

The Winner Takes it All

Investigating the incumbency effect for the Progress
Party on the Norwegian municipal level

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Master thesis

Spring 2019

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Abstract

With this thesis I explore the incumbency effect for the Progress Party in local Norwegian politics. While there seems to be wide-ranging agreement that incumbency indeed has an effect, whether this is an advantage or disadvantage is somewhat disputed. It is argued that incumbency can have varying effect on different types of parties, and the disadvantage seems to be extra damning for radical right-wing populist parties. Furthermore, most studies of the incumbency effect exist on the national level. Therefore, I wish to examine if having the mayoral position is an advantage or disadvantage electorally for the Progress Party. Due to their status as a radical right-wing populist party, I wish to explore whether or not the given effect is unique for the Progress Party by comparing the results with the remaining established Norwegian political parties. I use a panel dataset that cover the Norwegian municipalities from 1971 to 2016. To inspect the causal effect of gaining a mayoral position I implement the matrix completion method to estimate a synthetic counterfactual unit for comparison. In order to further inspect the results, I additionally examine four municipalities more in-depth, and perform various robustness tests.

I find that the effect of incumbency actually is a significant advantage for the Progress Party on the municipal level compared to the synthetic counterfactual unit. The visibility and recognition that incumbents enjoy could therefore lead to an increase in electoral support. Furthermore, this effect is not unique for the Progress Party, but generally translates to the remaining main Norwegian political parties as well. The effect could therefore be symptomatic of local Norwegian politics, rather than any party specific attributes.

Acknowledgements

Først og fremst vil jeg takke min fantastiske veileder Tor Midtbø, som har vært til særdeles stor hjelp både til å navigere oppgaven metodologisk, men også til å finne tema og fremgangsmåte. Tusen takk for all tilbakemelding og tålmodighet.

Tiden på masterstudiet hadde vært betydelig mye mer utfordrende uten det utrolig gode miljøet på Sofie Lindstrøms hus med kull 2017-2019. Takk for alle gode faglige diskusjoner, men aller mest takk for alle de fantastiske ikke-faglige diskusjonene, som den notoriske kanel/sukker debatten som preget vårsemesteret 2019. Takk for alle sampolvitser og memes. Særlig takk til min trofaste med-tropper på rom 101 Simen Aasheim Johannessen, som alltid tar seg tid til å hjelpe meg med dumme spørsmål.

Mange takk går ut til Hanna Amalie Holding Jones som leste gjennom oppgaven min og ga meg svært nyttig tilbakemelding. Takk skal også gis til MOR gruppen ved instituttet, hvor jeg fikk presentere funnene mine og ble møtt av gode innspill og idéer.

Videre må jeg takke mamma, pappa og storebror Vidar, dere har alltid støttet og oppmuntret meg. Tusen takk til Stian for din utrolige tålmodighet og støtte gjennom alle oppturene og nedturene over studieløpet. Du klarer alltid å få meg til å smile, og har vist uendelig med forståelse for de sene kveldene på lesesalen. Uten dere hadde jeg nok aldri klart å levere.

Sist men ikke minst, takk til Lykke for hennes rolle som motvillig terapihund noen dager, og frustrasjonsmoment andre dager, slik alle gode hunder burde være.

Idunn Johanne Bjøve Nørbech

Bergen, mai 2019

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1.0 Introduction

Norway has a long tradition for local democracy. On the municipal level the role of mayor is the most prominent and elicits considerable attention from both local media and constituents. This attention could be both positive and negative, as gaining a position of power in an advanced democracy bears many risks and benefits. Suddenly the politicians are being held accountable to the public, they are expected to live up to the promises they made during the campaign, and make sure that the state advances welfare and prosperity. At the same time, the opposition is exempt from accountability, and will use this opportunity to criticize the current power-holder. On the other hand, incumbents can also see the extra visibility and perks of office as a great advantage. On the local level the distance between the incumbent and the constituents is shorter which can lead to higher accountability. However, higher visibility and familiarity with the constituents could also lead to increased electoral support. The incumbency disadvantage, or cost of ruling, is additionally expected to have different consequences for different political parties. Parties generally considered at-risk candidates for incumbency disadvantage are anti-establishment parties, like radical right-wing populist parties

In this thesis I wish to explore the effect of incumbency on the municipal level in Norway using the matrix completion method (MCM) to better determine the direct causal effect of governance on the electoral support of the incumbent. As some parties potentially have more to lose by gaining a position of power, it will be interesting to see how the most radical right-wing populist party of the established Norwegian parties fares, namely the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP). To get a comparative perspective, I will also perform analyses using the remaining established Norwegian political parties, to explore whether a given effect is unique for the Progress Party. I have consequently chosen the following research question:

In what way will gaining the position of mayor on the Norwegian local level affect the Progress Party's electoral support?

Surprisingly I find that the Progress Party does in fact have higher electoral support in the municipalities where they have achieved the mayoral position for one election compared to those municipalities where they have not acquired this position. In addition, I find that this effect also applies to all the established political parties in Norway. It seems that the

incumbency advantage in general is likely to be a symptom of the Norwegian local politics, rather than any specific party and how they perform in a position of power.

1.1 How to answer the research question

To answer the research question, I shall first construct a theoretical framework. I will outline the arguments surrounding the incumbency effect, and the positions framing it as an advantage or disadvantage. I will then further expand on radical right-wing populist parties, and their unique nature when they achieve a position of government. Furthermore, I will explore the Progress Party, and whether or not they can be defined as a radical right-wing populist party, I will also consider their position in Norwegian local politics. To explore the causal effect of the cost of ruling on the municipal level I will use the matrix completion method, which will allow the researcher to create a synthetic counterfactual estimation. Additionally, I will explore some municipalities more in-depth. Initially, however, a more detailed discussion of the units of analysis, and the empirical device is of necessity.

