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Right-wing populism support in the Dutch national borders.

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This master thesis is the logical end of a two-year MSc program in International Relations and Diplomacy. The reason why I have decided to write my thesis on this topic was out of genuine curiosity and my continued interest in both elections and maps. The story behind it starts from June 2017, when I was checking out the electoral map of the French Presidential Election results. Despite all the difficulties encountered during the research, I hope I was able to demonstrate an interesting final project. I would like to thank both of my supervisors, Dr. Jaroslaw Kantorowicz (Leiden University) and Dr. Peter van Ham (Clingendael Institute) for their valuable insights. In addition, I would like to thank my friend Daniel Kasper who helped me with the conduction of Twitter analysis. His software knowledge was quite crucial for this research. Finally, thanks to everyone who was supportive and understanding throughout the entire thesis marathon.

Table of Contents

List of Figures & Tables

List of Abbreviations

1. Introduction	8
1.1 Research Topic	8
1.2 Research Question	9
1.3 Academic and Societal Relevance	11
1.4 The Composition of the Research	12
2. The Literature Review	13
2.1 Literature on Right-wing Populism	14
2.2 Literature on Distributional Policies	17
2.3 Literature on Communication Strategies	17
3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses	19
3.1 The Economics of Borders	19
3.2 Theories of Electoral Behavioral Models	22
4. Research Design	25
4.1 Case Selection	26
4.2 Variables and Data	27
4.3 Methodology	31
4.3.1 Statistical Analysis	31
4.3.2 Twitter Data Analysis	32

5. Analysis33

5.1 Summary and Descriptive Statistics33

5.2 T-Test Analysis40

5.3 Twitter Analysis43

5.4 Results45

6. Conclusions49

6.1 Summary50

6.2 Limitations and Future Research Agenda51

Appendices

Bibliography

List of Figures & Tables

Figure 1: The electoral success of PVV	p.10
Figure 2: Mean values of PVV support	p.36
Figure 3: Mean values of low-income households	p.36
Figure 4: Mean values of social help recipients and crime rate.....	p.37
Figure 5: Mean values of the median standard income	p.37
Figure 6: Mean values of the total population	p.38
Figure 7: Mean values of population groups.....	p.39
Figure 8: Mean values of employment groups.....	p.40
Table 1: Summary of the Dataset	p.34
Table 2: Results of the T-Tests	p.41
Table 3: Keywords used for the Twitter analysis	p.44

List of Abbreviations

AfD – Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)

CBS – Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Central Bureau for Statistics)

EU – European Union

FN – Front National

FPÖ – Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria)

PVV – Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom)

SPD – Svoboda a Prima Demokracie (Freedom and Direct Democracy)

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Topic

Throughout the last couple of decades, European socio-political life was experiencing a considerable increase of right-wing populist parties. It showed itself more explicitly after the Global Recession of 2008-2009. Consequently, it evidenced by the recent political changes such as the British Referendum on the EU Membership and the election of Donald Trump as the next President of the United States. The mass media, experts, and various scholars were forecasting that this trend might continue in the elections of different European states in 2017 (Brookings, 2017). Such countries as the Netherlands, Germany, France, Austria, and the Czech Republic had crucial elections in 2017.¹ A vast number of discussions have emerged due to the right-wing populist parties (PVV in the Netherlands; AfD in Germany; FN in France; SPD in the Czech Republic; FPÖ in Austria) who were criticizing the current state of affairs in a quite extensive character. Despite the fact that these parties got more votes and influence in the political lives of their countries, their votes were insufficient for forming governments and taking power (except for FPÖ in Austria who became a junior partner in the governmental coalition). However, before proceeding with the discussion, there is a need for explaining the central notions of this study. Before defining right-wing populism, one needs to define the term 'populism.'² In general terms, populism is a "communication style of political actors that refers to the people" (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: p.322). In a broader sense, populism regarded as a 'thin ideology' which encompasses and puts its primary focus on a small number of issues by hesitating to construct an approach or opinion towards broader socio-economic matters on the political agenda. (Freedon, 1996).

As for the right-wing populism, its definition in itself is a challenge within the academia, as these parties are neither far-right nor moderate right in the classical understandings of these terms. In addition, these parties also disagree with these labels and avoid them (Norris, 2005). Scholars tend to use such terms as "radical right", "anti-system", "new right" among others (Ignazi, 1992; Fennema, 1996; Minkenberg, 1997). Norris (2005: p.192) questions the appropriateness of these

¹ Despite the recent elections in Italy, it was not mentioned for two reasons. First, the elections took place in 2018. Second, Italy is peninsula state which does not make it relevant for this research. See pp. 26-27 'Case Selection' for a broader discussion.

² This research will solely focus on the right-wing populism.

labels by arguing that right-wing populist parties tend to combine neoliberal stances on the economy with "an authoritarian stance on social issues." What is remarkable about these parties is that their ideological stance based on three main pillars. It is important to point out that the views which will be listed below are only applicable for European right-wing populist parties.

First of all, in ideological spectrum, right-wing populist parties are often referred as 'national conservative' parties. National conservatism is a type of conservative ideology which focuses on the national interests of the state. Such notions as cultural and national identity have a foremost priority (Mandal, 2007). Thus, they also prioritize their citizens over the citizens of other states by advocating that the central governments need to take care of their nationals. In political science, this phenomenon called as 'welfare chauvinism' (Givens, 2005).

Second, right-wing populist parties show a strong opposition towards the immigration policies conducted by their national governments. The reason for this attitude is cultural and economic. Modern European right-wing populists perceive immigration of foreigners (with a particular emphasis on immigrants of non-Western background) as a threat to their socio-cultural values and lifestyle. Furthermore, right-wing populists see immigration as a significant burden to the national budget, as such facilities like refugee centers funded from the money of taxpayers. Notably, during the last year's elections in Europe, right-wing populist parties were concerned that the Syrian refugee crisis constitutes an inevitable damage for the European welfare states.

Finally, the earlier mentioned two characteristics reveal another significant aspect about right-wing populist parties. Concretely, these parties show a strictly skeptical view towards the European Union. Right-wing populists claim that the European Union is a highly bureaucratic institution which diminishes the national sovereignty of its member states (Werts, Scheepers, and Lubbers, 2013). The central argument is that the member states are unable to make their own decisions as they are overwhelmingly dependent on authorities in Brussels.

1.2 Research Question

As mentioned, the elections in European states throughout the last year showed a dramatic increase in the success of right-wing populist parties. However, this is not the central focus of

this research. Apart from the results of these elections, one needs to pay attention to the maps of the electoral results as they show an intriguing pictorial puzzle. The electoral maps of five elections mentioned above have shown that radical right parties were more successful at the border constituencies of their states. Figure 1 shows the electoral outcome of Party for Freedom (PVV) during the last year's Dutch General Elections (for the results of German elections, see Clarke (2017); for the results of French, Austrian, and Czech elections, see Appendices I-III). The yellow, orange and red areas show that PVV got at least 15 percent of the municipal vote. Right-wing populists were particularly successful in the majority of national borders of the Netherlands, France, and the Czech Republic. Both in Austria and Germany, parties were not successful on western borders.

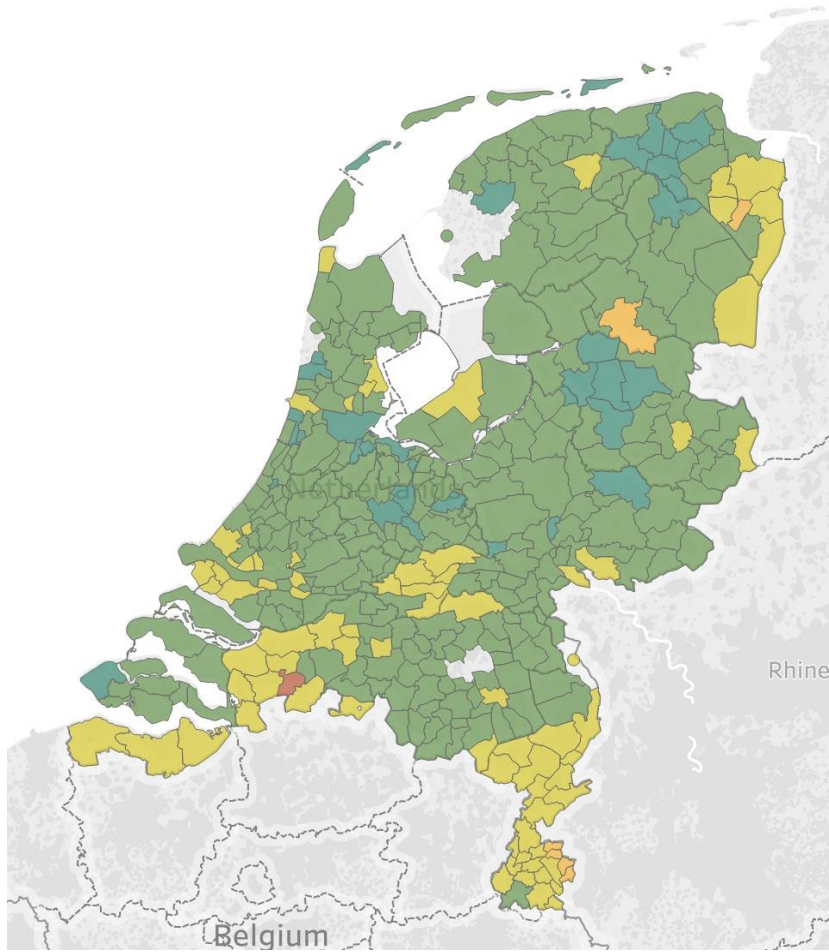


Figure 1: The electoral success of PVV.

Before articulating the research question, there is also a need in giving the definitions of a "national border" and "border constituency." The national border is a geographical line of separation which delimitates two sovereign entities (nation-state, federation, etc.). Border constituency is a unit of national administrative division which is geographically located on the national border and is neighboring with another sovereign entity. The names for these constituencies differ from state to state. For example, while in the Netherlands it is 'Gemeente' (municipality) in Germany it is 'Kreis' or 'Landkreis' (district). Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the analysis will not assess solely the municipalities located on the borders. As it is visible from the Figure 1, PVV also enjoyed electoral success in many municipalities which are close to the borders. Even though they are technically are not considered as border municipalities, their proximity to the national border increases the likelihood for a similar environment with border municipalities. This feature is in particular applicable for non-border municipalities which squeezed between Belgian and German borders in the province of Limburg. With this in mind, the notion of 'border municipality' will refer not only to municipalities on the national borders but also to ones which are close to them.³

Eventually, the pictorial puzzle shown and discussed above, leads to the research question of this study: *why do residents of border constituencies vote for right-wing populist parties?*

1.3 Academic and Societal Relevance

There is a need to highlight that the master thesis will have some innovative aspects. First of all, the electoral behavior on the national borders is a highly neglected topic for the analysis. There is barely any research on this issue. However, it is both challenge and an opportunity for the researcher.

On the academic level, this study is aiming to add into the debate on the economics of borders. The economics of borders is a discipline of political economy which focuses on the national border from a perspective of public goods. This study will look for the relationship between the distribution policies induced by the central governments and the recent electoral success of PVV

³ See p. 28 (section 'Variables and Data') for the criterion on which a municipality is considered as 'border.'

in Dutch borders. Second, this study will contribute to the theories on models of electoral behavior. Furthermore, it will add to the areal-ecological approach of the electoral geography which is widely used by various scholars. The areal-ecological approach seeks for the relationship between socio-economic data and the electoral outcomes. Finally, this study is intended to employ the data analysis of a Twitter account. The Twitter data analysis is a recently emerging type of a content analysis which is still in its initial levels of development.

On the societal level, the primary focus will be on the following questions. The fact that border municipalities had higher support for the right-wing populist parties raises some issues. Is there a difference in PVV support between borders and non-borders? Is there a social, economic, or demographic difference between the residents of the border and non-border constituencies? If yes, what are the reasons for these differences? Is it possible to prove them statistically? Are central governments performing well in satisfying the needs of border residents? Is there some socio-economic deprivation in border constituencies? This study will try to seek for answers to these questions. It will help to establish a clearer picture of the overall situation of border municipalities.

