Right-wing populism and Facebook as the political arena

- A quantitative study on political engagement online

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Abstract

Right-wing populism has spread across the European continent during the 21th century, this paper examines if this also is the case on the social media platform Facebook. Through the use of multivariate ordinary linear regression models the thesis seeks to answer if right-wing populist parties and leaders in 12 western European countries generate more followers on their official Facebook accounts than their non-populist competitors. The thesis finds that in both the case of political parties and political leaders the right-wing populists generate on average a larger number of followers. In addition to the findings a theory of possible explanatory value is presented which is based on emotional political participation. The fundamental idea is that people perform low-cost political actions because of anxiety, and this anxiety is caused by different politically charged subjects. What this means is that right-wing populists may attain support on Facebook because citizens feel anxious about the subjects that the populists control, however this anxiety may never turn into actual votes.

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1. Introduction

During the past decade, social media has become an integrated part of modern life. With this exceptional growth social media has transformed into a relevant and efficient tool for organizations and businesses alike to connect with the public. Political parties now strategically communicate with the public through social media platforms and the public is offered the possibility to interact with the parties online. A basic function of Facebook is the interaction of liking something. Liking something is a low-investment action of showing support for someone or something. A like can be an indication of support and they can be considered a form of political engagement. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the political parties and political party leaders of 12 European countries and to what extent they have generated followings on the social media platform Facebook. This is done to study if right-wing populist parties across Europe have larger followings than their competitors. This thesis aims to answer the following question:

Do right-wing populist parties generate more support on Facebook than their competitors?

To determine which of the political parties that can be defined as right-wing populists the thesis will base its statements concerning political affiliation on Cas Muddes work on political populism. The remaining parties of the study will not be defined in any larger extent other than being a non-populist party. To perform the study a data collection has be done where the generated likes of each countries relevant political parties and leaders have been accounted for. Each country within the dataset consists of a minimum of six parties and a maximum of 12. The dataset in its entirety consist of 100 political parties and 99 political leaders.

To answer the question as to whether right-wing populist parties generate more support on Facebook than their competitors, ordinary linear regressions have been conducted. Through the analyses we find that there indeed is a correlation between being a right-wing populist party and generating a larger number of likes on Facebook. The analysis also provides statistical proof that that right-wing populist party leaders generate more likes than their counterparts among the non-populist parties. The independent variables of the regression analyses consist of the following four: right-wing populism, population, share of the votes in the most recent election and the percental change between the most recent election and the one before that. It should be pointed out that this analysis only concerns itself with 12 western European countries and hence it would be of interest to test the thesis on other countries and

continents to strengthen the possibility of generalization. This process could further ensure the validity of the thesis analysis results. The difference in political parties per country is a result of limiting each country to consist of parties with seats in parliament and/or seats in any institution except municipalities. The reason behind this is simply that there are hundreds of parties in each country and the study would not have been able to be conducted within the current format.

Currently the author has found no other studies that statistically determine that right-wing populist parties and leaders generate more support on social media platforms than other political parties. However, there are studies that focus on what impact social media has had on the political arena. Studies of interest that more specifically centers on subjects connected to this thesis are Fabio Gigliettos[1] study on Facebook-likes and the possibility to predict electoral results based on data from social media platforms. The study performed by Jakob Baek Kristensen[2] presents a theory that it is possible to predict electoral results from a single Facebook-like with an accuracy greater than previous academical works. These studies accentuate the impact of Facebook-likes and stresses the importance of social media in the modern political sphere.

This thesis will be constructed with a background segment where the current situation concerning political parties use of social media in western Europe will be introduced. Following this the paper will discuss relevant research done in the field of social media and politics. The paper will then present the dataset and the methodology that has been the foundation of the thesis. Finally, the paper will exhibit the results and the conclusions found through the conducted research.

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[1] Giglietto, Fabio, *If Likes Were Votes: An Empirical Study on the 2011 Italian Administrative Elections*, published 2012-05-07, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1982736 (Accessed 2017-12-13)

[2] Baek Kristensen, Jakob, *Parsimonious data: How a single Facebook like predicts voting behavior in multiparty systems*, published 2017-09-20, http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0184562 (Accessed 2017-12-13)

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2. Background

The parties that have been included in this study are represented in political organs from Finland in the north to Italy in the south. When studying the different countries and their political representatives it was made clear that close to 100% of them have official accounts across several social media platforms. The one platform that stood out as the most commonly used was Facebook and thus is was decided that it would be the social media platform at the center of this thesis. From the data collection it was possible to determine that across Europe political parties from all party families were active on social media. Some more than others but it can be concluded that there are official accounts controlled by employees of political parties in all countries included in the study. Consequently, it is possible to state that social media is part of the strategical and political work of political parties. The countries included in the study are Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Portugal, Italy, Austria and the United Kingdom. The collection of data has been based on number of likes found on the official accounts of the political parties on Facebook.

3. Previous Research

In this section I will in depth present the current research that exists on social media within the political field. The studies that are presented are of importance to establish the relevance of the thesis but also to strengthen my claims that social media is a form of political engagement. These studies are not exclusively focused on right-wing populism or the parties that can be labeled as right-wing populist parties, however their results are based upon using the same likes that I have used for this thesis.

3.1 Political participation and engagement

To engage politically as a citizen of a society has since a long time ago been defined by actions performed in a none-digitalized era. The most rudimentary of political engagement stems back to the creation of the concept of democracy. Voicing opinions, taking to the streets and gathering allies in order to influence the political elite. As history has progressed so has the possibilities of political engagement and participation. The foundation of democracy is grounded in the idea that the people decide, these decisions are performed by different types of voting. Voting is possibly the highest of investments for the average citizen in a society. The vote cast will affect the individual in several aspects. Therefor the political participation of voting can be perceived as a path for the individual to reach great benefits, so long as his/hers preferred party gains power. Knowing what to vote for involves costs for the individual, costs which have been studied within the field of rational choice for example. Michael Laver[3] presents these net costs and states that deciding what to vote for is a process of searching for relevant information. It is also a possibly frustrating ordeal in making more profound decisions of political affiliation. Finally, it will for the majority of a country's population require the individual to leave his/her home and vote for the preferred party or politician.[4] What Laver proposes is that voting has costs, and questions if a rational individual would ever vote, since the one single vote never has proven to be determining in any election.

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[3] Laver, Michael, *Private desires, political action: an invitation to the politics of rational choice*, SAGE, London, 1997, p. 92.
[4] Ibid, p. 93.

This is referred within the rational choice theory literature as "the pardox that ate rational choice". These statements have also been proposed by Hanna Bäck et al.[5], however they attempt to offer explanations as to why people, how irrational it may seem, vote. They are testing two different solutions to the paradox, these two are collective incentives and selective incentives. Collective incentives can be summarized as a solution wherein individuals do not believe that their political engagement is irrelevant and that it will have political impact. The selective incentives can be summarized as a solution wherein there are benefits for an individual who political engages separated from the political outcome of said engagement. Their findings show that both solutions are present when understanding political engagement and action.[6]

3.2 Emotional political participation

Political participation and behavior has been studied to understand how people function when faced with politically charged subjects and their feelings concerning them. Nicholas A. Valentino et al.[7] provides research on the impact of emotion upon individuals rate of political engagement. Through an extensive survey where individuals were asked how they felt emotionally concerning the current situation in their country it was possible to predict that anger, rather than anxiety will active and mobilize individuals politically. An essential question for the study was to find the answer as to how the public felt about the current situation not the current politicians or parties. They analyze the responses to the survey by applying cognitive appraisal theory of emotions. Cognitive appraisal theory of emotions suggest that positive and negative emotional responses will affect individual choice in different ways. When this is combined with neuroscience based research, it can be said that anger triggers a certain behavior and anxiety triggers other ones[8]. What the study presents is that anger will mobilize individuals rather than anxiety. However, it does suggest that anxiety will trigger low-cost expressive actions. It further states that these actions are consistently

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[5] Bäck, Hanna, Teorell, Jan, Westholm, Anders, Explaining Modes of Participation: A Dynamic Test of Alternative Rational Choice Models, *Scandinavian political studies*, 2011.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2011.00262.x/abstract (Accessed 2017-12-13)
[6] Ibid, s. 74-93
[7] Valentino, A. Nicholas, et al. Election Night's Alright for Fighting: The Role of Emotions in Political Participation, The Journal of politics, published 2011-01-14,
http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/s0022381610000939?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed 2017-12-05), p. 157.
[8] Ibid, p. 159.

connected to emotion-coping where the individual seeks social support and discusses his/hers fears with family and friends. The conclusion is that anxiety may not trigger high-cost participation, yet it will boost low-cost participation. Furthermore, political expression has been shown to correlate with the feeling of anxiety in surveys.[9]

Looking at political engagement from the presented perspectives it can be said that they are applicable on an extensive period throughout history, but it does not concern itself with the digitalized world we live in today. This thesis introduces a new digital political landscape where political engagement does not involve supporting the one political entity you vote for, nor fighting the political entity you consider your competitors. This text will argue that individuals support political parties and leaders which they do not vote for, in order to express anxiety concerning a specific subject.

