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Macro Level Comparisons and Extreme Right-Wing Vote in Western Europe

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I have written the Master's thesis independently. All works and major viewpoints of the other authors and data from other sources of literature used for writing the Master's thesis have been referenced.

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Abstract

Competition theory suggests that an increase in collective threat to the dominant ethnic and racial groups increases out-group prejudice, which should translate into support for extreme right-wing parties (ERP) in national elections. Collective threat is understood as competition over scarce resources, which is intensified through rising immigration, unemployment, inflation rates and reduced economic growth. This study uses regional level data in five Western European countries over the period of 2000-2011 to measure the effects of the proposed variables on extreme right-wing party support in national elections. The results indicate that high levels of immigration and reduced economic growth increases ERP support as the theory predicted. Contrary to the theory, however, unemployment and inflation correlate negatively with ERP support. Though the basic tenants of competition theory found clear support indicating structural change that will spur extreme right-wing vote, it is necessary to reevaluate competition theory in relation to unemployment and possibly also to inflation, in order to determine whether the unpredicted results come from differences in prejudice levels or other competing values that are capable of undermining the role of prejudice.

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Introduction

Extreme Right Parties (ERPs) have seen an unparalleled success story during the past three decades. In the beginning of the 80s, parties classified as extreme right gained around 1 per cent of the vote on average in elections in Europe. By the year 2011, there were 11 countries in the European Union that had one successful extreme-right party in national parliaments with at least 5 percent of the total vote and one country, Austria, with two successful ERPs. The most recent vote share on the average for these 13 ERPs was 9.8 percent whereas the average highest vote was 12.7 percent. For 7 of these ERPs, the most recent result was also the highest. There still remained 15 EU member states where ERPs have scored less than 5 percent of the vote or they do not contest elections at all (Mudde, 2011: 13). ERPs have considerably increased their vote share and have made a successful break into the electoral market. They moved past the image of a negligible fringe parties to a new salient force. The comparison between the highest and most recent vote also shows that the rise of the ERPs is still ongoing.

A change of this magnitude indicates that voting for ERPs has become more than a manner of expressing protest votes, nor can we classify ERPs as single issue parties that are expected to disappear once a mainstream party incorporates the elements they have been advocating for. The change has been both on the supply and demand side of the process. The parties which classify as ERPs as a rule gave up their most extreme views such as biological racism during the 1980s and 1990s and adopted a milder populist version of their previous self. On the supply side, the percentage of voters who are now willing to consider an ERP as a legitimate choice in elections has also grown substantially. Both these changes speak of a larger structural trend that requires an explanation going beyond the specific elections and specific parties, and looks at wider trends taking place in the society.

Studying ERP election success does not only reveal that changes have taken place in voters' attitudes during the past three decades, but they have many far reaching influences that go beyond these specific parties and their supporters. They tend to add fragmentation to the party system in two ways. Firstly, by increasing the number of

parties and secondly, by increasing the share of seats in the parliaments that as a rule are excluded from the bargaining process. The anti-system tendencies more often than not pose an obstacle for the ERP to cooperate with dominant parties, and in this, limits the options of bargaining within the parliament. It has also been noted that the mainstream parties move closer to the ERP positions if ERPs gain success in elections, which again influences the entire party system and further legitimizes ERP platforms. (Jackman & Volpert, 1996: 504) These trends make ERPs relevant beyond their electorate and they are central for the wellbeing of democratic systems and political stability.

This research firstly explains the changes that have taken place on the supply side of the process, provides a brief overview of ERP history, classification and changes in their election platforms. On the demand side it analyses competition theory, the structural changes that have increased demand for democratic representation by these parties. Competition theory aims to explain the rise in ERP support through increased competition for scarce resources that reinforces prejudice against out-groups. It predicts that when competition increases either due to changes in relative size of the groups or through economic changes, prejudice should also increase.

From this theoretical approach two hypotheses are formed. The first predicts a positive correlation between higher percentages of immigrants in the population and higher support for ERPs. The second predicts a correlation between macroeconomic indicators, in particular GDP growth rate, unemployment and inflation and ERP success in elections.

The data is gathered from five countries that have had an ERP take part in national parliamentary elections during the past decade. This data has been compiled on a regional basis to match the regional data for immigration and unemployment. The comparability of the data, particularly on immigration, sets limitations to how many countries could be included and eventually five countries were chosen: the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. The data is composed for national parliamentary elections that took place between years 2000 and 2011 where at least one ERP party ran in the elections. The data for immigration was gathered from national statistics

databases and checked for comparability in terms of how immigration was measured. Unemployment data is also regional, whereas economic growth and inflation are national level indicators for the election year.

The purpose of the thesis is to gather a large enough sample for the last decade in Western Europe to see the extent to which competition theory is supported by regression analysis.

1. Extreme-right party history, ideology and theoretical frameworks

Extreme-right parties are a growing phenomenon in Europe. They are described as anti-system parties, and as such, they question fundamental values of liberal democracies. The study specifically will look at five European countries that have stood out with noticeable extreme right-wing party success during elections - Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy. These were the countries studied when theories used in the following proposal were developed and in terms of which considerable disagreements have been revealed. The nature of the disagreements will be explained in the following chapters. The thesis will look at the period from 2000 until 2011 and the national elections that have been conducted during this period.

This chapter looks into ERP history and how trends in election success during different post war decades in Europe are closely connected to the ideological changes the parties experienced during this period. The ideological premises of the parties form a closely connected unit between nativism and authoritarianism that reinforce each other. These two phenomenon are utilized through the method of populist antagonism between in-groups and out-groups to form a competitive frame in which the dominant nation in the country is juxtaposed to the immigrant population. This ideological composition allows for ERPs to utilize the votes from the right and further popularize immigration skepticism.

History

ERPs were relevant in Europe between the two World Wars but they became practically absent from parliaments from 1950s to 1970s. The fascist heritage of the parties made them highly controversial and the problems and topics they represented had been tainted by the interwar period (Minkernberg, 2011: 41). The outcome of the war and genocide that took place during it left the ERPs without a legitimate master frame. Biologically based racism, anti-Semitism and antidemocratic sentiments were all shunned by the

majority of the population. Apart from few exceptional ERPs like the MSI in Italy during early 1970s and NDP in Germany during late 1960s there were few parties that gained support in national elections. The low success is believed to have been supported by quick economic growth and fairly high levels of political trust. (Rydgren, 2005: 413 - 414)

A change occurred during 80s, when several new ERPs emerged but also old parties in a few cases gained more success. Currently there are some extreme-right wing parties with clear roots in interwar fascist parties, and there are "new" extreme-right parties (also referred to as populist parties) that deny any fascist heritage (Knigge, 1998: 251). This has created a dilemma where there is research that insists on differentiating between neo-fascist parties and new populist parties and there are those that would treat them as a single party family.

Until 1985 the average performance of neo-fascist parties and populist parties in Western European elections was mostly equal to around 1% of the total vote, with upsurges and lower points for both groups. Since 1985, populist parties have been clearly surging ahead, by 1990 they averaged around 2.5% of the vote and by 2000 it was 4,5%. During the same period neo fascist parties have been on a steady decline, falling to just 0.3% of the vote by 2000. (Golder, 2003: 444)

ERPs, both neo fascist and populist, share many commonalities. They are all anti-system parties. They share an authoritarian agenda and prefer anti pluralist procedures. Moreover, they support strictly exclusionary, particularistic conceptualizations of citizenship. In elections, anti-immigration rhetoric has taken priority for all these parties and, thus, it has been increasingly more difficult to make meaningful distinctions between the two party groups. (Knigge, 1998: 251)

For example, in 1986 two Swedish parties, the Swedish Progress Party and the BBS (Keep Sweden Swedish) emerged and formed Sweden Party which was two years later named the Swedish Democrats. They have roots in Swedish fascism and during the 80s and also early 90s they supported neo fascist statements and were openly anti-

democratic. Since the second half of the 90s they have tried to distance themselves from the fascist heritage and, as a result, have gradually increased their support. The process culminated in 2006 with their successful national elections (2.9 per cent of the vote) and 290 mandates in municipal councils. They managed an even stronger presence in 2010 elections where they received 5.7 per cent of the vote. (Rydgren & Ruth, 2011: 4) Despite the predecessors of the party, it is now classified as a populist party based on its election platforms. (Golder, 2003: 448) This firstly serves to show that there is mobility between the two party groups, which undermines the importance of the classification of two distinct ERP groups but more importantly, there is a trend among ERPs to soften the extreme standpoint in order to gain votes closer to the center. This research does not need to distinguish between the two party groups since all the ERPs in question are considered to be populist rather than neo fascist and they all share fairly similar issue positions for questions most relevant for the competition theory.

