The Sweden Democrats in Political Space

– Estimating policy positions using election

manifesto content analysis

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ABSTRACT

In the Swedish general elections of 2010, the party *the Sweden Democrats* for the first time entered the parliament. In an election otherwise characterised by competition between two explicit political blocs, the Sweden Democrats profiled itself as a party free from ideological blinders, ready to represent the will of the people. Commonly referred to as a populist party, there is considerable disagreement about where in the Swedish political space the party actually belongs. At the same time, there exist within political science a multitude of methodological approaches aimed at answering such questions. By combining election manifesto content analysis and survey-based approaches, the study of this paper presents cross-validated estimates of where in Swedish political space the Sweden Democrats belong. The study also evaluates strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches to the estimation of policy positions in the specific context of the Sweden Democrats. The party is found to be economically centrist but highly authoritarian, making it an outlier along both a "traditional" and a Swedish left-right continuum. Some methodological difficulties that may be particularly important to consider when analyzing parties such as the Sweden Democrats, e.g. bias, dimensional salience and linguistic volatility, are suggested.

Keywords: **Sweden Democrats; party policy; left-right; content analysis; wordfish**

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Abbreviations

C: The Centre Party [Centerpartiet]

FP: The Liberal People's Party [Folkpartiet]

KD: The Christian Democrats [Kristdemokraterna]

M: The Moderate Party [Moderaterna]

MP: The Green Party [Miljöpartiet]

S: The Social Democrats [Socialdemokraterna]

SD: The Sweden Democrats [Sverigedemokraterna]

V: The Left Party [Vänsterpartiet]

1. Introduction

In the Swedish general elections of 2010, the party *the Sweden Democrats* (Sverigede-mokraterna) for the first time entered the parliament with 5.7 % of the votes. In an election otherwise defined by competition between two explicit political blocs, the Sweden Democrats profiled itself as a party free from elitism and ideological constraints, ready to represent the will of the people. The party explicitly bases its policies on a nationalist principle and embraces both traditionally conservative values and general welfare provisions, with the goal of restricting immigration being its primary raison d'être. With roots in nationalist fringe movements, the party has been fairly unsuccessful in creating an image as a party free from racism and undemocratic tendencies. The nature of the party has led to considerable disagreement and confusion about how it should be defined, labelled and related to other political parties. Swedish politics have traditionally been structured mainly around economic conflict; with a primary focus on issues unrelated to the economy, the Sweden Democrats – despite sometimes being referred to as a party on the "extreme right" – arguably has no clear-cut place within Swedish *left* and *right*. But where, then, does the party belong in relation to other Swedish political parties, and what political cleavages do we need to acknowledge in order to make this distinction?

   Within political science there exist a number of approaches to the estimation of policy positions, tools that can be used to relate parties to each other on empirical grounds. Some approaches differ in what data are used, others in how the same data are processed; in the end most have something valuable to contribute to our understanding of political space and of the parties that inhabit it. But how do these approaches fare when it comes to a party such as the Sweden Democrats, which stands apart from the political mainstream and seemingly challenges the traditional left-right cleavage of Swedish politics? Can the position of such an actor be accurately estimated, or are there methodological difficulties related to the nature of the party?

1.1. Purpose and research question

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it aims to estimate the position of the Sweden Democrats within Swedish political space, which entails relating the Sweden Democrats to other parliamentary political parties along a number of policy dimensions, as well as

evaluating how Swedish political space is appropriately conceptualized. Multiple approaches to the estimation of policy positions are used in order to cross-validate results against each other. This leads to the second purpose of the paper: to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches in the context of a party such as the Sweden Democrats. Three different content analysis approaches are the main focus of the paper: a "classical" content analysis approach, where text units are manually coded according to certain criteria; the Wordfish approach, which uses a statistical algorithm to estimate party positions along policy dimensions; and a dictionary approach, where specific words are defined a priori as being indicative of parties' relative positions along a given political dimension. Election manifestos, being considered the most authoritative statements of official party policy, are used as the empirical basis of the content analyses. In addition to content analysis, estimates from survey-based approaches are included for the purpose of cross-validation and methodological evaluation.

This premise, then, provides two specific research questions. First, *where within Swedish political space do the Sweden Democrats belong?* And second, *what are the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to estimating the policy position of the Sweden Democrats, and how do these affect the estimated results?*

1.2. Outline of the paper

The following chapter addresses the theoretical foundations of the paper. A theoretical conceptualization of political space is presented, and ideological cleavages – such as the pervasive *left-right* dimension, along with its weaknesses and remedies – are discussed. A two-dimensional political space is presented as the framework for the study. The party family commonly referred to as the "populist radical right", in which the Sweden Democrats are often placed, is described.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology of the study. Case selection and empirical data are discussed, and several different approaches to the estimation of policy positions are presented. Survey-based and document-based approaches are contrasted, as are the approaches' varying emphasis on qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the analyses, where the content analysis approaches described in the previous chapter are applied to the empirical data of election manifestos. Estimates of the Sweden Democrats' position within political space are analysed in terms of a few

main policy dimensions, and different approaches are contrasted and compared. The nature of Swedish political space and the dimensions needed to accurately distinguish the Sweden Democrats from other parties are discussed. The different approaches to policy estimation are evaluated.

   In the final chapter, the findings of the analyses are summarized and suggestions for further research are made.

2. Theory

In this chapter, the theoretical foundation of the study is presented. A common conceptualization of political space is described, as are the main political cleavages or dimensions that define such a space. The chapter concludes by briefly presenting the party family commonly referred to as the "populist radical right".

2.1. Political space and ideology

2.1.1. The nature of political space

Political science – as well as political life in general – requires ways of differentiating between political actors, most notably political parties. In the field of political science, estimation of the policy positions of parties has been used, among other things, in the study of political representation, coalition formation and party competition (Huber and Inglehart 1995: 74). For the parties themselves, political differentiation is a way of communicating policy packages to voters, and the individual, finally, needs a simple and straightforward way of determining what party or politician to vote for (Downs 1957: 141-2). The most well known example of political differentiation is with little doubt the *left-right* divide that has been ubiquitous to political life since the time of the French Revolution. The distinction between left and right thus represents a single cleavage within political space. While the content of "left" and "right" varies over time and across borders, a distinction of this kind is arguably still relevant (Bobbio 1996: ch. 1). Indeed, one of the most basic and common ways of distinguishing between two parties is to ask whether one of them is positioned to the left or the right of the other, intuitively estimating how they relate to each other along a single dimension of political competition.

 A distinction needs to be made between the salience of political issues and a party's position on any given issue. That an issue is salient means that it has great importance for the party, such as worker's rights for Marxist parties, the environment for green parties, and economic issues such as taxes and spending for almost all parties. A party's position on an issue, however, indicates a specific stance; for example, all parties are concerned with the economy, but Marxist and liberal parties hold distinctly opposing views. Consequently, a political party's stance on any given issue can be described both in terms of issue salience and issue position. Most research in political science adheres

to a spatial model of politics pioneered by Anthony Downs (1957).[1] This political space is modelled as an *n*-dimensional Euclidian space, where parties can occupy any position along a dimension and the relative distances between positions may be mathematically measured in terms of interval metrics.[2] The study in this paper adopts an epistemological view that is advocated, among others, by Benoit and Laver (2006: 57), arguing that political positions are abstract concepts that cannot be directly observed. In this view, it is nonsensical to speak of any "true" policy positions or political spaces for the researcher to uncover. However, manifestations of these unobservable positions can be observed – for example through behavioural or textual data – ideally to the point that the position of any given party can be more or less agreed upon. Estimating the position of a party on a single ideal point in a political space is, of course, a theoretical simplification, as parties can be internally divided on many issues and contain various factions struggling for influence.

While there in this view exists no one "true" political space, it can be theoretically conceptualized as consisting of as many different dimensions (*n*) as there are possible policy issues.[3] This high-dimensional space implies that the voter, in order to make sense of the political landscape and decide what party best serves her interests, faces an extremely difficult task. How could the average citizen possibly be informed on where each party stand on each possible political issue? Downs argues that *ideology* serves as a cognitive tool to help voters differentiate between political parties, and that parties, in turn, thus have an incentive to formulate a coherent (and fairly stable) ideology attached to the party (Downs 1957: 141-2). In this way, the voter may choose between parties on the basis of considerably less criteria, ideally one: the relative position of a party on a single ideological (such as left-right) scale. Theoretical *n*-dimensionality aside, in practice many of all political issues are highly correlated. This effectively means that knowledge of the position of an individual on one specific policy issue allows for fairly accurate prediction of her position on any other issue (Hinich and Munger 1996: 127). If we know, for example, that a party is strongly opposed to abortion, we can assume that

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[1] Ray (2007: 13); Downs, in turn, builds heavily on Hotelling (1929).

[2] An *n*-dimensional Euclidan space is a linear space where *n* denotes any possible number of dimensions. Euclidan space and interval metrics are practical theoretical abstractions as they enable the use of various common statistical methods, such as regression analysis.

[3] See e.g. Benoit and Laver (2006: ch. 1-2) for a thorough discussion on the complexities of modelling political space.

it also opposes same-sex marriage. Similarly, if we know that a party is in favour of strong trade unions, we may assume that it is also opposed to tax cuts for the wealthy.[4] Such correlated policy issues can be analysed in terms of "latent" or underlying dimensions of political conflict with varying salience (Benoit and Laver 2006: 50). Due to this *ideological coherency*, the complex political space can often be parsed into a one or two-dimensional one, allowing for an intellectually and analytically tractable conceptualization.[5]

2.1.2. Left-right and other political dimensions

As we have seen, political space can often be fairly accurately described using only a few dimensions. But what, then, do these dimensions contain? Lipset and Rokkan (1967), in their pioneering work *Party Systems and Voter Alignment*, identified four main cleavages within Western politics: *centre-periphery*, *church-state*, *land-industry* and, finally, *owner-worker*, the classical Marxist division between capital and labour, often referred to as "class struggle". Party systems were taken to be structured along these cleavages, and class struggle was identified as the most salient source of political conflict following the introduction of universal male suffrage (Lipset 2000: 6). Traditionally, this polarization has been seen as the basis for the left-right distinction, where "*Left* means support for social programs, working-class interests and the influence of labour unions [and] *Right* is identified with limited government, middle-class interests, and the influence of the business sector" (Dalton 2006: 5; emphasis in original).

However, it has been argued that the economic development of the last decades has resulted in a decline in class-based voting (Inglehart 1990), and that more value oriented issues have been gaining salience (Green-Pedersen 2007: 612; Hellwig 2008: 690). Considering this, a simple left-right dimension may fail to account for some potential differences among right-wing parties: it is possible, for example, for a party to hold liberal views on economic issues, opposing state interference in the market, while at the same time opposing conservative values such as traditional morality. Put simply, the

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[4] See also Zaller (1992: 26): "There is [...] a tendency for people to be fairly consistent 'left' or 'right' or 'centrist' on such disparate value dimensions as economic individualism, [...] racial issues, sexual freedom, and religious authority."

[5] This has been done using factor analysis applied to expert survey data (Laver and Hunt 1992; Benoit and Laver 2006; McElroy and Benoit 2010) as well as data from manually coded manifestos (Gabel and Huber 2000; Bakker et al 2010), though the latter approach is questioned by Jahn (2010) on the grounds that factor analysis in not well suited for count variables.

left-right distinction fails to distinguish properly between conservative and liberal parties (Benoit and Laver 2006: 13), and it is thus possible that "the very concept of Left and Right is not one-dimensional but refers to at least two dimensions made up of the three ideologies [socialism, liberalism and conservatism]" (Jahn (2010: 9).[6] In order to capture such a distinction, it is common within political science to separate the general left-right dimension along two independent axes: one regarding economic issues – such as taxes, public spending, regulation and government intervention – and one regarding socio-cultural issues – such as homosexuality, abortion, gender equality, multicultural-ism and authority (e.g. Inglehart 1990; Kitschelt 1994; Benoit and Laver 2006; Hooghe et al 2010). For the purpose of parsimony, these dimensions are usually assumed to be completely independent of each other, and the corresponding political space can thus be conceptualized within two orthogonal axes. A two-dimensional political space of this kind, with a horizontal economic axis ranging from left to right, and a vertical socio-cultural axis ranging from libertarian to authoritarian, is illustrated in figure 2.1.[7]

A graphical representation of this kind always requires considerable simplifications concerning categories and placements. Most importantly, the four quadrants should be viewed as analytical abstractions and not ontological categories. That being said, party types can be plausibly placed within this political space: socialists and social democrats can be expected to be economically to the left of conservatives and liberals, while social liberals can be expected to be more libertarian than social democrats and conservatives while somewhat economically centrist. A category relevant in the Swedish context is one that could be labelled "liberal conservatism", which combines liberal economic views with some conservative values. This can be contrasted with Christian Democratic par-

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[6] The terms "liberal" and "conservative" have differing meaning in the European and American context, which should not be confused. This paper consistently refers to liberalism and conservatism in the "classical" European sense, where the former, commonly associated with writers such as John Locke and Adam Smith, is an ideology promoting individual liberty and freedom from coercion; and where conserva-tism, commonly associated with Edmund Burke, is an ideology that builds on hierarchy and authority, promoting family and community rather than the individual and favouring traditional values and institu-tions (Ball and Dagger 2009: ch. 3-4). Conservatism as a political ideology should also not be confused with the relative use of the term, meaning simply to conserve something (i.e. protect status quo).