3.3 Political engagement online

A study carried out by Kristensten et al., conducted quantitative research in order to determine if Facebook-likes can be an indicator of voting behavior within a multiparty system.[10] Initially a dataset was constructed by collecting data from official accounts of Danish politicians and parties within a set timeframe of two years. The study is carried out by comparing multinomial logistic regression models created from the dataset. Through the comparison conclusions could be drawn as to whether it was possible to determine how a specific person would vote. To summarize what the analysis contributes with is that through observing the behavior of individuals on Facebook it is possible, by tracking their likes, which party they will vote for. This study is presenting actual predictions something this thesis does not intend to do, however this study does point out that likes on Facebook are a new form of political engagement and they are of value. The authors also propose that likes on social media cannot be defined as cost-free political engagement that are carelessly used. It is rather the opposite way, that a like indicates that either one or several political ideas held by a politician or a political party is shared by the individual.[11]

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[9] Ibid, p. 159.
[10] Kristensen et al., p. 1.
[11] Ibid, p. 9.

Fabio Giglietto (2012) conducted a study within the same field as Kristensten et al, researching if it is possible to predict electoral results from Facebook-likes-[12] His study was carried out using data collected from the 2011 administrative elections in Italy, this data consisted of official Facebook accounts controlled by a political party or politician. In this paper Giglietto presents a background to contextualize the presence of social media within the political field. Through previous research Giglietto states that the political engagement between individual on social media is different from what we know as "face-to-face".[13] When performing the majority of possible actions on social media platforms you are not engaging in a face-to-face interaction. There is a relevant difference between talking to your friends in you home and talking to your friends on Facebook. The traditionally communication of talking to someone does not leave traces, online interaction and conversation does.[14] However, it is possible to state that the concept of "friends and family" now exists online as well as offline, which makes it possible for individuals to discuss private matters in public spaces. Few would argue that the conversations taking place within ones' home is to be considered public, and few would argue that engagement on Facebook pages and profiles are private. Giglietto also presents us with the idea of electoral performance in relation to popularity on Facebook. The choice of words is relevant here as the definition of what a "like" indicates has been debated among schoolers studying social media. This will be further discussed in a future segment of the thesis. Another important aspect that Giglietto anticipates, and many with him, is that Facebook will become a more frequently used strategical tool for politicians. The text was published in 2012 and as this thesis dataset has found that almost every single politician and political party has an official Facebook account it does seem as if Gigliettos prediction was quite accurate.

Apart from these two studies on online participation there has been research performed on young people and their activities within political engagement. When discussing political science in everyday conversation it is often said that young people are the ones actively using the different platforms. This is a statement that is true and has been proven by demographical research upon the social media platforms currently being used, stating that 88% of people between the age of 18-29 are actively using Facebook.[15] However, usage does

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[12] Giglietto et al., p. 1.
[13] Ibid, p. 4.
[14] Ibid, p. 2.
[15] Duggan, Meave, Greenwood, Shannon, Perrin, Andrew, Social Media Updated 2016, Pew Research Center, published 2016-11-11, http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/ (Accessed 2017-12-15)

not concern the political categories of accounts and profiles on social media. Social media has according to Avril Keating and Gabriella Mellis[16] not become a groundbreaking tool for young people to engage politically. Their study found that youth who are politically involved outside of social media will be engaged online, but in general, social media has not gathered a new group of young people and found a way to activate them politically.[17] A variable often introduced as problematic when talking about the social media is age. It can however be seen through demographical researches within the field of marketing and strategical communication that the use of social media is widespread and excludes no age category.[18] However, I encourage a study to be performed where age is a variable, to test if age alters the results found.

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[16] Keating, Avril, Melis, Gabriella, Social media and youth political engagement: Preaching to the converted or providing a new voice for youth, The British Journal of politics and international relations, published 2017-07-07, http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1369148117718461 (Accessed 2017-12-10)
[17] Ibid, p. 882-891.
[18] Chaffey, Dave, New Global Social Media Research, Smart Insights, published 2017-04-27, https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/ (Accessed 2017-12-20)

4. Theory

Right-wing populist parties and their leaders generate more likes than their competitors on Facebook. Translating "likes" into votes is not of importance for this thesis, however previous literature in the field of political engagement on social media has shown that it can be of relevance. Translating votes into likes without considering any variables lead us to different conclusions. Taking the example of Sweden it would be presumed that the right-wing populist party the Swedish Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna) would be the party winning the upcoming election. Whether this I true or not is of course impossible to say, however proposing and predicting that they would win based on their likes on Facebook would mean raising their vote share of 12,90% to that of the Social Democrats which was 31%. This thesis does not propose such a thing happening yet still the Swedish Democrats remain the largest party on Facebook in Sweden. It could be established by this study that right-wing populist parties and party leaders across Europe on average generate more likes, yet in some countries they do not hold more than 3% of the vote share. In the case of Belgium, Vlaams Belange have, as of November 2017, 87.733 likes on their official Facebook account with 3,7% of the vote share in the last election. This makes them the second largest party on Facebook in the case of Belgium only beaten by the party with the largest vote share, which is the New Flemish Alliance with 20,3%.

4.1 Costs and cognitive appraisal theory

Because of these findings this thesis proposes that individuals through the low-cost investment of liking a party or a politician on Facebook engage and supports parties which they do not vote for. To strengthen this idea and to perhaps offer an explanation as to why this would occur the thesis will present a theory based in parts on the idea behind rational choice theory and cognitive appraisal theory of emotions. Rational choice theory presents at its foundation a set of costs connected to political engagement.[19] It is important to state that this thesis does not argue that voting and "liking" is in any way synonym, the political action of voting comes with a much higher cost than "liking" does. However, both of them would be considered supportive and not neutral. Cognitive appraisal theory of emotion suggests that anger and anxiety lead to different types of behavior.[20] The difference between anger and

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[19] Laver, p. 92.
[20] Valentino et al., p. 161.

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anxiety is that of mobilization. A person filled with anger may leave their home and join a demonstration, an individual who feels anxiety will avoid such an action. However, a person who avoids a high-cost engagement such as a demonstration will instead engage in conversations with family and friends concerning the subject that caused the anxiety. Studies have also shown that a person who is anxious concerning something tends to express themselves politically.[21]

The theories presented this far are theories based on research conducted on data collected from offline engagements and interactions. This thesis intends to combine these with findings from research done on social media platforms, and thus apply these theories on political behavior online. In the studies presented in "Previous Research" there are sections in each which are of relevance for this thesis theory section. In the study *How a single Facebook likes predicts voting behavior in a multiparty system* the authors can conclude from their research that Facebook likes are not cost-free engagement but rather a form of support for at least one idea, sometimes more, presented by a political party or politician. This text wishes to present the idea that it is true that Facebook-likes are not cost-free, yet they are not as costly as joining a party or going to the polls to vote. It would rather be that individuals who find a majority of their views and ideas represented by a political party will vote for that party, however it may be that the individual disagrees with the party it votes for in a specific matter. Since this study finds that right-wing populist gain larger followings on Facebook than others do, it proposes that people who feel anxious about a specific subject is willing to like a party on Facebook but would not vote for that party in an election. The question of immigration, asylum and refugees are highly debated and widespread subject that affects all countries in the world and currently Europe specifically. These questions have been the main purpose of the right-wing populists gaining grounds in the political arena. From this study it can be said that they also have gained grounds on social media to the extent where they even have surpassed their competitors. Voter X may have voted for conservative party Y for several years but now during a refugee crisis he has begun thinking about voting for the right-wing populist party based on the populist propaganda used when talking about the refugees. From that standpoint he decides to like them on social media, this is a low-cost engagement that changes little and requires little. When election day arrives however he decides to vote for the conservative party once again. The support for the right-wing populists concerning immigration, does not outweigh the support the voter shows for the conservative party.

