



Working Paper Series

Working Paper No. 22-02 • September 2022

Emigration and Radical Right Populism

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September 16, 2022

Abstract

An extensive literature links the rise of populist radical right (PRR) parties to immigration. We argue that another demographic trend is also significant: Emigration. The departure of citizens due to internal and international emigration is a major phenomenon affecting elections via two complementary mechanisms. Emigration alters the composition of electorates, but also changes the preferences of the left behind. Empirically, we establish a positive correlation between PRR vote shares and net-migration loss at the subnational level across Europe. A more fine-grained panel analysis of precincts in Sweden demonstrates that the departure of citizens raises PRR vote shares in places of emigration and that the Social Democrats are the principal losers from emigration. Elite interviews and newspaper analyses explore how emigration produces material and psychological grievances on which populists capitalize and that established parties do not effectively address. Emigration and the frustrations it generates emerge as important sources of populist success.

*For very helpful research assistance we thank Joe Noonan, Fredrik Strelert, Nicolas Kipfer Schwebel, and Vasco Yasenov. The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support from the National Science Foundation, “Asylum Seekers and Refugee Integration in Europe” (grant number SES-1627339), ERC (grant number 683214), the Swedish Research Council (grant number 2021-008282), and the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation (grant number W18-0002).

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Introduction

Recent years have seen a marked and much-discussed rise in populist radical right (PRR) parties. Rejecting open borders and globalization and often disregarding fundamental tenets of liberal democracy, these parties have particular appeal among voters who oppose immigration and the cultural and economic dislocations it can bring (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2019; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lancaster, 2020; Mudde, 2019; Norris and Inglehart, 2019). Immigration is clearly salient in radical right campaigns and election coverage (Akkerman, 2015; Goodman, 2021). But while it has been extensively studied as a source of PRR success, when it comes to the effects of local immigration on local PRR vote shares, results are mixed (Cools, Finseraas and Rogeberg, 2021; Berman, 2021; Golder, 2016).

Despite uneven results, this focus on immigration has obscured another significant aspect of demographic change: domestic and international emigration. In fact, when we examined 2,427 article abstracts dealing with populism published from 2004 to 2018 (collected by Hunger and Paxton (2021)), we found that only 3 mention emigration (albeit without connecting it to a rise in populism) compared to 173 that reference immigration. However, the permanent departure of locals due to emigration is a major demographic phenomenon with lasting and consequential impacts on the places left behind. One of these impacts is electoral. Emigration locales, we argue, provide fertile ground for populist radical right parties and pose a significant challenge for traditional parties to retain their core voters.

We distinguish two mechanisms that link internal and international emigration to PRR success – compositional and preference-based – and propose that both can shape election outcomes in systematic ways. Emigrants are disproportionately young and motivated adults who seek educational and economic opportunities that are fostered in cosmopolitan surroundings. The population that remains is less educated and more rooted in place (Anelli and Peri, 2017; Lueders, 2022; Maxwell, 2020). These attributes are in turn systematically linked to PRR voting (De Vries, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2018). As a result, when regions experience substantial out-migration, this *compositional* change can promote PRR success without

altering voting behavior. Additionally, emigration can change voter *preferences* and thereby influence voting behavior. The departure of individuals of prime working age who would have supported the local economy, formed families, and contributed to a vibrant communal life makes emigration locales less livable. Emigration can thus adversely affect public and private services, leading to school and business closures and straining the viability of public transport and healthcare systems. Additionally, those who remain may suffer psychologically, feeling that emigration devalues the status of their hometowns and communities. The accompanying decline in services and gathering places further saps community spirit. Together, this decrease in quality of life gives rise to grievances on which populist parties capitalize, especially if they can convince voters that they have not only been deserted by their fellow citizens, but also by incumbent parties.

We assess the impact of emigration on the vote shares of populist radical right parties and evaluate both of these mechanisms in this paper. To do so, we first chart the broad outlines of the relationship, demonstrating a cross-sectional correlation between net-migration loss and PRR vote shares at the subnational level across Europe. To better understand what underlies this dynamic, we turn to Sweden, where more fine-grained panel data on local population change – domestic and international emigration and immigration – are available, allowing us to estimate the effects of local departures on the vote shares of the radical right Sweden Democrats (SD) at the municipality and precinct level over two decades (2002-2018). To gain further insights into mechanisms, we study a random sample of newspaper articles during the same period ($N = 560$) and conduct interviews with party elites ($N = 12$).

These analyses yield three main findings. First, the departure of native Swedes to other municipalities in Sweden is an important factor driving SD success. When measuring the number of departures relative to the total population at baseline, our estimates from a panel regression with two-way fixed effects suggest that the departure of 100 people from a municipality increases the SD vote share by about half a percentage point in election precincts. This effect is substantively large, considering that the Sweden Democrats receive about 8.3% in a

precinct during the elections in our sample (2002-2018). The effects significantly outpace the impacts of immigration on SD vote shares. Importantly, using a series of robustness test we demonstrate that these effects are not sensitive to the inclusion of variables measuring local economic decline, and a formal sensitivity analysis reveals that they are also not sensitive to unobserved confounding.

Second, while we find that the compositional mechanism plays some role, we also find evidence that the preference-based mechanism explains the emigration effect. For example, though we observe that the departure of voter types who are unlikely to be supporters of the Sweden Democrats does boost support for the party, it is also the case that precincts whose populations hold steady but that are located within municipalities that experience emigration – and associated quality-of-life declines – see a rise in SD vote shares. Our analyses also demonstrate that emigration has especially pronounced impacts on SD vote shares where we would expect it to be particularly damaging to public and private infrastructure, namely in municipalities with low population density. Our investigation of newspaper articles and elite interviews further reinforces the idea that emigration produces local grievances that populists can exploit and that traditional parties find difficult to counter.

Third, our analyses point to the challenges these demographic changes pose to established party systems and especially to the center-left (Berman and Snegovaya, 2019). Our results reveal the Social Democrats to be the principal losers to the populist challenge in emigration locales. As the once incumbent party in much of Sweden, the Social Democrats found themselves unable to respond to the problems of emigration and population decline. Our newspaper data and elite interviews in turn illustrate the Sweden Democrats’ ability to capitalize on this strategic failure.

Taken together, these findings make several contributions. Most importantly, we advance scholarship on the political effects of emigration. This work has largely focused on international emigration and its effects on political and economic outcomes in autocratic or more recently democratized countries (Adida and Girod, 2011; Hirschman, 1993; Horz

and Marbach, 2020; Karadja and Prawitz, 2019; Kelemen, 2020; Miller and Peters, 2020; Sellars, 2019). We show that emigration in the form of internal migration is an important phenomenon in high-income democracies and argue that it can portend significant political change here as well, undermining liberal democracy where it had long been attained and potentially endangering its consolidation elsewhere.

In highlighting that emigration can propel political change, we advance research linking demographic change to populist success. This research has focused on the disruptions caused by immigration, but aside from a few contributions (Anelli and Peri, 2017; Lim, 2022; Patana, 2021) it has neglected the consequences of emigration. Whereas immigration can bolster populist radical right parties through congestion effects and overburdened public services (Cremaschi et al., 2022; Dancygier, 2010; Hooijer, 2021), we show that opposite forces can do the same. The emptying out of regions can produce frustrations of equal importance, with significant political consequences.

Our research also speaks to the literature on the socio-political dimensions of regional inequalities (Cramer, 2016; de Lange, van der Brug and Hartevelde, 2022; Rodden, 2019). Similar to cross-national developments, structural transformations within countries have long pushed people out of peripheral regions and into urban centers, widening regional disparities. Economic shocks arising from globalization intensify these disparities, generating insecurities on which populists thrive (Ballard-Rosa et al., 2021; Colantone and Stanig, 2018; Dehdari, 2021). Our paper similarly illuminates some of the political consequences arising from this geographic polarization, but also shows how these can unfold even in the absence of shocks to local employment or incomes.

Our argument complements recent studies that highlight the grievances of residents living in declining peripheries as a source of PRR success (Patana, 2021; Rickardsson, 2021). However, different from this work – which documents a one-election, cross-sectional correlation between PRR vote shares and population decline – our panel analyses can better isolate the effect of emigration on PRR support by comparing changes in precinct-level vote shares with

changes in emigration rates covering five general election cycles. Focusing on over-time variation within precincts allows us to separate the emigration effect from other cross-sectional confounders tied to, for example, population density and economic geography. Moreover, by measuring emigration rates directly (vs. total population change), we can separate the effect of emigration from other components of demographic change that may contribute to the correlation between population decline and PRR support.

Finally, we expand the scope of analysis by paying attention not only to the electoral winners but also to the electoral losers of emigration, tying the success of PRR parties in emigration locales to strategic dilemmas that established parties have faced. Our work suggests that while center-left parties may benefit from urban growth strategies that promote internal migration to cities, these policies generate losses in the periphery. Out-migration thus emerges as a key process in the reconfiguration of political competition in advanced democracies (Gingrich, 2017; Häusermann, 2020).

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows: We first discuss how and why emigration may generate vote gains for PRR parties. The next section uses Europe-wide cross-sectional data to demonstrate that a larger net-migration loss is associated with higher PRR vote shares. We then examine election results in Sweden, where we connect emigration to PRR success at the municipality and precinct level over five election cycles. These analyses demonstrate that emigration significantly increases PRR vote shares, and they suggest that changing voter preferences play a role. We next conduct semi-structured elite interviews and newspaper analyses which provide clues that emigration produces material and psychological grievances that incumbent parties have frequently failed to address and around which the Sweden Democrats can mobilize. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for the study of demographic change, populism, and party strategy.

Emigration, Depopulation and Populist Radical Right Parties

Emigration is a widespread phenomenon that can threaten the sustainability of entire regions. Approximately two-thirds of Europe’s 1,216 counties are projected to have lower populations in 2050 than in 2019.¹ In the United States, more than half of all counties were smaller in 2020 than in 2010. At the same time, four-fifths of all US metropolitan areas witnessed population increases during this period.² Internal migration plays an outsize role in these spatially uneven population shifts. While most international emigration stems from low-income countries, internal out-migration frequently affects low-income regions in high-income countries. Especially in the last several decades, transitions to post-industrial, service- and innovation-based economies have produced agglomerations in urban centers and hollowed out peripheral regions once dominated by manufacturing and heavy industry (Moretti, 2012; Rickard, 2020).

Both types of emigration drain sending regions of young residents with educational and economic aspirations. Moreover, those who willingly uproot themselves are, by definition, less attached to their places of birth than those who stay behind. They may welcome interactions with strangers in foreign countries or in ethnically-mixed cities in their native countries and feel at home in cosmopolitan environments (Lim, 2022; Lueders, 2022). Research on PRR parties has shown that these attributes – educational attainment, economic success, cosmopolitanism – should make emigrants quite unlikely supporters of radical right parties. These parties’ central appeal lies in their xenophobia and nationalism, and this nativism is much less pronounced among educated and economically secure voters (Mudde, 2019; Sobolewska and Ford, 2020). By implication, those who remain are more likely to feel close ties to their locality and to be circumspect of outsiders, sentiments that pave the way for

¹This statistic refers to the NUTS 3 units in the EU, Norway and Switzerland; see <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210430-2>.

²See <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/more-than-half-of-united-states-counties-were-smaller-in-2020-than-in-2010.html>.

PRR voting (Fitzgerald, 2018; Maxwell, 2020). Finally, if emigration is disproportionately female, this will also bode well for PRR parties, whose support base skews male (Immerzeel, Coffé and Van der Lippe, 2015).

In light of these systematic differences between emigrants and those they leave behind, emigration can alter the *composition* of electorates such that relative support for PRR parties rises in emigration locales. This change in electoral support occurs without any voters changing their vote choices and without parties changing their campaign messages. It simply arises due to compositional shifts in the electorate. Prior research has also identified emigration’s compositional effects on domestic politics, but it has focused on different outcomes. For example, emigration of disloyal citizens is considered a “safety valve” for autocrats seeking regime stability (Kapur, 2014; Miller and Peters, 2020). Within the EU, it can facilitate the drift towards authoritarianism in countries like Hungary (Kelemen, 2020). Emigration can also change the quality of democracy. Lueders (2022) shows that the local rootedness of non-migrants leads to the localization of politics in places experiencing out-migration and to the nationalization of politics in places receiving unmoored migrants. We also examine local democratic contexts, but investigate whether emigration-induced compositional changes benefit radical right populists.

Additionally, emigration can change voter *preferences*.³ If economically active citizens leave en masse, the local tax base will shrink and with it the availability of public services and private businesses (especially in the absence of remittances). Even when national transfers prop up local finances, reduced demand strains the viability of many goods and services. Population decline can impact nearly all areas of public life ranging from essential services to cultural offerings: the number of schools and hospitals shrinks, theaters and libraries close, restaurants and shops shut down, rail and bus lines are discontinued, and civic associational activities suffer (Kröhnert, van Olst and Klingolz, 2004).

³See also Lim (2022) who argues that those left behind by emigration worry about the sustainability of their local communities’ values and traditions. Lim’s empirical analysis covers very large geographic regions (NUTS2 and NUTS3), making it difficult to identify the effects of emigration and to distinguish compositional from preference effects.

Emigration can thus make places less livable. This deterioration affects citizens directly, and it can further prompt reactions such as isolation, disappointment, and feelings of inadequacy. Faced with the fact that many of their neighbors choose to leave for what are perceived to be more attractive destinations, communities may experience a collective status and self-esteem loss. Emigration effectively degrades their hometown. Moreover, if departures lead to the closure of gathering spots, residents are deprived of the spaces that could otherwise maintain community spirit.⁴ Prior work has attributed individual-level status loss and social marginalization to radical right voting (Gidron and Hall, 2020). We theorize that local emigration can also trigger these feelings at the community level. In short, emigration can have psychological repercussions, which are compounded by material ones.

As the quality of life in emigration locales deteriorates, political outsiders may find it profitable to blame incumbents for neglecting the needs of the left behind. In this way, emigration-induced PRR voting may be understood as a protest vote against the incumbent political establishment. But unlike a generalized dissatisfaction with elite politics, in this scenario voters who are exposed to the consequences of emigration voice their discontent about specific policy failures in their localities for which they hold incumbents to account. Populist parties can further fuel this discontent (cf. Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2018; Rooduijn, Van Der Brug and De Lange, 2016) by reminding the voters that remain that established parties have abandoned them, along with their neighbors. In spreading this message, they play up their populist (more so than their radical right) credentials: as the only true and legitimate representative of “the people”, populist parties maintain they are best equipped to listen to, understand and act upon the concerns of ordinary citizens (Canovan, 1999; Müller, 2016). When established parties have indeed disregarded the needs and worries of citizens dealing with the harmful repercussions of emigration such appeals may become increasingly credible and attractive to the left behind. By implication, the challenges surrounding emigration, including the political elite’s shortcomings in meeting them, open up new territories for pop-

⁴This part of our argument lines up with Bolet’s (2021) innovative study linking radical right voting to pub closures.

ulist radical right parties whose core message nationally frequently centers around the ills of immigration (Akkerman, 2015; Mudde, 2019).