[7] Jost et al (2009), writing from a psychological perspective, define these dimensions as "rejecting versus accepting inequality" and "advocating versus resisting social change", cleavages that can be seen as more or less synonymous with those presented here.

ties, which are likely to hold more socially conservative values but also be slightly sceptical of unfettered capitalism.[8]
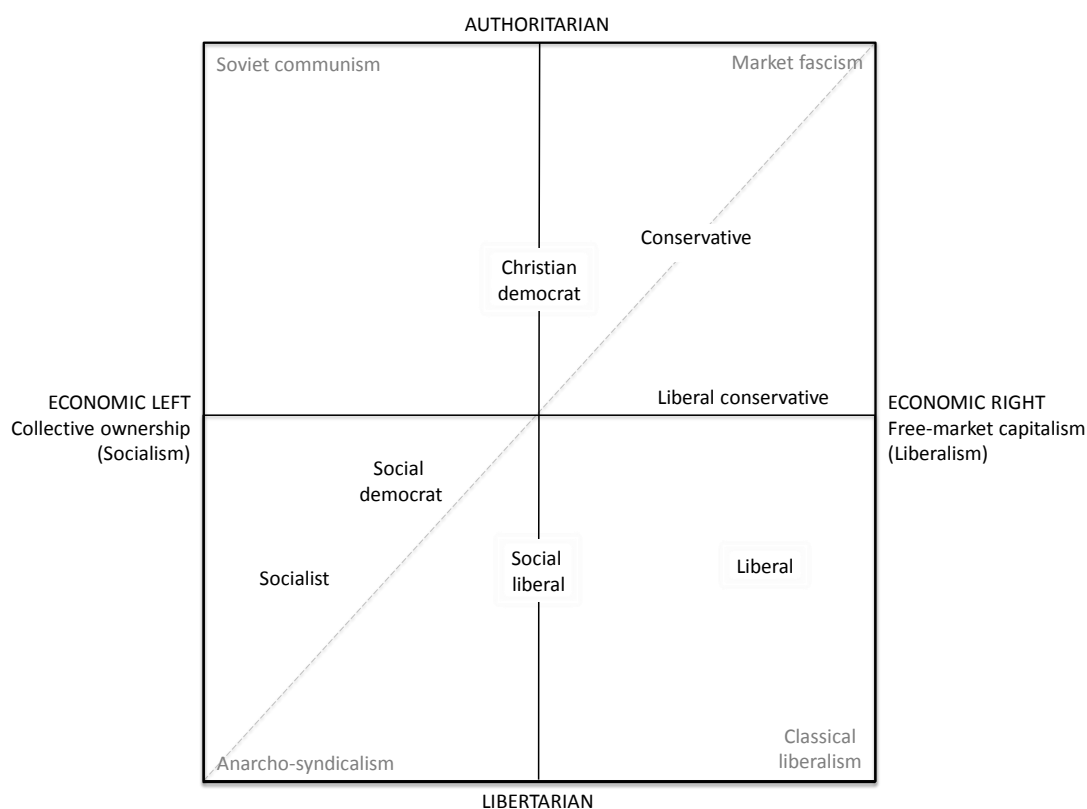
Figure 2.1. Theoretical conceptualization of a two-dimensional political space.[9]

In theory, a political party could occupy any position within this two-dimensional space, from far-left libertarian or authoritarian, to its far-right counterparts. However, Kitschelt (1994: 23-7) argues that intellectual coherence and material self-interest constrains the possible variations of voters' preferences, resulting in a political space where political struggle takes place mainly along a left-libertarian – right-authoritarian divide (illustrated by the diagonal dashed line in figure 2.1). According to this argument, constituencies that would serve as bases for authoritarian socialist parties or libertarian capitalist parties are simply either too small or do not exist. Empirically, it has been

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[8] Classical conservatism commonly promotes market economy to the extent that it supports property rights, but is assumed to be sceptical towards unfettered capitalism, and in particular materialism and consumerism, which are viewed as deteriorative to the sense of community (Kymlicka 2001: 271-2).

[9] The figure also shows four ideal type ideologies at the opposite extremes for illustrative purposes: anarcho-syndicalism, promoting stateless voluntary collectivism; classical liberalism, promoting full individual liberty; Soviet communism, using totalitarian means in the name of equality; and "market fascism" (as sometimes associated, for example, with Pinochet's Chile), equally authoritarian but fiercely anti-socialist and market oriented.

shown that in contemporary Western Europe this hypothesis mainly holds true; political competition seems to predominantly take place along a unidimensional, "traditional" left-right divide ranging from libertarian left to authoritarian right (Bakker et al 2010: 5-6). Notably, most parties claiming to be "liberal" are either social liberals or liberal conservatives, while few approach the more distinctly liberal position as plotted in figure 2.1.

This, however, does not necessarily mean that we should abandon the multidimensional political space. After all, as emphasized by Benoit and Laver (2006: 51), "parties remain free to compete by changing their positions in this two-dimensional space, while new parties may enter the fray and articulate a position anywhere in the space". When a new issue enters the political arena, it may align along established dimensions (such as left-right) or it may come to constitute an entirely independent one. One example of the former, noted by Bobbio (1996: 10), is that while environmental considerations has entered political discourse across the board, most parties have implemented them without making any radical changes to their original policy positions. In the case of Sweden, for example, Benoit and Laver (2006: 136-7) have shown that while environmental issues are present in political discourse, they contribute little to a model of the Swedish political space. In fact, the Swedish political space appears to be fairly unidimensional, in the sense that the primary dimension of political conflict is determined largely by economic concerns (Ibid., p. 134). Likewise, Bakker et al (2010: appendices A and B) show high correlation between Swedish economic and socio-cultural dimensions, to the extent political space may – with fairly little loss of explanatory power – be reduced to a single latent dimension. Oscarsson (1998) finally, has shown that socio-cultural matters have a fairly low salience for Swedish voters. Overall, then, political competition in Sweden seems to be structured primarily along an economic continuum. The question, however, is if the socio-cultural dimension is necessary in order to relate the Sweden Democrats to other parties in the Swedish political space.

While research indicates that economic and socio-cultural dimensions are conceptually distinct as ideological features (Jost et al 2009: 313), there is scholarly disagreement on how to operationalize the second dimension. Symptomatic of this are the many different labels used for such a dimension: *libertarian-authoritarian*, *progressive-conservative*, *materialist-postmaterialist*, *traditional-postmodern*, *degree of social liberalism* etc. Some operationalizations, for example, include the environment (Slapin and Proksch 2008),

others exclude law and order (Laver and Garry 2000), while still others focus primarily on sexual and moral issues (Hooghe et al 2010). However, the fact that political conflict has been shown to be empirically reducible to a few latent dimensions would have us believe positions along these continua to be highly correlated. While "authoritarian" and "libertarian" may not be ideal conceptual labels (and conceptual stretching should generally be avoided) they are nevertheless used throughout this study to denote the respective ends of the socio-cultural scale, due to convention and for lack of optimal alternatives. A distinction should be made, however, between *political* authoritarianism, which implies anti-democratic features, and *socio-cultural* authoritarianism, defined as a set of certain values or policy positions. The substantial content of the socio-cultural dimension will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.2. The populist radical right

The Sweden Democrats, the main party of interest in this paper, is often referred to as belonging to the "populist radical right" (Mudde 2007) or similar labels.[10] What, then, does such a label imply? Populism, as an analytical concept within political science, has proven notoriously difficult to pin down; it has been described as an ideology, a syndrome, a political movement and a political style (Mudde 2004: 543). The concept of populism as a "thin" ideology (Ibid; Canovan 2002; Stanley 2008) is increasingly salient within political science (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2010: 4). In this view, the thin ideology of populism can be attached to "thicker" and more comprehensive ideologies such as socialism or liberalism in order to attract voters, but the fact that a party is populist does not necessarily tell us anything about the kinds of policies it supports.[11] It does imply, however, an antagonistic relationship between people and elite, where popular sovereignty is contrasted with a corrupt establishment (Mudde 2004: 543). Populism, defined as such, is not the main focal point of this paper as it relates only indirectly to substantial policy issues.

   Mudde (2007: 25) uses the label "radical" rather than "extreme" for the explicit reason that while parties of this family typically oppose some features of liberal democracy,

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[10] E.g. "populist right" (Widfeldt 2008); "radical populist right" (Betz & Johnsson 2004); "radical right-wing populist" (Betz 2005).

[11] However, there have been attempts to distinguish between different types of populism as ideology, such as agrarian, neo-liberal, socialist, etc. See e.g. Canovan (1981), Mudde (2007) and Zaslove (2008).

such as political pluralism and the constitutional protection of minorities, they are not anti-democratic per se. The label "right", finally, may – as we have seen above – imply both liberal economic policies and/or authoritarian social views. However, it has been argued that "[t]he new radical right is right-wing primarily in the socio-cultural sense of the term" (Rydgren 2007: 243). Furthermore, Kitschelt's (1994) claim that conservative policy must be accompanied by liberal economic policy has been challenged on the grounds that economic policy is often a secondary concern for parties of the populist radical right (Mudde 2007: 133); a party's stance on the economy may therefore be a strategic and instrumental decision, concerning a means to achieve influence rather than an end in itself. Indeed, many parties on the populist radical right are *welfare chauvinist*, in that they support welfare state provisions but wish to exclude immigrants from them (Ibid.)

2.3. Theoretical summary

Traditionally, the left-right divide has been considered the main cleavage of political competition, but the parsimony of such a model is marred by its inability to distinguish properly between certain types of parties – most notably conservative and liberal ones. This study, following most research within the field, adopts a spatial multi-dimensional conceptualization of political space where the two parameters of interest are a party's position along a political dimension, as well as the salience of that dimension. While the economy has been shown to be by far the most salient dimension in Swedish politics, both economic and socio-cultural dimensions are considered intuitively and theoretically appropriate in distinguishing between political parties, and they are thus the main focus of the paper. We will now turn to the methodological approaches by which the position of the Sweden Democrats within this political space can be estimated.

3. Methodology

This chapter begins by presenting the main party under investigation – the Sweden Democrats – as well as the main source of empirical data: election manifestos. Following this, several approaches to the estimation of policy positions are introduced and contrasted, primarily in terms of validity and reliability.

3.1. Selection and material

3.1.1. The Sweden Democrats

In its most recent election manifesto, the Sweden Democrats describes itself as a party free from ideological constraints and independent of the two established political blocs (Sverigedemokraterna 2010: 3). Indeed, in a political space primarily structured by economic conflict, many of the Sweden Democrats' most salient issues, such as immigration and cultural conservatism, are unrelated to the economy. With roots in nationalist fringe movements, however, the party has been fairly unsuccessful in creating an image as a party free from racism and undemocratic tendencies (Rydgren 2002: 34), and it has only recently gained parliamentary representation (5.7 % in the 2010 elections). Despite sometimes being referred to as a party on the "extreme right", the Sweden Democrats arguably has no clear-cut place along a Swedish political continuum. As we saw in the previous chapter, there is a general disagreement about how parties of this kind should be defined, as well as about where in political space they belong. Qualitative assessments by experts, for example, sometimes estimate radical parties as being more extreme (i.e. far-left or far-right) than their actual policies would suggest (Klingemann et al 2006: 80; Benoit and Laver 2006: 90-2; Volkens 2007: 109), while supporters of radical parties on both the left and right tend to be less moderate than the parties themselves (Klingemann et al 2006: 56-7). The Sweden Democrats thus constitute an interesting case in that it represents a challenge both to the left-right cleavage of Swedish politics and to the estimation of policy positions.

Limiting the paper to one country alleviates a number of potential problems, most notably that of cross-nationally differing meanings of the concepts of left and right.[12] Furthermore, focusing on only one party enables a more in-depth analysis of the linguis-

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[12] On this issue, see e.g. Benoit and Laver (2006: ch. 6) or Gschwend et al (2010).

tic properties of election manifestos as a basis for policy position estimation. Nevertheless, some conclusions may potentially be generalized to other parties with similar characteristics. While the Sweden Democrats is the main party under investigation, the positions of other parties will be discussed to the extent that they help assess the general validity of estimated results, or provide insights into how these parties relate to the Sweden Democrats. The time period selected spans the three latest Swedish general elections: 2002, 2006 and 2010. The Sweden Democrats only entered the parliament in 2010, but had parliamentary ambitions in the preceding elections and as such formulated election manifestos that can be used in the analyses of this paper. One reason for choosing a three-election period, as we shall see below, is that content analysis in some circumstances can benefit from smoothing or averaging results over time, in order to improve comparability with other measurement techniques; another reason is that changes in positioning and issue saliency over time may be analysed.

3.1.2. Election manifestos

As we saw in the previous chapter, this study follows the premise that there is no one "true" policy position a political party can hold on any fundamentally "true" political dimension; these are analytical constructs that cannot be directly observed. However, there are observable manifestations of political behaviour that may tell us something substantial about a party. Examples of such manifestations are political speeches, parliamentary voting and election manifestos.[13] Election manifestos, the empirical source that is relied upon in this paper, are used because they are "authoritative party policy statement[s] approved by an official convention or congress" (Budge et al 2001: xvi). As such, these manifestos can be assumed to contain the issues on which the party engages in political conflict, and while the unitary actor assumption mentioned earlier is a theoretical simplification, election manifestos can at the least be expected to represent a dominant party line. As compared to other party documents, such as newsletters and programs of action or principle, election manifestos are more easily compared and most clearly present the political ideas of each party (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2010: 8). While issues that are not contested within the political space (such as abortion in Sweden) are usually absent from election manifestos (Volkens 2007: 111), we can expect parties to

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[13] For an overview of approaches to the estimation of policy positions, see Laver (2001).

present their stance on all more or less salient issues. Election manifestos, then, seem to be as close as we can get to the analytical ideal that Slapin and Proksch (2009: 11) refer to as "encyclopaedic written statement[s] of party positions". Depending on which country is being analysed, election manifestos may have differing functions and appearances; cross-national analysis can therefore be problematic, while comparative analysis between parties within a single political space is be less so.

3.2. Validity and reliability

Broadly speaking, estimation of policy positions can be approached using either survey data or document-driven data (Keman 2007: 77). Where the former builds on either voter, elite or expert perceptions of party positions, the latter uses some kind of content analysis to infer party positions from political texts. Much of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to the estimation of policy positions can be summed up in terms of validity and reliability. Ideally, scientific results are both perfectly reliable and perfectly valid, but in practice there may be a trade-off between these two values. Within the field of policy estimation, and particularly within content analysis approaches, this is very much the case. Given that election manifestos are the basis of content analysis, there are still various ways in which this textual information can be translated into a substantially meaningful estimate of the party's position within some political dimension. Again, broadly speaking, this can be done in two ways: through qualitative interpretation of the text's meaning, or through quantitative analysis of word frequencies.

Using the former approach, the researcher manually reads a document and judges its position according to some systematically derived criteria. This can be done on various levels of refinement, such as the individual sentence, the paragraph or the document as a whole. One advantage of an approach of this kind is that a trained human coder easily can identify the context in which a statement is written and make an informed judgment about its meaning. On the downside, however, are issues of cognitive bias and reliability: each coder holds different preconceptions and makes different judgments, and this may translate into unreliable results. Quantitative approaches, on the other hand, disregard meaning and context, which means that the number of times a given word is found in the text is important, whereas its placement within the text is not. Quantitative content analysis is perfectly reliable, in the sense that a re-analysis using the same data will yield

exactly the same results. However, such approaches are often questioned in terms of validity: given the absence of context, how do we know what we are actually measuring?

It is important to note that while approaches presented in this paper are referred to as predominantly qualitative or quantitative, they each contain elements of both. Qualitative interpretations or estimates are often presented using frequencies or quasi-interval scales, and quantitative scholars treating texts as numerical data must nevertheless define concepts and interpret results. Consequently, as argued by Krippendorf (2004: 87), the differences between the two should not be overstated:

> Although qualitative researchers compellingly argue that each body of text is unique, affords multiple interpretations, and needs to be treated accordingly, there is no doubt that both approaches sample text, in the sense of selecting what is relevant; unitize text, in the sense of distinguishing words or propositions and using quotes or examples; contextualize what they are reading in light of what they know about the circumstances surrounding the texts; and have specific research questions in mind.

