the high number of news items among the articles. However, negative stories came a close second (35.9%). Positive evaluations were the most infrequent, below a tenth of all stories. Negative evaluations were common in news stories, but were particularly common in columns, commentaries and editorials, i.e. the types of story in which opinions are frequently expressed.

Table 3 around here

In Finland, neutral news items dominated the discussions concerning PS, although negative evaluations were the next most popular assessment. In every other Nordic country, negative evaluations were much more common, accounting for more than one-third of the stories. The Swedish press was clearly the most critical; more than half of the discussions about SD were negative, more than 40% neutral and rarely positive (0.8%). The Norwegian press had the most balanced evaluations, tending to be the most positive towards their populist party; more than one-fifth of the stories gave it a positive evaluation. The Danish newspapers followed in terms of positive evaluations (10%), but were second only to the Swedish press when giving negative evaluations.

The main themes of the stories were coded into 26 categories defined according to a study on the Finnish parliamentary elections of 2011 (see Pernaa and Railo 2012, Appendix 2). The categories included such themes as election results, campaigns, the media in the elections, opinion polls, various policy areas, the populist party as a phenomenon, immigration and the next coalition government. More than 80% of the Finnish stories could be coded into these fixed categories. In Sweden and Norway about 30% of the stories focused on a subject that could not be found in the coding categories (see Table 4).

The election result was the most popular topic, gaining a 12% share of all stories relevant to this study. The second most popular subject was the coalition government, followed by the media in elections, campaigns and the populist party as a phenomenon. The other themes that were categorized gained less than a 4% share of the coverage. However, there were differences between the countries. Speculation over the future coalition government was an especially popular topic in Norway and Denmark, but the actual election result was not as popular in these countries as it was in Finland and Sweden. In turn, the populist party as a phenomenon was a popular theme in Finland and Sweden, but less so in Norway and Denmark.

Table 4 around here

The most common topics in articles in which a populist party was mentioned (n=1,315) were similar to those in all the election stories with two exceptions. First, stories in which the main subject was a populist party as a phenomenon were more popular in general. Second, immigration was the fifth most common theme in stories that mentioned a populist party, accounting for 6.2% of 1,315 articles. Speculation about the coalition government after the elections was an even more common topic in the articles that mentioned a populist party. In the Norwegian context, this can be explained, as resulting from debates over the coalition government once Høyre's victory was cemented and NFP was seen as a plausible governing partner. However, the evaluations of NFP remained mostly neutral or negative.

In addition to the topics, the three most prominent groups of actors mentioned in the stories about the populist parties were coded. By far the most mentioned party actors were the party leaders, who were quoted or mentioned in half (n=1,617) of all the stories. As first actors, the party leaders appeared in one-fourth of the stories. The next most common group contained party members other than candidates or leaders (702), candidates other than leaders (632) and prime ministers (555). As first actors, the prime ministers were the second most commonly mentioned actor, 10% of all

stories. Note that, in the Nordic countries, the prime ministers are often the leaders of the leading parties.

The popularity of the party leaders as the topic of and actor in election articles is evident when examining the names mentioned in the press coverage (Table 5). The five most common names in the articles were the leaders of their respective party during the election campaigns in all countries. The only exception was Carl I. Hagen, who was a former leader of the NFP. Most of these leaders were also prime ministers or other ministers before or after the elections.

Table 5 around here

The leader of the relevant populist party (see Table 5) was included in the top five list in all countries except Denmark, where Pia Kjærsgaard slipped to sixth place with 62 references. The Danish list of names mainly reflects the left-wing success in the 2011 elections. The leader of PS, Timo Soini, was by far the most popular name in the Finnish papers, indicating Finland's increasing interest in PS. In Sweden, the leader of SD, Jimmie Åkesson, stood in fifth place, although the number of references to him was markedly fewer than for the two most popular names, Fredrik Reinfeldt (Moderaterna) and Mona Sahlin (Socialdemokraterna). In Norway, the former prime minister, Jens Stoltenberg (Arbeiderpartiet), and the new prime minister, Erna Solberg (Høyre), dominated the stories, but the current (Siv Jensen) and former (Carl I. Hagen) leaders of the NFP were included in the top five list. Together they gained the most references after Solberg.

In all countries except Denmark, the leader of the populist party was mentioned both absolutely and relatively more often after the elections than before. In Sweden, the papers almost completely refused to mention or interview Jimmie Åkesson before the election date, and he did not appear in articles until the results showed SD had surpassed the 4% threshold value guaranteeing seats in parliament. The electoral success of PS increased Timo Soini's popularity in Finnish articles, while negotiations to form the government in Norway put Siv Jensen in the headlines. In Denmark the conservatives lost the elections and Pia Kjærsgaard became a less popular interviewee after the elections.