Note that our focus on emigration complements but also differs from accounts linking regional economic transformations – in the form of import competition and deindustrialization, for example (Baccini and Weymouth, 2021; Colantone and Stanig, 2018) – to populism or that connect immigrant-native competition over public services to radical right voting (Cavaillé and Ferwerda, 2022; Cremaschi et al., 2022; Dancygier, 2010). We examine the effects of local departures on PRR parties net of unemployment, income inequality, and immigration, and we additionally investigate how compositional changes in electorates and grievances these shifts unleash contribute to the success of these parties.

Cross-national Evidence

Dynamics of demographic change vary widely across regions. Figure 1 displays the rate of total population change between 2001-2011 across 112,028 municipalities in 32 European countries.⁵ In some parts of Europe the population is growing at levels of above 2% annually, while others witness population declines of a similar magnitude. This total population change is due to four interrelated demographic processes: births, deaths, immigration and emigration. Where the population declines by 2% or more annually, it is likely that emigration is a significant driver.

Are PRR parties more successful in places with more emigration? To answer this question we correlate local vote shares with net-migration rates relying on cross-national data assembled by Dijkstra, Poelman and Rodríguez-Pose (2020). These data include constituency-level radical right party vote shares for national elections in the mid 2010s across 28 European countries (for a list of included elections see Table SM.2 in the Supplemental Materials (SM)). Dijkstra, Poelman and Rodríguez-Pose (2020) define a party as radical right when it scores

⁵The population counts come from census tabulations compiled by Gløersen and Lürer (2013). We informally refer to the geographic units as municipalities noting that names for local administrative units (LAU) differ across countries.

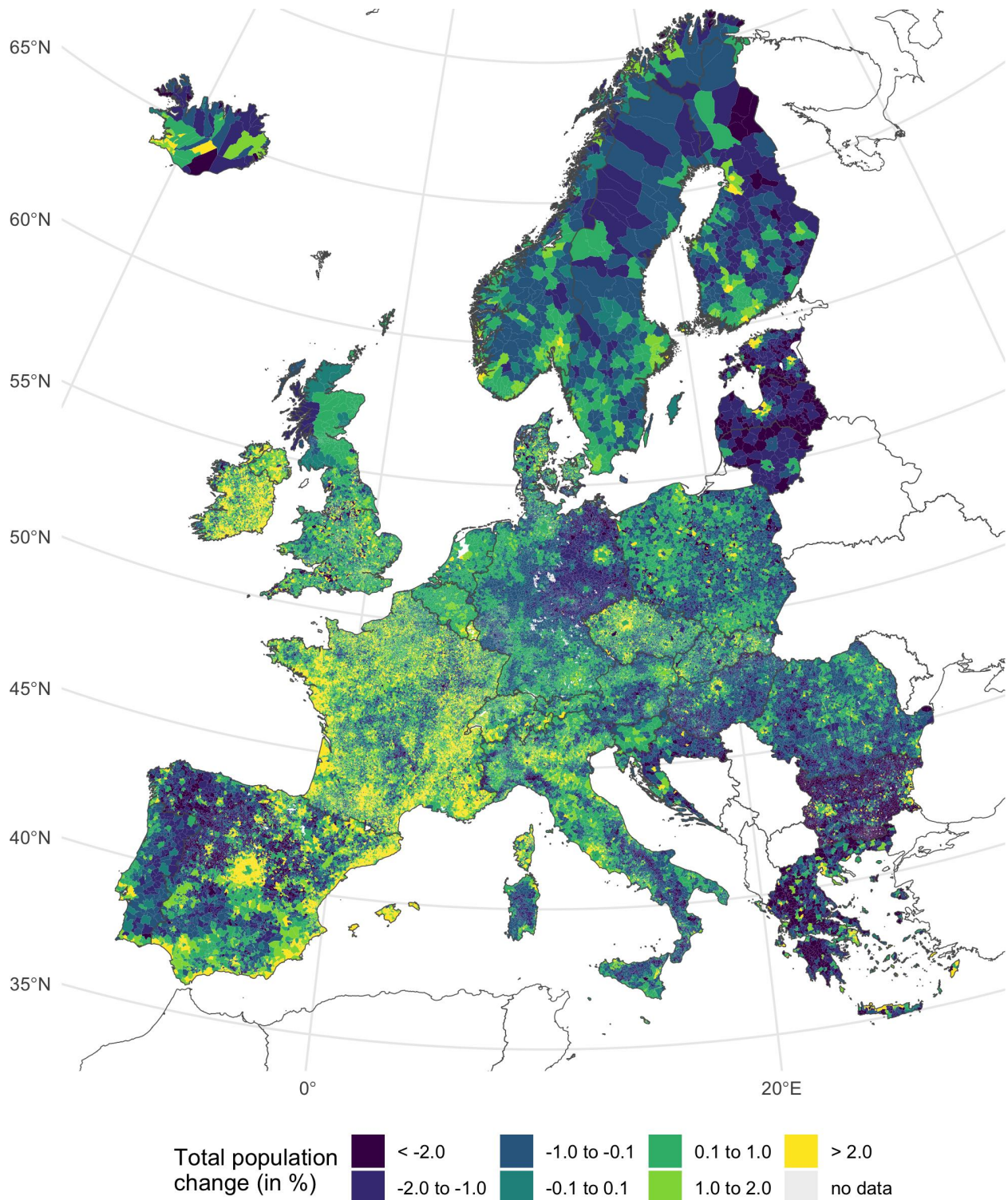


Figure 1: Annualized change in the total population size between 2001-2011 (standardized by the average population size between two years) across 112,028 municipalities in 32 countries in Europe.

8 or above on a 0-10 left-right scale in the CHES expert survey (Jolly et al., 2022).⁶ The authors' net-migration data come from Eurostat, the European Union's statistical agency and are measured at the county rather than the constituency level.⁷

Figure 2 displays a scatter plot of radical right vote shares and the associated average annual net-migration rate in the previous decade. Observations to the left of zero on the x-axis represent places where on average more people move away rather than arrive; observations to the right are places registering more people arriving than leaving. We see that, on average, as the net loss increases vote shares for radical right parties rise. As the sample includes observations from places without radical right party candidates (for which the vote share is 0), the observed correlation combines a demand- and supply-side effect of net migration on radical right party support.⁸

Though much of the literature draws a link between immigration and radical right populism (Berman, 2021; Golder, 2016), these patterns suggest that emigration could be a significant factor as well. Nonetheless, the cross-national analysis faces a number of limitations. First, when it comes to measures below the county level many countries do not publish data on net-migration but just on total population change. Emigration is an important component of total population change, but so are births, deaths and, most importantly, immigration. By focusing on regions that experience low net migration, we could be excluding places where immigration is sufficiently large to offset any losses due to emigration. Second, assessing variation in emigration at the county-level obscures variation within counties. Voters might be keenly aware of how population change affects their municipality, but could have little sense about the nature of these processes elsewhere in their county. Third, relying on aggregate population counts or net migration means we are unable to say anything about *who* is leaving (e.g., citizens vs. non-citizens, high- vs. low-income residents). Fourth,

⁶As some parties are not included in the CHES expert survey, the authors calculate the radical right vote share among all parties included in the survey.

⁷We informally refer to the geographic unit as county noting that we mean the lowest administrative subdivision (NUTS3 level).

⁸In Table SM.3-SM.4 we report a series of regression models that adjust for potential confounders including economic trends. These models corroborate what we find in the simple scatter plot analysis.

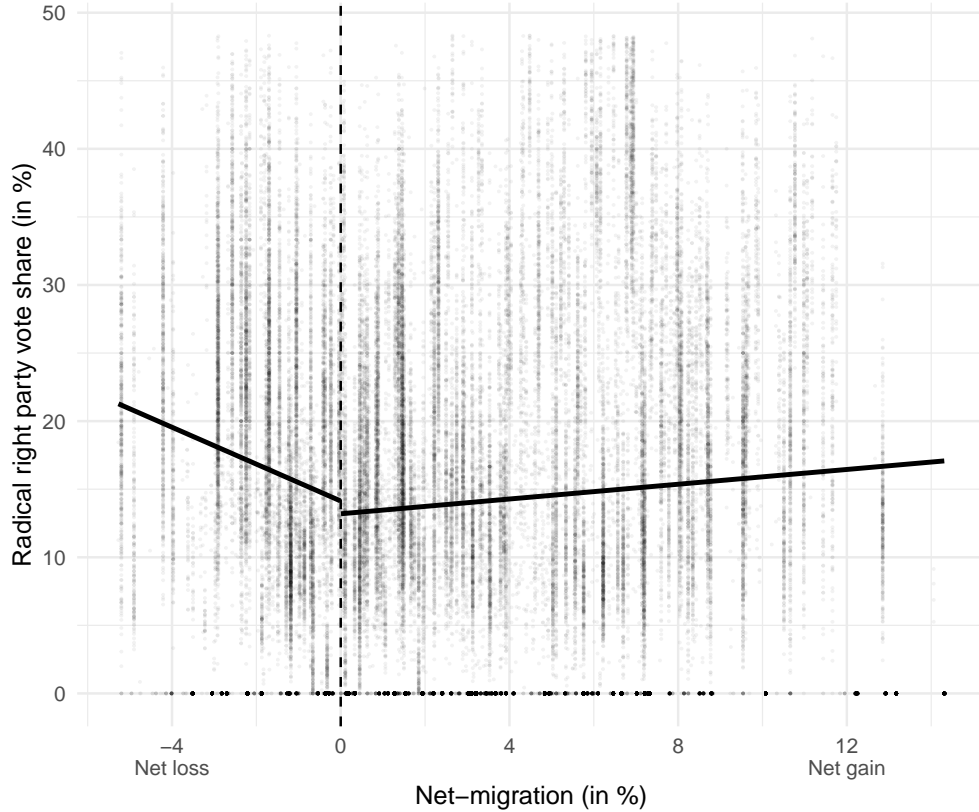


Figure 2: Scatter plot and fitted linear regressions of the county-average annual net-migration rate between 2000-2016 and the vote share of radical right parties in elections during the mid 2010s. To increase readability we clip values larger (smaller) than the 99% (1%) percentile.

relying on cross-national data limits our ability to isolate the effect of emigration on radical right party vote shares from other confounders.

In short, Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that population decline and net migration are significant phenomena that correlate with increased vote shares of radical right parties. We turn to the Swedish case to better assess the role that local emigration plays in promoting the rise of the populist radical right.

Emigration and Voting in Sweden

We situate our study in Sweden for reasons of data quality and representativeness. First, with respect to data, we can exploit administrative registry data provided by Statistics Sweden.

The *Total Population Register* includes all legal residents and allows us to track individuals' place of residence across multiple years in a consistent manner. Using yearly information on the municipality of residence, we create moving status indicators for all legal residents. We construct these indicators using residence information between two consecutive general elections, for all elections from 2002 to 2018. We combine these data with general election outcomes across Swedish precincts.

Second, political, economic and demographic trends in Sweden resemble those in other advanced democracies. Sweden is a popular destination for immigrants from outside and inside the European Union. In 2020, almost 20 percent of the population was foreign-born, up from 11 percent in 2000.⁹ As Figure 1 illustrates, this rise coincides with substantial demographic change across municipalities. The data underlying Figure 1 indicate that 51% of all Swedish municipalities experienced some population decline. Sweden is thus a typical case in Europe where, on average, about half of the municipalities in a given country experience population decline (see Table SM.1). 36% of Swedish municipalities register small population declines (between -1 to -0.1% annually), while 8% are shrinking by more than 1 but less than 2%. However, different from some other countries experiencing substantial drops in population, especially in Eastern Europe, there are no municipalities that shrink by more than 2% annually.

These population changes are tied to economic developments. Similar to many other Western countries, Sweden was hit hard by the the Great Recession. The unemployment rate rose from 6.1% in 2007, to 8.6% in 2010, and the yearly number of layoff notices tripled in 2009 compared to previous years. Numerous manufacturing plants closed down or downsized, many of them located in mid-sized industrial towns (Dehdari, 2021).

The Sweden Democrats entered the Swedish Parliament in 2010 against this backdrop of rising immigration and economic restructuring, running on an anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-establishment platform. Formed in 1988, the party initially had links to racist

⁹The share of non-European-born adults increased from close to 5.5 percent to almost 9 percent between 2000 and 2018 (Andersson and Dehdari, 2021).

and neo-Nazi movements. Over the last two decades it worked to moderate its profile to resemble that of other successful European nativist and populist parties.¹⁰ Whether these shifts represent a real change in party ideology is disputed (Erlingsson, Vernby and Öhrvall, 2014), but they did help the party double its vote share in each national election between 2002 and 2014, going from less than 2% to almost 13% of the vote. In 2018, the party polled more than 17%, and some established parties have signaled their willingness to cooperate with it (Leander, 2022). Although the breakthrough of a populist radical right party thus occurred comparatively late in Sweden, these developments resemble those in several other European party systems (Rydgren and Van der Meiden, 2019). We next investigate whether and how emigration has contributed to the Sweden Democrats' rise.

Data

Emigration Data To construct a measure of emigration, we use registry data from Statistics Sweden. The register includes information on municipality of residence for all individuals with a permanent residence.¹¹ By comparing the municipality of residence between two elections for each individual, we compute the number of residents in a municipality that moved to another municipality or left the country between two successive elections. This count is multiplied by 100 and divided by the total population in the municipality to obtain the emigration rate per 100 capita. We calculate a complementary immigration-rate measure by counting the number of individuals moving into a municipality (from abroad or from another municipality). Table SM.5 presents municipality-level descriptive statistics for departures and arrivals, pooled across all five election years. On average, arrivals have slightly exceeded departures (14.26 and 12.90 per 100 capita, respectively).

¹⁰According to an expert survey conducted by Meijers and Zaslove (2020), on four variables associated with populism – Manichean world view, native population as indivisible, support for immigration and ideology of nativism – the SD is about two standard deviations more populist than the average European political party.