The critique that the numerical treatment of words disregards the importance of context is one that deserves special consideration. Isolated words, the argument goes, are not sufficient to make inference about policy positions. For example, the word *taxes* may be used negatively, as in "high income taxes are suppressing growth in our country", or positively, as in "we need higher taxes in order to assure social equality". In this case, the word *taxes* clearly is context-dependent: in isolation it cannot be used to judge, for example, whether or not the party is in favour of raising or lowering taxes. There are, however, two ways that quantitative approaches deal with this dilemma. First, it has been shown that political rhetoric often is framed in positives, so that parties on opposite sides of an issue do not use the same rhetoric (Laver et al 2003: 329-30). *Trade unions*, for example, are most likely mentioned by parties in favour of them, such as Social Democrats, while parties opposing trade unions may – rather than stating outright that they are anti-worker – instead speak of *flexibility in the labour market* or the need for an *individualist perspective of labour*.

Second, some words are used much more frequently by certain parties than by others. Conservative parties, for example, tend to refer to *family* and *tradition*, while liberal parties often mention *freedom* and *gender equality*. If this is the case, words that are used frequently by some parties and seldom by others may effectively distinguish

between the two (Laver and Garry 2000: 626; Proksch and Slapin 2009: 3). Concerning the word *taxes* above, it may be the case that it is used very frequently by parties on the economic right, while only once or twice by parties on the economic left. In this case, the word may be considered an *economic right* word, as the probability of its occurrence in a manifesto belonging to such a party is very high; most of the time the quantitative analysis will get it right. This relative distribution of words in central to the quantitative content analysis techniques discussed below.

3.3. Approaches to policy estimation

As there exist a number of different ways of estimating policy positions, several scholars have emphasized the benefits of multi-methodological approaches, where results are cross-validated against each other in order to "triangulate" estimated positions (e.g. Volkens 2007; Ray 2007). While estimates from different approaches need not overlap perfectly, general agreement among estimates derived in methodologically varied ways may strengthen our belief that they are in fact valid and meaningful. Before turning to the content analysis approaches that are the main focus of this paper, two common survey-based methods of policy estimation will be outlined.

3.3.1. Expert surveys

The use of expert surveys to measure political positioning was pioneered by Castles and Mair (1984), has been replicated and refined numerous times (e.g. Laver and Hunt 1992; Huber and Inglehart 1995; Benoit and Laver 2006; Steenbergen and Marks 2007), and is sometimes regarded as measuring the "true" positions of political parties (Volkens 2010: 109). The usual approach entails having a number of experts within each country estimate the positions of political parties along any number of ten or twenty point pre-defined dimensions and then average the estimates (Ray 2007: 14). Phrased otherwise, the technique serves to "summarize [experts'] accumulated wisdom in a systematic way, seeking an unbiased estimate of their judgments on particular matters that are defined *a priori*" (Benoit and Laver 2006: 77). As the approach is cost-efficient and produces quantified and easily interpreted results, expert surveys have become a popular tool of deriving policy positions on a great number of issues, some of which may not be available in the form of empirical data (Laver and Hunt 1992: 34). Nevertheless, potential weaknesses of the expert survey approach can be identified, for example, in terms of

selection bias (Keman 2007: 77), cognitive bias (Benoit and Laver 2006: 90-2), lack of conceptual clarity and ambiguity about the criteria by which estimates are derived (Budge 2000). Another significant disadvantage of surveys is that they are irregularly conducted and that they may in retrospect lack certain issues or parties of interest. Many expert surveys use the criteria of parliamentary representation when deciding what parties have relevance to the political system; clearly this is a problem regarding the Sweden Democrats, which only entered the parliament in 2010. As such, one of the few expert surveys where the SD is present is the *Nordic Populism Expert Survey*, under-taken in 2011 by Ann-Cathrine Jungar and Anders Ravik Jupskås within the project *New Voices, Old Roots – Dilemmas of Populism in Enlarged Europe* at Södertörn University. This recent expert survey is the source of the data used in the analyses of this study. For a detailed evaluation of the expert survey technique, see Budge (2000) or Steenbergen and Marks (2007).

3.3.2. Voter perceptions

The use of voter perceptions to estimate policy positions is similar to the approach above; the difference is simply that voters, rather than experts, are the respondents of survey questions. Voter and party ideology have been shown to correlate highly (Kim and Fording 1998), indicating that voter perceptions can be useful in estimating where parties belong in the political space. Such surveys, however, have their own share of potential difficulties, for example the fact that voters may project their own political position onto their favourite party[14] and that voters cannot be expected to be informed about party positions along several dimensions, limiting estimation to a single left-right dimension. The latter is also the case regarding the voter perceptions collected in a joint effort by the University of Gothenburg and Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB) in connection with Swedish general elections. In this study, the latest data that has been released, collected in 2006, is used.

3.3.3. Classical content analysis

In contrast with expert surveys, classical content analysis is an approach that is more explicit about the empirical basis for inferring policy positions. Texts are static and can

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[14] In the aggregate, however, such effects are expected to cancel each other out (Steenbergen and Marks 2007: 353).

be analysed and re-analysed, while older texts provide unaltered information about past positions. Classical content analysis is a predominantly qualitative approach, where units are manually assigned to categories by a trained coder. The leading effort to manually code election manifestos is the one undertaken by the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Budge et al 2001; Klingemann et al 2006). The coding unit of the CMP approach is the *quasi-sentence*, which is the smallest unit that contains an independent message. Sometimes this is a sentence and sometimes a sentence contains more than one message, such as "we want to invest in healthcare *and* education". Using the CMP coding scheme, each quasi-sentence is assigned to one of 56 categories, dealing with issues such as economy, welfare and international relations. Twelve of these categories as designated as being *left-wing* and twelve of them as being *right-wing*, and the CMP left-right score – known as the RILE score – equals the percentage of quasi-sentences to the left subtracted from the percentage of sentences to the right.

Kim and Fording (1998) have suggested an alternative ratio based left-right score, which is calculated as *left* sentences subtracted from *right* sentences as a proportion of all *left-right* sentences. The argument is that while the RILE score may be appropriate in measuring issue *salience*, it is less useful in estimating *positions,* for the reason that each additional unrelated quasi-sentence in an election manifesto shifts the RILE score to a more centrist position (Laver and Garry 2000: 627-8; McDonald and Mendes 2001: 97; Lowe et al 2010). A ratio score, on the other hand, remains unchanged for each dimension regardless of the prevalence of other issues in the manifesto. Following this argument, policy positions in this paper are estimated using the ratio approach.[15]

Due to the interpretive nature of the coding process and the fact that documents are usually only coded once, the CMP has been widely criticized for lack of reliability (e.g. Pelizzo 2003; Benoit and Laver 2007; Mikhaylov et al 2008; Benoit et al 2009; Lowe et al 2010; Dinas and Gemenis 2010).[16] Other critiques, summed up by Benoit and Laver (2006: 64-8), include the argument that the CMP categories, originally designed in the early 1980s, are outdated and incomplete; that the methodology for deriving categories

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[15] Also see section 3.3.5 for a more detailed description of the ratio approach. Lowe et al (2010) have recently suggested a logarithmic scaling approach.

[16] A related critique is that the CMP approach does not produce any estimates of measurement error. One solution to this problem is suggested by Benoit et al (2009), who use bootstrapping to simulate the original texts from their number of coded quasi-sentences in order to produce confidence intervals for the estimates.

included in the RILE measurement is flawed; and that the theoretical framework of the CMP approach is firmly grounded neither in spatial nor directional political theory. Another critique, though not applicable to this study, is that cross-national comparison can be difficult, as the contents of dimensions may be country-specific. Nevertheless, the CMP data sets are widely used, partly because they currently represent the only source of time-series estimates for party policy positions.

For the case of Sweden, the Comparative Manifesto Project has made coded results available up until the 2002 election,[17] though no codings exist for the Sweden Democrats. The author has coded all parties for the 2010 election, and additionally, 2002-2010 codings for the Sweden Democrats from Jungar and Jupskås (2010) are used.[18] The categories and dimensions used in analyses are shown in table 3.1. The *left-right* dimension corresponds to the RILE scale as designed by the CMP. The other two are theoretically derived, in the sense that the selected categories are taken to be relevant indicators of parties' positions on the corresponding dimension;[19] most economic categories can be related to the socialism-capitalism cleavage, while the socio-cultural dimension contains most non-economic categories of the general left-right as well as some related categories, such as support for minority groups and opposition to multiculturalism. Contrary to some other operationalizations of a libertarian (or post-material) position, *environmental protection* is not included as a category. This is because all Swedish parties give considerable space in their manifestos to environmental issues, and as the category lacks a natural opposite, salience but not position can be calculated.[20] For more detailed information on the CMP coding scheme, see Klingemann et al (2006).

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[17] For the Swedish 2006 and 2010 elections, "preliminary" results with questionable face validity are available; these are not used in the analyses of this paper.

[18] For the Sweden Democrats 2010, an average of the author's own coding and that of Jungar and Jupskås (2010) is used, though the two correlate highly ($r = .95$).

[19] This can be contrasted with an inductive approach, such as factor analysis, where dimensions are constructed based on the empirical material. Numerous operationalizations of economic and socio-cultural dimensions from CMP data exist, e.g. Budge et al (2001); Benoit and Laver (2007); Keman (2007); Lowe et al (2010). The categories presented in table 3.2 have much in common with other such suggested dimensions, but have been adjusted to promote conceptual compatibility with the other methods used in the analyses of this paper.

[20] Some scholars argue that *productivity positive* constitutes the natural opposite of *environmental protection*, and while this seems reasonable, the former is not phrased explicitly as being antithetical to environmental concerns; furthermore, in Swedish manifestos references to the environment are salient for all parties and vastly outnumber references to increased productivity, to the extent that an inclusion of the former only serves to shift all parties towards a more libertarian position.

Table 3.1. Categories and dimensions from CMP data

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

3.3.4. Wordfish

Given the high costs and reliability problems of manual coding, automated approaches to the estimation of policy positions are undoubtedly appealing. Common to automated approaches is that they depend on word frequencies, treating words as data independent of meaning or context.[21] Typically, relative word distributions are used to estimate the positions of party documents along unobservable "latent" dimensions, such as *left-right* (Lowe and Benoit 2011: 2). One recent implementation is the Wordfish approach (Slapin and Proksch 2008; Proksch and Slapin 2009b), which provides point estimates of document positions along a primary dimension.[22] Documents from all parties and elections in which the researcher is interested are analysed at the same time, and if the contents of entire manifestos are used, the resulting dimension will be one that takes into account all words within the political space. While Slapin and Proksch (2008: 709) argue that this could be seen as a *left-right* dimension, it is perhaps more appropriately labelled "superdimension", as the nature of such an extracted dimension is dependent

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[21] See Monroe et al (2008) for an overview.

[22] An earlier draft of this paper included analyses using the Wordscores approach (Laver et al 2003); these were excluded from the final paper because they produced results similar to those of Wordfish. The latter was prioritized over the former because of its inductive approach and the fact that it does not rely on exogenous reference values. Lowe and Benoit (2011) have recently suggested correspondence analysis as a computationally efficient alternative to the Wordscores and Wordfish approaches.

on whether or not all manifesto content is relevant to the concepts of left and right (however defined).[23] This would be a considerable weakness of the Wordfish approach, if it were not for the output of word weights, which provides some insight into how the dimension is constructed. What words are estimated at the extremes of the dimension, and are they politically meaningful?[24]

The Wordfish model contains four parameters: document positions (i.e. the party policy position corresponding to each document) and word weights (described above), as well as word fixed effects and document fixed effects that are included to account for the fact that some words are used much more frequently than others (usually those without political meaning) and that documents may vary significantly in length. Using the data of a word frequency matrix, Wordfish employs an iterative technique known as Expectation-Maximation to calculate values for all four parameters. For a more detailed description of the approach, see appendix A.

One disadvantage of Wordfish is that a multidimensional analysis is dependent on the researcher's ability to identify sections relevant to the given dimension (Proksch and Slapin 2009:a 13). Consequently, to extract positions along *economic* and *socio-cultural* dimensions, for example, documents must be fairly accurately separated into sections that deal with such issues. This process, however explicit, not only introduces reliability issues but may also – depending on the structure of the document at hand – be very difficult. In selecting document sections for the Wordfish analyses in this paper, the criteria shown in table 3.2 were used. Education, for example, is normally considered a public spending issue and as such assigned to the economic dimension. When sections on education clearly deal with issues such as order and discipline, however, they are instead assigned to the socio-cultural dimension. Likewise, family issues regarding, for example, parental leave regulations are considered an economic issue, while segments referring to the family as the foundation of society are considered socio-cultural in nature.[25]

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[23] Jahn (2010) uses the term "superdimension" when referring to the inductively extracted primary political dimensions of Gabel and Huber (2000) and Franzmann and Kaiser (2006).

[24] Monroe et al (2008: 10) argue that "word weight" is a misleading label, as these words represent the words with the most extreme point estimates rather than the words that influence the estimates of actors' positions the most.

[25] No overlap was allowed between dimensions, and the content that was not assigned to either dimension where sections relating to the environment and international relations.

Table 3.2. Document sections used to extract Wordfish dimensions

SUPERDIMENSION	ECONOMIC DIMENSION	SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION
Entire manifestos.	Sections dealing with labour market, finance, enterprise, trade, taxation, public spending, welfare provision and other general economic policy.	Sections dealing with community, tradition, family, morals and values, sexuality, culture, integration, crime and military.

Prior to the construction of word frequency matrices, documents were spell-checked and converted to lower-case, irrelevant information (bullets, numbers, etc.) were removed, words were stemmed[26] and, as suggested by Proksch and Slapin (2009c: 7), words that only appear in a single document were excluded from the analysis. Early tests also showed the need for an additional criterion: words that appear in the manifestos of only one of three elections are also excluded. The reason for doing so is that results could otherwise confuse shifts in positioning with "agenda shifts" where entirely new issues enter political competition, meaning that all parties appear to move significantly over time (Proksch and Slapin 2009b: 17-9).

3.3.5 Dictionary-based content analysis

A final method for policy estimation used in this study is the semi-automated dictionary approach (e.g. Laver and Garry 2000; Ray 2001; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2010), which also depends on word frequencies but where word meanings are substantially defined a priori. As such, certain words are selected by the researcher as being indicative of a documents position on some dimension. While not as labour-intensive as a manual coding process where each document is individually scrutinized, the dictionary approach nevertheless requires a significant qualitative effort to identify meaningful words. After a dictionary has been constructed, however, it can be easily applied to any number of documents, while taking into account potential problems of changing word meanings and differing content.