1.2 Why study local elections

Although the literature on cost of ruling on the national level is quite extensive, little research exist on the local level. Local politics exist as an integral part of all political systems, studies on this level can give essential insights into the inner workings of democratic mechanisms (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 696). The municipal level in Norway is especially well suited for this feat. The Norwegian municipalities are quite similar when it comes to history, political culture and sociodemographic context, making them ideal comparative units (Martinussen 2004, 229). This is amplified additionally by the fact that radical right-wing populist parties especially vary significantly from country to country (Mudde 2007, 3). Therefore, it may be more feasible to study these parties within the context of one specific country. Furthermore, only a handful of radical right-wing populist parties have entered a position of power, and this is usually relatively recently, making the time perspective limited, and trends difficult to observe and study.

Studying cost of ruling for radical right-wing parties on the municipal level will therefore not only be beneficial because of the homogenous comparable units, but also because of the

expanded time perspective. In addition, most studies on the cost of ruling focus on governments instead of individual parties, even though theory suggest variation between party families (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 696). On the local level, the distance between voter and politician is short, implying that the decisions made on the municipal level are more visible for the citizens (Martinussen 2004, 230). Furthermore, being smaller units than nation states, each vote will count more, making the politicians ever more accountable to the electorate (Martinussen 2004, 230). However, significant challenges exist on the local level as well. This includes, among other things, actually recognizing a government in the traditional term on the Norwegian municipal level, and the role of the Norwegian mayor. This, and other challenges will be thoroughly discussed in the literature review.

1.3 Why study radical right-wing populist parties

Many radical right-wing populist parties have experienced a surge in popularity across Europe the last years. The party family is one of two that has managed to manifest after the second world war, and the only one that has managed to gain traction across all of Europe (Mudde 2007, 1). Even though the support for the party group is growing, the instances where they actually gain a position of power is relatively rare (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 2-3). This shift in power has happened relatively recently, therefore the knowledge surrounding the incumbency effect for these types of parties is somewhat limited.

The Progress Party is often considered to be in the grey area as to its status as a radical right-wing populist party, the party is more moderate than the radical right-wing populist parties in other countries. I will continue this discussion in the next chapter, but the party is certainly distinctively anti-establishment and radical right-wing within the Norwegian context (Jupskås 2017). Studying the Progress Party on the local level could give some useful insight into how radical right-wing populist parties fare in a position of power.

1.4 Why use matrix completion method

The matrix completion method is based on imputation using matrices, where the goal is to create a synthetic control unit. I will therefore first expand on the synthetic control method (SCM) and generalized synthetic control method (GSC), because of the similarities and justifications the three methods share. GSC exists as a continuation of the synthetic control method and the two methods share a lot of validations. SCM can on the basic level be likened to the normal comparative method, based on John Stuart Mill's method of difference (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2015, 495). The goal is to choose the best units for comparison to a unit where an intervention of interest has occurred, to approximate a counterfactual setting. The difference is that SCM uses data-driven methods to choose the best suited comparative units from the donor pool, combining the results from these units and applying weights to create a synthetic control unit that closely resembles the treated unit pre-intervention.

Methodological literature has called for a greater convergence of qualitative and quantitative methods in social sciences (George and Bennet 2005; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2015). More specifically the use of quantitative tools and statistics to compliment qualitative case studies (Lieberman 2015; Tarrow 2010; Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2015). Although arguably not the main trait of SCM, it could in theory give an important contribution to the merging of qualitative and quantitative methods, specifically case studies. Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2015, 495) remark that the method can contribute to bridging the divide between qualitative and quantitative methods, by combining data-driven case selection with the logic behind the comparative method in political science.

However, the comparative method does suffer from some serious drawbacks, two points are often raised. Firstly, selection of comparative units is vital to the comparative process and could, in the worst-case scenario, lead to selection bias and erroneous conclusions (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2010, 493; 2015, 2011). The most common form of selection bias is due to selecting a case based on the dependent variable (Goertz 2006, 161). Such cases suffer generally from lack of representativeness, the same could be said for the choice of "practical" cases, or "good" cases (Fearon and Laitin 2008). The solution proposed by Fearon and Laitin (2008), random selection, also has flaws, as the cases might not be relevant. SCM could be used in the assistance of case selection. SMC also offers advantages when the number of cases is low, as tend to be the case at aggregate levels (Mao 2018, 19910).

Furthermore, it is argued that a combination of countries could make for a more suitable unit than any one unit alone. This is because it is often problematic to find well-matched comparative units, especially on the aggregate level, where the large units often include a lot of unknown confounders (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2015, 496). In addition, SCM is transparent, and informs of which control units contributes to the average score, and how much they contribute. A lot of literature and research has been devoted to the cost of ruling, but none has used this method, which will be ideal to isolate the causal effect of incumbency. The method is advantageous, as it will allow us, with some certainty, to draw inference about the effect of incumbency, when all other factors are controlled for.

In that manner, SCM also share similarities with the experimental method, with its unique ability to explore the causal impact of an intervention in a controlled environment (Mao 2018). The experimental method is praised for its ability to explore causal effects by keeping all other variables constant by randomizing the experimental groups. The drawback is the controlled environment makes the results hard to generalize. SCM takes this ability one step further, by making it possible to examine the causal empirical interventions outside of this controlled environment.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured in the following manner. In chapter two I will consider relevant literature regarding the cost of ruling, radical right-wing populist parties, the Progress Party, and Norwegian local government, and I will present my hypotheses. Then, in chapter three, I will give a detailed account of the data material which is used to conduct the empirical analysis. Chapter four will deal with the empirical strategy, and I will give an extensive explanation of both the generalized synthetic control method and the matrix completion method. When this is accounted for, I will in chapter five present the results from the analyses and discuss it accordingly. Chapter six will be the conclusion of the thesis.

