The Electoral Impact of the Financial Crisis:
Evidence Using District-Level Data*

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Abstract

Do economic downturns increase voter support for left or right parties? In our empirical analysis, we combine fine-grained registry-data on the labor market impact of the crisis and how it varied across 5000 electoral districts, with district-level data on vote-shares for all major parties in Swedish parliamentary elections before and after the crisis. Because the impact was so diverse across districts, we can estimate the electoral impact of unemployment more efficiently than usual. Moreover, because the crisis was an external and unexpected shock to the Swedish economy, we argue that the selection bias that is usually inherent in estimating the electoral impact of unemployment is mitigated. We find that the electoral impact of crisis-induced unemployment was large, benefiting right parties.

Keywords: voting, parties, unemployment, financial crisis, selection bias
The study of the political consequences of unemployment, which has a long history in political science, has gained renewed actuality in the wake of the global financial crisis. The crisis rapidly spread to Europe following the collapse of Lehman Brothers and had dramatic consequences for labor markets in many countries across the world. In particular, unemployment rates rose dramatically as the world fell into the most severe recession since the Great Depression. Much of the scholarly debate has centered on how governments have responded to the crisis (see, e.g., Armingeon 2012, Pontusson and Raess 2012, Lindvall 2012). What has been done to regulate financial markets? What steps have been taken to consolidate public finances, and which fiscal stimulus-measures have been adopted? This paper instead joins an emerging literature that studies the electoral consequences of the crisis (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2012, Nezi 2012, Broz 2013, Leduc and Pammett 2013, Lindvall 2014). In particular, we ask what are the partisan effects of the crisis? Did it benefit parties of the left or right at the polls?

There is little consensus among political scientists about whether economic crises will have a partisan effect and, if so, whether left or right parties will be the ones that reap the electoral reward. According to one line of reasoning, when countries face economic difficulties, voter support for demand-side policies and social protection programs will rise. As a consequence, left parties will benefit on election day, since they are typically associated with such policies in the minds of the electorate (Lewis-Beck and Bellucci 1982, Broz 2013, Wright 2012). According to another line of reasoning, the electorate will become more fiscally conservative during economic downturns (Durr 1991, Sihvo and Uusitalo 1995, Stevenson 2001). If this is the case, we should instead expect right parties to be the electoral beneficiaries of economic crisis (Stevenson 2002, Markussen 2008, Kayser 2009, Barnes and Hicks 2012, De Neve 2013, Graaström and Kayser 2013). Finally, work within the retrospective voting literature is usually silent on the issue of whether crises will affect support for either left or right parties, instead arguing that voters punish incumbent governments, irrespectively of partisan affiliation (see, e.g., Lewis-Beck 1990, Powell and Whitten 1993, Nannestad and Palldam 1994, Anderson 2000). Some scholars claim that the main electoral consequence of the finan-
Note: Poll results are from TNS Sifo. Number of respondents in each poll is approx. 2000. The ‘Alliance’ includes the Conservative Party, the Centre Party, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats. The ‘Red-Greens’ include the Social Democrats, the Left Party and the Green Party. The left advantage is total share of respondents indicating that they would vote for one of the ‘Red-Green’ parties if it were election day today less the corresponding figure for ‘Alliance’ parties. Unemployment is defined as the number who lack employment and are actively searching (defined as being registered with the Swedish Public Employment Agency). A vertical line has been drawn at September 2008; the month during which Lehmann Brothers filed for bankruptcy.

Figure 1: Left advantage in opinion polls and unemployment, 2006–2010

Social crisis was in line with the retrospective voting literature, and that voters punished the incumbents without regard to partisan affiliation (Kriesi 2012, Bartels 2014).

One potential reason for the lack of consensus in the literature are the methodological difficulties inherent in estimating the partisan electoral consequences of economic downturns. The first problem relates to statistical efficiency. Many study the electoral impact of unemployment during the normal business cycle, which means that the key independent variable does not vary a great deal across time and space. If there exists a partisan effect, the power to reject the hypothesis of no effect will in all likelihood be low in such studies. The second methodological challenge is the selection bias that
is usually inherent in estimating the electoral impact of unemployment. Perhaps most obviously, there exists the risk of reverse causality; that the relative strength of left and right parties has an impact on economic outcomes. The literature on partisan business cycles has forcefully argued that parties of the left will pursue fiscal policies that lower unemployment and increase growth (see, e.g., Hibbs 1977, Alt 1985, Alesina et al. 1997).

To deal with these methodological problems, we turn to the case of Sweden during the financial crisis. In Figure 1 we show the advantage of left parties measured as the combined support in monthly opinion polls for the ‘Red-Greens’ less that of the incumbent right-government (the ‘Alliance’) between the 2006 and 2010 elections. We also show monthly unemployment figures taken from public records. As can be seen, the support for the left parties rose after the 2006 election and leveled out in the beginning of 2008. Around the time Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy, however, the left’s advantage started to drop quickly, a trend that continued until the 2010 election. It can also be seen that the left parties’ advantage over the incumbent parties is inversely related to unemployment, and that the dramatic increase in unemployment that starts during the fall of 2008 is accompanied by a drastic reduction of the left parties’ advantage in the opinion polls. Judging by Figure 1, then, the Swedish experience during the financial crisis is consistent with the notion that parties to the right, rather than those of the left, will gain voter support during economic downturns. Since the right parties were in government between 2006 and 2010, Figure 1 also speaks against the notion that incumbent parties will necessarily be punished during economic downturns.

However, this evidence is only suggestive. In our empirical analysis, we use fine-grained registry-based data on the labor impact of the crisis and how it varied across Sweden’s more than 5000 electoral districts. These districts are based on residential areas and typically comprise around 1000 eligible voters. We combine data on the labor market impact with district-level data on vote-shares for all major parties in parliamentary elections before and after the crisis. Because the impact of the crisis was large and varied a great deal across Sweden, we are able to estimate the electoral
impact of unemployment more efficiently than most previous studies. The features of
the Swedish case, as well as the detailed data we have at our disposal, therefore allows
us to mitigate the first of the methodological difficulties inherent in estimating the
partisan electoral consequences of economic downturns.