Lowe (2003: 11) argues that dictionary-based content analysis is a plausible approach to policy estimation to the extent that the categories constructed by the researcher coincide with those of the author of the document being analysed, which is taken by

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[26] One example of stemming is that the words *solidarity* and *solidary* are – due to their shared stem (*solidar**) – treated as the same word. All word stemming in this paper was performed with the software *jfreq* (http://www.williamlowe.net/software). It should be noted that automated stemming is never perfect; for example, the software fails to identify the common stem of *entrepreneur* and *entrepreneurship.*

Lowe not to be an unreasonable assumption. The argument is that the author of an election manifesto does not use words such as "class" or "liberty" oblivious of their generally acknowledged ideological connotations. In constructing the dictionary used in this paper, stemmed words from Swedish 2002, 2006 and 2010 manifestos were pooled, while eliminating words found in only one manifesto and words occurring less than five times overall.[27] Then certain words were selected – on theoretical grounds – as belonging to either an economic or a social dimension, where the latter where split into *libertarian* and *authoritarian* ones, and the former into *left*, *neutral* and *right*. The neutral economic category is included in order to assess proportionality of economic words in general; following Laver and Garry (2000), socio-culturally neutral words are not considered a possibility. Selection on theoretical grounds simply means that words that are assumed a priori as being, for example, inherently *left* or *right* are coded as such. For example, words such as *class* and *solidarity* are assumed to represent an economically leftist position, while words such as *entrepreneur* and *incentive* are assumed to represent the opposite position; *freedom*, *democracy* and *gender equality* are placed in the libertarian category, while *morality*, *family* and *crime* are placed in the authoritarian one. While the environment was excluded from the socio-cultural CMP dimension, the words *sustainable* and *green* are included here, as they are deemed indicative of a libertarian (or post-material) position in a way that the very general environmental category of the CMP coding scheme is not.

In a second step, the dictionary is refined on empirical grounds by assessing the relative distribution of selected words and controlling the context in which selected words appear. This is done partly in order to remedy the problem of ambiguous wording, discussed earlier, and partly to gain understanding of the linguistic properties of the different manifestos. If the word *business*, for example, is empirically found to be used predominantly in the context of promoting free-market capitalism, it remains a word to the economic right; if its use is ambiguous, it is moved to the neutral category. Likewise, if a word is commonly used in *all* manifestos, it is deemed unsuitable in distinguishing between positions. One such word is *public investment* [*satsning*], which – implying support for public spending – could arguably be considered an economically leftist word. In the Swedish context, however, it is a word commonly used by all parties and as

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[27] This was done to keep word quantities manageable and the dictionary parsimonious.

such contains little information about relative positions. Likewise, *welfare* is in the Swedish context a word that is used frequently by all parties and exclusively in a positive sense. In this second step, then, the construction of the dictionary is in a sense intertwined with the analysis.[28]

As the documents used in creating the dictionary are the same as those to which the dictionary is being applied, one needs to be careful in drawing conclusions too far. While context rather than a priori knowledge of a party's ideological leaning was the main guidance in the second step of constructing the dictionary, cognitive bias is likely an issue to some extent. It is therefore important to emphasize that the main purpose of including the dictionary approach as used in this paper is not to produce standalone policy positions, but rather to relate them to estimates from other approaches. This allows interpretation of *how* parties differ linguistically from each other, what types of words determine this and which difficulties the approach may encounter in the context of the Sweden Democrats. Examples of words for both dimensions, unstemmed and translated into English, are shown in table 3.3. The entire dictionary is available in appendix B.

Table 3.3. Examples of dictionary words

Economic dimension			Socio-cultural dimension	
LEFT	**NEUTRAL**	**RIGHT**	**LIBERTARIAN**	**AUTHORITARIAN**
Solidarity [solidaritet]	**Unemployment** [arbetslöshet]	**Business** [företag]	**Freedom** [frihet]	**Moral** [moral]
Class [klass]	**Work** [arbete]	**Entrepreneur** [entreprenör]	**Democracy** [demokrati]	**Family** [familj]
Worker [arbetare]	**Taxes** [skatt]	**Freedom of choice** [valfrihet]	**Gender equality** [jämställdhet]	**Crime** [brott]
Trade union [fackförening]	**Business cycle** [konjunktur]	**Incentive** [incitament]	**Peace** [fred]	**Respect** [respekt]

Following Laver and Garry (2000: 627-8) and the arguments presented in section 3.3.3, positions along the two dimensions are derived from these words frequencies using ratio scaling. This means that the resulting positions on the dimensions of *economic policy* ($Econ_{LR}$) and *social policy* (Soc_{LA}) indicate the proportional amount of

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[28] See also Ray (2001: 155): "In practice, dictionary compilation is often an iterative process where word lists are modified during the course of the analysis."

words favouring either position. For the variable $Econ_{LR}$, for example, this value can range from -1 (document contains only $Econ_L$) to +1 (document contains only $Econ_R$), with a value of 0 indicating an equal amount of the two. The values are calculated in the following manner:

$$Eco_{LR} = \frac{Eco_R - Eco_L}{Eco_R + Eco_L} \qquad\qquad Soc_{LA} = \frac{Soc_A - Soc_L}{Soc_A + Soc_L}$$

The construction of a *general left-right* dictionary dimension follows the theoretical discussion in chapter 2 and the construction of its CMP counterpart: the dictionary *general left* combines *economic left* and *libertarian* words, while *general right* combines *economic right* and *authoritarian* words.[29] As all the documents analysed are of the same kind (election manifestos) and originate within a limited time span (three elections), issues such as changing word meanings and differing content are considered a marginal problem.

3.4 Methodological summary

There are numerous ways of estimating the policy positions of political parties. A first broad division can be made between survey-driven approaches, building on the perceptions of experts or voters, and document-driven approaches, where content analysis is used to infer policy positions from text. The latter can in turn be broadly divided into manual or qualitative approaches (such as classical content analysis), where the meaning of text is interpreted in context, and automated or quantitative approaches (such as Wordfish), where words are treated as data independent of meaning or context. Dictionary-based content analysis is a semi-automated approach that contains elements of both. A multi-methodological approach is beneficial as it allows cross-validation of results. Table 3.4 below shows an overview of the methodological approaches employed in this study, along with the years for which estimates are available or produced in the analysis.

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[29] The general left-right (RILE) categories in table 3.2 do not perfectly overlap with the economic and socio-cultural categories below, but follow the same principle.

Table 3.4. Methodology overview

Approach	Expert survey	Voter percept.	Classical/CMP	Wordfish	Dictionary
Data	Survey		Document (election manifestos)		
Years	2011	2006	2002, 2006*, 2010	2002, 2006, 2010	2002, 2006, 2010

* Sweden Democrats only

Volkens (2007: 109) and McDonald, Mendes and Kim (2007: 65-66) point out that expert survey estimates of policy positions tend to be more stable over time as compared to estimates derived by content analysis. Similarly, Franzmann and Kaiser (2006: 173) argue that "the position scores we get at a single point in time cannot be taken at face value because parties use election programs as an information short cut to signal major policy shifts to voters". To compensate for this, the authors apply a smoothing operation by averaging position estimates over three elections. Building on this argument, content analysis estimates in this study are averaged over the period 2002-2010 when the purpose is to estimate a more general and stable position comparable to those derived by survey-based approaches, rather than to assess change over time or at a specific point in time.

4. Analyses

This chapter presents the empirical analyses of the study. Using the approaches presented in the previous chapter, estimates of the Sweden Democrats' position along some main political dimensions are analyzed; these estimates are then related to the dimensionality of Swedish political space. In concluding the chapter, the question of where in this political space the Sweden Democrats belong is discussed, and the different methodological approaches to policy estimation are evaluated.

4.1. Self-defined ideology

Before turning to the analysis of election manifestos in order to estimate the position of the Sweden Democrats along key political dimensions, it is worth noting how the party describes itself in its 2005 "program of principles".[30] This document states that the purpose of the party is to "combine the principle of basic social justice with traditional conservative ideas", and that "nationalism and the wish for democratic governance are the most basic principles of the Sweden Democrats' ideology" (Sverigedemokraterna 2005: 4; author's translation). Due to this, it is argued in the program, the party cannot easily be placed along the traditional left-right scale. As we have seen in chapter 2, right-wing parties are in the Western European context usually assumed to combine liberal economic policies with conservative social ones. On one hand, the program provides classical conservative criticism against individualism, in arguing that community – in particular family and nation – is essential for human well-being (Ibid., p. 7); on the other hand, the program advocates a "responsible, regulated market economy" (Ibid., p. 10) – hardly an economically liberal statement. It seems, thus, that the unidimensional left-right divide, as defined earlier, is indeed not sufficient if we are to place the Sweden Democrats in an intelligible way within the Swedish political space. Throughout this chapter, however, we will address the empirical question of where in a more complex political space the party actually belongs.

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[30] Such programs, unlike election manifestos, are formulated less regularly and deal with broader, foundational ideas rather than specific policies. For these two reasons they are also less suited for comparative analysis of policy positions.

4.2. Election manifesto content analysis

As discussed in the previous chapter, election manifestos are used as the primary empirical source of the analyses of this paper. Before turning to the content analysis, however, some basic statistics are in place. Of some concern, for example, is the variation in manifesto length: while the average Swedish manifesto length is 4560 words, the average election manifesto of the Sweden Democrats weighs in at a modest 1360 words.[31] SD manifestos have increased in length over the period being analyzed, with the most significant change being that the manifesto of 2002 is roughly half the size of the two subsequent ones. This may reflect the fact that it was not until the 2006 election that polls indicated the party had an actual chance of reaching the Swedish parliamentary threshold of 4 %. Being shorter than the average manifesto, SD documents naturally also contain fewer unique words. The vast majority of the most common words as a percentage of total word usage are so called "stop words", words that have grammatical functions but lack substantial meaning. Among the top ranking SD words that may have substantial political meaning are *Sweden* (discounting the use of the party name) and *Swedish*. While the former may largely be attributed to a rhetorical device in the 2010 manifesto,[32] the latter is used in a clearly political manner and is about five times as likely to be found in SD manifestos as compared to those of other parties. We will return to the issue of nationalism in section 4.2.4. In general, however, the Sweden Democrats' manifestos predominantly use the same vocabulary as other parties; among words that appear in no other manifesto, only about 20 of them appear in SD documents more than once and very few more than twice. Among top ranking words with the highest proportional frequency as compared to other party manifestos we find several that relate to nationalism and immigration (e.g. *foreigner*, *country of origin*, *immigration*, *cultural heritage*), as well as words relating to welfare provision and crime.

4.2.1. The general left-right dimension

While a general or "traditional" left-right dimension, as discussed in chapter 2, is often considered insufficient in distinguishing between certain kinds of parties, such a dimen-

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[31] If not specified otherwise, "averages" consistently refers to mean values across all parties for the period 2002-2010. Also note that the manifesto average is highly influenced by the lengthy manifestos of the Moderate Party and the Liberal People's Party; median manifesto length is 3350 words.

[32] The phrase "in our Sweden…" (in the sense of "in our preferred Sweden") is repeated when describing political visions and policies.

sion will nevertheless briefly be the first one approached in the analysis. The reason for doing so is to enable a subsequent deeper discussion of the construction of the Swedish political space, to which we will return in section 4.3. Even though the vagueness of a general political *left-right dimension* makes it an essentially contested concept, all approaches included in the analyses provide highly correlated estimates, meaning that they more or less agree on how parties relate to each other along this dimension. The estimates produced by Wordfish are more weakly correlated with other estimates, which is not surprising since it does not measure a left-right dimension per se but rather a primary political superdimension.

Figure 4.1 shows the parties' standardized estimated positions plotted visually from left to right. The scales are not directly comparable, in the sense that they are not estimates made at the same point in time. Rather, the figure serves to illustrate a more general agreement among the different approaches on the nature of Swedish left-right politics. Disregarding the Wordfish superdimension for the moment, the face validity of the rank ordering of parties is plausible for all approaches, with Red-Green parties on the left and parties belonging to the Alliance bloc on the right. All these approaches also agree that the Sweden Democrats belong far to the right of the Swedish political space, and for the content analysis approaches, which provide estimates at three different points in time, the far-right position of the Sweden Democrats is stable for the period 2002-2010.

-2	-1.5	-1	-0.5	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	
	V	S	MP		C/FP/KD/M		SD		**Experts**
	V		S/MP		C FP/KD	**SD**	M		**Voters**
	V	S/MP			KD/C/FP	M	**SD**		**CMP**
	MP	V	S C		KD	M	FP **SD**		**Wordfish**
	V		MP	S	C	FP M	KD **SD**		**Dictionary**
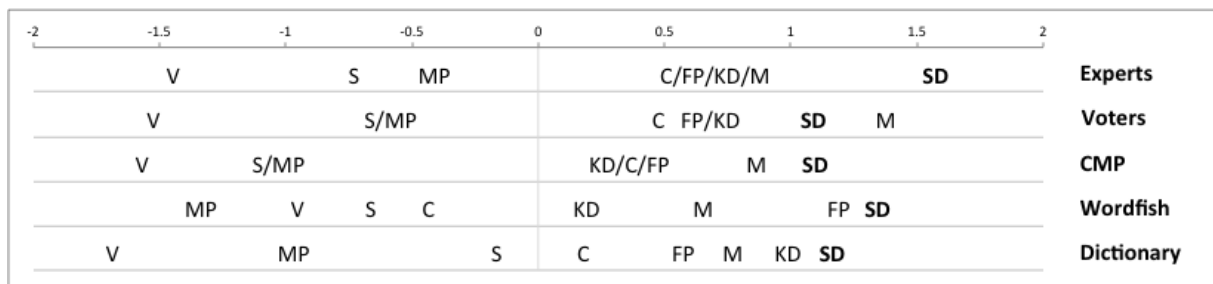
Figure 4.1 Standardized *left-right* positions of Swedish parties using five different estimates[33]

Turning to the Wordfish superdimension, it seems to correspond only partially to *left-right* as measured by the other approaches, placing the Green Party (MP) at the leftmost extreme, the Liberal People's Party (FP) unusually far to the right, and the Centre Party

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[33] The horizontal scale refers to standard deviations, and estimates have been offset so that the original scale midpoints are aligned at 0. Document based estimates are averages for 2002-2010.

(C) significantly to the left of other estimates. Wordfish results, however, do agree that the Sweden Democrats is the most far-right party in the Swedish political space, and while parties' positions shift slightly over time, the rank order of all parties is consistent throughout the three elections. As discussed in the previous chapter, Wordfish estimates are accompanied with word weights that allow inquiry into how the dimension is constructed. We will return to the question of what kind of superdimension Wordfish actually measures in section 4.2.5, after having analyzed the more substantial *economic* and *socio-cultural* policy dimensions.

4.2.2. The economic dimension

The economic dimension shows even better correspondence between different estimates, with correlations ranging from 0.85 to 0.96. All approaches place parties in more or less the same rank order, with the Left Party (V) being by far the most economically leftist party and with Alliance parties competing at the other end of the spectrum (figure 4.2). Again, Wordfish results are those that deviate the most from the others, most notable regarding the Centre Party (C) and the Liberal People's Party (FP). All estimates agree that the Sweden Democrats are a decidedly centrist party concerning economic issues, with expert estimates and CMP coding placing it slightly left of centre and the two word frequency approaches placing it slightly to the right.