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[21] Ibid, p. 159.

4.2 Pathways of communication

What the larger followings imply is that these right-wing populist own pathways of communication to the personal social media accounts of more citizens than other parties. Even though "likes" do not necessarily translate into votes which in turn means actual political power, the process of connecting to a political party by "liking" opens possibilities for the populist party. They may not rule in government, but they seem to rule social media. Every Facebook post published by a political party will end up in the feed of the individuals who have liked the page of the party. What the party says in its posts will be presented, whether the individual wants to or not, to each follower of the Facebook account. The discussions will include more people, it will be able to generate more likes and more shares simply because the account has generated more followers. Even if they are not controlling office their message is getting out there, it is reaching people on larger scale than their competitors. These ideas are illustrated in the picture below. Anxiety creates Facebook support, Facebook support guarantees message delivery, what message delivery leads to is not in any way proven but the study suggests that making the public talk and owning the public room can possibly impact policy change and can generate votes. The proposed outcomes of Facebook support and Message delivery is visualized by the dashed lines in *Figure 1*.
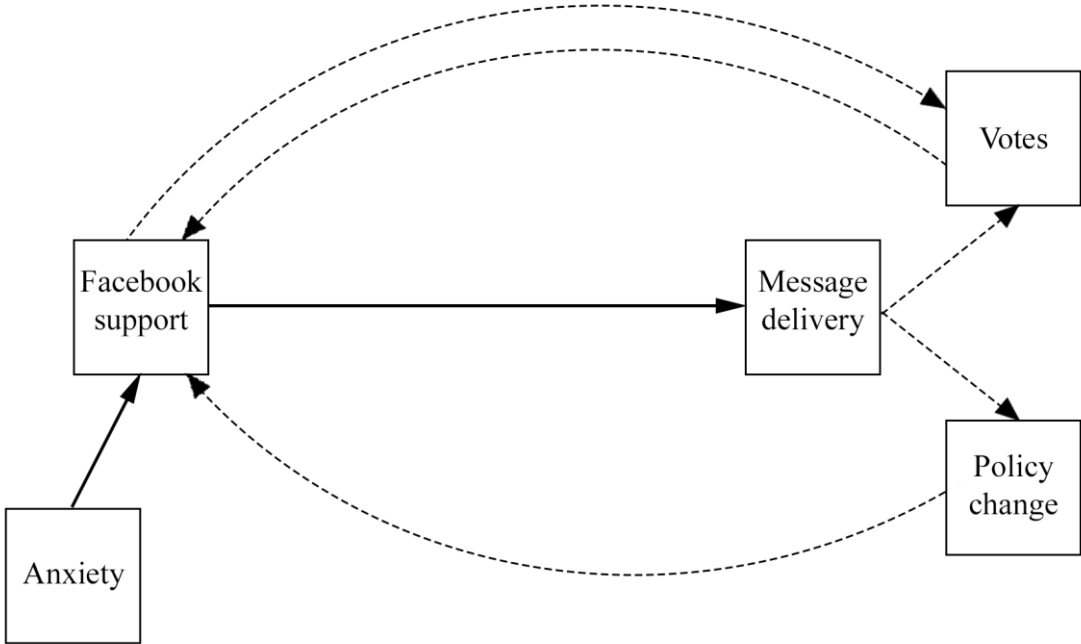

Figure 1

5. Methodology

In this section the methodology behind the research conducted will be explained. It will present the dataset, the independent and dependent variables and finally the regression analysis performed.

5.1 Dependent Variables

Facebook-likes are obviously not static numbers and can at any given moment decrease or increase. The numbers used in this study may be, and most certainly is, slightly different from those presented in the dataset. Liking something is an action where an individual decides to show support for either a specific post or a specific page. As is evident of this study, and many before it, nearly all political parties in western Europe control an official Facebook page. In order to determine validity of these Facebook pages the collection is based on links of each political parties' official website which redirects the user to the Facebook account. In cases where this was not possible the accounts have been considered valid if they have been granted a verification by Facebook. The verification is a tool which is implemented by Facebook to be able to determine the authenticity of accounts of public figures, politicians and celebrities.[22] The number of likes generated by the account is accessible to all and is visible to anyone who visits the account page. It is to be pointed out that Facebook offers the possibility to like something, however within the action of liking a user will also be considered to actively follow a page. Following happens automatically when a user likes a page.

To generate answers as to whether right-wing populist parties and leaders generate more followers than their competitors a multivariate Ordinary Linear Square regression was performed. An Ordinary Linear Square (OLS) Regression is in its most basic explanation an evaluation of the relationship between a given variable and one or more other variables.[23] In an OLS regression, or regressions in general, the axis are coded as dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is assumed to be stochastic in its nature which means it has a probability distribution. The independent variable on the other hand is assumed to be of a fixed value which means it will remain the same in repeated samples.[24]

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[22] Facebook, Terms of verification, https://www.facebook.com/help/1288173394636262/?ref=u2u (Accessed 2017-12-20)

[23] Brooks, C. Introductory Econometrics for Finance. 3rd edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, p. 27.

[24] Ibid, p. 28.

The regression analysis was chosen because it would be able to determine if right-wing populist parties and leaders generate larger followings. The dependent variables of the analysis is "Political parties Facebook likes" and "Political leaders Facebook likes". The dependent variables are the collection of likes generated by the political parties and leaders across Europe which makes up the dataset. To measure right-wing political parties and leaders, it was necessary to define an independent variable that could function within the regression. In each country it was assumed that at least one political party and hence one (or possibly more) could be defined as a right-wing populist party or leader of one. The research done was based on Cas Muddes definitions of radical right-wing populists in Europe. Mudde defines the parties through a series of questions concerning, globalization, culture and socioeconomical matters. Through researching parties and answering the questions Mudde composes a list in which the parties defined as right-wing populists are presented.[25] The definition is per definition based solely on previous research and if one would argue that Muddes definitions are flawed then of course the clams of this thesis would matter less and seem irrelevant. In the dataset the political parties and leaders were divided between right-wing populist parties/leaders and the remaining parties, the numbers 0 and 1 in the dataset divides the two, the parties that were not considered populist were simply defined as being non-populist. The parties and leaders were then introduced into the regression to see what affect the independent variables would have upon the dependent variable. The regression would then be able to calculate how being a right-wing populist affects the number of likes generated.

5.2 Control variables

Three other independent variables were introduced to establish validity for the possible results. These three variables are "vote share", "vote change" and "population". It was obvious before proceeding with the regressions that there were major differences between political parties and leaders, and these differences were not only because of the differences in actual Facebook-likes. To account for any differences caused by population a collection of data concerning populations across the 12 countries were introduced. It was also clear that there were parties with larger success in generating actual votes in elections meanwhile others were gaining little to no support when people went to the polls. The study also introduces a

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[25] Mudde, Cas, *Populist radical right parties in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 305.

variable which concerns the differences in parties' electoral results between the latest elections. This was done to see if there was a relationship between increasing or decreasing in votes and the likes generated by political parties and leaders.

5.3 Dataset

The dataset used in this study has been created by collecting Facebook likes from 100 political parties and 92 political leaders across 12 western European countries. To be included in the dataset the political party must be represented in their respective countries national parliament or represented in the European parliament. In the case of Sweden one exception has been made and that is the political party "Feministiskt Initiativ" because they do not represent right-wing populism yet cannot be defined as non-populist. The thesis will further explain this decision at a later stage. The data collection was carried out between the 14th of November and the 21 of November 2017. The countries included in the dataset are Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Portugal, Italy, Austria and the United Kingdom. Spain and Ireland have not been included in this study as they have often been referred to as deviant cases among the western European countries concerning the rise of the right-wing populist parties.[26] It could be argued that Portugal should also be excluded from the study because of the same reasons, however when the research was conducted it could be seen that there indeed was a relevant number of likes for a right-wing populist party, which made that party the third largest on Facebook in Portugal.

