

A comparative study of the Norwegian and Swedish EU- civil society organizations ‘Nei til EU’ and ‘Nej till EU’

How does the two opposition organizations, ‘*Nei til EU*’ and ‘*Nej till EU*’ justify their opposition against EU membership, and what can explain their differences and similarities in their political discourse?

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1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) started off as a peace project after the Second World War that developed into an extensive political and economic alliance with huge global impact. At first glance, it might look strange that a small state like Norway would be sceptical to be a part of an economy and political project of this scale. However, in the early days of European integration process, the Nordic states earned a reputation for being Eurosceptic.¹ These countries entered an alliance called the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) to avoid the supranational hands of the EU.

In Norway, the EU debate in the 1960's and early 70's fired up a critical movement within the Norwegian public, creating what would become the biggest resistant group in the country: *'Nei til EU'* (no to the EU). The organization reached 140 000 members prior to the 1994 referendum, with active and local political associations in every county.² The outcome of the referendums and the organization's committed members have been crucial in terms of further resistance against the EU membership and the European Economic Area agreement (EEA). Sweden - the neighbour and the "big brother" to Norway, has been a member since 1995. According to the Eurobarometer 2018, 73% of the Swedish public believe that their country has benefited from its EU membership.³ Having that said, Sweden has also been called "a reluctant partner" by the EU, as the country has big reservations over major policy issues such as environment and democracy.⁴ *'Nej till EU'* became the Swedish anti-EU organization and was established ahead of the national referendum in 1994. The main difference from the Norwegian case was that the opposition lost in Sweden, and the country became an EU member 1st of January 1995.

In light of these two concrete cases, the assignment will analyse the two organizations political discourse and find out how they justify their arguments and scepticism. One organization is working within an official EU member state and one is working from the outside: in other words, similar goals yet different circumstances. The cases will be put up against each other in a comparative study to seek the answer of my thesis: *how does the*

¹ Clive Archer. (2000).

² Nei til EU. Official website. (2007).

³ European-barometer. (2018).

⁴ Karl Magnus Johansson. (2002). p.4.

organizations 'Nei til EU' and 'Nej till EU' justify their opposition against EU membership, and what can explain their similarities and differences in their political discourse?

This bachelor assignment require a limit on length and will therefore primary focus on EU opposition in a historical aspect as it is expressed today and how it is explained in research literature. For a reflective purpose, the assignment will briefly cover the Nordic euroscepticism and show two important factors of the referendum outcomes, *value-driven* and *interest-driven* discourse – developed by Ivar Naumann and Christine Ingebritsen.

2. Method

To answer the thesis's research question, I will analyse the two opposition organizations in a qualitative comparative case-study from three different perspectives:

Firstly: a historic background. The importance of a historic background influence the arguments that the two opposition groups presents. For example, the 'Nei til EU' movement emphasises the historical aspect of how the country was under both Danish and Swedish rule and that an EU entrance would once again destroy Norwegian sovereignty. The Swedish resistance group emphasise the historical neutrality principal during the World War, and how EU's solidarity policy means Sweden will be forced to participate in an event of a new war.

Secondary: arguments. On the base of the historical part, I will look at the arguments presented by the two organizations. The core-values of the two groups, such as environment, solidarity, democracy and sovereignty influence their political discourse. This part shows what the organizations prioritize on their agenda and presents what can later be concluded as a difference between the organizations: interest-driven arguments and value-based arguments.

Thirdly: research-based findings. This part will be findings published by other researchers on motivation behind the euroscepticism in Norway and Sweden – thus a deeper explanation behind the presented arguments from the previous chapter. I will use the VCR-model developed by Marianne Skinner (2012)⁵ to explain why the 'Nei til EU's arguments are value

⁵ Marianne Skinner. (2012). *Norwegian euroscepticism: values, identity or interest*.

and identity based, while Milena Sunnus (2016)⁶ explains in her article *Swedish euroscepticism: democracy, sovereignty and welfare* the ‘Nej till EU’'s arguments.

The assignment will do a deductive approach, meaning the theoretical framework is based on existing data from books, articles, research studies and other sources.

My case study tries to answer the questions of “how” and “what” using a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). Such this assignment, the advantages of using this method is that it can analyse a small number of cases. The research requires comparisons to be made between each case and variable. That means even simple variables can be used, which gives this assignment a more detailed theoretical framework. A huge benefit is that QCA can systematically analyze large amounts of qualitative data, where patterns and variations within the data can be detected without losing any relevant information during the analysis⁷. On the other hand, the disadvantages of using QCA can be simplification of social phenomena (caused by dichotomous variables⁸), in this case topics like i.e. euroscepticism and national values. Obviously there are many other variables to take into consideration.

3. Theory

The assignment will now present its theoretical framework, starting off with the term ‘euroscepticism’. This is an important factor that will assist to ‘back up’ the thesis in the conclusion. I will mainly be using Cécilie Leconte’s (2010) definition in this part, and her book on *Understanding Euroscepticism* as a primary source. In addition, I will look at the two professors Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak research on ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ euroscepticism, E. De Vries’s book⁹ to explain and identify who supporters and sceptics are, and lastly Clive Archer’s book¹⁰ on euroscepticism found in the Nordic states.

⁶ Milena Sunnus. (2016). *Swedish euroscepticism: democracy, sovereignty and welfare*

⁷ Eva Hellström. (1998).

⁸ Ibid, Hellström.. (1998).

⁹ Catherine E. De Vries. (2018). *Euroscepticism and the future of European Integration*.

¹⁰ Clive Archer. (2002). *Euroscepticism in the Nordic region*.

3.1. Euroscepticism

‘Europhobia’, ‘Euro-critics’, ‘Eurorealists’, ‘Eurorejects’ and ‘Europragmatists’, are just a few terms under the big umbrella of *euroscepticism*. What they have in common is describing hostility towards the EU. The term is generic, which means that it applies to a large variety of factors or context that it might be in, whether that is according to the country, across time, media or history.¹¹

According to Cécile Leconte, euroscepticism is a rather recent term. It was actually not used during the first decade of European integration, when opponents of the integrations were referred to as nationalists or ‘anti-marketeters’ of the common market.¹² Some of the core concepts of the discourse already existed in mid-1960s, such as ‘eurocrat’ that appeared in the French dictionaries during the de Gaulle era which expressed the idea of a gap between European elites and the average citizen.¹³

Interestingly, the term originated for a specific context - the British public debate on the European Community in the mid-1960s, as it was first published in an article by The Times in 1985.¹⁴ One can argue that euroscepticism was (and still is very current) a British phenomenon, as it was popularized by Margaret Thatcher’s ‘Bruges speech’ given in 1988 at the College of Europe.¹⁵ Euroscepticism has a specific meaning in the British context, where it often refers to a form of cultural anti-Europeanism broader than ‘EU- scepticism’.¹⁶ This shows how the term varies depending on the i.e. country context. While it always refers to some form of hostility towards the EU, this hostility does not necessarily apply to the same dimensions of European integration. The term consists of two words ‘Euro’ and ‘scepticism’. Leconte describes the meaning of scepticism as a “safeguard” against intolerance and against other subversion of idealism into fanaticism.¹⁷

- Sceptics do not accept the validity of any other belief or opinion without submitting it to a free and critical examination. The sceptic abstains from judgments and advocates distancing

¹¹ Cécile Leconte (2010) p.3.