-2.5	-2	-1.5	-1	-0.5	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	
	V				S/**SD**/MP		KD/M/C/FP				Experts
	V		MP/S		**SD**/KD	FP	C/M				CMP
		V/MP		S		C/**SD**	KD	M	FP		Wordfish
	V			MP	S	**SD**	KD	C	FP/M		Dictionary

Figure 4.2. Standardized *economic left-right* estimates of Swedish parties

   Looking at the Wordfish word weights, most of the words at the extremes are words that have substantial economic meaning. On the left, we find words such as *reduction of working time*, *public housing*, *socialism*, *redistribution (of wealth)*, *worker's movement* and *right to strike*. On the right we find words relating, for example, to tax reductions, well-managed public finances and private sector job creation. However, many of the words at the right extreme are less ideologically unambiguous, in many cases referring to specific welfare policy issues such as improving public health care and education. That the latter

issue is so prevalent is consistent with the far-right estimation of the Liberal People's Party, as education has become one of the party's profile issues. Judging from CMP data, however, the Liberal People's Party is not in any way unique regarding the relative salience of education improvement (the Social Democrats are, at double the mean salience). The relevant category (*education expansion*) is also considered a leftist category by CMP standards, as it implies support for public spending.[34] What this suggests is that even though education is a fairly salient issue both on both the economic left and right (and calls for limiting the resources for education are practically non-existent), different rhetoric is used on the left and right in a way that distinguishes linguistically between the two. Such semantic rather than substantial differences in manifesto content may partly explain why the economic Wordfish dimension differs somewhat from those estimated by other approaches. Nevertheless, the results correlate remarkably well with other estimates given the small amount of manual labour preceding the analysis. We will, however, run into more significant problems when considering the socio-cultural dimension in the next section.

In the case of the dictionary approach, economic SD estimates are somewhat uncertain due to a low number of observations (i.e. *economic left-right* words). This is particularly the case in the 2002 manifesto (*n*=1), which is therefore removed from the average.[35] It is tempting to attribute this uncertainty to the short length of the Sweden Democrats' manifestos; however, if we examine the proportional occurrence of words relative to manifesto length, it becomes clear that SD manifestos on average contain noticeably fewer words relating to economic issues than do the manifestos of other parties. Compared to the national average of 7.3 percent economic dictionary words – left, right or neutral – SD manifestos average 5.5 percent. Judging from dictionary results, shown in figure 4.3, it seems that the proportional amount of economic words is increasing over time during the 2002-2010 period. This shift towards more manifesto space devoted to economic issues is also indicated by the CMP data,[36] as well as by the proportional length of economic sections selected for the Wordfish analysis. What this seems to suggest, then, is that economic issues are increasingly salient for the Sweden Democrats.

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[34] Sentences that emphasize increased *efficiency* rather than increased *resources* are coded differently.

[35] While no specific threshold is being used to assess the reliability of results, a single observation is clearly insufficient to make any meaningful inference.

[36] Green-Pedersen (2007) and Jäckle (2009) calculate CMP issue saliency in a similar way, i.e. by relative proportions of relevant quasi-sentences.

Why may this be the case? The most obvious increase in dictionary *economic left-right* wording, corroborated by an increase in CMP quasi sentences, occurred between the 2002 and 2006 elections, a period which also showed a doubling of national votes for the Sweden Democrats from 1.44 to 2.93 %. This increased focus on economic issues may be a symptom of trying to wash away the image of being a single-issue party; while it seems likely that few people vote for the Sweden Democrats exclusively because of the party's economic policies, some voters may be unwilling to vote for a party that is perceived as outright lacking economic policies. More generally, CMP results show that the number of categories used to code SD manifestos have increased over time, which may be indicative of a maturing process in which the party positions itself on an increasing number of issues.
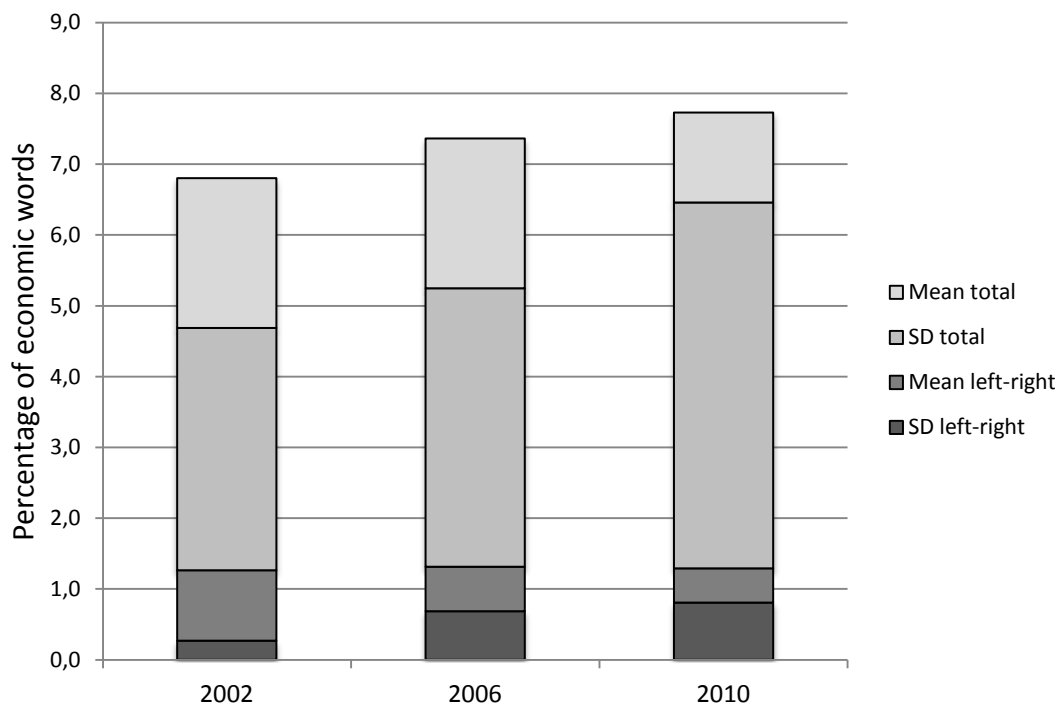
Figure 4.3. Proportional usage of economic dictionary words, 2002-2010

It seems, then, that the economy is becoming an increasingly salient topic for the Sweden Democrats, but how does the party's economic *position* change over time? Results from the three content analysis approaches, together with the recent expert survey estimate, are presented in figure 4.4. While CMP data indicates that the party holds a fairly stable position to the centre-left, Wordfish and dictionary results are more volatile. Most notably they agree that the Sweden Democrats were on the economic

centre-left judging by the 2006 manifesto, while in the subsequent 2010 manifesto making a sharp turn towards the economic right. In the case of the dictionary, this could again possibly be explained by small-*n* induced uncertainty. The Wordfish results, however, can only partially be explained by the small sample, as the confidence intervals for these values – while noticeably larger than for other parties – indicate a significant shift in that the confidence intervals for each year do not overlap. Such volatility over time is consistent with Mudde's (2007: 133) claim that parties of the populist radical right often view economic issues as instrumental in achieving influence on their most salient issues (such as immigration). While policy adjustments over time to some extent are to be expected from all parties (the Green Party, for example, moves considerably from economic left to centre during 2002-2010 judging by all content analysis estimates), the Sweden Democrats is the only party – judging by the results below – that drastically leaps from left to right within such a narrow time span.
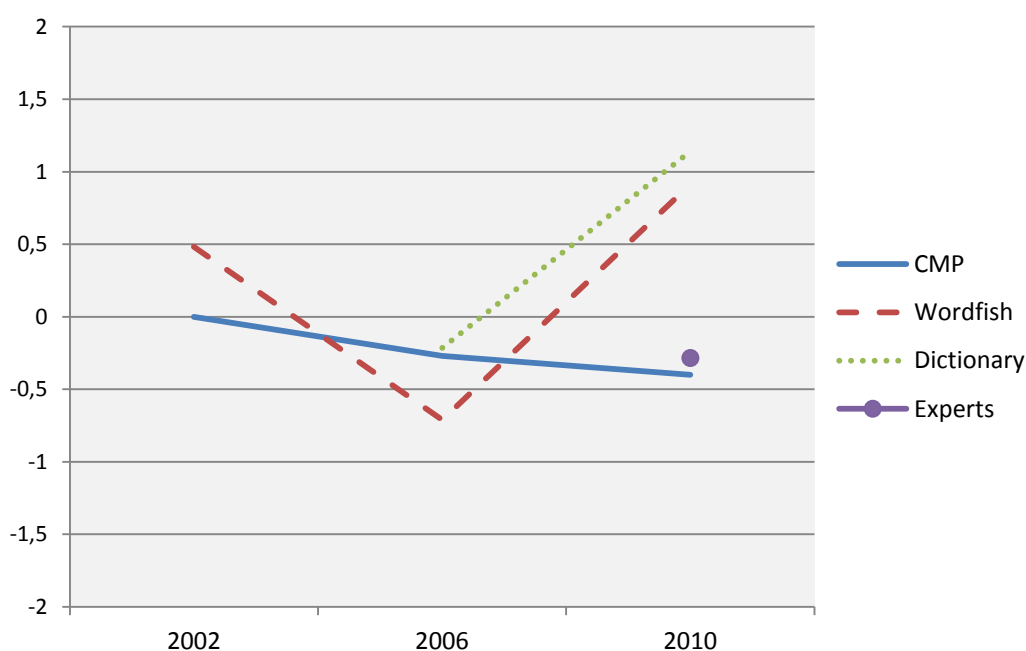
Figure 4.4. Economic left-right estimates for the Sweden Democrats, 2002-2010

   Looking at CMP results, however, the Sweden Democrats hold a fairly stable position on the economic centre-left. Expert survey results, collected early in 2011 and likely based to a great extent on the party's 2010 electoral platform, also place the Sweden Democrats economically centre-left. How, then, may we explain the fact that Wordfish and the dictionary approach both indicate a rightward shift? Since both these approaches use words as data, meaning that the linguistic properties of document content

are what matter, it is not surprising that they may be sensitive to the same shifts in word usage.[37] What the Wordfish results tell us, effectively, is that in 2006 the linguistic properties of the economic sections of the SD manifesto were similar to those of the Social Democrats; in the 2010 elections, on the other hand, these sections were much more similar to those of Alliance parties. There are two ways this shift can be explained: either the Sweden Democrats made linguistic changes (i.e. adjusted their rhetoric) between 2006 and 2010 while policy positions remained more or less intact, or the Sweden Democrats made significant changes to their policy positions and linguistic changes reflect this. If we pursue the latter explanation, the results are once again consistent with Mudde's argument on economic opportunism. We are, however, faced with the rather difficult problem of explaining why this rightward repositioning is absent in both CMP and expert survey estimates. If we choose instead to trust CMP and expert estimates, meaning that the shift can be attributed to linguistic changes rather than a radical repositioning on policy issues, there are, in turn, several ways to interpret this.

One potential reason for linguistic inconsistencies on behalf of the Sweden Democrats could be that their lack of a clear political (or ideological) legacy results in a more generic political language, or that the party is in the middle of a process of stabilizing its political language concerning economic issues. Under such a hypothesis, processes of text generation would be less constrained by the path-dependence of party language, and thus potentially provide more linguistically varied outcomes despite an essentially unchanged message.[38] The relative absence of clearly ideological economic words could also be plausibly attributed to such a lack of political baggage, as well as the fact that the economy is not the primary concern of the party. It could also reflect a deliberate strategy on behalf of the Sweden Democrats, where distinctly left-right rhetoric is avoided in order to strike a balance between the two to profile itself as "a party free from ideological blinders" (Sverigedemokraterna 2010: 3; author's translation).

Looking at the CMP data, the Sweden Democrat's main thrust (over 80 %) towards the economic left can be attributed to the categories *service expansion positive* and *education*

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[37] Contrastingly, while expert surveys and manual coding are both interpretive approaches they are methodologically more independent of each other than Wordfish and the dictionary approach.

[38] Benoit et al (2009) have shown how manifestos reflecting the same underlying policy position may be linguistically diverse due to the stochastic nature of text generation.
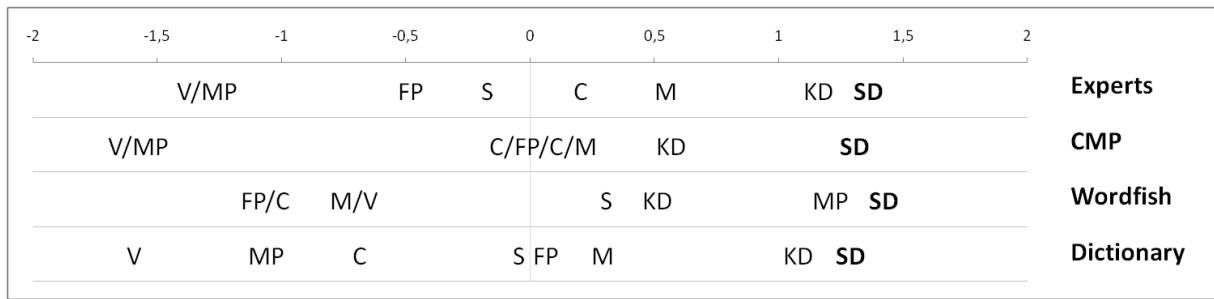
expansion positive, meaning support for welfare and educational spending. At the same time, however, there is a notable absence of sentences supporting *social justice* and *labour groups.* Traditionally, the party has been hostile towards labour groups (Jungar and Jupskås 2010: 6), and it is therefore not surprising that words that are closely associated with the socialist left (such as *worker's movement*, *trade unions* and *collective bargaining*) are not used by the Sweden Democrats, even though they may in many regards agree on fairly generous welfare policies. Another word on the dictionary left, *class*, is unlikely to be used by a party that is guided by a nationalist principle and thus views the Swedish people as a group.

Still another possible interpretation of the economically rightward shift is that the economic sections of the SD 2010 manifesto are inspired by the rhetoric of Alliance manifestos following their electoral success of 2006. Under such an interpretation, the linguistic properties of the SD manifesto places is further to the right using Wordfish and the dictionary, while the prevalence of support for welfare expansion places it further to the left in a more interpretive analysis. Any conclusive argument about the economic positioning of the Sweden Democrats over time is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper, but the fact that CMP and expert survey data place the Sweden Democrats to the economic centre-left in 2010 suggests that language has been more volatile than policy positions.