1.4 The Composition of the Research.

This master thesis is going to consist of six chapters. **Chapter II** will shed light on the current debate related to the research question by providing the literature review. As the topic of this research lacks any previous analysis, the focus will be on three particular subjects. First, the attention will be on the current findings which explain the nature of modern right-wing populism in Europe. Second, the discussion will continue with the literature focused on the governmental distribution policies. The literature review will finish the discussion with the communication strategies used by political parties for their electoral campaigns. **Chapter III** will share the theoretical framework and the hypotheses. This study will employ two theories, and each of them will be linked to one hypothesis. The first focus will be on the economics of borders. This research hypothesizes that the residents of border municipalities have different preferences over the distribution of public goods. Second, the attention will be upon the models of electoral behavior. The second hypothesis postulates that the right-wing populist parties will share more

information with a focus on the border municipalities. It assumes that the content of shared data will trigger certain behavioral patterns of border residents. Hence, it will affect PVV's electoral success. **Chapter IV** will provide the research design of this study. The research design consists of three main pillars. First, it will describe the selected case. This study will analyze the Netherlands and PVV's electoral success at the last Dutch General Elections. Second, it will discuss the variables and data used during the research. It will provide the details of a generated dataset by including the expectations from the variables of a dataset. The dataset consists of various socio-economic indicators as well as data on population and employment. The final section of the chapter will describe the methodology of the research. The study will employ statistical analysis for testing first of its hypotheses. Concretely, it will run T-tests to verify whether there are systematic differences between the border and non-border municipalities. The study will look at the averages of variables in border and non-border municipalities. It will let us understand the differences between the two types of municipalities. Twitter data analysis will be used for testing the second hypothesis. The investigation will encompass Geert Wilders' (PVV leader) official Twitter account. It will conduct a multi-step keyword search which will seek to understand whether Geert Wilders' tweets contain specific sentiments which might trigger the support in borders. **Chapter V** will share the results of the analysis. A number charts and tables will enrich the statistical analysis. The thesis will follow with a discussion of the results. **Chapter VI** will summarize the research project, provide conclusions, limitations, and the further research agenda.

2. The Literature Review

This section is going to discuss the existing literature within the scholarly debate related to the research question of this study. The literature hugely lacks the discussion on the support of right-wing populism in border constituencies. Even though there is a lot of research on the spatial distributions of the electoral behavior, there is barely any academic work which is focusing on the electoral behavior of citizens residing in border constituencies, not speaking about right-wing populist support in these areas. Given this, the literature review will attempt to link existing research from various disciplines which arguably might be a baseline for this research. With this aim, the literature review will cover: (1) the present debate on right-wing populist parties, (2) the

existing literature concerning the distribution policies by the central governments, (3) the literature which discusses the way political parties communicate with the electors. The reasons why these topics covered are the following. First, the literature on right-wing populism will shed light on their strategies, the issues they raise, and their overall nature. Second, the central assumption driving this research is that the unequal distribution of public goods might be a key in explaining higher support in border municipalities. Third, another assumption of this research presumes that right-wing populist parties employ particular communication strategies which in turn might affect the electoral behavior of border residents.

2.1 Literature on Right-wing Populism

In recent years, there is an observable increase in the literature on right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. Mudde (2013) emphasizes a finding that the literature on the issue skyrocketed since the 1990s. The primary focus of these studies was on the social basis of this support (Lipset, 1960; Norris, 2005), the reasons of this support (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt, 1995; Kitschelt, 2000; Mudde, 2013) and the institutional approach to it which describes the relations between the electoral system and the right-wing populism support (Givens, 2005). However, some investigations were done for understanding regional populist parties' support which is concentrated in peripheries (Woods, 1995; Mazzoleni, 2005). Still, the focus was not on border constituencies.

The electoral behavior on the national borders is a recently emerging phenomenon, and the literature hugely lacks the research on the issue. Steinmayr (2018) have made one of the first efforts on the topic. His study focuses on Austrian Federal State Elections which took place in 2015. He analyzes the relationship between the refugee influx in Austria and the electoral success of Austrian Freedom Party in the elections mentioned above. The selected case which is the federal land of Upper Austria was experiencing an influx of refugees who were heading towards Germany. This phenomenon was especially relevant for the border municipalities of Upper Austria. As a result of the state elections in 2015, Austrian Freedom Party has doubled its votes in Upper Austria. On the one hand, some municipalities were welcoming refugees and embracing the contact between them and native population. On the other hand, border

municipalities were reluctant in this kind of activities. He argues that municipalities which have hosted refugees had lower support for the Freedom Party due to the existence of contact between refugees and natives. As a matter of fact, municipalities with refugees had less support for Freedom Party by 3.45 percent. At the same time, border municipalities had higher support by 2.7 percent. Hence, he argues that the more is contact, the less is support for right-wing populism.

However, Steinmayr's assessment is limited to (1) the refugee crisis and (2) refugees' route from their states to Germany. The analysis does not cover the situation with non-Western migrants who are already residing in Upper Austria. Additionally, it remains unclear why then the Netherlands also had higher support for PVV in its border municipalities. It should be noted that the Netherlands did not experience an extensive amount of issues with refugees crossing its borders. Finally, it focuses on the particular relationship between refugees' influx and support for right-wing populist parties. Nonetheless, the finding that higher number of migrants decrease right-wing populist support gives a considerable contribution to the research. Therefore, this will be discussed furtherly in the analysis.⁴

Woods (1995) elaborates on the emergence of regional parties in Europe during the 1990s. He provides the example of Italian Lombard League and suggests that one of the key reasons of this emergence and popularity is the increasing problem of distribution which might result in the protest of peripheries since they are the most affected from errors of distribution. At this point, Woods emphasizes the paradox of center-periphery integration. On the one hand, the concentration of resources in the center is done to avoid political and economic uncertainties. On the other hand, this results in the emergence of socio-cultural distances between centers and peripheries. Besides, he draws a profile of an average right-wing populist movement supporter by stating that they generally represent small business and self-employed individuals. The similar parallels are observable in Mazzoleni's study (2005) in which he provides the example of Swiss "Lega dei Ticinesi" which unlike Lombard League, also raises issues on the national level.

A necessary approach to understanding right-wing populist support was made by Givens (2005) and Norris (2005). Both of them come up to a conclusion that proportional electoral systems with

⁴ The dataset will include a variable showing the percentage of non-Western migrants per each Dutch municipality. See p.30 for a detailed explanation.

low thresholds give more chances and strategic room for populist parties. Norris, in particular, suggests that the reason why small parties in such systems go for right-wing populism is that there is too much of a competition in centrist parts of the political system due to the firmly established mainstream parties. Norris (2005) also pays attention to such detail as the current political environment prior to the elections. She is arguing that the electoral success of right-wing populist parties heavily depend on the general socio-political situation. For instance, the recent popularity of right-wing populists primarily related to the refugee crisis in Europe, economic instabilities within Europe such as the European debt crisis, etc.

Kitschelt (2000) argues that right-wing populist parties are gaining popularity due to the frustration towards mainstream political parties. Notably, he underlines the fact that the differences between center-left and center-right parties have been shrinking on socio-economic questions. At the same time, Mudde (2013) highlights that right-wing populist parties began to increase their influence in the post-Cold War Europe. Despite the rising popularity, right-wing populists have been in only 8 out of more than 200 national governments formed in Western European states since 1980. Furthermore, in all of them, right-wing populists were the junior partners of governing coalitions. Although these numbers might raise some skepticism towards the issue, this does not mean that right-wing populists are out of European political life. Such variables as the crime rate show an insignificant correlation with the electoral success of right-wing populists.⁵ Mudde concludes that right-wing populists might affect the public opinion on several issues, but there was no observable change in the long-term character. Finally, he finds that the influence of right-wing populists is only successful on socio-cultural policies. He believes that right-wing populist parties are limited in their success as they are focusing on existing problems and do not add anything new to the political debate. Minkenberg (2001) argues that right-wing populist parties during their participation in national governments tend to focus on cultural policies.

⁵ Despite the fact that Mudde (2013) argues that there is a weak relationship between crime rate and right-wing populism support, the variable showing crime rate per each municipality was added to the dataset. Since security is a vital public good, the crime rate might show another dimension of distributional failures of the central government. See p. 29 in the sub-section 'Variables and Data' for a detailed explanation.

2.2 Literature on Distribution Policies

The economic reasons which trigger the electoral behavior remain as one of the heated debates among the economists. Many studies tend to link the distribution of public goods with the political outcomes in specific locations. For instance, Johansson (2003) argues that the central governments do not implement equal distribution as their goal is not to satisfy all of their citizens. Their primary objective is to satisfy the social groups and areas which will ensure their reelection. She is concluding that governments treat equals unequally. The economies of scale play a role of a valuable instrument here. The more citizens have similar priorities, the lower will be the costs of public goods. Hence, the more citizens are satisfied, the higher are chances for reelection. In support of this argument, Dixit and Londregan (1998) emphasize that the political parties usually favor their strongholds in their proposed distribution policies.⁶ Dur (2001) in his research introduces a different point of view. He analyzes the relationship among wages, unemployment, and citizens' voting behavior. He makes a compelling argument that wages and distribution policies are closely correlated. In particular, higher social help for unemployed citizens requires higher taxes. Thus, it results in a higher rate of unemployment. Consequently, he claims that higher unemployment will bring demands for the redistribution.⁷

2.3 Literature on Communication Strategies

The literature which is focusing on the communication strategies of political parties with their electors requires particular attention. The relationship between political parties and social media is one of the emerging topics of discussion. It is possible to see that parties use online platforms for their outreach. What is remarkable about it is that social media became a platform not only for connecting ties between the party elites and the electorate, but it also became a tool for regional and local party structures which are using social media for coordinating their activities.

⁶ This study believes that the central governments are failing in satisfying and compensating the preferences of border municipalities. See pp. 19-22 (section 3.1 'The Economics of Borders') for a detailed explanation.

⁷ With this in mind, the dataset also includes such indicators as the median standard income, low-income households, and unemployment rates per each Dutch municipality.

Right-wing populist parties are not an exception here, and they are also quite involved in the increase of their popularity by means of online tools (Kramer, 2017).

Although the relationship between populist parties and media is a highly investigated topic, the impact of the Internet was highly neglected (Aalberg, et al. 2017). The primary focus was on the general interaction between populism and traditional media. However, one should emphasize that the increasing number of research in populism-social media relationship is mainly due to the highly critical approach of right-wing populist parties towards traditional media. It argues that right-wing populist parties see an alternative in the face of social media by which they can avoid conventional means of sharing the information.

Kramer (2017) during his assessment of interplay between right-wing populist parties and social media emphasizes a possibility that populist elements might integrate into the lifestyle of specific environments and therefore it might affect the creation of a new political identity.⁸ One of the leading social media strategies of right-wing populist parties is the accumulation of informational sources (news or any other content) which depicts the scenes of inappropriate behavior by specific groups within the society (e.g., violence committed by a non-Western migrant).

Kim and Baek (2018) conduct a comparative analysis of online and offline campaign activities. Their research aimed to understand the modern patterns of both campaign strategies. The results of their study give way to new findings. It has appeared that online campaigning strategies turned out to be more successful than offline strategies. Campaigning through online platforms is more efficient. The most significant advantage of online campaigning lies in the fact that it requires fewer resources both financially and timewise. The implication for it constitutes a win-win situation for both political parties and electors. The authors detected that electors through online platforms show a higher involvement in the political debates and on the issues in the political agenda.

The main limitation of the existing literature mainly focused on the following. First, the researchers of right-wing populist parties had problems with the data collection which raises questions about their robustness (Mudde, 2013). Second, there is hardly any discussion on the

⁸ This study hypothesizes that the residents of a border and non-border municipalities have different preferences over the distribution of public goods. Hence, these shared preferences also trigger the emergence of shared identities.

spatial distribution of right-wing populist support. Third, the arguments made on the national peripheries remain mostly vague. The scholars have also mentioned their confusion on the way right-wing populist parties might affect the public opinion.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The existing research mostly came up to a conclusion that electors favor right-wing populist parties due to a couple of reasons. On the one hand, the primary trigger is the socio-economic dissatisfaction. On the other hand, the support is highly linked to the information provided by media and political actors. For the purposes of clarity, this study requires putting the current assumptions into one robust framework. With this aim, this study is intended to adopt two theories to explain the higher support of right-wing populists on border constituencies. It is important to point out that studies on electoral geography have polished two ways in investigating electoral outcomes (Busteed, 1975). First way focuses on understanding the relationship between socioeconomic variables. With this aim, it will focus on the theory of 'the economics of borders.' The economics of borders is a body of political economy which is studying the interplay between economic and political variables with a focus on the national borders.

Various factors might determine the electoral behavior of citizens. The discussed literature has shown that the information shared by political actors is one of the significant aspects which affect the decision made by electors. This information triggers certain actions by the electors. Scholars have been able to classify various types of electoral behavior in a number of models. Apart from the description and illustration of the theoretical framework, each theoretical approach will be linked to one of the hypotheses of this study.

3.1 The Economics of Borders

The economics of borders is a body of political economy which is focusing on the relationship between economic and political variables on the national borders. Studies on the economics of borders usually focus on the distribution of public goods within the state (Alesina and Spolaore,

1997, 2005, 2012; Bourdignon and Brusco, 2001). These studies believe that the failures in the distribution of public goods might affect the political outcomes on the national borders. A public good is a type of asset which is both non-excludable and non-rival for consumption (Cowen, n.d.). Public goods are non-excludable in a sense that it is impossible to exclude anyone from its use. They are non-rival in a sense that the consumption by one individual does not diminish the chances for another individual's consumption. National security, roads, public education, infrastructure, public funds among others are prominent examples of public goods.

The primary source for public goods' provision is the taxes paid by the citizens. In its turn, the central governments are distributing public goods within the state. Public goods tend to have a homogeneous character due to the economies of scale (since producing a higher quantity of a particular commodity requires fewer finances). What is not taken into account is that not all citizens will approve public goods provided by the central governments. There is a sufficient probability that some social groups will prefer a different set of public goods. As an instance, it might be a case for the residents of border constituencies. Spolaore (2012: p.4) emphasizes a finding that diversity of preferences over public goods tends to emerge "disagreements over the fundamental characteristics of the state." These disagreements called as "heterogeneity of preferences." The point is the public goods provided by the central governments do not meet the needs of border residents who feel dissatisfied with the distribution.