¹² Ibid, Leconte (2010). p.3.

¹³ Ibid, Leconte (2010) p.3.

¹⁴ Ibid, Leconte (2010) p.3.

¹⁵ Ibid, Leconte (2010) p.3.

¹⁶ Ibid, Leconte (2010) p 4.

¹⁷ Ibid, Leconte (2010) p.5.

*oneself from one's own opinions and beliefs*¹⁸

Obviously, this mindset has downsides. Sceptics have been accused of discrediting any form of universal truth to emphasise the respect of local norms and traditions. In this definition by Leconte, euroscepticism does not necessarily mean hostility towards European integration. As she points out:

*- Eurosceptics are those who submit the issue of European integration to a sceptical spotlight. Support for European integration should not derive from any theoretical or normative belief but must be assessed on the basis of practical costs/gains analysis and according to its respect of national political, cultural, normative diversities”.*¹⁹

However, in today's political discourse euroscepticism has come to denote different forms of opposition to European integration.

3.2. Hard and soft euroscepticism:

As the term 'euroscepticism' can relate to many variables. It is useful to break it down to 'hard' and 'soft' euroscepticism. Bearing in mind that the forms of scepticism often depends on the region and political culture.

Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (2003) explain that 'hard' euroscepticism is outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one's country joining or remaining a member of EU.²⁰ On the other hand, 'Soft' euroscepticism involves contingent or qualified opposition to European integration. It may take the form of 'policy' euroscepticism or 'national-interest' euroscepticism (although they often overlap).²¹

Policy-euroscepticism comes from the type of opposition that is designed to deepen the gap of European political and economic integration (i.e. EMU) or are against particular policy initiatives or specific extensions of EU competencies. However, it is not incompatible with

¹⁸ Cécilie Leconte. (2010) p 5.

¹⁹ Ibid, Leconte. (2010). p 5.

²⁰ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (2003) p.3.

²¹ Ibid, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2003) p.3.

expressing a broad support for the project or model of European integration. For example, a member state could be pro-EU, but opposed to provisions of the Maastricht treaty or the country's membership of the Euro. Policy-based euroscepticism is often a time- and country specific phenomenon. In Sweden, policy-euroscepticism is expressed through opposition to the Euro, where 56% of the votes rejected adaption to the Euro in the 2003 referendum.²²

'National-interest'-euroscepticism involves defending or standing up for national interests in the context of debates about the EU. Soft euroscepticism is compatible with support in the principle for the European project, it can also include parties supporting the European cooperation, but there is a need to present the national interest-euroscepticism here to represent the domestic political support base. There are grounds for this position among candidate states. The process of accession involves a degree of negotiation and compromises which involves candidates sacrificing short-term national interests.²³

3.3. Who are supporters and who are sceptics?

A question we might ask is whether euroscepticism is primary linked to people's feeling of national identity or if it is rooted in socio-economic insecurity?

According to Leconte, nationality is the most important factor to influence an individual's attitudes towards the EU ahead of transnational factors such as level of education or occupation.²⁴ Catherine E. De Vries (2018) examines the Brexit votes in her book *Euroscepticism and the future of European integration*. She argue that in terms of demographic profile, it is not the socio-economic status or financial anxiety that separates supporter from sceptics but rather the age, gender and education level. Especially, sceptics, of the exit variety, tend to be in the older group, male and slightly less educated.²⁵ De Vries mentions specifically that the better and more favourable national conditions are (and also if the exit option for a membership is visible, i.e. with Brexit) the more likely that the sceptical view will be focused on political topics like immigrants rather than unemployment²⁶.

If the national conditions are less favourable, unemployment trumps immigrations as the

²² Eurobarometer. (2003). *Post referendum in Sweden*

²³ Taggart and Szczerbiak. (2003) p.3.

²⁴ Cécilie Leconte. (2010) p.69.

²⁵ Catherine E. De Vries. (2018) p. 104.

²⁶ Ibid, De Vries. (2018) p.105-106.

biggest priority, even among exit sceptics.²⁷ If you look at countries with a high economic growth and favourable political conditions like Norway and Sweden the public would, according to De Vries, prioritize and care more about immigrant issues over unemployment and finance related issues. The EU and other national governmental elites may face difficulties with the divergent demands and priorities of sceptics and supporters from different states.

De Vries refer to Matthew Gabel and his 1998 classical utilitarian study of support for European integration that shows the British farmers and fishermen tend to be more supportive of the European project based on the agriculture subsidies that they receive.²⁸ However, in Norway that was the two biggest opposition sectors in the 1972 and 1994 against a membership. The reason behind the opposition had to do with the difficulty of farming in Norway due to the cold climate, hard soil and mountains. Farmers argued that they would never be able to compete with other states in the EU market. Additionally, the fear of the EU taking control over national resources - especially the fishery sector which was one of the biggest incomes for Norway.

3.4. Euroscepticism in the Nordic states

Geography of euroscepticism is also a factor in analysing the national and territorial cleavages in the Nordic countries relationship to the EU. Different countries mean different euroscepticism. Different factors needs to be considered: the chronological accession process but also national history and processes of state and nation building.²⁹

Looking at the location of the Nordic countries, they are placed in the north of Europe. Isolated from the centre of Europe, and also quite far away from the decision-making capital of EU – Brussels. Similar to the Nordic states, the UK is geographically more isolated on an island. However, in the UK the prominent type of euroscepticism is the anti-Europeanism, while the Nordic country of Denmark is more prone to policy- euroscepticism since the overlap between state and nation is so strong. In other words, the nature of euroscepticism differ from country to country.³⁰ For example, as early as the late 1940s, Norway and Sweden

²⁷ Catherine E. De Vries. (2018) p. 105.

²⁸ Ibid, De Vries (2018) p. 109.

²⁹ Cécile Leconte (2010) p.68.

³⁰ Ibid, Leconte (2010) p.68-69.

was rather sceptical towards the idea of ‘The United States of Europe’, whereas such an idea was strongly supported in the Benelux countries, while the British public opinion was largely undecided.³¹

According to Clive Archer, The Nordic region is rich in terms of GNP per capita and has a long tradition of democracy and known for its social welfare systems and policies.³² One suggestion is that Nordic states reservation towards European integration reflect the different economic interests. Christine Ingebritsen, a political scientist specializing on small states in international relations, has expressed that:

- The political influence of leading sectors (Norwegian oil, Swedish manufacturing, agriculture and fishery sectors) is a systematic way to understanding the politics (and economics) underlying the discourse about European integration, Nordic contractions of the EC (...) reflect the preferences of prominent, well organized groups within each society.

