Environmental governance and public discourse: news media and the NordStream Baltic Sea gas pipeline

Author:

Anna Maria Jönsson, Department of Culture and Communication, Södertörn University, Sweden, 141 89 Huddinge, Sweden, Telephone: +46 (0) 8 6084255 Email: anna-maria.jonsson@sh.se

Please note: Work in progress. Do not quote without permission of the authors.
**Introduction and purpose of study**

Environmental risks in e.g. the Baltic Sea Region transcend traditional boundaries and raise a need for new governing and communication strategies. Due to globalization and deregulation, decision-making and regulation take new patterns and involve new actors at different levels. This makes the concept of governance relevant for describing a new situation for governing environmental policies and risk. In this context, there is a growing need for interaction among various actors and levels in policy-making and political decisions. It also challenges the role of knowledge since risk governance often is about un-known futures and works in a context of uncertainty. What implications does this situation have for democracy, policy-making and the role of the citizen? In this paper I will discuss framing of risk issues in public discourse and how different governance structures may affect conditions for deliberation, participation and communication.

According to Ulrich Beck (1992), in today’s risk society we have to make decisions on an unknown future without an adequate foundation of knowledge, and to a greater extent without an authoritative centre for the creation of legitimate decisions. This also changes the prerequisites for decision-making in democratic societies and means we have to rethink the roles of experts and the public, as well as the media. Various actors (policy-makers, social scientists etc.) seem to agree that there in this context is a pressing need for more inclusive environmental communication and deliberation. What is put forward by advocates for a deliberative democracy and the ‘good governance’ perspective is that decisions should be preceded by discussions in the public sphere, and that these discussions should involve those affected by the decisions. Thus, making decision-making and risk regulating processes more deliberative is mainly about making them more inclusive: “questions normally seen as the province of experts and functionaries, lobbyists and politicians, must somehow be brought before the public at large for comment, debate, and in some cases, resolution” (Whiteside 2006:118). Public discourse becomes a fundamental part of the governance process. The motives for involving a wider public in environmental decision-making however differs (see Stirling, 2005).

The aim of this paper is to draw conclusions on the role of the public in the mediated public sphere in the case of the NORDSTREAM gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea. This is done through an analysis of framing and different forms and levels of public participation in the news media, here represented by the Swedish newspapers Dagens Nyheter and Gotlands-Tidningar.
The study is part of a larger project with the aim to compare the gas pipeline case with the case of climate change and flooding scenarios in the Baltic Sea area. The contrasts between these cases will be used in order to explore more general issues about common grounds for environmental governance and public discourse. We will then approach our cases as two examples of projected futures in the Baltic Sea area and wish to compare them by focusing on definition strategies and struggles to frame these futures. The two cases in this project, the Nord Stream gas pipeline and flooding scenarios in the Baltic Sea, include hypothetical scenarios as well as concrete plans for how to proceed in these issues. The cases share the governance characteristics in that they cross over territorial boundaries, involve several actors and arenas, and also share the problem of involving and delimiting relevant publics. They differ in other respects such as the degree of scientific uncertainties involved, types of risk, and scale (global, national, regional, local).

From this analysis we will contribute with knowledge regarding how environmental risks are governed and communicated in different contexts and how this creates different boundaries and common ground between experts and publics in terms of interests and identities for environmental governance and public discourse in the Baltic Sea area. Besides from deliberative processes and media representations the project also include analyses of public risk perceptions. The project is interdisciplinary and includes the project leader (Anna Maria Jönsson, Media and Communication studies), two other senior researchers (Misse Wester, Psychology and Linda Soneryd, Sociology) and one PhD student (Henrik Ifflander, Sociology).

**Deliberation, framing and public discourse**

During the last decades there has been a substantial amount of research aiming at describing the causes, consequences and possible solutions of major environmental risks in the Baltic Sea (see e.g. Elmgren 2001). Public deliberation has been suggested as a remedy to a range of structural problems that are associated with aggregative and inflexible forms of decision-making – not least in relation to environment policy issues. For example, ‘good governance’ in the EU is explicitly announced to involve deliberative participatory elements. The European Commission’s white paper on European Governance (CEC, 2001a:3) proposes that good governance implies that “more people and organisations [are] involved in shaping and delivering EU policy”. This includes efforts to democratising expertise, to improve access and
participation and to involve relevant stakeholders at every stage of the process, from the “identification of risks to the evaluation of policies intended to manage them” (CEC, 2001b: 25). The Aarhus Convention (1998) also emphasises the role of public deliberation in environmental decision-making as well as the EU directive on Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

