

Political Parties and Local Refugee Reception in Sweden

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Abstract

With the increased electoral success of anti-immigration parties, questions on what actual impact the parties obtain naturally follow. Previous research only sparsely has explored this question. Furthermore, within this body of research we are given different answers. While some argue that anti-immigration parties have made an impact on public policy others find no such evidence. We argue that some of this inconsistency is a consequence of the methodological strategies that have been employed. Previous studies are single case studies or comparisons of a smaller number of countries. Consequently different parties in different institutional settings are compared making it hard to estimate the actual impact of the party of interest. In order to circumvent such methodological problems this study explore the question of anti-immigration party impact from a local level and asks if the Sweden Democrats (SD) has managed to influence decisions on refugee receptions in Swedish municipalities. Our analysis show mixed results. Firstly, while we are unable to find an independent effect of the size of the representation of SD we show that the party's impact is conditioned by them holding the balance of power. Secondly, SD impact is not dependent on whether there is a right-wing or left-wing rule although we can show that local migration policy is stricter when the main right-wing party has a strong support.

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Introduction

With the increased electoral success of anti-immigration parties, questions on what actual impact the parties obtain naturally follow. Previous research only sparsely has explored this question. Furthermore, within this body of research we are given different answers (Mudde, 2013). While some argue that anti-immigration parties have made an impact on public policy others find no such evidence. We argue that some of this inconsistency is a consequence of the methodological strategies that have been employed. Previous studies are single case studies or comparisons of a smaller number of countries (e.g. Akkerman, 2012). Consequently different parties in different institutional settings are compared making it hard to estimate the actual impact of the party of interest. In order to circumvent such methodological problems this study explore the question of anti-immigration party impact from a local level and asks if the Sweden Democrats (SD) has managed to influence decisions on refugee receptions in Swedish municipalities.

Using a new time-series cross-section dataset with more than 1300 observations we hypothesize that the level of refugee receptions in Swedish municipalities is negatively correlated with the level of representations of an anti-immigration party. Especially we expect the correlation to be most apparent in cases where the party hold the balance of power. Finally we also hypothesize that the impact of the anti-immigration party is stronger in cases of right-wing rule. Our analysis show mixed results. Firstly, while we are unable to find an independent effect of the size of the representation of SD we show that the party's impact is conditioned by them holding the balance of power. Secondly, SD impact is not dependent on whether there is a right-wing or left-wing rule although we can show that local migration policy is stricter when the main right-wing party has a strong support.

This paper proceeds as follows. Firstly, we review prior research on anti-immigration parties in general and their impact on policy in particular. Secondly, deducted from this discussion we present the hypotheses of the study. In the third section we discuss why our methodological strategy of studying anti-immigration impact on local level is warranted. After this we continue with deducting hypotheses in the fourth section before we turn to a discussion on the data used and our analytical strategy. Hereafter we convey the empirical analysis before we sum up our conclusions.

Theoretical background of anti-immigration parties

Some harbour a certain fear that parties who many consider to not respect values as equality and everyone's equal value, are gaining great impact and are able to move politics in a direction that is not considered to be in line with humanism and basic human rights. Since research on to what extent these kinds of parties actually can influence policies is scarce and unambiguous, our study contributes with insights about if the above mentioned fears are relevant or not.

Anti-immigration parties have reached significant electoral success in many European countries during the last couple of decades. In some polities they have also been a formal part of the government or assured the government a parliamentary majority as a support party. The progress of these parties has resulted in an enormous interest among both media and scholars. Up until now much of this research has focused on trying to explain the establishment of these parties and their electoral success. Furthermore, the relatively small body of research that so far has been carried out on their potential impact present an ambiguous picture. In general, it would appear that the parties have little actual impact. However, there are those who have shown that in certain cases, the parties have been able to affect their profile issue, migration policy (Mudde, 2013).

Why these parties have impact on migration policy in some contexts but not in others are, however, not clear. This paper sets out from this uncertainty and therefore aims to investigate migration policy change from a party political perspective. Migration policy has mainly been studied in isolation from political parties (Bale, 2008). Given the central role of political parties as formulators of policy as well as decision-makers, we argue that migration policy change should be analysed from a party political perspective. Consequently this paper will focus on analysing the influence of anti-immigration parties on migration policy and thereby differs from most of the traditional research on migration policy, which has often concealed the role of the parties (Bale, 2008). Furthermore, several authors in the field of migration studies have also pointed out that local migration policy empirically is an understudied area (Alexander, 2003; Borkert and Caponio, 2010). By addressing the combination of these two gaps stressed in previous research this paper sets out to answer if, and to what extent, the anti-immigration party the Sweden Democrats (SD) has been able to influence local migration policy and thereby restrict the numbers of refugees received by the Swedish municipalities.