¹¹Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities featuring an average population of close to 33,000 during our study period.

Some of our specifications include emigration rates at the precinct level. Though we do not know residents' home addresses, we do know the 250×250 -meter grid-cell (or, in rural areas, the 1000×1000 -meter cell) in which the address that each individual is registered is located. We use this information for each election year to place residents in precincts (according to the 2018 precinct boundaries, see below). Table SM.6 displays precinct-level descriptive statistics for departures and arrivals.¹²

Finally, to obtain sub-group specific emigration rates, we match data from the population register with other registries containing demographic and socioeconomic information. More specifically, we create measures of emigration rates for Swedish and foreign-born persons,¹³ citizens and non-citizens as well as high and low-income earners.¹⁴ Table SM.5 presents these descriptive statistics for departures and arrivals for these subgroups.

Election data Sweden is divided into roughly 5,800 election precincts, which are the smallest geographical unit with aggregated election results with an average of close to 1,200 eligible voters. The shape and size of these precincts vary between elections. For instance, a precinct might be split into two separate precincts, or two precincts might merge into one. This makes it difficult to construct a panel spanning five elections. Although a majority of precincts remain unchanged between two elections, a significant number of the 2002 precincts changed or were removed by 2018 (approximately 80% remain unchanged between two elections). To obtain comparable geographical units over time we allot precinct-level vote counts for each election to the geographic boundaries of precincts in 2018 using population-

¹²Note that the matching procedure also distributes the total population in each square to 2018 versions of precincts in order to create precinct-level shares (or departure/arrival per 100 capita). In a few cases, these counts are close to 1. Since the arrival numbers are based on election year population divided by the population in the previous election year, these precincts will have extremely large per 100 capita numbers. However, our results are not driven by these precincts, and we test robustness by excluding all precincts with a population lower than 500.

¹³We do not know the specific country of origin for most foreign-born emigrants but rather the region (e.g., Northern Africa, Eastern Europe).

¹⁴Following Dal Bó et al. (2021), we use 3.5 times the annual price base amount as a cutoff. The price base is determined by the government and ranges from SEK 37,900 to 45,500 during our study period. While Sweden lacks legally mandated minimum wages, according to Dal Bó et al. (2021), 3.5 times the annual price base amount is equivalent to the de facto wage floor for most of the Swedish labor market.

grid weights.¹⁵ This procedure enables us to obtain election outcomes for all parties and all elections between 2002 and 2018 (according to the 2018 precinct map).

Table SM.6 shows descriptive statistics of precinct-level vote shares (as a percentage of all valid votes) for each party in the national parliament, pooled across all five elections. The mean share received by the Sweden Democrats (SD) is 8.13%, and it ranges widely between 0 and close to 50%. Only the Social Democrats (S) and the Conservative Party (M) attained a higher mean vote share.

Main Results

Baseline Specification

Our analyses leverage over-time variation in emigration rates and party vote shares. Our main OLS specification mimics a difference-in-differences specification comparing changes in precinct-level vote shares with changes in emigration rates. Focusing on over-time variation within precincts allows us to isolate the emigration effect from other cross-sectional confounders connected to economic geography and population. Some areas have persistently high out- and in-migration for structural reasons that, unlike the SD vote share, do not change much over time. One such example are university towns, where students and employees constantly circulate in and out. The local population that resides permanently in such towns is unlikely to consider these flows as signs of decline.

Let y_{it} be the vote share (in %) of the Sweden Democrats in precinct i in election t . Our main specification with precinct (α_i) and year (α_t) fixed effects takes the following form:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \alpha_t + \delta D_{m[i]t} + \varepsilon_{it}. \quad (1)$$

¹⁵For instance, if the precinct A_{2002} , with 100 votes for the Social Democrats in 2002, geographically corresponds to precincts A_{2018} and B_{2018} such that 90% of the population is in A_{2018} (according to the population weights), we would distribute 90 votes to the Social Democrats to A_{2018} , and 10 votes for the same party to B_{2018} .

Different from a standard difference-in-differences design, our main variable of interest is continuous ($D_{m[i]t}$) and measures the number of departures from municipality m between the election in $t - 1$ and t per 100 capita in $t - 1$. The coefficient δ estimates the effect of 100 additional departures on the votes for the Sweden Democrats. Throughout the analysis, we cluster standard errors at the municipality level ($N_m = 290$).

One concern with our specification is that other municipality-level trends co-varying with emigration rates and the trend in support for the Sweden Democrats confound our estimates. We therefore also estimate versions of our baseline specification in which we include additional time-varying covariates (\mathbf{X}_{it}). The first set captures economic trends in a municipality (the unemployment rate¹⁶, median income and the Gini coefficient) and the second set measures other sources of demographic change including shifting gender ratios (share of men), changes in the immigration rate and changes in the age composition (share of inhabitants in 10-year age brackets using 0-4 as a reference category). We present models with and without these controls as some of these measures might be a consequence of changing emigration rates in which case they may introduce post-treatment bias.

Main Result

Table 1 reports estimates from the baseline specification. The departure of 100 people from the municipality (one percent of the population) increases the SD vote share by about half a percentage point. The Sweden Democrats receive about 8.3% in a precinct during the elections in our sample, on average (see Table SM.6). The standard deviation is of similar magnitude ($sd = 7.6$). The estimated effect is thus substantively large, corresponding to an increase of about 5% at the sample mean. The estimates are largely insensitive to adding economic controls measuring unemployment, median income and income inequality in a municipality. The estimates are also insensitive to adding demographic controls measuring the age-composition in a municipality and the share of men. The effect of emigration increases

¹⁶Our measure of unemployment is the share of the adult population (16+) who are not employed.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	-0.09 (0.07)	0.41* (0.20)	0.38** (0.14)	0.42*** (0.12)	0.44*** (0.12)
Arriv.					0.04 (0.07)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.00	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 1: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats’ vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. Covariates are measured at the municipality level. Economic covariates include the unemployment rate, median income and the Gini coefficient. Demographic controls include the share of inhabitants in 10-year age brackets (5-14, 14-24, 25-34, ..., 95+) and the share of men. The full table is available in the SM (Table SM.7).

marginally when we control for the number of arrivals, while arrivals themselves have no effect on SD vote shares.

Isolating the effect of departures from economic decline is challenging. In our baseline specification we address this concern by including time-varying economic controls. Yet, the inclusion of time-varying controls may not be enough to adjust for all time-varying confounding. In the appendix we present additional specifications (Table SM.8 and SM.9) in which we allow for differential time trends in groups of municipalities with similar levels of departures or similar levels of unemployment in 2002 (i.e. the baseline year in our data). We also present a specification in which we include an interaction between a linear time trend and municipality fixed effects (Table SM.10). Our results are robust across these alternative specifications.

We also report the results of a formal sensitivity analysis following the procedure suggested by Cinelli and Hazlett (2020). This analysis reveals that an unobserved confounder would have to be unusually potent. Only an unobserved confounder that explains more than

18.9% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome in our regression would be strong enough to bring the point estimate to 0 ($RV = 18.9\%$). About half of residual variation would be sufficient to bring the estimate to a range where it is no longer statistically different from 0 ($RV_{\alpha=0.05} = 9\%$). Benchmarking against the observed confounders, this means that the unobserved confounder would have to be six times stronger than the observed unemployment covariate (see Figure SM.2).

Another concern with the analysis might be that the inclusion of very small precincts skews the results as even a handful of departures can result in large per capita departures. In total there are 327 precincts with fewer than 500 inhabitants at any time during our study period. When we drop these precincts, the baseline point estimates are virtually unchanged (see Table SM.11).

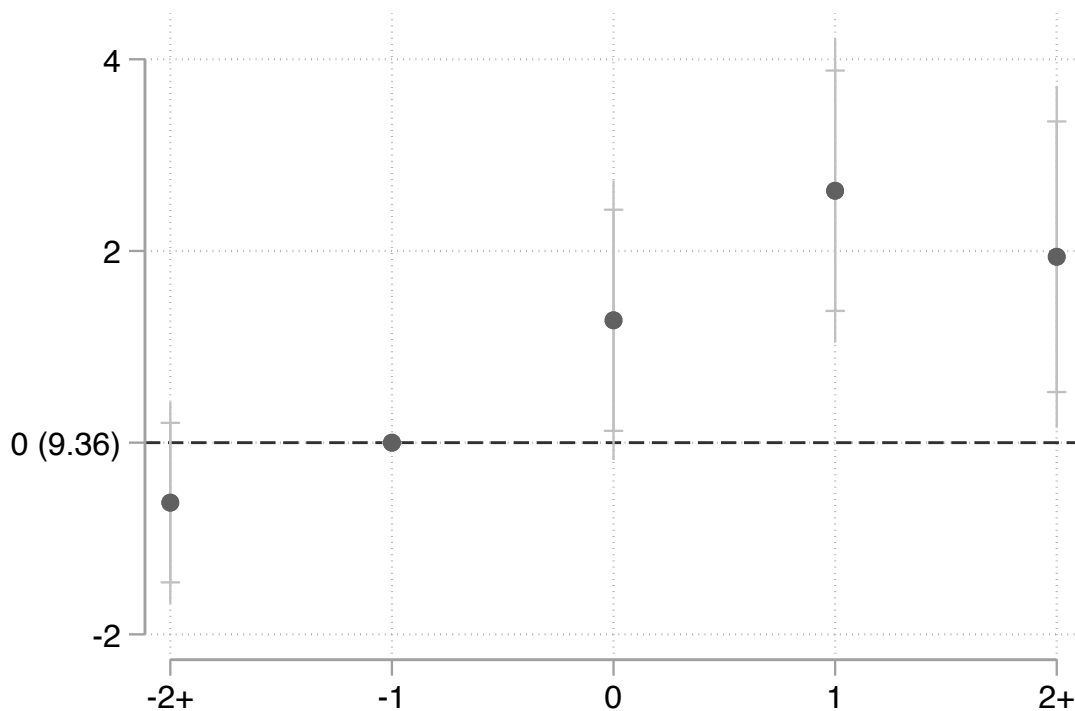


Figure 3: Event-study plot following the suggestions by Freyaldenhoven et al. (2021). Estimates display the cumulative effect of a one-unit change in the number of departures per 100 capita on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in the contemporaneous election (0), the elections thereafter (1-2) as well as the elections preceding the one-unit change (-2+) all relative to the effect in election before the one-unit change (-1).

In Figure 3 we show the estimates for a corresponding time-to-event specification for the baseline specification in Table 1, col. 2 (see Figure SM.1 for the estimates from the remaining specifications). While our main independent variable is not a binary policy variable but rather a continuous one that varies smoothly, the specification is similar to that of an event-study specification in a difference-in-differences design (DiD) with staggered adoption (Freyaldenhoven et al., 2021; Schmidheiny and Siegloch, 2019). The specification serves two purposes. First, we wish to rule out that the vote share for the Sweden Democrats in an election is affected by future departures. Second, we want to evaluate if departures only have a contemporaneous effect on vote shares or if there is a persistent effect on subsequent elections. The results show that there is no evidence that future changes in departures affect current election vote shares and that there is no evidence that the effect is reverting back to zero quickly.¹⁷

If the Sweden Democrats benefit from emigration, who loses? In Tables SM.12 and SM.13, we break down the results by the two main left-right electoral blocs during the period under study. These blocs comprise all the main parties, except for the Sweden Democrats. Our analyses demonstrate that the gains by the Sweden Democrats come at the expense of parties on the left. When we disaggregate further by party in Table 2, it becomes clear that the Social Democrats lose in the wake of emigration. The results strongly suggest that the Sweden Democrats' gains in places of emigration mainly come at the expense of the Social Democrats. Note that municipality-level departures do not have an effect on precinct-level turnout (see Table SM.15).

¹⁷Notice that the estimates in this time-to-event specification are larger than in the baseline specification as they are based on the variation in the middle of the panel (2010/2014) where the effect magnitude happens to be larger.

Panel A							
	MP	V	S	L	C	KD	M
Depart.	0.21*** (0.06)	0.04 (0.11)	-0.73*** (0.11)	-0.20 (0.12)	0.02 (0.13)	-0.00 (0.07)	0.30* (0.13)
Prec. FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Num. obs.	29710	29713	29713	29711	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.87	0.86	0.93	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.93
Panel B							
	MP	V	S	L	C	KD	M
Depart.	0.19*** (0.06)	-0.10* (0.04)	-0.70*** (0.12)	-0.13 (0.10)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.52*** (0.14)
Arriv.	0.10 (0.05)	-0.17** (0.06)	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.12** (0.04)	-0.16* (0.06)
Prec. FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29710	29713	29713	29711	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.88	0.88	0.94	0.90	0.91	0.89	0.94

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 2: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the all parties other than the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. Panel A does not include covariates. See note in Table 1 for covariates included in Panel B. The full table is available in the SM (Table SM.14). MP = Green Party; V = Left Party; S = Social Democratic Party; L = Liberal Party; C = Centre Party; KD = Christian Democrats; M = Moderate Party.

Probing Mechanisms

Why do the Sweden Democrats win votes in places experiencing substantial emigration? We first turn to a series of regressions to test the plausibility of the compositional and the preference mechanisms, complementing our precinct-level analysis with individual survey data. Together, these suggest that the compositional mechanism cannot be the sole driver of

the emigration effect, and they point in the direction of changing voter preferences in reaction to out-migration playing a significant role. In a final section, we conduct elite interviews and examine newspaper coverage to gain insights on the components of the preference mechanism.

Regression Analyses Evaluating the Compositional and Preference Mechanisms

The analysis above suggests that while SD gains come largely at the expense of leftist parties, we see a moderate increase for parties on the right, casting some doubt on the compositional explanation. To shed further light on the plausibility of this mechanism, we examine voter preferences of movers and stayers. Ideally, we would like to match neighborhood-level departures to voter preferences among those individuals who remain, both before and after departures are realized. Unfortunately, a large enough panel survey spanning the necessary time frame is not available. We therefore use a repeated cross-sectional survey carried out twice a year from 2017 to 2020 with more than 4,500 unique respondents per year, to estimate the difference in the propensity to vote for the SD between stayers and movers.

We matched each respondent’s municipality of residence at the time of the survey as well as four years prior, which means we can measure each respondent’s moving status in a manner similar to our departure measure used in the baseline results presented above. We regress a binary variable taking the value 1 for respondents who state they vote for the SD on a binary variable indicating whether the respondent changed municipalities in the last four years.