We also argue that our case and data puts us in the position to ameliorate the
selection bias that is usually inherent in estimating the electoral impact of economic
downturns. Even if one studies the variation in voting for the parliamentary elections
across sub-national units and therefore, in one sense, is dealing with a ‘fixed’ incumbent, the extremely strong correlation between individuals’ voting in national and sub-
national elections still makes selection bias a potential problem. However, we argue
that the variation in the labor market impact of the crisis across Sweden is unlikely
to have been caused by the national government, or by differences in local government
partisanship. First, the sources of the crisis were not domestic, and can therefore not
be seen as part of the regular political business cycle. Second, the crisis came suddenly
and unexpectedly, ruling out the possibility that precautionary measures, either at the
national or local level, had been taken. We also show, empirically, that the regions
whose employment was most affected were not areas that deviated substantially with
regard to employment trends prior to the crisis.

According to the results, the electoral impact of crisis-induced unemployment was
large. We find that the combined vote share of right parties increases more in the areas
most severely affected by the financial crisis, while we observe a corresponding decrease
in the vote share of traditional left parties. This also means that our results do not
support the view that incumbents will be punished at times of crisis, or, at least, that if
there was any punishment effect, it was outweighed by the partisan effect. Then, we go
on to show that these results remain robust when we take into account any differences in
pre-reform trends across more and less affected areas, when we control for a number of
potential confounders and to alternative measures of the economic impact of the crisis.

\[1\text{It is important to note that since ours is a single-country study, we are dealing with a fixed}
\text{incumbent. Therefore, we can not, strictly speaking, test the incumbent-punishment hypothesis.}\]
We also disaggregate the left and right blocs, analyzing which parties of the left and right are driving our results. Our results indicate that the party whose vote share was most negatively affected was the Social Democrats, which is the largest party among the Red-Greens. And although the vote shares of several right parties were positively affected by the crisis, the Conservatives, which are the largest party in the Alliance, experienced the largest increase.

The paper is divided into five parts. In the first, we develop our argument about why the Swedish case provides an ideal environment for the study of electoral impact of the financial crisis. In the second, we describe the statistical model, the data and variable measurement. Our empirical results are presented in the third. In the fourth, we analyze some potential channels through which the financial crisis might have affected the 2010 elections. In the fifth, finally, we set out our conclusions.

**Estimating the Partisan Effects of the Financial Crisis: The Case of Sweden**

What makes for an ideal environment in which to study the partisan effects of the financial crisis? First, our estimation strategy relies on there being a large but varied economic impact of the financial crisis. In other words, we want our data to include geographical areas that were hit hard by the economic crisis, but also areas that were little affected. Second, it is preferable to study economic downturns that are not endogenously ‘chosen’ by geographical areas, or the political units they belong to, under study.

The Swedish recession was mainly driven by external factors, most notably the plunge in world demand and the subsequent collapse of international trade. Although the impact of the financial crisis on the Swedish economy was comparatively short, it was also deep. Between 2008 and 2009, GDP fell by over 5%, the largest fall in GDP since WWII. The increase in unemployment for the corresponding years was close to 34%. As can be seen in the leftmost panel of Figure 2, the increase in the Swedish
### Change in %–Share Unemployed

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Difference Post–Pre Financial Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
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### Change in %–Share Expecting Employment Situation to Worsen Next 12 Months

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Difference Post–Pre Financial Crisis</th>
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<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
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*Note: Unemployment figures in leftmost panel are from the World Bank. Citizens perception of the economic situation in the rightmost panel are from Eurobarometer. The chart shows the difference between the surveys that were conducted in April-May (Wave 69) and Oct-Nov (Wave 70) of 2008.*

Figure 2: Change in actual and perceived risk of unemployment before and after the financial crisis

The unemployment rate between 2008 and 2009 was larger than in most EU15 countries. In the rightmost panel of Figure 2, we also show how the crisis affected the public’s perceptions of the state of the economy, which is what should ultimately matter for voting behavior, more than objective economic developments. As is clear, Sweden is among the EU15 countries where the public’s perception of the economy changed most for the worse during 2008.

The economic impact of the crisis was not only large, but also varied considerably across geographical areas. The external nature of the crisis meant that it primarily hit the export sector, which is very sensitive to fluctuations in world demand. The crisis affected the entire manufacturing sector, but had an especially large impact on the wood, iron and steel, chemical and automobile industry, the most striking example being
Figure 3: Geographical distribution of the economic impact of the financial crisis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Change in OECD’s Projected Growth (%) Between June 2008 and June 2009</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Figures are projected growth rates taken from OECD Economic Outlook 85 less that from OECD Economic Outlook 83.*

Figure 4: Revised growth projections from the OECD Council of Economic Advisors the process that started with General Motors’s announcement in late 2008 that SAAB was for sale and that culminated in the bankruptcy and closure of SAAB production in 2010. Since the manufacturing sector is not evenly spread across the country, the crisis had a much larger economic impact on certain geographical areas than on others. This is illustrated in Figure 3, which shows how the impact of the crisis was distributed across Swedish municipalities. The crisis primarily affected areas in the Southwestern parts of the country, where a lot of the manufacturing sector is clustered. By contrast, many areas, especially in the northern parts of Sweden and in the surroundings of Stockholm, were hardly affected at all.

The case of Sweden thus fulfills our first criterion in that exhibits a large and varied economic impact of the financial crisis. The second criterion states that this variation should not be the result of an endogenous process, where geographical areas, or
the political units they belong to, sort themselves into the states of being, or not being, affected by the crisis, based on characteristics that are correlated with electoral outcomes.