2.0 Theoretical framework – from the incumbency effect to local Norwegian governance

This chapter is divided into three main parts. I start broadly by presenting some of the existing literature on the cost of ruling, and its effects. I will also present literature on the incumbency advantage, based on the effects found in American congressional elections. Part two will explore the literature on radical right-wing populist parties and consider some of the theories concerning these parties when they enter a position of power. The third part will consider the Progress party, and whether or not it can even be classified as a radical right-wing populist party, I will also discuss the nature of local Norwegian government and the role of the Norwegian mayor. Finally, after considering the theoretical framework of the thesis, I will present the thesis' main argument and hypotheses.

2.1 Incumbency – disadvantage or advantage?

The cost of ruling is overall a well-known mechanism in political literature. The cost of ruling is described as the general loss of support political parties experience when entering a position of power. The cost of ruling is also a part of a lot of the literature investigating the VP-function, referring to the support of governments based on economic and political mechanisms (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013, 367). This is based on votes (V) and popularity in polls (P), these two functions are rarely differentiated (Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 214).

Generally, the cost of ruling has been estimated to be a couple of percentages loss in support over a normal period in a position of power (Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 238; Paldam 1986, 6). This effect is also shown to increase during the duration an incumbent holds office (Stevenson 2002, 158). The effect is based on the assumption of retrospective voting, that a significant amount of voters decide to hold the incumbents accountable, and that their decision to vote for another party is rational and purposeful (Söderlund 2008, 219). Cost of ruling in itself is paradoxical, the rational voter should expect the ruling coalition to govern as well or poorly as anticipated and therefore should not feel the need to punish incumbents (Paldam and Skott 1995, 159; Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 217; Paldam 1986, 6). Further explanation of this phenomena is warranted, and extensive literature exists on the subject. Most explanations

focus on rational choice theory and the median voter theorem. The literature usually separates between theories concerning economic and political outcomes.

2.1.1 Economic theories

When a country's economy performs poorly, the incumbent is often held accountable. The theory therefore suggest a relationship between electoral behaviour and economic performance (Mueller 1970, 22). This is called the responsibility hypothesis, and it focuses solely on the economic outcomes rather than the economic policies carried by the incumbents (Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 216). Often unemployment is considered a decent measurement of countries' economic performance (Mueller 1970; Nannestad and Paldam 1994; Goodhart and Bhansali 1970). Usually economic outcomes can be separated into two schools. The egotropic hypothesis is based on methodological individualism and assume that the voter judges the economy based on their own income (Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 224). The sosiotropic hypothesis assumes that the voter judges the economy as a whole (Nannestad and Paldam 1994). Generally more evidence has been found supporting that the citizens considers the sosiotropic factors to be more relevant when deciding how to vote (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013, 369).

A critique of these theories is that they do not explain how, even when the economy is on the rise, the cost of ruling is still apparent. Mueller (1970, 22) notes that even when the economy is on the rise, it does not seem to affect the popularity of the incumbent, should the economy perform poorly however, this will have significant negative consequences. This phenomena was coined the "grievance asymmetry" (Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 216). In addition, economic problems do not disappear or appear overnight, and the sitting government is not necessarily responsible for the country's economic performance (Boyne et al. 2009, 1274). Although, when acting on limited information, one could also expect the voter to assess current government performance to calculate how a specific government might act in the future (Kramer 1971, 134). Furthermore, rational citizens would be expected to demand change should the unemployment rate be high. Studies on the asymmetry of grievances produce mixed results, disagreement exist as to whether this effect is supported empirically (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013, 371)

On the municipal level, economic theories might be of less relevance considering the central government often controls the means the municipalities have at their disposal. However, the citizens might not be aware of this information, and experience the municipalities as an important factor when it comes to economic development. On the other hand, earlier research has shown that voters do not emphasize economic performance when voting in local elections (Martinussen 2004, 247). The reason for this could be that many voters attribute economic performance to the state level government rather than the local level (Boyne et al. 2009, 1275; Stein 1990, 51). Economic theories alone will therefore not be able to explain the general trend I wish to consider in this essay.

2.1.2 Political theories

Originally based on Downs' (1957a) seminal work, Mueller (1970) expands on the theory of "the coalition of minorities". This theory is based on the notion that, even when supported by the majority of voters, a party might end up eventually alienating enough minority groups, causing them to ultimately lose the majority (Downs 1957a, 55). The logic can easily be transferred to the notion of cost of ruling for incumbents, where they realistically usually are not able to fulfil all their promises from their campaigns, therefore might end up gradually alienating supporters (Mueller 1970, 20). Furthermore, initial popularity could be artificially high, bloated by the support of weak followers (Mueller 1970, 20).

Even though the government performs well, they are on average punished by the voters, the "asymmetry of grievances" theory suggest that disappointment is emphasized more heavily by people than success (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 697). In comparison the opposition cannot be held accountable for their promises, and therefore do not experience the same loss of support (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 697). Theory also suggest that voters simply have a taste for change, and wish to see new faces in government from time to time, this theory is of course hard to confirm (Paldam and Skott 1995, 160). Another theory assumes that the parties have a natural level of support, after a brief surge in votes to put them in office, they will slowly revert to their natural level (Paldam 1986, 9).

Paldam and Skott (1995, 161) also present a theory, which is a revision of the median voter theorem. In a two-party system where the voters are normally distributed, parties are expected

to move closer to the centre of the political spectrum in order to gain more voters¹. There are caveats to this Downsian logic, it expects that political actors' only goal is to gain power and achieve the economic benefits, and the prestige that follow a position of power (Downs 1957b, 137). In reality, individuals do not always act out of self-preservation, political actors are often observed making decisions that might harm their personal reputation, out of the notion that it will be better for the society as a whole (Downs 1957a, 27). Yet, theories about human actions still lean heavily on the idea that individuals act according to self-interest (Downs 1957a, 28).