Ingebritsen came out with the book *Nordic States and European unity* (1998) where she goes in depth on why the Nordic euroscepticism to EU is interest-driven and based on national priorities. Her view has also two other factors: security imperatives may override the political and economic influence in sectors, and ‘the sectors are caught in a two-level game’ at the inter-state and domestic levels.³³ According to Ingebritsen, the economic phenomenon of sectors is converted into political phenomenon by three institutional logics: party system, interest groups and social movements. In cooperative systems such as in the Nordic states, the density of ties between sectors and the states tends to be high.³⁴ Ingebritsen argue that the Norwegian central sectors: petroleum, agriculture and fisheries, (especially petroleum) has helped building up the Norwegian economy to catch up with European economies by handling out subsidies – especially the direct subsidies from the Norwegian state to the agriculture sector (which is one of the highest in the world, being over eight times larger than what the Swedish state hands out).³⁵ As result, the sectors have become dependent on the subsidies and will therefore fight for the state subsidy. A possible EU membership would

³¹ Cécile Leconte. (2010). p.70-71.

³² Clive Archer. (2007). p.88.

³³ Ibid, Archer. (2007). p.107.

³⁴ Iver B Neumann. (2001). p.88.

³⁵ Ibid, Neumann. (2001). p.89.

change the subsidy policy. Ingebritsen insist that the outcome of the referendum would be different if the political economy had been less dependent on the petroleum and more on the manufacturing exports, like Sweden did.³⁶ In contrast, Ivar Neumann - a political scientist and professor at Oslo Metropolitan University, look more on the identity-driven euroscepticism. He respond in 2001 to Ingebrigtsen's book³⁷, where he focus more on the national-identity as an independent variable for the Norwegian outcome of the referendum. Neumann argues that Ingebritsen arguments that Norway's petroleum sector can not be responsible for the outcome in the 1972 referendum as the oil was newly discovered in that time and hardly mentioned in the debates. Just 20 years prior to the 1994 referendum the agriculture and fishery sector were able to contribute a "no" vote without the exitance of the petroleum-generated subsidies. Neumann suggest that the reason why Norway wanted to maintain and even increase subsidies to the agriculture sector was based on symbolic power. The farmers were able to present themselves to be the embodiment of the nation, which present the power of identity.³⁸

³⁶ Iver B Neumann. (2001). p.89.

³⁷ Ibid, Neumann. (2001) p.89.

³⁸ Ibid, Neumann. (2001) p.92.

4. Analysis

In part 4, the assignment will be analysing the two organizations based on the theoretical framework given. It will consist of three perspectives, historical background, the arguments given by the opposition and the VCR model that explain the motivation behind the Norwegian ‘Nei til EU’s euroscepticism and Sunnus article on motivation behind Swedish euroscepticism. The Swedish case will also include the Swexit-campaign as a current historical aspect to the political discourse.

The Norwegian case draws on research that has been conducted by Cécilie Leconte (2010), Erik. O Erikson (2015) and the VCR model by Marianne Skinner (2012).

The Swedish case draws on work by Karl Magnus Johansson (2002) for historical background, Andrew C Twaddle (1997) and Milena Sunnus (2016).

4.1. ‘Nei til EU’ – The opposition side in Norway

To understand the background of ‘Nei til EU’ we have to look briefly at the history of the Norwegian accession process. As Leconte mentions,

- national perceptions of the EU are shaped by -and during the accession process: when a country plan to join the EU, as well as the referendum process and length.³⁹

<i>Referendum result</i>	<i>Turnout (%)</i>	<i>For (%)</i>	<i>Against (%)</i>
<i>1972 EC membership</i>	79,2	46,5	53,5
<i>1994 EU membership</i>	89,6	47,8	52,2

Table 4.1: Results of the Norwegian referendum on EU membership

The EU question is likely to have been the most discussed political topic within Norwegian history after the war. The public referendums in 1972 and 1994 engaged a huge part of the population where both resulted in ‘no’ to a EU membership.

³⁹ Cécilie Leconte. (2010) p.73.

Norway applied for the first time in 1962 for a membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) after Britain had sent in their application together with Ireland and Denmark. However, a veto was put down by Charles de Gaulle to stop the British application as he was in distrust of the UK. Norwegian government sent in a new application in June 1970. The negotiations led to a huge split in the parliament, especially for the Labour party, and gave fuel to the growing opposition movement.

Folkebevegelsen mot norsk medlemskap I fellesmarkedet (the people's movement against membership in the common market) was established in 1970 and peaked with 130 000 members.⁴⁰ This was the first wave of mobilized movement that would later become 'Nei til EU'. It was a political movement started by the people, rather than politicians or other authorities. The opposition mobilized quickly and managed to create a huge political involvement within the public. The opposition towards EU was strongest the further away from the cities and decision-making and consisted mainly of people from 'district Norway' such as farmers and fishermen.

The membership-issue's polarizing effect in 1972 made it difficult to discuss Norwegian European-politics on a free basis, a situation that remained until the next referendum. However, different historical moments changed that mindset, like the Berlin wall's fall and the Eastern bloc's collapse. It gave hope to the people that cooperation and peace was the way to go for the future. Norway participated actively in the negotiations of an agreement that would create relations to the EU without being a member in it. It was named the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement and is still today what binds Norway to EU and grants access to the single market. According to Erik Erikson and John Fossum:

*- many of those who were sceptical to full membership perceived the EEA Agreement as the lesser evil. A deal that would secure Norwegian access to the EU's internal market, while at the same time minimalizing the loss of sovereignty. Some claim that the Norwegian no-campaigners won in 1994 but have lost a little every day since then.*⁴¹

⁴⁰ Dag Axel Kristoffersen. (2015).

⁴¹ Erik O Eriksen & John Erik Fossum. (2015). p. 77.

The Norwegian National Assembly in 1992 decided to apply for a second time for a membership and started the negotiations the same year together with Sweden (that applied in 1991).

4.1.2 Arguments and political discourse

‘Nei til EU’ became, and still is, the biggest opposition group in Norway that fights against a membership in the Union. The independent non-governmental organization (NGO) is mobilized by the people and a coordinator for political parties on the opposition side.⁴²

The members are paying a yearly fee to support the economical aspect of the organization and help enlist new members. ‘Nei til EU’ also has a youth and student-wing.

The organization operates on three different levels: - national level, county level as well as on level of the municipalities. Each level has its own bodies and union representatives. The organization is classified as a democratic organization governed by its members. Political breadth, geographical spread and gender balance are sought in elections to all bodies and by representatives at all levels.⁴³

The main arguments from the national referendums were similar in both cases: scepticism towards further political integration in Europe, transferring power to supranational bodies, losing the national democracy as well as losing control over Norwegian fishery resources and subsidies to the agriculture sector. All these arguments are currently on the agenda for the political discourse. Particularly the topics of solidarity, democracy and climate reflect frequently in the Nei til EU’s arguments. The motivation behind those arguments will be analysed more thoroughly in the next part explaining Skinner’s VCR-model. For now, the political discourse will be presented according to ‘Nei til EU’s official webpage.⁴⁴ The main arguments is that the organization wants to:

1) Ensure democracy and sovereignty in Norway.

Participatory democracy, “folkestyre”, is highly valued in Norway. We can look back at the national history as to why this influence this argument. The Norwegian Euroscepticism might be affected by the history of being under foreign rule and the peripheries’ struggle for

⁴² Nei til EU (2019) Official website. *Organisasjonshåndbok*.

⁴³ Ibid, Nei til EU (2019).

