

Scandinavian Radicalism: The Politics of Inequality and Right-Wing Voting

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Abstract: What conditions influence a voter's decision to vote or support the radical right? In this paper, I argue that inequality plays an important role in boosting support for the radical right, but that the relationship is more complicated and depends on where a voter lives and under what conditions. I compile a cross-sectional dataset of Swedish municipalities and conduct an original survey experiment of Swedish citizens in order to determine how inequality impacts support for the radical right, how voters generate perceptions around the issue, and then how they use those perceptions in political decision making. I find that inequality increases support for the radical right across Sweden, but that the relationship is complicated and nuanced depending on how a voter feels about their neighborhood, whether they live in a rural or urban area, and how inequality is changing in their municipality. These findings contribute to how scholars understand the radical right and how they receive support by identifying how in some cases, the relationship between a variable is conditional on other factors like the population density and that direct relationships can be misleading. However, support does not always mean votes and these findings identify a pitfall in using the share of the vote as the sole dependent variable. As further research is conducted into the radical right in Sweden and Europe, it is important to capture support for the radical right in a variety of ways and not just through vote shares as a proxy for support.

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Introduction

Across Europe, support for the radical right has received unprecedented levels of support, elevating them to prominent positions in European legislatures and governments. Following elections in 2018, Jobbik, one of the more radical parties of the party family, became the second largest party in Hungary and the Sweden Democrats, one of the more moderate parties, became the third largest in the Riksdag. In Switzerland and Austria, they are the governing party or members of the governing coalition, respectively. In France in 2017, Marine Le Pen received almost a third of the vote in the French Presidential election, a new high for the National Rally. However, the success of the radical right is not uniform across the continent. In some cases, like Slovakia or Germany, the radical right is still a minor player in domestic politics. In other cases, the radical right barely exists, and if one does exist such as Portugal's National Renovator Party or Lithuania's Nationalist Union, their level of support does not go above one percent (see Figure 7).

The conventional narrative surrounding the success of the radical right focuses on their xenophobic anti-immigrant positions and the growing nationalism in European politics. Despite their national success however, the radical right does not receive unvarying success across countries. In Sweden's 2018 national election, support for the Sweden Democrats ranged from 10.9% in Västerbotten county in the north to 25.7% in Skåne county in the south of Sweden (see Figure 8). In other countries like Germany or France, the radical right earned the bulk of their support from rural areas and minimal support in urban city centers. The subnational variation in radical right vote shares raises interesting questions about where the radical right receives the most support and sheds light on why they have been successful. Why does the radical right

garner support in certain areas as opposed to others? Where do the radical right receive the most votes?

I will first discuss the radical right in Europe and the characteristics of these parties that make them interesting to study. I define a radical right party using Golder's definition of the radical right as having to contain both a populist and nationalist element. These need not be equal, but both must be present (Golder 2016). Then I outline the existing explanations directly related to the rise of the party family and then I discuss broader theoretical explanations for party success, failure, and voting behavior. After discussing the literature, I argue a voter's perspective plays an important role in support for the radical right, both regionally and nationally in shaping the decision to back the radical right. In order to test these hypotheses, I analyze two sources of data: 1) subnational data from Swedish municipalities collected from publicly available government websites, and 2) an original survey experiment of Swedish citizens. From my analysis, I argue that inequality is an important part of understanding the appeal of the radical right, but that the relationship is nuanced based on if a voter lives in rural areas where it activates a rural consciousness or in areas which have low inequality and are worsening which activates their relative deprivation. I also argue that support for the radical right is broad, and that general support for the party family needs to be captured in other ways beyond the share of the vote in elections.

What is the Radical Right?

These parties are most well-known for their nationalistic rhetoric on social issues and immigration. Most recently, following the refugee crisis, they gained significant attention for their hardline, anti-immigrant messaging, frequently bashing German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the EU for its open-door policy toward the influx of refugees from the Middle East. One of

the more radical parties is Jobbik in Hungary, which is notoriously anti-Roma, anti-immigration, and considered by many to be anti-Semitic. Jobbik supporters in Hungary have been caught tripping refugees at the border and were able to influence the conservative government under Viktor Orbán to build a fence along the southern border. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the UK, which pioneered the Brexit referendum, often cited immigration concerns when campaigning to leave the European Union. The nationalist message against immigrants are often expressed through strong sentiments about the greatness of their respective countries. According to radical right parties, countries need to undergo a palingenetic rebirth of political culture and be restored to a once former glory (Griffin 2002). The name Jobbik is an acronym in Hungarian which translated to English stands for “Movement for a Great Hungary” and the radical right party in Romania is even more open, simply calling themselves “Greater Romania”. Nationalism is a core component of the radical right as they often depend on nationalist identities to mobilize supporters, but it is not the only characteristic that defines the radical right.

These parties are also Eurosceptic and are able to rally support by galvanizing opposition to European elites. They attack mainstream politicians and Brussels, using the EU and its politicians as a scapegoat for the country’s problems. UKIP championed the Brexit movement, forcing Prime Minister David Cameron to call the referendum to win re-election in 2015 citing not only immigration concerns but also arguing that the EU was a breach of British sovereignty and that the UK needed to regain its power in London. Other parties like the National Rally in France or the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands have since expressed interest in their own exit referendums from the European Union. In the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections, the radical right emerged as the third largest party group in the EP, elected on a campaign platform

of fighting against Europe and breaking up the bureaucracy in Brussels. According to the radical right, the elite ignore the people, and argue that they will fight for the forgotten, an important component of their populist platform.

The nationalism and Euroskepticism of the radical right are well noted and observed in the coverage of the recent success of these parties. When Brexit succeeded, Marine Le Pen almost won in France, and the radical right emerged in Germany, a country with a troubled history of nationalist parties, the narrative surrounding their success was immigration and Euroskepticism. However, for this paper, the goal is to go beyond the more popular perception of the success of these parties as the result of rising fears of others and rising nationalism. The populist message plays to the differences among people in society and creates division among the people versus the elites in power. This rhetoric suggests that inequality, or the perceptions of inequality, is an important condition of the messaging and campaigns of the radical right. In Sweden, one prominent policy position of the Sweden Democrats is the expansion of the welfare state that works for everyone, especially Swedish citizens through expansions in healthcare, education, and pension policy (Sweden Democrats, 2019). The goal of this paper is to understand the populist appeal of the radical right in Europe and understand where and why that populist message takes hold. Where does the radical right receive support? Under what conditions does the radical right mobilize its base? Does inequality in certain areas affect support for the radical right more than in other areas?

Existing Explanations for the Radical Right

It is impossible to study the rise of the radical right and their electoral success without first going back and understanding what scholars have observed about the relationship between that success and immigration. Across the board, scholars agree that the role of immigration and

anti-immigrant attitudes plays a crucial role in understanding the success of the radical right in Europe (Ivarfslaten 2008, Rydgren 2009, Coffé et al. 2007, Jesuit 2009, Berning & Ziller 2017, Golder 2016). Given the recent refugee crisis and the drastic increase in immigration into the continent, many scholars have attributed the recent success of the radical right on a mishandling of the immigration issue by mainstream parties. Scholars such as Coffé et al. (2007) have found similar results, highlighting that regions in the Netherlands with large populations of immigrants were more likely to support the radical right. Ivarsflaten (2008) finds that the single most unifying issue among the European radical right is their policies on immigration. However, some scholars have observed that it is not areas with high immigration that see increased support from increases in immigration, but it is rather areas that are surrounded by areas where there are more immigrants (Eatwell 1998, Teney 2016, Rydgren & Ruth 2011) The halo effect thesis argues that voters do not necessarily have to be exposed to high immigration, but rather that they might be conditioned to fear immigration from changes in neighboring communities. The radical right capitalizes on fears of others and the increased influx of immigration in other communities to increase anxieties about what could happen in their community if nothing is done about immigration (Eatwell 1998, Teney 2016, Rydgren & Ruth 2011). The role of immigration is often studied as a direct relationship, but the halo effect suggests that there is something psychological at play, leading to more research into the indirect ways that immigration influences support for the radical right.

One such interaction suggests that economic anxieties are blamed on high immigration. The presence of ethnic prejudice within a community and high unemployment do not alone explain the support for the radical right, but high immigration allows radical right leaders to blame whatever level of unemployment on the immigrants, making the two issues almost

dependent on each other for the radical right to be successful (Jesuit et al 2009). A similar relationship has been found between immigration and social capital, where the presence of high levels of immigration and ethnic prejudice has been associated with decreased levels of social trust, cooperation, and association membership which increases support for the radical right (Rydgren 2009, Berning & Ziller 2017). Other scholars argue that immigration itself is not the source of radical right support, but rather it is how immigration is observed by the public and how radical right parties use other issues, like local economics or immigration in other regions, to manipulate public opinion (Spoon et al. 2019, Lubber et al. 2002, Stockemer 2016, Halla et al. 2008, Bowyer 2008). The role of immigration has been widely studied in relation directly and indirectly to support for the radical right with overwhelming support that immigration matters in some form to the success of the radical right.

Social Capital

While immigration dominates the literature, some scholars have focused on alternative explanations for the success of the radical right, viewing immigration as not enough to explain the rise of this party family. Social capital, as defined by Putnam (1994), is a measure of trust, reciprocity and involvement within society. He argues that high social capital leads to better performing democratic institutions while low social capital leads to worse institutions. For the radical right, scholars have found evidence that social capital does matter when understanding their backing. Municipalities with lower levels of associational membership and social capital have been found to have lower levels of radical right support (Coffé et al 2007). Other studies have found that locales with higher social cohesion actually leads to higher local level support for the radical right (Fitzgerald & Lawrence 2011). Other scholars have found competing evidence, suggesting that social capital's role is more nuanced and complicated. For example,

Rydgren (2009) finds that social isolation has no significant impact on support for the radical right, challenging scholars that point to social capital as a potential explanation. The role of social capital in the success of the radical right is complicated and complex, and some scholars have found that it helps the radical right while others have found that it hurts the radical right and some have found that it has no effect, leading to the development of even more explanations for radical right support.

Economic Factors

The other large group of alternative explanations focuses on economic factors, both real and perceived, around the time of the election. At the individual level, economic conditions matter and individuals who are unemployed, self-employed, or manual workers are more likely to support the radical right (Lubbers & Scheepers 2001, Rooduijn & Burgoon 2018). While individual conditions matter, studies argue that the aggregate conditions do not matter as much (Spoon et al 2019, Lubbers & Scheepers 2001, Lubber et al. 2002). As a result, scholars assert that economic conditions are the catalyst for radical right parties to then galvanize support by blaming immigrants and the establishment for economic concerns in certain regions (Stockemer 2017a). According to Stockemer (2017a), the economic crises of 2008 and 2013 in Europe cannot alone explain support for the radical right since areas that were less impacted by the crises tended to support the radical right more, but that radical right parties were able to go into these areas and create fear of things getting worse by pointing to immigrants and government activities in the hard-hit areas. This finding matches other scholars that claim that support for the radical right is actually higher in prosperous areas where unemployment is lower (Coffé et al. 2007, Lubber et al. 2002). The success of the radical right does not entirely depend on the overall

aggregate conditions, and some scholars argue that economics are background noise to the true causal mechanisms of radical right success.

Beyond prosperity and economic condition at the aggregate level, some scholars have recently observed that local economics can play a significant role in explaining the appeal of the radical right. As scholars have uncovered, regions which are better off tend to support the radical right more than the conventional wisdom would suggest (Coffé et al. 2007, Stockemer 2017a, Lubber et al. 2002). In a study of the neighborhood effect and radical right voting, Bowyer (2008) finds that a voter's perceptions of the local economy extend to the aggregate level, and that local conditions help explain support for the radical right. Additionally, Spoon, Hayes, and Lim (2019) argue that local conditions matter and, in their study on the impact of trade, suggest that while trade at the aggregate level is statistically insignificant with support for the radical right, there is a statistically significant relationship between the amount of imports and support for the radical right at the local level. Overall, local economics matters and that while aggregate conditions may be improving, if localities are struggling or negatively impacted by economic changes, then the radical right benefits.

One of the more interesting economic stories for support for the radical right is the role of globalization and the economic changes that come with increases in trade and more open economies. Coffé et al. (2007), alongside a positive relationship between immigration and radical right support, found that prosperous cities and those with lower unemployment were actually more likely to support the radical right. Additionally, Swank and Betz (2003) identify that increased internationalization through openness to trade and migration has a positive relationship with support for the radical right. Other studies buttress this relationship by finding that areas with more imports support the radical right more (Spoon et al. 2019). However,

according to Swank & Betz (2003), the impact of globalization was affected by the strength of the welfare state, with a weaker welfare state and increased globalization resulting in the most support for the radical right. This finding raises questions about the welfare state that are often overshadowed in the literature by globalization at large, unemployment, and immigration.

One overlooked economic condition is income inequality, which is often clumped together with the welfare state or globalization. Some scholars have found that in areas with improving economic conditions, voters are more likely to vote for the radical right if they feel like they have not benefitted from economic improvements (Roodujin & Burgoon 2018). According to Betz, these voters are globalization losers because they have not profited from the economic improvements associated with globalization, and it is these voters that are especially likely make up the base of radical right voters (Betz 1993). While these studies have addressed the role of unequal economic growth, the direct relationship between income inequality and support for the radical right has been understudied by scholars.