Another aspect to bring forth is that of bots. A bot is an account not controlled by an individual but rather is a coded application which automatically runs scripts online.[27] This makes it possible to create large amounts of "fake accounts" which can like and follow a page without being represented by any individual. These likes and follows from fake accounts are sold in order for businesses to appear successful or active. For this thesis it has been ruled that if one political party uses this strategy it would be probable that the others do too. Furthermore, to determine validity of each account which has liked the political party or political leaders would be close to impossible given the current circumstances. Yet, the author of the thesis is aware of the possible issue of bots and "fake accounts".

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[26] Buck, Tobias, No right turn for Spanish politics, Financial Times, published 2017-01-17, https://www.ft.com/content/414246f6-dbe4-11e6-86ac-f253db7791c6 (Accessed 2017-12-23)
[27] Dunham, Ken, Jim, Melnick, Malicious Bots: An Inside Look into the Cyber-Criminal Underground of the Internet, CRC Press, 2008, p. 6.

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In the case of a political party having more than one political leader the account with the most "likes" have been included in the dataset and the others removed, such is the case with a selection of the green parties in Europe. In cases where the party has been going through a problematic period and changed political leaders at several occasions within a small timeframe it has been ruled that the one with the largest number of likes will be selected. Such is the case of UK Independence Party. If a party has changed leader within the past three months (counting from the start of the data collection) the leader with the most likes has been selected. The few months of leadership offer little to no time for personal supportive interactions and hence cannot be representative for the actual support the party holds. This is the situation for the Swedish party "Moderaterna" and the German party "Alternative fur Deutschland".

The dataset also consists of the following control variables vote share, vote change and population. By vote share the thesis implies the amount of votes a party generated in the latest election held in the country where the political party is active. Vote change is defined by the difference between the last two elections, hence showing if a party has increased or decreased between the elections. The data concerning the election results have been collected from each country's electoral authority.[28] The final variable is population which is each country's population as recorded by the World Bank in 2016.[29]

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[28] Nordsieck, Wolfram, Parties & Elections, published 2017, http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/ (Accessed 2017-12-02)

[29] World Bank group, Population, total, published 2016, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL (Accessed 2017-12-02)

6. Results

In this segment the results found when carrying out the analyses will be presented and explained. The study will do so by introducing descriptive summaries based on the dataset and charts visualizing the results found.

6.1 The average party

Initially a simple calculation was carried out to establish what the average political party and leader looked like. It was at that time established, as can be seen in table 1, that an average non-populist party within the dataset would have generated just above 100 000 likes or followers. Meanwhile the average right-wing populist party reached just under 200 000. This information was of interest as it made it possible to see what the average parties of both categories looked like. The SPÖ of Austria has 103 028 likes on Facebook and gained 26% of the votes in the latest election. The number of Facebook-like makes the party one of the closest to the average number. The party is a social democratic one, a party-type represented in many countries across Europe. It was founded in January 1889. Interestingly the right-wing populist party that is the closest to the average, with 161 000 likes, is a party which has leaned towards the populist ideas during a period and now is classified as one. The Norwegian "Fremskrittsparti" was founded in 1973 with a foundation built on classic liberal ideas but has since then moved towards the populist right. The party is almost 100 years younger than the average non-populist but not a young one among the right-wing populists. The average non-populist party is one which held a fourth of the votes in the last election, represents one of the most common party families in Europe and has been a part of the political arena since the 19th century. The average right-wing populist party comes from a non-populist background, holds 15% of the vote and has only been in the political arena for the past 40 years. This is illustrated in *Table 1*

Variable	Observations	Std. dev.	Min	Mean	Max
Non-Pop. P	99	172 054	609	100 812	1 098 443
Non-Pop. L	92	466 321	1302	205 650	2 521 838

Table 1

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6.2 The average party leader

If we instead look at the average political leader of this study it can be said that Lars Løkke Rasmussen of the liberal-conservative party "Venstre" in Denmark is representative of the average non-populist leader based on Facebook-likes. His number of likes is 203 000 which is slightly below the average, but he is the closest of all non-populist leaders of the study. Lökke Rasmussen' party gained close to a fourth of the votes in the last election, they can be defined as part of a common party family and they were founded in 1870. When applying the same idea to the right-wing populist leaders and parties no single leader or party can be found close to the average. It can however be stated that out of the collected right-wing political parties the average generated number of likes reach slightly above 200 000, which the Norwegian "Fremskrittsparti" is the closest to represent. The political leader of a right-wing populist party has an average follower base slightly below 500 000 as can be seen in *Table 2*. As stated previously none of the 12 parties represent this number, which is not strange as the number of analyzed units are less than their non-populist counterpart.

Variable	Observations	Std. dev.	Min	Mean	Max
Populist P	12	193 896	2455	203 346	589 763
Populist L	12	649 560	4538	496 231	1 938 208

Table 2

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6.2 Model 1

The first regression concerns the Facebook-likes generated by the political parties. The dependent variable in this case is "Political Parties' Facebook Likes". The independent variables for Model 1 are "right-wing populist party" (also referred to as radical right party when the research was conducted), "Vote Share", "Vote Change" and "Population".

As is evident of *Table 3* the right-wing party variable holds explanatory value. It can because of this result be concluded that right-wing populist parties generate a larger number of followers than their competitors. This is confirmed as the probability or statistical significance of the correlation is measured to 0.0095%. It can therefore be stated that being a right-wing populist party will, according to this analysis, generate a right-wing populist party more followers on average than a non-populist party. Examining the other variables, it is evident that political parties with a larger vote share will generate a larger number of votes. This statement is strengthened by a significance level of 0.0001%. Furthermore, it can also be stated that political parties within countries with larger populations seem to generate larger number of Facebook-likes. This can be strengthened by a significance level of 0.0000%. The last variable, vote change, is not statistically significant which implies that the performance of parties in elections does not affect the number of likes generated by the political parties. The adjusted R-squared number for the model is 0.51 which indicates that the independent variables have a high explanatory value for the dependent variable. The fact that the model achieves such a high number concerning the adjusted R-square indicates that the statement as a whole rest upon a firm foundation. It shall also be stated that the model can be further refined, but such a task will be left to future studies. An important aspect to be mentioned is that this model only includes 83 of the datasets 99 political parties, as some of the parties included in the dataset did not exist when the elections took place or had not gained enough votes to break the threshold of their respective countries, therefore making the variable of vote change and vote share not applicable.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Constant	-45401.98	2211.29	-2.052968	0.0434
RW-Party	94809.65	35639.05	2.660274	0.0095
Vote Share	5334.714	1289.553	4.136871	0.0001
Vote Change	827.7169	1883.577	0.439439	0.6616
Population	0.003250	0.000459	7.078647	0.0000

Table 3

The effect of vote share on the dependent variable was expected before the regression was carried out, and the significance level confirms that the notion of it having a large impact was not wrong. This is visualized in *Figure 1*. It can be clearly seen that a relationship between larger vote share and Facebook-likes exists and that it gradually rises the larger the vote share is. As mentioned this was expected and the variable has hence this performed in a desirable way.
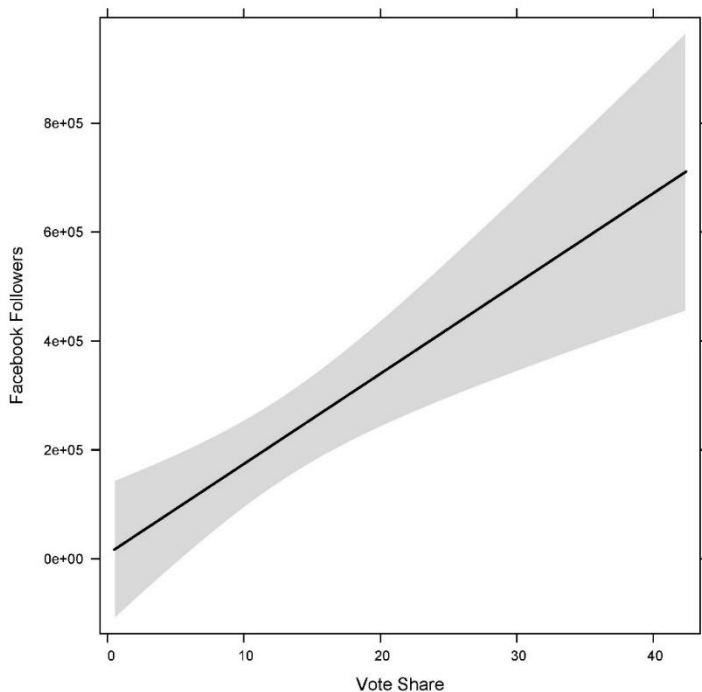

Figure 2

The control variable concerning population will not be visually presented as the results simply confirm that in highly populated countries parties run a higher chance of generating more likes.