The theory suggests that ideally speaking the central governments supposed to compensate border residents via public transfers. It has an aim to diminish the dissatisfaction among residents. Although, these public transfers (e.g., preference-based redistribution) are highly unlikely due to the feasibility and administrative costs. In fact, it is quite complicated for the central governments to calculate different preferences. Besides, the economics of borders postulates that "benevolent social planners do not exist" (Spolaore, 2012). The implication of this idea lies in the fact that the central governments will inevitably fail in satisfying the needs of all citizens. In other words, despite residents of border constituencies will pay for the public goods, they will not get the preferred ones. The number of disagreements and preferences does not determine the amount of taxes paid. Overall, the inaccurate distribution ends up in the appearance of a tax-base effect. This effect captures the difference of average income between

the border and non-border constituencies. Finally, the theory suggests that this variance has a link to the electoral outcome in these constituencies.

However, there is a question which is still arising. Why particularly border constituencies need to be affected by the inaccurate distribution of public goods? The literature suggests a number of reasons for it. First of all, it is important to point out that distribution of public goods is made on the base of income, not on the base of preference. Second, van Houtum (1998) argues that border constituencies are being perceived as 'peripheral' in both home and neighboring country. Finally, the importance of border constituencies considered as limited to the national level which often results in an inaccurate distribution of wealth (Crush, 1980). Findings mentioned above make possible to assume that the central governments show neglect in both satisfying and compensating the needs of border constituencies. The proof of this neglect is possible to see in the socio-economic data per municipality. One implication of it is the accumulation of capital and resources to the areas closer to the central government. On the other hand, the deviation of these indicators in border constituencies will detect the accuracy of this assumption.

The discussion above is possible to summarize in the following way. First, residents of border constituencies have a different set of preferences over the distribution of public goods. Second, the central governments are failing in satisfying preferences of border residents. The homogeneous nature of public goods determines this failure. Third, the central governments are failing in compensating the inaccurate distribution of public goods. The inability to detect the differences defines this failure. The central government as a non-benevolent actor will try to encompass a higher number of its subjects by neglecting the preferences of border constituencies over the distribution of public goods. The economics of borders has several implications in real life. First of all, residents of border constituencies are experiencing an aggravation in socio-economic conditions. Second, the shared experience among residents leads to a formation of a shared identity which aims to achieve a more fair distribution.

The existing literature on right-wing populist parties emphasizes that electors tend to vote for right-wing populist parties in certain conditions. One of them is the frustration towards the established mainstream political parties (Givens, 2005). Since the mainstream parties do the inaccurate distribution, it gives a higher likelihood for electors to support alternative parties which offer a different political agenda with different plans regarding the distribution of public

goods. In recent years, one of these alternatives in European states appeared to be right-wing populist parties. In particular, their criticism towards the political establishment and their distribution policies triggered support for them. This master thesis hypothesizes that the inability of central governments to satisfy and to compensate the preferences of border constituencies leads to higher support of right-wing populist parties in these constituencies. Besides, it is assumed that deviations of socio-economic indicators affect the popularity of right-wing populist parties in border constituencies. These findings bring us to the first hypothesis of this study.

Hypothesis I: *If preferences between the border and non-border municipalities vary, then there is a possibility that border municipalities will not be satisfied, leading to higher support for a right-wing populist party.*

3.2 Theories of Electoral Behavioral Models

Despite the fact that the economics of borders is a well-established theory with a quite narrow focus on such notion as the national borders, it should be underlined that economic approaches to the electoral geography are in nature insufficient. This insufficiency has a ground in the inability of economic approach in encompassing the behavioral side of the question. The urge on the development of behavioral approach was emphasized by some scholars (Minghi, 1963; Busted, 1975). The focus on the decision-making process which considered as a result of "evaluation of the available information" was a crucial idea in boosting the development of this discipline (Busted, 1975: p.40). Therefore, the behavioral approach in studies of the electoral geography focuses on the extensive analysis of the information. The central argument here is that electoral behavior is a result of a combination of elector's values with the received information regarding the parties and other political powers (Cox, 1969). Auxiliary information opens the way for the elector in his assessment and choice. At this point, it should be understood that the sources of this information are playing a vital role in shaping the elector's choice. Busted (1975) calls these sources 'information cues'. Cox (1969) argues that the information cues are more effective in peripheries rather than in national centers. State peripheries, especially national borders have less population, and therefore social interaction distinguished within smaller groups. What is

remarkable about these groups is that they possess a set of believed values which builds a more common ideological ground for them. Crucial importance has the means of communication between parties and electors. Technological development has also affected the way political parties communicate with them. In addition, right-wing populist parties ended up in benefitting the most from these shifts. These parties usually had conflicts with the traditional media. A closer examination of the details reveals that these conflicts had its ground in the highly critical approach of right-wing populist parties towards conventional media. As a matter of fact, traditional media is continuously criticized for being deceptive towards the society and for being supportive towards the established mainstream political parties (Kramer, 2017). With its increasing popularity, social media has become a suitable alternative for the modern right-wing populist parties for creating bonds with their supporters.⁹

Scholars were able to generate a number of theoretical models which explain various incentives of electoral behavior. This study will focus on three particular models which are relevant to the research question. These models are *the neighborhood effect*, *the friends and neighbors effect*, and *the location protection model*.

The neighborhood effect focuses on the difference between the actual and natural supporters of a political party. Natural supporters are party members or long-term supporters while actual supporters include the total number of electors which voted for a particular political party. The neighborhood effect postulates that the number of votes for a particular political party will be much higher than the number of its natural supporters. Butler and Stokes (1970) advocate that a political party after reaching a certain amount of popularity begins to monopolize the information flow in the particular environment. Consequently, this dominance ends up in getting the votes even from the expected opposers. The reasons for it might be different. On the one hand, there is a possibility that electors purposefully accommodate to the local political environment. On the other hand, a set of strict values gradually transforms newcomers into the

⁹ There is a widely accepted fact that younger generations predominantly use the internet and social media. On the other hand, there is a belief that older generations are more inclined to support right-wing populists. Even though this statement is somewhat valid, some researchers have found that citizens younger than 25 have shown significant support for right-wing populists. See p. 30 for a more detailed discussion.

supporters of the dominant political party. According to Kramer (2017), right-wing populist parties tend to spread the existing values of the particular environment via social media. The primary objective here is to strengthen the political identity and increase the neighborhood effect.

The friends and neighbors effect illustrates a situation in which a candidate or a political leader is particularly successful due to his or her popularity in specific areas. This popularity might be triggered by various indicators such as birthplace, an educational entity in which the political leader studied, etc. For instance, one of the reasons why PVV is particularly successful in the region of Limburg is since its leader Geert Wilders was born in the city of Venlo, which is also located on the German border.

Finally, the location protection model describes a situation in which residents of a particular area contain a belief that the political agenda of the mainstream political parties constitutes a threat to the lifestyle, values, and views of a certain location (Busteed, 1975). Therefore, residents tend to show an extraordinarily robust voting behavior. However, location protection requires some conditions. It might happen if political party protects or promises to protect residents from threats. It also might be a case if the stance of the party and its candidate is strong enough to convert the concerns into the actual votes. The location protection might have worrisome results. A political party might adjust its political agenda to these threats in order to attract higher support. Furthermore, Kramer (2017) in his study shares three primary objectives of right-wing populist parties' social media strategy. First of all, right-wing populists are aiming to transform existing threats into a point of view. Second, they are seeking to use previous incidents linked to the threat as a supportive element for their point of view. Finally, they are aiming to spread their point of view within the specified locations.

As it was mentioned above, all three models are more effective in less populated peripheries, particularly in border municipalities. It hypothesizes that PVV in his social media strategy is drawing particular attention towards residents of border municipalities. The reasons for it are following. First of all, the unequal distribution of public goods resulted in the emergence a shared identity among residents of border municipalities. Second, this shared identity has created a suitable environment for PVV to increase its electoral success in borders. Third, there is a high likelihood that PVV is also aware of its strongholds in borders. Therefore, the information shared by PVV aims not only to maintain but also strengthen this identity. The three models mentioned

above are all applicable for these objectives. Under these circumstances, it is expected that PVV in his social media strategy will focus on the following aspects. First, attract new voters (especially younger generations) by increasing the neighborhood effect. Second, show Geert Wilders as 'a man of the people' by increasing the friends and neighbors effect. Third, emphasize socio-political problems related to the refugees and migrants by enhancing the impact of location protection.

Hypothesis II: *If shared information has characteristics of increasing behavioral effects (neighborhood, friends and neighbors, location protection), then there is higher support for a right-wing populist party.*

4. Research Design

This chapter will illustrate the research design of this study. It consists of three different sections. Each of them is intended to cover different pillars of the research design. First part will discuss the selected case through two important features which are the (1) description of the selected case and (2) justifications behind this choice. The chosen case of this study is the Netherlands, and it will examine the results of the Dutch General Elections which took place on March 15, 2017.

The second section will explore the dataset and its variables. The dataset has 19 variables. It consists of various socio-economic and demographic indicators. The data were extracted from the database of Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics and depicted results from 2016. The vote share of PVV was retrieved from the official database of the Dutch Electoral Commission. The section will also provide the expectations of the researcher from these indicators.

The final section of this chapter will shed light on scientific methods which are planned to be utilized for this study. In order to test the first hypothesis (the interplay between the variables and the location of municipality), a statistical analysis will be employed. Concretely, the study will run T-tests which will give the opportunity to reject or accept the hypothesis. For testing the

relationship between the social media activity and right-wing populist support, the study will employ Twitter data analysis. It will analyze Geert Wilders' Twitter account.

It should be emphasized that this study will concentrate on comparing various indicators between the border and non-border municipalities and hence will look for comparative patterns between the municipalities which might explain higher right-wing populist support in border municipalities.

4.1 Case Selection

As it was discussed above in the first chapter of this study, the higher popularity of right-wing populist parties on border constituencies was an observable trend in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. Despite this amount of precedents, this study will focus and investigate the Dutch case. This choice has a number of following reasons. First of all, the elections in the Netherlands took place before than the other European states mentioned in the introduction. Second, the Dutch General Elections of 2017 attracted a significant amount of attention, both on domestic and international levels due to the possible continuation of the 'domino effect' started with 'Brexit' and the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States (Brookings, 2017). Third, the election's turnout was around 82% which was one of the highest electoral participation rates in the Netherlands during the last couple of decades (Kiesraad, 2017). The higher turnout also contributes to the robustness and accuracy of the research. Fourth, Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) which is the leading right-wing populist party in Dutch socio-political life, ended up in being the second biggest party in the Dutch Parliament with twenty seats (Kiesraad, 2017). Finally, the choice of investigating the case of the Netherlands was preferred due to the reasons of the feasibility of this research.

A detail which might raise questions is why the other EU member states will not be taken into consideration for this research. First of all, the other four countries which had the similar trend (France, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic) will not be analyzed due to the feasibility issues as the research of all five cases will require more time and resources. On the other hand, the socio-political reality in various EU member states might differ. Countries located in peninsulas and islands (Ireland, UK, Spain, Italy, and others) would not fit into this research by virtue of their

geographic location. Especially, island states which have no borderlines with other sovereign states might show significantly different variations of electoral behavior. As for the other countries which are not located in peninsulas or islands, these states have not demonstrated the trend of a higher right-wing populist support on the national borders. The reasons for it might differ. On the one hand, some of these states did not have national elections in the last years. On the other hand, these states have a different set of political culture and traditions. For instance, some countries do not experience an explicit right-wing sentiment, and there is no representation of these parties on the national level such as Croatia, Lithuania, Romania, etc. On the other hand, there are states which have the higher popularity of right-wing movements, and therefore they get support from various constituencies regardless of their location on a national border. The examples of such states are Slovakia, Hungary, etc.

4.2 Variables and Data.

The dependent variable of this master thesis is the support for a right-wing populist party. The first independent variable is the different preferences of border municipalities over the distribution of public goods. Even though the preferences of border residents are somewhat an abstract notion, there is a way to operationalize it with statistical data. The created dataset has an aim to detect these differences. It comprises of 387 out of 390 Dutch municipalities as for 2016. Municipalities of Schijndel, Sint-Oedenrode, and Veghel were merged into one municipality of Meireijstad (CBS, 2017). In contrast, the electoral data is from 2017, and the results are only available for Meierijstad. Under these circumstances, these municipalities were omitted from the dataset. It should be noted that the omission of these municipalities will not affect the results of the analysis as none of them have a proximity to the national borders. The following paragraphs will shed light on the variables of the dataset.

The first variable of the dataset shows the electoral support received by PVV (Party for Freedom) during the Dutch General Elections in 2017. The reason why this research will focus on the electoral outcome is the following. The previously discussed literature suggests that among other reasons, citizens tend to support right-wing populist parties (1) for manifesting their disagreement over the existing policies and (2) for showing a protest due to the disappointment

towards mainstream political parties (Ignazi, 1992; Givens, 2005; Mazzoleni, 2005; Norris, 2005). Usually, in democratic systems, the most feasible way of manifesting a disagreement occurs through the electoral process. Hence, it is expected that the residents of border municipalities will support a right-wing populist party to show their disagreement on the inaccurate distribution of public goods. The data shows the percentage of votes received by PVV per each Dutch municipality.