Table 1: Existing Explanations for the Radical Right

Explanation	Authors	Observable Implications
Immigration	Ivarfslaten (2008) Rydgren (2009) Coffé et al. (2007) Jesuit (2009) Berning & Ziller, (2017) Golder (2016) Lubber et al. (2002) Stockemer (2016) Spoon et al. (2019) Halla et al. (2008) Bowyer (2008)	Higher levels of immigration and anti-immigrant attitudes increase support for the radical right. Immigration also serves as a motivator for support when other factors present.
Social Capital	Putnam (1993) Rydgren (2009) Coffé et al. (2007) Fitzgerald & Lawrence (2011)	Areas with more social capital, trust, and reciprocity have lower levels of support for the radical right.
Economy	Coffé et al. (2007), Swank & Betz (2003), Betz (1993), Roodujin & Burgoon (2018), Lubbers (2001), Lubbers et al. (2002), Stockemer (2017), Spoon et al. (2019), Bowyer (2008)	Higher economic anxiety, unemployment and losses from globalization have higher levels of support for the radical right.

Voting Behavior & Party Success

It is important to step back and understand the existing theoretical explanations in the literature surrounding party success and party emergence. One part of the theoretical explanations of party success are institutionalists, who focus on the role of electoral rules and institutional design on the emergence of political parties. They study the institutional vacancies left by parties, such as spatial theory or electoral market theory, and the practical impact of electoral rules. The other part of the explanation is the individualistic approach to voting behavior. For individualists, voting behavior can be broadly divided into three subcategories which are identity voting, sociological voting, and economic voting, which all shape the preferences of voters.

Institutional Explanations

The basic idea behind institutionalism is that electoral rules and party systems shape the ability of a party to emerge and establish itself within those institutions (Duverger 1954, Sartori 1997 & 1999, Arzheimer & Carter 2006). According to Duverger's Law, the type of electoral system shapes the number of parties that are able to compete and gain seats. Single member districts (SMDs) in which the candidate with the most votes wins the seat and the losers walk away with nothing can only ever have a two-party system (Duverger 1954). Plurality systems in which SMDs are prominent, like the United States or the United Kingdom, have rigid and higher electoral thresholds to gain seats in the legislature, and it is therefore harder for parties to emerge and be successful in those systems. On the other hand, systems under proportional representation (PR) where seats are allocated by the amount of the vote that the party receives are more conducive to fringe party breakthrough and success (Sartori 1997 & 1999). Essentially, PR systems have a lower threshold for success, since seats are still awarded even if the party is not

the largest party in the region or country, increasing the number of viable parties (Duverger 1954, Arzheimer & Carter 2006). While an important part of understanding why the trend has emerged mostly in Europe, which is dominated by PR systems, Duverger's Law does not explain the variation of the radical right success on the continent. Even in systems with plurality systems and SMDs, like the United Kingdom and France, there is still an emergent and at times successful radical right party winning seats in the national legislature, albeit in smaller numbers for equivalent shares of the vote received in PR countries.

Since looking at the different electoral systems does not alone explain the success of the radical right, other institutional arguments focus on the electoral system through existing political parties, media, and organizations. One such argument views electoral systems as a market, with demand and supply similar to economic markets. Stable systems exist when the supply of parties and the issues they address in their platforms matches the demand of voters and their grievances. Fringe parties can gain support and emerge through an electoral market failure which occurs when the current parties, media, and institutions fail to offer ideas or address issues that the voters care about. When the issues demanded by the voters do not equal the platform positions or coverage by the media and political parties, then a void opens up and allows newer parties to gain support (Golder 2003 & 2016). Radical right parties therefore emerge when there is demand for a party that does not exist. In European politics, if there is sufficient demand for a hardline anti-immigrant, anti-EU party, then that party emerges to meet the demand and subsequently gets enough votes to return the market to equilibrium.

The one limitation of the electoral market framework is that mainstream parties are able to shift their message to address the changing grievances by voters and yet there are still successful radical right parties. In this case, one way to look at electoral politics is on a left-right

spectrum, where a party's ideology, legitimacy, and credibility also shape whether or not they gain support by adjusting their platform along the spectrum. According to spatial theory, parties adjust their positions and platforms in order to capture the majority of the voters along this spectrum, which usually results in center parties competing over the median voter, called the median voter theorem. When the parties become polarized or multiple parties exist along the spectrum, it creates an environment in which more radical parties can emerge and capture an unrepresented portion of the electorate (Adams & Somer-Topcu 2009, Downs 1957, Stokes 1963).

As parties adjust their policy positions along the left-right spectrum, their levels of support changes and can determine how many voters they gain or lose. (Adams & Somer-Topcu 2009a, Evans & Mellon 2016, Meyer & Schoen 2017). However, these policy changes do not translate directly into votes attained or stolen from other parties. Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009b) argue that there is a delayed reaction to shifts along the spectrum, and that voters respond to the platform of the past election when making decisions in the current election. Thus, they argue that parties should moderate their platform and expect to reap the rewards later, and

Table 2: Institutional Explanations for Party Success

Explanation	Authors	Observable Implications
Duverger's Law	Duverger (1954) Sartori (1997 & 1999)	In plurality systems, it is harder for radical right parties to emerge, whereas PR systems allow them to emerge and gain seats with lower vote shares.
Spatial Theory	Adams (2009) Downs (1957) Stokes (1963) Adams & Somer-Topcu (2009) Evans & Mellon (2016) Meyer & Schoen (2017) Golder (2003 & 2016)	Politics exists on a left-right spectrum, and parties position themselves on the spectrum to gain votes. Parties can emerge if there are gaps on the spectrum or if certain issues or grievances are unaddressed by the existing party structure.

therefore fringe parties like the radical right typically have good elections following some period of moderation, and then lose thereafter (Adams & Somer-Topcu 2009b). Other scholars have found similar responses to moderation where radical right parties like UKIP were able to come across as moderate, thus shifting the political spectrum and gaining votes at the expense of the mainstream parties (Evans & Mellon 2016). These studies suggest that fringe parties are not immune to the spectrum and have to operate within the same system as the other parties. Their support depends on how they are able to market their policy changes and how the other parties respond. In sum, parties are able to win votes based on how they adjust their policy platforms along the spatial spectrum, and by how voters respond to these changes.

Individual Explanations

On the other hand, individualists argue that voters make rational choices based on their own preferences, and that parties which appeal to these preferences earn votes. Within this school of thought, there are three models of voting behavior. One of the models argues that voting behavior is best understood through the lenses of an individual's political identity. The most widely accepted and used source of an individual's political identity is their party affiliation. Partisanship shapes the lens through which voters see the world and shapes their opinions of issues and candidates from other parties (Bartels 2000, Mayer 2017, Miller 1991, Finkel & Opp 1991, Rahn 1993, Zuckerman et al. 2007). Voters only vote for the party with which they identify, and actively root against the opposing parties. More recently, the persuasive power of party identification has actually decreased as partisanship within societies has decreased, with other cleavages such as nationality, education level, and socioeconomic status becoming more powerful identities for some voters (Holmberg 2007). For subscribers to the

identity model of voting, voters are ditching the old guard because their partisan allegiances are decreasing, making voters more open to newer parties like the radical right.

Another of the major models of voting behavior is sociological voting, which is a broad model that examines how voting is not purely an individual behavior but also a social act. One way that scholars analyze social voting is by examining social ties such as participation in associations, involvement within the community, and families (Gusfield 1962, Pauls 2015, Paxton 2002, Portes 2000, Huckfeldt & Sprague 1995, Zuckerman et al. 2007, Fitzgerald 2011). These interpersonal communications, scholars argue, shape the information that voters receive about parties and candidates and help influence political preferences and decisions (Huckfeldt & Sprague 1995, Zuckerman et al. 2007, Fitzgerald 2011). When applying familial relationships specifically to the emergence of new parties, Fitzgerald found that familial influence aids rising parties, and that children influence their parents, especially their fathers, which helps new parties since children do not have the partisan allegiances their parents might have (Fitzgerald 2011). Coffé and Voorpostel (2010) support this finding and argue that a mother who is supportive of the radical right increases the chances her husband and children will also support the radical right, and that interpersonal communication in families does aid the rise of the radical right. One venue of understanding voting behavior at the social level is through the relationships that people have with each other.

Another significant aspect of social voting is through social capital, or a person's participation within society and their level of trust in others. Social capital has been correlated to higher levels of effectiveness of democratic institutions and higher levels of political participation. If somebody's neighbor votes, then that person is much more likely to vote (Portes 2000, Paxton 2002, Putnam 1994). Additionally, who a person votes for is also impacted by the

people that they are around. Extremist movements and social movements are aided by social capital and spread where there is more interaction between people, higher associational membership and political participation (Gusfield 1962, Putnam 1994). While the social model of voting is rooted in association membership and social capital which propels civic engagement, other scholars argue that voting behavior at the social level can best be understood psychologically.

The localist theory argues that the salience of local issues and strength of local identification can determine whether individuals vote and for which party. Scholars have found evidence that there is power in the neighborhood, as it plays an important role in shaping political behavior (Anderson 2008, Forrest & Kearns 2001, Bowyer 2008, Spoon et al. 2019, Bisgaard et al. 2016). Fitzgerald observes that local politics can even be an important component of national electoral behavior and to understand support for fringe parties, especially the radical right. Communities with a high number of localists, or people who identify strongly with the community, are more likely to support these parties. She argues that people interact with politics more directly at the local level, which shapes how they perceive politics. The localist theory of voting behavior claims that voters make their decision based on the political salience of their locality and the issues that directly affect their community (Fitzgerald 2018). If immigration is high locally, that could increase the appeal of hardline immigration stances of the radical right. If a community has been hit particularly hard by the effects of globalization, that increases the appeal of anti-globalist messages frequently stumped by radical right politicians. Voters, according to localism, elect parties or candidates based on their neighborhood and the issues that directly affect their neighborhood, which can lead to unpredictable and sometimes radical political preferences (Fitzgerald 2018). Overall, localists see an important strength in going

Table 3: Individual Explanations for Party Success

Explanations	Authors	Observable Implications
Identity Voting	Bartels (2000) Mayer (2017) Miller (1991) Finkel (1991) Rahn (1993)	People vote based on their salient political identities, especially partisanship. When that decreases in salience, voters feel allowed to vote for radical non-mainstream options.
Social Voting	Gusfield (1962) Pauls (2015) Paxton (2002) Portes (2000) Putnam (1994) Zuckerman et al. (2007) Huckfeldt & Sprague (1995) Coffé & Voorpostel (2010) Fitzgerald (2011)	People vote based on their societal surroundings and their participation within organizations. Radical right can gain support by becoming popular among certain organizations.
Localism	Fitzgerald (2018) Anderson (2008) Bisgaard et al. (2016) Forrest & Kearns (2001) Spoon et al. (2019) Bowyer (2008)	Voters have a strong sense of local identities and attachment to their communities and will vote for parties that speak to the issues facing the community, including the radical right.
Economic Voting	Downs (1957) Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier (2007)	People vote based on the performance of the economy. If the economy is bad and they blame both mainstream parties, voters will search for alternatives.

beyond social capital and civic engagement and focusing on the salience of the locality and local issues in order to understand how parties can emerge and earn or lose support.

Lastly, the economic model of voting argues that voters elect candidates based on the state of the economy and whether or not they feel better off since the last election. If they feel better off, they reward the incumbent candidate or party for improving the economy. If they feel worse off, they will punish the incumbents and select a different party (Downs 1957, Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier 2007). It does a much better job explaining two party systems like the United States or United Kingdom. However, economic disenfranchisement can lead voters to cast off mainstream parties all together, and voters who feel like they have lost from the changes in the economy support more radical options because they feel forgotten (Betz 1993). Individuals who

feel forgotten in the modernization process, and who feel that the government has left them out to dry abandon the mainstream and find the appeal in the populist rhetoric that promises to upend the system and fight for the little guy. In short, the economic model of voting argues that a voter's decision on election day can best be predicted by their feelings on the economy and how they have been impacted by economic changes.

Theoretical Framework

Given the previous understandings of radical right support and voting behavior, there is a gap in the understanding surrounding their populist messaging and how perceptions impact voting behavior. Betz (1993) argues that losers from globalization are more likely to support the radical right since they have lost under mainstream governments. This lays a groundwork for understanding the economic argument for radical right support as those who have become globalization losers. One prominent theory that captures this sentiment is the idea of relative deprivation which is a personal feeling wherein an individual's place in society through wealth, class, education, employment and so on is at odds with where they feel they should be based on their expectations from society (Gurr 1970, Fiske et al 2017, Roodujin & Burgoon 2018). Alongside the basic assumptions of the economic model that voters support different candidates based on the state of the economy, this theory suggests that feelings of being particularly worse off can lead to political radicalization. Scholars have found that relative deprivation can explain how voters in areas that are doing well but are individually struggling are more likely to back the radical right (Roodujin & Burgoon 2018). As a result, the goal of this thesis is to expand the application of relative deprivation on voting behavior in advanced industrial democracies. When voters feel like they do not have as much as they should, they explore more radical options than

mainstream parties that fail to deliver. Therefore, I expect to find that higher income inequality at the time of the election will lead to more support for the radical right.