As stated above, the motives for involving a wider public in environmental decision-making differ (see Stirling, 2005). Brian Wynne (2003) e.g. argues that the ‘framing’ of environmental issues by certain groups is vital to understanding issues of governance, and in particular assumptions about the public as primarily concerned about ‘risk’. Instead, Wynne argues, one has to be open to alternative framings and meanings. Limiting the public debate to risk related concerns leads to the domination of technical risk assessments and a narrow view on human agency as only interested in the impact of technology development and not discussions about the driving forces behind it (Wynne, 2005).

The concept of framing within policy-making theory and political sociology is well-suited for analysing how actors are actively involved in debating, defining and setting a particular social sustainability agenda and furthering its implementation. “[F]raming is a way of selecting, organizing, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting.” (Rein and Schön, 1993:146). Frame analysis draws attention to actors’ active role in the construction of interpretative schemes. The way issues are framed also assumes particular versions of human relations and human agency. A close examination of how issues are framed (as risk issues or of wider concern, how environmental concerns are balanced against social, political and economic aspects etc.) is thus also informative for questions about the role of experts, decision-makers and a wider public.

Another and related focus is on the mediators of public concerns – in this case the journalists reporting on the two cases in the news media and the organisers of public consultation meetings, as well as the relation between media reports and public consultations on the two cases and risk perception. The news media shape the public discourse in that they influence who has access to the arena or public sphere, who can participate in the discourse, the subjects that can be discussed, the issues about which opinions can be expressed and the perspectives and values from which current events are viewed and evaluated. The news media can be said to be both an actor in the public discourse as well as an arena within which it takes place.
People often draw upon news media frames and representations to make assumptions on risk issues, the role of science and how to act in their everyday lives. It also influences public perceptions of risk and risk reduction or avoidance. News media representations thus can influence what decisions are made, by whom and on what grounds, both on a societal and individual level (Allan et al., 2000; Allan, 2002; Anderson, 1997).

Media is thus also important in the process of defining problems and framing environmental issues and risks. As used in contemporary media studies, the concept of framing generally consists of two main dimensions: one that refers to the way certain aspects in a text are made more salient, and one that is about how frames may affect the way people perceive reality. In the words of Robert Entman: “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” (Entman, 1993 p 52, italics in original). As for the studies concerning the role of media in public discourse, framing is generally used as a way to describe and analyze how different issues are represented in news media. Framing analysis thus can be, and are often, used as a tool for analyzing media texts (e.g. news articles), and the way that selection, focus of certain words, phrases or ideas contribute in shaping public perception (Entman, 1993; Reis, 2008).

A common perspective for understanding the role of media for environmental governance and policy-making is provided through the concept of mediatization. Mediatization refers to a situation where media has become the main frame of reference in society. Media in different ways influences how politics is framed and also set the terms of action in public discourse for politicians, stakeholders and other participants in public discourse (Asp and Esiasson, 1996; Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; Schulz, 2004; Hjarvard, 2008; Strömbäck, 2008). “Mediatized politics is politics that has lost its autonomy, has become dependent in its central functions on mass media, and is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media.” (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999 p 250).

One of our starting-points is that the issue of common grounds for environmental discourse is tremendously complex. Assumptions about the relations between science, the public and the policy sphere may most likely not be applicable in all cultural contexts and demands for the development of a ‘best practice’ in communicating environmental concerns with and to the public may not be realistic (Felt et al. 2008:237). The use of one conception of the public to
counterbalance another can be used for political purposes, aiming to show that the public is supportive or rejects a certain technology, policy or plan. This way of pitting groups against each other might lead to mistrust among citizens towards the participatory process, and scepticism against the value of deliberative fora. For this reason it is important to examine in what ways different conceptions of the public are used and for what reasons, as well as the value of fore-fronting one group over another. This raises questions over how a certain ‘public’ is constructed in relation to expertise and if there are specific issues are made open for public discussion and others that are not. How are the limitations of ‘concerned publics’ and ‘public interests’ made in terms of local communities, nations, regions or on a global scale, both with respect to who can participate and how publics are portrayed by various actors? It is also unclear who will be involved and “who will speak in the name of society” (Felt et al. 2008:237).