Theoretically this study departure from research on migration policy impact on a national level while it empirically has a Swedish municipal focus. With the entry of an anti-immigration party, the SD, into a large share of the municipal decision-making assemblies, a situation is presented where we are able to make comparisons between many different cases and at the same time hold a number of potentially important factors constant.¹

Previous research has mainly focused on structural factors and claimed that migration policy can be explained using demographical, economic and cultural factors (Arango, 2000; Freeman, 2011; Massey et al., 1993; Meyers, 2000). Consequently, the research has been lacking a political dimension where the importance of political processes and the actions of political actors involved have been in focus. But even if the scholars, for a long time, has mainly indicated structural factors, while more or less ignoring political ones (Carvalho, 2014; Giugni and Passy, 2006; Hix and Noury, 2007), recent studies from a Scandinavian context show that actor-specific factors, such as local political leadership, are also important in order to understand the formulation of local migration policy (Steen, 2010; Lidén and Nyhlén, 2012).

Research on anti-immigration parties may perhaps best be described as a field in the middle of a generation change. In the research of the first generation, focus was on investigating under what circumstances this type of parties were formed and later on obtained electoral success. The studies in this genre are many, at the same time as the results are often contradictory. While some have emphasized contextual explanatory factors such as unemployment (e.g. Arzheimer and Carter, 2006) and immigration (e.g. Arzheimer, 2009) others have shown the importance of the electoral system (e.g. Golder, 2003). Others yet have focused on the significance of the actions of the established parties (e.g. Meguid, 2008). The research of the second generation, which as of yet is relatively limited in its extent, has moved on to attempt to answer the question whether this type of parties, in addition to electoral success, also have obtained political influence.

¹ The Sweden Democrats was founded in 1988 but reached only very modest levels of success in its first five elections. Although the party won its first local seats already in 1991 it was not until 2002 an initial electoral breakthrough took place. This year the party won 49 seats in 29 different municipalities. Corresponding figures for 2006 are 266 seats in 144 municipalities. In the last election, 2010, the party continued its progress and won 605 seats in 249 out of 290 municipalities (Bolin, 2012; Erlingsson, Loxbo, and Öhrvall, 2012).

Anti-immigration party impact

The research available on the influence of anti-immigration parties is in many ways difficult to translate into general terms. A review of the literature indicates a variation between countries but also that the outcome in individual countries has been interpreted differently by different scholars. An important reason for the varying interpretations of the situation is the difficulty of determining whether a restriction of migration policy is a result of the influence of the anti-immigration party or whether there are other factors causing policy changes. Mudde (2013), for example, observes that anti-immigration parties in general, despite electoral success, have had a limited political influence. He argues that internationally it is possible to note a general restriction of migration policy but that this began already before several of these parties had reached electoral success (see also van Heerden, de Lange, van der Brug, and Fennema, 2013).

Potentially anti-immigration parties can influence migration policies both directly and indirectly. While there might be no obvious way to differentiate these forms of influence they capture the fact that policy impact not only could be achieved being in government. Schain (2006), for example, describes direct influence as having “policy-making capacities”. Of course such capacity potentially comes with government portfolios. However, holding seats in decision-making assemblies surely also must be regarded as a position where impact could be obtained. Indirect influence, on the other hand, could be described as policy change as a consequence of the mere existence of anti-immigration parties. Typically, this takes place when the established parties change their policies in hope of winning votes. Prior research show ambiguous results regarding both of these potential impact channels. When it comes to indirect influence some have find proofs of a so called “contagion of the right” (Bale, 2003; van Spanje, 2010; de Lange, 2012; Minkenberg, 2013) while others (Akkerman, 2012; Alonso and da Fonseca, 2012) suggest that while migration policy today is a more salient issue than some decades ago, the influence of anti-immigration parties on established parties’ policy programmes is moderate.