The regression analyses made it possible to predict the probability of the number of likes a political party may generate. This is illustrated in *Figure 3*. The prediction presented in *Figure 3* assumes that the independent variables are held at specific values. The figure presents the dependent variable of Facebook Followers of Parties on its Y axis, and the independent variable of right-wing populism on its X axis. In this figure non-populist parties have been coded as "0" and acts as a dummy variable within the calculation. The "1" on the other hand are the right-wing populist parties included in the thesis dataset. The prediction intervals are in this figure represented by the red markings on each side. The predicted probabilities are represented within these two markings. As can been seen from the non-populist variable we can expect that the average non-populist party will generate somewhere around 100 000 Facebook-likes on their official Facebook account. With the highest prediction reaching around 125 000 and the lowest around 15 000. The right-wing populist party variable tells us that we can expect somewhere between 190 000 and 200 000 followers for the average right-wing populist party. With the highest prediction reaching above 250 000 and the lowest around 130 000. The highest prediction for the non-populist party is evidently not surpassing the lowest possible prediction of the right-wing populist party. The difference may not be a large one, yet it is statistically significant. The study can because of this confirm a correlation which indicates that right-wing populist parties generate more followers than their non-populist competitors.
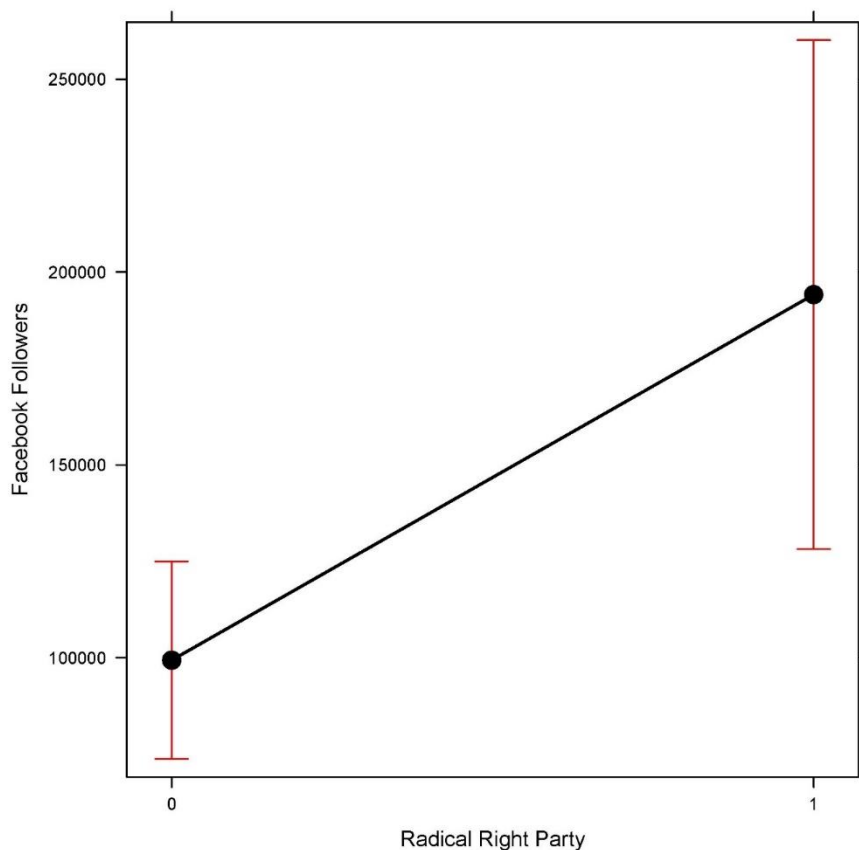
This of course raises the question as to why the right-wing populist parties are generating more followers. It also determines in extension that if a party was created within the set values that this regression is based upon a party which focuses on problematizing and claiming the subjects of immigration, Euroscepticism and nationalism will gain more Facebook-likes than one who does not.

6.3 Model 2

The second regression carried out, referred to as Model 2, concerns the political leaders of the dataset. The analysis consists of the same independent variables as in Model 1, the only difference is that of the dependent variable which now is "Political Leaders' Facebook-likes". Out of the 92 possible leaders to be included in the regression 78 observations were made. This as in the previous model because some parties did not exist at the latest elections.

Once more it can be established that the variable representing right-wing populism holds explanatory value within the regression. With the results provided by *Table 4*

it can be said that the RW-leader variable's level of significance is 0.0046, which is an even more positive relationship than that of the political parties. By stating this it is not intended in any way to propose that the results of Model 1 were not significant. What this means is that right-wing populist party leaders holds larger followings than their non-populist competitors.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Constant	-213401.3	72965.41	-2.924692	0.0046
RW-Leader	3367415	113230.1	2.973956	0.0040
Vote Share	16571.76	4128.817	4.013683	0.0001
Vote Change	-13933.45	6298.174	-2.212300	0.0301
Population	0.007104	0.001470	4.831279	0.0000

Table 4

Furthermore, it is possible to see from *Table 4* the variable "Vote Share" once more confirms a positive relationship between the number of votes you attain in elections and the amount of likes you generate on Facebook. This, as in the previous model, has a probability value of 0.0001. This is visualized in *Figure 4*. The population variable proves to be correlated with the number of likes generated, which, once again, means it can be proposed that political leaders in countries with larger populations will gain a larger number of followers on their Facebook accounts. The R-adjusted score for the model is 0,42 which is lower than Model 1 yet a high number on the scale. The R-adjusted value determines the accuracy of this model and with the score attained it can be stated that the model holds a high accuracy.
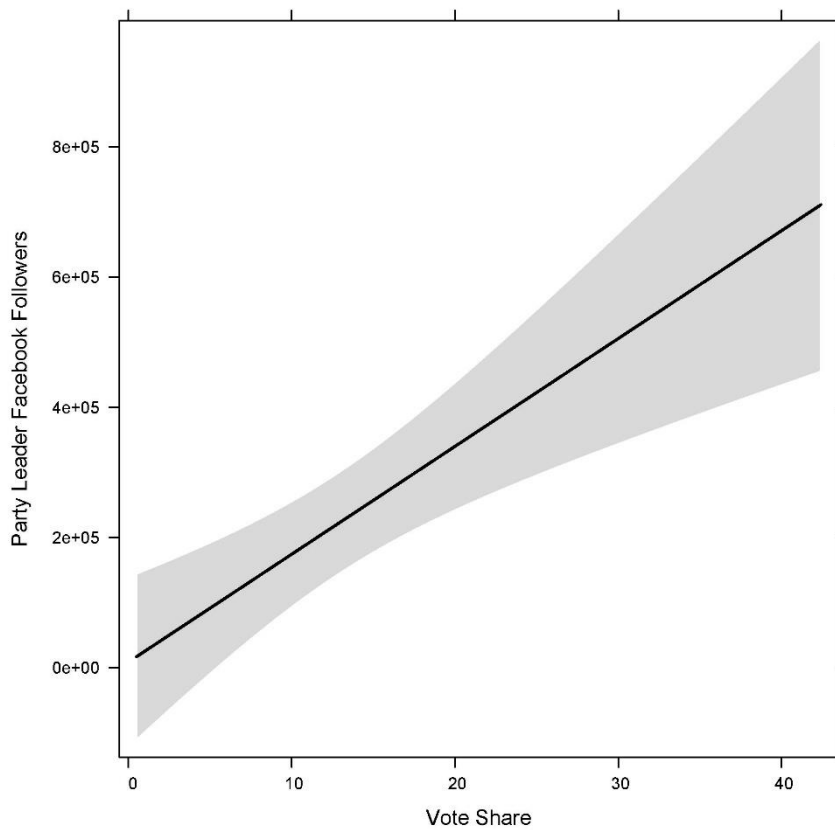
Figure 4