The Case
The Nord Stream 1220 km pipeline, previously called ‘North European Gas Pipeline’ (NEGP), will link Russia (Vyborg) to Germany (Greifswald) via two parallel pipes laid across the Baltic Sea, and is planned to carry up to 27,5 Bcm/year (Bouzarkovski and Konieczny, 2010). This will make it the largest submarine infrastructure in the Baltic Sea. The pipeline is built by Nord Stream AB and owned by Gazprom (Russia), BASF (Germany) and Eon (Holland). The plans on the pipeline became public in the first years of the 21st Century and the first pipes were put down in 2011. It is expected to be ready to start transporting gas that covers the need for 20 million households, from 2012.

According to UNCLOS (the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Seas) Article 79, all States are entitled to lay submarine pipelines and cables on the continental shelf (of another state). Since this is a transboundary project that is expected to imply environmental impact in other countries, it has however been subject to international conventions and national legislation. The countries that are directly concerned by the plans are Germany, Russia, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, and indirectly also Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. According to the Espoo convention (1991) these types of projects (‘that is likely to cause a significant adverse transboundary impact’) should be preceded by an environmental impact assessment (EIA), in this case conducted by Nord Stream, and neighbouring countries should be give the possibility to be part of the consultations concerning the EIA document. This
means that the route of a pipeline is crucial for who has a saying in the process. According to the Espoo Convention, Sweden together with Finland, Denmark and Germany are so-called 'Parties of Origin', which means that the pipeline will pass through their economic zones (EEZs). Russia has not ratified the Espoo Convention but would otherwise have been a Party of Origin. As a 'signatory power' however Russia still took part in the EIA process. After the approval of the EIA, Parties of Origin give construction permits. Affected Parties (e.g. Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) have no legal voice in the process, but can at least take part in the EIA process and make their opinions heard (Whist, 2008). This process works parallel to specific national permitting procedures required by the states that will have the pipeline in their territory.

The first plans of the NEGP came as early as 1993 but was not really acknowledged as a public issue until 2002 when EU got onboard (Bouzarkovski and Konieczny, 2010). The gas pipeline has been part of public discourse in Sweden since around 2004 but of course also widely discussed and debated in many other European countries. Nord Stream presented its Espoo Report in 2009 and there identified a series of risks. These included environmental, economic and social risks (Nord Stream, 2009). In November 2009 came the decision by the Swedish government to permit the pipeline to pass through the Swedish economic zone (Lidskog et al, 2011). Due to the resistance in Sweden motivated mainly be environmental concerns, Nord Stream has abandoned the plan to build a service platform just outside the island of Gotland in the Swedish economic zone (Bouzarkovski and Konieczny, 2010).
The European gas market is very complex and there have been a lot of hopes and fears in relation to the Nord Stream pipeline. According to e.g. WWF the gas pipeline will have a major negative impact in the Baltic Sea environment, mainly on marine mammals and fish (WWF, 2009). It is clear that the potential environmental impact and risks of the pipeline has been, and still is, an overarching concern for all the Baltic littoral states. According to Whist (2008) proponents of Nord Stream (mainly Germany, Russia and the Nord Stream consortium), have dismissed the concerns and work to frame the pipeline as a common European project that will provide gas to a union in great need of energy. In a study of discourses on the gas pipeline Whist has identified four main discourses or arguments in the debate: ‘Dividing Europe’, ‘Bringing Gas to Europe’, ‘A Military-Strategic Problem’, and ‘A Threat to the Baltic Sea Environment’ (Whist, 2008). As we can see three of these are arguing against the pipeline for different reasons, while 'Bringing Gas to Europe' obviously is a central argument for the pipeline.

Poland is probably the country that has shown the most opposition against the pipeline and the issue has caused something of a political storm. It has been a source for geopolitical tension were the critics saw the project as a 'Russian-German conspiracy'. Poland instead supports the idea of the proposed 'Amber' pipeline that is an overland alternative to the Nord Stream project. There has also been a lot of opposition in Poland based on environmental arguments, while the supporters have emphasized the positive economic impacts. Besides from being a central part of the political discourse, the pipeline has also been a hot topic in Polish news media were conspiracy theories are widely spread and related to grand historical narratives and ideas of national identity and security (Bouzarkovski and Konieczny, 2010).