Despite the fact that there is no need to divide ERPs into distinct groups, it is still complicated to place ERPs into one party group as every individual party still differs from the mean considerably. They lack the homogeneity that has been used to describe the "Greens," the "Socialists" or the "Communists". There is no uniform organizational structure to these parties, leadership style differs and electorate profile varies between parties, so finding a range of shared properties is difficult beyond general attitudes. (Ignazi, 2002: 22 - 23)

There are international party organizations that also help to identify party groups. For example the Socialist international involves most social democrats, socialists and labor parties, even the group is broad and has several differences in the policies they support. Extreme-right parties within the EU parliament tend to belong to Group of Independents for a Europe of the Nations, but not all parties considered to be ERPs belong there. (Norris, 2005: 43 – 44)

Since the trend of ERPs is fairly new compared to labor or conservative parties, we've seen a lot of new parties emerging, merging with existing parties and disappearing over a short period of time, which makes the classification more complicated. For example

the Italian Moviementa Sociale Italiano, which had previously been classified as an ERP changed its name into Alleanza Nazionale and shifted towards the center with a new platform presented at the 1995 congress and is now classified as a proto-conservative party rather than as an ERP (Ignazi, 2005: 337). Consequently, one must be careful in research when including it into the data pool. The opposite occurred with the Lega Nord, which started at the 80s as a combination of smaller regional parties but made a unified breakthrough in national elections 1992. Though many ERPs become more moderate after national election success, the Lega Nord adopted more of typical ERP characteristics and is now described as more radical than in the previous period and is definitely considered to be an ERP. (Ignazi, 2005: 345)

Placement on the left-right scale

Apart from questions regarding organization, party history and international organizations, a fairly common way of classifying ERPs has been through placement on a left-right scale. Most studies that analyze party platforms have placed ERPs very strongly to the right. On the scale where zero is strongest statement supporting left and ten is the same for right, most of the popular ERPs receive a score of 8,5 or more. The parties included in the study were The Danish Peoples Party, The Danish Progress Party, The French National Front, The Valloon National Front, The Flemish Blokk, The German Republicans, The Dutch Center Democrats, The Northern League and Austrian Freedom Party. It is also relevant to note, that there was a gap between 8 and 8,5 where no parties landed in the countries that were studied, which means that there is a fairly clear point of differentiation between main stream right and ERPs when considering this type of party classification. (Spanje & Van der Brug, 2007: 1025)

This would create the impression that the extreme right is clearly and univocally representing the right-wing sentiment, however, this is not entirely correct. The ERPs' historical roots lie in fascism and some historical fringes as well as current neo-fascists claim they are more affiliated with the left, rather than the right. They tend to be anti-capitalist, supportive of social welfare to an extent, revolutionary in their attempt to

change the existing system and many fascist thinkers have rejected association with right-wing politics primarily because right identifies with conservatism. Studies in Italian fascism history have distinguished between social movements that were anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist, revolutionary and secular and between the fascist regime which was pro-capital, clerical and conservative. Though the regime influence has been stronger, social movements have still left a mark on existing ERPs. (Ignazi, 2003: 15)

Many ERPs support more left-leaning job security and unemployment benefits alongside with strongly right-wing tax systems and liberal economic policies. There are also some ERPs that incorporate less standard left-wing policies. The Dutch List Pim Fortuyn is an example of an unusual ERP that supports gay marriage. (Spanje, 2011: 297) Overall it is justified to call these extreme-right parties if one looks at the entire party platform, but it is possible to detect clear left-wing leaning policy positions in most of the ERPs despite the clear general trend.

1.1. Ideology

Ideology of the extreme-right can be described through pillars of nativism, authoritarianism and populism according to Mudde (2007). These pillars are utilized in practice through an antagonism between in-groups and out-groups based on ethno-pluralist world view and competition over scarce resources.

Defining the extreme-right

The term extreme-right has been developed in German tradition of study. The word *extremismus* refers to anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-constitutional principles. It's particularly the anti-system connotation that makes the term more precise and thus a better term then populist party or neo-fascism. Extreme-right represents the ideological stance on the one hand and position of the left-right scale on the other. The ideological stance helps to characterize the party family and position on the left-right scale – though less relevant, is helpful when separating the extreme-right from other mainstream parties on the right. (Ignazi, 2002: 23)

ERPs have also been referred to as New Right by Rydgren. The term was mostly used to describe the counter action to left dominance in France best known as *Nouvelle Droite*. Their most notable innovation was replacing biologically based racism with ethno-pluralism, which has also been called new racism. (2005: 426). Iganzi considers the term still misleading, especially when translated to English, as the expression is simultaneously used to describe the new-conservative agenda. Calling ERPs populist parties is very common and it has established itself as a specific term that has a large role to play in today's literature. What it usually signifies is a rejection of current functioning of the political system and a certain kind of rhetoric which relies on "common sense". (Ignazi, 2002: 23)

This research follows the extreme-right definition rather than any of the alternatives and this mostly due to the precision of the term. Populism is something that can be used to

describe many different elements of the democratic process and it is not in its essence limited to the extreme-right, even if ERPs have used populism in a specific and systematic way that does differ from most mainstream parties. New right, though more specific, is more suitable in French where it stands for a specific movement at a certain time and place, but is harder to generalize to a whole party group, as several party groups can be called with the same term.

Basic elements of the ideology

Mudde has argued that ERP platform rests of three main pillars. The first pillar is nativism, which represents congruence between the state and the native population. The second pillar is authoritarianism, and the third pillar is populism (by populism Mudde mostly means antagonism based on "us" vs "them" division). These characteristics occur in all of the existing ERPs and have come to represent what extreme-right stands for. He purposefully does not include economic aspects but stresses that economic issues only matter as far as they have been connected to one of the three pillars through successful framing of the issue. (Mudde, 2007: 3)

One of the ideological underpinnings of extreme-right is formed by counterrevolutionary thinking which is critical of modernity, yet its role is fairly minimal when compared to fascism and racists component. Fascism however has had very many different interpretations and forms of representation, but one could argue that the ideological core, which all fascists representations had in common, is populist ultra-nationalism. It idealizes mobilized partisan masses which work for a common purpose of the nation. (Ignazi, 2002: 24) The connection between the pillar of nativism and authoritarianism is thus strongly connected and they reinforce each other as in fascism. The pillar of nativism rests on the concept that a group takes priority in comparison to the individual and thus it has an authoritarian connection. At the same time authoritarian dominance over the individual would remain unjustified as long as there is no understanding of greater good, in this case the nation. Therefore one could argue that

the two pillars of nativism and authoritarianism are highly dependent on each other as they conceptually make whole in which neither side would be justified individually.

It is also necessary to note that the nation is not the only concept that fits into this understanding. ERPs perceive the society as a whole to be formed of basic structures such as family, religion, community, homeland, duty and occupation. All of these form hierarchical structures where the individual is subordinate to the group and a similar pattern applies to the relationship between the common good and authoritarianism as it does with the nation. (Swyngedouw & Ivaldi, 2001: 9)

The third pillar of populism functions as a tool in distinguishing the unit that individual is subordinated to from the external and this makes the differentiation between in-groups and out-groups essential for the parties. There are very broad in-groups and out-groups based on culture, race and religion but also smaller divisions among the same racial, cultural and religious groups based on ideology, nationalism and political values.

There are country and party specific traits that should be considered before generalizations. One of the reasons why the Lega Nord in Italy was not immediately included among ERPs is that they started off as a regional party that demanded autonomy for the north. The grievances were related to the poorer southern regions that the north was donating to. Many of the us versus them methods were used to distinguish the urban, successful and hardworking north from the backward and lazy south. It took a while before the party started stressing the immigration issue and framing immigrants as the out-group. Also in Belgium, the out-groups are not only immigrated ethnic minorities but the party opposes itself to the Franchophone Wallonia to an equal degree. (Schain et al, 2002: 8)

The main tools of this populist strategy and aims are still very similar to the more standard nativist discourse that signifies the nation as the in-group rather than a region. The importance of the in-group is stressed through opposing an out-group and assigning blame to it for the grievances the in-group suffers.

The in-group can also have an even narrower definition. Most ERPs oppose themselves to the mainstream parties and try to separate themselves from the dominant political elite. This can be done through addressing corruption claims raised against mainstream parties like in Italy during mid-nineties. But it can also be done through a more general discourse. A fairly common division can be made between the ethnically committed and the ethnically neutral. The ethnically committed value ideals of nationalism, they have higher moral standards because they lift the community above the individual egoism and are capable of self-sacrifice. The ethnically neutral (often the established political elite but it can be a larger group) are anti-national or cosmopolitan, selfish and blind to the threat that the nation is under. (Swyngedouw & Ivaldi, 2001: 5) The nativist pillar has a wide interpretation and many different types of out-groups can be fit into this frame and they can take different priorities. It works through an understanding that society is composed of unequal groups as well as individuals and they can form hierarchies. Depending on the group that is defined as the in-group the out-group is formed and it is fairly flexible as long as it fits the discourse the party promotes.

Rydgren (2008) argues that when we look at this value system in practice, it is used to frame the dominant out-group, the immigrants, in four different ways.
1. Threat to ethno-national identity
2. Major cause of criminality
3. Cause of unemployment
4. Abusers of the welfare state

The first two can be considered to be part of the ethno-pluralist discourse, which opposes different ethnicities mixing. The third and fourth are part of the welfare chauvinism frame where immigrants and natives are depicted as competing over scarce resources. Actual policy proposals have included giving natives priority in housing, jobs and healthcare, which takes the form of reversed affirmative action. (Rydgren, 2008: 746)

Firstly, these frames are very closely connected to Mudde's pillars of nativism and authoritarianism. The threat to ethno-national identity falls well into the category of nativism as it creates the in-group that ought to be kept distinct and separate from out-

groups in order to preserve the community. Ethnicity based criminal behavior places blame on the out-group and expresses support for authoritarian measurers to restore the wellbeing of the society. The two both use us vs them antagonism in relation to immigrants which is connected to the populism pillar. Unemployment and abuse of the welfare state are a direct representation of the competition over scarce resources and fall well under the description of the competition theory that aims to explain ERP success.