Table 3 presents the estimates for the SD and the seven other parties in the national parliament. The negative coefficient in col. 1 means that movers are less likely to vote for the SD than are stayers. Specifically, the share of movers voting for the SD is 2.62 percentage points lower than the share of stayers who do. For all other parties, and for the Other category (comprising blank votes, undecided voters and voters of minor or local parties) this estimate is either positive or statistically indistinguishable from zero, except for the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats.

	SD	S	MP	V	L	C	KD	M	Other
Mover	-2.62*** (0.84)	-6.35*** (1.02)	1.99*** (0.59)	3.86*** (0.81)	0.32 (0.50)	1.07 (0.72)	-1.28*** (0.50)	2.31** (1.03)	0.69 (0.96)
Num. obs	18714	18714	18714	18714	18714	18714	18714	18714	18714
R ²	0.006	0.005	0.002	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.006	0.003	0.008

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 3: OLS estimates of the difference in average support for each party between movers and stayers. For example, in the first column the outcome is a binary variable taking the value 1 if the respondent named the Sweden Democrats as “the party that they would vote for if the election was held today”, 0 otherwise, and Mover is a binary variable taking the value 1 if the respondent changed municipality of residence in the last four years (based on register data), 0 otherwise. Respondents were surveyed in 2017-2020. SD = Sweden Democrats; MP = Green Party; V = Left Party; S = Social Democratic Party; L = Liberal Party; C = Centre Party; KD = Christian Democrats; M = Moderate Party.

The results for the Sweden Democrats are in line with the compositional mechanism: If stayers are more likely to vote for the SD than are movers, a larger share of the remaining electorate in places that experience out-migration are voters of the Sweden Democrats. However, the results for two other parties, in particular for the Social Democrats, are not. If stayers are disproportionately Social Democrats, the compositional mechanism predicts that emigration benefits the Social Democrats in a given municipality. Yet Table 2 indicates that the Social Democrats lose votes in places of emigration. This suggests that a preference mechanism exists alongside a compositional one.

We next return to the precinct-level data to gain further insights on how emigration benefits radical right populists. We first examine whether income drives out-migration effects. High-income earners are less likely to vote for the SD (Oskarson and Demker, 2015).¹⁸ All else equal, their removal from local electorates should boost SD vote shares, and Table SM.16 indicates that the departure of high-income residents, but not that of low-income ones, is associated with SD vote gains (see Table SM.16). This evidence is suggestive of a compositional effect, though we also note some ambiguity as the loss of high earners deprives

¹⁸Similarly, Dal Bó et al. (2021) find that SD candidates are disproportionately likely to be drawn from socially and economically marginalized groups.

localities of tax revenue and purchasing power, with adverse knock-on effects on public and private services (with the caveat that it may be unlikely that these effects materialize within one election cycle).

A complementary hypothesis to the compositional mechanism, but one that introduces preferences about the composition of the electorate, is that the Sweden Democrats win votes when non-citizens leave. Voters may attribute leaving non-citizens (predominantly immigrants) to the SD's creation of an environment that is hostile to immigrants and reward the party for it. If so, we would expect departures of non-citizens (but not those of citizens) to correlate with SD vote gains. However, in Table 4 we show that only the departure of citizens is associated with a significant increase for the Sweden Democrats, suggesting that voters do not reward the Sweden Democrats for driving out immigrants. The same pattern emerges when we focus on departures of Swedish-born vs. foreign-born residents. The Sweden Democrats score gains when Swedish-born individuals leave but not when the foreign-born do (see Table SM.18).

Next, we take a closer look at precinct-level departures and arrivals. We add a variable measuring per-capita departures from the precinct to our baseline specification which includes the per-capita departures from the municipality. If the estimated effects were only driven by departing left-leaning voters, we would expect that municipality departures have no independent effect after controlling for precinct-level departures. However, that is not what we observe. Even in precincts with the same levels of departures, municipality departures matter and have an independent effect. In Table 5, we find that even after adding all available controls (col. 5), municipality departures have an effect that is almost as large as the effect we detected in our baseline specification reported in Table 1.

In the SM we probe these results further by interacting the per-capita departures (from the municipality) with the per-capita departures from the precinct. Following the suggestions by Hainmueller, Mummolo and Yiqing (2019), we use a binning specification which is similar but more efficient compared to running three separate regressions on subsets of the data for

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart. (ctz.)	-0.82*** (0.09)	0.92*** (0.15)	0.61*** (0.15)	0.49*** (0.11)	0.52*** (0.12)
Depart. (non-ctz.)	2.57*** (0.59)	-0.97 (0.65)	-0.46 (0.38)	0.16 (0.30)	0.16 (0.30)
Arriv. (ctz.)					0.06 (0.11)
Arriv. (non-ctz.)					0.05 (0.10)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.10	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 4: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita by citizens and non-citizens from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. See note in Table 1 for additional covariates. The full table is available in the SM (Table SM.17).

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart. (Muni.)	0.01 (0.07)	0.32 (0.20)	0.30* (0.13)	0.35** (0.11)	0.37** (0.12)
Depart. (Prec.)	-0.09*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)
Arriv. (Muni.)					0.04 (0.07)
Arriv. (Prec.)					0.00 (0.00)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29712	29712	29712	29712	29712
R ²	0.01	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 5: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct, adding precinct-level arrivals and departures. See note in Table 1 for additional covariates. The full table is available in the SM (Table SM.19).

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Muni. depart. x Muni.: Low	1.02*** (0.04)	1.37*** (0.19)	1.00*** (0.17)	0.65*** (0.14)	0.66*** (0.14)
Muni. depart. x Muni.: Medium	-0.11*** (0.03)	0.93*** (0.24)	0.70** (0.23)	0.66*** (0.19)	0.70*** (0.19)
Muni. depart. x Muni.: High	-0.17*** (0.03)	-0.19 (0.23)	-0.29 (0.23)	-0.04 (0.20)	0.00 (0.21)
Arriv. (Muni.)					0.09 (0.07)
Arriv. (Prec.)					-0.00 (0.00)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29712	29712	29712
R ²	0.06	0.91	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 6: OLS binning estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. The municipality departures are interacted with tercile-indicators for municipality with high, medium and low population density. These indicators are median-centered within terciles such that the coefficients estimate the effect of municipality departures at the median within each tercile (for details see Hainmueller, Mummolo and Yiqing (2019)). We omit all constituent terms from the table to increase readability. See note in Table 1 for additional covariates. The full table is available in the SM (Table SM.21)

precincts with few, some and many departures. We find that even in precincts with very few departures, there is a sizeable effect of municipality-level departures that exceeds the baseline estimates (see Table SM.20). We would not observe these results if compositional changes were primarily driving the emigration effect.

Finally, we consider an observable implication relating to the deterioration of services that occurs following emigration and that prompts voters to change their preferences in favor of the SD. If this mechanism operates, the effects should be more pronounced in areas with low population density or in areas with population decline where it is particularly difficult to

sustain existing services and amenities.¹⁹ Using the same binning-specification as above, we find that the effect is indeed concentrated in municipalities with low to medium population density but absent in municipalities with high population density (see Table 6). When we interact departures with a variable measuring if the population declined in the decade before our study period (1991-2001), we find that the effect of departures is much more pronounced in shrinking rather than growing municipalities (see Table SM.22). Both of these results are consistent with a service-based preference mechanism. By contrast, if the compositional mechanism were behind our estimates, we would expect to see a similar magnitude across all types of municipalities.

Overall these results corroborate that the compositional explanation for our main estimate is insufficient. In places with high out-migration, Sweden Democrats gain votes above and beyond what would be expected from a compositional effect. Furthermore, they gain in places with low – but not high – population density where the breakdown of services due to out-migration is especially likely. These results suggest that the preference mechanism is a critical complement to the compositional one.

Exploring the Preference Mechanism: Elite Interviews and Newspaper Coverage

In this last empirical section we gather clues, via elite interviews and newspaper analyses, about what types of grievances out-migration generates; why voters react by opting for populist radical right candidates; and why the Social Democrats lose as a result.

Elite Interviews Our analyses show that the Sweden Democrats and the Social Democrats are the main electoral winners and losers, respectively, from out-migration. We therefore focused on interviewing party officials from these two parties and carried out 12 interviews.²⁰ We aimed to interview at least one person from each party in each of the following categories: National party official with responsibility for rural affairs, local politician in depopulating

¹⁹Surveys indicate that voters living in sparsely populated areas worry more about depopulation and the deterioration of public services (Erlingsson et al., 2021).

²⁰We received IRB approval from [withheld for anonymity].

regions, and party official with responsibility for election analysis.²¹ Interviews were semi-structured and contained nine thematic questions (see Table SM.24). We also asked interviewees for recommendations of party officials with relevant perspectives, and we continued this snowball process until we reached saturation (see, e.g., Grady, 1998, 26).

The interviews provide broad support for the material and psychological preference mechanisms. Several point to the historical political neglect of the interests of rural areas, which out-migration compounds further; in Sweden’s proportional electoral system, electoral geography does not work in favor of sparsely populated areas. As a Social Democratic former mayor notes: “When the population declines in the Northern parts of Sweden, and people move to Stockholm or other big cities, so do the parliamentary seats.” According to a party official working in rural affairs “The route to power does not lie in sparsely populated areas. The harsh reality is that about a million people live north of Gävle, so even if all of them vote for you, you will not have a majority in parliament.” The electoral system, in combination with the Social Democratic development strategy built on structural adjustment and urbanization, has not benefited rural areas. The same party official says that “From the 1970s and onwards, the focus has been on jobs and growth, and to accomplish this rural areas have been bled of their resources . . . also when it comes to human capital . . . one has actively sought out people and offered them jobs elsewhere.” In other words, governmental growth strategies are seen to have directly contributed to the emptying out of the periphery.

Interviewees agree that emigration is noticeable, not the least because of its impact on the local economy, public finances and the provision of goods and services. In the words of the Sweden Democrats’ party secretary: “People notice it [emigration] . . . Local services deteriorate, it could be that the local store closes, or that the small school is shut down.” A Social Democrat describes the adverse processes that out-migration sets in motion. Once depopulation triggers cutbacks and fiscal strain “there is this negative spiral where [affected localities] have difficulties attracting skilled workers.”

²¹Interviewees could be current or former holders of these positions. For more details on interview methodology, see SM section D.

Interviewees also emphasize psychological effects. A Sweden Democrat local politician noted that emigration “is not good for self-esteem.” The Social Democrats’ former Minister of rural affairs quotes a mayor from his own party whose municipality shrank from 15,000 inhabitants to 6,000, as saying that emigration leads to “collective depression.” A Social Democratic mayor in a depopulating municipality in mid-Sweden spoke of the psychological pressures of not meeting the standards of success set by the outside world: “We like it here. But then someone comes from the outside and says that you’re a failure if you live here . . . so we are struggling against the public perception of what constitutes a successful individual. We constantly have to work on the psychology of the municipality’s inhabitants in order to strengthen them against the impressions that come from the outside.” Another Social Democrat downplays the material impact of emigration and instead speaks of “a feeling of bitterness, everything revolves around Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm.” In short, emigration leads to a collectively experienced status loss.

Voter behaviour and party strategies have responded to these long-term developments. The former Social Democratic minister explains that “People have for a long time felt abandoned and this has caused my party, the Social Democrats, but also other established parties to lose. Above all, it is the right-wing populists, such as the Sweden Democrats, who have captured these voters.” Later on, when discussing the poor condition of roads in rural areas, he quips “Every time someone hits a pothole, the Sweden Democrats gain five votes.” The party secretary of the Sweden Democrats similarly comments: “The Social Democrats have been a very large party in many parts of the country . . . and if those who live there [in depopulating regions] feel that things are deteriorating . . . of course the Social Democrats lose votes.”

Several interviewees maintain that voters increasingly perceive the Social Democrats as the party of the urban middle class. A Social Democratic official says that in rural areas “many feel like the Social Democrats think that it is more important to do the bidding for the Greens, for example when it comes to forestry and mining issues or gasoline prices, than

to see to the interests of those left behind.” A Sweden Democrat interviewee concurs: “Our policies are, in many ways, similar to those of the Social Democrats. But when it comes to issues relating to agriculture, the forest industry and the environment, it is the Social Democrats’ government partner [the Greens] that is more influential.”

As for party strategies, a Social Democrat responsible for the 2014 post-election analysis offers this insight: “It was clear that the Social Democrats, together with some other parties, had not been prioritizing smaller and more rural localities, and that the Sweden Democrats had consciously been visiting these places, and this had produced results.”

Our interviews thus highlight that the Sweden Democrats capitalized on the incumbent party’s failure to address the concerns of voters contending with out-migration. But they also indicate that the Social Democrats recognize that their abandonment has provided an opening for right-wing populists that the party is now trying to close. The previously mentioned minister of rural affairs speaks of a growing awareness of these issues during the latest Social Democratic government, which came to power in 2014, mentioning large-scale subsidies to grocery stores and gas stations and the expansion of high-speed internet access. However, he also acknowledges that “it takes time to regain the confidence of voters. It can’t be done during one or two terms of office. The political price you pay for disappointing people is very high.”

Overall the interviews reinforce the idea that the preference mechanism – both material and psychological – underlies the relationship between out-migration and vote gains by populist radical right candidates.

Newspaper Coverage The interviews validate the interpretation that our regressions point to: dissatisfaction with public and private services and voter disillusionment with living in places of decline and political abandonment opens up space for right-wing populists. In our final analysis, we draw on newspaper articles to assess how representative these connections

are and to what extent public services, private services, or other aspects that make places livable shape these dynamics.

Examining two decades (January 2000–December 2020), we searched local, regional and national newspaper articles to learn what developments are associated with local out-migration. We used the website *Retriever*, which allows us to run full-text searches in almost all Swedish newspapers. We found 4,970 newspaper articles focusing on local out-migration in a political context.²² Figure SM.3 shows the distribution of articles over time; on average, we identified about 20 articles per month (median: 16).

We next drew a random sample of these articles ($N = 100$) and checked if they discussed local out-migration (or depopulation) in a political context in Sweden. 62 articles did so, and we next read those articles carefully. Among the 62, 44 mentioned specific changes associated with out-migration, which we classified into 11 categories (see Table 7 for the list).²³ We then drew a second random sample ($N = 700$) which we coded based on this scheme.

Table 7 reports the results from an analysis pooling the samples. In total 366 articles discussed local out-migration (or depopulation) in a political context in Sweden. The first column shows the proportion of articles among those mentioning certain types of local-level changes linked to out-migration. As articles may mention multiple changes, the proportions generally do not add up to 1. On average, articles mention 2.4 (median: 2) of our categories. The other two columns report overall percentages of each category.