⁴⁴ Ibid, Nei til EU (2019). *4 grunner and politikk, planer og vedtekter*.

influence and self-government.⁴⁵ Norway was under Swedish rule from 1814-1905⁴⁶ which influenced to spread an independence movement after the union broke. Especially the strong feeling of aversion to power concentration and technocracy. 'Nei til EU' also insist that the democratic deficit in the Union has become so serious that it is impossible for an EU citizen to know what happens behind "closed doors" in Brussels.⁴⁷ They argue that the EEA Agreement has affected the Norwegian democracy and is no longer in balance.⁴⁸

2) Ensure a continued Norwegian independence in international politics.

It can be rooted back into the Norwegian history when traditionally the periphery were the defenders of the Norwegian culture and identity, values and democracy against the power of urbanization, centralization and further European integration. UMEU, the student-wing of 'Nei til EU', want to focus on the independence Norway have in Europe and the independence the Norwegian citizens have in their society.⁴⁹ Becoming a member in EU will, according to the members, remove that right. EU will then move power and decision from the common people to the European elite – making them more powerful. This strides against the political culture of anti-technocracy and value of equality between citizens.

3) Strive to fairness and equality in international trade and cooperation and urges Norway to take an active role in the global arena obtaining those equalities.

'Nei til EU' argues that EU is pushing former colony-states into unfair trade agreements, preventing developing states in building up their own welfare states and economy. EU is becoming more dominating at the expense of others. For moral reasons Norway should remain on the outside and pursue a solidarity-based trade policy.⁵⁰

4) Strive for Norwegian natural resources to be administrated and controlled by Norwegians authorities and institutions.

Norwegian nature is not only unique and visually beautiful, but it is also the main source of renewable energy for the country. It provides economy for workers in the fishery and agriculture sector. Not surprisingly, those are the biggest opponents to an EU membership. An

⁴⁵ Marianne Skinner. (2012) p. 427.

⁴⁶ Francis Sejersted. (2012).

⁴⁷ Nei til EU. (2019). *Fire gode grunner til å stemme nei til EU*.

⁴⁸ Nei til EU. (2016). *Folkestyre eller fjernstyre?* P.7-8.

⁴⁹ UMEU (2019). Ungdommer mot EU. Official webpage.

⁵⁰ Nei til EU. (2019). *Fire gode grunner til å stemme nei til EU*.

entrance would mean EU would control and regulate agriculture production. 'Nei til EU' argues that EU mass production and transportation would lead to pollution and damaging the fragile nature and wildlife in Norway⁵¹.

The agriculture and fishery sector were highly mobilized during the referendum and came from the rural district/periphery under a common unity, where they argued on the need to maintain Norwegian agriculture and coastal fishing, protect nature and cultural landscapes, keep the decentralized settlement and promoting the thriving districts⁵². People who were supporting these arguments were most likely to be Eurosceptic.

5) Promote a broad international cooperation, not restricted by borders of Europe.

The Lisbon-treaty assures that foreign policy is coordinated, meaning Norway would not have its own independent voice in foreign affairs. 'Nei til EU' use Sweden as an example on why not to enter the Union. After becoming an EU member, Sweden's political voting in organizations like United Nations (UN) has changed. Before membership, Sweden used to vote with countries from both south and north but is not only voting with northern states.⁵³ The EU dominate foreign policy decision making, i.e. with plans of common EU military. Opponents fear of having a potential superpower weakening NATO and threaten the Norwegian foreign affairs, citizens and economy.

⁵¹ Nei til EU. (2019). *Fire gode grunner til å stemme nei til EU*.

⁵² Marianne Skinner (2012) p.427.

⁵³ Nei til EU (2019) *Fire gode grunner til å stemme nei til EU*.

4. 1. 3. The VCR model

Explaining the reason behind the Norwegian euroscepticism practiced by ‘Nei til EU’ can be rather complicated. In terms of dissecting the scepticism, part by part, there are three main concepts that come up frequently: political values, political culture and rural society (VCR).

Numerous researchers have conducted studies on the Norwegian opposition based on the 1994 referendum’s result. As Neumann (2002) mentions in the book *European Integration and National Identity*, these studies are able “to pinpoint patterns of behaviour [...] although the question of motivation is not explored”.⁵⁴ Similar to Neumann’s research on national identity and values being the reason of the referendum outcome, Marianne Skinner use a VCR theory to explain the Norwegian Euroscepticism in particular.⁵⁵ The model argues that in the centre of the scepticism is a concern of three concepts. Skinner suggest that ‘values’ can be a stronger explanation for Norwegian euroscepticism rather than ‘economic interest’ (ref. to Ingebritsen). The most cited arguments of the yes-voters were economic-based, while the majority of no-voters had sovereignty and democracy arguments at the top of their list.

Skinner explain that all the concepts in her model are linked together. Issues like environmentalism, quality of life and internal/external solidarity fall under the post-materialist values. Issues such as independence and democracy are central to the geo-historical/political culture, and issues concerning the primary sectors, settlement pattern and rural traditions define the rural society concept.⁵⁶ Through its territorial dimension, Rural society is connected to the geo-historical conceptions that are connected to political values because of the notion of left-wing policies associated with post-materialist values. Which according to Skinner “-is a cluster of values that speaks to the ideals of nearly all the rural factions in Norway”.⁵⁷ It is however important to point out the weakness of the VCR model. Particularly the line between political culture and political values can be blurred. For example, support to the welfare state in the Nordic countries can be described as a part of the political culture as well as the political value. In other words, problems can be found in the model regarding the different concept’s definitions and their overlaps.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Iver B Naumann (2002) p. 88-89

⁵⁵ Marianne Skinner (2012).

⁵⁶ Ibid, Skinner (2012) p.427.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Skinner (2012) p.427.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Skinner (2012) p.427.