Also evidence of direct impact is mixed. International studies show that anti-immigration parties are often prevented from collaboration with the established parties. In some countries, such as Belgium, Germany and France, the old parties have even joined forces to prevent anti-immigration parties, by what has become known as a “cordon sanitaire”. Parties have thereby, from right to left, agreed to prevent the anti-immigration party from influence and instead

sought cross bloc cooperation (Van Spanje and Van der Brug, 2009). A “cordon sanitaire” has been established, hence, with the belief that in the long run complete exclusion undermines the possibilities of the anti-immigration party to make an actual difference. In other countries, anti-immigration parties have, however, been met with less resistance. In Austria, Greece, Switzerland and Italy anti-immigration parties have been a part of a government coalition and in yet another couple of countries, Denmark and the Netherlands, they have acted as support parties for minority governments (Akkerman and de Lange, 2012; Mudde, 2013).

Most of the research relating to the impact of the anti-immigration parties are studies of parties which have been a part of the executive or formally supported the government. It is also logical to assume that the best position for an anti-immigration party to achieve migration policy influence is as a part of the political executive. The empirical evidence does, however, not present an unambiguous picture. Akkerman and de Lange (2012) conclude in their comparative study of anti-immigration parties in government that their influence varies. While these parties have had an impact in Denmark as well as Austria, the corresponding pattern is weaker in Switzerland and almost non-existent in Italy and the Netherlands. Also Green-Pedersen and Odmalm (2008) argue that in Denmark we are able to discern a restricting effect as a consequence of the influence of an anti-immigration party. Zaslove (2004) in turn, claims that anti-immigration parties have had influence in Italy as well as Austria while Duncan (2010) argues that Austrian immigration policies has not been influenced to any significant extent by the country having had anti-immigration parties in their government. Finally, there are studies which provide support for a situation in which the established parties introduce a more restrictive migration policy in order to win back votes. Such circumstances are reported both from France (Marthaler, 2008; Schain, 2006) and Great Britain (Carvalho, 2014) for counter-acting electoral success of the Front National and the British National Party respectively. All in all, the above mentioned previous research gives reason to investigate the importance of representation in decision-making assemblies and participation in the political executive in order for an anti-immigration party to achieve immigration policy influence.

There are also discussions about whether anti-immigration parties more easily gain sympathy for their policy from right-wing parties than left-wing parties. Since research suggests that right-wing parties on average are somewhat more restrictive toward migration (e.g. Gudbrandsen, 2010) and anti-immigration parties mostly support centre-right governments,

such a focus is not surprising. Bale (2008), for instance, has shown that the migration policy of these parties, at least to some extent, has been influenced by anti-immigration parties, while Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup (2008) show how the bourgeois parties in Denmark were able to reach the executive by introducing a more restrictive migration policy and consequently receive the support of an anti-immigration party. In a previous study, Harmel and Svåsand (1997) have also shown how the conservative parties in both Denmark and Norway, as a result of the increased electoral success of the Progress parties in each country, have changed their policies. In a similar vein, Gilljam et al. (2010) have showed in a Swedish context that second to the SD, the councillors of the mainstream right-wing party the Moderates holds the most restricted opinions toward refugee reception.

In a few recent studies the impact of anti-immigration parties on centre-left parties also has been investigated. Bale et al. (2010), for example, show that Social Democratic parties under certain circumstances chose to introduce a more restrictive migration policy as a result of the success of anti-immigration parties (see also Downs, 2011). Also Hinnfors et al. (2012) show that it is not only centre-right parties who chose to introduce a more restrictive migration policy when they point out that it has mainly been the Swedish Social Democratic Party who have been the driving force behind the various restrictive migration policy reforms that have taken place in Sweden during the last decades. However, apart from these studies, there is more to suggest that right-wing parties, in general, pursue a more restrictive immigration stance.

Swedish municipalities as objects of study

Previous research provides divergent answers to both whether anti-immigration parties have an impact on migration policy and if migration policy is influenced by the colour of the government. In order to approach these issues we argue that it could be fruitful to empirically study migration policy, unlike much previous research, on the local level instead of the national level. This choice is motivated by this giving us access to a great number of cases, where it is possible to hold several important factors at a constant (cf. Bäck, 2003). Since variations in migration policy has been suggested to partly emanate from institutional configurations (Breunig and Luedtke, 2008) such strategy is warranted if we want to decrease the number of relevant factors to analyse and at the same time keep focus on the impact of political parties. In addition, we will avoid party specific differences which inevitably hamper the comparability when making comparisons between countries as we will be studying the

same party only in different municipalities (cf. Dahlström and Sundell, 2012). That is, we are able to decrease the number of relevant independent variables in the analysis when we investigate if an anti-immigration party obtains influence.