Hypothesis 1a: At the municipal level, if income inequality is higher, then support for the radical right will be higher.

Hypothesis 1b: At the individual level, increasing salience and concerns about inequality increases support for the radical right

Additionally, relative deprivation does not argue that people who are strictly worse off will radicalize. It relies on the perception that one is unfairly worse off than they should be. This perception is why baseline levels of inequality are more acceptable in some countries as opposed to others, and why some countries have lower inequality than others without revolution. Therefore, it is important to examine trend lines and the perceptions surrounding the current level of inequality and understand if the country is becoming worse off or better off in regard to inequality. Therefore, I anticipate that rising inequality will also lead to more radical right support. If the level of inequality in a country is worsening, I expect more people to notice and, according to relative deprivation, feel like they deserve more than they have and will radicalize by electing the radical right.

Hypothesis 2a: At the municipal level, worsening inequality will lead to more radical right support

Hypothesis 2b: At the individual level, the perception that things are worsening over time will lead to more support for the radical right.

While the application of relative deprivation is a relatively novel addition to the literature on radical right support and voting behavior, literature has emerged about the ways in which people interpret the world around them and generate their perceptions based on their surrounding communities (Zuckerman et al. 2007, Fitzgerald 2018, Cramer 2016, Huckfeldt & Sprague 1995). Among this emerging class of literature is the idea that a voter's perception of politics and subsequent behavior are shaped by the kind of communities that people live in and how they

identify with these communities (Fitzgerald 2018, Cramer 2016). Overall, the main goal of this thesis is to not only expand the understanding of relative deprivation among radical right literature, but to also contribute to the emerging literature on the impact of contextual factors and how voters interpret politics based on where they live.

One important observation is the idea that local politics influences national politics, and the subnational level of analysis is more valuable than just in grasping the impact of aggregate cross-national conditions. People who “feel that they belong to a bounded community, can be inspired by such sentiments to participate in politics in distinct, often exclusionary ways.” (Fitzgerald, 2018, pg. 176). People not only consider themselves to be members of the nation, but also members of specific communities and locales within the nation. Additionally, Golder (2016) observes that the radical right does not receive universal support throughout the nation. As with all parties, support varies in the different regions and counties throughout countries, suggesting that regional factors can sway radical political behavior just as much as national factors. Therefore, I anticipate that the role of inequality will be the same if not stronger at the subnational unit of analysis. I hypothesize that regional concerns about inequality will have a greater impact than a voter’s perception of national inequality.

Hypothesis 3: At the individual level, regional concerns about inequality will have the same effect or a stronger effect than national indicators.

Additionally, scholars have observed that the radical right improves outside of cities in rural areas. Stockemer (2017b) finds that the radical right in Sweden had a positive relationship with whether an area was rural or urban. Not only do voters base their perceptions on how strongly they identify with the locality that they live, scholars have also identified that voters’ perceptions of the world around them are different based on whether they live in rural or urban areas. Cramer (2016) calls this difference in perspective the “rural consciousness” and suggests

that rural residents have a different outlook on the world and politics than urban voters. She argues that rural voters are especially immune to economic crises because poor economic conditions are always a problem, more anti-establishment because they feel ignored by the existing institutional actors and tend to support smaller government since the status quo does not work for them anyway (Cramer 2016). Cramer's focus is on Wisconsin and support for Tea Party politicians like Republican Governor Scott Walker, but her findings can apply to current understandings of radical right support. Radical right parties propose solutions that are widely held in rural areas since they tend to favor upending the system and less immigration. Her analysis of American rural voters also explains findings that the radical right does better among voters who feel like they are being left behind (Roodujin & Burgoon 2018, Betz 1993, Cramer 2016). As a result, I expect to first confirm the conventional wisdom that the radical right does better in rural areas in Sweden (Stockemer, 2017b). Then, I expect rural voters to interact with issues in different ways than urban voters, and that increases in inequality increases support for the radical right in rural communities more than in urban communities.

Hypothesis 4: At the municipal level, as the population density of an area increases, support for the radical right decreases

Hypothesis 5: At the municipal level, there will be a difference in rural and urban areas and as income inequality increases in rural areas, support for the radical right will increase

In sum, there are five hypotheses that will be tested in this thesis. First, I expect inequality to play an important role in the level of support for the radical right, and that higher income inequality at the time of the election leads to larger changes in support for the radical right. However, since relative deprivation deals with perceptions, the trend of the country could also explain support for the radical right, and I expect rising income inequality to lead to larger gains for the radical right. In order to contribute to the growing literature on how perceptions are

generated and the impact of where people live, I also expect to find that inequality at the local level shapes politics more than at the national level and that inequality in rural areas leads to greater increases in support for the radical right than in urban areas. By addressing the effect of an issue, and then under what conditions that issue is most important, this thesis makes important contributions not only to the literature on the radical right and understanding the rise of the radical right in Europe, but also on the role of rural consciousness, localism, and relative deprivation in voting behavior.

Subnational Analysis of Swedish Municipalities

Data & Methods

In order to best understand where the radical right does best and the role of inequality and perceptions of inequality, I conduct a cross-sectional analysis of Swedish municipalities. Sweden serves as an ideal case for this study because their radical right party is one of the more successful radical right parties in Europe. In the most recent election in Sweden in September of 2018, the Sweden Democrats won 17.6% of the vote which was a roughly 5 percentage-point increase from 2014. The Sweden Democrats have been a feature of Swedish politics since 2010, when they had their first electoral breakthrough, receiving 5.7% of the vote and their first seats into the Riksdag. However, their greatest vote gain came in 2014, when they gained 7.2 percent and received a total of 12.9 percent of the vote, cementing their place in Swedish politics and the Riksdag. As a result, in order to best understand the success of the radical right, 2014 serves as an ideal electoral case study because it was the first time that the Sweden Democrats received widespread support throughout the country (see Figure 8).

Additionally, Sweden is well-known for its welfare state and lower levels of inequality. According to data from the WorldBank, in 2014, the GINI coefficient in Sweden was .284

measured on a scale from zero to one where zero represents perfect equality and one captures perfect inequality. For comparison, Germany had a GINI coefficient in 2013 of .311 and Hungary had a GINI coefficient of .309 in 2014. Despite Sweden's relatively low levels of absolute inequality, reports indicate Sweden has grown less equal overtime. According to Statistics Sweden (2016), the GINI coefficient has been steadily increasing since data has been collected beginning in the 1990s. Sweden has since surpassed its Scandinavian neighbors of Norway which had a GINI coefficient of .264 in 2013 and Finland which had a GINI coefficient of .271 in 2015. Sweden has been getting more unequal in the last decade and has become more unequal than its neighbors. Given the expectations of equality in Sweden and strength of the welfare state, worsening levels of inequality in the country provide an interesting case study for analyzing the role of perceptions and inequality in radical right voting. Studying Sweden provides valuable insight into how changes over time impact the share of the vote for the radical right, and how a voter's sentiments towards an issue may shape national politics depending on where a voter is located.

In order to conduct this analysis, I compile a dataset of the 290 municipalities in Sweden using data from Statistics Sweden and affiliated government agencies from 2014. The dependent variable will be the share of the vote received by the Sweden Democrats in the 2014 Riksdag elections for each municipality. Then, I compile the GINI coefficient for each municipality in Sweden in both 2011 and 2014. Using the 2011 and 2014 values, I then calculate a change variable which captures the degree of change of the GINI coefficient over three years, with the goal being to capture as much time between elections as possible. I then collect data on the population density of each municipality, which is measured as the number of people per square

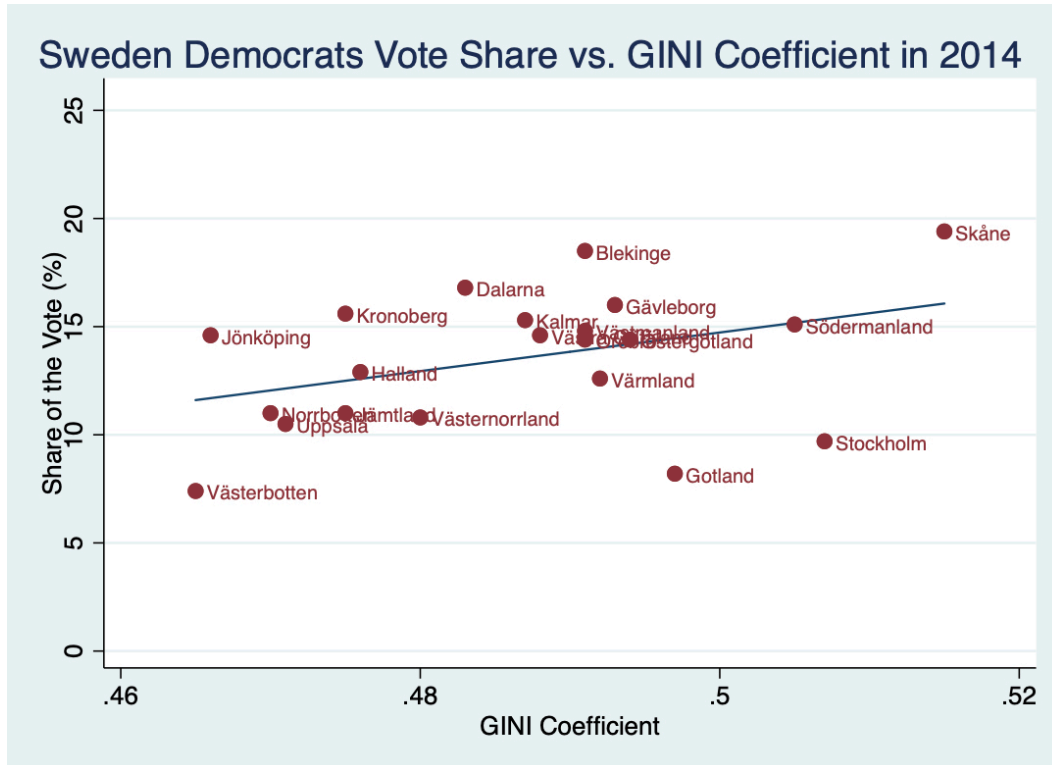


Figure 1: Variation in the GINI Coefficient in 2014 and Support for the Sweden Democrats in Swedish Counties

kilometer. For controls, I assemble measures of the percentage of the population that is foreign born, the unemployment rate¹, and the crime rate in each municipality. The crime rate was calculated as the total number of crimes for every 100,000 people, which was then converted to a percentage and retrieved from the Swedish Council for National Crime Prevention. I collect data for each control variable from 2011 to 2014 and then a change variable is calculated based on the difference over three years.

Figure 1-3 depict scatter plots of the variation in the data of the GINI coefficient (Fig. 1), the change from 2011 in the GINI coefficient (Fig. 2), and the population density of an area (Fig. 3). As the figures highlight, glancing at the county unit of analysis reveals observable trends

¹ Statistics Sweden only records the unemployment rate at the county level. As a result, I used county level data as a proxy for unemployment in the municipalities by applying the county value to the municipalities in that county.