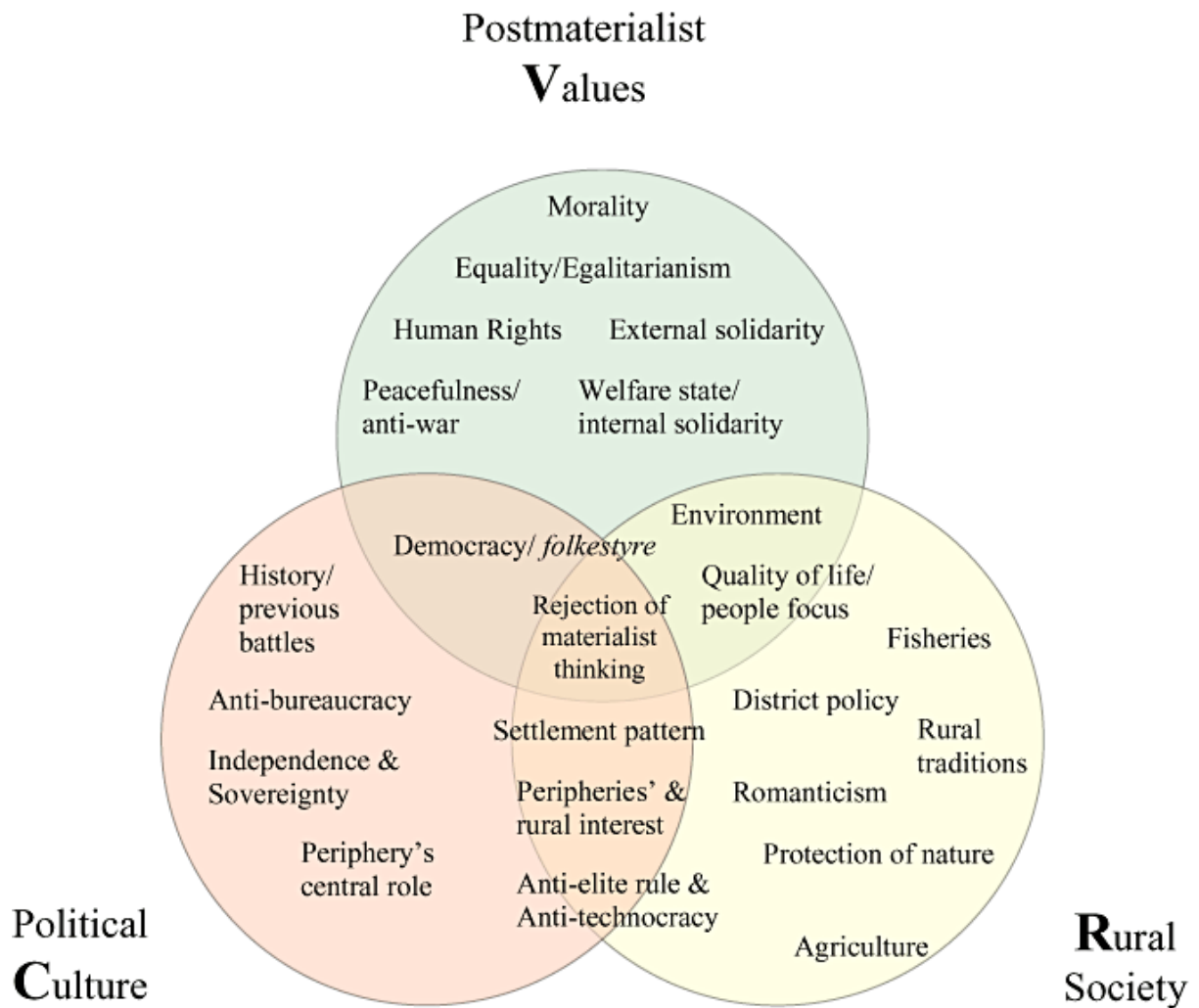


Table 4.2: The VCR-model by Marianne Skinner

As the figure above shows, the political culture characteristic of democracy can be identified as a self-expression value and a post-materialist value.⁵⁹ According to Skinner, the democracy aspect can also be a central part to geo-historical concept than to the post-materialist variation since in Norway the notion of “folkestyre” is closer linked to political tradition than self-express values.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Marianne Skinner. (2012) p.428.

⁶⁰ Ibid, Skinner (2012) p.428.

Post-materialist value:

Skinner points out that in the early processes of discussing the membership possibility, Norwegian Eurosceptics were on the fence of EU's "obsession" with economic growth, the single market and the free trade principle. Apparently, some saw it as a reason not to join the EU since other non-economic policy topics were not prioritized – especially topics that could threaten the economic growth.⁶¹ Protecting the environment, focus on people and their welfare and quality of life were topics that were not discussed as much as business interests and money growth. Strictly speaking, the Eurosceptics saw it as a question of morality. For example, instead of growing a wealth in Europe that will increase the gap between poor and rich, countries should rather prioritize solidarity towards weaker states.

The logic behind the environment argument is that increased consumption will strain on the world's already exploited resources.⁶² Skinner argues that a unique element to the Norwegian euroscepticism is rather based on idealistic values and the wish to make the world a better place, thus seeing EU as a part of the problem rather than a solution.

Political culture:

As mentioned previously, history and culture has a major impact on the arguments in the rooted euroscepticism. There is a clear emphasis on the people's right to vote and govern and the country's independence. The opposition's view is that EU's system of government is not compatible with the Norwegian democracy and that a membership will mean losing control over Norway's sovereignty.

An element to the voters were that many people felt proud over that what their ancestors had fought for and achieved – a free nation. EU would, in their eyes, take away the fundamental freedom and democracy from their existence. EU's democratic deficit was seen as a huge barrier to a membership. The democracy sentiment builds on conceptions of people empowerment, bureaucracy, antipathy, transparency, accountability and geographical distance.

Rural society:

Both the euroscepticism in Norway and Sweden is characterized by a strong territorial dimension between the urban districts and the rural districts – also known as the centre versus

⁶¹ Marianne Skinner. (2012) p.432.

⁶² Ibid, Skinner (2012) p.432.

periphery in Stein Rokkan's four territorial-culture cleavages theory.⁶³

Some can argue that the centre-periphery dimension has more to do with the romantic idealization of the 'peasants' and the life on the countryside which is ingrained into Norwegian identity and values, and less to do with the Norwegian political and economic rural interests. Although this explanation by Skinner might be a far stretch – "it could explain why the fishery and agriculture sectors were able to rally so many voters to their cause/side despite the limited size and economic significance".⁶⁴

4.2. 'Nej till EU' – The opposition in Sweden

The Swedish history have some similar elements to the Norwegian one, yet also completely different. After the war the trust among the European countries were destroyed, along with Europeans cities, economy and citizens. To build up Europe once again there was a need of cooperation. However, the Swedish state did not see any reason to go into a cooperation with other states since the country was not in necessarily in need of an economical rescue. Sweden did however enter the Marshall plan after negotiations through the "side-door", scared it would disrupt their neutrality.⁶⁵ Sweden had small damages compared to other European states, and kept a stable democracy, avoided the worst phases of the war and handled their economy better.⁶⁶ The citizens had also a high confidence and trust to the state compared to other countries had during the postwar.⁶⁷ It was rather the supporters of economic foreign-policy that saw opportunities in an international project, that would feed the commercial interest in Sweden for the opportunity of a free and open market.

Joining different organizations proved a dilemma for Sweden. On one hand, they wanted to take part in the economic aspects of the cooperation as the Swedish export industry stood stronger after the war. There was a strong national interest in taking part of an international free trade and market. On the other hand, the cooperation would also mean that EU could/and would interfere in the national sovereignty.

In the early stages of discussing the EU membership, the Swedish government made the

⁶³ Marianne Skinner. (2012) p.425.

⁶⁴ Ibid, Skinner. (2012) p.424.

⁶⁵ Kurt Samuelsson. (1988) p.363.

⁶⁶ Karl Magnus Johansson (2002) p.22.

decision that a full membership would mean unacceptable restrictions on both foreign-and domestic policy.⁶⁸ As the EU grew quicker, the Swedish leaders, politicians and economist realized it would be more important and beneficial to the country to come up with a deal outside the membership's frame. Sweden tried for three decades to negotiate on an economic agreement that would not subject the country to political obligations that a membership would require. However, in October 1990 the negotiations took a U-turn as the Swedish government announced its decision to apply for a full membership. After a national referendum in autumn 1994, Sweden joined the EU in January 1995.