Specifically, we have chosen to study Swedish municipalities. Such a choice is made possible by the division of policy competences in Sweden, where migration policy is mainly a responsibility for the national state but where the municipalities decide on refugee reception. Moreover, Sweden has often been characterized as a country with a generous migration policy (Abiri, 2000) and might therefore also be considered to be a least-likely case for anti-immigration party influence. And while Sweden for a long period of time has been one of the EU countries receiving the most refugees (UNHCR, 2012), migration policy has rarely been given much space, and has been characterized by consensus (Green-Pedersen and Odmalm, 2008). That the issue to such little extent has been politicized, despite there being a significant number of voters who hold anti-immigration opinions (Sandberg and Demker, 2013), has been highlighted as an important reason to why Sweden, unlike many other west European countries, for a long time not had any anti-immigration party in the national parliament (Odmalm, 2011; Dahlström and Esaiasson, 2013). The established parties have mainly chosen to avoid politicizing the issue, contrary to what has been the case in, for example, Denmark. This argument is well in line with the research showing that the success of a party depends on whether its core issues are paid any attention (Meguid, 2008; Arzheimer, 2009).

With the entry of the SD into the Swedish national parliament in 2010, an anti-immigration party has representation on all levels in the Swedish polity. The party's most important political area is migration policy, and therefore it is reasonable to assess its level of success based on whether it reaches influence in this policy area. The entry of SD poses a challenge for the Swedish migration policy tradition of generosity and consensus. Up to now, the impact of the party on national level appears to have been small. A framework agreement on the Swedish migration policy was concluded between the centre-right government and the Green Party in March 2011. This agreement includes liberalization of labour migration and a call for a deepening of the European and international collaborations and could be said to be well in line with the Swedish tradition of a generous and open migration policy. As a reason for the agreement, Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt expressed, among other things, that it prevents xenophobic forces from influencing migration policy. Consequently, it has not been possible to discern any restrictive effects despite the entry of a party with a desire to establish a more

restrictive migration policy (cf. Spehar, Bucken-Knapp, and Hinnfors, 2013). If, however, we turn to the local level, the picture presented is somewhat different. On a general level Loxbo (2010), for example, has showed how the entrance of the SD has had implications on the composition of local coalition governments. In the case of local migration policy it has been suggested that the electoral support for SD is negatively correlated with the reception of refugees in the municipalities (Lidén and Nyhlén, 2013) which is in line with what Folke (2010) has demonstrated in his study of how the anti-immigration party New Democracy had a negative effect on the reception of refugees in the Swedish municipalities in the beginning of the 1990s. Also Steen (2009) arrives at the same conclusions in his analysis of how the Norwegian Progress Party has succeeded on a local level.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical discussion above three hypotheses will be tested. Prior research suggests that the prospects of anti-immigration party impact are best when being part of the government. However, there are no such cases at the Swedish local level. Instead two other forms of potential impact are tested. Our first hypothesis is derived from the discussion on anti-immigration party parliamentary presence. Based on the notion that the size of parliamentary presence matters for the chances of partisan impact on policy chances and in line with, for example, the findings of Green-Pedersen and Odmalm (2008) we expect there to be a negative relation between the SD seat share and the willingness of the municipal to receive refugees.

The second hypothesis is an extension of our first hypothesis and further qualifies the level of formal impact. Here we expect the SD to have impact only insofar it holds a balance of power position (cf. Loxbo, 2010). That is, the number of seats is only relevant insofar there is a minority government and the seats of the SD together with the seats of the governing coalition together add up to a majority.

Our last hypothesis include the representation of the other parties and poses expectations about the importance of the composition of the local assembly. Although the empirical record is not uniform, prior research predominately argue that centre-right parties are less prone than centre-left parties to adopt liberal migration policies. Research specifically from Sweden shows how attitudes concerning refugee reception are more negative among centre-right politicians (Gilljam et al., 2010). Hence, derived from prior research discussed above (e.g.

Bale, 2008), we expect SD to have a greater impact in municipalities in which centre-right parties dominate, and thereby having enhanced possibilities of making local migration policy restrictive. In analogy, migration policy is expected to be more generous in municipalities in which centre-left parties dominate.