In terms of the economic policy ERPs as a rule prefer to avoid opposing workers and employers but they tend to promote a national solidarity and it is usually the immigrants that form the out-group in a market context. The capital versus labor division is replaced by multicultural versus national axis. They promote a combination of free market policies and welfare distribution services, which enables them to get support from different income groups, but they are unwilling to extend social welfare to immigrants. In accordance with nativism, they tend to support protectionism in international trade, often oppose WTO and stress the importance of sustaining local jobs and supporting local products and entrepreneurs. (Swyngedouw & Ivaldi, 2001: 9) In that regard, one can also agree with Mudde when he stated that economic matters are framed through the nativism discourse only through this frame do they become significant.

On the other hand, one can also say that ERPs oppose promoting competition within the main ethnic group and avoid all common opposing interest frames between workers and employers. Especially the ladder makes ERPs stand out compared to mainstream parties as references to competition between income groups and occupation representatives is fairly common otherwise. Yet the strategic choice seems justified as placing standard in-group competition models with ethnicity based models supports the relevance of immigration as a topic and increases the salience of in- and out-group competition frame. It also makes it easier to compete for votes from all income groups.

ERPs as an anomaly

ERPs are often viewed as a pathological formation of values that opposes the general principles that guide western liberal democracies. They are either the votes of the victims of the modernization process on the lower end of socioeconomic division or they are protest votes to oppose mainstream politics in general or parties in particular. Mudde argues that this view is out dated and if one looks at the three main pillars of the ERPs, they advocate many of the existing values held by western countries, but they have merely framed them in a more radical manner. Nativism proposes that all states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that nonnative elements (both people and ideas/values) are a threat to the homogeneous nation-state. This ideology dates far back in European history and though there are disagreements on how far a state can go pursuing homogeneity among its population, the idea itself is not foreign to mainstream thinking. It is recognized in several constitutions of EU member countries and even the UN charter begins by calling for respect for the "self-determination of peoples". The constitutions also support openness to foreigners and not all states are nativist, but there are "ideological habits" that reinforce nativist principles, such as history education, media outlets, brands that recommend consuming local goods, etc. (Mudde, 2007: 5-6) Claiming that nativism is foreign to the western way of thinking is incorrect. Furthermore, many of the nativist habits stress the element of competition. The promotion of local products emphasizes the element of market competition, the media covers sports competitions and introducing national and cultural elements in education helps to increase the in-group feeling, which can later be used for opposition to out groups with the correct master frame.

Authoritarianism, or belief in an orderly and law abiding society where breaking the law is punished severely, is common not only to extreme-right parties but most of the right in general. Authoritarianism has been represented by non-religious liberal thinking to orthodox Christianity and in most fields in between. The previous two pillars are reinforced by populism. (Mudde, 2007: 6) The fact that their platforms are built on commonly held but underrepresented viewpoints has granted the ERPs an opportunity

for electoral success, given that they manage to represent the issues in a manner that is acceptable to the average voter.

ERPs have positioned themselves further away from extremists and closer to where they could compete with mainstream parties while utilizing the already preexisting values in their ideology. This explains why ERPs have increased their ability to compete with main stream right parties in elections, especially after moving further away from the traditional fascist past and taking on a more liberal and populist approach.

The more lenient and ethno-pluralist frame that was adopted in 1980s and onwards has made it possible for the ERPs to increase their support also among voters that as a rule support democratic principles and do not share hostility towards immigrants. If in 2011 the average support rate for an ERP is almost 10 percent of the vote in 12 European countries, we run into trouble referring to ERPs as an anomaly or an exception.

ERPs react to the existing demand among the population regarding issues of immigration, safety and political trust. The frames ERPs use are salient and can influence also other parties through competition, framing and the general shift in the discourse. The antagonism between in-groups and out-groups is likely to remain a relevant part of the political bargaining as long as ERPs continue to enjoy success in national elections.

1.2. Theoretical framework

Numerous theories have attempted to explain the rise of ERP success in elections. Arzheimer (2009) placed them four broader groups with generally similar approach to the matter. The first group focuses on extreme-right party votes, voters' socio-economic indicators and their belief systems and potential motivation for their vote, which was started by Adorno in the 50s but has been thoroughly developed since. The second field starts with the assumption that ERP success can primarily be explained with social disintegration in which previous social norms have ceased to exist and social change has brought about the feelings of anxiety and isolation. Social disintegration inspires the need for strong leadership and conservative ideology which ERPs offer. The third major strand of theory looks at group conflict. There is heterogeneity among this research as it can vary from traditional scapegoating theories, where minorities provide an easy target for preexisting aggression and frustration in the society and in that sense is closer to social disintegration field. On the other end of the spectrum it can also look at material and rational causes of out-group resentment that has been brought on by competition over scarce resources between majority and minority groups. The middle area between the two extremes is explained through "status politics", modern racism and social identity which can be summarized with the term relative deprivation – one social group perceives that in relation to the other group they do not get what they are entitled to despite the fact, that in absolute terms, they may be getting more. The forth field differs from previous fields as it spends more energy on contextual factors and focuses on a central notion of opportunity structures. The purpose is to look at the institutions, party system, general values and sentiment in the society in order to explain the emergence of ERPs. (Arzheimer, 2009: 260 - 261)

The line of research that focuses on individual characteristics of the voters has found some support, however, this strand of research has two shortcomings. Firstly, the ERP voter profile has become more diverse as the popularity of the parties has grown. Secondly, it does not consider wider structural changes and it is less suitable for explaining the emergence of ERPs and larger fluctuations in their success and failure.

The opportunity structure theory does look at structural changes. It also considers the specific characteristics of the country's party system in order to determine the opportunities for new parties as well as their spatial location. However, it is harder to find support for this in empirical studies. For example Kitschelt proposed that spatial location of mainstream parties on the left-right scale can either hinder or support ERP success (Kitschelt, 1999: 453). His hypothesis was that if the mainstream parties, particularly on the right, move closer to the center, it creates an opportunity for ERPs to emerge. This would mean that in the 1980s and 1990s when most ERP started to gain support, there was a vacuum on the right end of the scale. Studies measuring the party placement on the left-right scale discovered the opposite case instead. Before ERPs emerged, there was a trend from main stream conservative parties to become more right-wing, which should have hindered ERP success. (Ignazi, 2002: 30)

The social disintegration theory can explain well the mental states that creates a longing for a strong leader and support for authoritarianism, but it is less suited for explaining why it is often the immigrants and other out-groups that become the central element of campaign. Immigration tends to be a more salient issue than the shortcomings of the democratic system even if anti-system tendencies are part of most ERP platforms.

This research chose the competition theory, firstly because there are shortcoming in alternative approaches and secondly, because many of the elements discussed in the ideology section indicate that the elements of a perceived competition are present in most ERP's ideological programs. Both the pillars of nativism as well as authoritarianism require in their essence the concept of in-groups and our-groups to exist. In order to have an identity that becomes the central element of uniting the electorate and which also functions as a justification for authoritarian elements, there needs to be a concept of the nation, or the ethnic group or a smaller division that becomes the center of the idea.

The populism pillar means ERPs prefer to form their ideologies based on opposing interests of the in-group and out-groups. They do it by depicting the in-group as it were in a disadvantaged position, either due to the competition on the job market, increasing

criminal behavior or changing cultural environment. These grievances are then connected to the out-group that is predominantly immigrants, though it can also be related to regional opposition as in Italy or Belgium as previously mentioned. This overlap between the party ideology and competition theory gives a good starting point for the research.

Competition theory suggests that whenever groups compete for scarce resources, such as jobs, welfare benefits etc., it increases the average level of prejudice and intensifies the relationship between individual characteristics and prejudice. (Knovich, 2004: 20) When this theory usually looks at the rise and decline of prejudice in general, then the aim of this research is to see which particular factors correlate with changes in prejudice.

The theory considers the use of in-groups and out-groups in party rhetoric but also in media at large as a key element. The discourse connects out-groups and grievances the in-groups experience such as unemployment, rise in criminal activity or change in the social structure of the society in general.