Two main themes dominated the Swedish debate prior to the referendum: those in favour of membership emphasising that joining the EU was necessary for economic survival. Those against argued that membership would dilute democratic traditions, social welfare and sovereignty.⁶⁹ The supporting side of the Swedish membership were mainly big companies and cooperation's involved in international trade and markets. Most of the major players in media were also on the supportive side.⁷⁰

The opposition included people who were interested in preserving the Swedish culture, traditions and laws. They saw the EU entrance as not promoting the interest of the common citizens or their country, but rather for the elites.⁷¹ In the late 1993, all the leaders of parliamentary political parties, without the exception of the Left-party, had endorsed membership while the majority of the people were opposed to it.⁷²

⁶⁷ Karl Magnus Johansson. (2002) p.22.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Johansson. (2002) p.22.

⁶⁹ Andrew C Twaddle (1997) p.202.

⁷⁰ Karl Magnus Johansson (2002) p. 23.

⁷¹ Andrew C Twaddle. (1997) p. 189

⁷² Ibid, Twaddle. (1997) p.189.

4.2.2. Arguments and political discourse

The left-leaning Swedish opposition organization “Nej till EG” – no to the European Community (EC) (later called “Nej till EU”) began mobilizing in the early 1990s to avoid the outcome of a yes-vote.⁷³

The group linked up prostitution, drug-liberalism, sexism, elitism and a democratic deficit to the EU in their 1993 campaign, as they printed out pamphlets suggesting Europe was equated with a “bordello” or “women’s trap” and a “Brussel power”.⁷⁴ This vision set by the anti-EU campaign was contrasted to the democratic, solidary and national welfare state. A leading voice during the anti-EU campaign was Göran Greider within the Social Democratic Party, who declared that becoming a “European human being” would not benefit Sweden and set the world back to the pre-democratic time before the French revolution and the construction of a modern nation-state.⁷⁵ All these statements were presented by the anti-movement, mostly by left-party, arguing that the Swedish nation state was associated with democracy and thus an EU membership would mean a considerably inferior form of democracy.⁷⁶

In response of being accused of being nationalists Göran Greider and other leading anti-EU campaigners emphasised that nationalism came in a “good” as well as “bad” forms.

Rolf Karlbom, a historian at the university of Gothenburg, wrote in an anti-EU periodical that those who accused the no-side of “narrow nationalism” missed the point of Swedish national identity. Thus, the Swedish nationalism was historically linked to democracy, solidarity and humanity.⁷⁷ Karlbom continued saying:

– there is no reason to be ashamed of Swedish history, it is not a matter of national romanticism or of chauvinistic patriotism to point out that next to Switzerland, Sweden has the most ancient tradition of popular rule

After the result of the 1994 referendum and Sweden joining the EU, the still active ‘Nej till EU’ members organized a series of demonstrations – but shifting the focus on the Euro-referendum in 2003 and keeping the Swedish krone.

⁷³ ‘Nej till EU’ (2009) Official website.

⁷⁴ Lars Trägårdh (2001) p.165.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Trägårdh (2001) p.165.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Trägårdh (2001) p.165.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Trägårdh & Rolf Karlbom (2001) p.167.

4.2.3. The Swexit campaign

The Swexit campaign is based off the Brexit outcome, when the UK decided to leave the EU after a public referendum held on the June 2016. The result of UK leaving did not only send shockwaves throughout Europe, but also started a debate in other EU-member states on a possible “domino-effect” on more countries leaving the Union.

The biggest opposition party Sweden democrats (SD) used the Brexit outcome as an inspiration for their national election campaign. The Swedish nationalists wanted Sweden to follow UK’s example, and promised to push for a referendum if SD would win the election. Their leader, Jimmie Åkesson, told the newspaper Dagens Industri that the “EU is a part of a large web of corruption where no one has control over anything” and that Sweden “pays an enormous amount of money and get overwhelming little back, and we should not be a part of an ideological union”.⁷⁸

According to their campaigners, Swexit can create initiative for a new referendum as the EU is not the same today in 2019 as it were when the Swedish people voted in 1994. A large part of the citizens today were not entitled to vote. The “Nej till EU” campaigners believe that a new referendum should be carried out as soon as possible to maintain the Swedish democracy. The arguments used in the campaign are based upon many of the same arguments used in the 1994 referendum, although the voters have now lived in a EU-country for two decades and have an essentially different understanding on what EU has contributed with and not, what has worked and what has not worked.

The ‘Nej till EU’'s arguments from the official website⁷⁹ follows as:

1) EU is not a democratic project: ever since its inception the EU, it has been the “big companies project” with increasingly supranational ambitions. The main problem of EU is the lack of ‘people power’ - a arena for common, democratic, political discussion. The EU and its institution cannot be changed, developed, reconstructed in a democratic direction.

⁷⁸ The Local.se (2018). *Sweden Democrats call for referendum on Swedish EU membership after 2018 election.*

⁷⁹ ‘Nej til EU’ (2019). Official website. *Swexit campaign.*

2) The foundations of economic policy. The Lisbon treaty and the EU constitution is superior to all national laws including Sweden's constitution. The free movement of goods, services, persons and capital as well as the principle of "non-distorted competition" is the foundation of the treaty. This is the constitutional neo-liberal economic policy – no classic Keynesian policy is allowed. There is no foundation in the world that directly defines what economy policy a country should pursue.

3) Privatization of welfare: The neo-liberal economic policy inevitably leads to privatized welfare and labour law. The Lisbon Treaty does not include the concept of "public service" but instead the "services of general economic interest" where topics perceived as general welfare services (school, care, elderly care and infrastructure etc) are privatized. More and more flexible forms of employment and staffing companies are detrimental to the working environment and the trade union movement is weakening.

4) Agriculture-and rural policies are undermined: The EU benefits from large-scale industrial agriculture, which replaces local systems based on cycles and renewable resources. In the market-liberal system, medium-sized and small farmers have no place. The countryside is depopulated with growing regional imbalances, worsening welfare at all levels and social consequences. Environment and biodiversity are affected in an alarming manner. The EU's agricultural and rural policy, with all its abundance of directives, regulations and laws, has taken over all the regulations and responsibilities of the member states. Food preparedness has been scrapped and the self-sufficiency of important agricultural products such as beef and milk has fallen to about 50 percent.

5) The EU is an empire building project: The EU is not a peace project. As a large company project, the EU is an empire-building state formation with a military power claim. Through association agreements with individual countries or groups of countries and so-called partnerships such as The Eastern Partnership strives for the EU to expand its market share and spread the "western" values.

Although the Swexit campaign is popular among the sceptics to the EU, Liberal Party leader Jan Björklund took the stage in Gothenburg in August 2018 (before the general election)

warning the Swedish public of the consequences the Swexit movement could have⁸⁰. The party released documents reporting that a possible outcome of Swexit could mean a loss of 150,000 jobs and the country's GDP would decrease with 300 billion SEK⁸¹.