It is apparent that Swedish policy-makers were surprised by the magnitude of the recession that hit Sweden in the wake of the financial crisis. When the Finance Ministry was preparing the budget for 2009 (which was published September 22, 2008) they were not expecting a significant economic downturn, and planned few stimulus measures. In the budget, the forecasted growth for 2009 is 1.3%, a figure that stands in sharp contrast to the fall in GDP (over 5%) that eventually took place. This can be contrasted with the revised budget for 2009 that was actually adopted by the parliament in the beginning of 2009, and which did include a number of stimulus measures. The severity of the financial crisis also appears to have surprised the Central Bank. Just five days before Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy in September 2008, the Swedish Central Bank raised the interest rate from the already high 4.5% to 4.75%. By the end of the year, however, they had lowered it to 2%. It is also apparent that the extent to which the financial crisis impacted on the Swedish economy surprised international experts. In June 2008, the OECD projected Sweden’s 2009 growth rate to be 2.1%. In June 2009, this had been revised downward to -5.5%. As can be seen in Figure 4, this was the third largest downward revision among the EU15 during this period.

The unexpected and external nature of the economic shock gives us good reason to believe that the Swedish case fits our second criterion, which states that the variation in the impact of the crisis should not be the result of an endogenous process, unusually well. In large part because the crisis was driven by falls in foreign demand, and therefore primarily affected the manufacturing sector, the regions that were most affected by the recession were not areas where unemployment was already unusually large. Rather, it was areas where unemployment was low prior to the downturn that was most affected. Furthermore, and most importantly given our the research design we employ below, the most affected areas did not deviate from the least affected with regard to the trends in unemployment. In the empirical analysis below, our main measure of the impact
Figure 5: Non-employed in the least and most affected electoral districts, 2002–2010

of the economic crisis is going to be the change in the % non-employed (a discussion of this, and alternative measures, can be found in the next section). In Figure 5, we show the average pre- and post-crisis non-employment rates for the most and least affected electoral districts. In particular, we have partitioned our data into two groups according to whether the electoral district that experienced an above- or below-the-median increase in the non-employment rate between 2007 and 2009. As can be seen, the trends in non-employment do not differ much between these two groups prior to 2008. As should also be clear, the difference between the least and the most affected districts shrank considerably between 2007 and 2009.

Note: Data are from Longitudinal integration database for health insurance and labour market studies collected by Statistics Sweden. The data is based on administrative registers and includes all individuals 16 years of age and older that were registered in Sweden as of December 31 for each year.
Statistical Model, Data and Variable Measurement

Our study of the relationship between district-level impact of the crisis ($C_j$) and party vote shares ($V_{jt}$) builds on estimating the following basic model

$$V_{jt} = \lambda_j + \theta_1 T_{2006} + \theta_2 T_{2010} + \gamma_1 T_{2006} \times C_j + \gamma_2 T_{2010} \times C_j + \psi X_{jt} + \mu_{jt}$$

(1)

where $j$ indicates districts and elections are indexed $t = 2002, 2006, 2010$. The variables $T_{2006}$ and $T_{2010}$ take the value 1 when the year is 2006 and 2010, respectively, and 0 otherwise. The difference in party vote shares between districts with different values of $C_j$ is allowed to vary between each of the three elections and is captured by $\gamma_1$ and $\gamma_2$.\footnote{Because we have included district specific intercepts, we cannot estimate how the 2002 election co-varies with $C_j$.}

In addition, we have included a district-specific intercept ($\lambda_j$), a vector of control variables ($X_{jt}$) with associated parameters $\psi$, and an error-term ($\mu_{jt}$).

When we have estimated 1, we can back out the standard differences-in-differences (DD) estimator:

$$V_{j2010} - V_{j2006} = \alpha + \beta_1 C_j + \psi (X_{j2010} - X_{j2006}) + \mu_{j2010} - \mu_{j2006}$$

(2)

where $\alpha = \theta_2 - \theta_1$ is the intercept and $\beta_1 = \gamma_2 - \gamma_1$ is the estimated effect of the crisis on party vote shares. We denote this model $DD_{10-06}$.

The advantage of the DD-estimator is that it gets rid of district-specific effects. This is important to the extent that district-specific factors have an effect on both the extent of the crisis at the district-level and party vote shares. However, for our differences-in-differences estimator to be a valid estimate of the effect of the crisis on party vote shares what has become known as the ‘parallel trends assumption’ must also hold. That is, we have to assume that the rate of change in party vote shares in the absence of the crisis would not have differed across districts with different values of $C_j$.\footnote{To be clear, we are not assuming the absence of trends had the crisis not occurred, only that trends would not have differed across districts with different values of $C_j$.}

In principle, the parallel trends assumption is untestable. However, in practical
applications, and if more than one pre-treatment period is available, it has become common practice to test this assumption by checking whether there are differences in the pre-treatment trends of the groups under comparison. In our case, this would mean analyzing whether trends in party vote shares are correlated with $C_j$ prior to when the economic crisis actually happened. This amounts to backing out the results from 1 to obtain the following $DD$-estimator:

$$V_{j2006} - V_{j2002} = \alpha + \beta_2 C_j + \psi(X_{j2006} - X_{j2002}) + \mu_{j2006} - \mu_{j2002}$$

where $\alpha = \theta_1$ and $\beta_2 = \gamma_1$, and accepting the parallel trends assumption if $\beta_2 = 0$. We will denote this model $DD_{06-02}$. In the methodological literature, this is often referred to as a kind of ‘placebo test’, and builds on the idea of using $\beta_2$ as an estimate of the difference in party trends across districts with different values of $C_j$ that would have obtained in the absence of the crisis.