Group-threat theory predicts rise in prejudice when collective threat perception rises. Mechanisms can include increases in the relative size of the competing groups, poor economic conditions, etc. The balance and relevance of the correlates depends on how these changes are utilized in frames that oppose out-groups and how well these frames resonate among the general population. The part of the population that is expected to be most influenced by the frames, are subgroups most likely to be in direct competition with the out-groups. However, as group theory does include the role of framing, it is also possible that if scarcity of recourses are triggered by an economic downturn or an active policy change by the government, then the out-groups do not necessarily have to be seen as the group to blame. A possible outcome in the limits of this theory is decrease in prejudice towards out groups if the responsibility is assigned to the government or the elite in general. (Knovich, 2004: 21)

ERPs and their success in elections enables to measure existing levels of prejudice. Studies that analyze what motivates ERP vote have reached various conclusions depending on the method and selected data. As a general trend it has been detected, however, that anti-immigrant attitudes and political dissatisfaction tend to correlate best with extreme-right vote. (Lubbers et al, 2002: 349)

2. Extreme-right voting

This chapter looks at previous studies that have been conducted in the field of extreme-right voting in order to test the main hypothesis. It continues to explain in detail the research relevant for competition theory, mainly studies comparing ERP vote with immigration rates and economic indicators.

The sudden growth in ERP success is a major phenomenon that cannot be explained only through successful framing and the correct choice of issues raised during elections. ERPs have been steadily gaining votes in almost all western countries where they have been present for a while and also new ERPs in countries with no previous success stories for extreme-right are starting to emerge and grow. This implies that we are not only looking at a few smaller trends but there might be a case to argue for a structural change that has been taking place since the 80s which supports the demand side of this process.

Betz proposes that this process can be explained by a structural change that took place around the 1970s. During the first postwar decades western societies experienced a dynamic economic growth and unforeseen levels of economic prosperity. Since the middle of the seventies this trend reversed and a decline in productivity occurred. For the first time since the Second World War real income either started to fall or stagnated and the gap between the higher and lower socioeconomic classes widened. Postwar years had almost achieved full employment that in the 1970s was replaced by mass unemployment. The reason for the shift in employment levels was a shift from labor-intensive production to capital-intensive production. The unskilled or semi-skilled labor that formed the core of the postwar production was becoming increasingly devalued, which created a group that has become known as "the losers of modernization". (Betz, 1998:7)

First studies that were conducted based on this hypothesis showed that extreme-right parties' electorate is predominantly male, from working and lower-middle classes and with lower education than the average voter. (Arzheimer, 2009: 259). The theory has

later been proven to be less supported by data than first expected, as extreme-right voters are now found among all income groups and division based on education is also weaker. But the general trend that right-wing voters tend to be less educated, younger and financially less well-off then the average voter is still confirmed. (Lubbers et al, 2002: 347-348).

The majority of studies, which look at the profile of the ERP voters have still concluded that on average they fit the profile Betz described. Lower-end socioeconomic background and direct competition with immigrant groups increases the likelihood of voting for an ERP. Rational calculations of the individual seem to provide an explanation with remarkable consistency. (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010: 317)

It has also been indicated that extreme-right parties gain votes under similar political and pragmatic considerations as moderate parties. The vote cannot be considered as merely a protest vote or a judgment on the government, but it is usually driven by sharing the political values of the party and also taking into account the party-specific indicators such as size, probability to make it into the parliament, etc. (Van Der Brug et al, 2000: 77) This indicates that analyzing extreme-right success should follow the usual methods and presumptions applied to all voting behavior studies.

2.1.   ERPs and immigration

Immigration skepticism (measured as willingness to reduce immigration) has been proven to be a good indicator of the right-wing vote. However, it is important to distinguish immigration skepticism in particular and xenophobic attitudes in general. Xenophobic attitudes measured by a variety of questions have a considerably weaker correlation with extreme-right vote in comparison to immigration skepticism even if this goes against most expectations as well as previous theories on extreme-right voter profile. (Rydgren, 2008: 737)

Several theories also assume a positive correlation between immigration skepticism and proportion of immigrants among the population, but this has received contradictory empirical results, depending on the method and region. Rydgren (2008) used data from six western European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Norway) to test the theory which claims that higher rates of ethnic heterogeneity in the region leads to higher rates of extreme-right vote, however the correlations were proven to be much weaker than expected and showed limited ability to support the theory. (Rydgren, 2008: 737).

Yet, studies conducted over a longer period of time in much the same countries, do show that an increase in immigration rates strongly correlates with rising support for right-wing parties (Knigge, 1998; Lubbers et al, 2002). The problem, however, arises from the fact that contradicting research was firstly conducted by using a different method: snapshot versus longitudinal studies and with a considerable difference in the time period. The longitudinal studies were conducted earlier and suggested that by 2008 ethnic heterogeneity should be able to explain right-wing support better, however, this was not the case. Looking at the longer period should help provide an answer to the question.

This study aims to test the theory that predicts an increase in right-wing party support as immigrant population increases over the period between years 2000 - 2011 and compare

it with national statistics on immigrant population and the increase it has been through over that period. Recent national level comparative studies on this topic that cover a longer period are missing at the moment. This particular period is not chosen only because of limited studies during this period, but also because it has shown an unexpected increase in support for anti-immigrant parties in Europe.

2.2. Economic indicators: economic growth, unemployment, inflation

Socioeconomic indicators have been considered relevant to ERP success. Taking the theory of economic disadvantage as a positive force on extreme-right success from the individual level to the macro level makes things more complicated.

The theory on economic competition mentioned earlier aims to explain extreme-right voting. Competition for jobs increases between the ethnically dominant population and recent immigrants due to economic decline, and this creates political support for restrictions on immigration (Lubbers et al, 2002: 349). Swank and Bets (2003) studied the influence of economic factors on the right-wing vote in 16 European countries between 1981 and 1998 and discovered that a universal welfare state considerably depresses the rightwing vote, which also creates a strong link between economic insecurity and extreme-right support. (Swank & Betz, 2003: 215) This shows that if direct competition over resources is intermediated by the state through means of unemployment benefits and social welfare, the competition effects are smaller.

Economic growth

Competition theory assumes that there's competition over scarce resources. The competition should become more acute when economic growth slows down due to two reasons. Firstly, slower economic growth creates less jobs, which generates more competition for every single job. Secondly, slower economic growth or decline should mean smaller budget for the welfare state and hence the intermediation effects become smaller. Thus, welfare chauvinist frames become more salient in economic downturn circumstances. The frames draw links between limited resources for the sick and elderly while stressing how much of the state budget is spent on the immigrant population in one way or another. During slower economic growth periods or economic recession, the socioeconomically marginalized groups tend to grow, which furthers the breeding ground for these arguments. (Rydgen & Ruth, 2011: 5)

Unemployment

ERP election campaigns have often linked unemployment and immigration. The National Front in France used the following slogan during the 1984 EU elections: "Two million immigrants are the cause of two million French people out of work". The Republicans in Germany proposed to solve unemployment by stopping immigration and Freedom Party in Austria proposed to give citizens legalized privileges in the job market over immigrants. (Golder, 2003: 438)

There is very little empirical evidence to suggest that immigration could have a negative effect on wider economic indicators or unemployment in particular. Also, among the population that is most likely to compete for the same jobs as immigrants do, unemployment rates rarely correlate with number of immigrants in the region (Golder, 2003: 438) Yet, this does not invalidate the materialist argument. It is not necessary to prove a connection between immigration and unemployment for the materialist hypothesis to stand as long as it's possible for the voters to believe that a connection exists. As ERPs keep actively using this frame and promoting the understanding that the connection exists, it is likely that the sentiment is there.

The theory expects conflicts to be more severe in regions with high unemployment rates. Competition and conflict of interests lead to exclusionist reactions from majority groups, with trends that show a stronger reaction from the *losers of modernity*: manual workers, rather than white-collar job holders. (Coffè et al, 2007: 144)

When it comes to studies that have measured the effect of unemployment on ERP success, the picture has been diverse. Baimbridge et al (1994, 1995) Jackman & Volpert (1996) found that the correlation is positive, while Knigge 1998, Lubbers & Scheepers (2000) and Jesuit &Mahler (2004) found the effect to be negative. Most of these studies covered a shorter period and it would be beneficial to check trends that last for more

than a decade. These studies were also taken before the last economic recession and it is relevant to see if the recent economic downturn has had an effect on the results.

Inflation

As inflation reduces the value of one's income and lowers individuals purchasing power, the competition theory predicts a positive correlation between inflation and ERP success. Knigge (1998: 257) argues that when the period of quick economic growth and low inflation came to an end in the 1970s oil crises it reinforced the social marginalization that had occurred during the industrial modernization. Inflation functions as an amplifier of negative trends in the economy and falling status and living standards reinforce the threat of out-group prejudice and scapegoating. Previous studies have yet again produced contradicting results and a wide scale dataset covering a decade should help to clear these issues.

3. Hypotheses

This chapter compares the macro-level indicators suggested by the two main theories that explain extreme-right parties' success and national-level voting data. The first looks at the demographic composition and percentage of immigrants among the population. The second looks at macroeconomic indicators - economic growth, inflation and unemployment.

The reasons for choosing macro level indicators are related directly to the nature of the theories, which study the effect of national changes such as economic decline and influx of immigrants on election results. But they also aim to clarify contradictory results from previous macro level studies and particularly in light of recent global changes such as a rise in immigration rates as well as an economic recession.

The hypothesis are the following:

H1: The higher the share of immigrants in the overall population of the region, the stronger the support for extreme-right wing parties in elections.

H2: Higher the rates of unemployment and inflation and lower the rates of economic growth, the stronger the support for extreme-right wing parties in elections.