Gothenburg University's SOM Institute annually survey on public opinion shows that the Swedish support for EU membership has grown after the Brexit result, showing that 53% of Swedes are generally in favour of a EU membership (up from 49% in 2016) while the portion of people against a membership has dropped to 18% (down from 23%) in the same period.⁸² In the same poll only 17% of Swedes said it would be a good idea to leave EU, while 53% said it would be a bad idea to leave.⁸³

4.2.4 Interest-driven opposition

Milena Sunnus argue in her article *Swedish euroscepticism: democracy, sovereignty and welfare* that the base for the Swedish euroscepticism is political culture and national superiority like gender equality, welfare state and protection of the environment. The public often debate on how the Swedish and "Nordic" values were threaten in the cultural dimension of European integration.⁸⁴

Democracy and sovereignty are two key topics to the Eurosceptic debate, both in Sweden and Norway. Whereas the sceptics feared for the country's sovereignty in a membership with the EU, those in favour stressed the benefits of the common market and having a direct say in EU decision-making. The pro/anti divide broadly coincides with the traditional left/right cleavage, with the Swedish left-wing parties showing the greatest propensity for euroscepticism and a warning against the loss of self-determination.⁸⁵

In other words, a lot of the Swedish euroscepticism roots out from the fear of losing sovereignty, democracy, culture or values. Another fear is bureaucracy, especially "the people in Brussels" that are taking interfering with "everything" within the Swedish society.

Many of the Eurosceptics are questioning the transparency and the democratic legitimacy of the EU, claiming an inconsistency between Swedish notion of democracy and the practices

⁸⁰ Aftonbladet.se (2018) *Jan Björklund varnar för ett Swexit*.

⁸¹ Ibid, Aftonbladet.se. (2018).

⁸² The Local.se. (2018) *More faith in the EU and the Economy: six changes in Swedish opinion*.

⁸³ The Local.se. (2018) *Sweden Democrats call for referendum on Swedish EU membership after 2018 election*.

⁸⁴ Milena Sunnus. (2016) p.194.

from the Union⁸⁶. The EU have received a lot of criticism the past decade that the public documents are too advanced and complex for the common citizen to read and understand, that creates a democratic deficit and a lack of transparency. People don't feel connected to the Union.

Demographically, the votes in the 1994 referendum are significantly different in the cities versus the rural societies. The capital Stockholm, Goteborg and Malmo voted in favour of a membership, while the districts and northern parts of Sweden, the public opinion was sceptical.⁸⁷ An explanation of this could be that the decision-making in Brussel is far away from the national issues. Like the Norwegian farmers argued, how can a politician know anything about Norwegian agriculture sitting away in an office in Brussels?

Milena Sunnus concludes her take on the Swedish euroscepticism, which she believe is largely inspired by their positive view on the Swedish model, about democracy, social welfare and equality. During the debate on the membership, the image of "being better" was widely propagated and created a certain reluctance towards the EU.⁸⁸ Perhaps Sweden sees itself as "better" and "different" like Britain. Being an old and proud state, practically never invaded nor occupied, neutral during the war and possesses a strong national feeling. People are proud of their national sovereignty, yet these emotions has not affected it attitude towards enlargement.⁸⁹ However, that has to be supported by the national parties as well as the majority of the Swedish public. In this case it does not seem like the European integration has provoked any fear of losing cultural values and national achievements.

⁸⁵ Milena Sunnus. (2016) p.196.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Sunnus. (2016) p.196.

⁸⁷ Ibid, Sunnus. (2016) p.198.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Sunnus. (2016) p.202.

⁸⁹ Ibid, Sunnus. (2016) p.202.

5. Discussion

So far, the assignment has presented the theoretical aspect and the two cases of ‘Nei til EU’ and ‘Nej till EU’. In part 5 I will discuss my findings and compare the cases in light of the analysis presented to attempt answering the thesis.

5.1. Similarities and differences

Leconte argues that Nordic countries are mostly in opposition to a further extension of EU’s power concern, welfare issues, environmental protection, defence and political cooperation.⁹⁰ Certainly, there are country-specific issues that come to crystalize Eurosceptic feelings: i.e. scepticism towards the common EU fishery policy in Norway or manufacturing policy issues in Sweden.⁹¹ Starting off with similarities, most people would argue that Sweden and Norway are based on the same political mindset, cultural values historical background. But does that mean the opposition groups share the same euroscepticism?

Fundamentally, both cases showcase the importance of value and national identity, hence a reason to *why* people are Eurosceptic. Undeniably, it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly the reason behind euroscepticism as there are many individual motives to why a person is Eurosceptic. It can be factors such as gender, education and age, like De Vries argues, or favourable national conditions. Having that said, Norway and Sweden has phenomenal political conditions when it comes to democracy – something that the Nordic countries are well known for. I would argue that the topics such as democracy, independence, equality and social welfare comes under Nordic values, which Norway and the Sweden proudly presents as the Scandinavian model. For instance, Clive Archer mentions that the Norwegian opponents “portrayed oil-rich Norway different from the EU states, interested in democracy and social welfare”.⁹² That EU would never meet the Nordic standard. The euroscepticism might therefore be explained by the Nordic population’s compliance to a certain belief system in pursuit of these values. In other words, ‘Nei til EU’ and ‘Nej till EU’ members trust their own state system aspirations rather than European Union. An example of this would be the topic of environmental policy. For example, ‘Nej till EU’ argues that the membership makes it harder for Sweden to be a pioneer in environmental issues since EU has decided to not prioritize

⁹⁰ Cécile Leconte. (2010) p.72.

⁹¹ Ibid, Leconte. (2010) p.73.

⁹² Clive Archer. (2000). p.98.

that policy area. In the same way, 'Nei til EU' argues that Norway has benefitted greatly being outside because there is freedom to promote environmental policies in international organizations such as UN, whereas EU only think of free movement, more production and transport. Additionally, the two organizations are both close-knitted in the way they justify their political discourse. Through their official-webpages you can find the brochure⁹³ "Four good reasons to say no to EU" where environment, democracy, solidarity and trade freedom are both prioritized as their main arguments for the organization. At the end of the Swedish brochure I discovered that it was "produced in cooperation with the Norwegian Nei til EU".⁹⁴ This comes to show that their political agendas are not only alike but coordinated. In short, the two opposition groups are essentially based on the same beliefs and wants the same outcome: to stay outside the union. For Sweden that is exiting out of the EU and for Norway ending the EEA agreement.

I have mentioned that I believe the national history plays a role in the euroscepticism of the voters and even though the historic background are slightly different in Norway and Sweden, there's certain elements that I have found that are similar. Playing on the Nordic value of democracy, both the countries arranged a referendum so common citizen could participate. We also see this element in 'Nei til EU' and 'Nej till EU' structures as both operates democratic with annual elections and decision-making on three different levels, including a student and youth-wing. Flaws in EUs democratic structure was perhaps the most salient issue for many Swedes, and especially the undermining of a fundamental "openness principle".⁹⁵ Whereas in Sweden and Norway all documents not specifically made secret are open to the public, including all the government decisions.⁹⁶ Having access to the right information is a reason why movements and opposition organizations like 'Nei til EU' can exist and criticise politics and decisions made by the national government. In contrast, the opposition argue that EU clearly is undemocratic where the EU citizen have no influence on decision – which in this case would be contradicting to the Nordic values.