Data and analytical strategy

Migration policy foremost is a matter for the national state. However, in Sweden also the local level plays an important role. Local migration policy is manifested in the agreements which are concluded between the state, through the county administrative boards, and the municipalities regarding the number of refugees which the latter commits to receive. Since these agreements are voluntary Swedish municipalities themselves decide if and to what extent refugees should be received.² In order to grasp the willingness of a municipality to receive refugees, hence, the dependent variable in our study is the number of accepted refugees per thousand inhabitants according to the agreements between the state and the municipalities.³

Of primary interest in this study are the political variables. *SD seat share* is a rather straightforward measure indicating the proportion of seats won by the SD in the local assembly. Our second political variable, *balance of power*, is a dichotomous variable, indicating whether the SD holds the important pivotal position in the assembly or not.⁴ The third hypothesis is measured by a dichotomous variable, *M seat share*, classifying whether the Moderate Party in the municipality holds a seat share over or under the median value of the party's seat share in all municipalities. However, since previous research on the Swedish case is somewhat ambiguous (Borevi, 2012; Spehar et al., 2013), we complement this variable with a measurement of the seat share for the other dominant party, the Social Democratic Party.

In addition to the political factors discussed above we also include a number of other independent variables in our analyses in order to control for other theoretically grounded explanations of migration policy. In accordance with Lidén and Nyhlén (2013) we, therefore, add economic factors, socio-cultural factors and demographical factors. Neoclassical

² By this we refer to the reception of refugees given a residence permit, for example including quota refugees and asylum seekers given a positive decision.

³ The number of refugees a municipality commits to harbor according to the agreement does not necessarily correspond to the actual number of refugees admitted. However, since the agreement expresses the political willingness of the municipality this measure is applied.

⁴ Data for this variable was originally collected by Wångmar (2011) and Loxbo (2010).

economic theory represents the most dominant ideas of international migration, building on geographical differences in supply and demand for labour (Massey et al., 1993). We control for this by adding data for municipalities' unemployment rate and income level, and hence assume that high unemployment will decrease the level of reception due to constraints in the local labour market. By contrast, we theorize that high income levels imply better possibilities of refugee reception (Cornelius and Rosenblum, 2005; Freeman, 2011). To assure that not only the absolute figures of income but also the distribution is accounted for, we complement this factor with a gini coefficient and expect that income equality positively could be related to a more generous migration policy. Socio-cultural theory argues that previous flows of immigrants will increase the chance for future ones (Massey et al., 1993). Hence, we control for this by including a measurement of proportion of citizens with foreign background and expect a positive relationship with the dependent variable.⁵ Also, previous research (Lidén and Nyhlén, 2013) has stressed the importance of population size, meaning that smaller municipalities are more inclined to establishing a reception of refugees to enhance a positive demographical development. Therefore, we also add this indicator. Finally, in order to control for whether differences in refugee reception is caused by variations in local opinions on migration policy we add an additional variable, named toughness. This variable, in which the data originates from a web survey of all 13 000 local politicians in Sweden in 2008, is constructed as an index measuring the average attitude of local politicians, though excluding SD, on immigration issue.⁶

The used data set is collected from Swedish authorities or otherwise established data sources for the municipal sector in Sweden. In order to test our hypotheses we have collected data for the dependent variable for the period 2006-2011. Apart from the political variables all independent variables throughout the analyses indicate the years before these (t-1). Potentially, the N is 1450 but due to some missing data the actual number of cases is somewhat fewer. All included variables with sources are presented in Appendix 1.

⁵ Due to some lack of data we do not include a measure of the number of asylum seekers. Potentially, the political willingness to receive refugees could be influenced by this factor. Tentative analyses of asylum data do, though, not show any important influence. As a proxy for this and simultaneously controlling for socio-cultural claims we instead control for the proportion of citizens with foreign background in municipalities.