A substantial share of articles (59%) notes a decline in the quality of public services. Specific examples include the closure of schools, fewer options for public transportation, the departure of physicians and the closing of hospitals and a lack of high-speed internet. Jobs and housing are also important concerns. With respect to housing, articles frequently refer

²²We used the following search string: (utflyttning* OR avfolkning*) AND (Sverigedemokrater* OR Socialdemokrater* OR Centerparti* OR Miljöparti* OR Vänsterparti* OR Folkparti* OR Liberalerna* OR Moderater* OR Kristdemokrater*). The terms before the AND condition are emigration and depopulation. The following terms are word stems corresponding to the parties in the national parliament.

²³Most articles do not clearly distinguish between the causes or consequences of out-migration but present them as interactive processes.

to the need to relax zoning restrictions, such that homes can be built on lakefronts and other scenic locations, so as to attract middle-class families and restore local populations. The quality and affordability of existing housing is another theme.²⁴ The arrival of immigrants and high gas prices are not central topics.

	Proportion of articles	Percent of statements
Quality of public services	0.59	
<i>Schools/childcare</i>	0.31	13%
<i>Transportation</i>	0.18	7%
<i>Health care</i>	0.15	6%
<i>Internet speed</i>	0.07	3%
<i>Other</i>	0.24	10%
Availability of proper housing	0.60	25%
Lack of jobs	0.48	20%
Shops and stores closing	0.17	
<i>Essential</i>	0.11	5%
<i>Non-essential</i>	0.09	4%
Arrival of immigrants	0.09	4%
High gas prices or carbon tax	0.07	3%
		100%

Table 7: Proportion of articles and the share of statements describing changes associated with out-migration at the local level in Sweden ($N = 366$ articles).

Articles also frequently link out-migration’s negative repercussions to the growth in support for the SD. After the 2018 election, one journalist wrote that “Voting for the SD can partly be seen as a protest against the deterioration of public goods and services—schools and health care—in the wake of emigration” (Petersson, 2018). After the 2014 election another journalist remarked that “None of the established parties manage to channel the powerlessness and discontent in the parts of the country” that experience the quality-of-life declines produced by emigration (Akinder, 2014). In short, outside observers and locals have clearly identified what we have termed the preference-based mechanism as underpinning the relationship between out-migration and radical right voting.

²⁴Within the housing category, almost 50 percent mention legal and financial obstacles to new housing development; 50/45 percent mention affordability/quality of existing housing.

Conclusion

This paper brings together two major political and demographic currents in contemporary democracies: populism and emigration. In doing so, it advances the literature on several fronts.

First, a large body of research links the rise and consolidation of radical right populists to immigration. Opposition against migrants is a core feature of PRR platforms, and negative views about immigrants are a prime determinant of PRR vote choice (Akkerman, 2015; Chou et al., 2021; Lancaster, 2020). Despite this salience of immigration, published studies – and the results we present in this paper – show that the correspondence of local immigration with the success of local PRR parties is weak at best (Cools, Finseraas and Rogeberg, 2021). We argue instead that large-scale departures of citizens to other domestic municipalities or internationally are a critical cause of PRR gains.

Second, we pursue this argument with cross-national and within-country data. Our cross-national analysis confirmed a positive correlation between net migration and PRR vote shares across Europe, suggesting that emigration could indeed be an important component of populist candidates’ arsenal. However, a challenge in estimating the electoral effect of emigration is obtaining the appropriate data at low levels of geographic aggregation. Given the extensive detail of administrative data in Sweden, we constructed a dataset from the *Total Population Register* provided by Statistics Sweden. These data allow us to measure international and domestic emigration and immigration at the municipality and precinct level; to break these measures down by key variables such as income and citizenship; and to test their effects on election outcomes across general elections from 2002 through 2018. We complement these data with individual-level surveys, broken down by moving status.

Third, we formulate two mechanisms that constitute the emigration effect, contrasting changes in the composition of electorates with changes in electorate preferences. Our rich longitudinal data enables us to explore these mechanisms with a fine-toothed comb and to isolate the emigration effect from other cross-sectional confounders. On the whole, we find

that the compositional mechanism plausibly affects PRR success to some degree. But our evidence also clearly indicates that changed preferences are a powerful driver of populist voting. One avenue for future research is to further refine the measurement of the compositional and preference mechanisms. Vote choices are informed by perceived realities, and media coverage and elite assessments helped us establish the connections that locals and outside observers draw – if any – between out-migration, compositional and preference change, and PRR voting. Yet some of these perceptions will fit objective reality better than others (Herrera, 2005). A useful next step would be to examine what type of emigration-induced service cuts have particularly large effects on PRR voting or what types of psychological traits and mental health challenges are common in places of out-migration and PRR electorates.

Fourth, we go beyond work that zeros in on PRR success only and also examine the effect of emigration on the party system as a whole. Our quantitative results indicate that the once hegemonic Social Democrats are the likely losers of the shift towards populist voting in places exposed to out-migration. We then interrogate newspaper coverage and the perspectives of leading party officials to understand why this is so. While more suggestive in nature, these additional sources reveal the material and psychological sources of PRR voting: voters in towns affected by out-migration feel a loss of public services, a subsequent sense of political abandonment as well as an experience of “collective depression.” They therefore penalize a party that has long been in charge and are open to a party that bears no responsibility for this material and psychological decline, namely the SD. Our interviews reveal that Social Democratic officials were not blindsided and sought to redirect public subsidies toward these towns, though they acknowledge lack of full success.

One implication of our account is that the local protest route for PRR success suggests an uncertain future for these parties. The forces driving out-migration and subsequent decline are not easily reversed. As SD politicians move into ruling local coalitions and face further decline, their appeal may well weaken (Cohen, 2020).

Another emerging theme is the ideological flexibility of the populist radical right. In courting disaffected voters in the periphery, the SD – and more generally parties that style themselves as radical right populists nationwide, running on nativism and nationalism – are adjusting to local conditions, emphasizing issues that are not particularly right-wing. This suggests a normalization away from radical right positioning that is distinct from the normalization that occurs via the legitimization of far-right positions by mainstream actors (Wodak, 2020). It also illustrates the ideologically “thin” nature of today’s populists (Mudde, 2004), who opportunistically layer their populism onto a host of disparate grievances.

Finally, our study exposes dilemmas faced by mainstream parties. These parties, including Sweden’s Social Democrats, have at times tried to counter the far-right threat by moving to the right on immigration (Meguid, 2008; Spoon and Klüver, 2020; Van Spanje, 2018). Immigration restrictions have the advantage of being relatively easy to implement, but the disadvantage of being ideologically compromising, with adverse consequences for the center-left in particular (Chou et al., 2021). Focusing on the structural causes of emigration in the periphery presents far fewer ideological costs, but achieving policy success is significantly more challenging. Nonetheless, a return to their roots as proponents of public goods providers beyond urban centers may have greater electoral returns for center-left parties than a repositioning as anti-immigration hawks.

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Supplemental Materials

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A Background and Descriptive Statistics

Country	Proportion of municipalities with total population change			
	< 0.0	-1.0 to -0.1	-2.0 to -1.0	<-2.0
Belgium	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.00
Switzerland	0.17	0.12	0.02	0.01
Ireland	0.22	0.12	0.06	0.02
France	0.23	0.15	0.04	0.01
Netherlands	0.25	0.16	0.00	0.00
United Kingdom	0.25	0.16	0.03	0.02
Slovenia	0.28	0.22	0.00	0.00
Czechia	0.29	0.20	0.04	0.01
Italy	0.41	0.25	0.09	0.02
Slovakia	0.44	0.28	0.08	0.02
Austria	0.45	0.34	0.05	0.00
Denmark	0.46	0.29	0.09	0.04
Norway	0.47	0.32	0.09	0.01
Sweden	0.51	0.36	0.08	0.00
Spain	0.52	0.19	0.17	0.14
Poland	0.52	0.35	0.08	0.03
Germany	0.63	0.37	0.18	0.03
Finland	0.64	0.32	0.27	0.03
Portugal	0.64	0.36	0.23	0.01
Greece	0.68	0.16	0.19	0.31
Romania	0.71	0.44	0.18	0.03
Croatia	0.77	0.38	0.28	0.08
Hungary	0.80	0.43	0.23	0.11
Latvia	0.86	0.09	0.34	0.42
Bulgaria	0.87	0.12	0.18	0.56
Estonia	0.87	0.15	0.39	0.32
Lithuania	0.93	0.07	0.62	0.25

Table SM.1: Proportion of municipalities with any (col. 1), with small (col. 2), medium (col. 3) and with large population declines (col. 4) between 2001-2011. Rates are based on annualized total population change between 2001-2011 as displayed in Figure 1.

Country	Election Year
Austria	2017
Belgium	2014
Bulgaria	2017
Croatia	2016
Cyprus	2016
Czechia	2017
Denmark	2015
Estonia	2015
Finland	2015
France	2017
Germany	2017
Greece	2015
Hungary	2014
Ireland	2016
Italy	2018
Latvia	2014
Lithuania	2016
Luxembourg	2013
Malta	2017
Netherlands	2017
Poland	2015
Portugal	2015
Romania	2016
Slovakia	2016
Slovenia	2014
Spain	2016
Sweden	2014
United Kingdom	2015

Table SM.2: List of countries and elections included in the cross-national analysis.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Net mig.	-1.09*** (0.08)	-0.82*** (0.05)	-0.69*** (0.05)	-1.26*** (0.06)	-1.30*** (0.06)
Net mig. > 0	-0.23 (0.20)	-1.74*** (0.15)	-1.19*** (0.14)	-0.97*** (0.14)	-0.97*** (0.14)
Net mig. x (Net mig. > 0)	1.11*** (0.08)	0.90*** (0.06)	0.83*** (0.05)	1.06*** (0.06)	1.11*** (0.06)
Covariates					
Pop. dens.			-0.93*** (0.06)	-0.44*** (0.04)	-0.47*** (0.04)
Rural			-0.06 (0.05)	0.15** (0.05)	0.20*** (0.05)
Dist. capital			-0.97*** (0.07)	0.19* (0.09)	0.21* (0.09)
65+			-0.80*** (0.04)	-1.05*** (0.05)	-1.06*** (0.05)
Tertiary edu.			-0.82*** (0.05)	-3.06*** (0.06)	-3.03*** (0.06)
GDP growth p.c.				-1.34*** (0.08)	-1.21*** (0.08)
GDP p.c.				-0.38*** (0.10)	-0.40*** (0.10)
Empl. rate				4.34*** (0.08)	4.28*** (0.08)
Empl. growth				1.16*** (0.07)	1.11*** (0.07)
Indust. empl.				-0.23*** (0.03)	-0.20*** (0.03)
Unclass. vote					2.97*** (0.15)
Country FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	53076	53076	53005	52998	52998
R ²	0.01	0.57	0.58	0.64	0.65

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.3: OLS estimates of county-average annual net migration between 2000-2016 on the vote share of radical right parties in elections during the mid 2010s. Covariates are all mean-variance standardized. Heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Net mig.	-1.09*** (0.08)	-0.21*** (0.05)	-0.13* (0.05)	-0.13* (0.06)	-0.17** (0.06)
Covariates					
Pop. dens.			-0.64*** (0.06)	-0.39*** (0.06)	-0.41*** (0.06)
Rural			0.20** (0.07)	0.28*** (0.07)	0.31*** (0.07)
Dist. capital			-0.35 (0.18)	-0.49** (0.19)	-0.49* (0.19)
65+			-0.61*** (0.07)	-0.56*** (0.08)	-0.59*** (0.08)
Tertiary edu.			-3.13*** (0.10)	-2.80*** (0.12)	-2.93*** (0.12)
GDP growth p.c.				0.11 (0.12)	0.15 (0.12)
GDP p.c.				-0.94*** (0.10)	-0.93*** (0.10)
Empl. rate				-0.24 (0.16)	-0.21 (0.16)
Empl. growth				0.27** (0.09)	0.31*** (0.09)
Indust. empl.				-0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)
Unclass. vote					1.80*** (0.27)
Country FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	15139	15139	15105	15105	15105
R ²	0.02	0.59	0.62	0.63	0.63

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.4: OLS estimates of county-average annual net migration between 2000-2016 on the vote share of radical right parties in elections during the mid 2010s. The estimation sample includes only observations for which net-migration is negative. Covariates are all mean-variance standardized. Heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses.

	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Depart.	12.90	12.55	3.57	5.82	29.90
Arriv.	14.26	13.64	4.63	4.35	37.99
Depart. (Sw.-born)	10.15	10.17	2.53	5.17	22.16
Depart. (frgn.-born)	2.75	2.30	1.58	0.18	10.68
Depart. (ctz.)	11.27	11.20	2.88	5.49	24.84
Depart. (non-ctz.)	1.63	1.32	1.03	0.05	7.00
Arriv. (Sw.-born)	10.00	9.98	3.07	3.47	25.48
Arriv. (frgn.-born)	4.25	3.60	2.46	0.47	15.18
Arriv. (ctz.)	10.62	10.51	3.36	3.51	28.39
Arriv. (non-ctz.)	3.63	3.06	2.06	0.35	11.94
Depart. (ctz., high edu.)	4.21	3.61	2.26	0.92	13.85
Depart. (ctz., low edu.)	7.06	6.66	1.80	3.92	13.69
Depart. (non-ctz., high edu.)	0.58	0.41	0.50	0.00	4.09
Depart. (non-ctz., low edu.)	1.05	0.85	0.62	0.00	4.86
Depart. (ctz., high inc.)	4.82	4.31	1.98	1.43	15.84
Depart. (ctz., low inc.)	6.45	6.07	1.50	3.25	13.45
Depart. (non-ctz., high inc.)	0.36	0.24	0.32	0.00	2.97
Depart. (non-ctz., low inc.)	1.27	1.08	0.77	0.00	5.08
Non-Employment	41.88	42.09	4.17	29.01	60.39
Median income	225.62	218.70	40.69	146.20	361.30
Gini	37.94	37.04	3.92	29.94	55.97
Age 0-5	5.73	5.73	0.80	3.14	8.90
Age 5-14	11.54	11.24	1.59	6.99	17.56
Age 15-24	12.29	12.07	1.55	8.56	18.27
Age 25-34	13.15	12.40	3.52	5.86	23.47
Age 35-44	13.41	13.40	1.61	7.02	18.01
Age 45-54	13.09	12.99	0.82	10.51	16.41
Age 55-64	12.30	12.19	1.59	8.82	18.41
Age 65-74	9.74	9.39	2.27	5.31	18.83
Age 75-84	6.19	6.23	1.44	2.52	12.34
Age 85-94	2.39	2.41	0.59	0.66	5.42
Age 95+	0.18	0.18	0.06	0.02	0.47
Share men	49.82	49.78	0.76	47.67	53.53

Table SM.5: Descriptive statistics of municipality-level variables (Sweden), pooled across 5 election years (2002-2018).