Another explanation of this would be the centre-periphery (Stein Rokkan) argument that Skinner refer to, where the farmers, fishermen and people living outside the cities felt that the

⁹³ Nei til EU. (2019) *Fire gode grunner for at Norge skal si nei til EU*.

⁹⁴ Nej till EU. (2019). *Fyra skäl att säga nej till EU*.

⁹⁵ Andrew C Twaddle (1997) p. 200.

⁹⁶ Ibid, Twaddle (1997) p. 200.

elite would take all the decisions. In her argument, she suggest that the inhabitants of periphery were central to the Norwegian social and political development, since cities focused on urbanization and Europeanization and they defended the culture, democracy and values. Milena Sunnus also mentions this in her research on Swedish euroscepticism that habitants in the districts were more sceptical towards Brussel interfering and making decisions over Swedish culture and values, while city-based habitants interests were mostly economy-based and not losing the opportunity to be in the single market.

Different political interest, or ‘policy-based euroscepticism’, can mean different kind of euroscepticism between countries. For example, the attitude towards the EU applies to the citizens preferences as to the desired policies. On that note, it appears that the anti-EU parties in the national government’s central interest were in both cases to protect the national identity and interests, remain in control over its own policy-making and natural resources. However, the “drive” behind the euroscepticism can be very different.

I would argue on the base of theoretical analysis and research, the biggest difference is the motivation behind the euroscepticism in Swedish and Norwegian opponents. Indeed, they have a lot of the similar arguments and values but there is certainly a difference in interest. The Norwegian euroscepticism, and therefore also ‘Nei til EU’s argumentation, is leaning more towards Neumann’s value-driven euroscepticism (and Skinner’s VCR model) rather than Swedish euroscepticism that is closer to Ingebrigtsen interest-driven euroscepticism.

According to Ingebrigtsen, Sweden central sector manufacturing played a vital role for the supporters.⁹⁷ In five years, from 1985 on, the foreign investment of Swedish firms increased by 500%. One of the reasons being an urge on the part of industrialists to secure a base inside the EU.⁹⁸ Supporters argued that a Swedish membership would strengthen the European economy in the world marker, increase economic stability for Sweden, increase access to public markets, result in lower interest rates and prices and provide a greater range of choices for Swedish consumers. Staying outside the EU would injure the Swedish economy as it would increasingly marginalized causing economic decline. The supporters were clearly interested in the Economic aspect of an EU membership, something that would reflect over on the argumentation to the anti-campaigners. In contrast, the ‘Nej til EU’ opponents saw that a

⁹⁷ Ivar B Neumann (2001) p.88.

⁹⁸ Ibid, Neumann (2001) p.88.

membership would be a loss of national control over economic decision-making including reduced powers of taxation. The result would be increased tariffs in non-EU trade, increased unemployment, and a blockage of trade outside the EU. In addition, the dues that would have to be paid to the EU would far exceed any economic benefits to be gained by Sweden⁹⁹. ‘Nei till EU’ argued that the benefits claimed by the supporters had already been fulfilled through liberalization of trade in the EES and EFTA. A current economically-based argumentation is found in the Swexit-campaign, where the opposition insist that Sweden pays too much to the EU, while the profits back are too low.

Another difference to the Norwegian opposition was that the Swedish agriculture sector actually preferred the EC’s Common Agriculture policy (CAP) to the prospect of further liberalization imposed by Stockholm.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, the biggest sceptics in Norway were afraid of CAP and their power to change the existing subsidy policy. Especially having in mind that the direct subsidy from the Norwegian state to the agriculture sector is one of the highest in the world, being over 8 times larger than what Sweden’s government gives out.¹⁰¹

According Skinner’s VCR model, the research point out in the direction that economic interest cannot be said to be primarily the reason why Norwegian people said ‘no’ to a membership. I would argue that the Norwegian euroscepticism is motivated and mobilized in defence of Nordic values (also the post-materialist values in the VCR-model) sovereignty, democracy and a decentralized society considering the ‘Nei til EU’s argumentation. That being said, I can suggest that farmers and fishermen maybe took “utilitarian” considerations, such as quality of life, “folkestyre” etc, into account. There might have been more history-based hostility in Norway than Sweden to former Powers States of Europe, anti-German sentiment and a post-war feeling of Freedom¹⁰². Taking in the aspect of the oil-findings in 1969 and the economic boom in the 70’s¹⁰³, I can imagine that the Norwegian Eurosceptic did not believe the country would be better off economically in the EU, and the scepticism of sharing the newly found “gold mine” with other states. This gives me the impression that economic consideration was not taken into the argumentation of “Nei till EU”, other than

⁹⁹ Andrew C Twaddle. (1997) p. 197.

¹⁰⁰ Ivar B Neumann. (2001) p.88.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Neumann. (2001). p.89.

¹⁰² Marianne Skinner. (2012). P.437.

¹⁰³ Government.no. (2013). *Norway’s oil history in five minutes*.

“Norway can manage well outside the EU¹⁰⁴” type of arguments. As Neuman suggest, “-there is something about the way Norwegian discourse is set up to have a preserving influence on policy outcomes – whether it comes to institutional lay-out or shape of political debates”.¹⁰⁵ For the ‘Nei til EU’ campaigners, that was to “capture the heart of the nation” as Ingebritsen and Neumann explains it, emphasising values such as national history, the ancestors fight for democracy and the country’s own independence.

6. Conclusion

‘Nei til EU’ and ‘Nej till EU’ organizations might look and sound the same, however there are differences in both motivation, political interest and discourse. In this assignment I have covered euroscepticism in the Nordic states, the historical context, arguments and research-based findings on the motivation behind the organization’s political discourse.

In short, both organizations have similar hostility towards the European Union. Whether that’s the democratic deficit or power to interfere in national interests. The primarily goal is to protect the country’s interests and own sovereignty. I would argue that the organizations are highly affected by the ‘Nordic values’ in their argumentation. Most topics are compared to the ‘Scandinavian model’ such as social welfare, democracy and equality – where the EU could never meet the same standards. There is certainly a common justification in their arguments that Norway and Sweden is “better” off outside than being in the EU.

However, I concluded on the base of historical context and research-based findings, that ‘Nei til EU’ leans more towards a value-driven motivation behind their argumentation and political discourse, while the Swedish opposition ‘Nej till EU’ falls into the category of interest-driven argumentation. The Norwegian scepticism comes undeniably from the national history, when ancestors fought for a free and independent Norway – values with great meaning. Giving “Norway away” to Brussel would put the country once again under a superior rule. ‘Nei til EU’ emphasise “folkestyre” as being the most central value in the Norwegian society. The adaption of the EU’s civil society form would entail people losing their power in decision-making, and therefore contribute to a deeper democratic deficit. The Swedish opposition is in contrast more concerned over the amount of money Sweden pays yearly to the EU and argue

¹⁰⁴ Marianne Skinner. (2012). p.436.

that Sweden would economically benefit a new deal outside the Union. 'Nej till EU's arguments varies more often in national interest rather than value-based. Nevertheless, the motivation behind the arguments can often overlap.

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¹⁰⁵ Ivar B Neumann (2001) p.92.

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