It has thus been suggested that environmental impact during the construction phase may be negative for fishery and tourism. When the pipeline is in place, a leakage could imply serious damage to the Baltic Sea. Besides from Sweden also Lithuania, Poland and Estonia have expressed serious concerns about the possible negative environmental impact (Bouzarkovski and Konieczny, 2010). Critical points have been made that the transparency of the project is insufficient and that a public dialogue is lacking. Russia’s increased influence over the region has also been questioned. From the perspective of the EU the gas pipeline is a way of decreasing the dependence on oil as well as improved competitiveness on the energy market. All in all, the project with the gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea clearly is related to several overlapping risk discourses.
In this paper the framing and the role of the public in the case of the Nord Stream gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea is analyzed, looking at a) **themes** and **frames**, and b) **actors** and **participation**, in public discourse mainly focusing the **news media** but also including a short presentation of **deliberative processes** and activities in relation to the pipeline plan.

**Deliberation on the gas pipeline**

As discussed above, the Aarhus convention (1998) regulates the rights for the wider public to be involved in environmental decision-making. Concerned publics have a right to be informed and involved in the planning process. Nord Stream has not given a precise account of how they demarcate concerned publics, but states that: “public hearings are public […] and open to everyone. We do not make any limitations as to who can participate.” (Nord Stream, 2008). Until 2008 Nord Stream had arranged 15 public hearings, in the five countries that are directly concerned by the pipeline. Thus the demarcation made by Nord Stream is according to the regulations in the Espoo convention (the countries mentioned above as ‘indirectly’ concerned have not been involved in activities arranged by the developer).

From a preliminary review of how the planned pipeline have been communicated in various consultation activities we can conclude that public engagement and debate has been low, although there has been some possibilities for public participation. However, other actors than Nord Stream have also tried to enhance involvement and debate, for example, a Municipal Training Centre in Lithuania have arranged citizens’ panels; a joint effort between the Russian regional environmental centre in Moscow, Friends of the Baltic and the Finnish Association for Nature Conversation has been made to engage NGOs in discussions on the environmental impact of the pipeline and a public hearing at the European Parliament has been held.

In November 2006 Nord Stream initiated the process on the EIA with the relevant countries and informed all affected parties about the plan to build a pipeline. This was the real starting-point for the consultation process. Since then there has been two rounds of consultations and Nord Stream have received 129 comments from citizens and public authorities in the concerned countries (http://www.nord-stream.com/international_consultations.html).

To take a closer look at the consultation process in Sweden we find that prior to the decision on the EIA the Swedish government gave 11 public agencies the possibility to comment and ask questions to which Nord Stream had to respond. The government thus defined which
actors should be considered relevant and in this case excluded other actors like e.g. environmental NGOs (Lidskog et al, 2011). After this discussion on what to include in the EIA, Nord Stream eventually presented its Espoo Report in 2009. Nord Stream has also arranged several meetings for the public as well as for relevant authorities and NGOs. Of these meetings the two most relevant seem to be the two hearings for the Swedish general public held in Stockholm and Visby in 2006. These meetings are defined by Nord Stream as starting-points for the consultation process. After this Nord Stream has also held several other meetings (e.g. in 2007) with different stakeholders (http://www.nord-stream.com/company_events.html). We have also identified a number of other consultation activities arranged by different actors in Sweden; see some examples below:

Political parties

• The liberal party (Folkpartiet) arranged in 2007 a hearing at Gotland initiated by Carl B. Hamilton.

Municipalities

• For obvious reasons there has been a couple of hearings at Gotland. However none of these seem to have been organized by the municipality of Gotland but rather by Nord Stream.

Parlament

• One public hearing in the parliament on December 12th 2006. Only politicians were allowed to ask questions but the public was invited to listen.
• On January 29th 2008 there was also a hearing in the European parliament

Media

• TV Axess broadcasted in 2008 a hearing in the channel with the same name. Invited experts discussed the topic mainly focusing on the security issues.