The "Vote Change" variable in Model 2 appears to be significant which was not the case when the regression for political parties was carried out. This proposes that a relationship exists between the change of electoral results and Facebook-likes. The coefficient value is however, somewhat surprisingly, negative. This means that if a political party's performance between two elections were negative the political leader will continue to grow on Facebook ignoring the failure. This is an issue which this thesis has not delved deeper into and does not intend to explain, it is simply an observation made. This will be commented on in a later section of the thesis, but only briefly and without intention of answering the question of why this is the case. This is illustrated in *Figure 5*. The significance level of this relationship is measured to 0,0301, which is slightly less than the remaining variables.
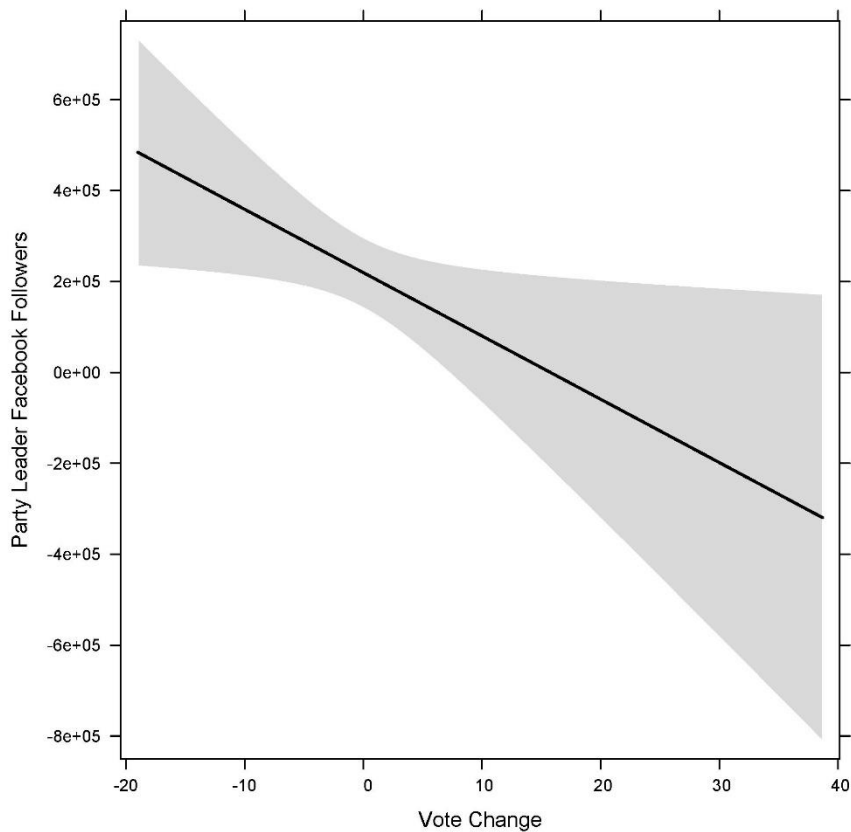
Figure 5

As was done with the previous model a figure illustrating the predicted probabilities was designed for Model 2. In *Figure 6* the Y-axis represents the dependent variable Facebook-followers and the X-axis the independent variable of right-wing populism among leaders. The dummy variable is once again the non-populist coded as "0". The prediction intervals are located on each side of the figure in red, where the predicate possibilities for both non-populist and right-wing populists are mapped out. The non-populist leader will on average generate around 175 000 likes on Facebook with a minimum of 95 000 and a maximum of 250 000. The right-wing populist leader can expect an average of 505 000 followers on average with a minimum of 300 000 and a maximum of 710 000. This indicates that right-wing populist leader on average will generate a substantially larger following than their non-populist competitors. There is a spread between parties on the spectrum of right-wing populism and this concerns vote share, vote change, population and of course when looked at more specifically political leadership, actual political actions, and agendas. However, it seems that when this spectrum is viewed as a whole and they are measured as one it is clear from

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this study's results that they are gaining larger followings than those parties who confirm to a non-populist policy. It shall be stressed that this is predicted probabilities and these results are based upon the robustness of the study and the laws governing predictions within regression analyses. It is in no way a truth or a fact, it is an observation possibly opening the door for others who deem it necessary to explore it further.
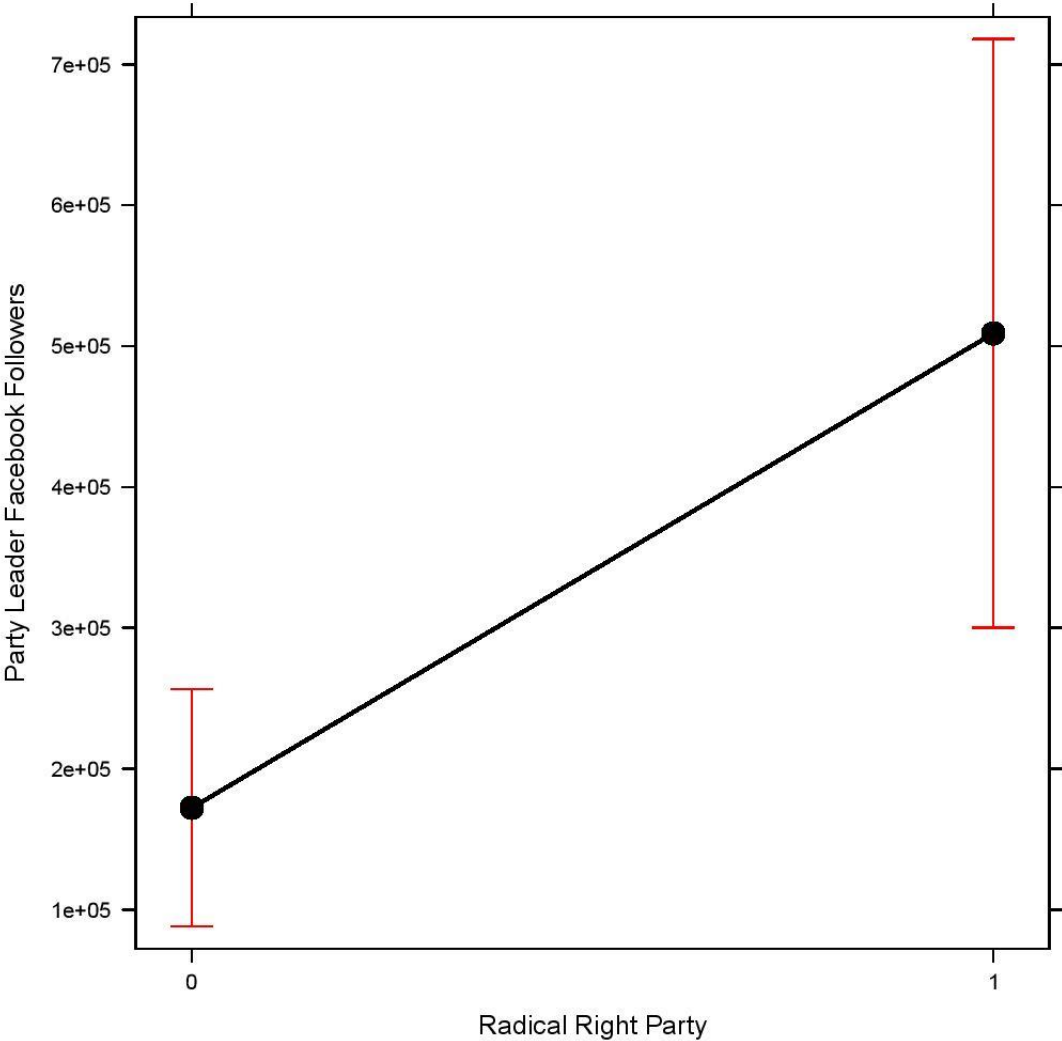

Figure 6

7. Analysis

The idea of this study spawned in the fall of 2017 because of a simple observation of right-wing populist parties on social media in the Nordic countries. That observation seemed to indicate that the right-wing populist parties in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark were beating their non-populist competition on social media. There were obvious similarities between the countries which were taken into account, these concerned vote share for the populist right, population in relation to the rest of Europe and the culture of the countries. There were differences as to when the right-wing populist parties gained actual political representation on national or international level, but the theory felt strong enough to further study and develop. 12 countries in western Europe were selected and it was at this time decided that the theory possibly could be applicable on right-wing populist leaders as well as the parties. As the research was carried out it could be established that the right-wing populist parties and leaders across Europe were gaining larger followings than the remaining non-populist parties and leaders. The findings and the dataset they were based upon are in themselves valuable for further studies. However, to extend the thesis from an observation to a possible academical answer as to why these right-wing populist parties are generating these numbers an analysis of the results is required.