When comparing the different newspapers types, there were no significant differences between them in terms of the share of stories in which a populist party was mentioned (n=1,315). Populist parties were discussed in 43.2% of the election stories published by the popular papers and in 56.8% of the stories published by the quality papers. These proportions are similar to the shares of the stories between these newspaper types in the sample as a whole (see Table 2).

However, when one examines the newspapers' evaluations of the populist parties, the differences between the newspaper types become evident (see Figure 2). In general, the quality papers were more negative and the popular papers were more positive towards the populist parties. *Verdens Gang* assessed NFP positively and negatively in equal measures. The exception in the evaluations was the Swedish popular paper *Aftonbladet*, which assessed SD equally as negatively as *Dagens Nyheter*. In general, a neutral or negative approach to a populist party dominated the news articles published in the quality papers, and negative approaches flourished, especially in commentaries and editorials.

Figure 2 around here

There were few significant differences between the newspaper types in their selection of the main topics and actors for stories which mentioned the populist parties. However, in the opinion polls, the populist party as a phenomenon and the relationship between election campaigns and the media were discussed significantly more often in the quality papers than in the popular papers. The quality papers also promoted experts and voters more often as their first actors than the popular papers. Thus, the

quality papers can be said to have preferred a slightly more analytical approach to the populist parties than the popular papers.

Discussion and Conclusion

The media attention that was focused on the Nordic populist parties during the first parliamentary elections of the 2010s fits the life cycle model fairly well. PS and SD experienced clear insurgent phases and gained a great deal of media attention. This is especially true of PS who triumphed in "big bang" elections. In contrast, DF can be said to have experienced its established phase in the early 2010s as it gained only modest coverage in the press in the parliamentary elections. NFP can also be said to have undergone its established phase but it also gained significant media attention, especially after being invited to join the government for first time, which resulted a new insurgent phase.

The leaders of the populist parties also received significant media attention, except for those in Denmark. Timo Soini, dominated much of the public debate in Finland, while Siv Jensen and Carl I. Hagen were remarkably popular figures in the Norwegian papers. The leader of SD, Jimmie Åkesson, was ranked fifth in the list of most popular names in election stories, although the leaders of the ruling parties received remarkably more publicity. However, Pia Kjærsgaard and DF took a back seat in Denmark's election coverage. The life cycle model was thus supported by the fact that NFP and DF were not discussed much in the context of populism, indicating that their media attention had been "normalized". However, populism as a phenomenon was debated more in the Finnish and Swedish papers, because PS and SD were experiencing their insurgent phases and enjoyed electoral success.

This study also supports the argument that links tabloid journalism and populist rhetoric to each other, which is a key feature of the life cycle model. Furthermore, even though there were no great differences between the newspaper types in the relative volume of media attention given to the populist movements, the style used for presenting the populist parties, excluding Sweden, differed significantly as the quality papers portrayed the populist parties more negatively, while the popular papers presented them in a more positive light. The quality papers also seemed to be slightly more analytical in their approaches to the populist parties than the popular newspapers.

It is not possible to assess properly the roles that the particular communications strategies of the populist parties played as the content analysis used in this study lacks that ability. However, the amount of media attention the party leaders gained during the campaigns indicates that they succeeded reasonably well in promoting their agendas. The issue of immigration, for example, was debated much more in election articles in which a domestic populist party was also mentioned (cf. Horsti and Nikunen 2012).

However, certain findings also challenge the life cycle model. Although the overall amount of media attention correlates with the success of the populist parties, a comparison of newspaper attention before and after the election does not support the idea of the media playing a major role in the parties' electoral success. In all countries, excluding Denmark, the populist parties were more frequently discussed in newspapers after the elections, leading to the assumption that the written press reflected the election results rather than helped to promote the populist parties before the elections.

In addition, even when giving attention to the rise of PS in Finland, the media followed the election campaigns quite neutrally by referencing opinion polls and commenting on the election results (Borg 2012). In Norway, the newspapers discussed what the NFP would be like as a potential partner in a conservative-led government, and the coverage of that discussion increased after the elections. The opposite occurred in Denmark, where the shift to the left meant that DF lost newspaper attention to the successful left-wing parties.

In contrast to the other countries, Sweden's newspapers continued their previous criticism of SD as being a racist and fascist political movement, despite its growing support (cf.

Rydgren 2005, 117), and this criticism actually increased after the election results were published. Resistance to right-wing populism has dominated discussions about populism in Sweden, explaining the predominantly negative media surrounding SD and its leader in both the quality and popular papers, despite SD experiencing its insurgent phase.