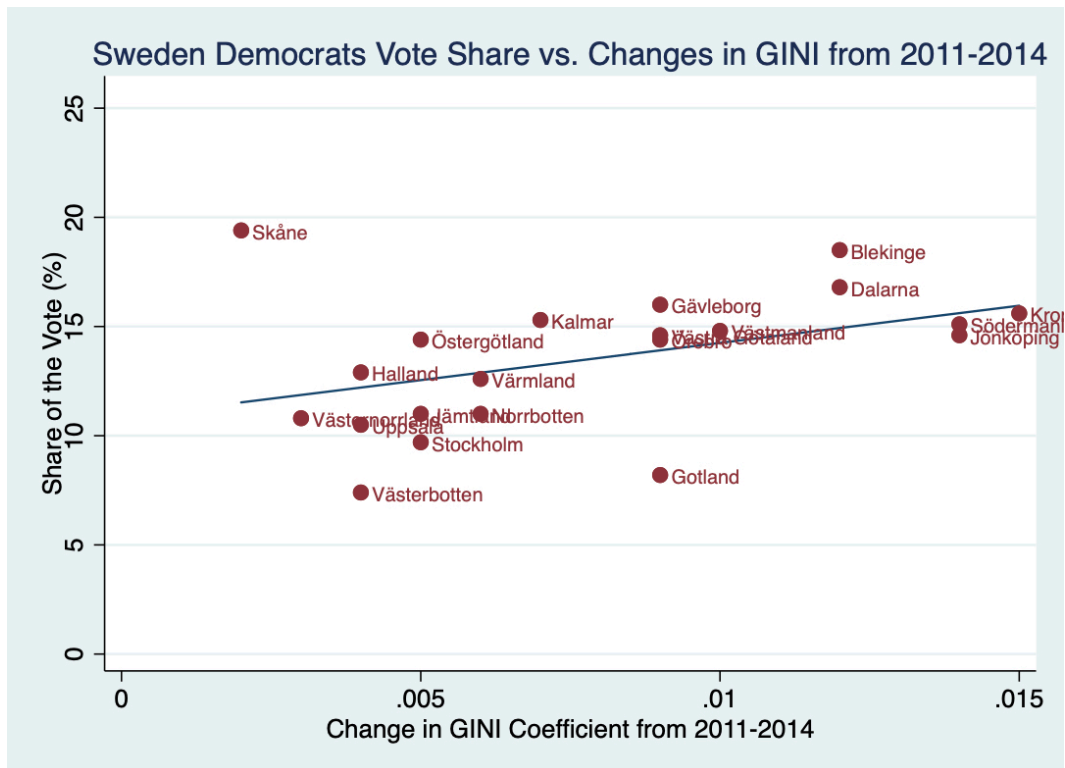
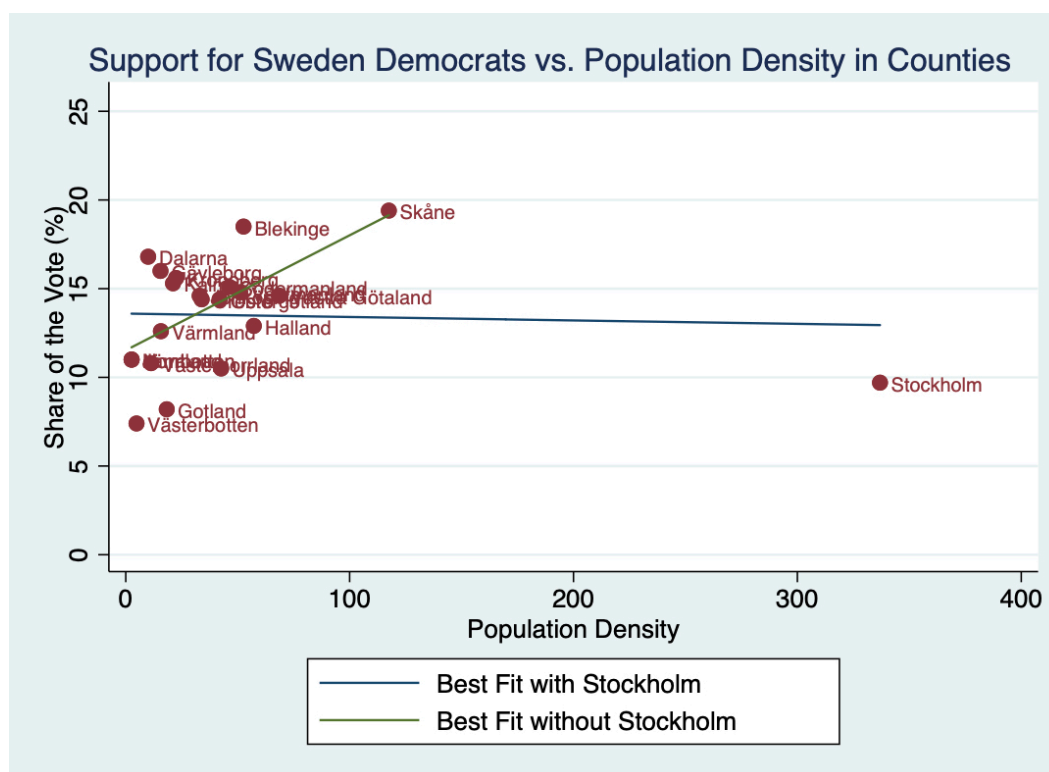


Figure 3: Variation of Population Density and Support for the Sweden Democrats in Swedish Counties

between all three of the main independent variables. Figure 1 depicts the GINI coefficient in 2014 of the various counties, and the line of best fit of the scatter plot trends upwards, suggesting that there is a positive relationship between the GINI coefficient and radical right support. Figure 2 captures the change in the GINI coefficient over three years from 2011, and also illustrates a positive trendline, indicating that there is a positive relationship between how much inequality has worsened and support for the radical right. Lastly, Figure 3 displays the variation of the population density of the 21 Swedish counties and paints a slight negative relationship among all counties between population density and support for the radical right. However, Stockholm is an outlier in this data since it is the largest city and capital of Sweden. When Stockholm is excluded from the line of best, there is a positive relationship. This hints that density at the county level is positively associated with radical right support, as urban areas have higher levels of support for the radical right than rural areas. The counties of Sweden present observable relationships and



the analysis of the municipalities will better be able to capture the validity, significance, and direction of these relationships.

Results

Using the dataset of municipalities in Sweden, I estimate OLS models predicting radical right support. In the first of these models, I estimate the share of the vote for the radical right as predicted by the GINI coefficient in a bivariate regression. I then include controls for the population density, crime rate, and unemployment. I add the percentage of the population that is foreign born to the model to test the impact of immigration on the significance of the model. I include an interaction between the population density and the GINI coefficient in 2014 in order to determine what effect, if any, inequality has in certain parts of the country and whether the relationship between inequality is dependent on whether a voter lives in a rural area or an urban area. I also include interactions between the static GINI coefficient in 2014 and the amount of change from 2011 in order to capture the role of changing inequality on support for the radical

right. By interacting these variables, I capture the effect of changes in inequality based on where inequality was in 2014 and if voters have different reactions depending on how inequality was changing. Lastly, I estimate a model using just the change variables that were calculated from 2011 to 2014 to try to capture the impact of changes over time on voting behavior.

Table 4 presents the models predicting the share of the vote for the radical right in Sweden at the municipal level. Model 1 is a standard bivariate regression between income inequality and the share of the vote for the radical right. In this model, the GINI coefficient has a statistically significant relationship with support for the radical right, but this is without important controls. Model 2 (Table 4) then includes controls for the population density of a municipality, the unemployment rate for the municipality pulled from county data, and the crime rate in the municipality. Since immigration concerns are traditionally associated with the radical right, I also test the importance of immigration concerns in my analysis. In order to test the role of immigration, I leave it out of the second model and include it in Model 3 (Table 4).

According to the second model without controls for immigration, the level of inequality is statistically insignificant with support for the radical right in the 2014 Swedish elections. The population density, the unemployment rate, and the crime rate are statistically significant. When the percentage of the population that is foreign born, a proxy for the level of immigration, is added to the model, it has no noticeable impact on the model, with the only major difference being that crime lost its statistical significance. The GINI coefficient remains statistically insignificant, and the coefficient is roughly the same. The variation that the model is able to explain increases by .002 points from the second specification of the model, and the percentage of the population that is foreign-born is itself statistically insignificant.

Table 4: Predicting the Share of the Vote for the Radical Right in Sweden at the Municipal Level

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Gini Coefficient	18.630** (8.201)	4.562 (7.143)	4.205 (7.151)	8.404 (7.704)	7.208 (7.945)	-----
Population Density	-----	-.003*** (.000)	-.003*** (.000)	.006 (.006)	-.003*** (.000)	-----
Unemployment Rate	-----	1.652*** (.201)	1.681*** (.203)	1.67*** (.203)	1.699*** (.202)	-----
Crime Rate	-----	23.495* (8.737)	17.242 (10.618)	18.829* (10.654)	19.216* (10.526)	-----
Foreign-Born Population (%)	-----	-----	5.284 (5.1)	4.335 (5.132)	5.791 (5.066)	-----
Interaction of GINI x Change in GINI	-----	-----	-----	-----	-668.898* (358.914)	-----
Interaction of GINI x Density	-----	-----	-----	-.017 (.012)	-----	-----
Change in GINI from 2011	-----	-----	-----	-----	381.876* (186.388)	22.608 (16.977)
Change in Density from 2011	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-.03*** (.007)
Change in Foreign Born from 2011	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	116.645*** (26.495)
Change in Unemployment from 2011	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1.644*** (.315)
Change in Crime Rate from 2011	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-11.618 (14.278)
Constant	6.285 (3.994)	-1.985 (3.5)	-2.109 (3.502)	-4.101 (3.756)	-4.588 (3.86)	13.521*** (.492)
Observations	290	290	290	290	290	290
R-Squared	.018	.307	.309	.314	.33	.186
Prob > F	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Standard errors in parentheses, *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.001

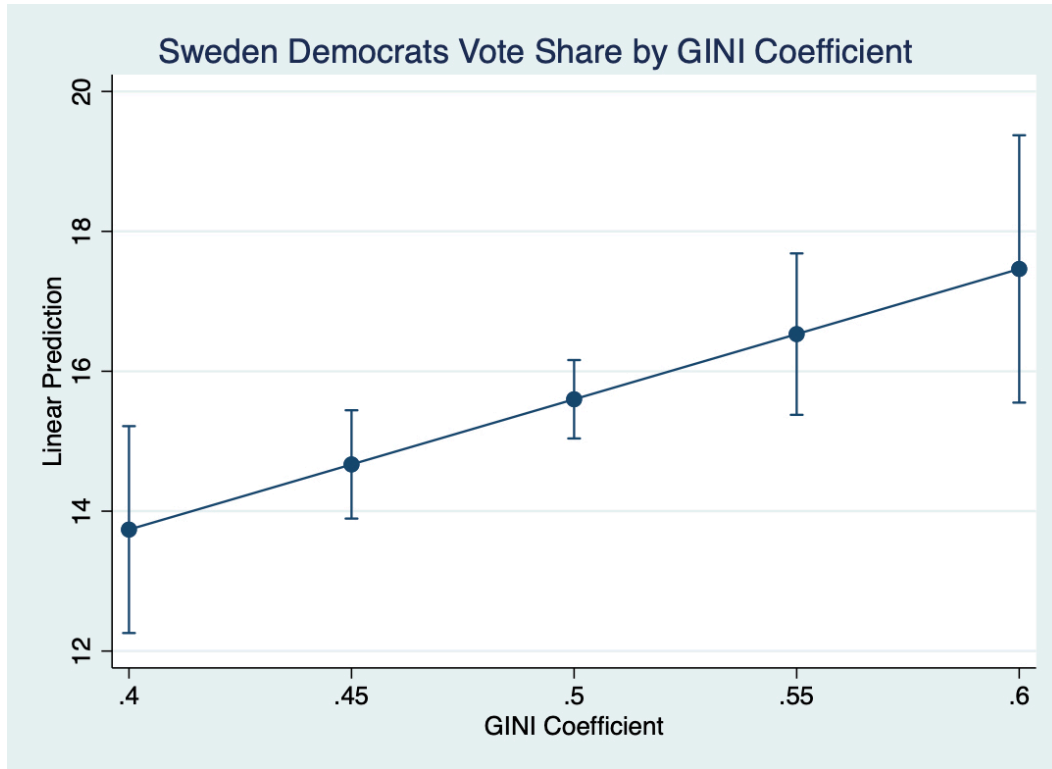


Figure 4: Estimated Share of the Vote for the Sweden Democrats by GINI Coefficient in a Bivariate Model

These results are important for understanding what contributes the success of the radical right. As inequality increases in a municipality by one, support for the radical right increases by 18.6 percentage points according to the bivariate model. Figure 4 depicts this relationship since the GINI coefficient is measured from zero to one, so as inequality increases from the minimum value of .4, radical right vote share increases almost four percentage points to .6 which is the maximum GINI coefficient. However, when controls are added the significance disappears. This hints that there is a relationship between radical right support and inequality, but that it is clouded by other contextual variables such as unemployment or population density and the true effect of inequality is complicated, challenging hypothesis 1a. However, as the population density increases, radical right vote shares decrease, confirming that support for the radical right increases in rural areas. A one unit increase in the population density of a municipality, results in a .003 percentage point decrease in support for the radical right. Since the population density has

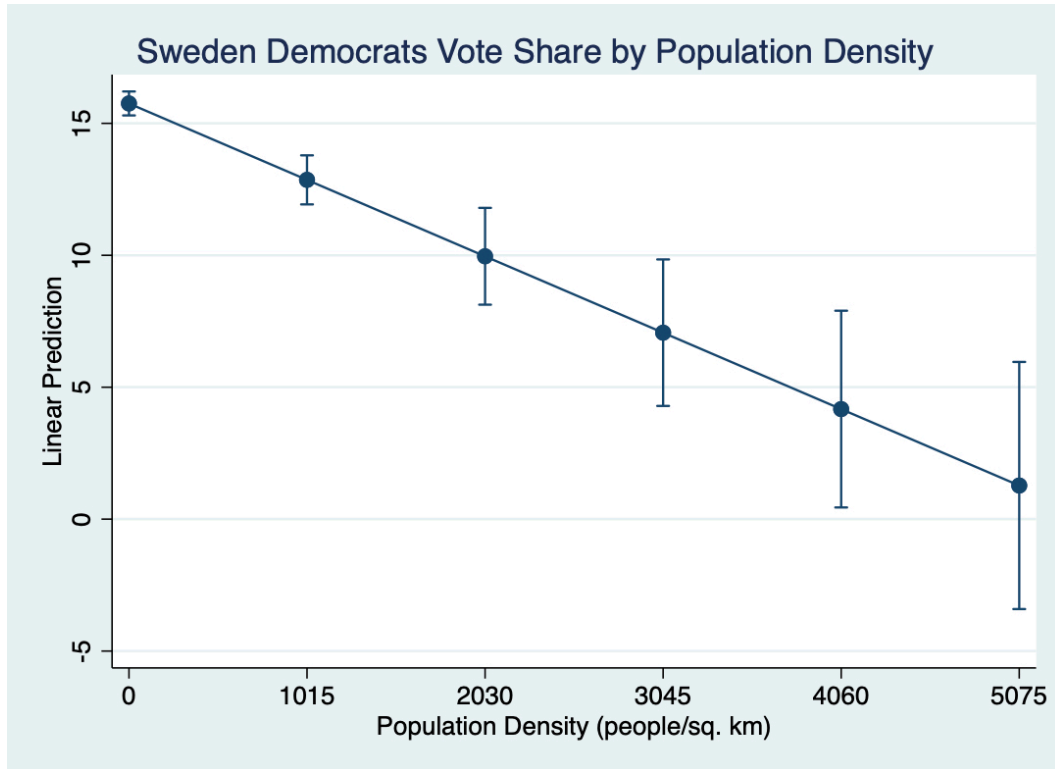


Figure 5: Estimated Share of the Vote for the Sweden Democrats by Population Density (Model 3)

a large range of values, a one-point increase does not capture the relationship as well as Figure 5 which demonstrates the negative relationship between population density and support for the radical right. In rural areas where population density is low, the radical right receives almost 15 percentage points of support which then declines to no support as the population density increases to the maximum value near 5073 people per square kilometer which is Stockholm. These results confirm hypothesis four and suggest that the radical right does the best in places that are low in population density.