The thesis introduces in the sections of "previous literature" and "theory" a selection of academical work on the subjects of political engagement, rational choice and cognitive appraisal theory. A combination of the three makes up the intended theory that will be applied on the results found within this study. It is of importance to establish that there are countries among these 12 where the right-wing populist party is the largest political party when measuring by Facebook-likes while they are not the largest political part in vote share. There is in fact not a single right-wing populist party holding the largest vote share in any of the countries included in the study. It is therefore not as simple as saying that the largest party offline gets the largest following online. This thesis would however argue that political parties attain a majority of their Facebook-likes from a percentage of their voters, and as some political parties have a larger base of votes they can attain, in theory, larger amounts of Facebook-likes. This means that the followings of Political parties in large consist of people who vote for the party they have liked. Apart from the Facebook-likes which are political engagements performed by voters of the party this thesis argues that voters from both the traditional left-wing and the traditional right-wing engage with parties they do not vote for.

7.1 High and low-cost engagement

To understand the results and present a possible explanation the thesis proposes that the engagement of liking something on Facebook is a low-cost engagement. In comparison a high-cost investment would be attending demonstrations, walking in marches, physically fighting for your political beliefs, or coming out to vote. These high-cost engagements cannot and probably should not be defined as equal in cost, however they are not to be seen as low-cost. When discussing costs connected to political participation or engagement there is a plethora of studies performed and a large sum of these are based upon rational choice theory. In this study the collection of ideas within rational choice are not the most valuable addition, it is rather the specific idea that political engagement comes at a cost. Laver (1997) does explicitly state that it could be argued that the cost of voting can be considered a very small one.[30] However small that cost may be this thesis argues that it will never be smaller than that of a Facebook-like. At least not in the current way the two engagements are carried out.

The term "costs" in this context is hardly a set number of things, basically anything can be argued to be a "cost" to the person who engages in an activity. The costs agreed upon in a large amount of the cases are monetary loss and time-consuming activities.[31] Monetary loss can be translated to such trivial things are the leather sole of your shoe being worn out by you walking to the polls to vote, and time-consuming activities could be determined to be googling for a political parties' standpoint on domestic affairs. Looking at higher costs one could bring forth the extreme possibility of dying in a violent demonstration or the loss of respect from your family because of voting against the beliefs of your nearest. As can be seen engaging yourself politically comes with costs and these costs have different values.

Where does this leave the political engagement of liking a political party or a political leader? Previous research done on the social media platform Facebook has lead researchers to believe that Facebook-likes cannot be understood as cost-free engagement.[32] It is an action where the individual is selective and decides upon interacting with the political party or leader based on at least one subject or preference which they both share the same

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[30] Laver, p. 94.
[31] Ibid, p. 92.
[32] Kristersen et al., p. 4.

standpoint upon.[33] This could mean that the individual believes that a party or a leader represents the individuals' best solution to a problem. When deciding what party to vote for in an election there are several areas of political interest wherein the individual must make crucial decisions. Do I believe in higher or lower taxes? Do I support the European Union, or do I find them to be unnecessary? Is immigration an asset or a burden? The questions presented as examples cannot summarize the endless number of questions a voter is faced with, it is a sample of the possible questions which can be presented. This large number of questions will all be important when the voter is deciding on which party to vote for, as the elected politicians will be able to rule and thus actually impact how these issues are handled.

On Facebook however, this is not the case. The Facebook-like holds no such value, it gains the party or leader no actual political power. Yet the Facebook-like, as previously stated, cannot be believed to be completely cost-free, but rather a selective action where the individual shows support for at least one of a party's standpoints. Imagine then that a voter could decide on the subject or subjects that he/she could support, yet the support would not mean actual political power. For example, the Social Democratic party in country X represents most of voter Ys' beliefs, however voter Y does not think they are handling the refugee situation nor immigration in a satisfactory way. It is however not to the extent where the non-satisfactory handling of the questions concerning immigration is of larger importance than the collected subjects which Y is pleased with. Come election day voter Y will vote for the social democratic party X but up until that point he has discussed the problematic situation concerning immigration with friends and family, perhaps even on social media, perhaps he liked the populist parties Facebook page. This example is the core of the thesis, voter Y is the proposed difference between the numbers of likes generated by right-wing populist parties and their non-populist competitors.

7.2 Anger, anxiety and political behavior

In order to strengthen this statement academical work concerning political engagement and anxiety must be presented. In studying anger and anxiety connected to political participation Valentino et al. found that the two emotionally responses trigger different types of behavior.[34]

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[33] Ibid, p. 9.
[34] Valentino et al., p. 163.

Anger makes the individual risk-seeking in finding a solution to an issue. Risks are connected to costs, an individual who is willing to risk is also willing to pay the costs if the engagement would end poorly. This could be connected to high-cost engagements such as joining rallies where violence may occur. Take the case of Charlottesville, the individuals on both sides were aware of the hatred and the opposing views present when the two sides clashed. The emotional responses which has led to leaving your house and facing your opponent is based on a form of anger, the anger on both sides are located on two completely different parts of the political spectrum but it has nonetheless mobilized individuals. On the other hand, anxiety leads to risk-avoiding behavior, anxiety is not effective if the goal is to mobilize. Valentino Et al. states that because of this, anxiety within the political arena does not lead to high-cost engagements.[35] However not participating in high-cost engagements does not mean not participating at all, it is in fact so that anxiety stimulates low-cost expressive actions.[36] In conclusion it can therefore be said that anger triggers high-cost political engagement, and anxiety triggers low-cost expressive engagement. As stated in a previous paragraph, studies have found that Facebook-likes and not cost-free and this thesis would agree but also add that they are not costly. Few would argue that Facebook-actions are non-expressive, they are rather the opposite, they are expressive by nature. This would make it possible to define a Facebook-like as a low-cost engagement of expressive nature. The exact type of interaction that people who feel anxious about something would engage in. Voter Y which was mentioned earlier is not angry enough to join rallies, however he/she is anxious enough to perform a low-cost political engagement to express his/her discontent with something. The proposed reason as to why right-wing populist parties and leaders are larger on Facebook than their competitors is because of individuals who feel anxious about the specific subject the right-wing populist control which in turn generates the populists likes but not always votes.

7.3 Populism within other political affiliations

An interesting observation made in the early stages of this study was that of the Swedish party "Feministiskt Initiativ", a party created to represent a feminist political entity in the Swedish political arena. The feminist party in Sweden is in fact the third largest political party on Facebook with 139 000 likes on their official Facebook account meanwhile achieving 3,1% of

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[35] Valentino et al., p. 159.
[36] Ibid, p. 160.

the votes in the last election. This means that the top three political parties on Facebook in Sweden is the right-wing populist Swedish Democrats with 150 874 likes, the social democratic party with 145 000 and the Feminist party with 139 000 likes. The theory of anxiety leads to low-cost expressive actions is according to this thesis applicable on the feminist party as they represent a subject which makes many anxious concerning their possibilities to succeed in society and their overall position in the world. They are a voice within the political arena pinpointing issues of gender, an issue highly debated and increasingly important across the entire political spectrum. Liking the feminist party on Facebook does not mean you will vote for them, however it does mean you support the idea of equality which they represent. Further studies concerning populist parties not found on the right-wing would have to be carried out to give this single observation any value of generalization.

8. Conclusion

There are certain aspects of the thesis where critique may be of interest and especially concerning the theory of anxiety and political participation online. The first thing that would come under investigation is the dataset and the countries included. One could possibly argue that the countries selected are not as similar as the thesis suggests and that the definition of right-wing populism is not sophisticated enough. It may be that there are more efficient ways to research the uprising of right-wing populist parties on Facebook and the author of this thesis then only hopes this work was a pathway to greater and more precise findings. Secondly the theory which functions as the explanation as to why the right-wing populists are gaining grounds is based on research done on actions connected to the offline world. If it is possible to apply these theories upon human behavior in a digitalized era is yet to be proven and only further research can decide whether that is the case or not.

In a world where the digital platforms have come to replace the analog equivalents in almost all aspects and has done so within a small period of time it is hard to propose truths just yet. When political participation was studied in America in 2011 a low-cost engagement was placing a bumper sticker on your car[37], seven years later we find ourselves in a situation where the new low-cost engagement are the likes on Facebook. It is the same anxiety concerning politically charged subjects that actives the expressive actions, but the costs have possibly been further reduced.