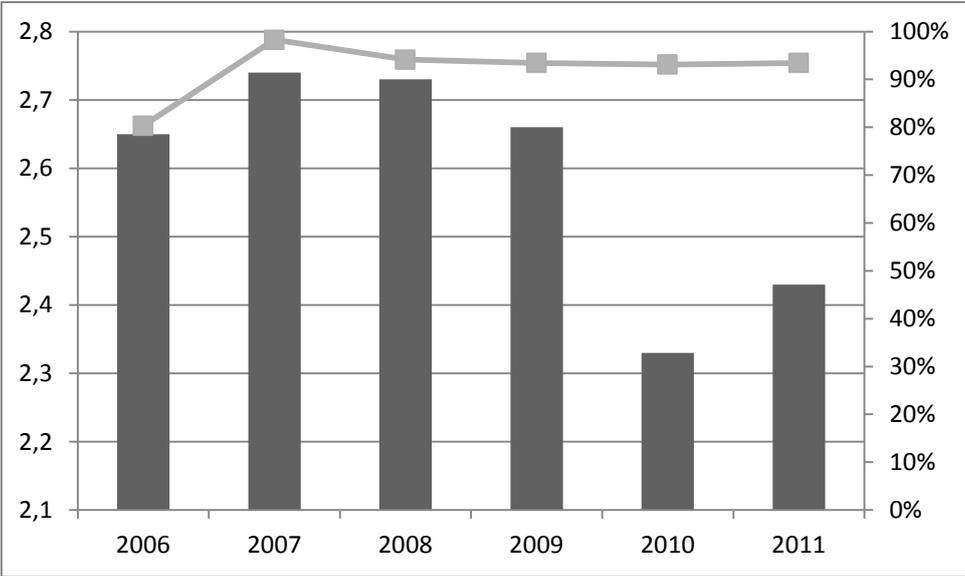
⁶ The two questions making up the index had the following phrasing: "When it comes to the municipality where you live: What is your opinion in each of the following suggestion? Receive more refugees in the municipality" and "Below are a number of proposals that have been put forward in the political debate. What is your opinion in each of them? Receive fewer refugees in Sweden". Five options were available: "Very good suggestion", "Moderately good suggestion", "Neither good nor bad suggestion", "Moderately bad suggestion" and "Very bad suggestion". See Dahlström and Sundell (2012) for more information.

The analyses are conducted with so called time-series-cross-section (TSCS) models. There is an on-going debate how data across space and time (TSCS), most appropriately should be modelled. In this study we adhere to the convincing argument, laid out by Beck and Katz, that ordinary least square (OLS) estimations are the most appropriate statistical tool (Beck and Katz, 1995; Beck, 2001). However, there are problems related to using OLS of TSCS that need to be managed. Among these are problems with heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation (Wilson and Butler, 2007). Following the suggestion in the literature (Beck and Katz, 1995), the first problem will be controlled for by using robust standard errors and the second by estimating an autoregressive model which includes a lagged dependent variable.

Empirical analysis

Sweden is often characterized as being a relatively generous country when it comes to allowing immigrants entrance. This is also confirmed by the figures of annual reception presented by the Swedish Migration Board. The number of residence permits granted during the studied period varies between 11 000 and 25 000 (Swedish Migration Board, 2013). As was mentioned above, Swedish authorities cannot force the municipalities to receive refugees. Instead the state, via the county administrative boards, establishes agreements with the municipalities, stating how many persons should be received. In Figure 1 the proportion of municipalities with agreements is presented together with the average number of recipients per thousand inhabitants. Since 2007 there are just a few municipalities without agreements. The figure also indicates that the average number of refugees per 1 000 inhabitants is about 2.5. For the average size Swedish municipality (about 30 000 inhabitants) this corresponds to 75 refugees on an annual basis.

Figure 1: Average number of municipality reception of refugees per 1000 inhabitants (left axis and bars), proportion of municipalities' with annual reception (right axis, lines)



In order to illustrate the environment in which this study takes place it might also be appropriate to present some facts about the political situation within the Swedish municipalities during the studied period. In all, the time period covers two elections, 2006 and 2010. As was stated above, the number of municipalities in which the SD has representation steadily rose from 2006 to 2010.

In terms of the success of the two dominant parties', the Moderate Party increased their average representation in municipalities from 19.99 percent in 2006 to 21.81 in 2010. For their main competitors, the Social Democratic Party, the situation was reverse, lowering their representation from 37.32 percent in 2006 to 35.99 in 2010.

An initial test of our hypotheses is conducted through bivariate analyses (see Table 1 and Table 2). As expected Table 1 show that there is a negative correlation between the presence of the Sweden Democrats and the level of refugee reception. However, this is not the strongest relation found. While a negative correlation between the seat share of the Moderate Party and the dependent variable theoretically was expected, the magnitude is stronger than what could be assumed. Although previous research has been ambiguous concerning the impact of the Social Democratic Party and refugee reception in Sweden, this analysis indicates a positive influence. This gives preliminary support for our third hypothesis.

Table 1: Bivariate correlation analysis, correlation in Pearsons's r

	Accepted refugees per thousand inhabitants	N
SD seat share	-0.196***	1377
M seat share	- 0.405***	1395
S seat share	0.207***	1395

*Significant at the 0.10-level, ** Significant at the 0.05-level, ***Significant at the 0.01-level.

To give an opening inspection of our second hypothesis, comparisons of means are conducted in Table 2. A significantly lower reception of refugees is reported from municipalities in which SD occupy the balance of power compared to municipalities in which they not. Hence, also our second hypothesis is given preliminary support.