In order to determine how inequality is treated in rural areas versus urban areas and how inequality and the population density are related to one another, I include an interaction between inequality and population density (Model 4, Table 4). The unemployment rate and crime rate maintain their relationships and statistical significance while the percentage of the population

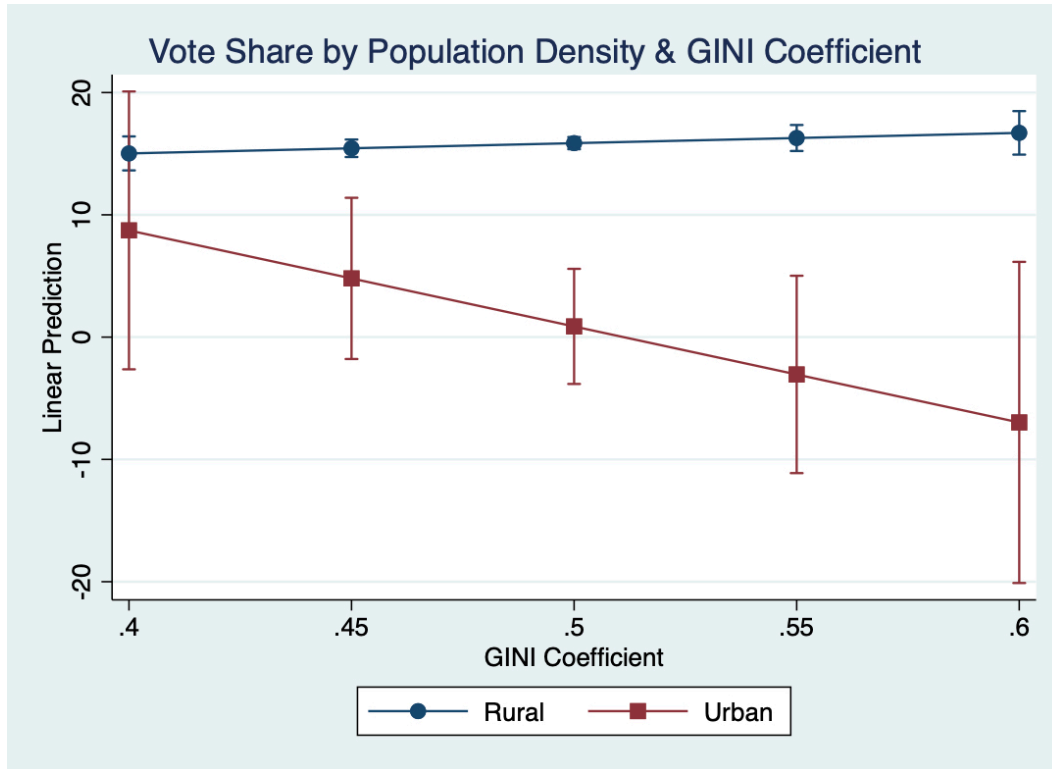


Figure 6: Estimated Share of the Vote for the Sweden Democrats by GINI Coefficient in Rural vs. Urban Areas (Model 4)

that is foreign born remains statistically insignificant. The coefficient of the interaction variable is statistically insignificant, but when the model is graphed, there does appear to be an important relationship between inequality and the density of the area. As Figure 6 depicts, as inequality increases in rural areas that are lower in population density, support for the radical right increases slightly. However, as inequality increases in urban areas where the population density is higher, support for the radical right decreases. While the predicted probabilities are not informative because they suggest a negative share of the vote for the radical right, these relationships of inequality depending on the size and density of a municipality are telling.

I conclude my analysis by testing whether or not changes in the GINI coefficient over time has any impact on support for the radical right. I start with a similar model to models 2, 3, and 4, but instead of using static values from 2014, I instead use the amount of change that

Table 5: Predicted Share of the Vote for the Sweden Democrats (%)

Change From 2011	GINI Coefficient in 2014		
	.4	.5	.6
-.05	8.393	12.458	16.524
0.0	14.109	14.83	15.551
.05	19.825	17.201	14.577
.1	25.541	19.572	13.604

occurred from 2011. This model is depicted in Model 6 of Table 4 and indicates that changes in the GINI coefficient over the three years leading up to the 2014 elections have no statistically significant impact on support for the radical right in the municipalities of Sweden. The change in the crime rate from 2011 is also statistically insignificant, but the change in the foreign-born population, change in the population density, and change in unemployment are statistically significant. As a final test into whether changes in inequality shape the level of support, I include an interaction between the changes in the GINI coefficient and the level of income inequality in 2014 after three years of change. Figure 9 depicts the graphical trends of the interaction, and Table 5 presents the predicted levels of support for the radical right (see Appendix). As the regression model indicates, the interaction between the level of inequality in an area after three years of change and how much change that the area experienced is statistically significant. As Table 5 presents, as the inequality in an area got worse from 2011 to 2014, areas which had low levels of inequality increased the share of the vote for the radical right while areas that had

higher levels of inequality at the end of three years of change saw decreased support for the radical right as the amount of change increases. Places in the middle with a GINI coefficient of .5 saw a slight increase in support for the radical right as the amount of change increased over time. These findings indicate that the amount of change in inequality has different effects depending on where a municipality was and where it ended up by 2014.

These results find support for majority of my hypotheses. I found that estimating support for the radical right by the GINI coefficient does indicate that a relationship exists and the share of the vote the radical right receives increases as the GINI coefficient increases. However, when controls are added to the model, the significance disappears suggesting that the relationship between inequality and radical right support is complicated and not as important as other variables. However, I did find support that as the population density of an area decreases, support for the radical right increases, confirming hypothesis 4. I then find that higher levels of inequality in rural areas increases support for the radical right while higher levels of inequality in urban areas actually decreases support for the radical right, confirming hypothesis five. Lastly, while I do not find support that the change in inequality over three years alone can explain support for the radical right, I do find that changes in inequality over time is important depending on the level of income inequality that exists around election day as worsening inequality increases radical right vote shares in areas with low and average levels of inequality but decreases radical right support in areas with high inequality. In the following sections, I discuss the implications of these findings and how they help explain the radical right.

Implications

These results are interesting because they help to make sense of the success of the Sweden Democrats in recent elections. They reveal that inequality can be important when

understanding support for the radical right and would seem to confirm the hypotheses of Betz (1993) and Roodujin and Burgoon (2018) about the appeal of the radical right among losers of globalization and those that feel worse off than they should. Globalization for all its benefits does not create winners among everybody and those that do not benefit from globalization are called globalization losers (Betz 1993). Betz identifies these individuals as those that are most likely to support the radical right because they are struggling in an otherwise winning economy. Further studies into this relationship that voters who are worse off in an otherwise well-off economy support this idea that supporters of the radical right are those who are not benefitting from globalization as much as the rest of society. However, the relationship between inequality is confounded by variables such as population density or how much change has occurred in an area over time. Focusing just on areas with higher inequality does not help to understand support for the radical right, suggesting that perceptions of being worse off and relative deprivation are more nuanced than by analyzing inequality alone.

One such complexity of the relationship between inequality and radical right support is that inequality only increases support in rural areas whereas it decreases support in urban areas. This divergent finding buttresses Cramer's (2016) argument that there is a rural consciousness among voters living in rural areas in that they interact with the world around them and behave differently than people in urban areas. Not only does the radical right already succeed in rural areas when other factors are controlled for, but since inequality only increases support in rural areas, it suggests that rural voters perceive the radical right differently. In her study of Wisconsin's voters, Cramer (2016) identifies a sense of being ignored and left out of the discussion by politicians in the urban centers of the state as a leading factor in the decision to support positions that challenge the status quo and fight the establishment. For understanding the

radical right, these parties are anti-establishment against both the mainstream parties and the European Union, which attracts rural voters who feel ignored by urban elites. Since increases in inequality in rural areas increases support for the radical right, this suggests that as these places become more unequal, the more those who are losing feel ignored by overall society and opt for radical change in the form of the Sweden Democrats.

Further supporting the rural consciousness thesis is that rural voters behave differently than urban voters when presented with the same contextual information such as increasing inequality (Cramer 2016). In urban areas like Stockholm, support for the radical right decreases as inequality increases, which captures the potential differences between rural areas or urban areas in Sweden. One possible explanation is that winners from globalization might cluster in urban areas, leaving globalization losers to be left in the rural and suburban areas. According to Betz (1993), the changes from globalization create separate societies among the educated, well-off winners who cluster in urban areas while the uneducated working class remain in working class areas outside of the suburbs and urban centers. This might explain the divergence in the impact of inequality on support for the radical right. Globalization winners are less likely to support the radical right because they are well-off, and the economy is working for them. They do not see the need for change, so not only do they not vote for the radical right, but they invest resources to support the mainstream parties that are helping them succeed. While this is going on in urban areas, rural poor voters are not receiving the same influence as the urban poor and are therefore more aware that they are losing from globalization and more likely to support the radical right. One possible account for the opposing relationships depending on whether an area is rural or urban is that globalization benefits cities while rural areas are not receiving the

benefits, resulting in influence from the globalization winners campaigning against the radical right.

One alternative explanation relates to social capital, social cohesion, and attachment to the locality. Scholars have found that social capital is already higher in rural areas than it is in urban areas, finding that rural residents are more likely to reach out to their neighbors and families for support than urban residents (Hofferth & Iceland 1998). While the relationship between social capital and support for the radical right is complicated, scholars have found that trust is lower in unequal areas, although the relationship between inequality and social capital through time is less significant (Fairbrother & Martin 2013). However, that study was conducted in the United States where inequality is generally accepted. In Sweden though, inequality is generally frowned upon as Sweden is a relatively equal society. It is possible that as inequality increases, it is deteriorating social capital and trust among Swedes. This deterioration in social capital in rural areas is more impactful since social capital is higher than urban areas, and the loss of social capital presents a challenge to how voters view their communities. The loss of social capital that is potentially associated with increasing inequality may be more accepted or go unnoticed in cities where life is already less connected, whereas in rural areas that are generally tighter notice and respond to the change more than urban voters. One reason Fitzgerald (2018) argues that high local attachments increase radical right support is that these areas are evolving, and voters are responding to that change by embracing the radical right that promises to remedy that change. It is possible that inequality is deteriorating social capital in Sweden, but the repercussions are more noticeable in rural areas, leading rural voters to respond to that change and support the radical right.

While inequality has been found to increase support for the radical right in rural areas, another way in which the relationship between income inequality and support for the radical right is nuanced is by analyzing how it changes over time. As the results indicate, just comparing the amount of change over time in an area is not statistically significant for inequality and crime. However, it is significant for the percentage of the population that is foreign-born, the unemployment rate, and the population density of an area. Essentially, areas that are urbanizing faster, becoming more unemployed and becoming more populated with foreigners support the radical right more, contributing to the loss of local identity and community that could be a reason for increased support for the radical right (Fitzgerald 2018). However, the amount of change of inequality is not significant, challenging some of the assumptions of the globalization loser's thesis. If globalization is increasing support for the radical right by benefitting some individuals and not others, then as inequality changes over time and worsens, the radical right should benefit, but they do not. However, changes in inequality being insignificant is not the entirety of the story and the actual relationship is more complicated than voters just focusing on the current conditions around them as they cast their ballot.