One can push the logic behind this test even further. In particular, if we consider the pre-treatment $\beta_2$ as a good proxy for the difference in party trends across districts with different values of $C_j$ that would have obtained in the absence of the crisis, which is what applications using the above-described placebo test do, we can use this insight and estimate what is known as the differences-in-differences-in-differences (DDD) model. The DDD-model is the difference between $DD_{10-06}$ and $DD_{06-02}$

$$(V_{j2010} - V_{j2006}) - (V_{j2006} - V_{j2002}) = \beta_1 - \beta_2$$

which is simply the $\beta_1$ net of any pre-crisis differences in trends across $C_{ij}$. This model is denoted $DDD$. As can be seen, if $\beta_2 = 0$ the $DDD$-model will give us the same estimate of the impact of the economic crisis on party vote shares as the $DD_{10-06}$-model. It should be also be noted, however, that the results obtained from the $DDD$-model will become more and more different from those of the $DD_{10-06}$-model as $\beta_2$ moves away from 0 (in any direction).

We estimate 1 by applying OLS to data compiled from administrative registers and
use this to calculate (2) through (4). The following variables are used in the analysis:

**Dependent Variable.** Party vote shares, at the district level, made available by the Swedish Electorate Authority. From these data we construct the three aggregate measures used in the main analysis. *Left share* is the percentage of votes received by the left bloc, the ‘Red-Greens’, which includes the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party, and the Green Party. *Right share* is the votes received by the four governing parties in the right bloc, the ‘Alliance’, i.e., the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Centre Party. *Left advantage*, finally, is the difference between the vote shares of the left and the right bloc.

**Independent Variable.** Given the chosen research design we need to measure the extent to which various electoral districts was hit by the financial crisis. This we will do by studying the development of non-employment rates during the crisis. More precisely, we have access to information, from Statistics Sweden, on employment status in November each year for the entire Swedish population older than 15 years. In the next step we use this information to calculate the yearly shares of non-employed individuals in each electoral district. As our main crisis indicator we will then, finally, use the percentage change in the non-employment share between November 2009 and November 2007. Or more formally:

\[
\text{Crisis} = \frac{NE_{09} - NE_{07}}{NE_{07}},
\]

where \( NE \) denotes the share of non-employed individuals in a particular electoral district.

This crisis measure will thus capture the relative deterioration in labor market conditions associated with the financial crisis. Two things are worth commenting on about this measure. First, it is based on the change in non-employment rates rather than unemployment rates. An important advantage with non-employment rates is that the so-called discouraged worker effect will show up in this figure, i.e., those individuals that
leave the labor force due to the economic downturn. Moreover, the non-employment rates are less sensitive to the design of the unemployment insurance system (which underwent important changes just before the crisis) than are the unemployment rates. A second thing worth noting is that we use the entire adult population in a district as the basis when calculating the non-employment rate. This means that districts with a large share of retired people usually will score lower on our crisis indicator. We find this to be reasonable, because by basing our crisis measure on regional variation we have, implicitly, chosen to focus on the effects of the crisis that worked through local labor market conditions. It thus only seems natural to assume that the crisis was less pronounced in districts with a large share of retired voters, since these voters had no jobs to lose.

**Control Variables.** Even though we are studying a sample of comparatively homogenous units for a limited period of time, there may be concerns that the main independent variable, Crisis, is correlated with a number of variables that are, in their turn, correlated with trends in voter support. However, and as is well known, including controls that might be affected by the main variable of interest might lead to over- or underestimation of it’s total effect. Therefore, we have aimed to include a very limited number of controls that are correlated with, but not causally affected by, our measure of the economic impact of the crisis. These variables are average education (measured in years), average age and age squared, and the share of immigrants among the adult population living in a particular electoral district at the time of the election. The data comes from Statistics Sweden and have been aggregated up from the individual level.

In Table 1 we display some basic descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis for the year 2010. As can be seen there is a fair degree of variation both in voter support and the extent of economic crisis among the 4925 electoral districts included in the analysis.
Empirical Results

Before we turn to the main empirical analysis that was described in the previous section, we examine the basic relationship found in the data by means of a simple graph. Figure 6 shows our main dependent variable, left advantage, for the 2002, 2006, and 2010 elections. For the purpose of this visualization, the electoral districts have been divided into two groups depending on whether they score below (low) or above (high) the median of our crisis indicator.

As can be seen, the development in the pre-crisis electoral cycle was very similar across the two groups. Left parties lost about 10 percentage points of their votes to the right parties between 2002 and 2006. Turning to latter electoral cycle, however, we see clear indications that the financial crisis did have an influence on the outcome of the 2010 election. Although the left continued to loose votes in both types of electoral districts between 2006 and 2010, this trend was considerably more pronounced in the electoral districts that were most affected by the crisis. This finding might lead us to conjecture that the financial crisis worked to the disadvantage of left parties. We now turn to investigating whether this result holds up to closer scrutiny.

Table 2 displays our main results. The first two columns show the results when using left advantage as the dependent variable. As described in the previous section, the coefficient labelled $DD_{10-06}$ denotes the differences-in-differences estimate for the post-crisis period, whereas $DD_{06-02}$ is the corresponding estimate in the pre-crisis period. $DDD$, finally, is the difference between these two estimates. In model A, which includes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Share</td>
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<td>12.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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no controls, the effect of the crisis indicator in the post-crisis period is negative and statistically significant, corroborating our earlier finding that left parties did worse in the electoral districts that were most affected by the economic crisis.

This effect also seems to be of substantive importance. According to our estimates, an one standard deviation increase in the crisis indicator, decreases the left advantage by about 2 percentage points, which amounts to about half of the average gap in the vote share between left and right parties in the 2010 election. Moreover, in this model we find no signs of different trends in the pre-crisis period between high- and low-crisis districts. The $DD_{06-02}$ estimate is small in magnitude and does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Therefore, as can be seen in Table 2, the $DDD$ estimate lies very close to the $DD_{10-06}$ estimate.