The second variable is a binary (dummy) variable which indicates the location of the municipality. While '1' indicates that the municipality is in the border, '0' shows the opposite. At this point, there is a need for clarifying what exactly is considered as a 'border municipality.' As mentioned in 'Introduction,' in this research border municipalities are not only the ones which are technically located on the national border.¹⁰ The municipalities which are located at a distance of 20 kilometers will be considered as 'border municipality.' The reason for it is the following. According to Dutch Law, the Royal Dutch Marechausse "has the authority to patrol in a 20 km zone" around the Dutch borders (van der Woude, 2015). Hence, municipalities which lay in this zone will be considered as a 'border municipality.'

To ease the explanation of the rest 17 variables, they can be divided into three different groups. The first group shows the indicators of the overall well-being within the Dutch municipalities. As mentioned in Chapter III, public goods and non-rival and non-excludable goods. It means that it is practically impossible to exclude or diminish anyone from the consumption of a particular product. Usually, public goods are provided by the central governments and reflect itself in such things as infrastructure, education, healthcare, social security, governmental subsidies, etc. The practical way to measure the number of public goods would be to analyze official data on public transfers to municipalities in various branches. However, there is significant complexity in the retrieval of these data. After all, these data were only available for the Dutch provinces. Therefore, the first variable group constitutes various socio-economic indicators. It is possible to expect that these variables will be able to detect the differences between the border and non-border municipalities. This group consists of four variables.

¹⁰ It is assumed that municipalities which are close to the national boundaries have a similar environment with the ones which are technically on the frontiers. See p. 11

First two variables show the percentage of low-income households and the annual median standard income per each municipality. These variables illustrate the financial well-being of Dutch citizens. Presumably, both of these variables directly affect the heterogeneity of preferences with the distribution. The more is the number of low-income households and the less is the median standard income; the higher is the heterogeneity of preferences over the public goods. Thus, it will give additional incentives for residents to vote for right-wing populists. The data on low-income households are shown in percentage terms, while the median standard income is indicated in thousands of euros. Bearing in mind the first hypothesis of this study, it is expected to see a higher concentration of low-income households and lower median standard income rates in border municipalities.

Social security is considered as one of the essential types of public goods. It aims to provide the socio-economic stability to the citizens. The next variable illustrates the number of social help recipients per each Dutch municipality. The data are shown in the overall number of recipients. The situation of social care and the assessment of it as a public good will contribute to the creation of a more unobstructed view of the distribution policies of the central government. It is expected to see a lower concentration of social help recipients in border municipalities.

Finally, the last variable is the crime rate. The provision of the security has utmost importance for each central government. This is backed up by an idea that the nation states were created as a result of a social contract between citizens and political elites. According to the social contract, political elites take an obligation to defend its citizens.¹¹The data on the crime rate is constituted as a sum of cases registered by courts, decisions made by the public prosecutors, and the settlements by the judges in the first instances. The expected higher concentration of a crime rate on border municipalities would detect another failure of central governments in their distribution policies.

Although the socio-economic data encompasses various aspects of public goods' distribution, it remains insufficient. It is quite challenging to explain the differences between the border and non-border municipalities only through socio-economic indicators. There is a significant number

¹¹ Despite Mudde's (2013) claim that crime rate has no relationship with the right-wing populist support, the analysis will try to understand whether it is also applicable for the Dutch borders. See p.16 for a discussion on the relationship between the crime rate and right-wing populist support.

of intersecting variables which makes the control of them quite complicated. An important aspect also lies in the previous research on right-wing populist parties. Betz (1994), Givens (2005), and Norris (2005) draw particular attention to the profile of an average right-wing populist supporter. These studies conclude that right-wing populist supporters are generally divided into three groups: low-skilled blue-collar workers, small entrepreneurs / self-employed individuals (e.g., shopkeepers, artisans, farmers), and retired individuals. Lipset (1960) have suggested that these groups tend to support right-wing populist parties as they are squeezed between the big business and labor unions and are vulnerable to the social risks. In contrast, in the modern understanding of right-wing populist support, class cleavages are insufficient, and one needs to pay attention to more recent fractures. A prominent example of it is the 'Us and Them' rhetoric used by right-wing populists for illustrating the problems of immigration. The practical way out from this challenge is the collection of data on various socio-demographic variables per municipality which will show the spatial distribution of residents according to their profiles. The remarkable is that Givens (2005) have found that citizens under 25 have voted more for right-wing populists in Austria, Germany, and France more than the other age groups. Her assessment encompassed the elections in these states throughout the 1990s. In like manner, this trend was also observable in France prior to the presidential elections in 2017. In fact, a sufficient amount of young population was supporting Marine Le Pen (Farand, 2017).

Bearing these findings in mind, the dataset will also include two additional groups of variables. It is assumed that border residents might have different preferences due to their life background. The first group will focus on the population. Hence, the dataset will cover such demographic variables as the total population of municipalities, age groups (20-25; 25-45; 45-65; 65+) the percentage of migrants with the Western background, and the percentage of migrants with the non-Western background. The second group of variables will draw attention to the employment. This group will include the number of unemployed individuals; the number of individuals with lower education (not more than a high school degree); and employment per industries (agriculture, forestry, and fishery; industry and energy sector; commercial services; non-commercial services). Blue-collar workers are represented within industry and energy sector, while farmers are represented within agriculture, forestry, and fishery. It is expected that individuals with low education, blue-collar workers, and farmers will have a higher representation in border municipalities. Besides, it is also expected to see an older population in

border municipalities including a higher number of retired individuals. Another attention will be drawn on the distribution of young people. It has an objective to find out whether Givens' (2005) findings are applicable for the Dutch borders.

The second independent variable of this master thesis is focusing on whether the shared information affect the behavioral effects (neighborhood, friends and neighbors, location protection) for the support of PVV. This study assumes that a right-wing populist party might be aware of its advantages in border municipalities and therefore might concentrate their efforts more in these areas. Unfortunately, the data on the number of campaign activities per municipality does not exist which makes the testing of this hypothesis quite complicated. However, it is possible to keep track of campaign activities through online resources. For instance, Twitter account of Geert Wilders, PVV chairman is a quite helpful source for this purpose due to three reasons. First, Geert Wilders' account is the only official Twitter platform of the party. Second, PVV is a one-member party which means that he is the one who will most likely share all available information regarding the party activities. Besides, he has around one million followers who show that he has a quite sufficient audience for shaping the public opinion (Twitter, 2018). It is expected that Mr. Wilders was reaching the residents of border municipalities through his twitter account.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Statistical Analysis

The analysis of the electoral outcomes on the statistical level is an inevitable part of the research on this topic. With this in mind, this study is intended to go further with the statistical analysis as well. The primary objective of the statistical analysis is to understand the possible relationship between the variables and the geographic location of municipalities. Briefly, it will look for statistical inferences. The investigation will start with the summary and descriptive statistics. It will provide the initial information such as mean, minimum and maximum values, etc. Besides, descriptive statistics will include bar charts for creating a clear visual demonstration of data. These bar charts will show the difference between the border and non-border municipalities. The second part of the statistical analysis, which will follow the descriptive statistics, will run the T-

tests. The T-tests will reveal the relationship of each variable with its geographical location. Hence, it will focus on the binary (dummy) variable which indicates whether the municipality is on the border.

4.3.2 Twitter Data Analysis

Although statistical analysis is widespread in the research of electoral behavior, it is not sufficient enough for broadly understanding the phenomena. One of the most significant shortcomings of the statistical approach lies in a bias which called 'Ecological Fallacy.' 'Ecological Fallacy' is a situation in which a researcher assumes the results of statistical analysis on the individual level (Busteed, 1975). Therefore, this challenge has led to the development of the behavioral theories which aims the analysis of the existing information. Traditionally, the study of the information flow encompasses the examination of various text sources. The advancement of technologies and social media has led to the subsequent development of text analysis. Therefore, one of the ways for it is the analysis of Twitter data. Some studies were conducted in which the analysis of Twitter data was gathered employing keyword searches (Agarwal. et al. 2011; Kouloumpis, Wilson, and Moore, 2011). The analysis will use a programming language called 'Python.' The software has a set of toolkits (i.e., Application Programming Interface or API) which give a possibility to scrape the data from Twitter accounts. Also, the analysis will have a set timeframe. It will encompass and analyze tweets by Geert Wilder from December 4, 2016, to March 14, 2017. In other words, it is one hundred days prior to Dutch General Elections on March 15, 2017. One hundred days is a sufficient timeframe for the analysis as the assessment of tweets from previous dates has no practical point. It is highly unlikely that any political party will involve into campaigning before this period.

The analysis will have a number of steps. First of all, the names of border municipalities will be searched on the software and will seek for the number of tweets posted within the given timeframe. Subsequently, the content of these tweets will be analyzed one by one and will look for the following characteristics. First, if there is an appeal to the unequal distribution of public goods. Second, if there is an appeal to the socio-economic problems of border municipalities. Third, if there is an appeal that PVV is going to combat these problems. The keyword search of

municipality names will look for the patterns of increasing the neighborhood and friends and neighbors effect. Apart from border municipalities, the analysis will also encompass a unique control group of 10 randomly selected non-border municipalities. It will make clear the difference of shared information between both types of municipalities.

It is entirely possible to assume that an appeal might take place without mentioning of a particular municipality name. Therefore, the keyword search will expand in a number of ways. First of all, the keyword search will also add the names of the Dutch urban and administrative centers such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague, Utrecht, etc. It also has an aim to understand the general performance of Geert Wilders' Twitter activity. Second, the keyword search will include some keywords such as infrastructure (infrastructuur), crime (misdrijf), healthcare (zorg), elderly (ouderen), farmer (boer), agriculture (landbouw), border (grens), borders (grenzen), etc. Furthermore, the search will also include such keywords as 'Islam,' 'Immigration,' 'Muslim.' It will find out whether Mr. Wilders' tweets will focus on the increase of both neighborhood and location protection models of the electoral behavior.

5. Analysis

This chapter is intended to describe the results of the investigation. With this aim, the chapter will consist of four sections. The first section will cover the summary and descriptive statistics. The second section will share the results of T-tests. The primary objective of this section will be to elaborate on which variables shows statistically significant results and vice versa. After the statistical analysis, the third section of this chapter will share the results of Twitter data analysis. The final section will discuss the results.

5.1 Summary and Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 illustrates the summary statistics of the used dataset. The summary statistics comprises of such statistical data as the number of observations, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values. It should be noted that the Age A-D variables show the age groups of 20-25, 25-45, 45-65, and 65+, respectively.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Municipality	0				
Bor	387	.3255814	.4691983	0	1
PVV	387	13.35669	4.209461	4.9	38.9
LowIncHouse	387	28.16408	4.317686	10.9	41.3
SocHelpRecip	387	1324.91	4082.675	10	49460
MedStanInc	385	28.69143	2.481138	24	41.4
CrRate	387	1234.16	3709.823	10	48750
TotPop	387	43668.01	67850.97	919	833624
AgeA	387	5.359173	1.465046	2.6	17.3
AgeB	387	22.18243	2.705502	13.6	35.7
AgeC	387	29.70853	2.328435	19.1	35
AgeD	387	19.50588	3.130923	8.565568	30.59511
WestMig	387	8.073127	4.228169	1.4	44.1
NonWMig	387	6.356848	5.502531	1.1	37.6
Unemp	387	2.012172	.3704115	.6504228	3.323179
AgrForFish	345	2.6	3.224543	0	17
IndEner	344	17.97965	8.043768	1	50
ComSer	385	49.25195	9.4652	20	80
NonComSer	386	30.5544	10.56966	6	69
LowEd	387	18.65633	4.7216	1	31

Table 1: Summary of the Dataset

As it is possible to see from the Table 1, variables on the median standard income and employment per industries (AgrForFish; IndEner; ComSer; NonComSer) have less number of observations than 387. The reason for it is the existence of missing values. Furthermore, the exact summary tables were also generated for border and non-border municipalities separately.¹²

An aspect which has particular importance in this research is to understand the frequencies of each variable for both border and non-border municipalities. It will let us have a better image on which factors might lead to higher support of PVV in Dutch national borders. An effective way to do it is the generation of bar charts which will depict the prevalence or absence of individual variables in both types of municipalities. As a result, some bar charts were generated in order to

¹² See appendices IV & V for the separate summary statistics on both the border and non-border municipalities.

show these frequencies by each variable of the dataset. The charts will show the variables' mean values. The way variables grouped for the charts has an aim to avoid unclear images. It was an issue as some variables shown in the percentage terms whilst some of them demonstrated in numerical terms.