In areas that were more equal and had a low or average GINI coefficient by 2014, the vote share for the radical right increased as inequality worsened over time. In areas that were more unequal and had a higher GINI coefficient by 2014, support for the radical right decreased as inequality worsened over time. Economic changes over time should be important to voters because, at least according to the economic model of voting, voters base their decision on how things have changed from the last election (Downs 1957). While the relationship is more complicated, the divergent relationships presented in the interaction do contribute to how scholars understand the radical right and voting behavior. In areas that had low inequality, as

inequality worsened, the radical right benefitted. Since worsening inequality in an area had different impacts depending on whether an area ended with low, medium, or high inequality suggests that perceptions of inequality are important and that feelings of relative deprivation might not take effect until a threshold is crossed. In the areas that had low inequality, the worsening inequality indicates that there was more drastic change than in areas where inequality was already higher, radicalizing voters to support right wing parties while voters in areas with higher inequality might have adjusted to the inequality already. In the places with higher inequality, support the radical right decreases because there are likely more globalization winners, or these voters are more aware of income inequality and supporting other parties with stronger positions on inequality like the center left Social Democrats. These results suggest that voters have different tolerance points for when a problem begins to influence their political behavior, and that relative deprivation might only radicalize voters when areas cross a threshold and experience inequality that is new to the area.

Overall, analyzing the subnational units of Sweden contributes a great deal to how scholars study the radical right and populism in Europe. Inequality is important, but the relationship is complicated by where a person lives and what conditions they live under. As some people thrive in the globalized world, the people who are not as successful become radicalized and begin to support radical parties that address their issues. This is especially the case in rural areas where rural voters already perceive the world as rural residents versus urban residents who dominate politics. As a result of this rural consciousness, when inequality is higher, they vote for the radical right more because their feelings of being treated unfairly are strengthened by greater inequality while urban residents are benefitting from globalization strongly influenced by the winners of globalization. Additionally, changes in inequality may be insignificant across

Sweden, but they are important when broken down by the level of inequality around the time of the election as voters in equal areas increase their support for the radical right as inequality worsened over time. These results are important for determining what kind of areas are supporting the radical right, explaining why the radical right benefits from a message of being against the elites and in rural areas over urban areas, and the role of change in support for the radical right. What these findings cannot speak to is how voters perceive inequality and how it impacts their political decision making. I have argued that the context matters, and the context may open the door for certain messages and appeals from the radical right, but I have yet to uncover how inequality directly is perceived by Swedes and how that impacts their decision to support the Sweden Democrats.

Surveying Swedish Voters

Data & Methods

In order to determine how voters are perceiving inequality in Sweden and the role of those perceptions in voting behavior and voting for the radical right, I conduct a survey experiment in Sweden. Scholars debate the validity and usefulness of survey experiments in political science research. Some scholars argue that survey experiments are not externally valid, and their findings are not as reliable since voters are not isolated from other contextual information (Barabas & Jerit 2010, Imai et al. 2011). However, other scholars argue that observational data like the subnational analysis of Sweden does not capture causality as well as survey experiments which are an increasingly effective tool at isolating causal relationships (Gaines et al. 2007, Druckman et al. 2006). By relying on both observational data and individual survey data, this thesis is able to capture the relationships from the strengths of both tools of social science research. The observational data is effective at determining if relationships exist at

the contextual level and if certain relationships are worth further study. The survey data best understands the individuals and is helpful in ascertaining how exactly voters interpret information available to them and then how they behave in response to that information. As a result, the survey experiment is a valuable tool that captures variation at the individual level about voting behavior, and in conjunction with observational data from the subnational units, provides valuable information about the role of income inequality and its effect on the decision to vote for and support the radical right.

I conduct this survey online using SurveyMonkey over two days from February 27th to March 1st, 2019. Respondents were acquired through SurveyMonkey's global panels and paid \$6.94 for their participation. Sweden was chosen as the destination country in order to compare the results from the individual level and the aggregate level. This survey is able to corroborate the findings from the analysis of the 2014 election by helping determine whether the observed relationships are a 2014 phenomenon or perpetual through time. Before jumping into questions about inequality and Swedish politics, respondents are asked generic questions about their level of education, employment status, and the county and municipality they live in. Data on the respondents age and gender is provided by SurveyMonkey. This data primarily serves as controls in order to isolate the effect of inequality on support for the radical right and help generalize the findings to the Swedish public. Information on their county and municipality is also gathered to allow for further analysis of the impact of the size of the subnational unit. Then respondents will be asked about their views on inequality in Sweden and whether it is a salient issue for them or not in order to capture whether voters view inequality as a problem, and how serious of a problem they view it as before asking about the Sweden Democrats. After capturing how voters view inequality, respondents are then asked about their partisanship and electoral behavior in

Swedish elections. They are asked where they identify on the political spectrum and their prospective vote in an upcoming election. Respondents will then be asked a series of questions to identify their level of concern over inequality in Sweden and how concerned they are about the level of inequality at the municipal level, the county level, and finally at the national level.

Respondents will be randomly assigned into one of two groups. The first group will be the control group which will just be asked four questions specifically about the Sweden Democrats and their party leader, Jimmy Åkesson. Respondents will also be asked about the Green Party in an effort to disguise the true purpose of the survey. The other randomly assigned group will be given a short vignette outlining the growth of inequality at the regional level. In order to convey the severity of the problem, respondents are warned about the growing disparities between the rich and the poor and how things are worse in their region than in neighboring counties. This treatment is designed to give respondents more information on the level of inequality and determine whether perceptions that inequality is worsening impacts support for the radical right.

Income inequality has reached an all-time high in {respondent's county} compared to other regions and is at its worse point in the modern times. The gap between the top 10% of income earners and the bottom has never been higher in {respondent's county} according to statistics from Statistics Sweden. {respondent's county} is on pace to be more unequal than any of its neighbors. Keeping this information in mind, please answer the following questions about political parties in Sweden.

Ultimately, the survey is designed to capture how voters perceive their surroundings and interact with them when making political decisions. This survey allows me to better address the role of inequality as a voter makes their decision, and also better determine the role of location and local attachment when understanding support for the radical right. In the following sections, I discuss the results of estimated OLS predictions conducted on the survey responses and discuss the implications of the survey on understanding support for the radical right and voting behavior.

Table 6: Predicting Vote Choice in Sweden

	(7) Sweden Democrats	(8) Social Democrats
Inequality as a Salient Issue	-1.864** (.634)	1.352*** (.34)
Level of Education	-.157 (.102)	.001 (.088)
Employment Status	-.001 (.111)	-.079 (.095)
Age	.219 (.193)	.029 (.17)
Female	-.803** (.382)	-.705** (.324)
Constant	.156 (.981)	.012 (.973)
Observations	199	199
R-Squared	.108	.086
Prob > F	.001	.001

Standard errors in parentheses, *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.001

Results

I start by analyzing which party voters said that they would vote for in an upcoming election. There were five choices: The Social Democrats, Moderates, Sweden Democrats, the Green Party, and another category for other potential parties. In order to capture how a voter perceives inequality, I use whether or not a voter identifies inequality as one of their two most salient issues facing Sweden as the main independent variable. I then control for the respondent's level of education, their employment status, age, and gender. Table 6 depicts the logit model results for whether a respondent would vote for the Sweden Democrats or the Social Democrats. According to the models, whether a voter identifies income inequality as a salient issue or not is statistically significant for both support for the Sweden Democrats and the Social Democrats, however, with different relationships. Voters who identify inequality as an important issue are less likely to support the Sweden Democrats, but more likely to support the center left Social Democratic party. The only other statistically significant control within these models are

Table 7: Predicting Perceptions of the Sweden Democrats

	(9)
Experiment Treatment	.753* (.438)
Level of Education	-.124 (.116)
Employment Status	.031 (.123)
Age	.002 (.227)
Female	-1.236** (.428)
Constant	6.652*** (1.169)
Observations	198
R-Squared	.059
Prob > F	.037
Standard errors in parentheses, *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.001	

gender, and in both cases, women are less likely to vote for the Sweden Democrats or Social Democrats. Overall, a voter's perception of inequality as a salient issue does influence the voting behavior of Swedish voters, but in ways that challenge the assumptions of my hypotheses.

These results are interesting in that they potentially help explain the statistical insignificance of the direct relationship between inequality and radical right support from the observation data. The story is more complicated than inequality increases the number of votes for the radical right. Other than their vote share, I also examine how voters perceive the Sweden Democrats, and in the following analysis I find that a voter's sentiments towards inequality do also shape the perceptions of the Sweden Democrats. I first test the significance of my treatment on the level of support a respondent expressed for the Sweden Democrats. Table 7 presents the results of my analysis on how my treatment impacted the way voters felt about the Sweden Democrats². According to the model, my treatment was statistically significant and voters who

² In this model, I include controls for education, employment, age, and gender alongside the treatment. While a randomized treatment controls for all of these things and more, my survey had a limited number of observations.

received the short summary outlining worsening trends of inequality had a higher perception of the Sweden Democrats than respondents who did not receive the treatment. This finding alongside the significant negative relationship associated with physically voting for the Sweden Democrats suggests that political behavior is more complicated than which party receives a voter selects, but that voters may be supportive of a party's message while voting for another political party.

Lastly, I hypothesized that the importance of inequality increases as the subnational unit of analysis in which a voter is interacting with inequality gets closer to their neighborhood. My contextual analysis was unable to capture the variation in how voters interact with inequality in their localities, counties, and countries. However, the survey was able to capture how voters perceived inequality in their area and how concerned they were about inequality affecting their city, county, and Sweden as a whole. I estimate three models with sentiments towards inequality at the municipal, county, and national level against perceptions of the Sweden Democrats. I control for education level, employment status, age, gender, and include an interaction effect to control for how the concerns about inequality and the treatment are interacting with one another since perceptions of the Sweden Democrats was a post-treatment question while the concerns about inequality were pre-treatment questions. Table 8 presents the results from my analysis and has three models each of which includes a measure of the concerns of the different levels (municipal, county, or national) of inequality. Model 10 of Table 8 presents my findings using the concerns about inequality at the municipal level. As a voter becomes more concerned about inequality in their municipality, the smallest subnational unit in Sweden, a voter's perception of

With the limited number of observations, I do not expect the randomization to have captured all the variation in these four controls on its own, and therefore it was important that I also control for these variables within the specifications of the model.

Table 8: Predicting Perceptions of Sweden Democrats by Levels of Inequality

	(10) Municipal	(11) County	(12) National
Concerns About Inequality	.034** (.016)	.024* (.012)	.001 (.013)
Treatment	2.128* (1.142)	1.88** (.952)	1.823* (1.078)
Interacting Concerns and Treatment	-.028 (.02)	-.025 (.017)	-.024 (.017)
Level of Education	-.084 (.114)	-.092 (.115)	-.122 (.115)
Employment Status	.026 (.120)	-.006 (.122)	.023 (.121)
Age	.037 (.221)	.035 (.221)	.072 (.224)
Female	-1.131** (.418)	-1.208** (.419)	-1.048** (.425)
Inequality as a Salient Issue	-1.485** (.468)	-1.502** (.471)	-1.23** (.507)
Constant	4.9*** (1.441)	5.693*** (1.283)	6.575*** (1.422)
Observations	197	197	195
R-Squared	.123	.117	.117
Prob > F	.002	.002	.002

Standard errors in parentheses, *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.001

the Sweden Democrats increases by .034 points. Model 11 presents the findings from using the concerns about the level of inequality in a respondent's county and reveals that as the concerns about the level of inequality at the county level increase, so too does a voter's perception of the Sweden Democrats by .024 points. Lastly, Model 12 presents the results from using a voter's concern about inequality throughout Sweden. While municipal and county concerns are significant, concerns about the whole country are not statistically significant and therefore using national concerns about inequality is not a useful predictor of perceptions of the Sweden Democrats.

These results reveal not only how voters perceive inequality around them, but also that as the unit of analysis gets more removed from a voter's immediate community and goes from

municipality or county to the whole country, the importance of inequality becomes insignificant. Concerns about inequality at the municipal level and at the county level had statistically significant positive coefficients with the degree of support for the Sweden Democrats. As subnational concerns increased, support for the radical right increased as well. However, at the national level, concerns about inequality were not statistically significant with support for the radical right. This suggests that subnational concerns are important to voters, while national concerns are not as important. Additionally, across the models, concerns about inequality at the municipal level explains the most variation with 12.3% while the county-level specification and national specification could only explain 11.7% of the potential variation. While small, this slight difference in the amount of the variation that can be explained by the models suggests that local issues are more important than national issues. This analysis confirms my hypothesis that voters care more about inequality as it gets closer to them personally.

In sum, through the survey, I uncovered how voters perceive the political landscape around them. If a voter identifies inequality as a priority concern, they are less likely to support the radical right. However, inequality does matter as those same voters were more likely to support the central left Social Democrats. While a voter's decision to elect the Sweden Democrats is negatively associated with how they identify it as a salient issue, being informed about the trends of inequality did have a significant impact on how respondents perceived the Sweden Democrats. Not only did more information about inequality increase support for the Sweden Democrats, but higher degrees of concern for municipal and county inequality also improve perceptions of the radical right. The impact of the subnational concerns also reveals that perceptions of inequality are forged by the size of the subnational unit of analysis, and that voters respond the most to inequality in their neighborhoods.