When we include controls for district-level measures of age, education, and immigrant background, as we do in model B, the results change somewhat. Again, we find
Table 2: The political impact of the financial crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Left Advantage</th>
<th></th>
<th>Left Share</th>
<th></th>
<th>Right Share</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>$DD_{10-06}$</td>
<td>−.338***</td>
<td>−.275***</td>
<td>−.179***</td>
<td>−.149***</td>
<td>.158***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$DD_{06-02}$</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.119***</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.057***</td>
<td>−.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$DDD$</td>
<td>−.359***</td>
<td>−.394***</td>
<td>−.189***</td>
<td>−.206***</td>
<td>.170***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controls</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obs.</td>
<td>14775</td>
<td>14775</td>
<td>14775</td>
<td>14775</td>
<td>14775</td>
<td>14775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The models for which Controls=Yes include controls for education, immigrant share, age and age squared. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, allow for clustering at the district level. ***/***/**, indicates significance at the 1/5/10% level.

A quite large, and statistically significant, negative effect for the crisis variable in the post-crisis period. However, now we also find a positive pre-crisis trend in the data. That is, the drop in support for left parties between 2002 and 2006 was actually less pronounced in the electoral districts that experienced the biggest downturn during the 2008 crisis. If we assume that this trend would have continued between 2006 and 2010 if the financial crisis had not happened, we can obtain a measure of the impact of the crisis on the support for left parties by subtracting the effect in the post-crisis period ($DD_{10-06}$) from the effect in the pre-crisis period ($DD_{06-02}$). As can be from the table, this effect ($DDD$) is very similar to the corresponding effect in the model without controls. Consequently, whereas the inclusion of the controls changes the point estimates for the two periods somewhat, our main conclusion that it was the left parties that were hurt by the crisis remains unchanged.

In the remaining four columns of Table 2 we present the results for the left and right bloc, respectively. Given that these parties obtain the lion’s share of total votes in most districts, we should expect these results to give a similar picture as those of the first two columns. This is also what we find. To judge from the results, the onset of the financial crisis induced a direct transfer of votes from the left to the right bloc. A one standard deviation increase in the crisis indicator is estimated to have decreased
voter support for the left bloc by about one percentage point and increased that of the right bloc by the same amount.

### Table 3: Effect by party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>FP</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>KD</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$DD_{10-06}$</td>
<td>$-0.121^{***} -0.003$</td>
<td>$-0.025^{<em><strong>} 0.119^{</strong></em>}$</td>
<td>$0.055^{***} -0.005$</td>
<td>$-0.043^{<em><strong>} 0.018^{</strong></em>}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$DD_{06-02}$</td>
<td>$0.052^{<em><strong>} 0.054^{</strong></em>}$</td>
<td>$-0.048^{***} 0.010$</td>
<td>$0.000 -0.033^{<em><strong>} -0.039^{</strong></em>}$</td>
<td>$0.029^{***}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td>(0.012)</td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$DDD$</td>
<td>$-0.173^{<em><strong>} -0.057^{</strong></em>}$</td>
<td>$0.024^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.109^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.055^{***}$</td>
<td>$0.028^{***} -0.004$</td>
<td>$-0.011^{*}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td>(0.012)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** All models include controls for education, immigrant share, age and age squared. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, allow for clustering at the district level. ***/**/*, indicates significance at the 1/5/10% level.

In Table 3 we disaggregate the results by individual party. According to these, the two traditional left parties, the Social Democratic Party (S) and the Left Party (V), were the ones losing most votes due to the crisis. Conversely, the two parties gaining most from the economic crisis, the Conservative Party (M) and the Liberal Party (FP), are both situated at the right of the political spectrum. Overall, the consistency of the individual party with the more aggregated results lend additional credibility to the conclusion that the political right benefited electorally from the economic crisis.

Interestingly, the main radical right party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), do not seem to have gained from the crisis. Although the SD did better in the most affected electoral districts in the 2010 election, as can be seen from $DD_{10-06}$, it is evident from the $DD_{06-02}$ estimate this trend was even more pronounced in the pre-crisis period. If anything, the occurrence of the economic crisis thus appears to have slowed down the growth in voter support for the SD in the most affected areas. This is reflected in the $DDD$ estimate, which shows a small, but statistically significant, negative effect of the crisis on the vote share of the SD.

In Table 4 we examine the robustness of our results. In the column labelled $a$, we have introduced a sample restriction that excludes all electoral districts where the
number of eligible voters has changed by more than 15 percent between two consecutive elections. By doing so, we reduce the problems associated with the existence of splits and mergers of electoral districts. That is, in some cases an electoral district can retain the same identity code even though its geographical borders have changed. By introducing this sample restriction, the number of observations is reduced by about 20 percent. Yet, the results remain very similar to those presented before. For instance, in the first column of Table 4 we can see that if we increase our crisis indicator by one standard deviation, left advantage is expected to drop by 2.3 percentage points.

In the column labelled b, we instead investigate the extent to which our results are sensitive to how we measure the economic impact of the crisis. Rather than basing our measure on the increase in the number of non-employed individuals, we now measure the severity of the crisis at the district level by the percentage increase in the total number of recorded unemployment days in the district between 2009 and 2007. Although this measure is far from perfectly correlated with our preferred measure (the
product moment correlation is .32), the direction and magnitude of the effect of the
economic crisis remain similar when using this alternative measure. According to the
DDD estimate in Column b of Table 4, a one standard deviation increase in this al-
ternative crisis measure is associated with an expected 1.5 percentage decrease in the
advantage of left parties.

In the column labelled c, we use our original crisis measure but control for the level
of the dependent variable (e.g., Left Advantage) in the previous election. The reason
for including this control is to check to what extent there is any signs of a regression
toward the mean in party support that could affect our results. However, as can be
seen we find no evidence for this being the case. The results hardly change at all when
controlling for the lagged dependent variable.