Media attention is also dependent on the status of a particular party. The government-opposition arrangement is one of the main determinants of media attention in multiparty democracies, thus it is plausible that it is an even more important factor outside election campaigns. This is due to the fact that critics of the traditional ruling parties tend to gain more media attention, even if negative, during election campaigns than at other times. Thus, a political party's status within the domestic political arena explains some of the differences in the variations of the media attention given to PS, SD, NFP and DF.

Another factor explaining the study's results are journalistic routines and practices (see Van Dalen 2012). The journalistic criteria of neutrality and objectivity explain the neutral tone and scarcity of positive evaluations in the majority of the news stories. Negativity as a main news criterion (Galtung and Ruge 1965) partly explains the negative evaluations of the populist parties in some news stories that discussed them. However, the negative evaluations mostly appeared in editorials, columns and commentaries, which are the newspaper sections that most typically offer opinions. The Nordic populist parties' criticism of immigration and their anti-elite appeal increased the negative press they received, especially in the editorials and commentaries of the Swedish and Finnish quality papers.

Journalistic practices and routines also make leading politicians, such as party leaders and prime ministers, their main topic and interviewees. However, this does not concern only populist leaders, since contemporary political journalism generally personalizes and focuses almost entirely on political leaders (cf. Corner and Pels 2003; Bos et al. 2011). This is particularly true during parliamentary election campaigns when party leaders act as their party's figurehead. Hence, charismatic leadership and the entertainment value of populism cannot solely explain this study's results regarding the most popular actors found in the press coverage, except perhaps in Timo Soini's case because his popularity surpassed that of the leaders of Finland's established parties.

Populist movements often come and go and thus have a clearer and more rapid life cycle compared to mainstream parties. However, as Mazzoleni (2008, 61-62) noted, some of the neo-populist movements have proved to be surprisingly persistent, for example, those in France, Italy, Austria and the Benelux countries (see also Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b, 10-11). The same appears to be also true in the Nordic countries. This leads to the question: how does the life cycle of populist parties differ from that of other political movements or established parties? Is it possible that the evolution of populist movements indicates a whole new structuring of the political party arena in multiparty democracies?

The analysis of the media coverage of the Nordic populist parties creates some support for the life cycle model. However, further research is needed to indicate the role of variables such as journalistic practices and routines and the country-specific political contexts surrounding the media attention given to populist parties. Comparisons between populist movements and other political parties would also be necessary in order to prove the validity of life cycle model with regard to populist movements.

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Notes

[1] Paula Häkämies coded the Finnish sample, Yvonne Andersson the Swedish sample and Elin Strand Hornnes the Norwegian sample. In Denmark, Lea Hovmand Jørgensen and Signe Sophus Lai did the coding.

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Appendix

Table (Appendix) about here

Table (appendix). Information on the newspaper stories in the sample

Newspaper	Genre of the story			Size of the story			Writer of the story		
	News	Column	Editorial	Small	Medium	Large	Own staff	Freelance or experts	No credit
Helsingin Sanomat	149	62	21	272	41	50	275	9	30
Ilta-Sanomat	122	42	18	199	16	85	248	11	5
Dagens Nyheter	256	91	47	207	116	176	412	33	7
Aftonbladet	214	103	33	84	102	218	371	29	2
Politiken	315	139	20	181	228	185	428	75	49
Ekstra Bladet	235	74	66	226	93	160	268	61	124
Aftenposten	146	66	37	117	166	104	235	65	72
Verdens Gang	76	125	53	117	81	113	159	125	27
Total	1,513	702	295	1,403	843	1,091	2,396	408	316

Table 1. The Nordic populist parties

	Established	**Into parliament (votes % / seats)**	**Leaders**	**Votes % / seats in parliament**	**Government / opposition**
Norwegian Progress Party (NFP)	1973	1973 (5% / 4)	Siv Jensen (2006-) Carl I. Hagen (1978-2006)	16.3% / 29 (2013)	Government (2013-)
Danish People's Party (DF)	1995	1998 (7.4% /13)	Kristian Thulesen Dahl (2012-) Pia Kjærsgaard (1995-2012)	21.1% / 37 (2015)	Assisting government 2001-2011 and 2015-
Finns Party (PS)	1995	1995 (1% / 1)	Timo Soini (1996-)	17.7% / 38 (2015)	Government (2015-)
Sweden Democrats (SD	1988	2010 (5.7% / 20)	Jimmie Åkesson (2005-) Mikael Jansson (1995-2005)	12.9% / 49 (2014)	Opposition, cordon sanitaire