Implications

These results shed light on inequality and contribute to the study of the radical right in future research. Inequality is important to voters. How they perceive the issue, their awareness of it as an issue, and how concerned they are about it affecting them all influence their behavior in interesting ways. This buttresses the notion that relative deprivation and the perception of unfairness can influence how a voter interacts with the world and with politics. The survey also reveals that the changes in equality influence the decision to elect the radical right despite non-findings in the contextual level, affirming that the voters do respond to changes. The treatment condition did not only outline that inequality in their county was bad, but that it was getting worse. It primed respondents that inequality was not only a problem, but something that was worsening, and that residents of that county were worse off than their neighbors, and respondents reacted to this stimulus. The respondents who perceived inequality as a worsening problem in their community had a higher degree of support for the Sweden Democrats. The perception that change was imminent and that it was getting worse, especially compared to their neighbors, increased their support for the radical right's message. This finding supports the theory that the radical right benefits from worsening conditions and change and supports the idea that relative deprivation can radicalize voting (Roodujin & Burgoon 2018). Voters who feel like they are getting worse personally or that they are in an area that is deteriorating feel like they are being unfairly treated by the economy and they radicalize their behavior.

Additionally, these results contribute to the emerging focus on localism and how politics exists on multiple levels and the impact multi-level politics on voting behavior. As scholars have identified, local issues matter (Spoon et al. 2019, Bowyer 2008) and local attachments matter (Fitzgerald 2018). While voters are operating in national politics, they are still behaving and

forming their perceptions about the world around their neighborhood (Bowyer 2008). This study has found that the neighborhood impacts a lot of issues, including income inequality and that concerns about inequality not only vary as the subnational unit becomes more local, but also that it impacts support for the radical right in different ways. Concerns about municipal and county inequality increase support for the radical right and are the best predictor of support over national concerns despite being national contests. Voters are instead interacting with their immediate neighborhood when forming their opinions about political parties and who to vote for in elections rather than focusing on the problems at the aggregate level. Local concerns are what matter to voters, not the national measures that are frequently used when analyzing the radical right in case studies or cross-national studies and is an important contribution to how scholars understand the radical right.

While the perceptions and increased knowledge about inequality are important and confirm the hypotheses of this thesis, inequality and the perceptions of inequality are not necessarily translating into votes for the radical right. As the results indicate, it is the case that the radical right gains support when concerns about inequality are increased and voters are informed about the problem in front of them, but when it comes to voting, inequality being a salient issue for them decreases the likelihood that they vote for the radical right and increases the likelihood though that they vote for the center left. The center left, as the conventional wisdom holds, is the party of redistributionist politics and wins over low-income voters concerned about inequality. If immigration unifies the radical right, redistribution and income inequality unify the center left, and so it is expected that voters who are concerned about the level of income inequality are voting for center left political parties (Ivarsflaten 2005, Ivarsflaten 2008, Pontussan & Rueda 2010). In the 2018 elections, the Social Democrats ran on a policy

platform of expanding the welfare state, similar to the Sweden Democrats. They campaigned on expanding healthcare in Sweden, reforming pension policy, and implementing regulations to cut down on profits from welfare programs (Social Democrats, 2019). These reforms are similar to those of the Sweden Democrats, who also campaigned on expanding the welfare state in Sweden; however, as my results indicate the Social Democrats got the votes (Sweden Democrats, 2019). Within my survey, 30.5 percent of respondents hold the Social Democrats responsible for the level of inequality in Sweden, but only 16 percent held the Sweden Democrats responsible. It would be problematic if the center left did not benefit in my survey from increased salience of income inequality, however this relationship provides a better understanding for how perceptions of inequality can increase support for the radical right while simultaneously decreasing the likelihood of voting for the radical right.

One potential explanation for these divergent findings about the relationship between support for the radical right is that a voter's support for a particular party or that party's message does not always translate into actual votes for that party. Swedish voters are supportive of the Sweden Democrats based on how the radical right discusses inequality and identifies it as a problem, but those voters are not voting for the radical right as much as their support might suggest. Instead, if inequality is important to them, they are more likely to vote for the center left than the radical right. Voters might vote strategically if they care about a certain issue, and while they may be more supportive of the radical right generally, some voters might see the center left as a more viable option to actually address the problem. The conventional wisdom states that strategic voting is most impactful in SMDs where voters are forced to vote for viable parties in order to avoid their least favorite option from winning, but that in PR systems where seats are allocated proportionally, voters are free to vote their sincere preferences (Duverger 1954, Sartori

1997 & 1999). However, as these results indicate, even PR systems might encourage strategic voting for the mainstream political parties. Some research has corroborated these findings by arguing that voters do take into account the likelihood of success when they vote for parties in PR systems and have even identified that supporters of radical parties are more likely to vote strategically as opposed to sincerely (Sobbrio & Navarra 2010). Evidently, voters in Sweden are voting strategically along the importance of a policy issue. While they identify inequality as an important issue, they are not voting for the party that they are supportive of when it comes to inequality, but rather for the party that they perceive as having the highest chances of not only winning but also actually solving the problem. Even in PR systems which are commonly thought to incentivize sincere voting, voters are still voting strategically about the issues they care about despite increasing support for other parties due to concerns over the issue.

Overall, inequality is important for how voters interact with politics and how they perceive the radical right. Awareness of the issue increases their support, supporting the idea that radical right parties are benefitting from radicalized behavior brought on by relative deprivation. Voters are reacting to becoming worse off than their neighbors and competing neighborhoods and more supportive of the radical right and their messaging on the state of affairs in Sweden. Additionally, voters are responding to inequality as it gets closer to their lives. Concerns at the municipal level were the most significant predictor of support for the radical right while national concerns, despite asking about national politics, was the least important of the three units of analysis in Sweden. While inequality and concerns about inequality generate increased support for the radical right, voters who care about the issue are less likely to physically vote for the radical right. This could be a product of voters being receptive to the message that things are changing too fast and getting worse, but when asked to give a party a chance to actually address

the issue, they would rather support the center left who has a more engrained appeal and is perceived to have a better shot at actually forming a government.

Concluding Thoughts

Areas for Future Research

Despite important findings for the scholarly understanding of the radical right and its relationship with inequality and perceptions of inequality, this research is not without its limitations that need to be addressed by future research to better verify the findings of this study. Due to constraints in available data, the subnational analysis of observational data is simple. Statistics Sweden only recorded data on the GINI coefficient from 2011 to 2017, removing the possibility of doing a time-series analysis of the Sweden Democrats through time, and data on other controls beyond density, unemployment, immigration, and crime was similarly scarce. This prevented in depth analysis of what leads new voters to support these parties, and also prevented observational analysis into the impact of the unit of analysis as the subnational unit increases. Future research will have access to more data as elections continue in Sweden and databases are updated and will be able to better conduct the necessary time-series analysis and analysis of how county measures impact support for the radical right against municipal measures.

I have argued that inequality matters for political behavior, but that the relationships between income inequality and support for the radical right are complicated and nuanced based on how voters perceive the problem and interact with income inequality. While my findings are significant, I have only focused on Sweden as a case study for this research, and further research is required to determine if these relationships exist throughout the continent or are isolated to the Swedish case. Sweden has a history and cultural bias towards equality among its citizens and has a strong welfare state designed to better redistribute wealth and ensure as much equality as

possible. Alternatively, countries like the United States do not have the same cultural sensitivity towards equality and are often compared to Sweden either as the model for a perfect society from the left or as an example of the dangers of redistributive politics from on the right. Therefore, one would expect income inequality and worsening inequality to affect the voting behavior of Swedish citizens who would be most responsive to how inequality is affecting their lives.

However, Sweden's emphasis on ensuring equality is not universal across the world, and some countries throughout the world have very different cultural relationships with inequality. Further research should implement this research design as best as possible onto other countries in order to determine the effects of inequality across the region, and capture if the relationship between inequality and radical right voting and support is a Swedish phenomenon or if it is something deeper about radical right parties and how they appeal to voters.

Another way future research can test the generalizability of these findings is by conducting a cross-national study, either through survey data throughout the continent or observational data throughout the history of the radical right in Europe. There are many radical right parties in Europe that have existed since the 1950s in the continent. They have received electoral breakthroughs at different times which are often in sync with the success of the radical right in other countries. These patterns of support raise interesting questions not only about what issues lead to radical right support and where that support exists, but also when they receive that support. What is it about this moment in time that is leading voters to support the radical right in unprecedented numbers? This study was unfortunately unable to adequately address this important question about the radical right and political behavior, but this is an interesting line of inquiry for future work which will better be able to acquire data and study inequality and the radical throughout the continent and throughout time.

Broader Implications

As scholars study the radical right and understand their success, a broad literature has emerged on how these parties earn support, where they win over voters, and what motivates their base. This study, through observational data and original survey data, has examined the radical right in Sweden in order to understand how income inequality impacts this rising party family. I have argued that income inequality captures the feelings that scholars have identified as important like losing from globalization, feeling worse off than they should, and consequences of change and that despite the applicability of income inequality to these theories behind radicalized voting behavior, income inequality itself has been understudied (Betz 1993, Roodujin & Burgoon 2018). However, these theories about radicalized political behavior are more complicated and can depend on where a voter lives or and how they perceive the problems around them. In this study I found that inequality does increase support for the radical right, but the story is nuanced as other variables are taken into account. As a result, I find that inequality does increase support for the radical right in rural areas but not urban areas and that greater changes in inequality increase support in areas with low inequality.

Additionally, I sought out to understand not only how perceptions of inequality are developed, but how those perceptions themselves influence support for the radical right. Despite complicated findings about changes in inequality at the contextual level, I found that the perception that things are worsening does increase support for the Sweden Democrats, and that how a voter perceives the changes around them shapes their behavior. A voter's perceptions are forged by where they live and how they identify with their neighborhood. Voters in rural areas interact with inequality in different ways than voters in urban areas, confirming that rural voters have different perspectives on the world around them than voters in suburban or urban areas

(Cramer 2016). A voter's perception is also forged by how they identify with their locality, and that voters are more concerned about inequality that effects their neighborhood than the entire country, supporting the emerging literature on the multi-level nature of political behavior and support for the radical right (Fitzgerald 2018).

However, throughout my analysis, I have found interesting dynamics that present important implications for future research into the radical right. Identifying income inequality as a salient issue makes voters less likely to vote for the radical right, which might explain the insignificance of a direct relationship between inequality and radical right support from the observational data of Swedish municipalities. However, these findings counter the subsequent survey findings into how perceptions of the Sweden Democrats are formed. I argue that voters who care about inequality are more supportive of the radical right message on inequality, and more receptive to the radical right, but vote strategically in order to actually address the issue. Identifying inequality as salient did strengthen support for the center left Social Democrats, as is expected since center left parties own redistribution. While voters are increasing their support for the radical right, they are still voting for the Social Democrats since they have more issue ownership on inequality and are perceived to be viable winners.

As the survey indicates, using the share of the vote for the radical right as the sole measure of support is flawed. Voters are less likely to vote for the Sweden Democrats, but more likely to generally support the party and its message. A voter was more supportive of the Sweden Democrats when presented with information about worsening inequality and as concerns about inequality in their municipality increases but was less likely to vote for them as concerns about inequality became a salient issue. At the subnational level, inequality was insignificant with the share of the vote for the radical right in Swedish municipalities. Vote choice, while the best

measure of support for political parties and the radical right, does not capture the full breadth of support for parties and the radical right. As the academic community continues to study the radical right, it needs to better address other ways to capture support, as this study has found that vote choice is a flawed dependent variable to understand the rise of this party family. Survey questions that capture support for the radical right but do not ask about whether or not a voter actually votes for that party is an important next step in evaluating how voters perceive these parties.