As discussed above, news media can in various ways be seen as part of public discourse and an important tool for public deliberation and stakeholder participation. Media framings play an important role for definition of problems, solutions and the role of the public.
The Nord Stream gas pipeline in the news media

Gas pipelines and News Media Discourse

In order to see how the case is framed in the news media, a quantitative content analysis of news reports, focusing on the Swedish daily press (here represented by the national broadsheet Dagens Nyheter and the local newspaper Gotlands Tidningar) was conducted. The material consists of news articles collected from the Internet press archive Retriever (end year 2011). To find relevant articles on the Nord Stream gas pipeline plan, the archive was searched for articles in Dagens Nyheter and Gotlands Tidningar including the keywords ‘Nordstream’ or ‘Nord Stream’ and ‘gasledning*’ (gas pipeline*). After the search all articles were checked and the ones with relevance for the case were selected and included in the study. The study of Gotlands Tidningar and the comparison between the two newspapers is complicated by the fact that in the case of Gotlands Tidningar, only articles after the 4th of January 2008 are available on Retriever. Because of this the main analysis will focus on Dagens Nyheter, using Gotlands Tidningar as a frame of reference to the results.

Let me first say something about the wider media discourse on gas pipelines and then turn to the issue of how the Nord Stream Baltic Sea pipeline has been framed in the news. One first conclusion is that gas pipelines has been a topic in the Swedish media discourse for a couple of decades now. In the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s there was for example a discussion on a possible gas pipeline between Sweden and Germany (Rostock and Trelleborg). During the 1990s there was also a rather intensive discussion concerning possible pipelines from Russia through Sweden and from Norway to Sweden. There is also some reporting on the so called Yamal project.

The first example (in Dagens Nyheter) of when gas pipelines are discussed in terms of environmental risks is an article from 1995 on how the pipeline between Denmark and Sweden has changed the seabed. It is also worth noting that especially during the latter part of the 1990s the discourse on gas pipelines is often part of a discourse on nuclear power (were gas is presented as an alternative source for energy) as well as discourses of international relations, like the conflict in Georgia and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2009. Another conclusion is that according to media discourse there is clearly a close relationship between energy and security politics and most reporting concerning gas pipelines has energy and/or security issues as the main frame. There are also a numerous amount of articles about accidents involving gas pipelines (in e.g. Argentina).
The Nord Stream gas pipeline plan first appears in *Dagens Nyheter* in 2004 and during the period 2004 to May 2011 there are 231 articles addressing this topic (see Figure 1 above). During this period some events have influenced the media discourse. One of the most infected issues was the so called 'Bildt-affair' during 2006-2007 when it was revealed that the Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt had options in a company with direct connection to Gazprom. As we can see from the table, the gas pipeline was mainly acknowledged and considered news worthy between 2006-2009. Much of this is explained by the fact that the ‘Carl Bildt-affair’ occurred during 2006-2007 and also the fact that the EIA-report was prepared during this time.

From Table 1 (below) we can see that that the interest of Nordstream gas pipeline in terms of number of articles is higher in the local newspaper Gotland Tidningar than in the more national Dagens Nyheter (2008-2011). Due to the fact that Gotland was/is more directly affected by the construction of the pipeline, this is only to be expected. News media generally value issues and events that is close (in space and time) to their readers (cf. Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Just as in the case of Dagens Nyheter it seems like the interest in the issue dropped somewhat after 2009.
Table 1. The Nord Stream gas pipeline in Dagens Nyheter and Gotlands Tidningar 2008-2011 (number of articles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dagens Nyheter</th>
<th>Gotlands Tidningar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Media framings of the gas pipeline*

Figure 2 (below) shows the main frames and themes in the articles about the gas pipeline in *Dagens Nyheter* 2007-2008. The most common main frame is 'politics' with about 25 percent of the articles, followed by the 'security' and 'environmental' frames (17 resp. 16 percent). The main difference between 2007 and 2008 is that the Carl Bildt-affair was the main news theme in 10 percent of the articles in 2007 but not part of the news agenda at all 2008. In 2008 the security frame was more salient than in 2007 and was actually together with politics the most common frame that year.

It is obvious though that these traditional frames are a bit insufficient in the understanding of the complex relationship between different perspectives and aspects. In an article from 2007 for example the gas pipeline plan is framed in terms of security politics but at the same time environmental problems are identified as the biggest security problem and biggest threat.
The analysis also shows that the gas pipeline can been framed with several different frames, like e.g. both as an environmental and security risk. From the quote below we can see an example of this kind of complexities of this risk framing and also an example of how the case was framed as a projected future.