Figure 2 shows the mean values for PVV support in the last Dutch general elections and the mean for the percentage of low-income households. As it is possible to observe, the Party for Freedom (PVV) got significantly more votes in border municipalities. While the average percentage of votes in non-border municipalities is around 12, for border municipalities this number is almost 16 percent (see Appendices IV & V for the exact numbers on each variable). A closer examination of the details reveals that the votes for PVV vary between 8 and 38.9 percent in border municipalities. On the other hand, for non-border municipalities, this value ranges between 4.9 and 23.7. It is clear that PVV got more votes from the border municipalities by slightly more than 3.5 percent which is a quite significant difference.

The statistical data shows a similar picture of the values of low-income households as well (Figure 3). In non-border municipalities mean percentage of low-income households is around 27.5 percent with a variance of about 11 – 39 percentage points, while for borders it is slightly higher than 29.5 percent with the values varying between 21 – 41 percentage points. Figure 4 shows the mean values of social help recipients and crime rate, respectively. It is visible that both of the variables have a higher frequency at non-border constituencies. The number of social help recipients in non-border municipalities is around 1400, while for borders this value is about 1100. The rate is again similar to the amount of crime committed in municipalities by showing around 1350 for non-border and around thousand for borders.

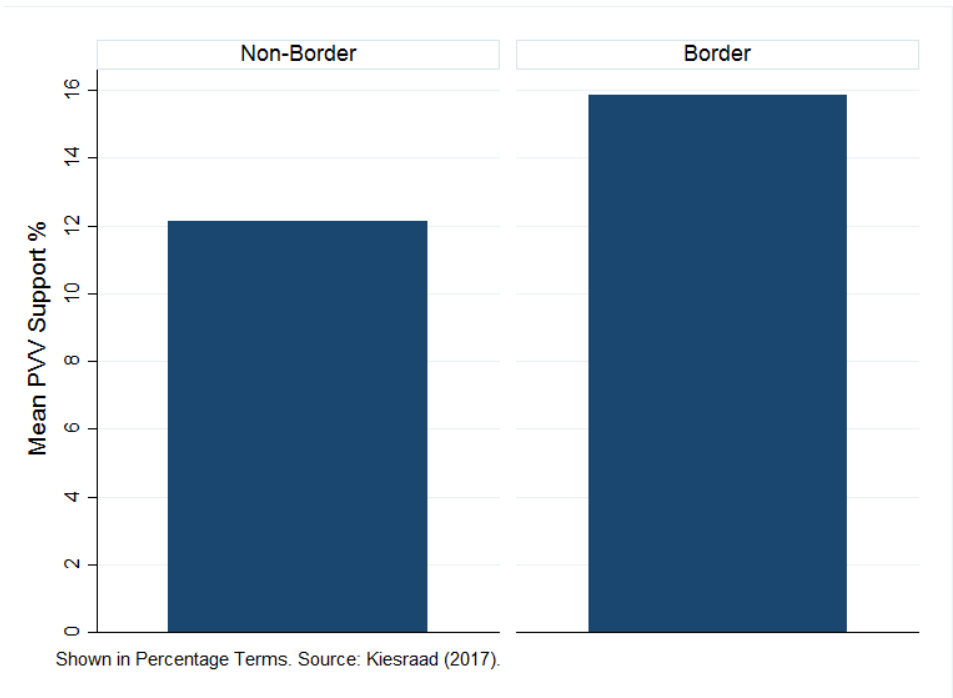


Figure 2: Mean values of PVV support.

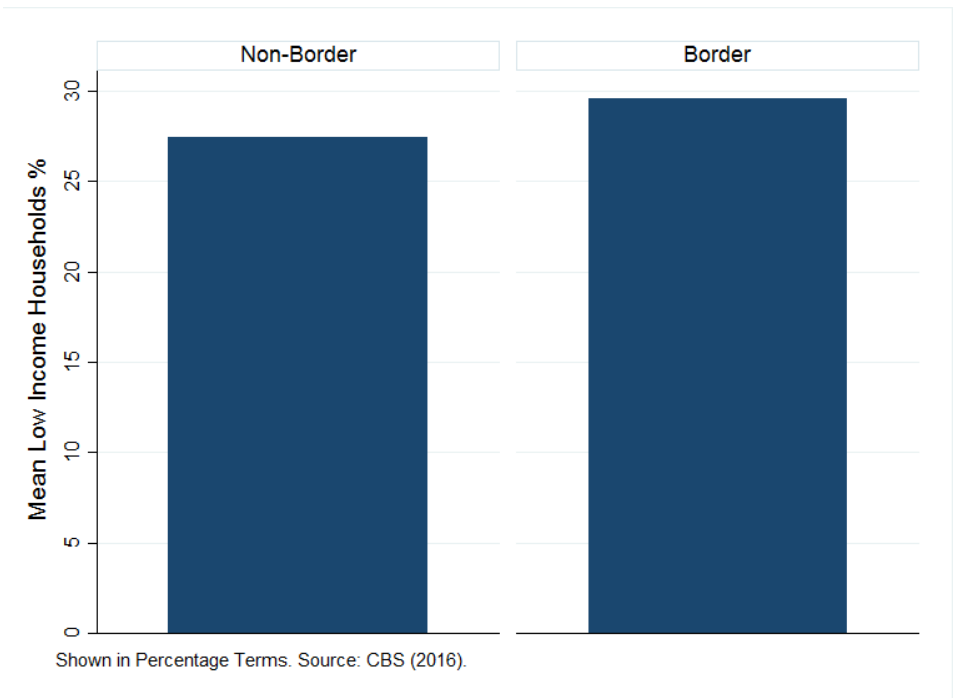


Figure 3: Mean values of low income households

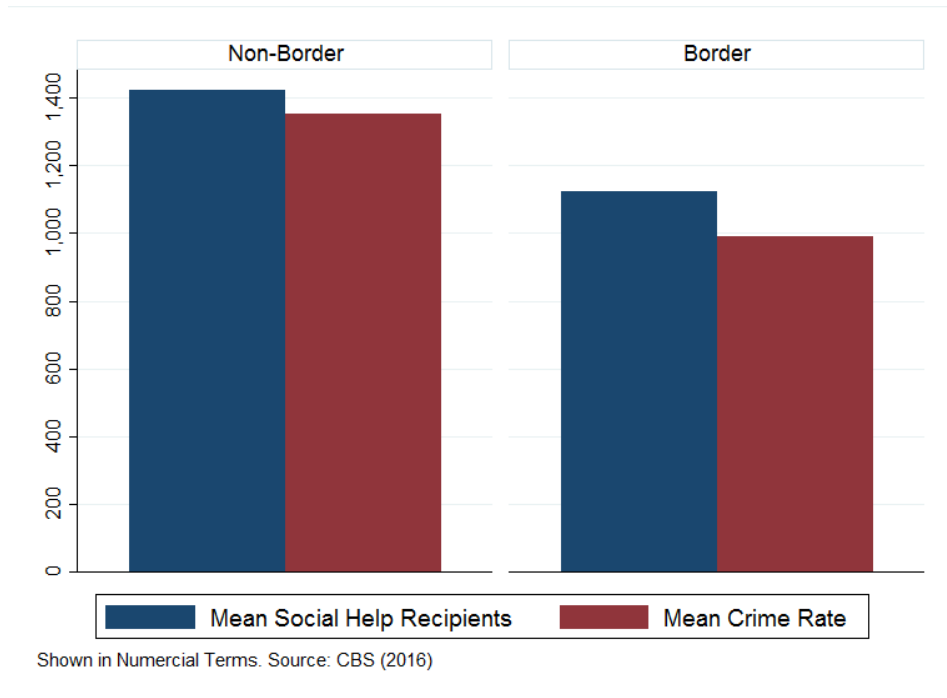


Figure 4: Mean values of social help recipients and crime rate.

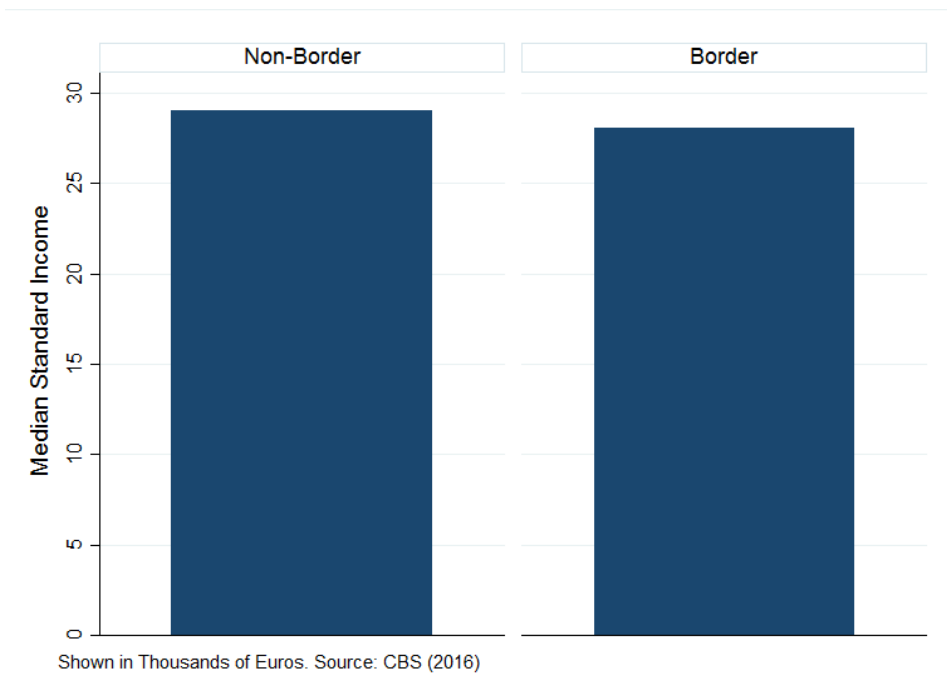


Figure 5: Mean values of the median standard income.

The next two bar charts (Figure 5 & Figure 6) show the average median standard of income and population. The difference between the median standard income between the border and non-border municipalities is quite intriguing. In fact, whereas for border municipalities it is around twenty-eight thousand Euros, non-border municipalities have a higher median income just for one thousand of Euros by showing the values of approximately twenty-nine thousand. In both types of municipalities, the minimum values of median income are around 24 thousand Euros, while the maximum is about 32,5 thousand for borders and 41,5 thousand for non-borders.

The second group of variables puts a focus on statistics related to the population. Initially, it will draw attention to the total population. As Figure 6 shows, there is a significant difference between border and non-border municipalities. For example, in border municipalities, the average population is approximately 39 thousand. On the other hand, for non-border municipalities, this value is around 46 thousand.

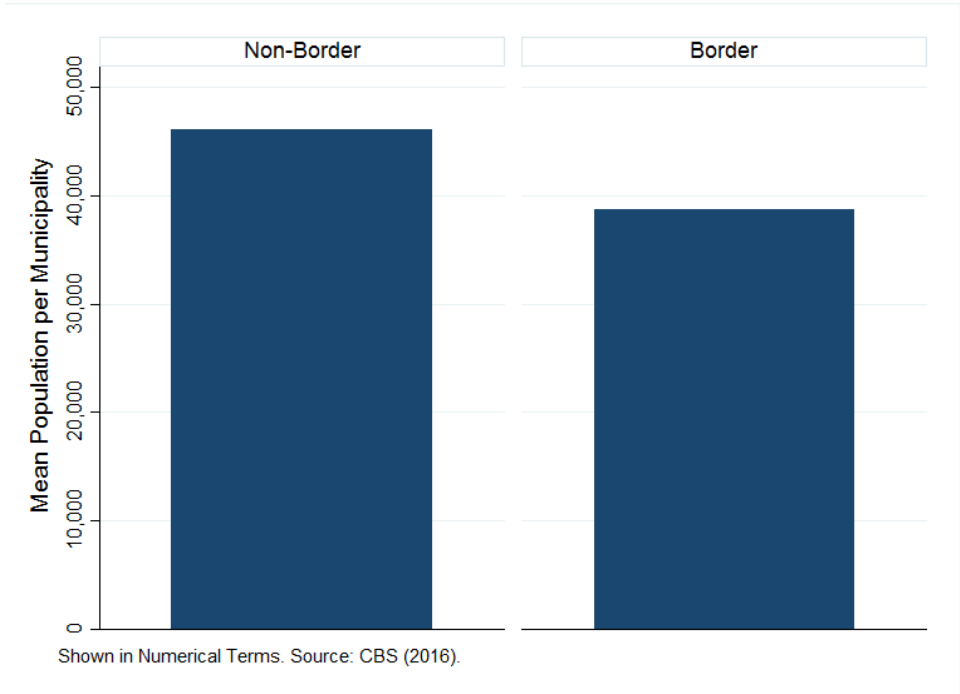


Figure 6: Mean values of the total population.

A more detailed view of the population will clarify the differences between municipalities. The comparison of age groups will reveal such an in-depth look. Figure 7 gives a supplementary assessment of these groups. The given figure has some impressive results. First of all, the number of residents within the age group 20-25 are about the same in both border and non-border municipalities with slightly higher than five percent. Second age group indicates that border municipalities have one percent fewer residents aged between 25-45 than non-border municipalities. The latter two age groups (45-65; 65+) are more frequent in border municipalities. In each age group, the value in border municipalities is higher by around one and a half percent.