With these considerations, it makes sense to expect parties to move towards the centre of a political spectrum in order to gain more support, should the electorate be evenly distributed (Downs 1957b, 143). However, the parties will not get too similar as it may dissuade citizens from voting should there be no apparent difference between the parties. In addition policies need to be approved by the party members, who often are more radical than the median voter (Paldam and Skott 1995, 161). Therefore, one should expect the parties to appear noticeably different from one another. With this assumption in mind, a gap could be expected to exist between the two main parties, which should lead to three different group of voters. Those closest to the party to the left, those closest to the party to the right, and the group of voters falling between these two positions.

The literature assumes that voters emphasize policy outcomes rather than political positions. Considering that most political outcomes needs a considerable amount of time to get implemented voters might feel like change is sluggish (Paldam and Skott 1995, 161). In addition, changing of government could lead to dismantling of the changes in policy that were in development (Paldam and Skott 1995, 161). Paldam and Skott (1995, 163) assume that the voters falling in the gap between the two parties are the ones who are able to decide which party wins the election, these voters might prefer an alteration of the parties in power rather than steady rule by either party. According to Paldam and Skott (1995) these swing-voters and their demand for change, lead to the loss in support for government parties.

¹ Of course, empirically few countries operate with a pure two-party system, but the logic may be transferred to countries that have two clear party blocks on the left/right dimension. Either way the model is a radical simplification of real political systems (Paldam and Skott 1995, 168).

2.1.2.1 Theories concerning multi-party systems

Many studies on the cost of ruling originate from the United States, which with their two-party system makes the analysis of incumbents and opposition simpler, and makes no distinction between party and government (Van Spanje 2011, 612). The water gets muddier with multi-party systems, and greater variation among parties can be expected, as the government and the opposition are composed by multiple different parties (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016). Theories involving the median voter are more relevant for two-party systems and can also give useful insights in multi-party systems consisting of two main ideological blocks (Paldam and Skott 1995, 168; Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 698). In reality the party systems are very complex and can be divided by a number of different political cleavages (Paldam 1986, 9). For more complex multi-party system with less consistent coalitions, studies of individual parties are more relevant than focusing on governments alone (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 698). Furthermore studies that focus on the government as a whole, do not account for variation among individual parties, where some parties might have more to loose from governing than others (Van Spanje 2011, 612).

The party prominence theory is more relevant for multi-party systems. The theory suggest that voters differentiate between the parties present in a coalition government, based on the perceived responsibility of each party. Usually the prime ministers party, and the party of the minister of finance are emphasized (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 698). In this thesis, the focus will be on the mayoral position on the municipal level, a visible position which carries prominence on the local level. The effect of the cost of ruling, can be expected to be higher the more prominence can be acquainted to the party in question (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 698). Related to this the theory of “clarity of responsibility” suggest that blame is easier to assign to majority governments, while minority governments manage to avoid accountability to a larger degree (Anderson 2000, 154). Another theory considers political company. If parties enter into a coalition with other parties that the voters dislike or ideological outliers, their electoral support might decline (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 699). The same concept applies to anti-establishment parties who lose their “purity” by collaborating with the establishment (Van Spanje 2011, 610-611). FrP in the Norwegian context can be seen as a classical anti-establishment party, and it seems reasonable to expect the cost of ruling effect to be stronger for this party.

It should be noted however, that incumbency does not always have to be a disadvantage. There exists a lot of literature which suggests that incumbency is, indeed, advantageous for candidates. I will discuss this literature in the following section.

2.1.3 The incumbency advantage

Is incumbency truly a zero-sum game? Studies from the United States Congressional elections usually consider incumbency as a great advantage, this effect is especially prominent for the members of Congress who often experience re-election (Cover 1977, 524). According to Fiorina (1989, 7) the re-election rate of congress incumbents is close to 90% since the first world war. This success is generally attributed to gerrymandering and decline in partisanship (Cover 1977, 524; Ferejohn 1977, 166). Although these causes are not directly applicable to Norwegian municipalities, Franklin (1993, 271) argues that the extra visibility incumbents gain in congressional elections is considered a substantial electoral advantage (Franklin 1993, 271). King and Gelman (1991) also show that redistricting, which is not relevant for the Norwegian municipalities, cannot account for all the effects of incumbency.

Furthermore incumbents gain privileges and experience, which can be useful tools to increase their support (Ferejohn 1977, 167). In addition, the incumbents are familiar names for the voters, and their campaigns often receive more funds (Johannes and McAdams 1981, 513; Liang 2013; Fiva and Smith 2018, 706). These extra resources have a direct effect on the incumbents' advantage, by having more funds and staff available, the candidate will have the ability to run a more substantial campaign (Cox and Katz 1996, 479). This could also have an indirect effect, by deterring other candidates from running against them, as they are well aware of the incumbents' advantage (Cox and Katz 1996, 479; Fiva and Smith 2018, 706). In democratic states such as USA, Japan, Ireland and India, there has even been talk of political dynasties, and inherited incumbency advantage (Fiva and Smith 2018, 706).

Decline of partisanship is considered a possible explanation for the congressional incumbency effect (Cox and Katz 1996, 481). The congressmen's role has shifted from lawmaker, where their power is limited by the sheer number of congressmembers, to more bureaucratic roles as ombudsmen and pork barrelers (Fiorina 1989, 48-49). Based on this assumption, the incumbency effect makes sense, bureaucratic seniority and experience matters, leading to re-

election (Fiorina 1989, 49). Career politicians make it their prerogative to get re-elected and will therefore be incentivised to keep their constituents satisfied (Kukovic and Hacek 2013, 88). Even though the incumbency effect in itself is not disputed in American political research, the effect does differ between incumbents themselves, some factors like economy and the presiding president seem to influence the electoral support for incumbents (Johannes and McAdams 1981, 512-513).