In the column labelled d, we present the results from an analysis in which we control
for 250 electoral district cluster dummies. More precisely, we have used cluster analysis
to group our 5000 electoral districts in 250 groups based on the pre-crisis values (2006
levels as well as 2002-2006 changes) of 10 political variables (Left Advantage, the vote
shares of all 8 parties and turnout), and then we include a dummy for each cluster in
our regression analysis. Because the electoral districts placed in the same cluster should
be very similar in most relevant respects this procedure should severely reduce the risk
that our results are driven by unobserved pre-crisis trends in the data. However, a
drawback of this approach is that it will also severely reduce the variation in our key
independent variable, since we will now only use the within-cluster variance in this
variable to identify the effect of interest. As can be seen from the results presented in
column d of the table, we obtain qualitatively similar, although quantitatively somewhat
smaller results when controlling for the district clusters. Based on this analysis, it is
not possible to tell whether the decrease in the effect is due to the fact that we now use
a different type of variation to identify the effect or whether it signals that part of the

*As the statistically inclined reader may have noticed, this model includes both unit fixed effects and
a lagged dependent variable, which may lead to biased estimates of the coefficient of the lagged depen-
dent variable in short panels (Nickell 1981). We have therefore experimented with more sophisticated
estimators for this model but the results remain intact.
effect is driven by unobserved factors not picked up by our DDD-model.\textsuperscript{5}

It could also be argued that the difference-in-difference estimate in the pre-crisis period ($DD_{06-02}$) could be biased if our crisis measure is correlated with trends in labor market performance in the electoral districts before the crisis. However, as is to be expected given the external nature of the crisis, the correlation between our measure of the crisis and previous labor market trends is very low. For instance the correlation between the crisis variable and the change in the non-employment share between 2006 and 2002 is as low as 0.034. Consequently we obtain very similar difference-in-difference estimates in the pre-crisis period when controlling for the change in the non-employment shares. Without controls $DD_{06-02}$ goes from 0.020 to 0.018 when controlling for changes in non-employment, whereas the corresponding change for the model with controls is from 0.119 to 0.087.\textsuperscript{6}

Finally, another potential source of bias is spill-over effects between electoral districts.\textsuperscript{7} This would occur if, for instance, the crisis affectedness in an electoral district has an impact on the election results in neighboring districts. One solution, when concerned about such spill-over effects, is to study treatment effects at a higher level of aggregation (Duflo et al. 2007). Therefore, we perform an additional analysis where we move the level of analysis one step up, from the level of the electoral district to the municipality. Although we lose other advantages that result from using the more fine-grained district-level data, the problem of spill-overs mentioned should be ameliorated, since the degree of social, political and economic interconnectedness between districts within a municipality is much higher than the interconnectedness between municipalities. The exact results are in Table A2 of the Appendix. Overall, the effects are qualitatively similar, albeit quantitatively somewhat larger, as compared to those in Table 2.

In sum, the empirical results presented in this section strongly suggest that the

\textsuperscript{5}In Table A5 of the Appendix, we present more detailed results controlling for the 250 electoral district clusters. We also present fuller results for the other robustness checks in Table A7.

\textsuperscript{6}The full results for these are in Table A6 of the Appendix.

\textsuperscript{7}Technically, this would be a violation of the Stable Unit Treatment Value Assumption (SUTVA).
financial crisis of 2008 had a partisan effect. In particular, by utilizing the geographical variation in the severity of the economic crisis, we have been able to show that the support for political parties to the right of the political spectrum increased as a result of the economic downturn.

Channels

In this section we analyze some potential channels through which the financial crisis of 2008 might have affected the 2010 elections. First, we examine whether the drop in support for parties of the left was caused by a drop in turnout. Second, we investigate voters’ issue priorities and their evaluations of the major blocs’ policies in various areas. Third, we explore the role of the post-crisis economic recovery. The purpose of all three parts is to check the plausibility of our interpretation of the main results that were presented in the previous section.

Turnout and the Economic Crisis

One possibility that would invalidate our interpretation of the main results would be if it turns out that the Red-Greens’ loss is driven by a drop in voter turnout. In particular, some scholars have argued that economic adversity may lead some voters to withdraw from the political process. As Radcliff (1992, 444) writes, “economic downturns may foster preoccupation with personal problems that reduce the time and attention that may be paid to the more peripheral concerns of politics.” If you combine this with the common notion that left-of-center parties, which are typically claimed to be disproportionately supported by downscale socio-economic groups, will lose from lower levels of turnout (Pacek and Radcliff, 1995, Bartolini, 2000, Finseraas and Vernby 2014), you end up with the hypothesis that negative economic shocks may reduce support for left parties.

We deem it unlikely that lowered turnout is the channel by which the financial crisis of 2008 affected the 2010 elections. Not the least because opinion polls show that the
shift in voter support was visible (see Figure 1 in the introduction to this paper) almost immediately after the onset of the crisis. Nevertheless, and to investigate this possibility, we use the same basic statistical models as we did in our main analysis (which are based on the statistical model in 1). The only difference being that we replace the dependent variable (party vote shares) with turnout (measured in percent of the total number of eligible voters). The results are presented in Table 5, and although there is some evidence that the crisis may have affected voter turnout adversely, the effects are too small, quantitatively, to explain our main results regarding the impact of the crisis on party vote shares. If we base our interpretation on the $DDD$-model with controls in column 2 of Table 5, we find that a one standard deviation increase in our crisis measure decreases voter turnout by approximately .2 percentage points. To see that this effect is too small to explain our results for party vote shares, this number could, for instance, be compared to the $DDD$-model in column 4 in Table 2. The latter results suggest that a one standard deviation increase in our crisis measure decreases the left share by about 1.2 percentage points.

<table>
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<td>-.036***</td>
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<td>$DD_{06-02}$</td>
<td>.028***</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.008)</td>
<td>(.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$DDD$</td>
<td>-.047***</td>
<td>-.040***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.001)</td>
<td>(.001)</td>
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</table>

**Notes:** The models for which Controls=Yes include controls for education, immigrant share, age and age squared. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, allow for clustering at the district level. ***/***/** , indicates significance at the 1/5/10% level.