4.2.3. The socio-cultural dimension

As we saw in chapter 2, compared to the economic dimension there is less agreement among scholars on what a socio-cultural dimension should consist of, making it slightly more troublesome to analyze. Nevertheless, the correlations between different measurements on the socio-cultural dimension are fairly high. The notable exception is the Wordfish approach, which produces a very peculiar scale with the Green Party and the Sweden Democrats – by other estimates indicated to be socio-cultural opposites – together at one extreme. As shown in figure 4.5, expert, CMP and dictionary estimates all agree that the Sweden Democrats are a distinctly authoritarian party, with the Christian Democrats being the most similar party on this dimension. Looking at the dictionary data, however, the SD manifestos contain a significantly greater proportion of socio-cultural words as a percentage of total word usage (3.2 %) as compared to the average (2.2 %), indicating a higher than average salience on these issues. As was the case with

economic saliency, this proportionally greater focus on socio-cultural values is con-firmed by CMP data and Wordfish selection. The latter two approaches, however, indicate a decrease in socio-cultural saliency for the 2010 election. While it is too early to say if this reflects a general trend, it is likely the result of the increased focus on economic issues we saw in the previous sections. Unlike the economic dimension, however, there are no indications of drastic movements along the dimension during the three-election period; the Sweden Democrats is estimated to be a party positioned firmly on the authoritarian side of a socio-cultural divide.

-2	-1,5	-1	-0,5	0	0,5	1	1,5	2	
	V/MP		FP	S	C	M	KD **SD**		**Experts**
	V/MP			C/FP/C/M	KD		**SD**		**CMP**
		FP/C	M/V		S KD		MP **SD**		**Wordfish**
	V	MP	C	S FP	M		KD **SD**		**Dictionary**

Figure 4.5. Standardized *libertarian-authoritarian* estimates of Swedish parties

Returning to the Wordfish results, we can once again examine word weights to assess how a dimension that groups the Green Party and the Sweden Democrats together is constructed. Among the fifty most extreme words at this end of the scale, almost forty are found in SD manifestos, and about half of these relate in some way to nationalism or immigration. About ten of the most extreme words are found in Green Party manifestos, and most of these relate to anti-discrimination, democracy and equal rights. When party specific words are removed before the analysis, many of the words related to immigra-tion (only used by the Sweden Democrats) disappear from the top 50, while the rank ordering of parties remains more or less unchanged. For some words with large weights the assumption of context independence clearly does not hold: *military* (by far the highest weighted word at this extreme) is used by the Greens in the context of disarma-ment, while by the Sweden Democrats in the context of strengthening Swedish defence; *same-sex relations* is used by the former in the context of equal rights and by the latter in the context of prohibiting same-sex adoption; *traditional* is on the one hand used in the context of battling female subordination, and on the other in promoting traditional family values.

When the assumption of context independence does not hold, Wordfish results are perhaps better interpreted as relating to salience rather than position, in the sense that reference to an issue signals importance but does not hold unambiguous information about a party's stance. While the Sweden Democrats and the Green Party can be expected to hold opposite position on many issues, they may nevertheless share salience on these issues. For example, both feel strongly about HBT issues and immigration, but the Green Party favours progressive sexual legislation and norms as well as a generous and open immigration policy, while the Sweden Democrats favour a traditional view of family and marriage as well as a restrictive immigration policy. While the number of unique words in a Wordfish analysis (in this case around 1400) precludes scrutiny of all word contexts, and the few examples discussed above represent infrequent words (thus having little effect on the overall estimate) the violation of this assumption may play some part in the seemingly invalid results.

The issue of context dependence also needs to be addressed regarding the dictionary approach, as two out of three words that served as examples above were in fact placed in the dictionary *authoritarian* category. The methodological argument for doing so is that they can be taken to represent an authoritarian position, while only rarely appearing in the opposite context. Indeed, manually removing all dictionary entries that actually violate the assumption (a possibility when cases are few) only very slightly affects the results. The exception, as we saw above in the case of the Sweden Democrats and the economic dimension, is when only very few words are identified, and each additional word thus significantly alters the estimates. As the socio-cultural dimension is salient above average for the Sweden Democrats, manifestos contain a fairly large number of related dictionary words and the estimates are in this sense more reliable than for the economic dimension. Authoritarian words by far outnumber libertarian ones in the case of the Sweden Democrats, with words relating to crime, family and military being the most common in the former category. The latter category shows fairly large inconsistencies in which issues are addressed: ecological sustainability and democracy in 2002, women's rights in 2010 and practically no such issues in 2006.

This variation in which socio-cultural issues are addressed in any given manifesto relates to yet another possible explanation for the seemingly invalid Wordfish results: the actual content of selected text segments. Perhaps the contents of those segments identified as dealing with socio-cultural issues simply is not suitable for Wordfish

analysis. Such a problem could to some extent be attributed to poor segment selection on part of the author, but it may also reflect a more fundamental problem with the method concerning vague policy areas such as this. While entire manifestos may plausibly be regarded as "encyclopaedic statements of policy positions" (see section 3.1.2), this assumption seems less realistic when applied to a sub-selection of the text, and even more so regarding a vague concept such as socio-cultural values. While economic sections of manifestos usually concern broadly the same issues – such as taxation, spending, budget and employment – sections identified as containing stances on socio-cultural issues may focus on entirely different aspects: some on sexual equality, some on community, some on crime and punishment and others on nationalism. While such issue diversity may not always be the case, an empirical examination of the election manifestos used in this analysis reveal emphases on a wide variety of issues, many of which are not addressed by all manifestos and some which are addressed by only one party or manifesto.

4.2.4. Nationalism and immigration

As was discussed at the outset of this chapter, the Sweden Democrats is a party that by its own account shapes its policy by a nationalist principle; immigration is to be tolerated only to the extent that it does not pose a threat to Swedish culture (Sverigedemokraterna 2005: 6). Measuring salience and position on the immigration issue through content analysis can be done, for example, by using the frequency of the CMP category *multiculturalism negative*, defined as opposition to the autonomy of religious, ethnic and linguistic heritages within the country. SD manifestos contain on average 13 % such quasi sentences per document, with stable salience over time. Another relevant category, *national way of life positive*, also shows a strong salience, peaking at almost 10 % in the 2010 manifesto.[39] At the same time, the party has zero quasi-sentences indicating the opposite positions (*multiculturalism positive* and *national way of life negative*), meaning that the party on this issue, from a ratio perspective, holds the most extreme position possible. This is also consistent with experts' estimations, where the variables *immigration*, *national identity* and *nationalism* all score between 9.5 and 9.7 out of 10. Words clearly relating to nationalism and immigration are absent

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[39] Both *multiculturalism negative* and *national way of life positive* are also included in the *authoritarian* CMP position (table 3.1).

from the dictionary because of selection criteria, meaning that they are not frequent enough to be included. Furthermore, an examination of such words reveals that few of them have unambiguous meanings; to fit in the authoritarian category a word needs to indicate hostility towards immigration or multiculturalism, rather than simply implying salience for these issues.[40] We will return to this complication in the next section when examining the Wordfish superdimension.

A related example that highlights the benefits of context-dependent coding over that of Wordfish or a dictionary approach concerns the Sweden Democrats' statement in their 2010 manifesto that they want to prohibit "ritualistic slaughter of animals". A coder disregarding context (or, similarly, a context-independent approach) may interpret this sentence as being "pro-animal rights", which within the CMP coding scheme would fall into the category *environment positive*. Put into context, however, the coder could very plausibly argue that this statement is not necessarily indicative of a broader commitment to animal rights, but rather an opposition to multicultural minority rights, which fits into the corresponding category described above. Context independent approaches run into trouble in two ways: on the one hand, the words alone have a clear difficulty transmitting the deeper sense of opposition to multiculturalism. However, even if the word *ritualistic* in itself is considered an anti-multiculturalist word, the fact that its frequency can be expected to be exceptionally low means that it may most probably be discarded according to one or more of the pre-analysis criteria discussed in chapter 2.[41] This is just one example used to highlight the potential difficulties in quantitatively assessing rare words that may – in context – have very significant meanings.

4.2.5. The Wordfish superdimension

We will now return to the Wordfish superdimension, created using the entire contents of election manifestos, in examining what this dimension actually contains. As we saw in figure 4.1, Wordfish agrees with other estimates in placing the Sweden Democrats at the far right of this continuum, but differences in the rank ordering of other parties suggest that some other dimension than the left-right of the other approaches is being meas-

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[40] See Rooduijn and Pauwels (2010) for a dictionary approach to measuring "exclusionism".

[41] E.g. that the word must occur in more than one election or at least X number of times. This specific example (*ritualistic*), however, actually shows up as one of the highest weighted "right" words on the Wordfish superdimension (see section 4.3.2).

ured. We return, therefore, to the word weights produced by Wordfish in the creation of the dimension, in order to assess what words are placed at the extremes of the spectrum. Word clouds presenting the fifty highest weighed words at each extreme of the superdimension, sized by weight, are presented in figures 4.6 and 4.7.

Figure 4.6. Wordfish words with greatest *left* weight.

On the superdimension "left" we find some words that may be considered economically leftist, such as *cooperative*, *terms of employment*, *reduction of working time* and *public housing*.[42] The majority of words, however, are not directly related to economy, for example *weapons export*, *voting age*, *anti-discrimination agency*, *fur farming* and *world order*.[43] These words can to a great extent be seen as representing a libertarian, progressive or post-materialist position. At the other extreme we find even fewer economic words, but instead many words relating to immigration, such as *immigration policy*, *assimilation policy*, *foreigner*, *Swedish born* and *deport;* as well as words relating to law, order and discipline (*criminalize, entrapment, disorder, undemanding*).[44] Though less distinct than its opposite, this position may to some extent – depending on the context in which words appear – be labelled authoritarian or conservative. Regardless of how these extremes are labelled, however, the Wordfish superdimension appears to primary consist of socio-cultural issues. This would also explain the more-left-than-usual positions of the fairly libertarian Green and Centre parties.

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[42] *Kooperativt; anställningsvillkor; arbetstidsförkortning; allmännyttan.*

[43] *Vapenexport; rösträttsålder; antidiskrimineringsbyrå; pälsfarmning; världsordning.*

[44] *Invandringspolitik; assimileringspolitik; utlänning; utvisa; svenskfödd; kriminalisera; brottsprovokation; oordning; kravlös.*

Figure 4.7. Wordfish words with greatest *right* weight.

However, some observations are inconsistent with such an interpretation. First, the Christian Democrats, by all other accounts estimated to be the second most authoritarian party in the Swedish space, is positioned by Wordfish as a fairly centrist party for all three elections. Second, the Liberal People's Party, self-proclaimed socially liberal, is positioned fairly close to the Sweden Democrats.[45] While the results of this paper suggest that the Liberal People's party is perhaps more of a conservatively liberal party, the relative positions of the two parties in a two-dimensional space makes it seem unlikely that the two would score similarly along any dimension. How, then, can this be explained? Again, what the Wordfish clustering of SD and FP manifestos tells us is that there are significant linguistic similarities between the two. Accordingly, Liberal People's Party manifestos have about 40 words in common with the Sweden Democrats that appear in no other parties' manifestos – the largest such figure in the data set. As was the case with the socio-cultural Wordfish dimension, some words that are given a large weight appear in clearly opposite contexts, such as *Turkey*, where the Liberal People's Party is in favour of a Turkish membership of the European Union, while the Sweden Democrats are highly opposed. Overall, it seems that the clustering of the two parties along the Wordfish superdimension is caused by a high salience for both the Sweden Democrats and the Liberal People's Party on some of the same issues, most notably that of immigration/integration and crime/order. Unlike the Sweden Democrats, the Liberal

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[45] Related to this, the words *liberal* and *social liberal* – almost exclusively used by the Liberal People's Party – are among the fifty most extreme words of this side of the spectrum.

People's Party is not pushing for more restrictive immigration, but measures such as language tests for immigrants have been suggested as part of the Swedish integration policy. Both parties, then, are concerned with immigration and the reduction of criminality, but in the absence of a more in-depth policy analysis, it seems more accurate to once again attribute this shared trait to salience rather than position.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an in-depth analysis of the nature of the Swedish political space as constructed by Wordfish, the results suggest that socio-cultural issues are considerably more salient to this superdimension than to a left-right dimension as measured by other approaches. At the same time, however, the superdimension clearly does not correspond solely to a libertarian-authoritarian continuum. The implications of this discrepancy cannot be pursued here, but it is a question that warrants further inquiry.

4.3. Left and right in the Swedish context

As we saw in chapter 2, a "traditional" left-right dimension is often assumed to align along a diagonal libertarian-left – authoritarian-right axis, where an economic leftist position is accompanied by liberal social values and a position to the economic right is associated with conservative values. Figure 4.8 shows a plot of estimates for all parties using four different approaches, as well as the average position of each party along the economic and socio-cultural dimensions. As can be seen, a majority of the estimates are placed in the two predicted quadrants, and very few are clearly positioned in the off-diagonal ones, though many are balancing the axes. Notable is the Sweden Democrats' position as an authoritarian but economically centrist party, a position without much variance in the distribution of estimates.

All averaged estimates coincide fairly well with expert estimates, the most notable exceptions being that averages are more economically left in the case of the Green party and the Christian democrats. Content analysis estimates for these parties are well to the left of expert estimates, and this might be a result of manifesto averages (around 2006) affecting their positions leftward; both parties have according to CMP results shifted towards the economic right over the three-election period. To the extent that experts place parties as they currently stand (which they are asked to do), this may partly explain the discrepancy in terms of economic left-right estimations. The average rank order of the Social Democrats (S) and the Green Party (MP) being inverted as compared

to expert estimates might also be explained by this; looking at content analysis results for 2010 only, CMP and dictionary estimates agree that the Green Party is the economically rightmost of the two. Again, as discussed in section 3.4, the reason averaged estimates can be considered appropriate in this context is that they give a more stable picture of parties' positions within the two-dimensional space.