A factor determining electoral support could be responsiveness, Eulau and Karps (1977) separate between four different types of responsiveness. (1) Policy responsiveness refers to the incumbents coverage of the major political issues, (2) service responsiveness consider the representative's ability to obtain certain benefits for individuals or groups in the constituency, as well as their ability to respond to emails, printing out pamphlets and similar activities (Eulau and Karps 1977, 241; Johannes and McAdams 1981, 513). (3) Allocation responsiveness refers to the candidate's success in securing funds and boons for their constituency, (4) symbolic responsiveness consider a candidates ability to create trust between them and their supporters (Eulau and Karps 1977, 241).

It is worth noting, that this effect translates to a lesser degree to the senate elections (and even less to presidential elections). Even though many senators do spend a lot of time on constituency service, their campaigns tend to be more influenced by personal characteristics, legislative achievements and issue positions, the senatorial candidates therefore, fail to go through their campaigns sounding like ombudsmen (Fiorina 1989, 116). The senatorial positions are more prestigious, they attract more media attention, and the political focus is often more national rather than state based which seems to have a greater possibly to cause damage electorally (Fiorina 1989, 117). Furthermore, in the presence of larger political scandals and recessions, the people seem to hold the president accountable as opposed to the congressional members (Fiorina 1989, 137).

Disagreement exist as to whether or not the incumbency advantage could be harmful to democracy. On one hand, election of the same candidates over and over could lead to a an uneven political playing field and deterring accountability, on the other hand, it could just indicate that the candidates who are re-elected are better suited for the position in the first place (Kang, Park, and Song 2018, 47).

The question remains as to whether or not this incumbency effect translates to the Norwegian municipal mayoral positions, and if this is applicable to the Progress Party. Kukovic and Hacek (2013) did find an incumbency effect amongst mayors in Slovenian local government. At the same time, difference between political parties seem minimal, at least in the American context (Lockerbie 1999, 643). Furthermore, the distance between the candidates in local elections and their constituents is shorter, allowing them to be more responsive and familiar with their voters (Kang, Park, and Song 2018, 48). Similar finding could therefore be plausible when studying the Progress Party during their political career on the municipal level in Norway.

2.1.4 Previous studies on the local level

Widespread studies exist on the VP-function and cost of ruling on the national level², however few studies exist on the cost of ruling on the local level. Martinussen (2004) explore the cost of ruling on the municipal level in Norway, for the two elections in 1995 and 1999 using OLS regression. He finds that the cost of ruling exist on the municipal level in Norway (Martinussen 2004). Karlsson and Gilljam (2016) study the cost of ruling in Swedish municipalities over four local elections from 1998-2010 using multiple OLS regression. They also explore differences in the loss of electoral support between the different political parties, finding that anti-establishment parties suffer significantly more than the moderate parties. Interestingly they find that the party which belongs to the municipality's mayor does not suffer from the cost of ruling. Karlsson and Gilljam (2016, 712) suggest that a possible explanation could be the increased media attention a mayor gets, and the party having ties to a possible well-liked and respected person. This is supported by theories suggesting that the increased visibility of incumbents leads to electoral advantage (Franklin 1993). Furthermore, voters tend to prefer voting for the familiar (Nannestad and Paldam 1994, 223). The party of the mayor in the municipality should indeed be familiar to the average voter.

Based on measures of local government performance in England Boyne et al. (2009) examine whether or not voters punish local power holders based on their performance using a regression on a panel data set. They found strong support for the "asymmetry of grievances" theory, where the voters did not seem to reward good performance by the government (Boyne et al. 2009).

² For an extensive review of the literature and studies on the VP-function see Nannestad and Paldam (1994) and Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2013).

On the other hand, Kang, Park, and Song (2018), using a regression discontinuity design, find incumbency advantage in South Korean local elections, as opposed to the national elections. Interestingly, they also find that the incumbency advantage carries over with candidates who have previously run for local elections, to the national election (Kang, Park, and Song 2018).

Fiva and Smith (2018) investigates the incumbency advantage and political dynasties for individual politicians, albeit in national elections as opposed to local. To investigate the effect, they use a regression discontinuity design, on a dataset that spans from 1953-1981, where the treatment is winning office (Fiva and Smith 2018, 706). They find that incumbency advantage exists, even though politics in Norway is mainly party-focused, but that there does not seem to be a tendency for political dynasties (Fiva and Smith 2018, 709).

2.2 Radical right-wing populist parties

Does incumbency affect all parties in the same way, or are some parties more “vulnerable” to incumbency disadvantage than others? Theory seems to suggest that radical right-wing populist parties are at a higher disadvantage when it comes to the loss in support associated with a position of power. In this section I will first define radical right-wing populist parties, then present relevant theory discussing these parties in a position of power.

Controversy exist around defining right wing populist parties. Even the definition of populism is not completely clear cut, although some elements tend to be repeated. These elements include “the people” as a homogenous unit and defender of their sovereignty against the corrupt “elites” (Van Kessel 2015, 2; Albertazzi 2009, 1).