An alternative approach to design the third hypothesis, focused on the composition of local assemblies, is to examine the difference between left and right government.⁷ The difference between left and right government is on average below 0.5 accepted refugees per thousand inhabitants. However, if we instead apply the support for the Moderate Party as a measurement for identifying the conditions for which local migration policy can be restricted, much clearer results are reached. The average reception among municipalities where the Moderate Party is strong is almost as low as in municipalities in which SD has the balance of power. By contrast, where the party lack such support, the willingness towards refugee reception is significantly stronger. To inquire a potential conditional effect of the influence of SD in certain political landscapes, we continue to examine our hypotheses in multivariate models.

⁷ This data is based on whether the local councilor represents the centre-left parties or the centre-right parties.

Table 2: Mean comparison test (t-test)

	Mean of accepted refugees per thousand inhabitants
SD no balance of power	2.680***
SD balance of power	1.640***
Left government	2.821***
Right government	2.388***
M strong	1.844***
M weak	3.273***

*Significant at the 0.10-level, ** Significant at the 0.05-level, ***Significant at the 0.01-level.

In Table 3 we present three TSCS models. The first model is a complete test of the collected data set, counting 1358 municipality-years. In control for other factors, we find that there is no independent effect of the seat share of the SD. However, if SD possesses the balance of power the reception of refugees is on average significantly lower. Apparently, this circumstance is irrespective of the overall support for the party. Hence, while the first hypothesis can be rejected the second can be verified.

The seat share for the Moderate Party mirrors the bivariate analyses and reports a negative influence on the dependent variable. In addition, four out of six control variables are significant. The operationalization of the general attitude of migration issues among local politicians is significant. Average income level is, contrary to our expectations, negative related to refugee reception. While we can only speculate about the causes of this relationship it might be so that it serves as a proxy for other properties that causes municipalities to initiate a reception (cf. Lidén and Nyhlén, 2013). Further, income distribution, measured as a gini coefficient, yields a positive influence. In this setting more unequal societies are also more inclined of receiving refugees. Another significant indicator is the population level, interpreted as less populated municipalities in general have a larger willingness of receiving refugees. Finally, the proxy for asylum seekers, share of population with foreign background, do not seem to be of importance. This is interesting insofar that it suggests that large streams of asylum seekers do not seem to restrain municipalities from commitments of refugee reception.

To explicitly inquire the third hypothesis we continue by modeling a split sample. In the second model, only municipality-years in which the Moderate Party has a strong position are included. The third model instead presents the opposite situation. Comparing these analyses with each other do, though, not indicate any remarkable differences. Although, the certainty of which SD balance of power being a decisive predictor is stronger in municipalities where the Moderate Party is strong, compared to weak, the potential causal effect is greater in the opposite setting. Thus, circumstances favoring impact of SD on migration policy does not seem to be dependent on the composition of the other parties.

Table 3: TSCS OLS (dependent variable: accepted refugees per thousand inhabitants)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
SD seat share	-.237 (.832)	-.139 (.725)	1.120 (1.912)
SD balance of power	-.137** (.062)	-.160** (.069)	-.245* (.131)
S seat share	-.167 (.490)	.601 (.409)	-.335 (.635)
M seat share	-1.070** (.415)		
Toughness	-1.545*** (.594)	-.918*** (.278)	-2.332** (1.132)
Unemployment rate	-.050 (.045)	-.049 (.038)	-.062 (.056)
Average income	-.004*** (.001)	-.004** (.002)	-.005 (.005)
Gini coefficient	3.544*** (1.266)	2.219* (1.173)	-1.703 (3.560)
Population (log)	-.682*** (.1846)	-.219 (.138)	-1.228*** (.425)
Share of pop. with foreign background	.003 (.005)	-.007 (.007)	.008 (.007)
Dependent variable (<i>t</i> -1)	.801*** (.099)	.710*** (.089)	.797*** (.107)
N	1358	654	704
R-squared	0.740	0.714	0.716

Note: Entries are coefficients followed by panel corrected standard errors. Political variables (SD seat share, balance of power, S seat share and M seat share) reflect the same year as the dependent variable. Toughness does not vary over the years but reflects the situation of 2008. The other independent variables are lagged one year. Autocorrelation is controlled for in autoregressive models by using a Lagrange multiplier test. *Significant at the 0.10-level, ** Significant at the 0.05-level, ***Significant at the 0.01-level.