<table>
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<td>Obs.</td>
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</table>
Policy Evaluations, Issue Priorities and Voter Choice

We would also like to be able to corroborate that those who voted for the Alliance in 2010 did so primarily for economic reasons. An alternative interpretation would be that when economic crisis strikes, voters will tend to take more conservative positions on ‘social issues’, such as immigration, gender equality, law and order and the environment. This, in turn, could lead to a surge in support for parties of the right, who are associated with such conservative positions on the social dimension.8

To discriminate between these two interpretations of our results, we make use of aggregate evidence from the major Swedish exit poll (Valu). It is carried out by the Swedish public service television company (SVT) and asks voters which party they voted for, and also which bloc, the Red-Greens or the Alliance, had the best policy in various issue areas (Holmberg et al. 2014).9 In Figure 7, we show the results along with the share of respondents who stated they had voted for each bloc.10 As can be seen, the Alliance had a clear advantage in the areas of economic and fiscal policy. The share of respondents who indicated that they had the best policy for the Swedish economy as well on taxes far outweigh the share who actually voted for them. They are also viewed by a plurality of respondents as having a better policy on employment and education than do the Red-Greens. If we instead turn to the environment and social welfare, we see that the Red-Greens are considered to have the best policy, and that the share of respondents who indicated that the Red-Greens had the better policy in these areas is considerably larger than the share who actually voted for a party belonging to this bloc. These evidence, then, speak against the interpretation that the gain in right party support was due to an increased emphasis on social issues. Rather, they were

8What we call the ‘social dimension’ goes by several names in the literature on European party systems, for example the ‘materialist/post-materialist’ (Inglehart 1990) and the ‘libertarian/authoritarian’ dimension (Kitschelt 1994).

9Survey responses were collected from both absentee voters and voters voting on election day. The entire sample consists of 11,889 voters, of whom 11,563 voted in the parliamentary election. The survey was conducted in four Swedish cities in different parts of the country (Göteborg, Lund, Stockholm, and Umeå,) that were not randomly selected. Nevertheless, the distribution of votes over the parties is fairly close to the actual election results.

10Among the respondents, 45.2% indicated that they had voted for a party belonging to the Red-Greens, whereas 48.4% state that they had voted for a party belonging to the Alliance.
Figure 7: Which bloc had the best policy in various areas according to voters? Percent of respondents. Dashed (Dotted) line shows the share of respondents supporting the Alliance (Red-Greens). In the election, the Red-Greens got 43.6% and the Alliance 49.3% of the votes.

considered the better choice on issues of economic policy.

This conclusion is strengthened when we consider what policy issues voters say were important when they made their decision on which party to vote for in the parliamentary elections. The Valu-respondents were presented with a list of policy issues and, for each issue, they could then choose from the following five response categories: ‘very important,’ ‘fairly important,’ ‘neither important nor unimportant,’ ‘fairly unimportant,’ and ‘very unimportant.’ We have recoded the data to a 5-point scale that starts at 0 (‘very unimportant’) and goes to 4 (‘very important’). In Figure 8, we present the results for 12 policy issues. Economic issues (employment and the Swedish economy) and those associated more broadly with the welfare state (social welfare and education) and some 11

\[\text{Note: Poll results are from SVT Valu. The ‘Alliance’ includes the Conservative Party, the Centre Party, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats. The ‘Red-Greens’ include the Social Democrats, the Left Party and the Green Party.}\]

\[\text{The number of issues covered when asking about what issues lay behind voters’ party choices is somewhat larger than when asking which bloc has the best policy.}\]
Figure 8: How important were different issues for voters’ party choice? 0=very unimportant and 4=very important. Entries are means for all respondents as well as for Red-Green, Alliance and Sweden Democrat voters. All group differences are significant at the 95% confidence level except for the difference between the Alliance and Sweden Democrat voters on private enterprise and social welfare.

Poll results are from SVT Valu. The ‘Alliance’ includes the Conservative Party, the Centre Party, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats. The ‘Red-Greens’ include the Social Democrats, the Left Party and the Green Party.

were the most important for voters. With the exception of the environment, which places sixth among all respondents, the issues associated with the social dimension (gender equality, law and order, immigration) end up on the lower half of the ranking. This, too, speaks in favor of the interpretation that it was economic issues, and issues related to the welfare state more broadly, that were at the forefront of most voters minds when casting their ballot in the 2010 elections.

When breaking the results in Figure 8 down by bloc, we see that the most important reason, on average, for voting for a party belonging to the Alliance in 2010 appears to be the issue of the Swedish economy, followed by employment, education, private economy and taxes. Given that the Alliance was considered to have the best policies regarding
matters of the economy, it is not surprising that voters who emphasize these issues vote for a party belonging to this bloc. For those voting for the Red-Greens on the other hand, the issue of social welfare is the most important one, followed by employment, education, personal economy and the environment. As we saw in Figure 7, social welfare and the environment are also the issues where the Red-Greens are considered to have the best policies. The voters of the Sweden Democrats, which does not belong to any bloc, are the only ones for which social issues are at the forefront. Their most important issues are immigration, followed by law and order. After these issues, however, come the Swedish economy, the personal economy and employment.\footnote{On the issues of immigration and law and order the Sweden Democrats has taken a strongly conservative position, whereas it has taken right-of-center views on economic policy (Erlingsson et al. 2014).}

In sum, voters as a group appear to have had greater confidence in the Alliance’s ability to manage the economy in the wake of the financial crisis and it was also economy-related issues that were most important to voters during this election. And while Alliance voters did appear to emphasize some issues that are associated with a conservative position on the social dimension (law and order), the economy was the most common reason voters chose to vote for one of the Alliance parties. Those who voted for the Red-Greens also placed weight on some social issues – the environment and gender equality, which are associated with a liberal position on the social dimension – but appear to have placed the greatest emphasis on employment and issues associated with the welfare state (social welfare and education). Taken together, all this significantly adds to the plausibility that our main empirical results are indeed driven by economic voting.