Table 2. The different countries and newspaper types

Newspaper (country)	Type of paper	Election day	Sample period	Number of articles
Helsingin Sanomat (Finland)	quality	17.4.2011	1.4.–30.4.2011	363
Ilta-Sanomat (Finland)	popular	17.4.2011	1.4.–30.4.2011	300
Dagens Nyheter (Sweden)	quality	19.9.2010	3.9.–2.10.2010	499
Aftonbladet (Sweden)	popular	19.9.2010	3.9.–2.10.2010	404
Politiken (Denmark)	quality	15.9.2011	30.8.–28.9.2011	594
Ekstra Bladet (Denmark)	popular	15.9.2011	30.8.–28.9.2011	479
Aftenposten (Norway)	quality	9.9.2013	23.8.–22.9.2013	387
Verdens Gang (Norway)	popular	9.9.2013	23.8.–22.9.2013	311
Total				3,337

Table 3. Share (%) of the different evaluations of the populist parties (n=1,315*)

	Positive	**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Ambivalent**
Finland	6.4	18.4	57.1	17.3
Sweden	0.8	54.2	41.4	4.9
Denmark	10.7	36.4	43.1	12.4
Norway	22.3	34.6	26.9	16.2
Average	9.2	35.9	43.0	12.5

**Pearson χ^2=3299.786; df=15; P<0.001*

Table 4. Share (%) of the different topics in all election articles (n=3,337*)

	Results	**Government**	**Media**	**Campaign**	**Populists**	**Immigration**	**No fixed category**
Finland	19.2	5.3	10.0	3.5	6.4	1.5	19.5
Sweden	14.7	6.1	8.7	8.7	7.1	1.2	29.7
Denmark	9.7	8.9	9.6	8.6	0.5	5.6	26.8
Norway	4.6	14.6	4.6	7.4	3.7	5.3	29.2
Average	11.9	8.7	8.4	7.4	4.1	3.5	26.6

* *Pearson χ^2=773.921; df=78; P<0.001*

Table 5. The five most commonly mentioned names in the different countries' newspapers

	Finland	**Sweden**	**Denmark**	**Norway**
1.	*Timo Soini* **140** (Finns Party)	Fredrik Reinfeldt **96** (Coalition Party)	Helle Thoring-Schmidt **241** (Social Democrats)	Erna Solberg **131** (Conservative Party)
2.	Jyrki Katainen **84** (National Coalition Party)	Mona Sahlin **95** (Social Democrats)	Lars Løkke Rasmussen **172** (Left Party)	Jens Stoltenberg **83** (Social Democrats)
3.	Mari Kiviniemi **57** (Centre Party)	Lars Ohly **41** (Left Party)	Villy Søvndal **88** (Socialist People's Party)	*Siv Jensen* **65** (Progress Party)
4.	Jutta Urpilainen **43** (Social Democrats)	Maria Wetterstrand **27** (Greens)	Margrethe Vestager **78** (Radical Left Party)	Knut Artild Hariede **32** (Christian Democrats)
5.	Paavo Arhinmäki **16** (Left Alliance)	*Jimmie Åkesson* **26** (Sweden Democrats)	Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen **67** (Red-Greens)	*Carl I. Hagen* **21** (Progress Party)

Figure 1. The amount of newspaper stories (%) discussing the populist parties before and after the election date

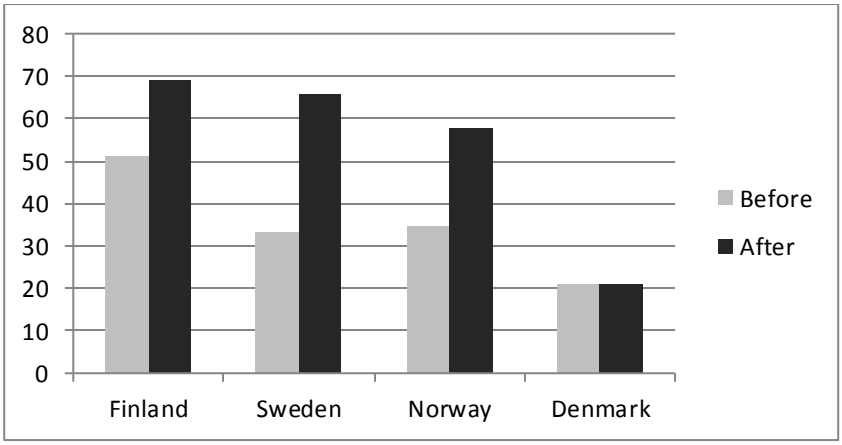


Figure 2. Share of the evaluations (%) of the populist parties in the different newspaper types (n=1,315)