According to Mudde (2007, 16) the minimum definition of populist radical right wing parties should hinge on the core concept of the “nation”. However the term nationalism is has been watered down and stretched making it an unprecise tool to distinguish the party families of interest (Mudde 2007, 16-17). The term nativism is according to Mudde (2007, 18-19) a better fit. Nativism can be defined as: “an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007, 19). Nativism can also manifest as scepticism towards immigrants, anti-EU or anti-Islam

rhetoric (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 16). Nativism as a term is especially suited to define this party family as it recognizes xenophobia as an important part of radical right wing populist parties ideology, without limiting the parties to single-issue parties (Mudde 2007, 19). Akkerman, de Lange and Rooduijn (2016, 7) consider three points that distinguish radical right-wing populist parties, they appear non-centrist, they have a tendency to focus on sociocultural rather than socioeconomic cases, and their notion of politics clearly pits them against the establishment.

2.2.1 Radical right-wing populist parties in a position of power

Considering radical right-wing populist parties' unique nature, special attention should be given how entering the mainstream political arena could affect their policies and strategies. Right-wing populist parties popularity have been on a surge over Western-Europe, and in Austria, Finland, Netherland, Norway and Switzerland these parties have been able to enter a position of government (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 1).

According to Downs' (1957a) theory, inclusion into the party system will cause a party to moderate in order to appeal to the median voter (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 1; Berman 2008, 6). The established parties struggle with the task of mobilizing voters, and extreme and radical opinions complicate the matter further. These parties will therefore have more to gain by moderating to draw in more voters, assuming these voters are normally distributed (Berman 2008, 6). Being parties of a radical nature, moderating their politics to appeal to the median voter, could cause radical right-wing populist parties to lose their core supporters. Another strategy could therefore be to distance themselves from the moderate parties rather than challenge them in the strive for the median voters (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 16).

The Downsian logic would claim moderating policies as a power-seeking behaviour, but moderating could also be a result of inclusion into a position of government (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 15). Most Western-European democracies depend on coalition governments, meaning that in order to form a government parties need to negotiate and compromise in order to bridge ideological differences (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016, 4). Radical right-wing populist parties would have to adjust their agenda and position to

form a coalition with more moderate parties to gain office. In addition to moderating voters may perceive radical anti-establishment parties entering coalition with moderate parties as “sell-outs” thus disappointing their voters, and losing support (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 699). On the other hand, entering government would be an opportunity to reap the spoils of office, and implement their policies (Van Spanje 2011, 610).

However, cooperating with establishment parties also means it will be unlikely for radical parties to be able to implement most of their policies (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 699). This mirrors the coalition of minorities theory, which claims that during the election campaign, promises will be made that will be difficult to implement in government. Of course, they could possibly gain new voters by appearing more moderate and as a part of the establishment, but it is nevertheless an extra potential cost for these parties to be in a position of ruling. Furthermore, replacing the voters is not likely to happen right away, as the party will hold on to the reputation of being radical for a while after moderation (Van Spanje 2011, 614).

Once in a position of power, it is theorized that the everyday duties of government might leave the radical parties unable to use their energy on radical ideologies (Berman 2008, 6; Akkerman, de Lange, and Roodujin 2016, 4). Of course, evidence exist that not all radical right-wing populist parties tend to moderate when included in the mainstream political climate (Albertazzi 2009; Minkenberg 2013). Furthermore, right-wing populist parties that support a majority government tend to moderate more than the parties supporting a minority government (Akkerman, de Lange, and Roodujin 2016, 15). This seems to parallel the “clarity of responsibility theory” where a minority government is less likely to be held accountable by the voters, giving radical right-wing populist parties the possibility to stay radical, without being held accountable to the same degree if they are not able to fulfil their promises. In addition moderation as part of a position of power could be temporary and the parties radicalizing again when they lose office (Akkerman, de Lange, and Roodujin 2016, 15).

2.2.2 Previous studies on radical right-wing populist parties

Although not explicitly a study on the cost of ruling for radical right-wing populist parties, Van Spanje (2011) examines how anti-establishment parties fare in a position of power, using a pooled time series cross sectional design. His findings show that these parties suffer significantly more than the traditional establishment parties. Although his study includes radical leftist, and green parties, as well as radical right-wing populist parties in the category of anti-establishment parties.

Interestingly the effect does not seem to go the other way, and moderate parties do not seem to lose more support should they enter a government with an anti-establishment party (Van Spanje 2011).

It therefore seems likely that the incumbency disadvantage could be stronger for radical right-wing populist parties. To examine this, it will be necessary to compare the different Norwegian parties and the effect incumbency has on them.

2.3 The Progress Party and the Norwegian context

The focus of this thesis will be on the Norwegian local level, and this part will elaborate on local Norwegian politics, and the Progress Party. Often described as considerably more moderate than many of the other radical right-wing populist parties, it is necessary to discuss whether the Progress Party actually belongs in this party family.

2.3.1 The Progress Party – a borderline radical right-wing populist party?

While Mudde (2007, 47) suggests that FrP lacks the nativist focus necessary to be defined as a populist radical right party, Van Kessel (2015, 61) at least define the party as clearly populist due to their focus on taking the people's side against the political elite. Starting as a protest party focused on a single issue, FrP was expected to be a short-lived party, however, the party gained electoral popularity in the mid- 1990s (Jupskås 2016, 169). Surprisingly, despite being a right wing party, FrP has gained a decent amount of support within the working class (Goul Andersen and Bjørklund 1990, 195; Bjørklund 2007). However the support for the party first

greatly increased after they made the switch from a neo-liberal anti-tax party to radical right wing by focusing on the negative aspects of immigration (Jupskås 2016, 170). On the municipal level Bjørklund (2007) claims that FrPs success has been in line with regional cultural differences declining in the country, making Norway more culturally homogenous. This explains how FrP can be electorally successful both in western and eastern Norway, despite, among other things, their liberal alcohol policies (Bjørklund 2007).