The amount of immigrants between two groups of municipalities requires particular attention due to the several reasons. While around 9.8 percent of ‘border’ population are migrants of ‘Western’ background, this number is about 7.3 percent for non-border municipalities. On the other hand, the percentage of non-Western migrants is higher in non-border municipalities. Whilst non-border municipalities have 7 percent of non-Western migrants, for border municipalities, this percentage is approximately 5.

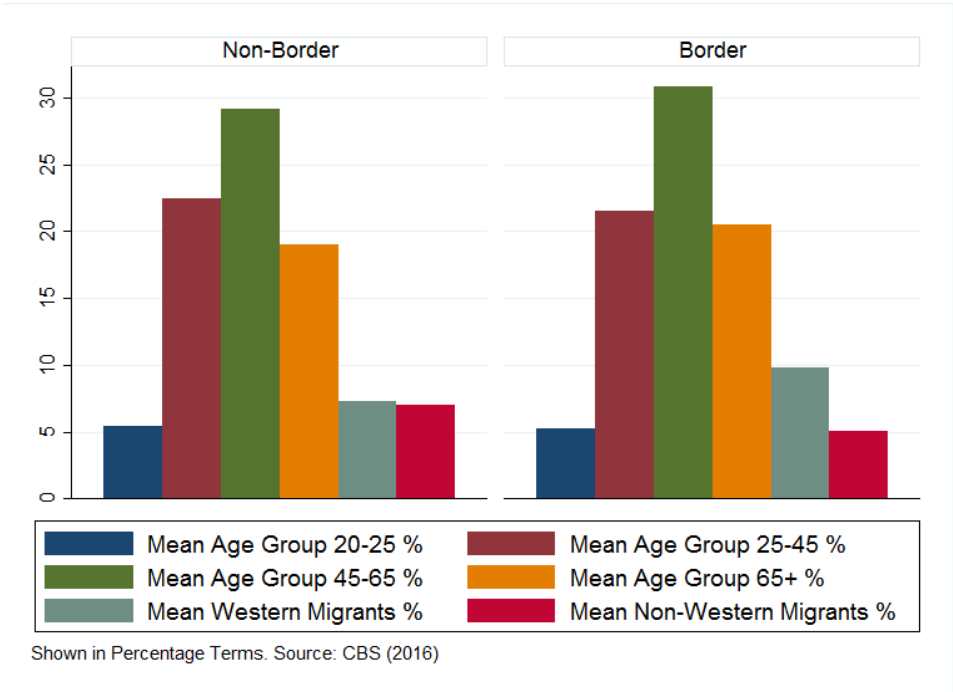


Figure 7: Mean values of population groups.

Finally, the third group of variables is focusing on the employment. Figure 8 shows the means for various employment indicators. First of all, border municipalities have a higher number of low educated residents by one and a half percent. Second, the percentage of unemployed residents has similar values around 2 percent. Also, the rate of residents employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishery also have the same amount about 2.5 percent. This similarity also continues in the number of residents employed in non-commercial services with each about 30 percent. However, there is a difference in residents employed in industrial jobs and commercial services. While there are fewer employees in commercial services in border municipalities, a higher amount of employees in industrial and energy sectors have compensated this gap.

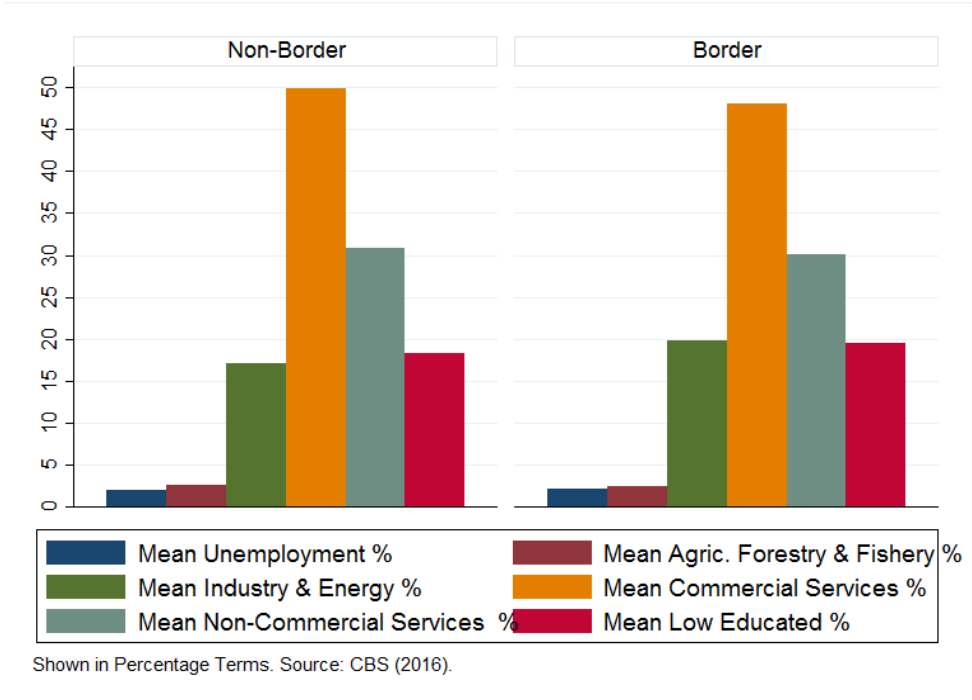


Figure 8: Mean values of employment groups.

5.2 T-Test Analysis

Followed by the descriptive statistics, this sub-section will enlighten the results of T-tests. Table 2 illustrates the generated T-scores per each variable. To accept the hypothesis, the T-score

should not be between -2 and 2 (at the confidence level of 95%). The following paragraphs will discuss each T-score in detail.

Before starting to assess each T-score, there is another significant aspect regarding these results. T-scores which have negative values show that the variable is more frequent in the border municipalities. Consequently, T-scores which have positive values indicate that the variable is more frequent in non-border municipalities.

Variable	T-Score
PVV Support	-8.91
Low Income Households	-4.61
Social Help Recipients	0.67
Median Standard Income	3.63
Crime Rate	0.89
Total Population	0.99
Age Group: 20-25	0.9
Age Group: 25-45	3.16
Age Group: 45-65	-6.9
Age Group: 65+	-4.5
Western Migrants	-5.77
Non-Western Migrants	3.17
Unemployment	-6.16
Employment: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery	0.30
Employment: Industry and Energy	-2.92
Employment: Commercial Services	1.8
Employment: Non-Commercial Services	0.56
Low Education	-2.48

Table 2: Results of the T-Tests

First of all, the electoral success of PVV shows the T-score of -8.91. It means that indeed residents of border municipalities supported PVV more than the residents of non-border municipalities. Furthermore, the coefficient is high enough for a statistical significance. Low-income households have a T-score of -4.61. It implies that low-income households (1) are more prevalent in border municipalities and (2) are statistically significant. Social help recipients and crime rate show the values of 0.67 and 0.89, respectively. These values show that these variables were more prevalent in non-border municipalities and that they are statistically insignificant. As for the median standard income, its value of 3.63 indicates that residents of border municipalities have a fewer income than their counterparts in non-border areas. Its significance suggests that less income trigger different distributional preferences.

In addition, the variables on population also have appealing results. On the one hand, total population (0.99) and the age group of 20-25 (0.90) show that they have represented slightly less in border municipalities. Furthermore, age group of 25-45 have represented significantly less by signaling that the relative absence of this age group in border municipalities affects the electoral outcome in favor of PVV. On the other hand, the last two age groups (45-65; 65+) show a significant overrepresentation in borders with the scores of -6.9 and -5.77, respectively.

The last two variables in the population group show the amount of Western and non-Western migrants. While T-score for Western migrants is -5.77, for non-Western migrants it is 3.17. With these coefficients, the T-test reaffirms the finding in the descriptive statistics that Western migrants have a significant overrepresentation whilst non-Western migrants are more prevalent in non-border municipalities.

Notable attention requires the scores of the employment variables. Employees in agriculture, forestry, fishing and non-commercial services have insignificant values of 0.30 and 0.56, respectively. In contrast, the unemployment score (-6.16) shows that there are significantly more unemployed residents in border municipalities, rather than in non-border ones.

Besides, employees in industry and energy sector are not only more prevalent in border municipalities, but this prevalence is also considerable enough. It underlines the possibility of PVV support by low-skilled blue-collar workers. This possibility strengthened with a finding that

borders also have more residents with low education (-2.48). Finally, the analysis also shows an insignificant coefficient for employees of commercial services (1.8).

Overall, the results provided by the statistical analysis gave sufficient amount of insights regarding the issue. It gives way for further elaboration on the results, by matching them to the previous literature and the expectations of the researcher.

5.3 Twitter Analysis

The Twitter text analysis was conducted to analyze the shared online information orchestrated by the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV). It has a goal to find out the possible connection between PVV's social media activity and its electoral success.

It should be reminded that the analysis is seeking for the appeals made by Mr. Wilders. The next paragraphs will emphasize various parts of the analysis step by step. During the period mentioned above, Geert Wilders has tweeted 560 times. Consequently, the first step was to make a keyword search for each border municipality. However, this step of analysis has shown a minor success. In fact, Geert Wilders has mentioned only 4 out of all municipalities throughout the whole period. These municipalities were Breda, Heerlen, Venlo, and Weert. Tweets mentioning first three municipalities were describing the campaign events attended by Geert Wilders in which he was sharing his satisfaction with the activities (see Appendix VI). However, the tweet on the last municipality attracts considerable attention. In this tweet, Geert Wilders shares a story from a refugee camp in Weert. The story tells that some refugees in the camp were involved in the rape scandal in Cologne in 2015 (Limburg, 2017). Afterward, Geert Wilders has written "Grenzen dicht. Genoeg is genoeg!" (Eng. Shut the borders. Enough is enough!) (see Appendix VI). The remarkable is that three out of four border municipalities mentioned in his tweets located in the province of Limburg which considered as a traditional PVV stronghold.

Keyword searches of the control group followed the keyword searches of border municipalities. The control group consisted of ten randomly selected Dutch non-border municipalities. These municipalities were: Achtkarspelen, De Wolden, Den Helder, Ede, Helmond, Lochem, Lousden,

Oss, Pekela, and Veere. However, Mr. Wilders did not mention any of the municipalities in his tweets.

The second step of the Twitter data analysis consisted of keyword searches of the urban centers and the main regional centers of the Netherlands. It had an aim to check the overall performance of Geert Wilders' activity on Twitter. The only cities he mentioned in his tweets were Rotterdam (7), The Hague (3), Amsterdam (3), and Apeldoorn (2). It is important to point out that the tweets on Rotterdam concerned the Dutch-Turkish diplomatic crisis which took place a couple of days prior to elections (McLaughlin and Croft, 2017).

Finally, the search also encompassed a list of specially selected keywords. Table 3 shows their overview.

Keyword	Translation	Tweets
Arbeider	Worker	0
Boer	Farmer	0
Grenz	Border	0
Grenzen	Borders	24
Immigratie	Immigration	3
Infrastructuur	Infrastructure	0
Islam	Islam	48
Landbouw	Agriculture	0
Misdrijf	Crime	0
Moslem	Muslim	5
Ouderen	Elderly	7
Zorg	Healthcare	14

Table 3: Keywords used for the Twitter analysis

As it is possible to see from the Table 3, half of the keywords had shown no results at all. The mentioned keywords are immigration (3), Muslim (5), elderly (7), healthcare (14), borders (24), and Islam (48). It should be noted that 'immigration,' 'elderly,' and 'healthcare' most of the times used in the same tweets. In these tweets, Geert Wilders was criticizing the refugee quota system of the European Union, by underlying the importance of giving the priority for healthcare to the elderly Dutch citizens. Apart from that, the most tweets were about the 'threat of Islam,' and that Dutch citizens need to support him, so he and his party would be able to solve these issues.

5.4 Results

As it was discussed in the theoretical framework, the economics of borders concern with the consequences of distributional policies in the national borders. This study hypothesized that the residents of border municipalities have different preferences over the distribution of public goods. Therefore, the thesis assumes that the residents of border municipalities will have not only varying levels of the economic success, but they will also differ in demographic composition. The statistical analysis was able to detect these differences.

First of all, the analysis has shown that residents of border municipalities indeed favor PVV more than the residents of non-border municipalities. The difference of 3.5 percent is a quite significant margin for such conclusion. The other question is what might be the reasons for this support.

For instance, it is possible to conclude that the number of low-income households affects the electoral success of PVV. Same is applicable for the lower median standard income for the residents of border municipalities. The imbalance between the income levels of the border and non-border municipalities also results in the emergence of tax-base effect. Spolaore (2012) argues that the inaccurate distribution of public goods impacts the tax-base effect. Furthermore, he underlines that this effect is captured by the difference between the average income of border and non-border municipalities. Hence, it results in differing priorities on the distribution policies. The expectation that border municipalities will have more low-income households and less median standard income was valid.

Second, the study expects that border municipalities will have less social help recipients. Although according to the analysis this is true, the relationship between the variables is weak. The T-score shows an insignificant statistical inference. On the other hand, the number of crime rate is also lower in border municipalities. This finding was somehow surprising, as the analysis was expecting a higher crime rate for border municipalities. Furthermore, crime rate does not show any statistical inferences as well. Additionally, it also reaffirms Mudde's (2013) finding that crime rate has no relationship with right-wing populist support.