The first hypothesis looks at the number of migrants as a percentage of the population and assumes that in countries with higher rates of migrants there is higher support for extreme-right wing parties. It is also expected that as the number of migrants rises over the study period in the country, support for extreme-right parties increases in that region. The regions are chosen to match the regions for which there exists data on immigrant population as well as election districts, which means they were not chosen by the lowest indicator, such as an election district for example but by the lowest common denominator for both data sources. This also means that the district's overall population figures differ from country to country.

Countries with greater economic growth and lower unemployment should have less extreme-right party success in elections. This research will be conducted on the-regional level for unemployment but on a national level for economic growth and inflation, as the data for regional level for the last two indicators is not available. The time period of this research covers economic growth and decline periods in the European economy and it is also expected that during a period of economic growth, extreme-right support declines and during economic recession, it rises. Economic decline is seen as an extra incentive in addition to immigration rates that should further spur right-wing support.

As previous research has received results in support of these hypotheses as well as against them, it is of interest to see if recent wide scale data can offer satisfying support for these theories.

4. Data and methods

The selection of countries had two main criteria. Firstly, it was necessary that the Western European country being selected had an existing party that fits the ERP profile and it was necessary that this party had entered national parliamentary elections during the period of 2000 until 2011. Since countries differ in their election systems and how votes are transferred into mandates, the measurement unit used was percentage of the valid ballots cast during national election in the party's favor.

The second criterion was a comparable means for measuring immigrant population by the region. Many states use different policies in order to measure immigrant population. There are states that only collect data on citizens and foreigners by the region but do not keep track of native or nonnative decent. There are also differences regarding whether the data concerns only the foreign born population or the second generation is also included. For the purposes of this study, citizenship measurements do not correspond with the purpose of measuring immigrant population as country specific naturalization will distort the results. Therefore, only countries that measure immigration and not citizenship could be included and it was necessary that immigration was measured in a similar manner. Eventually five countries emerged that fit all the criteria: the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The data was gathered for all national elections that had at least 1 ERP running between years 2000 and 2011.

Selection of election data units

National elections are the primary elections both from the perspective of parties as well as voters. Reif and Schmitt (1979) developed a theory of first and second order elections. They claimed elections for national public office are the most salient elections and local elections as well as EU parliament elections tend to be viewed as having less at stake. Though they both are conducted in the same party system, still three main differences remain. Second order elections have a lower turnout, government parties tend to suffer losses, and large parties tend to suffer losses. (Marsh, 1998: 592-593)

The main difference between the two is that first order elections determine who is in power and what national policies will be pursued during the duration of the election cycle. The results of the second order elections will have less of an effect. The smaller turnout means, that second order elections represent a smaller proportion of the electorate, and hence, the results are more likely to differ from actual support rates for these political parties. Secondly, the considerations voters make, may differ when stakes are either higher or lower.

Secondly, it indicates a change in party selection which can have different grounds. This has been explained through the election cycle, which proposes that government parties should have a smaller support rate between elections, largely due to their own campaign decisions. This can also be seen as protest voting and expressing discontent with government policies.

Regardless of how these differences are explained, extreme-right party success has always been higher in local elections, but breaching the threshold of national elections indicates another level of salience for the voters. Firstly, it means that an extreme-right party is capable of representing issues which seem relevant in comparison to main stream party propositions and secondly, also the strategically minded voter, who does not only consider political preferences, but also the likelihood of making it into the parliament, is willing to give them their support. Thus, success in national elections is a much stronger indicator of extreme-right sentiment among the population, than any second order election could demonstrate, and there is a qualitative difference between the two. The goal of this work is to measure the influence of national election results.

Selection of political parties

Comparisons with classifications of extreme-right parties by Mudde (1999), van der Burg et al (2000), Golder (2003) and Minkenberg (2011) have all reached similar conclusions when it comes to determining which parties classify as ERPs and which do not and there are eventually few controversies. In the five chosen countries there is an

agreement among researchers which parties classify as ERPs. They all share a clear far-right position in economic policies, stress the principles of nativism and use similar populist framing.

In Denmark the ERP is the Danish Peoples party. In Italy four parties were marked as ERPs: The Northern League, Pidemont-Italian Social Movement, Venetian League and Lombard League. During national parliamentary elections of the given period, only Northern league had received votes. For Netherlands, four parties were classified but between 2000- and 2011 only the Geert Wilders Party and the Pim Fortuyn List received votes. In Sweden the ERP is the Sweden Democrats and in Norway it's the Progress Party.

Operationalization

Measuring the variables mentioned in hypothesis will be as follows. Support for extreme-right parties will be measured through election results as a percentage of the entire vote, rather than as seats allocated in the parliament, as seat allocation might not be proportional. It is important to keep in mind that the actual vote does not directly correlate with support for the party as election system characteristics, such as a high threshold for the parliament or single member districts influence voter behavior and deter voters from supporting smaller parties. However, for practical considerations votes cast in elections give a better view of how to predict future election results and thus serves the purpose of this research better. The data will be viewed on the regional level in order to increase the level of accuracy in results.

Macroeconomic indicators are taken form Eurostat data on economic growth and inflation rate for the year of election in question. The trend that took place during that period, either economic growth increases or decreases, should indicate clearly enough the relevant economic climate in the country. The unit of measurement is percentage of GDP growth. The unemployment data is regional and comes from national statistics databases. The number of immigrants will be taken from national statistics of each

country and looked at on the same unit of measurement as the election results, which in most cases was the province level. Data will again be converted into percentage of population. The definition of immigration in this case includes both the first and second generation. The data ads up the number of people who are either first or second generation immigrants and calculates the percentage of the total region's population.

5. Results

The results were gathered for five countries and 14 different elections. The number of provinces for each country varied from 10 to 25, which resulted in a data pool of 227 cases.

ERP success in elections during the last decade has shown a rising trend in almost all of the countries in question. It also shows a high variation in results within countries but especially between countries. On the national level, results ranged from 2.9 percent of the vote in Sweden 2006 to 22.9 percent of the vote in Norway in 2009. Data on the province level showed an even greater variation, where it ranged from 0 to 29 percent of the vote.
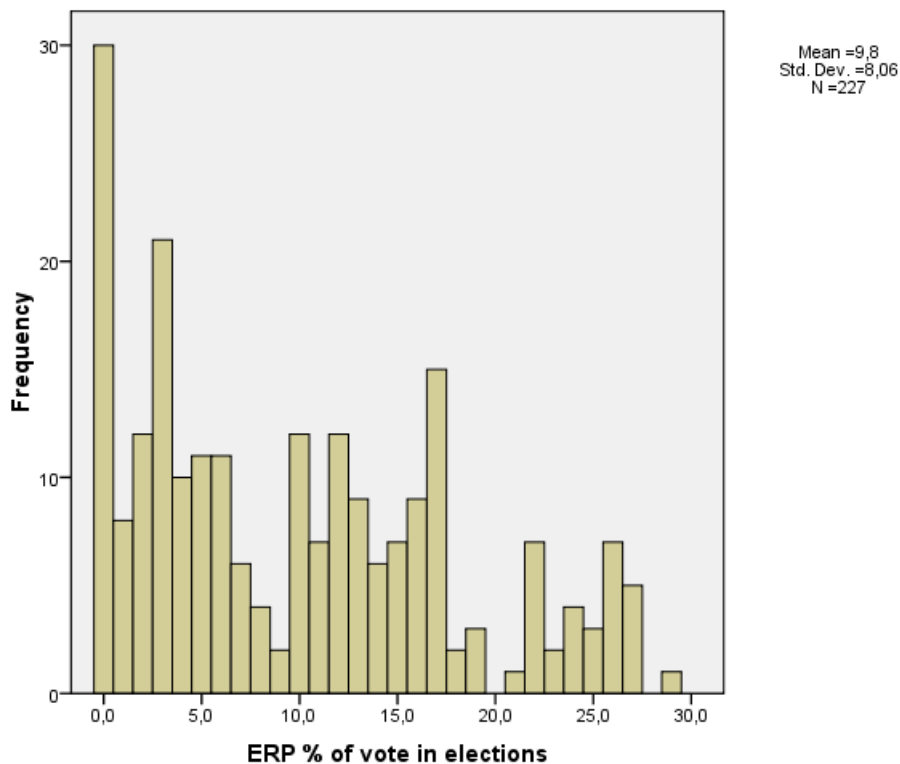
Figure 1. Histogram of ERP support in elections as a percentage of the total vote and frequency of the result on y-axis.

Norway in particular stands out with a very high ERP success rate, where the average support rate by region in elections is the highest (mean 19.2%) of the vote. Denmark follows with an average of 12.8% of the vote. Netherlands has an average support rate of 9.9%. The lowest and similar scores are shared by Sweden and Italy. In Sweden the measured ERP has only taken part in two most recent elections and it stands out with below average results (mean: 3.9%) Italy has an average ERP vote of even lower, of just 3.8%. The differences are also wide apart between regions. Denmark and Sweden stand out with a small standard deviation (slightly above 2 for both), which means that ERP support is consistent between regions and the party holds a fairly stable electorate across the country. Italy, on the other hand, has a standard deviation of 6.4 and a very strong regional distribution. It was the only country with regions that consistently over elections never voted for an ERP and got a score of 0, and regions where the score was consistently high. In Norway deviation was 5.5 which is also high, but ERPs did receive votes in all regions. The lowest results began at 10 percent of the vote and ranged up to 29 percent. In Netherlands standard deviation was 5.9 and support ranged from 3 to 26 percent of the vote. This information suggests that one would expect to see strong country effects in the overall results, which are affected by high variation between total scores as well as standard deviation within country results.