(The Russian-German gas pipeline just east of Gotland will become an immediate environmental threat to the Baltic Sea. […] Public international law gives us right to say no to the project that is also a risk in terms of security politics. A Swedish protest will annoy Moscow and Berlin, but if the decision is delayed the consequences will probably be even worse. This is written by Krister Wahlbäck, former ambassador, expert on security politics and professor emeritus before a meeting with the Baltic Sea countries. (DN, opinion 31/7 2006), my translation)  

In a little more than half of the articles (56 percent) the Nord Stream gas pipeline is the main news and the focus of the article, while about 4 out of 10 articles address the topic as part of another issue area. In about one out of four articles (28 percent) the gas pipeline is presented as some sort of risk. The EIA-report and preparations for this was mentioned in 16 percent of the articles and then especially during 2007 (for obvious reasons).
The analysis also shows that the news discourse on the Nord Stream gas pipeline represents many different news formats and genres. Most common (40 percent) however is the general news article (often rather short). It is interesting to note that the second most common genre (24 percent) is editorials (ledare), and about 10 percent of the articles are found in the Economy pages. Since the gas pipeline is a transboundary project the news articles often address different countries. Not surprisingly Sweden is the country most often in focus (66 percent of the articles). Besides from Sweden most attention is directed towards Russia (12 percent). The articles focusing on Russia often has a security frame and we can see that the word 'rysskräck' (fear of Russians) is very common in these articles. Other countries that are focused in the gas pipeline discourse are Germany, Finland, Poland and Denmark.

If we move on to the issue of which actors that take part in media discourse, the analysis shows that in 51 percent of the articles there is no actor (quoted). This is partly due to the fact that editorials almost never have an (active) actor and there are also quite a few short notes that do not make space for actors. Those who gets to participate in the media discourse on the gas pipeline are mainly politicians, both Swedish and foreign. In about one of every fourth article a Swedish politician is the main actor and most common is the environmental minister Andreas Carlgren, and the foreign minister Carl Bildt. Other main actors found in the media discourse are representatives from Nord Stream and Gazprom, together with representatives from Swedish authorities (like e.g. Naturvårdsverket/Swedish Environmental Protection Agency) and different kinds of experts. Thus it can be stated that the media discourse on the gas pipeline mainly make room for elites. This is however not typical only for this discourse but also for news in general.

The Role of the Public

As been discussed above, the way that the public is constructed and represented in the media are important aspects of a deliberation and a 'good governance'. Framing processes occurs in several arenas (of which media is one) and these processes also points to the importance of participation. Participants generally have a greater influence over how issues are framed, than those who does not participate (e.g. in the news media discourse). Analyses of actors’ representation and participation in the news are generally about to what extent a certain group (like e.g. citizens) gets a saying in the news. Based on ideas on different citizen roles it is important to also develop the idea of public participation in the news media and to discuss different forms of participation. The argument is that citizens participation and involvement in
news media should not be seen as binary categories where people either participate or do not participate. The public is of course always more or less present as an intended audience but for the analysis of the role of the public in news media we distinguish between three major forms of participation (cf. Egan Sjölander and Jönsson, forthcoming 2012):

- the public as an anonymous collective (e.g. 'the public opinion')
- the public as passive/reactive voices (e.g. surveys)
- the public as active voices (sources with influence on framing)

So what about the public, the citizens in the media discourse on the Nord Stream pipeline? Well, as noted above this is an elitist discourse with little room for the general citizen to make their voices heard. Of the 104 articles analyzed so far (2007-2008), only five had the public as the main actor, and all of these were the special news format 'letters to the editors'. Besides from this there were references to the public as an anonymous collective in four articles. Most of these were news about opinion polls (with the news that the majority of the Swedes are against the gas pipeline). There were no examples of the public as a passive/reactive voice in the news. Only two articles in some way referred to public hearings, seminars, etc.

*Environmental framing of the gas pipeline*

Since the main interest in this project is on the pipeline as an environmental risk, I will finally in this paper take a closer look at the articles with an environmental framing. As shown in figure 2 ‘Environment’ constitutes the main frame in about 16 percent of the articles concerning the gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea. However, as much as every third article include at least some kind of environmental framing on the topic. It is clear that in the case were the gas pipeline is presented with an environmental frame it is mainly framed in a Swedish context. Almost 90 percent of the articles with ‘environment’ as the main frame are about Sweden and Swedish actions. It is also interesting to note that in all articles with ‘environment’ as a main frame the gas pipeline is the main topic of the articles (compared to 57% of all the articles). Just a little more than half of these articles discuss the pipeline as part of a risk discourse. Perhaps not surprisingly the most common actor in these articles is the Swedish minister for Environmental issues Andreas Carlgren. The form of the articles is either general news articles or letters to the editors (insändare). Compared to other main themes, 'environment' receives less attention in the editorials (ledare) and opinion pieces (debattartiklar).
**Conclusions**

In the media discourse the gas pipeline is framed in several different ways. It is for example clear that the proponents emphasize economic arguments while the opponents prefer to discuss the project in relation to security issues and environmental risks. Much of the debate is about the role of Russia and its position in the energy market and relations to the EU. The media debate is definitely part of the problem framing process and reflects definition strategies and struggles to frame the possible futures linked to the gas pipeline plan.