Third, the previous literature was suggesting that border municipalities have less population, and therefore it leads to a higher concentration of the shared identity of the residents (Cox, 1969). The thesis argues that this identity will lead to a standard set of beliefs. As a result, it expects that the residents of border municipalities will tend to show a common electoral behavior. The analysis shows that indeed border municipalities have less population. However, this gap is also insignificant. Thus, it is not likely that total population affects the electoral behavior in Dutch borders.

In general, the demographic composition of Dutch municipalities gives way for some interesting findings. The study was expecting those border municipalities will have an older population, where younger age groups are underrepresented while older age groups are overrepresented. It is a widely accepted fact within the scholarly debate that older residents tend to vote for right-wing populist parties (Givens, 2005; Norris, 2005). However, it is crucial to point out that Givens also have found higher support for right-wing populists by young generations. Hence, the relationship between youth and PVV support had particular importance.

It is crucial to point out that the distribution of young people between the border and non-border municipalities is roughly equal. The reason why border municipalities have an older population lies in the underrepresentation of residents between the ages of 25-45. Surprisingly enough, the age group of 20-25 does not give any statistically significant results. It might have two reasons. On the one hand, it is possible that youth support for PVV is not the case at all. On the other hand, perhaps young voters support PVV, but this support is not affected by the geographical location. The age group of 25-45 shows a significant underrepresentation within the border municipalities. Bearing in mind that this age group is the least likely to support a right-wing populist party (Givens, 2005), it is possible to conclude that this underrepresentation affects the

higher electoral success of PVV. As for the latter two age groups of the analysis (45-65; 65+), they have a significant overrepresentation in border municipalities. Traditionally, these age groups also have a higher number of supporters for right-wing populists.

Despite the fact that migrants from Western countries explicitly overrepresented in border municipalities, it is still hard to say whether these groups affect the electoral outcome. The previous literature has no findings on the relationship between the number of Western migrants and support for right-wing populists. The only possible explanation for this relationship might be that the anti-EU rhetoric of right-wing populists affects the electors in a sense that they have started to feel uncomfortable due to the migrants from other EU member states. For the Dutch case, this is particularly relevant for German and Belgian residents living in Dutch border municipalities. However, this claim has no ground and requires some further research and elaboration.

On the other hand, the fewer number of non-Western migrants in border municipalities also raises some questions. It is not clear why residents of Dutch borders support anti-immigration policies of right-wing populists if non-Western immigration is not that prevalent in Dutch borders. The possible explanation for it was given by Steinmayr (2018) who claims that the more is contact between migrants and locals, the less is the support for right-wing populists. Perhaps, PVV like any other right-wing populist party tries to create an image of a non-visible threat. Consequently, this leads to increased 'location protection' by border residents.

Finally, after the review of the previous literature, this study was also hypothesizing that the status of employment is one of the decisive factors which shape residents' preferences over the public goods. The research suggests that low-skilled blue-collar workers, farmers, and small entrepreneurs are main employment groups which support right-wing populist parties. The analysis has partially met these expectations.

First of all, despite the difference of unemployment levels seems to be minor (1.93 percent for non-border and 2.17 percent for borders) the analysis had shown that higher unemployment in borders is one of the reasons for a more upper PVV support. This reaffirms Dur's (2001) claim that higher unemployment leads to preferential changes over the distribution. Surprisingly, the individuals employed in the areas of agriculture, forestry, and the fishery is more concentrated in

non-border municipalities, and they also do not affect the electoral outcome. On the other hand, border municipalities had a considerable number of both low educated individuals and employed in industrial jobs. It is an explicit proof for a fact that border municipalities have a higher amount of low-skilled blue-collar workers. Hence, these groups trigger the electoral success of PVV. Another trigger for this success is the fewer number of people employed in commercial services. Betz (1994) and Givens (2005) were arguing that employees of commercial services are least likely to support right-wing populists and they traditionally tend to support mainstream political parties.

Despite the Twitter text analysis had a questionable success, it was able to generate some findings as well. The theories on the electoral behavioral models postulated that peripheral environments which have less population (in our case they are border municipalities) lead to the emergence of a shared identity which is shaped by shared values. The results of the statistical analysis suggest that these values and beliefs formed due to the socio-economic differences between the border and non-border municipalities. The theory argues that right-wing populist parties tend to generate a pleasant environment to spread the needed information in the particular areas. The combination of socio-economic differences with the shared information leads to the emergence of some behavioral patterns. These patterns constituted within a certain number of behavioral models. This study was hypothesizing that the information which is spread by PVV leads to the emergence of the neighborhood, friend and neighbors, and location protection effects.

The Twitter data analysis has shown that Geert Wilders has mentioned only four municipalities in his tweets. It is interesting that three of them located in the province of Limburg including Venlo, his hometown. Despite it seems like Wilders was aiming to enhance 'neighborhood' and 'friends and neighbors' effect, the number of shared tweets are insufficient for making more robust conclusions.

On the other hand, the search of specially selected words has given intriguing results. The fact that the word 'Islam' had a mentioning 48 times and such words as 'Borders', 'Elderly', 'Healthcare' were used only in the context of welfare chauvinism (e.g., to spend resources on our citizens in need, rather than to Syrian refugees and to Brussels) shows that Geert Wilders and his party was trying to create an invisible threat which will trigger the support for him in border

municipalities. The reason why this threat is invisible lies in the fact that the number of non-Western migrants is much less than in non-border municipalities. The results of Twitter analysis also overlaps with the finding of Grill (2016) who argues that right-wing populist parties in their social media activities do not emphasize the issues in the political agenda. Instead, as it is possible to see, the emphasis was put on the threat of immigrants and anti-EU rhetoric. The residents of border municipalities which have different preferences over the public goods are also experiencing the extensive information flow from the Party for Freedom. It results in the creation of a common worldview which triggers the emergence of a 'location protection' by the residents of border municipalities.

To summarize, the statistical analysis has shown that the residents of border municipalities differ from the residents of non-border municipalities in economic welfare, level of income, the presence of an older population, higher level of low-skilled blue-collar workers. These findings give a possibility to state that preferences of border residents over the distribution of public good indeed differs from the residents of non-border municipalities. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this research has enough evidence to be correct. As for the second hypothesis, the Twitter data analysis was not able to find enough evidence on 'neighborhood' and 'friends and neighbors' effect. In contrast, it has found evidence on the 'location protection' model. Therefore, the second hypothesis might only be partially accepted.

6. Conclusions

This master thesis was analyzing the recent electoral success of Party for Freedom (PVV) in last year's Dutch General Elections. The electoral map of the elections has shown that border municipalities were more supportive of PVV. The final chapter of this research is going to (1) share the concluding notes and (2) the limitations of this study. The second section will also discuss how the analysis might be improved and what should be the priorities for the further research.

6.1 Summary

The review of the previous literature and the discussion on the theoretical framework has led to the emergence of two hypotheses. These assumptions were the primary forces driving this study. First, it was assuming that the higher electoral success of PVV at Dutch border municipalities is linked to the distribution of public goods by the central governments. This master thesis assumes that the residents of border municipalities have different preferences than that of the non-border municipalities. To find out whether differences exist, this study employed the statistical analysis which analyzed three groups of variables showing socio-economic indicators, population, and employment. It was assuming that the differences might be determined not only with the economic welfare of border residents but also with their life background. The analysis has shown that the residents of border municipalities differ from non-border municipalities in various aspects. First, it is evident that border municipalities are poorer. In fact, they have a higher number of low-income households and lower income. Second, the residents of border municipalities are older. At the same time, border municipalities experience a considerable lack of younger adult population (25-45). Third, border municipalities have a higher concentration of low-skilled blue-collar workers. Fourth, borders have a higher rate of unemployment. These differences are quite substantial for concluding that there is a gap between the border and non-border municipalities. In addition, the numerous literature on right-wing populists parties suggested that the above-mentioned characteristics of border residents increase the likelihood of support for right-wing populist parties. However, it should be noted that the differences between the types of municipalities are not extremely high. Still, the average vote for PVV is sufficiently higher in borders by 3.5 percent.

Second, this master thesis was hypothesizing that PVV's online activity might trigger behavioral effects in border municipalities. Although some found tweets were relevant to the expectations, they were mostly insufficient for making any conclusions for 'neighborhood' and 'friends and neighbors' effects. On the other hand, Twitter analysis has shown another aspect of PVV's online campaigning. The Twitter data has reflected the party's classic strategy of blaming and shaming the European Union, demonizing the migrants of non-Western background, etc. It is possible to conclude that this strategy has led to a higher degree of location protection among border municipalities. The existing information is highly dominant with this rhetoric.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research Agenda

Throughout the research period, this study experienced some limitations which complicated the researcher's task. First of all, a significant challenge was the lack of research on the topic. In fact, even the literature on right-wing populism lacks the sufficient amount of research. Perhaps, this problem is temporary as the number of studies on the issue is increasing rapidly. Mudde (2013) underlines that there is a lack of systematic approach for the empirical assessment of right-wing populist parties. Scholars regularly face problems with the lack of data. As Mudde (2013: p.5) later mentions, there is an absence of "cross-national and cross-temporal data on many crucial aspects." Therefore, the overwhelming majority of studies are constrained either with a small number of cases or "use problematic data." In fact, this was the case in this research as well. For instance, the data on public transfers from the national budget to municipalities is absent. The results shown by the analysis raise questions on some aspects. It is still not clear how migrants of Western background might affect (1) distributional preferences and (2) support for PVV. The Twitter data was also insufficient. It is understandable that the analysis of social media accounts is a recently emerging topic within the academia. Therefore, this discipline still needs substantial developments.

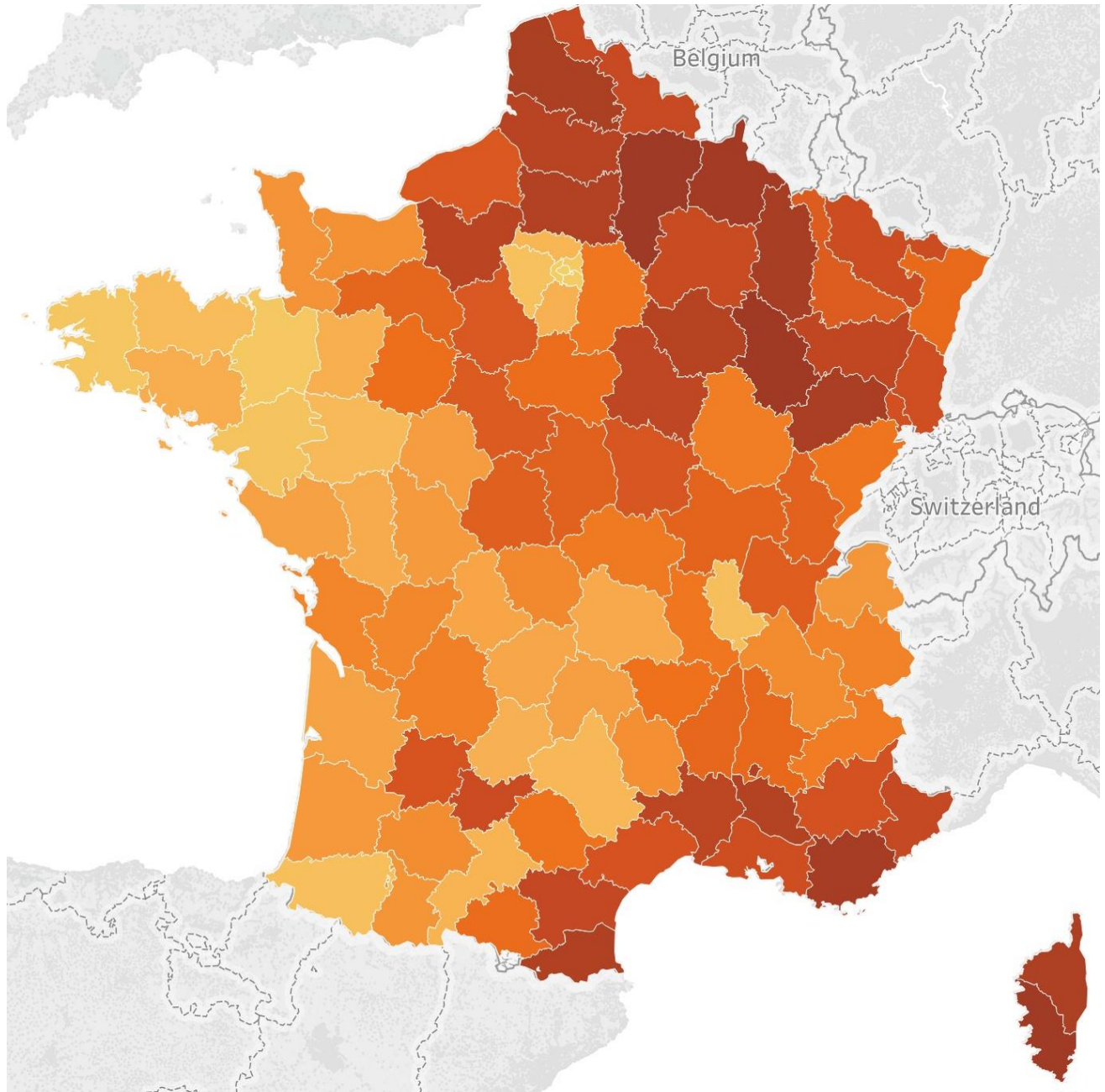
Improving this research through different ways is entirely possible. First of all, there is a need in analyzing the other states in which higher right-wing populism was observable on the national borders. However, the priority can remain the same. It is quite essential to understand whether the difference between border and non-border residents is prevalent in other European states. Another aspect which is worthy of analysis is to know why AfD is triumphant only in Eastern borders but not in the Western ones. Second, the study should encompass a more extended period. The scholars can do time-series analysis which would explain the temporal pattern of this phenomenon. On the one hand, this might be a recent change in the socio-political reality. On the other side, maybe this trend was improving for the last decade. The literature suggests that right-wing populists became more popular after severe economic crises. Perhaps, the residents of border municipalities started to vote for right-wing populists after the period of Global Recession in 2008-09. Or the Syrian refugee crisis was the actual moment which triggered the support of border residents. In these terms, the main priority should be on understanding the particular period when this started to be a case.