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[37] Valentino et al., p. 166.

As to what the author suggests concerning further studies on the field of populism the next step should be focused on the eastern European countries and to statistically test if the theory of this thesis is applicable. Another interesting study would be on populist parties on the far left. Perhaps the case is that populist parties across the political spectrum gain larger followings and in that case a much larger dataset could be created for even stronger generalization. It is of the outmost importance to mention that Facebook is as a political tool not older than 10 years. The power, possibilities and functions of the platform are yet to be unleashed upon the public. The action of liking something may as of now seem like a simple, almost trivial action, but when gathered the collection of likes becomes endless ways of communications. The important question to ask is who dictates which matters are discussed, the political party people vote for or the party people like?

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10.　　Appendix – Dataset for political parties and leaders

Party	FB	Leader FB	Country	Voteshare	Votechange	Population
Kesk	15141,00	13748,00	Finland	21,10	5,30	5495000
Kok.	24451,00	4761,00	Finland	18,20	-2,20	5495000
SDP	20092,00	8411,00	Finland	16,51	-2,60	5495000
Sin.	707,00	3292,00	Finland			5495000
Vihr.	38526,00	14164,00	Finland	8,53	1,30	5495000
Vas.	27853,00	47239,00	Finland	7,13	-1,00	5495000
RKP	7876,00	1302,00	Finland	4,88	-0,60	5495000
KD	4395,00	14638,00	Finland	3,54	0,50	5495000
PeruS	35054,00	31750,00	Finland	17,65	-1,40	5495000
S	145266,00	129741,00	Sweden	31,00	0,30	9903000
M	88378,00	33507,00	Sweden	23,30	-6,80	9903000
C	45838,00	39217,00	Sweden	6,10	-0,50	9903000
MP	62895,00	21663,00	Sweden	6,90	-0,40	9903000
V	88280,00	35720,00	Sweden	5,70	0,10	9903000
L	25543,00	1378,00	Sweden	5,40	-1,70	9903000
KD	17022,00	18197,00	Sweden	4,60	-1,00	9903000
SD	150874,00	131829,00	Sweden	12,90	7,20	9903000
SocDem	94648,00	68131,00	Denmark	26,30	1,40	5731000
Venstre	69258,00	202917,00	Denmark	19,50	-7,20	5731000
SF	35944,00	59091,00	Denmark	4,20	-5,00	5731000
C - Kons	33387,00	39066,00	Denmark	3,40	-1,50	5731000
Rad-Ven	37495,00	30457,00	Denmark	4,60	-4,90	5731000
RG-ali	81030,00		Denmark	7,80	1,10	5731000
LA	94794,00	95672,00	Denmark	7,50	2,50	5731000
F-EU	22381,00		Denmark			5731000
Altern	92134,00	55911,00	Denmark	4,80		5731000
DF	85542,00	68682,00	Denmark	21,10	8,80	5731000
AP	132644,00	185794,00	Norway	27,40	-3,40	5233000
Höyre	125025,00	236848,00	Norway	25,00	-1,80	5233000
Sp	26286,00	30269,00	Norway	10,30	4,80	5233000
SV	47921,00	34502,00	Norway	6,00	1,90	5233000
Venstre	33980,00	16371,00	Norway	4,40	-0,80	5233000
KrF	15509,00	34771,00	Norway	4,20	-1,40	5233000
Gröne	63089,00	12747,00	Norway	3,20	0,40	5233000
Röde	35440,00	13861,00	Norway	2,40	1,30	5233000
FrP	161287,00	180790,00	Norway	15,20	-1,10	5233000
N-VA	100533,00	40399,00	Belgium	20,30	2,90	11350000
CD&V	11726,00	7478,00	Belgium	11,60	0,70	11350000
Open Vld	16440,00	10651,00	Belgium	9,80	1,20	11350000

Sp.a	37555,00	29973,00	Belgium	8,80	-0,40	11350000
Groen	60987,00	9438,00	Belgium	5,30	0,90	11350000
PS	49322,00	110353,00	Belgium	11,70	-2,00	11350000
MR	28773,00	18546,00	Belgium	9,60	0,30	11350000
cdH	4292,00		Belgium	5,00	-0,50	11350000
Ecolo	16912,00		Belgium	3,30	-1,50	11350000
DéFI	3311,00	2153,00	Belgium	1,80		11350000
PP	25494,00	14219,00	Belgium	1,50	0,20	11350000
VB	87733,00	26962,00	Belgium	3,70	-4,10	11350000
PSD	147118,00	143327,00	Portugal	38,60	38,70	10320000
CDS	30398,00	77453,00	Portugal			10320000
PS	59897,00	17103,00	Portugal	32,31	4,20	10320000
Left Bloc	609,00	73425,00	Portugal	10,20	5,00	10320000
PCP	4338,00		Portugal	8,30	0,40	10320000
Os Verde	9487,00	5581,00	Portugal	1,39		10320000
PNR	31097,00	4538,00	Portugal	0,50		10320000
PD	212634,00	1100787,00	Italy	25,40	-7,80	60600000
M5S	1098443,00	1988057,00	Italy	25,60		60600000
Forza	163583,00	993685,00	Italy	21,60	-15,80	60600000
MDP	21122,00	42477,00	Italy			60600000
AP	10278,00	123038,00	Italy			60600000
ALA	5794,00		Italy			60600000
LNP	347190,00	1938208,00	Italy	4,10	-4,20	60600000
CDU	171590,00	2521838,00	Germany	26,80	-7,30	82670000
SPD	182905,00	466427,00	Germany	20,50	-5,20	82670000
FDP	146871,00	245657,00	Germany	10,70	5,90	82670000
LINKE	245145,00	62192,00	Germany	9,20	0,60	82670000
A90/Greens	176405,00	143351,00	Germany	8,90	0,50	82670000
CSU	201329,00	108487,00	Germany	6,20	-1,20	82670000
AfD	383291,00	202422,00	Germany	12,60	7,90	82670000
En March	215607,00	1963843,00	France	28,20		66900000
LR	196206,00	16315,00	France	15,80	-11,30	66900000
PS	136151,00		France	7,40	-22,00	66900000
MoDem	8546,00	75433,00	France	4,10	2,30	66900000
FI	116732,00	1049001,00	France	11,00		66900000
PCF	55228,00	34413,00	France	2,70		66900000
FN	467835,00	1579078,00	France	13,20	-0,40	66900000
Conserv	638285,00	447035,00	UK	42,40	5,50	65640000
Labour	1012515,00	1376484,00	UK	40,00	9,60	65640000
SNP	288518,00	301116,00	UK	3,00	-1,70	65640000
LibDem	186081,00	10019,00	UK	7,40	-0,50	65640000
Plaid C	29470,00	35254,00	UK	0,50	-0,10	65640000
UKIP	589763,00	775768,00	UK	1,80	-10,80	65640000

VVD	88505,00	101954,00	Netherlands	21,20	-5,30	17020000
CDA	48892,00	24719,00	Netherlands	12,40	3,90	17020000
D66	73916,00	32318,00	Netherlands	12,20	4,20	17020000
SP	59363,00	44750,00	Netherlands	9,10	-0,50	17020000
PvdA	42998,00	37094,00	Netherlands	5,70	-19,00	17020000
CU	27933,00	23266,00	Netherlands	3,40	0,30	17020000
PvdD	119465,00	32114,00	Netherlands	3,20	1,30	17020000
50Plus	5368,00	2806,00	Netherlands	3,10	1,20	17020000
SGP	13026,00	20921,00	Netherlands	2,10	0,00	17020000
Denk	71025,00	81831,00	Netherlands	2,00		17020000
FvD	137406,00	1608,00	Netherlands	1,80		17020000
PVV	2455,00	250624,00	Netherlands	13,00	2,90	17020000
SPÖ	103028,00	235357,00	Austria	26,90	0,10	8747000
ÖVP	49380,00	713818,00	Austria	31,50	7,50	8747000
PILZ		36515,00	Austria	4,40		8747000
NEOS	81627,00	87756,00	Austria	5,30	0,30	8747000
Grune	68925,00	12466,00	Austria	3,80	-8,60	8747000
FPO	98029,00	764119,00	Austria	26,00	6,50	8747000