5.1. Immigration and ERP support

The first hypothesis predicted a positive correlation between immigration and ERP success and this correlation seems to be supported by evidence. Immigration data also has fairly high variations in results. The Netherlands stands out with the highest percent of immigrants among the overall population (16.4 percent of average in a region) and it also has the highest standard deviation of 6.1. Denmark is followed by 9% (5.22), Norway with 6,6% (3,6). Sweden and Italy both have low rates around 4 % and low standard deviations.

Figure 2 shows a fairly wide distribution of data with deviations from the predicted value, which indicates that the results differ from a perfect linear distribution. The reason behind the variation is related to strong country effects in voting as well as

immigration data. The immigration data creates strong effects due to concentrations of immigrant population in certain areas, especially the capital of the country. The theory predicts that the "losers of modernization" are the driving force behind increases in votes for ERP. However, the distribution of immigration is more heavily centered around urban regions, whereas unemployment, lower levels of education and lower income are more likely to see a distribution closer to even results then with immigration. This means that a greater number of outliers and some distortion of data away from perfect linear correlation is to be expected in this case. Not due to lack of demand for ERPs but due to uneven distribution of voters with described qualities in relation to immigrant population.
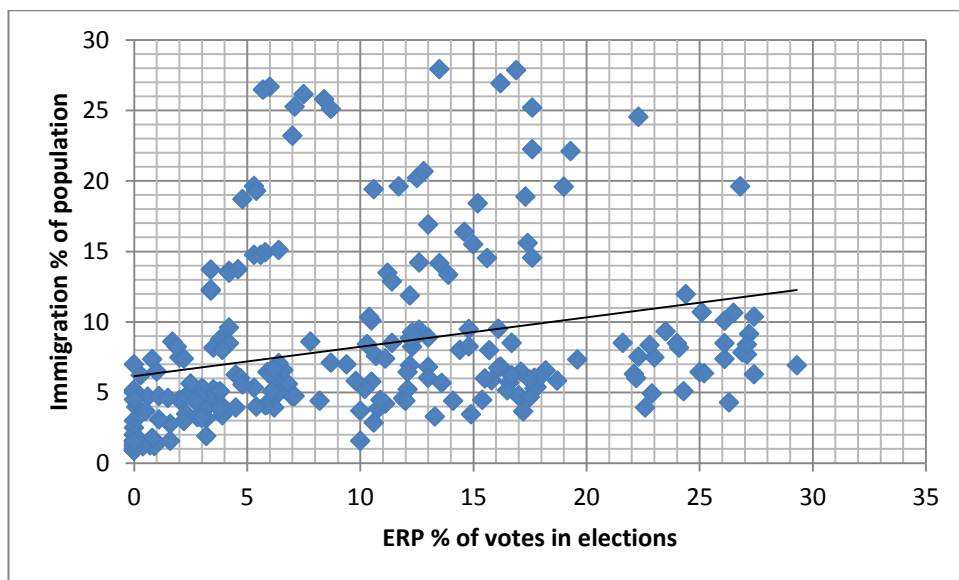
Figure 2. ERP success in elections as percentage of the total vote and corresponding regional immigration levels as percentage of the population

The graph shows that regions with immigration rates well above average do not all show a proportional increase in ERP support. This was to be excepted as the distribution of immigrant population is more uneven then the distribution of potential ERP voters.

Figure 2-also shows a cluster of regions with very low ERP support, which is a distortion created largely by Italy, where many southern regions do not vote for the

Lega Nord, yet southern regions still have comparable levels of immigrants among their population compared to those regions which do vote for Lega Nord. As party success in elections does not only depend on macro level indicators measured here, but also on the strategic choices of the party and regional voting patterns of every country separately then the given distortion is also acceptable as it does not undermine the prediction that on average, there is a positive correlation between immigration and ERP support. This distortion comes less pronounced, when the linear regression analysis also includes country dummies as shown later on in this chapter.

5.2. Unemployment and ERP support

The data shows a negative correlation between unemployment and ERP vote.
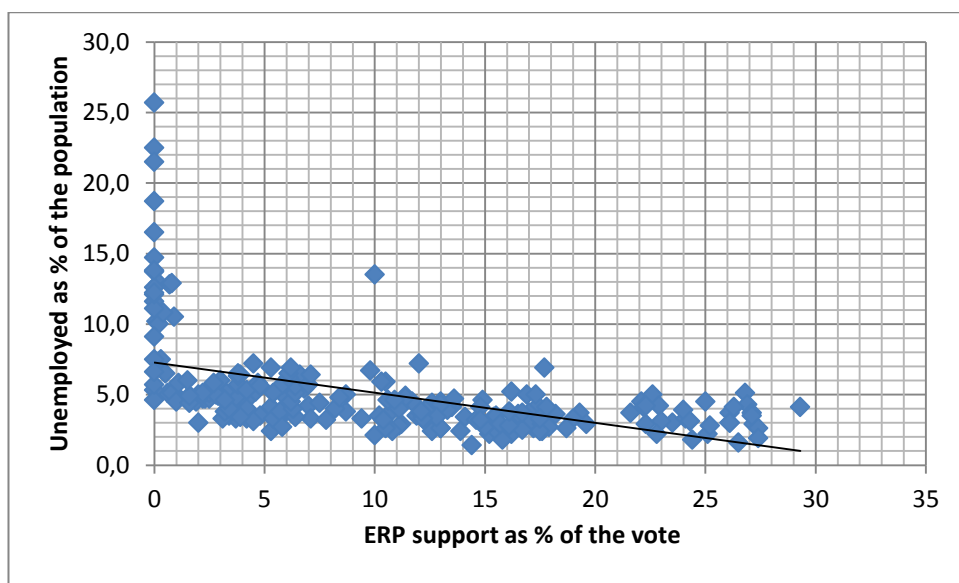
Figure 3. ERP support as percentage of the vote and unemployment rate in the region as percentage of the working age population.

Unemployment contrarily to theory predictions produces a negative correlation with ERP support. The graph in general shows a clearer correlation and less deviation from the predicted value then it was the case with immigration. When we look at the data

state by state, we find the unemployment levels are equally low in all countries, Denmark, Norway and Netherlands average around 3 percent, Sweden is slightly higher with 5 percent and all these four countries have rather equal unemployment rates across regions with small standard deviation. Italy again is an exception where unemployment in some southern regions goes up to 25 percent even if the average unemployment rate is only 7 percent.

Italy is also the main reason behind a cluster of results with 0 percent support for ERPs but with highest unemployment rates. This is again an exceptional case introduced by Italy, where the ERP only has a presence in the Northern region of Italy, but the highest unemployment rates are in the southern regions.

Negative correlation is also present when one looks at country by country data. The only country (Sweden) where there was a slight positive correlation between unemployment and ERP support. All four other countries and particularly Italy showed a fairly strong negative correlation and consistency in the results.

5.3. Economic Growth, Inflation and ERP support

The results for economic growth are only available for state level and not regional levels, which will influence the results by minimizing variation for the independent variable. The graph it produces is expected to be clustered on the y-axis. It show whether in years when economic growth was higher, the ERP support on the average was lower as the theory predicted.