	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Vote: SD	8.13	5.45	7.58	0.00	49.56
Vote: Right	43.40	42.55	14.70	3.82	98.73
Vote: Left	45.52	45.29	13.94	0.64	94.50
Vote: MP	5.65	4.87	3.27	0.00	30.53
Vote: V	6.82	5.90	4.05	0.10	45.62
Vote: S	33.04	32.58	12.39	0.38	87.51
Vote: L	7.64	6.62	4.74	0.00	41.14
Vote: C	7.06	5.69	5.21	0.00	43.46
Vote: KD	6.34	5.72	3.53	0.00	50.29
Vote: M	22.37	20.52	10.79	0.01	72.59
Turnout	81.39	82.35	6.53	38.59	96.19
Depart.	12.77	11.79	6.35	0.00	100.00
Arriv.	15.56	12.55	123.29	0.00	20 400.00
Unemployment	7.03	6.12	4.03	0.00	100.00
Median income	1517.17	1432.04	565.20	0.00	13 738.79
Age 0-14	17.19	17.44	5.49	0.00	44.21
Age 15-24	11.03	10.67	3.47	0.00	85.71
Age 25-34	11.99	10.06	6.07	0.00	100.00
Age 35-44	12.20	12.10	2.66	0.00	37.90
Age 45-54	11.97	11.94	2.36	0.00	66.67
Age 55-64	11.07	10.94	2.94	0.00	66.46
Age 65-74	8.53	8.39	3.19	0.00	75.00
Age 75-84	5.80	5.36	3.12	0.00	100.00
Age 85-94	2.28	1.92	1.74	0.00	47.37
Age 95+	0.16	0.10	0.22	0.00	10.53
Share men	49.66	49.87	2.53	24.32	100.00

Table SM.6: Descriptive statistics of precinct-level variables (Sweden), pooled across 5 election years (2002-2018).

B Additional Analyses – Effects of Departures

Note that in the analyses using Swedish data, we employ individual-level microdata provided by Statistics Sweden. These are restricted access data, and we are not allowed to share the data with any third party. However, we will provide the code to replicate all of the results in the paper and SM, along with a README-file that describes how the data can be accessed and how the code can be used to replicate the results.

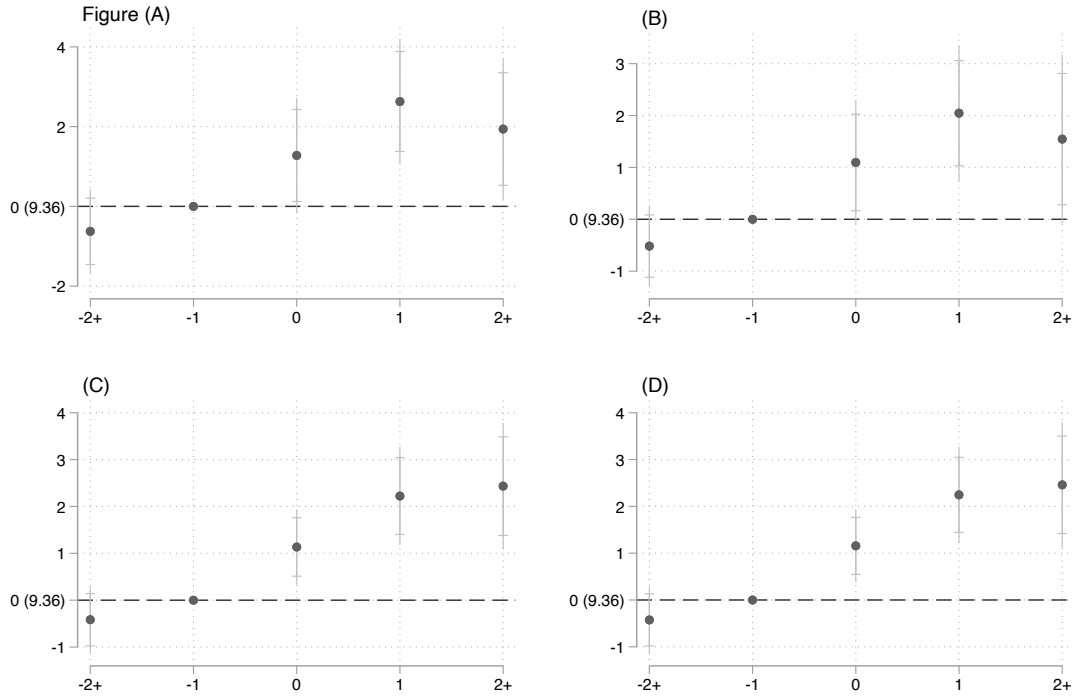


Figure SM.1: Event-study plot for the models reported in Table 1 (col. 3-6) following the suggestions by Freyaldenhoven et al. (2021). Estimates display the cumulative effect of a one-unit change in the number of departures per 100 capita on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct in the contemporaneous election (0), the elections thereafter (1-2) as well as the elections preceding the one-unit change (-2+) all relative to the effects in election before the one-unit change (-1). Panel A are estimates based on a specification that only includes precinct and year fixed effects but no covariates. The specification for Panel B includes economic controls, the specification for panel C includes demographic controls and the specification in panel D includes the number of arrivals per capita as a control.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	-0.09 (0.07)	0.41* (0.20)	0.38** (0.14)	0.42*** (0.12)	0.44*** (0.12)
Unemployment			0.47*** (0.11)	0.22* (0.10)	0.21* (0.10)
Gini			-0.97*** (0.21)	-0.80*** (0.17)	-0.80*** (0.17)
Income			-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.72*** (0.38)	-1.69*** (0.40)
Age 15-24				-1.12** (0.40)	-1.10** (0.41)
Age 25-34				-1.64*** (0.44)	-1.63*** (0.45)
Age 35-44				-2.99*** (0.46)	-2.90*** (0.49)
Age 45-54				-1.33*** (0.30)	-1.26*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.96*** (0.29)	-1.90*** (0.33)
Age 65-74				-1.27*** (0.29)	-1.22*** (0.31)
Age 75-84				-1.76*** (0.39)	-1.72*** (0.41)
Age 85-94				-1.39* (0.55)	-1.34* (0.55)
Age 95+				-2.18 (2.00)	-2.25 (2.00)
Men				-0.10 (0.48)	-0.15 (0.50)
Arriv.					0.04 (0.07)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.00	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.7: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. Covariates are measured at the municipality level. Economic covariates include the unemployment rate (in %), median income (in SEK 1k) and the Gini coefficient (in %). Demographic controls include the share of inhabitants in 10-year age brackets (5-14, 14-24, 25-34, ..., 95+) and the share of men (all in %).

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	-0.09 (0.07)	0.40* (0.17)	0.32* (0.13)	0.46*** (0.10)	0.50*** (0.10)
Arriv.					0.12 (0.07)
Unemployment			0.64*** (0.09)	0.31*** (0.09)	0.29** (0.09)
Gini			-0.79*** (0.22)	-0.74*** (0.19)	-0.71*** (0.18)
Income			-0.13*** (0.03)	-0.12*** (0.02)	-0.12*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.17*** (0.28)	-1.08*** (0.29)
Age 15-24				-0.90* (0.38)	-0.84* (0.39)
Age 25-34				-1.37*** (0.36)	-1.32*** (0.37)
Age 35-44				-2.59*** (0.33)	-2.34*** (0.38)
Age 45-54				-1.10*** (0.29)	-0.90** (0.32)
Age 55-64				-1.75*** (0.23)	-1.58*** (0.26)
Age 65-74				-1.11*** (0.25)	-0.97*** (0.26)
Age 75-84				-1.11*** (0.31)	-0.98** (0.34)
Age 85-94				-0.85 (0.55)	-0.65 (0.56)
Age 95+				-2.48 (1.92)	-2.60 (1.91)
Men				0.04 (0.44)	-0.07 (0.44)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE x Depart. Bins	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29647	29647	29647	29647
R ²	0.00	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.8: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct allowing for differential time trends in five bins of municipalities with similar levels of departures in 2002. All five bins have the same range. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	-0.09 (0.07)	0.36* (0.17)	0.44** (0.14)	0.45*** (0.12)	0.46*** (0.13)
Arriv.					0.03 (0.07)
Unemployment			0.44** (0.14)	0.21 (0.12)	0.21 (0.12)
Gini			-0.95*** (0.19)	-0.78*** (0.17)	-0.77*** (0.16)
Income			-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.89*** (0.39)	-1.87*** (0.40)
Age 15-24				-1.34*** (0.39)	-1.33*** (0.40)
Age 25-34				-1.88*** (0.44)	-1.87*** (0.45)
Age 35-44				-3.13*** (0.44)	-3.07*** (0.49)
Age 45-54				-1.49*** (0.31)	-1.44*** (0.34)
Age 55-64				-2.10*** (0.32)	-2.05*** (0.36)
Age 65-74				-1.33*** (0.30)	-1.30*** (0.32)
Age 75-84				-1.97*** (0.40)	-1.94*** (0.43)
Age 85-94				-1.72** (0.56)	-1.68** (0.56)
Age 95+				-1.87 (1.94)	-1.92 (1.94)
Men				0.04 (0.48)	0.01 (0.50)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE x Unempl. Bins	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29695	29695	29695	29695
R ²	0.00	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.9: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct allowing for differential time trends in five bins of municipalities with similar levels of unemployment in 2002. All five bins have the same range. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	-0.09 (0.07)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.23*** (0.06)	0.17** (0.06)	0.16* (0.06)
Arriv.					-0.01 (0.05)
Unemployment			-0.23** (0.08)	0.04 (0.07)	0.04 (0.07)
Gini			-0.08 (0.17)	-0.13 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.11)
Income			-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Age 5-14				-0.25 (0.15)	-0.26 (0.16)
Age 15-24				-0.38* (0.18)	-0.39* (0.19)
Age 25-34				-0.61* (0.25)	-0.61* (0.25)
Age 35-44				-1.55*** (0.34)	-1.57*** (0.34)
Age 45-54				-1.10*** (0.20)	-1.12*** (0.20)
Age 55-64				-0.95*** (0.15)	-0.97*** (0.16)
Age 65-74				-0.82*** (0.16)	-0.84*** (0.18)
Age 75-84				-0.61** (0.20)	-0.63** (0.21)
Age 85-94				0.21 (0.36)	0.19 (0.35)
Age 95+				0.91 (1.11)	0.92 (1.11)
Men				0.81** (0.25)	0.82** (0.25)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Muni FE x Time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.00	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.95

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.10: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	-0.08 (0.07)	0.40 (0.20)	0.38** (0.14)	0.42*** (0.12)	0.43*** (0.12)
Arriv.					0.04 (0.07)
Unemployment			0.48*** (0.11)	0.24* (0.10)	0.23* (0.10)
Gini			-0.96*** (0.21)	-0.80*** (0.17)	-0.79*** (0.17)
Income			-0.16*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.69*** (0.38)	-1.66*** (0.40)
Age 15-24				-1.15** (0.41)	-1.13** (0.41)
Age 25-34				-1.60*** (0.45)	-1.59*** (0.45)
Age 35-44				-2.96*** (0.46)	-2.88*** (0.50)
Age 45-54				-1.25*** (0.30)	-1.19*** (0.32)
Age 55-64				-1.91*** (0.29)	-1.86*** (0.33)
Age 65-74				-1.26*** (0.29)	-1.21*** (0.31)
Age 75-84				-1.76*** (0.39)	-1.72*** (0.42)
Age 85-94				-1.31* (0.56)	-1.26* (0.55)
Age 95+				-2.51 (2.03)	-2.56 (2.03)
Men				-0.12 (0.50)	-0.17 (0.52)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	28127	28127	28127	28127	28127
R ²	0.00	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.11: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. The sample excludes 327 precincts with fewer than 500 inhabitants. Covariates are measured at the municipality level. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

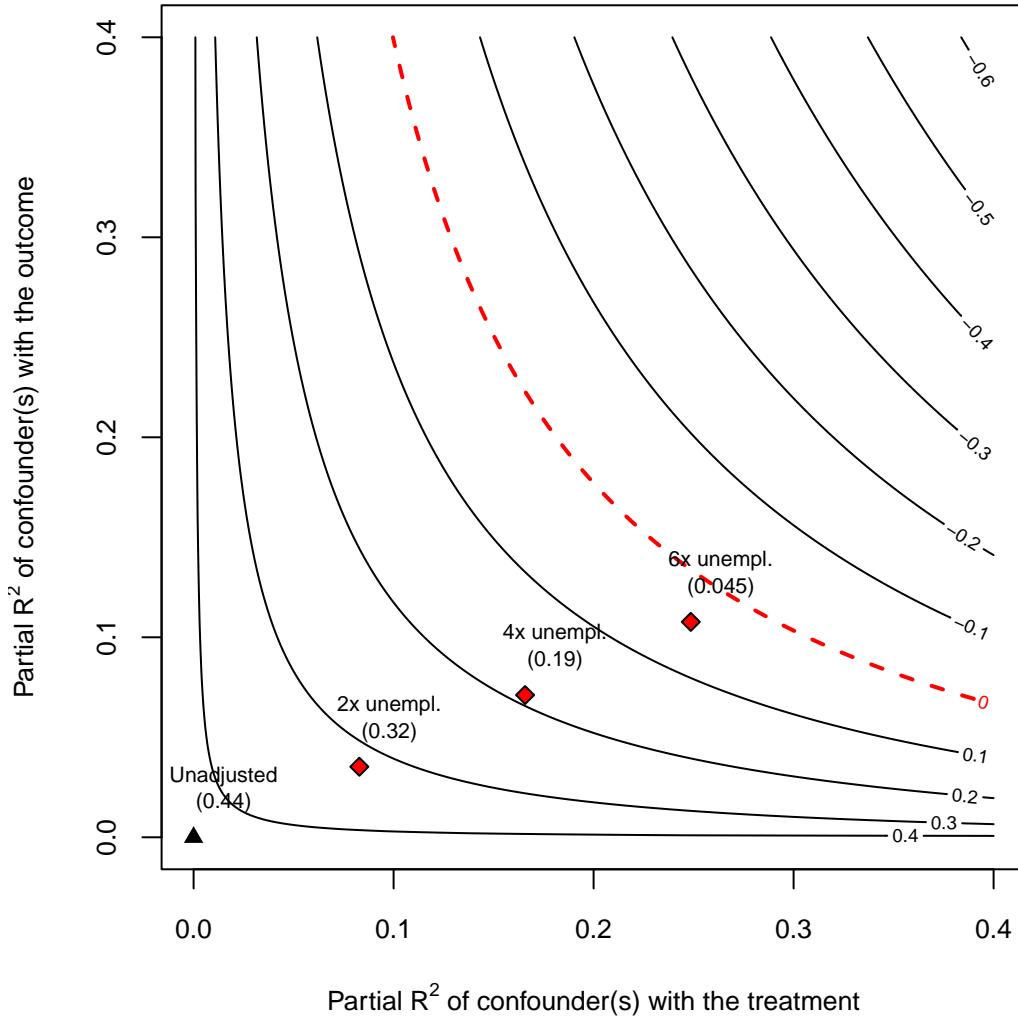


Figure SM.2: Sensitivity analysis to unobserved confounders following Cinelli and Hazlett (2020). Each contour line shows the departure effect we would have obtained in a regression that includes an unobserved confounder with a hypothetical strength. The strength of a confounder is a function of the residual variation of the departure variable (x-axis) and the residual variation of vote share for the Sweden Democrats (y-axis) explained by the hypothetical confounder. The adjusted estimates (in red) are based on adding a confounder that is 2, 4, or 6 times as strong as the unemployment variable.