A general conclusion based on this study is that the media discourse on the Nord Stream gas pipeline is an elite discourse and thus mainly public in the sense of being public, but not really being a discourse for and with the public as citizens. Media is part of public discourse but in relation to publics as citizens, the communication underlining this rather can be described as a linear transmission model and not a model of dialogue. Following the idea of a 'good governance' media should ideally also work as a deliberative platform for different actors and stakeholders. This result is also in line with other research on the role of the public in environmental news were this is sometimes described as 'the missing public(s)' (cf. Egan Sjölander and Jönsson, forthcoming 2012).

If we consider the results of this study in the theoretical perspective of mediatization, the main impression is that there seem to be a clear symbiosis between media and political discourses (mediatization of politics/politization of media), and it is probably fair to assume that most peoples' perception of the issue is more or less based on the news media representations. Later on in the project we will analyze how risk perceptions correspond with media images.

Finally it can be concluded that the issue of the pipeline is embedded in a wider European landscape of power networks and relations concerning energy and security. Discourses on the gas pipeline are connected to different spheres of power and combines ideas the pipeline as a tool for or expressions of economic, political and coercive power (Thompson, 1995). A result of the project is also a decreased political unity in the region and the formation of new political alliances (Bouzarkovski and Konieczny, 2010).
References


Bouzarovski, Stefan and Konieczne, Marcin (2010) "Landscapes of Paradox: Public Discourses and Policies in Poland's Relationship With the Nord Stream Pipeline". Geopolitics, 15: 1, 1-21


Egan Sjölander, Annika and Jönsson, Anna Maria (forthcoming 2012) "Contested Ethanol Dreams - Public participation in environmental news"


Public Opinion Quarterly vol. 36, no 1.


Stirling, Andrew (2005) “Opening up or closing down? Analysis, participation and power in


Appendix 1

Coding schedule (kodschema) for content analysis

V1. Tidning
   1. Dagens Nyheter
   2. Gotlands Allehanda/Tidningar

V2. År

V3. Månad

V4. Artikeltyp
   1. Sverige (nyhetsartikel)
   2. Ekonomi (nyhetsartikel)
   3. Nyheter (nyhetsartikel)
   4. Utrikes/världen
   5. Ledare
   6. Debatt
   7. Insändare
   8. Övrigt

V5. Land i fokus
   0. Ej kodbart
   1. Sverige
   2. Tyskland
   3. Ryssland
   4. Polen
   5. Danmark
6. Estland
7. Finland
8. EU

V6. Gasledningen huvudnyhet
   0. Nej
   1. Ja

V7. Huvudtema (frame)
   1. Energi
   2. Ekonomi
   3. Säkerhet
   4. Miljö
   5. Politik
   6. Annat

V8. Energiframe
   0. Nej
   1. Ja

V9. Ekonomiframe
   0. Nej
   1. Ja

V10. Säkerhetsframe
    0. Nej
    1. Ja

V11. Miljöframe
0. Nej
1. Ja

V12. Risk (Gasledningen som risk)
0. Nej
1. Ja

V13. Huvudaktör – agerande (debattartikel=författare)
0. Ingen agerande aktör
1. Nordstream representant
2. Gazprom representant
3. Carl Bildt
4. Andreas Carlgren
5. Fredrik Reinfeldt
6. Svensk politiker, annan
7. Utländsk politiker
8. Organisation
9. Företag
10. Expert/forskare
11. Allmänhet

0. Nej
1. Ja

V15. Allmänhet/medborgare: Passiv/reaktiv
0. Nej
1. Ja
V16. Allmänhet/medborgare: Aktiv
   0. Nej
   1. Ja

V17. Referens till Miljökonsekvensbeskrivning
   0. Nej
   1. Ja

V18. Referens till Hearings etc
   0. Nej
   1. Ja