Figure 4.8. Two-dimensional estimates and averages.[46]

As we saw in figure 4.1, estimates from all approaches agree that the Sweden Democrats is a party that belongs to the right of the Swedish political spectrum. At the same time, however, estimates also agree that the Sweden Democrats belong in the centre of the political space concerning economic issues. Accordingly, an estimate that places the Sweden Democrats to the far-right along a general left-right continuum makes sense only if left-right positioning is a function of economic *and* socio-cultural policy. Furthermore, this should be expected to be consistent for all parties. However, the economic and general left-right dimensions of Swedish politics, as judged by experts,

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[46] For Wordfish, values on the socio-cultural dimension are replaced by means for the other estimates; axis values refer to standard deviations.

correlate almost perfectly ($r = 0.99$), if it were not for the significant outlier of the Sweden Democrats – estimated to be far right in a general sense but economically centre-left. The relationship between these two variables can be seen in figure 4.9.
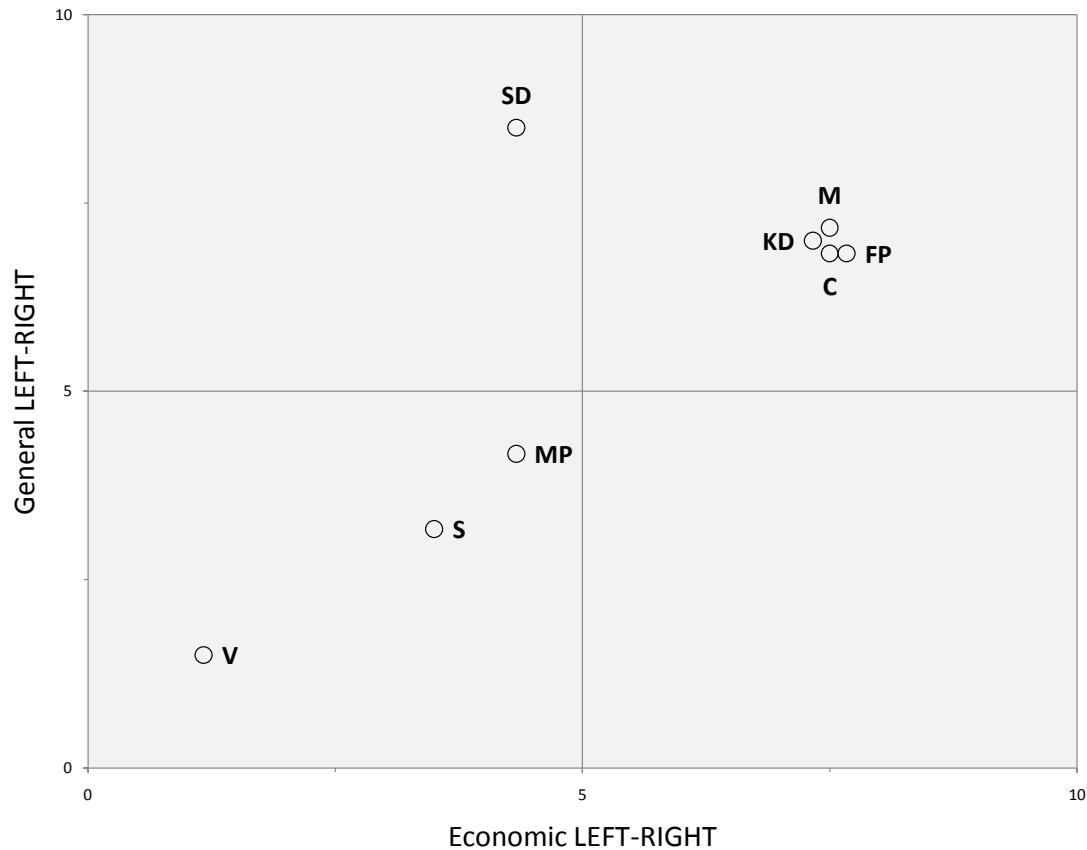

Figure 4.9. Relationship between *economic* and *general left-right* dimensions.

This almost perfectly linear relationship between *economy* and *general left-right* (excluding the SD) as judged by experts, is consistent with the primarily economic political space found in earlier research (see section 2.1.2). But if left-right position is primarily a function of economic position, why are the Sweden Democrats estimated as being a far-right party? First of all, since we do not know how experts define *general left-right*, we cannot with any certainty know the substantial content of this dimension. We can, however, expect the ordering of the parties to correspond systematically to some latent properties. The outlier above, however, suggests that all parties derive their left-right position from their economic position, while the Sweden Democrats does so based on some other criteria. One potential reason for this discrepancy, explored by Benoit and Laver (2006: 90-2), is cognitive bias: experts who strongly disagree with a party tend to perceive it as more extreme than its policies may actually suggest. Such bias

would be expected to cancel out in the aggregate but not among non-randomly selected experts. An alternative explanation could be that this discrepancy reflects a more conscious unwillingness to normalize a party that has its roots in undemocratic movements and opposes some central aspects of liberal democracy. The Sweden Democrats undoubtedly hold radical positions on some policy issues, most notably immigration, and therefore, perhaps, the party is estimated at the rightmost extreme; placing the party in a centric position could possibly be seen as wanting to legitimize these views. If this hypothesis is correct, the estimation of the Sweden Democrats as being a party on the "extreme right" implies a fairly strong normative statement.
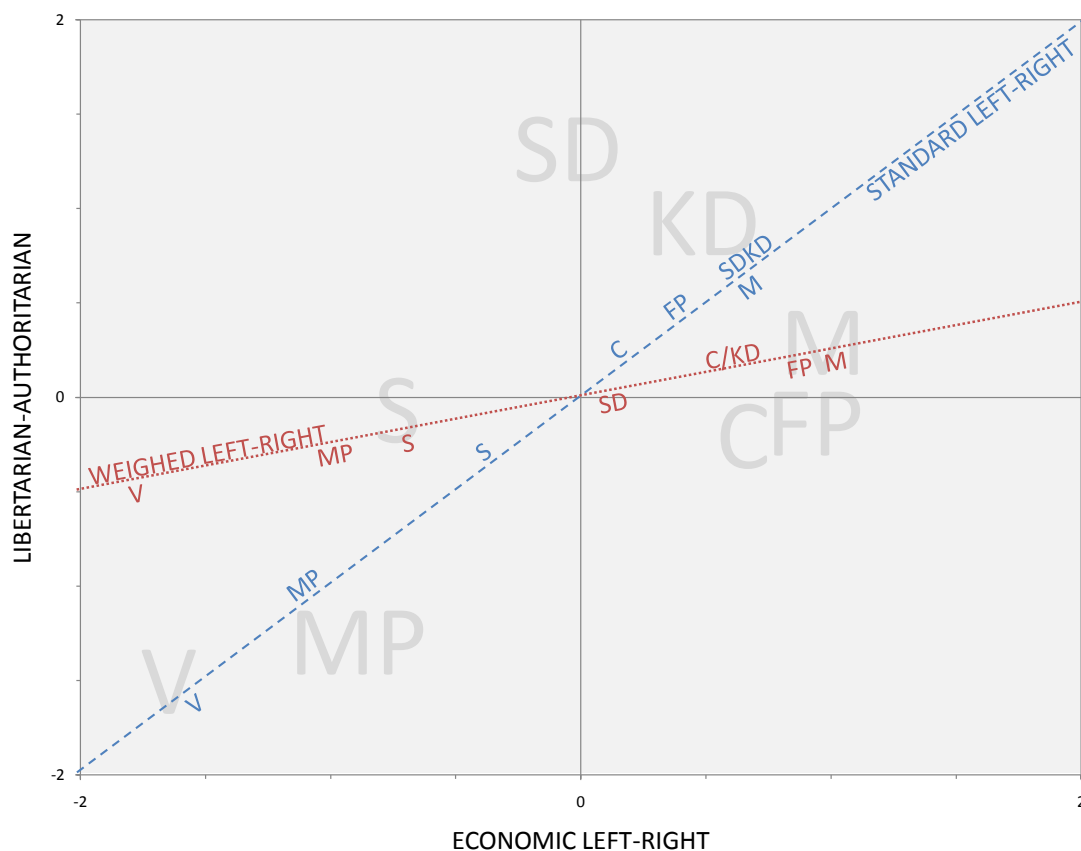
Figure 4.10. Standard and weighed left-right dimensions

If voter and expert perceptions are used as a kind of benchmark for the nature of the Swedish left-right continuum, similar problems can be found in the CMP and dictionary approaches. In the analytically constructed left-right dimensions of both these approaches, economic and socio-cultural dimensions are given equal weight, meaning that parties' estimates on the second dimension may shift their left-right estimates towards a position that is inconsistent with the perceptions of voters and experts. Figure 4.10

shows party positions based on the results of this paper along a standard general left-right axis and along a weighed left-right axis, where the socio-cultural dimension has been given a quarter of the weight of the economic dimension. This particular weight *is arbitrarily chosen* to illustrate the point that as the weighed left-right dimension rotates around the intercept, parties' positions change to reflect the salience of each dimension. Notable changes are that as the economic dimension grows more salient, the libertarian Green Party moves closer to the Social Democrats; the Centre Party and Christian Democratic Party, despite being fairly far apart in a socio-cultural sense, approach each other; and the Sweden Democrats move towards a centrist position. The less a party's economic position corresponds to its socio-cultural position, the more its position is affected by a shift in dimensional salience. The point being made here, primarily, is that a political left-right dimension modelled using these two components may consist of any combination of dimensional salience. We should, however, expect the positions estimated along such a dimension to be consistent. In this sense, a left-right dimension where the Sweden Democrats are the most extreme party is one that consists almost entirely of socio-cultural issues. Along such a dimension, however, the Green Party is positioned significantly to the left of the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats significantly to the right of other Alliance parties, which is inconsistent with the perceptions of most people (experts and voters alike). What this means, essentially, is that the inclusion of the Sweden Democrats in the Swedish political space makes it more difficult to collapse political conflict onto a single latent dimension; the statement that political conflict is structured almost entirely by economic positioning becomes less true.

4.4. The Sweden Democrats in political space

Clearly, there is no easy answer to the question of where we should place the Sweden Democrats along a left-right continuum. Stating that the party is either far-right or centrist without qualifying what left and right means is essentially meaningless, as either label reveals little of the party's nature. For example, most would probably place a hypothetical neo-liberal party to the right of the Alliance parties, but this party would be about as dissimilar to the Sweden Democrats as is the Left Party. On the other hand, a centrist position implies support for a mixed economy, which is correct in the case of the Sweden Democrats, but it says nothing about the party's conservative values and radical immigration policies, which are undoubtedly its most distinguishing features. Similarly,

the label "extreme" is clearly not unambiguous enough to be used carelessly; it may, for example, on the one hand imply a spatial position at the extreme of some continuum[47] and on the other support for anti-democratic principles. If the term is reserved for the former, what do we call parties that are openly undemocratic – and how do we know when we are speaking of the same thing?

Considering the Sweden Democrats' historical connections to nationalist fringe movements, an argument in favour of the extremist label is that the party has a "hidden agenda", and that there is one set of politics that is presented in official party documents for the purpose of gaining parliamentary influence, and another set of "true" or preferred politics that the party would implement were they to gain this influence. While this may or may not be the case, it is important to clearly distinguish what is actually being estimated, and which is the empirical evidence supporting such claims; it is also important that all parties within a comparative study are judged by the same fundamental criteria. In the study presented in this paper, the data used to estimate policy positions is official party documentation, which is obviously unsuited to assess anything beyond formally sanctioned party policy. Avoiding any simplified or confusing labels and taking a considerably less parsimonious but more accurate way, the Sweden Democrats could – based on party policy – be described as an economically centrist party with socially conservative values and radical views on immigration based on a nationalist principle

While a single left-right dimension is not enough to accurately relate the Sweden Democrats to other parliamentary parties, we also need to ask ourselves *why* we need to place the Sweden Democrats along the Swedish left-right in the first place. If the purpose is, for example, to create a model of coalition bargaining, an economic dimension – or a general left-right with the Sweden Democrats as a centrist party – may be the most appropriate, given the economic primacy of Swedish political conflict. Alliance parties, being very similar in terms if economic policy, manage to present fairly coherent electoral platforms despite their diverse stands on socio-cultural issues. However, given the fact that the SD is a parliamentary pariah, with virtually no prospects of taking part in government coalition negotiations within the foreseeable future, the question is highly

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[47] E.g. the Sweden Democrats' position on a dimension relating to immigration.

hypothetical.[48] More generally, however, a party that attaches low salience to economic issues might have the potential to bridge traditional left-right gaps given that its high-salience issues are less controversial.

Looking instead at voters, it is possible that another model of political space is more appropriate. An electoral survey conducted by Swedish public television (SVT) in 2010 shows that immigration and law/order are the two most important issues for voters who cast their ballot for the Sweden Democrats (Holmberg et al 2010). In this case, a libertarian-authoritarian dimension – or some other dimension relating to the issues at hand – is likely more useful than an economic dimension or a general left-right. Given that the issues that are most salient for the Sweden Democrats are less important to other parties, any single dimension that is constructed primarily from the preferences of the latter is unlikely to accurately accommodate the former. If we instead wish, for example, to estimate the boundaries of party families based on parties' distribution in political space, we clearly need more than one dimension to make an adequate distinction. Two essential questions are therefore what kind of dimension is most appropriate for the research question at hand, and under what circumstances we are willing to forego the parsimony of a unidimensional political space in order to accommodate an outlying party.

4.5. Methodological evaluations

At this point, it should once again be emphasized that policy positions in this study are viewed as abstract concepts that cannot be measured in any single "correct" or "objective" way. To the extent that different approaches to policy position are in agreement with each other, however, the positions extracted can be expected to correspond to some meaningful properties of parties. Within the two-dimensional political space that has been examined in this paper, there has been an overall high correlation among estimates, with some notable exceptions.

In general, Wordfish results are those that are the most weakly correlated with estimates from other approaches, while bearing in mind that it is also the approach that

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[48] The rating of the "coalition acceptability" of the Sweden Democrats on a scale from 0 to 10 in the *Nordic Populism Expert Survey* is a perfect 0: "The party is not viewed as an acceptable coalition partner". Furthermore, it has been argued that both blocs try to distance themselves from the Sweden Democrats while at the same time blaming the party's progress on the opposing camp (Hellström and Nilsson 2010: 68).

requires the least manual effort in order to produce estimates. In a technical sense, the Wordfish approach is perfectly reliable and free from cognitive bias in the scaling process, but its results cannot be blindly trusted and instead need considerable interpretation. The importance of this highly qualitative effort should not be overlooked, and interpretation can be difficult, as was the case when considering both the socio-cultural dimension and the superdimension earlier. A more basic limitation with the Wordfish approach is that it can only be used for main dimensions; narrower issues such as immigration and nationalism – which may be captured with classical content analysis, the dictionary approach (given that appropriate words can be identified) and expert surveys (given that the right questions are asked) – are beyond the reach of Wordfish. The primary reason for this is that not all manifestos deal with such issues (as compared to, for example, economic issues), and therefore such sections cannot be selected for inclusion in the analysis. This is a challenge that is particularly significant in the case of the Sweden Democrats, as many of the party's most salient issues belong to dimensions that are not as easily measured. On the other hand, interesting insights about the linguistic similarities between the Sweden Democrats and other parties may nevertheless be gained from analyses of main dimensions.

Another challenge with specific implications for the Sweden Democrats is that of linguistic volatility and context-independence. As we saw in earlier sections, results suggest that changes in Wordfish positioning of the Sweden Democrats over time can perhaps be better attributed to linguistic changes rather than policy changes. Likewise, many words weighed by Wordfish at the extremes of the spectrum appear in contradictory contexts. When the assumption of context independence is violated, individual words can be used to assess salience but not positioning. In the case of the Sweden Democrats, the problem may be more distinct because of its radical position on some issues, but the extent to which this actually affects Wordfish estimates is difficult to determine.

The dictionary approach faces some similar issues. Given that enough unique dictionary words are found in any given manifesto, the assumption of context independence need not be one hundred percent accurate. If, for example, one word out of fifty violates context independence the resulting estimate will not change much. For documents containing very few dictionary words, however, each violation of the assumption may drastically alter policy estimates. There are two aspects to this problem: first a more

general one, which is that the shorter a manifesto is (or the less salient the issue in question is), the less unique words will be found. If this number is small enough, the estimate will be wholly unreliable, as we saw in the case of the Sweden Democrats' economic 2002 estimate. This aspect of the dictionary problem is determined by lack of data (i.e. short manifestos and low issue salience) and is mainly unrelated to the nature of the party. As such, a dictionary analysis applied to the populist parties of, for example, Denmark or Finland, would likely not yield problems of this kind given the very lengthy (by Swedish standards) manifestos of these countries.