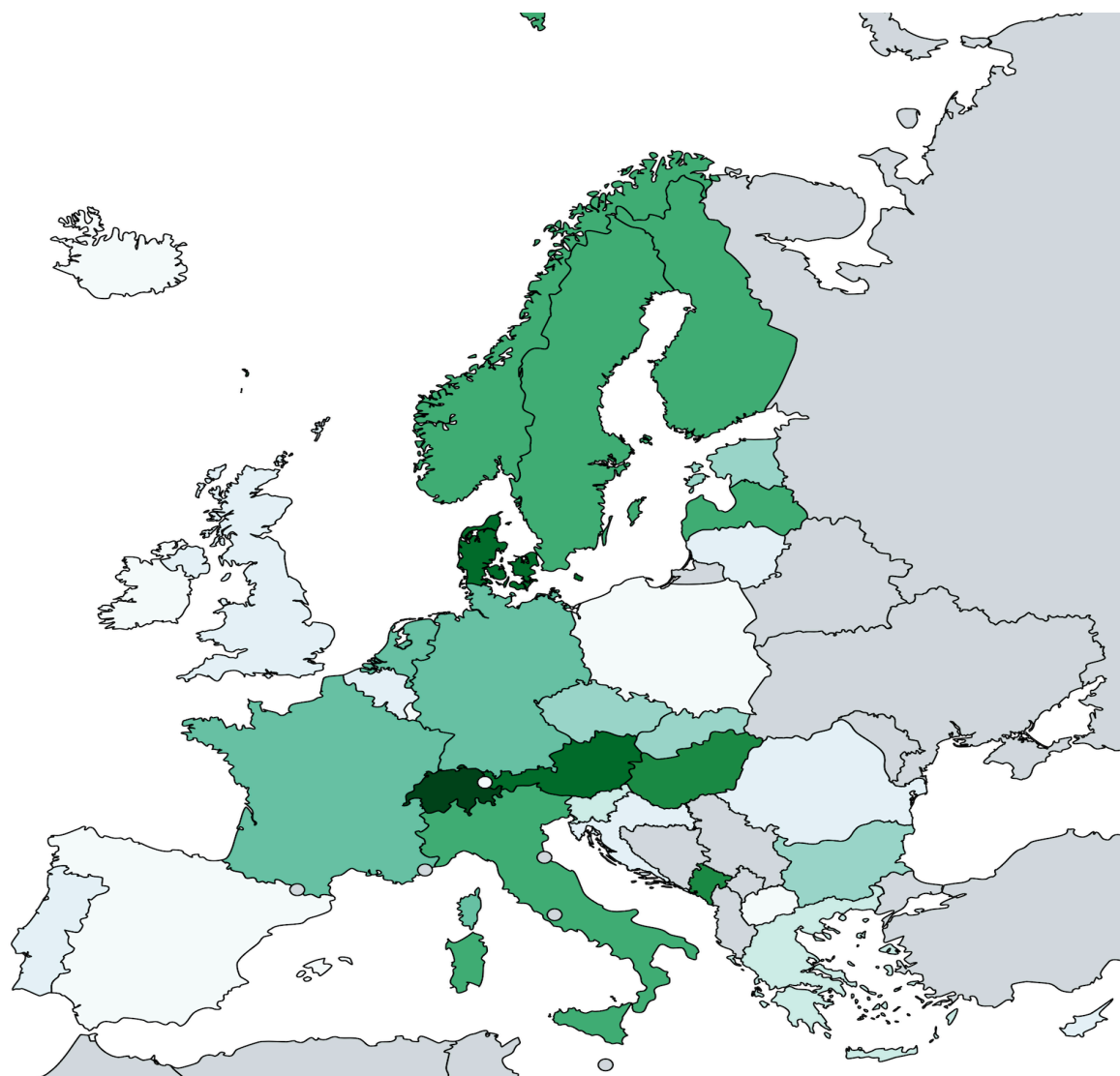
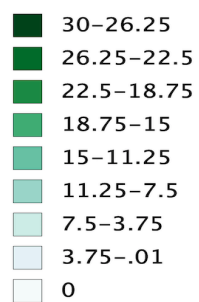
Despite a widespread literature on how these parties are succeeding, scholars have continuously used the vote share of these parties as the key measure of support and have found competing findings for many of the conventional explanations of their success. However, support for the radical right is broader than the share of the vote that the radical right actually received, as strategic and personal considerations also play a role into how voters actually vote. There are many ways to support a party other than voting through growing more sympathetic and supportive of their message, donating to candidates, or attending rallies. These other measures of support for the radical right might shed more light on what conditions influence the success of this party family and contribute to a stronger understanding of the resurgence of the radical right.

Throughout Europe the radical right has been on the upswing, receiving unprecedented support. In Sweden, the radical right has upended the existing party structure between the Social Democrats and the Moderates. Throughout this study, I have sought to explain support for the radical right by focusing on Sweden and the rise of the Sweden Democrats by exploring where they gain support, shedding important information on why they have been successful. In 2014, the Sweden democrats benefitted in rural areas with high inequality and in areas with low inequality that saw the highest degree of worsening inequality. These contextual findings mean

that there is a rural consciousness in Europe which lends support for the radical right in Sweden and that relative deprivation can explain the appeal of right-wing populism. Through survey data, I found that concerns about inequality in one's municipality and county and the perception that things were worsening increased support for the Sweden Democrats, but not necessarily the likelihood of voting for the radical right. In Sweden's multi-level democratic system, local concerns and issues were more important to understanding support for the radical right than national concerns, suggesting that localism is a viable approach to studying the radical right in the future. The radical right is the most successful in rural areas where inequality is higher or where inequality is low but getting worse, and where voters are concerned about the level of inequality in their community and perceive things to be getting worse.

Appendix

Vote Share %



Created with mapchart.net ©

Figure 7: Map of Variation in Support for the Radical Right in Europe

Sweden Democrats Vote Share (%)– 2014

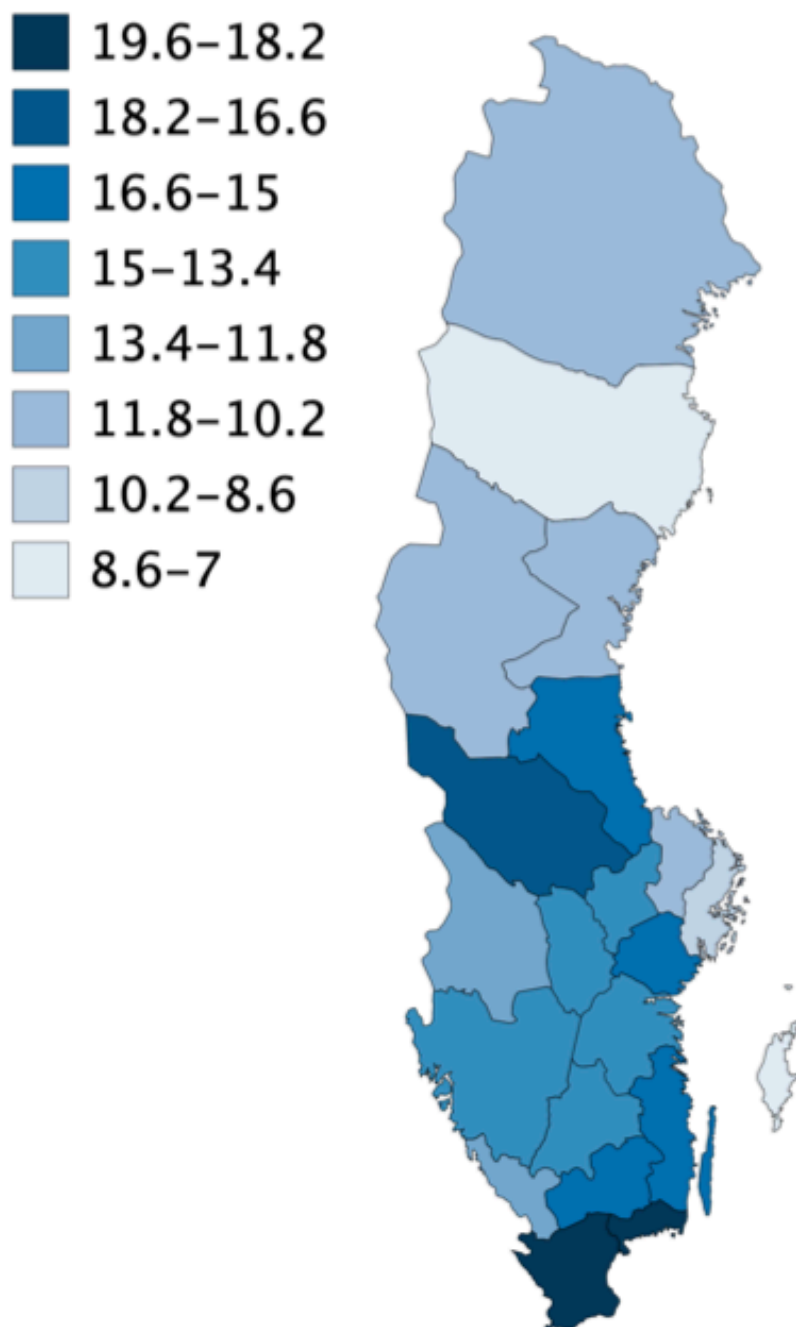


Figure 8: Map of Variation in Support for the Sweden Democrats

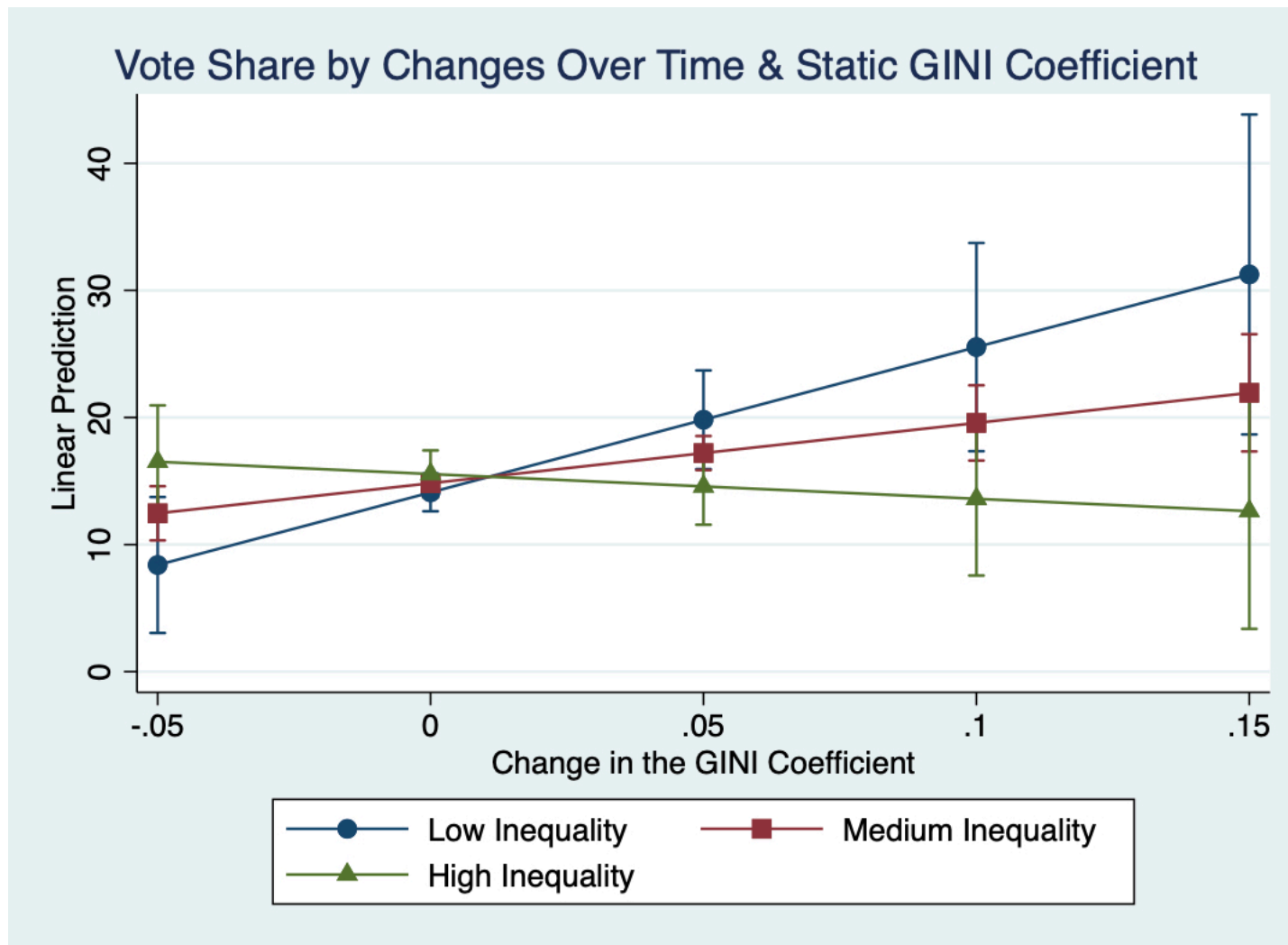


Figure 9: Estimated Support for the Sweden Democrats by Change in GINI Coefficient in Areas with Low, Medium, and High Inequality

Survey Questions

1. *What type of education do you have?*
2. *Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?*
3. *Which province do you live in?*
4. *Which municipality do you live in?*
5. *What are the two most important issues facing the country?*

Some experts argue that income inequality is not an issue and that the gap between the top and the bottom is not large enough to threaten the economy. On the other hand, other experts argue that the gap between the rich and the poor is a serious threat to Swedish society and left unaddressed could pose serious challenges for the country.

6. *On a scale from 0-100, how would you rate your stance in this debate (0 is inequality is not a problem at all while 100 is a very serious problem)*
7. *Who do you hold most responsible for the level of inequality?*

Next, I am going to ask you a couple questions about recent elections. On Sunday, September 9, 2018, Sweden held national elections for the Riksdag and municipal elections.

8. *Generally speaking, how would you summarize your position on the political spectrum (1 being the most left, 10 being the most right)*
9. *If an election to the Riksdag were held tomorrow, for which party would you vote for?*
10. *On a scale of 1-100, how concerned are you, personally, about the level of inequality in {Response from Q4}?*
11. *On a scale of 1-100, how concerned are you, personally, about the level of inequality in {Response from Q3}?*
12. *On a scale of 1-100, how concerned are you, personally, about the level of income inequality in Sweden as a whole?*

Please answer the following questions about political parties in Sweden.

13. *On a 1-10 scale, how supportive are you of the Sweden Democrats, (10 is most supportive, 1 is the least)*
14. *Please rate on a scale from 0-100 your feelings toward the current leader of the Swedish Democrats, Jimmy Åkesson (0 is very strongly dislike while 100 is very strongly like)*
15. *On a 1-10 scale, how supportive are you of the Green Party (10 is most supportive, 1 is the least)*
16. *Please rate on a scale from 0-100 your feelings toward the current leader of the Green Party, Gustav Fridolin (0 is very strongly dislike while 100 is very strongly like)*

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