The theory predicted a negative correlation and this was supported by the data shown in Figure 4. The graph below shows an overall result, which is influenced by national level indicators. In this case, it seems that country effects magnify the real correlation to an extent as the countries with on average higher economic growth also happened to be stable in lower support for ERPs regardless of the election year.
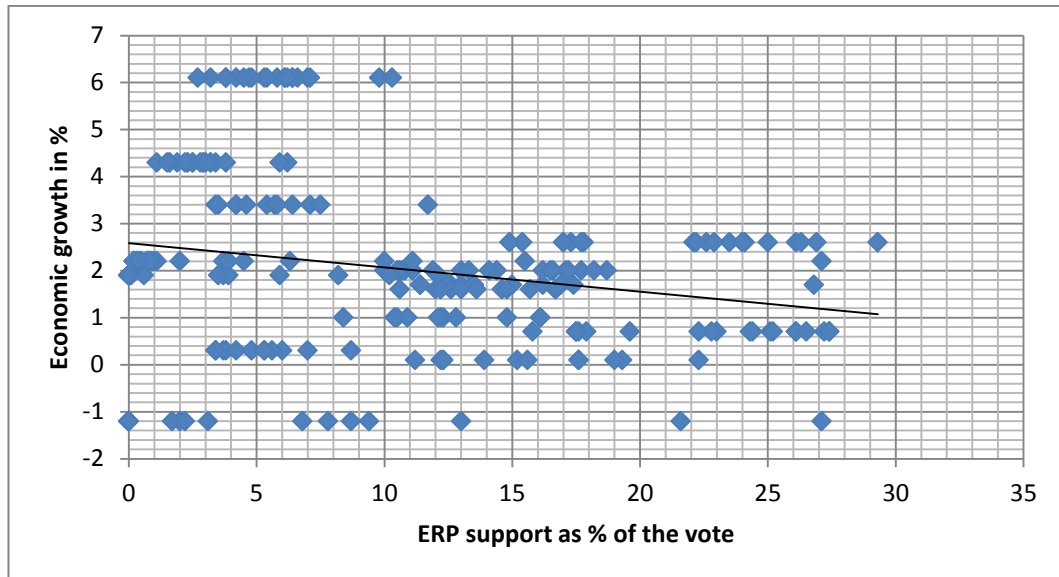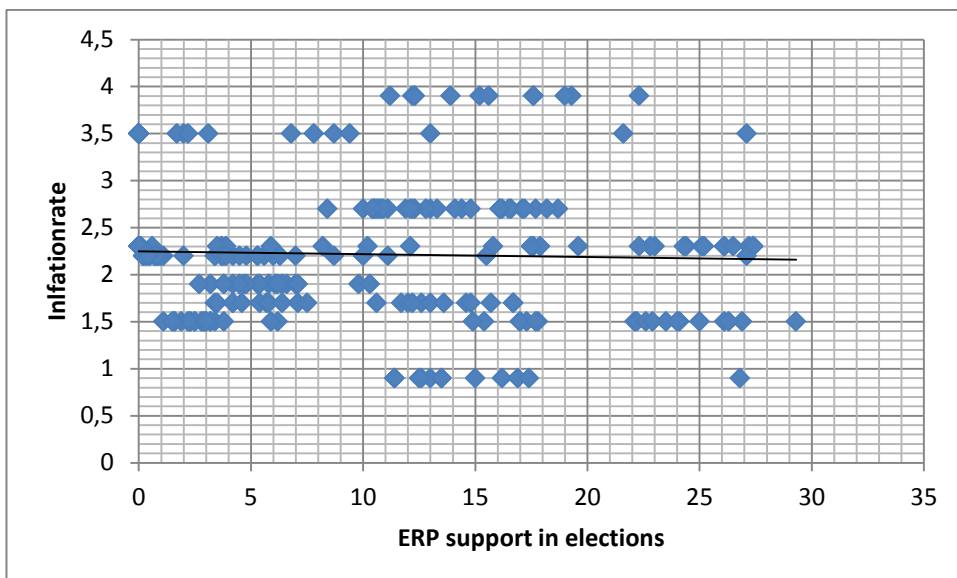
Figure 4. ERP support as percentage of the vote and economic growth as a percentage of GDP in the election year

When this data is analyzed with countries added as dummy variables, the effect of economic growth continues to be negative, but the standardized coefficient falls from -0.265 *** to 0.194**.

Inflation and ERP support

Inflation and ERP support were predicted to have a positive correlation. This analysis, however, shows a slight negative correlation. Again, as country level data was used and not regional data, the results are expected to vary according to country effects rather than regional indicators. In comparison to economic growth, the results are however placed closer to the predicted value and smaller deviation occurs among the independent variable. Based on this graph, one can admit a slight negative correlation.

Figure 5: ERP support in elections as percentage of the total vote and inflation rate in the year of the elections.

Before drawing final conclusions on the effect of immigration, it is necessary to add all the data to the general regression model to check the correlation and also the significance of the effect on ERP success in elections.

5.4.   Regression analysis

Regression analysis involved ERP support as a percentage of the overall vote as the dependent variable and it was compared to the percentage of immigrants in the region, unemployment rate in the region, economic growth as percentage of the GDP and inflation of the local currency within the election year. The analysis also included dummy variables for countries in order to check for country effects. Norway remained as the base category other results were assessed against.

Table 1. Factors influencing ERP vote share in elections (Linear regression)

Independent variables	B (SE)	Beta
Immigration	.257 (.082)	.198**
Unemployment	-.396 (.117)	-.169***
Economic growth	-1.137 (.353)	-.268***
Inflation	-1.592 (.603)	-.154**
Constant	22.780	
R^2	.355	
Adjusted R^2	.343	
N	227	

*** p<.001; ** p< .01; * p<.05

Adjusted R square of .343 shows that the correlation with four variables can account for 34% of the variation in ERP vote share in elections. Considering we expect party success to depend on more than macro level indicators, the result is satisfying for the purposes of this research. All the coefficients turned out to be significant after controlling for country effects. [1]

Increase in the share of immigrants by one percent produces and increase of 26% in the voter for ERP. While keeping in mind that immigration levels are bound to vary in ways that differ from distribution of ERP voters, this can be considered to be a fairly good indicator.

What came as more of a surprise in this case was the clear negative relationship between unemployment and ERP support. The results were partly explained already by Italy but since the correlation was negative and stable in four of the five observed countries, this can't be explained merely by party strategies for campaigning regionally. In Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands we observed the same effect. While Sweden showed a positive relationship between unemployment and ERP vote.

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[1] Examining residuals showed the model to have a reasonably good fit. Though there are some outliers, there are no problems with heteroscedasticity, non-normality nor nonlienarity.

As there have been previous studies measuring the effect of unemployment in both directions we can firstly say the country selection matters a great deal in drawing reliable generalizations based on differences in the slope of the regression line. We can also say that although the theory's most basic prediction of group competition which is highly dependent on group size holds true in all countries with a fairly high confidence interval, we may have to reconsider the exact intermediating factors that influence the correlation.

One of the possible explanations for the negative correlation with unemployment is that although we can predict a rise in prejudice, there is also a dimension of solving the issue of unemployment itself. In this case, though right wing parties would be supported when it came to the question of restricting immigration, they may not be perceived as the best party to deal with mediating the negative effects of existing unemployment due to their position on the far right of economic policies. They do not support redistribution of wealth and unless they offer specific and plausible options for solving the issue, they may lose votes to parties more in favor of redistributing wealth and actively managing the labor market.

This work could not explain these effects, but it would make for a valuable analysis to compare ERP success with other party groups under similar circumstances in order to determine possible reasons for this unexpected result and thus modify the competition theory on the issue of unemployment.

Economic growth was expected to have a negative correlation with ERP success and the regression analysis supported the results. Economic growth has the highest standardized coefficient and the lowest risk for the zero hypothesis to be true, which indicates a very strong marker of correlation for ERP success. This is well supported by the theory presented in the first chapters of the thesis and it supports the argument that scarcity of resources increases prejudice towards out-groups

However, these were country level indicators and the sample size was less flexible in terms of the dependent variable variation. As the effect of economic growth has also been measured to be weaker depending on the sample size and specific study in question, it would be useful for these indicators to be measured on a greater scale than just 5 countries.

Inflation was measured to be negative with a slightly higher chance of the zero hypothesis to be true than other indicators even if significance on .009 is well within the limits of reliability. The standardized coefficient was also the lowest, although it still explains a function of the variation and is thus relevant for this research.

We can conclude, based on this research, that competition theory's main starting points have found confirmation based on the example of these 5 countries and regional data. Both economic growth and the percentage of immigrants among the population are crucial indicators for the theory and have found support by the data.

However, it is also relevant to keep in mind that ERP support varies significantly due to country and party specific reasons, which means that the selection of countries in this study is of crucial importance and conclusions drawn on this sample may not hold true with all ERPs across Europe. Italy was definitely a unique case in terms of ERP support and regional distribution, which means that the effect Italy had on this study should be considered when drawing wider generalizations. Also, Sweden showed an unexpected positive relationship between ERP support and unemployment, which should be considered, even if in other variable relationships Sweden was much closer to the overall trend.

The trends detected in this study are statistically sound and fairly straightforward. This gives support for the claim the changes in ERP vote shares are more than protest votes or party success due to improved framing. These are consistent trends which correspond to the structural changes in population and shifts in macroeconomic situation.

It also clear that competition theory requires more research, particularly on the issue of unemployment. This would presume a comparison of ERP support with other party families to understand how macroeconomic indicators influence party competition over votes. Another important question beside party competition could be answered by an individual level data comparison to measure the importance on unemployment in voting patterns and how it affects party choice. Currently, there are two possible explanations for the problem, either unemployment acts differently from other scarcity variables in terms of increasing prejudice and instead of creating rising trends in ERP support, it reduces it. The competition explanation would be that it still increases prejudice but changes that motivation and priorities of the voter away from prejudice and closer to competing values and sentiments. They both hold relevant implications for competition theory and require a further look into the matter.

Conclusion

Extreme-right parties have shown increasing trends over the past three decades that few other party groups can match. There have been various attempts to explain this phenomenon, yet the exact reasons behind the party success have not yet fully received satisfying answers, as conducted research has often reached contradicting results. This thesis aims to contribute to the research firstly by analyzing trends that took place over a longer period of time. Secondly, by not only drawing conclusions based on cross-national data, but by following trends also state by state in order to detect anomalies that might interfere with the final results. The ladder is particularly important with this research as measured variables all vary considerably and a crude correlation may be misleading.

The study first begins by explaining the trends that have taken place among ERPs and electoral behavior. We have found that changes have been relevant on both fronts. On the party level, majority of ERPs have given up their most extreme standpoints on racism and anti-democratic tendencies, which has considerably widened their appeal. At the same time, we have also seen a structural change in the society that coincided with ERP comeback to the Western European electoral market. The structural change has manifested itself through volatile economic growth, rising unemployment and increasing rates of immigration.