Finally it is worth noting that even though the predictor for balance of power is significant the coefficient reveals a moderate effect. The three models indicate that on average the number of received refugees decline with 0.14 to 0.25 per thousand inhabitants. This corresponds to a change in about 5 to 10 per cent.

Conclusions

Research on the electoral successes of anti-immigration parties must by now be regarded as a rather well covered field. However, we know less about what actual impact these parties acquire, once elected for parliament. Furthermore, those studies hitherto conducted points in different directions. Some of this variation most probably stems from problems of comparability. In this study we argue that it is possible to circumvent some of these problems by studying within country variation instead of cross-national. This research strategy not only makes it possible to keep potentially important institutional factors constant but also excludes inter-party variation since we have studied the same party in all Swedish municipalities.

The results of our analyses are mixed. While we can trace some direct impact of the SD when occupying the balance of power we find no support of an independent effect of the party's size of representation. To some extent this finding contradicts some of the previous studies in the field that argue that the established parties are moving in a more restrictive direction in order to counteract the electoral success of anti-immigration parties (e.g. Green-Pedersen and Odmalm, 2008). Hence, we find no support for the "contagion of the right" thesis put forward by other scholars.

Neither do our findings harmonize with previous suggestions about right-wing parties being more willing to accept the demands of the anti-immigration parties (e.g. Gudbrandsen, 2010). Although we find that the levels of receptions on average are lower in right-wing municipalities our multivariate analyses reveal that this difference does not hold for more sophisticated analysis.

To some extent we also must pay attention to the overall conclusions made by Mudde (Mudde, 2013) who argues that the restrictions made in many countries predated the electoral success of anti-immigration parties. While we to some extent control for this with the inclusion of our toughness variable, there still might be reasons to put this claim to further testing. So, while we empirically find a significant and negative correlation between SD holding the balance of power and refugee reception this might be a consequence of a long standing scepticism toward refugee reception. Partly, an immigration sceptical culture, hence, might be a cause for both restrictive immigration policies and anti-immigration party electoral success.

We can also draw some conclusions of methodological character. Earlier studies have studied different parties in different contextual settings they have suffered from shortcomings in comparability. The design we have been employed in this study have made it possible to raise the number of cases and at the same time hold a number of potentially important factors at a constant. Therefore, we argue, this study has made some progress towards making it possible to isolate the effect of anti-immigration parties on public policy.

Finally, the somewhat contradictory findings mentioned above could be subjected to further analysis. Additional analyses on cases with no or small numbers of refugee reception where SD holds representation would be a first step in doing this. Such an analysis could be conducted in a mixed method approach including both a replication of the statistical analyses in this study (with a subset of cases) and a number of in-depth case studies in order to grasp why SD are less successful in what seems to be favourable conditions.

Table A1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Source	Years covered
Accepted refugees per thousand inhabitants	1673	2.590	2.097	0	28.105	The Swedish Migration Board (2013); The Swedish Integration Board (2006)	2006-2011
SD seat share	1430	0.024	0.033	0	0.235	Statistics Sweden (2013a)	2007-2010
SD Balance of power	1450	0.111	0.314	0	1	Wångmar (2011); Dahlström and Sundell (2012)	2007-2010
S seat share	1450	0.371	0.094	0.067	0.645	Statistics Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2013b)	2007-2010
M seat share	1450	0.204	0.103	0	0.714	Statistics Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2013b)	2007-2010
M seat share (dichotomous)	1450	0.497	0.500	0	1	Statistics Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2013b)	2007-2010
Toughness	1740	.360	0.076	0.145	0.689	Gilljam et al. (2010); Dahlström and Sundell (2012)	2008
Municipality governing	1737	0.470	0.499	0	1	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (2012) and Statistics Sweden and Statistics Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2012a).	2006-2011
Unemployment rate	1740	3.271	1.076	0.793	6.870	Swedish Public Employment Service (2013)	2006-2011
Average income	1740	232.602	31.5458	179.000	476.600	Statistics Sweden (2013c)	2006-2011
Gini coefficient	1740	0.314	0.033	0.251	0.519	Statistics Sweden (2013c)	2006-2011
Population (log)	1450	4.265	0.404	3.391	5.928	Statistics Sweden (2012b)	2006-2011
Share of pop. with foreign background	1740	10.372	5.372	2.953	39.847	Statistics Sweden (2012b)	2006-2011
Lag of dep. var. ($t-1$)	1391	2.623	2.052	0	25.164	The Swedish Migration Board (2013); The Swedish Integration Board (2006)	2006-2011

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