2.3.1.1 Historical context – From neo-liberalism to radical right

The Progress Party's history starts in 1973 under the name "Anders Lange's Party for Strong Reduction of Taxes, Fees and Public Intervention"³. In addition to being a niche-party, naming the party after the aging party leader led people to believe the party would be short lived (Bjørklund 2003; Iversen 1998, 49). With Anders Lange's demise shortly after gaining a breakthrough with four representatives in the parliament, the party was on the verge of disintegration. Against common belief, Lange's successor Carl I. Hagen managed to not only hold the party together, but also gain momentum (Bjørklund 2003; Jenssen 2017, 231).

The party experienced electoral success after switching to an anti-immigrant programmatic platform, the surge of new members and voters led to cleavages between ideological fronts within the party (Jupskås 2016, 170). Three factions existed internally, the libertarians, the Christian conservatives and the national-populists, in the end, the libertarians lost the struggle, most of them leaving the party in 1994 (Jupskås 2016, 170; Iversen 1998, 112). It was following this shift the party truly picked up the mantle as a radical right-wing populist party (Jupskås 2016, 170). Firstly, the party has a clear populist agenda, among other things pushing for more referendums (Bjørklund 2004). In addition the party has a tendency to simplify complex issues making them more appealing to the people (Hagelund 2003, 48). Furthermore the Progress Party has a more authoritarian attitude than the other Norwegian parties, promoting harsher punishment for crime (Jupskås 2017, 409)

Although not the only party that has negative views towards immigration, FrP is clearly defined as "the immigration party" in Norway's political climate (Hagelund 2003, 49). Furthermore

³ Anders Langes Parti til sterk nedsettelse av skatter, avgifter og offentlig inngrep

the party is significantly more restrictive in their programmatic profile on the topic of immigration than the traditional parties like the Norwegian Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet, AP) or the Conservative Party (Høyre, H) (Simonnes 2013). In addition FrP has a focus on the cultural consequences of immigration, where moderate parties tend to focus on the economic consequences (Simonnes 2013). A third characteristic identifying FrP as a radical right-wing populist party is their fairly conservative, bordering on authoritarian views on crime and punishment (Jupskås 2016, 171). In addition FrP's party organization resembles that of most radical right-wing parties, with strong party discipline and a habit of excluding dissidents from the party (Bjørklund 2003). FrP has the most centrally controlled party organization in Norway, and the local lists are expected to implement decisions made by the party elites (Mjelde 2009). Interestingly enough, FrP do lack the clear Euroscepticism often found with radical right-wing populist parties, although many key members of FrP show a general aversion to deepening European integration (Jupskås 2016, 177). After gaining a position in government in 2013, the party has arguably become more moderate on many of these counts (Jenssen 2017).

In summary, FrP appear to be more liberal than many of its relatives across Europe (Kitschelt and McGann 1995). In addition they have a less nativist focus than what Mudde (2007, 47) considers necessary to qualify as a radical right populist party. However, FrP do share a lot of characteristics with radical right-wing populist parties, and seem to fit the typology rather well, even though there are more extreme parties in other European countries. Furthermore, FrP seems to have an immigration-focused programmatic nature, without becoming a niche party, therefore actually fulfilling some of the expectations of nativism. Either way FrP remains uniquely radical, populist and anti-establishment within the Norwegian context of which this essay will operate within.

2.3.2 Norway – politics on the local level

Despite its status as a unitary state, Norway has a long tradition of local democracy. The country consists of a two-layer system with 422 municipalities and 19 regions. State-wide politics has a tendency to steal attention from local politics, but the municipalities are not completely without importance (Bjørklund 2017, 302). They often get responsibility for tasks not attributed to other institutions (Bjørklund 2017, 303; Mjelde et al. 2016, 244). Still the sovereignty of the municipalities is worth discussing at length. As entities with limited political

autonomy, it is reasonable to expect, much like with the minority coalition governments, that accountability, and therefore cost of ruling would be low. It would be a waste for rational citizens to punish local leaders, if they conceive them to have no power at all. On the other hand, the distance between citizen and local power holder is much shorter, which could again increase the feeling of accountability.

2.3.2.1 Local government – Degree of autonomy

As a unitary state, the central government has the final say when it comes to the municipalities' finances and activities. The municipal revenue consists mainly of general grants and income tax (Martinussen 2004, 232). The task of the local government is limited to allocating the funds between the services offered on the municipal level, furthermore, the agenda for these services is often decided by the central government (Martinussen 2004, 244). The municipalities do have the ability to decide the degree of property tax, as well as general fees to maintain the technical infrastructure falling under the municipality's areas of responsibilities, such as water sewage and renovation (Bjørklund 2017, 303). Even though these sums are not monumental, they do get a lot of focus in local media. Hence, despite the municipalities limited fiscal sovereignty, disproportionate media attention is given, artificially increasing the sense of local economic autonomy (Bjørklund 2017).

How important the voters perceive local politics to be, is of significance in this discussion. Empirical studies find that Norwegian voters express more or less the same interest in local politics as national politics (Martinussen 2004, 232; Bjørklund 2017, 303). In addition, the voters show a significant amount of trust to their local democracy, and the local politicians find their work meaningful (Baldersheim and Smith 2011, 19). The assumption can be made that if the voters perceive the local authorities as powerful, there is no reason why they should not hold them accountable in elections. Furthermore, the municipalities have the autonomy over the location of public goods, which often induce a lot of emotions amongst their electorate (Bjørklund 2017, 304).

The local election campaign is often focused on local matters (Bjørklund 2017, 307). The coalition of minorities theory is based on the notion that promises made during the campaign, are important when it comes to the alienation of some groups of voters based on broken promises. The same could be expected from the election campaigns on the local level, and not

keeping some of the promises made should be expected to have the same consequences on this level. An opinion poll made by Bjørklund (2017, 307) also shows that local political cases are considered most important by voters in municipal elections, when it comes to distinguishing between parties in local elections, local political cases are closely followed by the general trust of the party in question. This gives us the notion that the parties appearing on the national level, operate with more or less the same trust as they experience in local elections. In summary, the citizens seem to perceive that local governance is of importance, and not completely powerless in comparison to nation-wide politics. Therefore, the electorate should be expected to hold local government responsible.