The starting point of the thesis was competition theory. The theory predicts that when the dominant ethnic/racial group in the society experiences increased competition over scarce resources with minority groups, it increases prejudice towards out-groups. The prejudice takes the form of ERP support during elections in ERP. Based on this theory, two hypotheses were formed. First predicts a positive relationship between rise in immigrant population and ERP support. The second predicts that macroeconomic indicators such as unemployment, economic growth and inflation should have significant effect on ERP support.

The results show that all the tested correlations were significant and explained a fair share of the variation in ERP success. Immigration and ERP support have a positive correlation as predicted by the theory. During period of high economic growth ERP as more likely to receive lower support then with lower results for GDP growth. This was also predicted by the theory and hence, two main pillars of the competition theory found support. However unemployment rates and inflation did not behave as the theory predicted. Inflation showed a very small negative correlation but with unemployment, fours countries out of five demonstrated a fairly strong negative correlation, whereas only Sweden confirmed the theory.

The implications to be drawn from this research are as follow. Immigration, as the basis of increased competition between in-groups and out-groups, did produce consistent and high correlation with ERP success, which shows that immigration, is a relevant factor in this field. Also, as immigration levels will probably continue to grow, we can expect to a continued ERP success. Relevance of economic growth was also supported by the theory over all, the most basic predictions of the competition theory hold.

The anomalies that took the form of unexpected results for unemployment and inflation, suggest that competition theory requires further investigation in order to determine what the reasons are for falling ERP support. This can mean that either these variables decrease prejudice towards out-groups, or high unemployment levels influence voter behavior in favor of competing parties without a change in prejudice. Both of these are relevant directions to go to. There have been studies already conducted that analyze factors increasing or decreasing prejudice on the individual level, but there is still a shortage of research that compares ERP success with mainstream parties.

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Makrotasandi võrdlused ja paremäärmuslike erakondade edu valmistel Lääne-Euroopas - Kokkuvõte

Paremäärmuslikud erakonnad on olnud kõige kiiremini kasvava toetusega erakonna grupp viimase kolme kümnendi jooksul Lääne-Euroopas. 1980ndate alguses said paremäärmuslikud erakonnad keskmiselt ühe protsendi häältest riiklikel parlamendi valimistel. 2000. aastaks oli see näitaja kasvanud 5% ning on jätkanud kasvu ka sealt edasi. Muutus on olnud märgatav ühtemoodi kogu Lääne-Euroopas ning see on toimunud nii olemasolevate erakondade toetuse suurenemises kui ka uute erakondade tekkena riikides, kus varem parmäärmuslike erakondi ei toetatud.

Sellisel skaalal toimuvad muutused näitavad, et tegu on kõigi eelduste kohaselt rohkemaga kui protesti häältega, ning me ei saa ka pidada paremäärmuslikke erakondi ühevaldkonna erakonnaks, millele on piiratud valijaskond ning reeglina lühike eluiga. Muutused on toimunu nii nõudluses kui pakkumises. Erakondade poole pealt on toimunud nihe vähem äärmuslike hoiakute suunas, kus suurem osa neist on loobunud näiteks bioloogilise rassismi toetamisest ning ka demokraatlike väärtustega vastuollu minek on olnud järjest vähem tõenäoline. See on võimaldanud paremäärmuslikel erakondadel konkureerida laiemale valijaskonnale ning konkureerida peavoolu erakondadega. Nõudluse poolele on muutunud valijate käitumine, kes järjest rohkem peavad oluliseks teemasid nagu immigratsiooni ja rahvus ning kultuuriline ühtsus, ning järjest suurem osakaal valijaid on nõus äärmuslikke erakondi toetama. Lisaks sellele on toimunud olulised struktuursed muutused ühiskonnas, mille algus langeb kokku parmäärmuslike erakondade valimisedu tõusu perioodiga. Viimaste kümnendite jooksul on majanduskasv aeglustunud ning toonud kaasa suurema ebastabiilsuse, tööpuudus on tõusnud, vähendades inimeste majanduslikku kindlustatust ning on suurenenud immigrantide osakaal ühiskonnas. Nii nõudluse kui pakkumise poole muutused vajavad seletust, ning see eeldab konkreetsete erakondade ja valimiste vaatlemist.

Katsed ootamatut ja järsku tõusu paremäärmuslike erakondade edus on püütud korduvalt seletada , kuid siiani pole saavutatud täielikult rahuldavaid tulemusi, sest erinevate uurimiste vahel on mitmeid vastuolusid. Magistritöö püüab anda oma panuse

kõige pealt vaadates laiemaid ja püsivamaid muutusi üle kümneaastase perioodi. Teiseks, võetakse lisaks üldistele korrelatsioonidele arvesse riiklikud kõikumised, et välistada eksitavaid tulemusi, mis on olnud põhjustatud riikide eripäradest.

Töö aluseks on konkurentsi teooria, mis eeldab, et kui ühiskonnas domineeriv etniline või rassiline grupp satub piiratud ressursside tõttu tugevamaste võistlusesse piiratud ressursside pärast, siis peaks suurenema eelarvamusliku hoiakud vähemusgruppide suunas. Eelarvamusliku hoiakud omakorda avalduvad valimistel paremäärmuslike erakondade poolt hääletamises. Selle põhjal loodi kaks hüpoteesi. Esimene ennustab positiivset korrelatsiooni immigrantide osakaalu ja parmäärmuslike erakondade edu vahel regioonis. Teine ennustab makromajanduslike näitajate – tööpuuduse, majanduskasvu ja inflatsiooni mõju paremäärmuslike erakondade edule.

Andmestik koguti viie riigi parlamendi valimistelt perioodil 2000-2011. Andmeid võrreldaks regioonide tasandil koos immigrantide osakaaluga koguelanikkonnast ning töötuse osakaaluga regioonis. Andmete võrreldavus tekitas mõningaid probleeme, seda just eriti immigratsiooni kohta andmete kohapealt, ning see seadis piirangud, mis viis viie riigi valimiseni: Holland, Itaalia, Taani, Rootsi ja Norra. Valimiste andmed koguti kõigi valimiste kohta sel perioodil, kus astus üles vähemalt üks paremäärmuslik erakond. Immigratsiooni all mõeldakse nii esimese kui teise põlvkonna esindajaid ning nende osakaalu regiooni kogu elanikkonna hulgas. Tööpuuduse andmed on sammuti regionaalsed, kui andmed majanduskasvu ning inflatsiooni kohta on kogutud riiklikul tasemel.

Tulemused saadi läbi regressioonanalüüsi, mis hõlmas üht sõltuvat muutujat (paremäärmuslike erakonda protsent valimistel saadud häältest) ning nelja sõltumatut muutujat, milleks oli tööpuudus, majanduskasv, inflatsioon ja immigratsioon. Need neli näitajat seletavad kokkuvõttes ära suhteliselt kõrge osa variatsioonist parmäärmuslike erakondade edus. Hüpotees immigratsiooni ja paremäärmuslike erakondade edu kohta leidis kinnitust. Sammuti leidis kinnitust, et majanduskasvu ja parmäärmuslike erakondade vahel on negatiivne korrelatsioon. Samas tööpuuduse ja paremäärmuslike erakondade edu vahel oodati, positiivset seost, kuid see osutus negatiivseks. Viiest

riigist neljas oli olemas tugev negatiivne korrelatsiooni ning Rootsi oli ainus riik, mis käitus ootuspäraselt. Ka inflatsiooni puhul leidis kinnitust oodatust vastupidine korrelatsioon, kuigi viimase korrelatsiooni näitajad oli teistest madalamad, ning seega oli efekt väiksem.

Selle põhjal on võimalik teha kask suuremat järeldust. Esiteks, immigratsioon , kui konkurentsiteooria olulisim alustala leidis kinnitust. Tegemist oli selge ja olulise korrelatsiooniga, mis oli sarnane kõigi riikides. Majanduskasvu ja parmäärmuslike erakondade edu vahel oli negatiivne korrelatsioon, ning arvestades, et hetkel on Euroopa veel majanduslangusega ja selle tagajärgedega tegelemas, ning ka immigrantide osakaal pigem kasvan kui kahaneb, siis võib oodata, et paremäärmuslike erakondade edu pigem jätkub

Anomaaliad teoorias, mis esinesid tööpuuduse ja inflatsiooni näol tuleb veel analüüsida põhjalikult. Seda on võimalik teha kahel suunal. Esiteks analüüsides, kas eelarvamuslikes hoiakutes toimuvad muutused tööpuuduse ja inflatsiooni puhul. Teiseks vaadates, millistele erakondadele paremäärmuslikud erakonnad kõrge tööpuuduse ja inflatsiooni tingimustes kaotavad. Eelarvamuslike hoiakute analüüsi on juba läbiviidud, kuigi mitte nende muutujate mõõtmisega. Paremäärmuslike erakondade võimet konkureerida peavoolu erakondadega on aga vähe veel siiani vaadatud, ning see oleks üks oluline valdkond, mida edasi uurida.