**Economic Recovery**

In the previous section, we showed that voters in the 2010 election as a group had greater confidence in the incumbent Alliance’s ability to manage the economy. Perhaps the Swedish right parties gained in that election as a consequence of the comparatively quick recovery of the Swedish economy? However, as could be seen in Figure 1, the
left opposition’s advantage in the opinion polls fell dramatically immediately after the September 2008 events (see Figure 1). That is, the turnaround took place long before the economy had begun to recover. In the Appendix, we utilize the fact that elections to the European Parliament took place in June 2009 to investigate this more closely. In particular, our analysis there shows that there is a very strong correlation between the outcome of the 2009 elections to the European Parliament, which took place before Sweden’s recovery after the financial crisis had started, and the parliamentary elections of 2010. To validate this, and given the strong correlation between the two election results, we have replicated our main results in Table 2 of our paper, replacing the 2010 parliamentary election results with the results from the 2009 elections to the European Parliament. All results are qualitatively similar to those in the first two columns of Table 2 in our paper, in that the left bloc fared worse in districts that saw a larger increase in non-employment in the wake of the financial crisis.

The findings presented in the Appendix thus further validate the notion that our results are not driven by successful crisis management and/or economic recovery. A more plausible interpretation, and one that would reconcile the findings in this and the previous section, builds on the theory of ‘issue ownership’ (Petrocik 1996). Longitudinal research on issue ownership among the Swedish parties shows that the Conservatives (the leading party in the Alliance) has ‘owned’ the issue of employment since 2006; that is, two years prior to the Lehman crash (Martinsson 2009). In other words, and rather than earning a reputation for being competent in the aftermath of the Lehman Brothers crash, the right parties that make up the Alliance had already successfully managed to convince many voters that they were more competent to handle macroeconomic issues, so that when the crisis struck, voters turned to them.

**Conclusion**

The study of the political consequences of unemployment has a long history in political science. This topic has gained renewed actuality in the wake of the the global financial
crisis. While there has been a vigorous public debate about the electoral consequences of the crisis, there have been few systematic scholarly attempts to investigate its partisan effects. In the small emerging literature there is little consensus, a state of affairs we partly attribute to the difficulties inherent in estimating the partisan electoral consequences of economic downturns. In this paper, we present a novel data-set, which combines fine-grained registry information on the labor market impact of the crisis and how it varied across Sweden’s more than 5000 electoral districts, with district-level data on vote-shares for all major parties in parliamentary elections before and after the crisis. With this data in hand, the Swedish case can be used to address the main difficulties faced by scholars in the literature. First, since the labor market impact was so diverse across many districts, we can estimate the electoral impact of unemployment efficiently. Second, because the crisis was an external and unexpected shock to the Swedish economy, we argue that the selection bias that is usually inherent in estimating the electoral impact of unemployment is mitigated. According to our analysis, the crisis, working through local labor market conditions, had a large impact on election outcomes. In particular, our results suggest that it is parties of the traditional right that will make electoral advances in the wake of crisis. The results do not support the view that incumbents will be punished at such times, or, at least, that if there was any punishment effect, it was outweighed by the partisan effect.

We have argued for the internal validity of studying the partisan effects of the financial crisis in the Swedish context. But what about external validity? Of course, one should always be careful when drawing conclusions about other countries based on a single-country study. However, there are a number of things that suggest that our results may, indeed, travel to other countries. First, the Swedish government’s discretionary measures in response to the crisis were far from exceptional if one compares to other European countries (Armingeon 2012). This speaks against the interpretation that the Swedish right parties gained in the 2010 election merely a consequence of their perceived skillful handling of the economic crisis. And one also has to remember that even though the government presented few discretionary measures before 2009, the left opposition’s
advantage in the opinion polls fell dramatically immediately after the September 2008 events (see Figure 1), that is, before any discretionary measures had been announced. Second, like in many other European countries, the economic crisis occurred in the middle of the Swedish electoral cycle. That is, if one worries that voters are myopic and react differently at the ballot box depending on the distance to significant events, Sweden is a typical case with regards to the timing of the election in relation to the financial crisis. Third, and perhaps most importantly, our results are qualitatively similar to those found in Lindvall’s (2014) cross-country study, where he finds that right parties gain votes in the wake of the crisis, even when controlling for incumbency status.\textsuperscript{13}

One possibility for making further progress in establishing the generalizability of these findings, is to examine in greater detail the underlying mechanisms. For instance, in this paper we have suggested that issue ownership may be of importance to understand why the right gained political support when the crisis hit Sweden. To the extent that this can be shown to have been the case also in other countries, this would speak to the generality of our findings. We therefore consider this to be an important avenue for future research.

To sum up, we believe the results of this study have important implications for current debates about the political consequences of economic crisis. First, our results speak to scholarly debates about how governments have responded to the crisis (see, e.g., Armingeon 2012, Pontusson and Raess 2012, Lindvall 2012). If the great recession has had consequences for the partisan make-up of governments, as our results would suggest, this is likely to have consequences for public policy. The financial crisis can, in this way, have an indirect effect of public policy. Second, our findings also suggest that, in discussing the partisan consequences of the crisis, public and scholarly debates have been too focused on the effects on radical right-party support. We find that in Sweden, it was the traditional right parties that gained support in those geographical areas that

\textsuperscript{13}Although they do not quantify the rightward swing, Leduc and Pammett (2013) argue that in the majority of elections in European countries following the crisis, parties of the right were strengthened.
were most affected by the crisis. The main Swedish radical right party (the Sweden Democrats) also make larger advances in these areas than in those unaffected by the crisis. However, this was only a continuation of a positive pre-crisis trend in support for the party in the most affected areas. In fact, if one takes this pre-crisis trend, which was much more dramatic than the post-crisis trend, into account, it appears that the crisis might even have negatively impacted on the radical right party’s election result in 2010. In light of this, we believe that the debate on the electoral consequences of the crisis would benefit from paying equal attention to the broader electoral patterns that have unfolded in the aftermath of the crisis.
References