Another aspect of the problem, however, concerns the fact that SD manifestos contain fewer unique *left-right* words even in proportion to the lower-than-average manifesto length. In fact, very few words in the economic sections of SD manifestos can be considered ideologically loaded or even politically unambiguous; one would have great difficulties constructing an economic dictionary based solely on these documents. This issue is more directly related to the nature of the party, insofar as the reason for this lack of ideological language may reflect a lack of political or ideological heritage. Another explanation, explored earlier, relates to a conscious effort on behalf of the party to distance itself from a traditional left-right conflict. Overall, then, it seems that SD manifestos may be susceptible above average to linguistic issues such as linguistic instability and context-dependence, issues that can affect the results of both the approaches above.

The most qualitatively oriented content analysis approach used in this study, manual coding, has some potential advantages over the Wordfish and dictionary approaches when analysing parties such as the Sweden Democrats. Like expert surveys, manual coding allows for position estimation on a multitude of policy issues for which appropriate individual words cannot be distinguished, and which do not belong on any main dimension of political conflict. This aspect becomes more important when analysing parties for which main dimensions, such as the economy, are salient below average, or for which narrow issues, which are not dealt with by other parties, are salient above average. Furthermore, problems such as linguistic instability can ideally be disregarded by human coders; to the extent that we trust the CMP codings and expert estimates of this paper, the benefits of this advantage were illustrated when assessing the Sweden Democrats' economic positioning over time. However, manual coding has its own difficulties. The issue of reliability could be alleviated by multiple codings, assuring that estimates are not unduly influenced by subjectivity or bias, but this solution is prohib-

ited by high costs. The coding scheme of the Comparative Manifesto Project also has some methodological problems such as outdated and lacking categories as well as categories without natural opposites. An obvious way around this problem is the use of an improved coding scheme, but the vast content already coded using the CMP scheme naturally acts as a considerable counter-incentive to reform.[49]

While the dictionary approach certainly is useful in some research designs (see Rooduijn and Pauwels 2010 for a recent example), the question is if its trade-off between validity and reliability makes it appealing enough as a general approach to the estimation of policy positions. An effort in developing the dictionary technique as an alternative to the CMP approach (Laver and Garry 2000) was seemingly discontinued in favour of developing the Wordscores approach (Laver et al 2003). While novel statistical approaches such as Wordscores or Wordfish have great potential there are still difficulties to resolve, some of which can be expected to be particularly problematic when taking into account "outlier" parties, such as the Sweden Democrats, that differ significantly from mainstream parties in one way or another. Expert surveys, finally, certainly have an important role to play in the analysis of party positions, but as a measurement of official party policy there are some difficulties to consider when it comes to estimating parties that are almost universally disliked.

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[49] See Laver and Garry (2000) for a suggestion of an improved coding scheme.

5. Conclusions

Being a party that differs significantly from the Swedish political mainstream, there is considerable disagreement both on how to label the Sweden Democrats and on where on the left-right continuum the party belongs. In a political space primarily defined by economic conflict, the Sweden Democrats' main focus are issues unrelated to the economy; in a political space where economic position can be fairly accurately used to predict socio-cultural position, the Sweden Democrats is a distinct outlier. Where, then, does the party belong?

Based on the analyses of this paper, the Sweden Democrats is estimated to be an economically centrist party, for which the economy is an increasingly salient (but still below average) issue. This increased salience might be explained by the hypothesis that the party needs to widen its agenda (i.e. escape the image of being a single-issue party) in order to attract more voters; populist parties are often assumed to view economic issues as instrumental in achieving influence within their main spheres of interest, such as immigration. Regarding economic positioning over time the results of the analyses are inconclusive: linguistically, the Sweden Democrats' manifestos shifted drastically towards the economic right between 2006 and 2010, but the more interpretive approaches of manual coding and expert surveys place the party on the economic centre-left in the last election. A plausible guess is that policy positions have remained fairly stable while the political language on economic issues has changed. One potential explanation for this linguistic volatility is the Sweden Democrats' lack of a clear political or ideological heritage, resulting in the lack of a distinct political language. Another explanation may be that the party strategically avoids obvious left-right rhetoric in order to remain free from the constraints of the left-right cleavage.

Results also place the Sweden Democrats firmly on the authoritarian side of the socio-cultural dimension, a position earned primarily through support for conservative values, strong military, tougher measures concerning law and order, and opposition to immigration and multiculturalism. This dimension is salient above average, and the Sweden Democrats position is stable over time. While the Sweden Democrats in spatial terms hold an "extreme" position on these issues, this term is inappropriate insofar as it could imply anti-democratic tendencies, which are – unsurprisingly – not to be found in official election manifestos. Given the primacy of economic issues in the Swedish political space,

it is also inappropriate to refer to the Sweden Democrats as being "right-wing" in any unqualified way, as this reveals little of the party's nature. The inclusion of the Sweden Democrats in a model of Swedish political space makes it more difficult to collapse political conflict onto a single latent dimension, and the appropriate position of the party along any single dimension must be determined by the research question at hand.

A second aim of the paper has been to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches to the estimation of policy positions, in particular in the context of the Sweden Democrats or similar parties. Wordfish and the dictionary approach are obviously better suited to analyse linguistic differences and similarities. Given that issues or dimensions can be clearly delimited – meaning that relevant sections or individual words can be identified – policy positions that correlate highly with other estimates can be extracted. However, both approaches assume the context independence of words, which may or may not be problematic. The latter may to some extent compensate for it, but this both requires a significant effort and may challenge reliability. Research has shown the assumption to be fairly robust, but even slight violations can have significant consequences when data are scarce. Linguistic volatility, discussed above, may also affect the results of these approaches; both these issues should be considered when using word frequencies to analyse parties that deviate from the political mainstream.

Manual coding does not face these difficulties, allowing instead for a more qualitatively oriented interpretation of what message a given body of text wants to convey. Furthermore, manual coding potentially enables assessment on a greater number of issues than could the approaches above. At first glance, then, manual coding seems better suited to the analysis of outlier parties such as the Sweden Democrats. However, apart from the general problem of reliability, fundamental to all interpretive methods, the issue of bias is likely particularly important when analysing a party such as the Sweden Democrats, which promotes controversial issues and has an origin in extremist movements. Such bias is also a difficulty facing survey-based approaches, and in particular when estimating positions on an abstract scale such as general left-right, when it is unclear what criteria is or should be used. Regardless of which methodology is used to estimate policy positions, multidimensional models of political space need to be weighed by issue salience; generic models that assign equal weight to economic and socio-cultural issues are inappropriate in the Swedish context.

5.1. Suggestions for future research

The twin aims of this paper have been to estimate the position of the Sweden Democrats in political space and to evaluate different approaches to doing so. Building on the insights of these analyses, some suggestions for future research are presented.

One tentative conclusion drawn from the analyses of this paper is that economic sections of SD manifestos are more linguistically volatile than those of other parties, resulting in some difficulties for linguistic approaches to policy estimation. An interesting research agenda, then, could entail a deeper examination of the nature and causal mechanisms of this volatility. For example, to what extent do the Sweden Democrats lack a clear ideological profile on economic issues, and how does this affect manifesto language? Does the party strategically avoid distinct economic left-right rhetoric in order to profile itself as a "third way" party? A more general question, related to the field of linguistics, is whether an ideological message can be conveyed using ideologically neutral language. Are there some words or rhetorical figures that are essentially unavoidable, or can the clever author convey any message using any text?

Contrary to other estimates of a general Swedish left-right dimension, the Wordfish superdimension seems to rank parties in a manner heavily influenced by socio-cultural issues. The discrepancy between these two conceptions of Swedish political space may warrant a deeper examination of the salience/position distinction, as well as the extent to which the assumption of context independence is realistic in Swedish political language. Content analysis could also be applied to parliamentary speeches, in order to assess the prevalence of certain issues. This may reveal a different image of the party than the official one projected through election manifestos, potentially giving insights into internally contested issues and party factions. A complement to content analysis, focusing instead on behaviour, is to examine the outcomes of parliamentary voting. With which political bloc do Sweden Democrats vote on issues of interest? Such questions could provide additional insight – methodologically distinct from the approaches used in this paper – into where the party stands on any given issues or dimensions.

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Appendix A. Wordfish details

For inclusion in Wordfish analysis (Slapin and Proksch 2008; Proksch and Slapin 2009c), a political text is parsed into a vector of word counts, and multiple documents form word frequency matrices where each row represents a word and each column a document. Individual words are assumed to be distributed at random – the *naïve Bayes* assumption, shown to be empirically false but well suited to represent text for computational purposes. Furthermore, word frequencies are assumed to be generated by a Poisson process, a probability distribution with only one parameter, λ, which is both the variance and the mean; this distribution is chosen because of its simplicity. The functional form of the Wordfish model is

$$\lambda_{ijt} = \exp(\alpha_{it} + \psi_j + \beta_{j*} \omega_{it})$$

where ω represents the position of party *i* in election *t*; β represents the word weight of word *j*; α is a set of document fixed effects to compensate for variation in manifesto length; and ψ is a set of word fixed effects to compensate for the fact that some words are used much more frequently than others. Using a word frequency matrix, Wordfish estimates positions for all parties (documents) simultaneously. With a set of starting values, an Expectation-Maximization algorithm iteratively re-estimates the values of all parameters until convergence. A parametric bootstrap running 500 simulations (i.e. 500 resampled data sets drawing from a Poisson distribution) provides 95 % confidence intervals for the estimates; more unique words (longer documents) provide narrower confidence intervals.[50]

For additional details, see Slapin and Proksch (2008) and Proksch and Slapin (2009c).

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[50] See Lowe and Benoit (2011) for an alternative and less computer-intensive approach to the computation of confidence intervals.

Appendix B. Dictionary word lists

Economic dimension

LEFT	RIGHT	NEUTRAL		
jämlik	avregler*	*arbetslös*	arbetsmarknad*	maxtaxa*
klyft	coach*	*avdrag*	arbetstillfäll*	medarbet*
rättvis	entreprenör*	*avgift*	arbetsuppgift*	moms*
anställningsskydd*	flexib*	*bidrag*	bnp	monopol*
anställningsvillkor*	frihandel*	*bolag*	bransch*	plånbok*
arbetarrör*	företag*	*bost*	deltid*	pris*
arbetsmiljö*	hushållsnär*	*ekonom*	effektiviser*	produ*
arbetsrätt*	hushållstjänst*	*ersättning*	export*	rehabilitering*
arbetstid*	incitament*	*finans*	fastighet*	resurs*
arbetsvillk*	konkurr*	*försäkring*	förmögen*	satsning*
fack*	medelinkomsttag*	*industri*	försörj*	service
fattig*	nyföretag*	*omsorg*	föräldrapenning*	skuld*
kollektivavtal*	näringsliv*	*peng*	globalisering*	skyddsnät*
nedskärning*	regelbörda*	*pension*	handel*	småföretag*
privatiser*	riskkapital*	*sjuk*	heltid*	stimuler*
socialis*	rörlighet*	*skatt*	hyresrätt*	subvention*
solidari*	tillväxt*	*skol*	högkostnadsskydd*	syssels*
vinstintress*	valfri*	*tjänst*	inkomst*	trygghet*
		utbildning	insats*	upphandling*
		vård	investering*	utgift*
		a-kassa*	jobb*	utgiftstak*
		aktör*	kapital*	vinst
		anställ*	kompetens*	välfärd*
		arbete*	konjunktur*	värnskatt*
		arbetsgiv*	konsum*	yrke*
		arbetskraft*	lön*	äga*
		arbetsliv*	lönsam*	

Socio-cultural dimension

LIBERTARIAN		AUTHORITARIAN		
asyl*	integritet*	alkohol*	gemenskap*	skärp*
demokrat*	jäms*	ansvar*	kravlös*	straff*
diskriminer*	kvinn*	arbetsro*	krimin*	studiero*
fred*	livschans*	brott*	militär*	säkerhet*
frihet*	mångfalld*	bugg*	moral*	tradition*
funktionsneds*	nedrust*	civil*	narko*	värdegrund*
förtryck*	rasis*	drog*	polis*	våld*
grön*	samkön*	etik*	respekt*	
hatbrott*	toleran*	familj*	restrik*	
hbt	vapenexport*	församling*	samhör*	
hållbar*	yttrandefri*	försvar*	sammanhåll*	

Appendix C. Manifestos used in analyses

Year	Party	Title	Length (words)
2002	C	Kompass för samhällsförnyare – Centerpartiets valplattform 2002	2509
	FP	Ett parti som vågar utmana – Folkpartiet liberalernas valmanifest inför valet 2002	5539
	KD	Tid för förändring. Tid för handling	4615
	M	Frihet för Sverige	5509
	MP	Grönt valmanifest 2002 – för en långsiktigt hållbar utveckling	1429
	S	Tillsammans för trygghet och utveckling – Socialdemokraternas valmanifest 2002-2006	2826
	SD	Ditt land - Ditt val – Sverigedemokraternas valmanifest 2002	747
	V	Valplattform 2002	5673
2006	C	Kontrakt för fler jobb, förnyad välfärd och god miljö – Centerpartiets valmanifest 2006	4375
	FP	En socialliberal modell i globaliseringens tid – Folkpartiets valmanifest 2006	7522
	KD	Garanti-bevis till Dig som väljare inför valet 2006	1991
	M*	Nytt hopp för Sverige	10849
	MP	Grönare Sverige! - för ökad livskvalitet	1784
	S	Alla ska med – Socialdemokraternas valmanifest 2006-2010	4068
	SD	Sverigedemokraternas valmanifest 2006	1601
	V	Arbete, demokrati, rättvisa – Vänsterpartiets valplattform 2006	3490
2010	C	Framtiden tillhör dem som vågar – Fler jobb i nya och växande företag, förnyad välfärd och god miljö	6982
	FP	Folkpartiet liberalernas valmanifest 2010 – Utmaningar efter valsegern.	9594
	KD	13 steg och 89 vallöften för ett mänskligare Sverige.	3207
	M*	Jobbmanifestet – Alliansens valmanifest 2010-2014.	16653
	MP	Framtiden är här – Valmanifest för en grön omställning som ger nya jobb, en nödvändig klimatpolitik och global solidaritet	2344
	S	Fler jobb och nya möjligheter – Vägval 2010	2493
	SD	99 förslag för ett bättre Sverige – Sverigedemokraternas kontrakt med väljarna 2010 – 2014	1734
	V	Gemensam trygghet, individens frihet, en hållbar värld – Valplattform 2010	2531

* For the 2006 and 2010 elections, the Moderate Party only released joint Alliance manifestos.