Apart from it, this topic can develop further with the help of different methodologies. It is crucial to understand that the desk research is not sufficient for the analysis of such phenomena. There is a need in the conduction of interviews and field works. These fieldworks might concentrate on the discussions with municipal authorities, local party organizations, and residents. Also, there is a need in a better-organized content analysis. This analysis might encompass various newspapers, party meetings, statements, etc.

Appendices

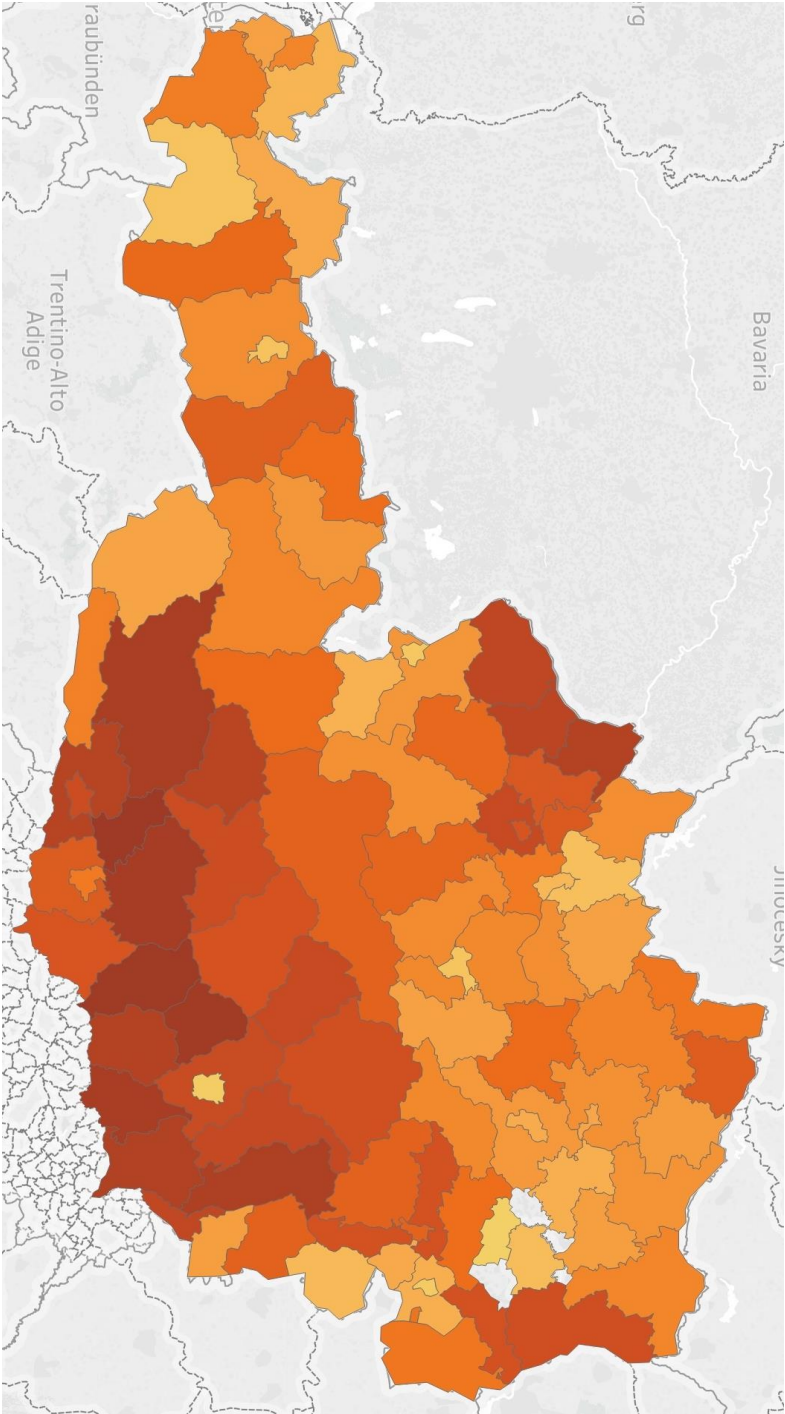
Appendix I – Front National’s success at the second round of French Presidential Elections 2017. Values vary between 10.32% - 52.91%. Warmer areas have higher support.

Source: [https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/electresult__presidentielle-2017/\(path\)/presidentielle-2017/index.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/electresult__presidentielle-2017/(path)/presidentielle-2017/index.html)



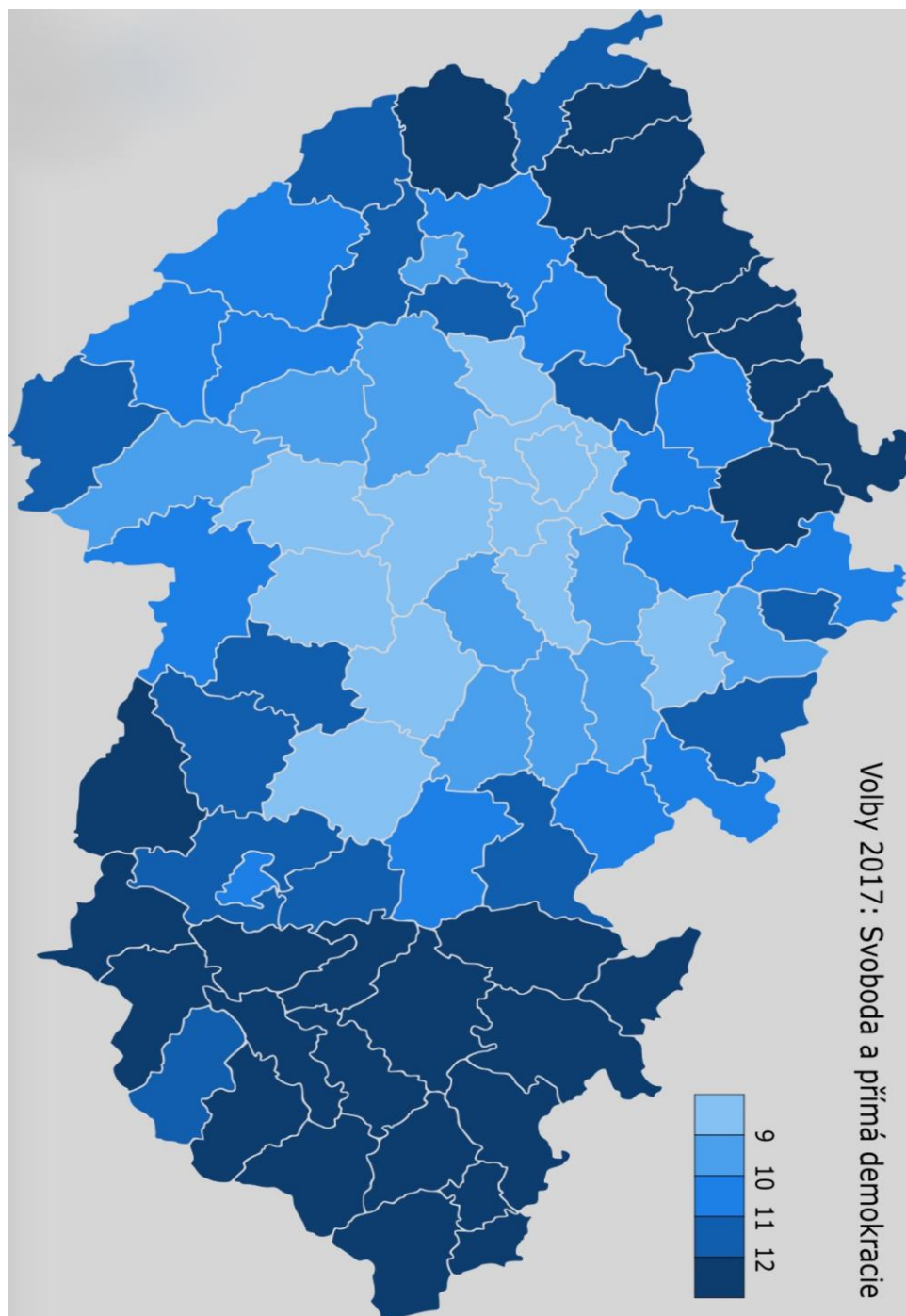
Appendix II - FPÖ's electoral success at Austrian Legislative Elections 2017. Values vary between 19.1% - 36.8%. Warmer areas have higher support.

Source: <https://wahl17.bmi.gv.at/index.html>



Appendix III – SPD’s electoral success at Czech Legislative Elections 2017. Values vary between 5.81% - 15.96%. Warmer areas have higher support.

Source: <https://www.volby.cz/pls/ps2017nss/ps3?xjazyk=EN#2>



Appendix IV – Summary statistics for border municipalities.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Municipality	0				
Bor	126	1	0	1	1
PVV	126	15.85984	4.877839	8	38.9
LowIncHouse	126	29.58492	4.074429	20.9	41.3
SocHelpRecip	126	1122.698	1867.614	90	9330
MedStanInc	126	28.04206	1.75113	24.1	32.5
CrRate	126	991.5079	1651.805	85	10975
TotPop	126	38729.71	39380.47	6611	224755
AgeA	126	5.262698	1.232866	3.9	12.5
AgeB	126	21.5627	2.257742	16.3	30.3
AgeC	126	30.82143	2.146462	24.3	35
AgeD	126	20.51273	2.549142	13.97366	26.7829
WestMig	126	9.789683	5.446097	3	44.1
NonWMig	126	5.092063	3.806659	1.2	18.8
Unemp	126	2.171786	.3049965	1.438301	3.04878
AgrForFish	116	2.525862	3.215347	0	15
IndEner	116	19.74138	6.676527	5	38
ComSer	125	48	8.559093	25	69
NonComSer	125	30.112	9.202223	12	58
LowEd	126	19.50794	4.272229	7	30

Appendix V – Summary statistics for non-border municipalities.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Municipality	0				
Bor	261	0	0	0	0
PVV	261	12.14828	3.219515	4.9	23.7
LowIncHouse	261	27.47816	4.27141	10.9	38.7
SocHelpRecip	261	1422.529	4799.96	10	49460
MedStanInc	259	29.00734	2.7149	24	41.4
CrRate	261	1351.303	4367.88	10	48750
TotPop	261	46052.02	77921.07	919	833624
AgeA	261	5.405747	1.564954	2.6	17.3
AgeB	261	22.48161	2.85313	13.6	35.7
AgeC	261	29.17126	2.223506	19.1	33.8
AgeD	261	19.01981	3.271185	8.565568	30.59511
WestMig	261	7.244444	3.18813	1.4	22
NonWMig	261	6.967433	6.06917	1.1	37.6
Unemp	261	1.935117	.3750559	.6504228	3.323179
AgrForFish	229	2.637555	3.235573	0	17
IndEner	228	17.08333	8.531728	1	50
ComSer	260	49.85385	9.830307	20	80
NonComSer	261	30.76628	11.17599	6	69
LowEd	261	18.24521	4.878645	1	31

Appendix VI – Tweets on border municipalities.

Breda:

March 8, 2017 – “Fantastisch zo veel lieve mensen, zoveel steun in het prachtige Breda #STEMPVV”

Translation: Fantastic so many lovely people, so much support in beautiful Breda.

Source: <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/839494353550737408>

Heerlen:

March 11, 2017 – “Flyeren in het mooie Limburg: Valkenburg en Heerlen”.

Translation: Flyering in beautiful Limburg: Valkenburg and Heerlen.

Source: <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/840591519987978240>

Venlo:

February 25, 2017 – “Vuul pleezer Venlo – Ik hald vuul van dich, mien laeve lang”

Translation (from Limburgish): Lots of fun Venlo – I love you, all of my life”.

Source: <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/835437572180574208>

Weert:

March 11, 2017 – “Grenzen dicht. Genoeg is genoeg! Asielzoekers Weert betrokken bij aanrandingen Keulen”

Translation: Shut the borders. Enough is enough! Asylum seekers in Weert involved in rape in Cologne”

Source: <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/840478232998760448>

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