	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left
Depart.	-0.85*** (0.17)	-0.48* (0.19)	-0.43** (0.14)	-0.57*** (0.13)	-0.61*** (0.12)
Arriv.					-0.11 (0.11)
Unemployment			-0.46** (0.16)	-0.15 (0.12)	-0.13 (0.12)
Gini			0.55* (0.24)	0.52** (0.19)	0.50** (0.18)
Income			0.12*** (0.03)	0.06** (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)
Age 5-14				2.33*** (0.34)	2.25*** (0.35)
Age 15-24				2.31*** (0.38)	2.26*** (0.39)
Age 25-34				3.13*** (0.52)	3.11*** (0.53)
Age 35-44				4.70*** (0.57)	4.48*** (0.62)
Age 45-54				3.09*** (0.34)	2.91*** (0.37)
Age 55-64				4.12*** (0.36)	3.97*** (0.36)
Age 65-74				2.42*** (0.36)	2.29*** (0.35)
Age 75-84				3.43*** (0.39)	3.31*** (0.41)
Age 85-94				1.38* (0.63)	1.24 (0.67)
Age 95+				2.49 (2.41)	2.66 (2.38)
Men				-0.02 (0.54)	0.10 (0.56)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29710	29710	29710	29710	29710
R ²	0.05	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.94

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.12: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the left bloc (which includes the Green Party, the Left Party, and the Social Democratic Party) in a precinct (measured in %). Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	Right	Right	Right	Right	Right
Depart.	0.90*** (0.17)	0.11 (0.11)	0.04 (0.12)	0.34* (0.13)	0.29* (0.13)
Arriv.					-0.15* (0.07)
Unemployment			-0.05 (0.07)	-0.53*** (0.07)	-0.50*** (0.08)
Gini			0.30 (0.17)	0.65*** (0.19)	0.62*** (0.18)
Income			0.01 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)
Age 5-14				-0.67* (0.30)	-0.77* (0.31)
Age 15-24				-0.87** (0.32)	-0.94** (0.33)
Age 25-34				-1.24** (0.44)	-1.28** (0.44)
Age 35-44				-1.36*** (0.40)	-1.66*** (0.42)
Age 45-54				-1.41*** (0.36)	-1.64*** (0.38)
Age 55-64				-2.01*** (0.28)	-2.22*** (0.29)
Age 65-74				-0.70* (0.30)	-0.88** (0.32)
Age 75-84				-0.59 (0.33)	-0.76* (0.34)
Age 85-94				1.29* (0.65)	1.11 (0.65)
Age 95+				1.11 (2.26)	1.34 (2.22)
Men				0.09 (0.37)	0.27 (0.38)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29711	29711	29711	29711	29711
R ²	0.05	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.13: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for right bloc (which includes the Liberals, the Centre Party, the Christian Democrats, and the Moderate Party) in a precinct (measured in %). Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	MP	V	S	L	C	KD	M
Depart.	0.19*** (0.06)	-0.10* (0.04)	-0.70*** (0.12)	-0.13 (0.10)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.52*** (0.14)
Unemployment	0.07 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.21* (0.10)	0.02 (0.08)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.39*** (0.05)	-0.13 (0.07)
Gini	-0.07 (0.07)	0.19* (0.09)	0.38* (0.18)	-0.59*** (0.13)	0.45*** (0.10)	0.60*** (0.10)	0.16 (0.15)
Income	0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.05*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)
Age 5-14	0.07 (0.20)	-0.02 (0.15)	2.20*** (0.30)	0.07 (0.22)	0.48 (0.27)	0.62** (0.19)	-1.92*** (0.37)
Age 15-24	-0.34 (0.20)	0.12 (0.16)	2.48*** (0.32)	1.43*** (0.29)	-0.19 (0.24)	-0.26 (0.18)	-1.90*** (0.34)
Age 25-34	-0.15 (0.24)	0.55* (0.21)	2.71*** (0.43)	1.02** (0.39)	-0.06 (0.26)	-0.15 (0.20)	-2.06*** (0.41)
Age 35-44	-0.37 (0.23)	1.53*** (0.24)	3.32*** (0.48)	0.73* (0.36)	0.12 (0.28)	-0.40 (0.21)	-2.09*** (0.40)
Age 45-54	-0.14 (0.14)	0.81*** (0.18)	2.24*** (0.33)	0.20 (0.24)	0.45* (0.18)	-0.21 (0.17)	-2.06*** (0.34)
Age 55-64	-0.44* (0.18)	0.72*** (0.14)	3.69*** (0.32)	0.94*** (0.26)	-0.25 (0.21)	-0.27 (0.16)	-2.62*** (0.30)
Age 65-74	-0.39** (0.15)	0.44** (0.14)	2.24*** (0.31)	0.51* (0.23)	-0.20 (0.19)	0.12 (0.15)	-1.29*** (0.31)
Age 75-84	-0.48* (0.23)	0.45** (0.16)	3.34*** (0.35)	0.88** (0.31)	-0.18 (0.27)	0.36 (0.20)	-1.80*** (0.30)
Age 85-94	-0.39* (0.19)	-0.19 (0.25)	1.82** (0.62)	0.07 (0.31)	0.02 (0.28)	0.11 (0.22)	0.93 (0.74)
Age 95+	0.18 (0.65)	-0.35 (1.01)	2.84 (2.17)	0.09 (1.19)	3.15* (1.31)	-1.86 (1.08)	-0.12 (2.09)
Men	-0.10 (0.16)	-0.13 (0.20)	0.34 (0.49)	-0.35 (0.29)	0.51 (0.29)	0.05 (0.22)	0.04 (0.37)
Arriv.	0.10 (0.05)	-0.17** (0.06)	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.12** (0.04)	-0.16* (0.06)
Prec. FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29710	29713	29713	29711	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.88	0.88	0.94	0.90	0.91	0.89	0.94

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.14: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the all parties other than the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. MP = Green Party; V = Left Party; S = Social Democratic Party; L = Liberal Party; C = Centre Party; KD = Christian Democrats; M = Moderate Party.

	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout
Depart.	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.09 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.05)
Arriv.					-0.10* (0.05)
Unemployment			0.03 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.06)
Gini			-0.37** (0.12)	0.03 (0.14)	0.01 (0.13)
Income			-0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age 5-14				-0.07 (0.24)	-0.14 (0.24)
Age 15-24				-0.05 (0.26)	-0.09 (0.24)
Age 25-34				-0.07 (0.34)	-0.09 (0.33)
Age 35-44				-0.44 (0.36)	-0.63* (0.31)
Age 45-54				-0.64* (0.25)	-0.79*** (0.23)
Age 55-64				-0.02 (0.25)	-0.15 (0.22)
Age 65-74				0.34 (0.22)	0.22 (0.20)
Age 75-84				-0.15 (0.35)	-0.25 (0.32)
Age 85-94				-0.29 (0.35)	-0.41 (0.32)
Age 95+				-2.74* (1.27)	-2.59* (1.27)
Men				-0.94*** (0.25)	-0.83*** (0.24)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.00	0.89	0.89	0.90	0.90

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.15: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on turnout in a precinct (measured in %). Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart. (high inc.)	0.15 (0.28)	0.04 (0.29)	0.49* (0.20)	0.67*** (0.17)	0.74*** (0.18)
Depart. (low inc.)	-0.39 (0.24)	0.68* (0.32)	0.28 (0.28)	0.20 (0.21)	0.19 (0.21)
Unemployment			0.48*** (0.10)	0.24* (0.09)	0.22* (0.09)
Gini			-0.96*** (0.21)	-0.84*** (0.17)	-0.83*** (0.17)
Income			-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.68*** (0.35)	-1.61*** (0.36)
Age 15-24				-1.09** (0.39)	-1.04** (0.39)
Age 25-34				-1.66*** (0.43)	-1.64*** (0.43)
Age 35-44				-3.05*** (0.45)	-2.90*** (0.47)
Age 45-54				-1.31*** (0.29)	-1.18*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.95*** (0.28)	-1.84*** (0.30)
Age 65-74				-1.29*** (0.29)	-1.20*** (0.30)
Age 75-84				-1.79*** (0.38)	-1.70*** (0.40)
Age 85-94				-1.49** (0.55)	-1.41* (0.55)
Age 95+				-2.21 (1.99)	-2.34 (1.98)
Men				-0.06 (0.48)	-0.14 (0.49)
Arriv.					0.08 (0.06)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.01	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.16: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart. (ctz.)	-0.82*** (0.09)	0.92*** (0.15)	0.61*** (0.15)	0.49*** (0.11)	0.52*** (0.12)
Depart. (non-ctz.)	2.57*** (0.59)	-0.97 (0.65)	-0.46 (0.38)	0.16 (0.30)	0.16 (0.30)
Unemployment			0.42*** (0.11)	0.22* (0.10)	0.21 (0.11)
Gini			-0.79*** (0.22)	-0.77*** (0.17)	-0.75*** (0.17)
Income			-0.16*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.67*** (0.36)	-1.63*** (0.40)
Age 15-24				-1.09** (0.40)	-1.06** (0.41)
Age 25-34				-1.60*** (0.43)	-1.58*** (0.45)
Age 35-44				-2.92*** (0.44)	-2.81*** (0.47)
Age 45-54				-1.32*** (0.29)	-1.23*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.93*** (0.28)	-1.86*** (0.32)
Age 65-74				-1.27*** (0.29)	-1.20*** (0.31)
Age 75-84				-1.71*** (0.36)	-1.64*** (0.40)
Age 85-94				-1.41** (0.54)	-1.35* (0.54)
Age 95+				-2.28 (2.00)	-2.37 (2.00)
Men				-0.04 (0.49)	-0.10 (0.49)
Arriv. (ctz.)					0.06 (0.11)
Arriv. (non-ctz.)					0.05 (0.10)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.10	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.17: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita by citizens (ctz.) and non-citizens citizens (non-ctz.) from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart. (Sw.-born)	-0.82*** (0.10)	1.25*** (0.18)	0.76*** (0.15)	0.58*** (0.12)	0.61*** (0.13)
Depart. (frgn.-born)	1.29*** (0.36)	-0.92 (0.52)	-0.42 (0.28)	0.07 (0.24)	0.07 (0.24)
Unemployment			0.40*** (0.11)	0.22* (0.10)	0.21 (0.11)
Gini			-0.67** (0.22)	-0.73*** (0.17)	-0.71*** (0.17)
Income			-0.16*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.65*** (0.36)	-1.59*** (0.40)
Age 15-24				-1.10** (0.39)	-1.07** (0.40)
Age 25-34				-1.61*** (0.43)	-1.58*** (0.45)
Age 35-44				-2.89*** (0.43)	-2.76*** (0.48)
Age 45-54				-1.32*** (0.28)	-1.21*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.94*** (0.28)	-1.85*** (0.32)
Age 65-74				-1.29*** (0.29)	-1.21*** (0.31)
Age 75-84				-1.69*** (0.36)	-1.61*** (0.40)
Age 85-94				-1.46** (0.53)	-1.38** (0.53)
Age 95+				-2.38 (2.00)	-2.51 (2.00)
Men				0.04 (0.49)	-0.01 (0.50)
Arriv. (Sw.-born)					0.08 (0.12)
Arriv. (frgn.-born)					0.05 (0.09)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29713	29713	29713
R ²	0.08	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.18: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita by individuals born in Sweden (Sw.-born) and foreign-born (frg-born) from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart. (Muni.)	0.01 (0.07)	0.32 (0.20)	0.30* (0.13)	0.35** (0.11)	0.37** (0.12)
Depart. (Prec.)	-0.09*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)
Unemployment			0.47*** (0.11)	0.22* (0.10)	0.21* (0.10)
Gini			-0.97*** (0.21)	-0.81*** (0.17)	-0.80*** (0.17)
Income			-0.16*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.72*** (0.38)	-1.69*** (0.40)
Age 15-24				-1.12** (0.40)	-1.10** (0.41)
Age 25-34				-1.65*** (0.44)	-1.64*** (0.45)
Age 35-44				-3.00*** (0.45)	-2.91*** (0.49)
Age 45-54				-1.34*** (0.30)	-1.27*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.96*** (0.29)	-1.91*** (0.33)
Age 65-74				-1.28*** (0.29)	-1.23*** (0.31)
Age 75-84				-1.77*** (0.38)	-1.72*** (0.41)
Age 85-94				-1.39* (0.55)	-1.34* (0.55)
Age 95+				-2.20 (2.00)	-2.27 (2.00)
Men				-0.10 (0.48)	-0.15 (0.50)
Arriv. (Muni.)					0.04 (0.07)
Arriv. (Prec.)					0.00 (0.00)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29712	29712	29712	29712	29712
R ²	0.01	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.19: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the Sweden Democrats' vote share (measured in %) in a precinct, adding precinct-level arrivals and departures. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
α_1 (Muni. depart. x Prec.: Few depart.)	0.11** (0.03)	0.85*** (0.16)	0.60*** (0.13)	0.51*** (0.11)	0.52*** (0.11)
α_2 (Muni. depart. x Prec.: Some depart.)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.32 (0.21)	0.29* (0.13)	0.32** (0.11)	0.34** (0.11)
α_3 (Muni. depart. x Prec.: Many depart.)	-0.06** (0.02)	-0.06 (0.26)	0.12 (0.14)	0.22 (0.12)	0.24 (0.13)
μ_1	7.13*** (0.36)	-13.57*** (2.94)	-7.74*** (1.51)	-5.15*** (1.16)	-5.15*** (1.16)
μ_2	9.66*** (0.39)	-6.03*** (1.19)	-2.99** (0.91)	-1.91* (0.77)	-1.90* (0.77)
μ_3	8.54*** (0.38)				
η_1	0.89*** (0.20)	1.55*** (0.39)	1.21*** (0.24)	1.02*** (0.21)	1.03*** (0.21)
η_2	1.18*** (0.29)	1.61** (0.50)	0.68*** (0.20)	0.38* (0.19)	0.38* (0.19)
η_3	-0.26*** (0.04)	0.42** (0.16)	0.22 (0.22)	0.14 (0.17)	0.14 (0.17)
β_1	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)
β_2	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.11** (0.04)	-0.04* (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
β_3	0.01** (0.00)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Unemployment			0.48*** (0.10)	0.23* (0.09)	0.22* (0.09)
Gini			-0.86*** (0.21)	-0.74*** (0.17)	-0.73*** (0.17)
Income			-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.12*** (0.02)	-0.12*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.70*** (0.35)	-1.66*** (0.37)
Age 15-24				-1.16** (0.39)	-1.14** (0.40)
Age 25-34				-1.66*** (0.44)	-1.64*** (0.44)
Age 35-44				-2.94*** (0.44)	-2.84*** (0.47)
Age 45-54				-1.33*** (0.30)	-1.25*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.94*** (0.28)	-1.87*** (0.31)
Age 65-74				-1.28*** (0.29)	-1.22*** (0.30)
Age 75-84				-1.73*** (0.37)	-1.67*** (0.39)
Age 85-94				-1.40* (0.55)	-1.34* (0.55)
Age 95+				-2.20 (1.99)	-2.28 (1.99)
Men				-0.02 (0.48)	-0.08 (0.49)
Arriv. (Muni.)					0.05 (0.06)
Arriv. (Prec.)					0.00 (0.00)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29712	29712	29712	29712	29712
R ²	0.17	0.88	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.20: OLS binning estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. The municipality departures are interacted with tercile-indicators for precincts with few, some and many departures (α_j). These indicators are median-centered within terciles such that the coefficients estimate the effect of municipality departures at the median within each tercile. The coefficient labels follow the notation of equation 4 in Hainmueller, Mummolo and Yiqing (2019).

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
α_1 (Muni. depart. x Muni.: Low)	1.02*** (0.04)	1.37*** (0.19)	1.00*** (0.17)	0.65*** (0.14)	0.66*** (0.14)
α_2 (Muni. depart. x Muni.: Medium)	-0.11*** (0.03)	0.93*** (0.24)	0.70** (0.23)	0.66*** (0.19)	0.70*** (0.19)
α_3 (Muni. depart. x Muni.: High)	-0.17*** (0.03)	-0.19 (0.23)	-0.29 (0.23)	-0.04 (0.20)	0.00 (0.21)
μ_1	-1.70*** (0.39)		-29.33** (10.68)	-16.57 (8.62)	-16.37 (8.59)
μ_2	9.80*** (0.37)	19.06* (7.90)	-8.73 (5.86)	-4.76 (4.70)	-4.50 (4.70)
μ_3	10.08*** (0.43)	22.47 (11.46)			
η_1	0.07* (0.03)	0.31 (0.27)	0.40 (0.23)	0.28 (0.22)	0.28 (0.22)
η_2	0.02 (0.01)	0.15 (0.08)	0.21** (0.08)	0.14* (0.07)	0.15* (0.07)
η_3	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
β_1	-0.00 (0.00)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
β_2	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)
β_3	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Arriv. (Muni.)					0.09 (0.07)
Arriv. (Prec.)					-0.00 (0.00)
Unemployment			0.23* (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)	0.12 (0.09)
Gini			-0.34 (0.21)	-0.42* (0.17)	-0.39* (0.17)
Income			-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.64*** (0.35)	-1.59*** (0.37)
Age 15-24				-1.24*** (0.37)	-1.21** (0.38)
Age 25-34				-1.64*** (0.41)	-1.63*** (0.42)
Age 35-44				-2.69*** (0.40)	-2.53*** (0.45)
Age 45-54				-1.14*** (0.30)	-1.01** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.68*** (0.29)	-1.56*** (0.33)
Age 65-74				-1.17*** (0.32)	-1.07** (0.34)
Age 75-84				-1.70*** (0.36)	-1.62*** (0.38)
Age 85-94				-1.78** (0.55)	-1.71** (0.55)
Age 95+				-3.51 (2.00)	-3.72 (1.99)
Men				0.19 (0.45)	0.11 (0.46)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29713	29713	29712	29712	29712
R ²	0.06	0.91	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.21: OLS binning estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. The municipality departures are interacted with tercile-indicators for municipality with high, medium and low population density (α_j). These indicators are median-centered within terciles such that the coefficients estimate the effect of municipality departures at the median within each tercile. The coefficient labels follow the notation of equation 4 in Hainmueller, Mummolo and Yiqing (2019).

	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD
Depart.	1.16*** (0.18)	1.89*** (0.30)	1.04*** (0.20)	0.78*** (0.16)	0.78*** (0.16)
Depart. x Growing	-1.32*** (0.18)	-2.35*** (0.49)	-1.05*** (0.30)	-0.55* (0.24)	-0.55* (0.24)
Growing	12.46*** (1.83)				
Unemployment			0.41*** (0.10)	0.21* (0.10)	0.20* (0.10)
Gini			-0.84*** (0.20)	-0.73*** (0.18)	-0.73*** (0.17)
Income			-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.13*** (0.02)
Age 5-14				-1.75*** (0.36)	-1.74*** (0.38)
Age 15-24				-1.17** (0.40)	-1.16** (0.41)
Age 25-34				-1.65*** (0.43)	-1.65*** (0.43)
Age 35-44				-2.89*** (0.46)	-2.85*** (0.49)
Age 45-54				-1.29*** (0.30)	-1.26*** (0.31)
Age 55-64				-1.92*** (0.29)	-1.89*** (0.32)
Age 65-74				-1.30*** (0.29)	-1.28*** (0.30)
Age 75-84				-1.76*** (0.37)	-1.74*** (0.40)
Age 85-94				-1.33* (0.57)	-1.30* (0.56)
Age 95+				-1.87 (2.01)	-1.90 (2.02)
Men				-0.12 (0.48)	-0.14 (0.49)
Arriv. (Muni.)					0.02 (0.06)
Prec. FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Econ.)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cov. (Demogr.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	29585	29585	29585	29585	29585
R ²	0.06	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.92

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table SM.22: OLS estimates of the number of departures per 100 capita from the municipality since the last election on the vote share for the Sweden Democrats (measured in %) in a precinct. The municipality departures are interacted with a binary indicator coding if the municipality population was growing between 1991 and 2001. Covariates are measured at the municipality level.

C Newspaper Analysis

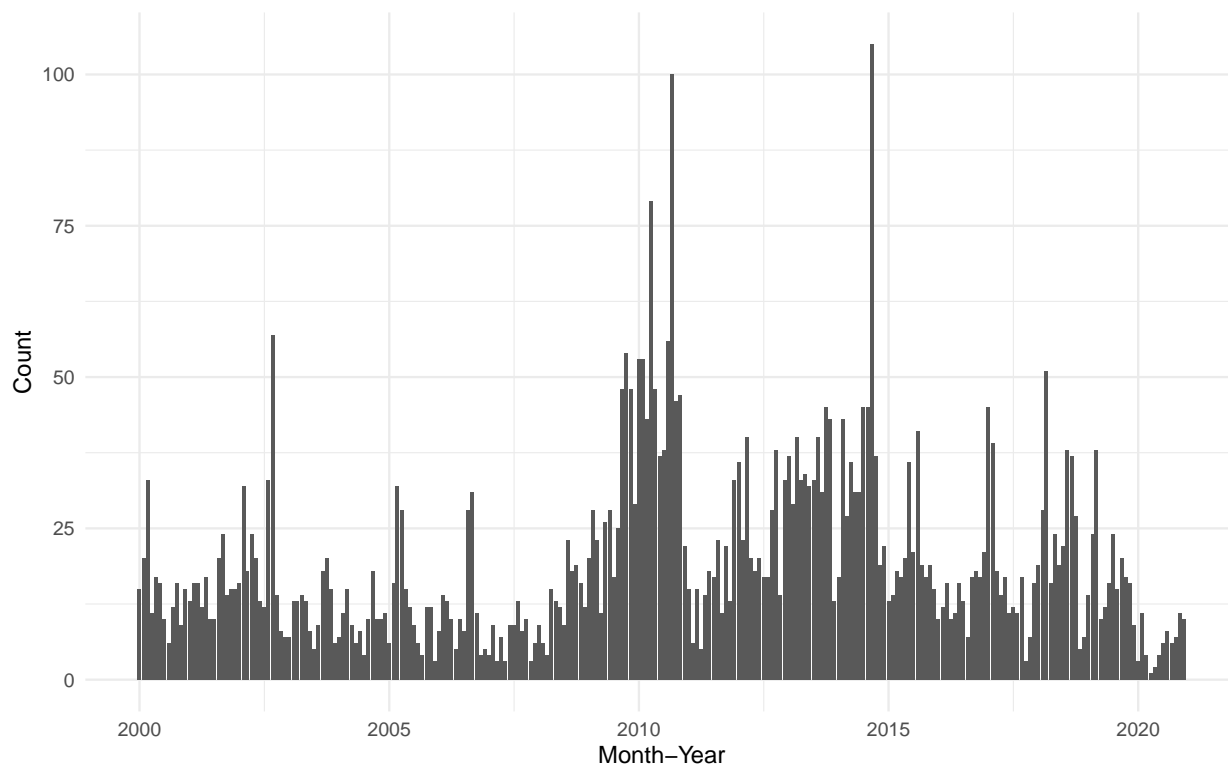


Figure SM.3: Number of hits in local, regional and national newspapers between January 2000 and December 2020. Note: This count excludes magazines, TV and radio transcripts, press releases, international newspapers and news agencies.

D Interviews

The interview study was approved by the institutional review boards of [withheld for anonymity.] It involved no deception. We recruited participants via email. When participants agreed to be interviewed we asked for them to confirm their consent by email. We informed participants that their participation was voluntary and that the interview could be stopped any time. We also informed them that their names could be kept confidential upon request.

We began by identifying one person from each party (the Social Democrats and the Sweden Democrats), for each of the following roles: National level party official with responsibility for rural affairs, local politician in depopulating region, and party official with responsibility for election analysis. At the end of each conversation, we asked each interviewee whether they would like to recommend another party official who they thought could offer useful perspectives. The design thus incorporated an element of snowball sampling, and we continued this process until we reached saturation as defined by (Grady, 1998, 26):

In interviews, when the researcher begins to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation is being reached. It is then time to stop collecting information and to start analysing what has been collected.

The logic behind our selection criteria was that the types party officials selected for this study possess expert knowledge of how emigration impacts local communities, including their electorates. The sample of officials included in the interview study is described in Table SM.23. All of our interviewees were current or recent holders of their position (\leq three years) apart from the interviewee that participated in the Social Democratic 2014 post-election analysis group that finished their work six years ago (in 2015). The interviews were semi-structured and were organized around nine thematic questions. These themes are shown in Table SM.24.

Table SM.23: Semi-Structured Interviews with Party Officials)

Number	Date	Party	Position in Party	Role in Sample	Length	Recording
1	4-Oct-21	Social Democrats	Former Political advisor for two Ministers of Rural Affairs	National level party official with responsibility for rural affairs	51 mins	Audio recording
2	21-Oct-21	Sweden Democrats	Party Secretary	Official Responsible for election analysis	37 mins	Audio recording
3	21-Oct-21	Sweden Democrats	Parliamentarian and party spokesperson (forestry)	National level party official with responsibility for rural affairs	40 mins	Audio recording
4	25-Oct-21	Social Democrats	Post-election analyst	Official Responsible for election analysis	41 mins	Audio recording
5	1-Nov-21	Social Democrats	Mayor	Local politician in depopulating region	34 mins	Audio recording
6	4-Nov-21	Social Democrats	Post-election analyst	Official Responsible for election analysis	49 mins	Audio recording
7	12-Nov-21	Social Democrats	Former Minister of Rural Affairs	National level party official with responsibility for rural affairs	31 mins	Audio recording
8	3-Dec-21	Sweden Democrats	Local politician	Local politician in depopulating region	47 mins	Audio recording
9	9-Dec-21	Sweden Democrats	Local politician	Local politician in depopulating region	25 mins	Audio recording
10	31-Mar-22	Social Democrats	Mayor	Local politician in depopulating region	38 mins	Audio recording
11	8-Apr-22	Social Democrats	Local politician	Local politician in depopulating region	38 mins	Audio recording
12	31-May-22	Sweden Democrats	Local politician	Local politician in depopulating region	24 mins	Audio recording

Table SM.24: Thematic Questions Used in Semi-Structured Interviews with Party Officials

#	Question:
1	There has been a great deal of in-migration and out-migration from Sweden's cities in the past twenty years. How has this changed the strategies and coalitions of your party for municipal elections?
2	Has your party done any studies on population change and its implications for vote shares by party? Could you tell me what you learned or send me any documents that might have been prepared on this?
3	When a municipality loses population because many of its residents leave, how do local citizens react? Do you think the local population notices local population loss?
4	How is your party affected if members of highly skilled residents leave? What about when immigrant populations leave for different cities?
5	Immigration and emigration probably change the cultural composition of Sweden's municipalities. How does that affect the votes for the Social Democrats and for the Sweden Democrats?
6	When a municipality loses population because many of its residents leave, how does this impact the remaining population? Does it change in any way their political values or commitments?
7	Looking at the last two decades, we have found that the Sweden Democrats receive higher vote shares in municipalities that lose population due to out-migration. Why do you think that is?
8	Looking at the last two decades, we have found that the Social Democrats receive lower vote shares in municipalities that lose population due to out-migration. Why do you think that is?
9	Are there some public goods and services (schools, public transport, doctors, post offices, grocery stores) that are particularly affected when a municipality loses population?