2.3.2.2 Recognizing government on the local level, the role of the Norwegian mayor

While most Norwegians are familiar with which parties the national government consists of, the same may not be true on the municipal level. The voters seem to have less notion of which parties the local multiparty governments consist of. However most citizens should be familiar with the parties holding the two most important positions in their municipality, the mayor and the deputy mayor (Martinussen 2004, 231). The cost of ruling is also assumed to be stronger for the parties connected to these positions, as they hold positions with clear responsibilities (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 698). In this thesis I will therefore use the position of mayor to measure the effect of the cost of ruling. Although this opens the discussion of the real power of the Norwegian mayors.

In the Nordic countries, the local leaders do not have extensive amounts of formal power, but they are still perceived as influential leaders (Aarsæther and Mikalsen 2015, 14). The types of local leaders are complex, but in general some personal traits that signify “good” local leadership are charisma, intelligence confidence, personal motivation and people skills (Aarsæther and Mikalsen 2015, 16). The role is in addition highly influenced by the structural and institutional frames they operate within, as well as for example the size or political climate in the specific municipality (Aarsæther and Mikalsen 2015, 17). Tasks like being the connection between the county administration and the state, and in contact with media are an important part of the mayoral obligations (Sletnes 2015, 50). Legally however, the mayoral position is limited to leading, and deciding the agenda for, the local council meetings (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015, 169). Their role have developed over time, as politics become more

professionalized, and now have the makings of prominent local leaders in practice (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015, 169). The mayor is the only full-time employed politician on the municipal level, making their influence on local politics significant, in addition, the mayors have not expressed any wishes for further expansions of their power. The lack of formal legal restraints on the mayoral role, opens for the opportunity of political leadership (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015, 170-171).

Politics in the Norwegian municipalities is to some degree based on consensus, the fronts are not as polarized as they are on the national level, and the mayors are pragmatic and willing to cross party lines to find the best solutions (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015, 180; Jacobsen 2009, 100). Although this form of consensus based politics gives the opposition the possibility to influence the decisions of the mayor, it does on the other hand also lead to an emasculation of the opposition to some degree, as they become less prominent in the spotlight (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015, 180-181; Jacobsen 2009, 101). Leading to an opposition that prefers waiting until the current mayor retires before they make a move, not unlike the trend observed amongst American members of congress. In addition the mayors often enjoy high levels of trust and popularity from the local population (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015, 187). This could influence the cost of ruling, by cooperating across party lines, they reduce the opposition's ability to criticize the powerholder's actions as they are responsible as well. In addition, with their limited formal power, the mayor can in addition "blame" the powerholders on the national level should the public be dissatisfied with their municipal leader. This could lead to opposite results of the cost of ruling on the local level, compared to the national level. This said, the level of conflict does vary significantly across the municipalities independent of local organisation (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005, 39).

2.3.2.3 The Progress Party on the local level

The Progress Party has been active in local politics since its inception in 1973. However, their performance on this level has varied, and only increased in later years. The 2003 municipal election was particularly successful for the Progress Party, winning them the position of mayor in 13 new municipalities (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005, 28).

It is worth noting, however, that parties on the local level do not necessarily mirror the party on the national level. This is because multiple factors might affect local politics, like a specific incident in that particular municipality or their local values (Fimreite and Flo 2002, 310). However, a consequence of the national parties running on the local level as well is that the national cleavages get a pronounced role in local politics, in addition, the parties' agenda will be effected by the cases the national party wish to focus on (Christensen, Folkestad, and Aars 2017, 43). Furthermore, the municipal elections are often considered to be second-rate, but could be used as a platform to "punish" the national party (Mjelde et al. 2016, 248). Mjelde et al. (2016, 243) refers to the 2015 local election, where the Progress Party performed poorly, which could be in response to their entrance into national government two years earlier. Furthermore theory assumes that national politics may travel down to the local level (Martinussen 2004, 245). In addition, FrP is structured, like most radical right-wing populist parties, with strong party discipline, it is therefore reasonable to expect the party to be recognizable and comparable in the different municipalities.

2.3.3 Previous studies on the Progress Party

Bjørklund and Saglie (2005) expand on Martinussen's (2004) study, by examining variation in the electoral turnout for the different municipal parties between 1999 and 2003. They achieve this by looking at the changes in mean electoral support for the parties between the elections. They found that the party which holds the position of mayor generally loses support between elections, however variation exists between parties (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005, 40). The Conservative Party, and the Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig folkeparti, KrF) suffered the greatest losses in support, this could be because they were a part of the national government at the time as well, and therefore suffered twice from the cost of ruling (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005, 40). Interestingly enough, the Progress Party actually increased their support from 1999 to 2003 despite holding a position of power, this could be because holding such positions could give the impression of credibility and responsibility to a party which earlier have been strictly anti-establishment (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005, 41). These are interesting findings, that are highly relevant for this thesis. The fact that the Progress Party increased their electoral support while holding the position of mayor/deputy mayor, not only contradicts the cost of ruling theory, but also the more specific theories regarding anti-establishment and radical right-wing populist parties. Such findings confirm the need for more studies of the cost of ruling on the

local level, Bjørklund and Saglie (2005) only considered the variation between two elections, this thesis will examine whether the same trend can be seen over time, and examine the causal impact holding a position of mayor/deputy mayor will have on the electoral turnout.

2.4 Hypotheses and theoretical argument

The theories presented suggest that incumbency could be an advantage or disadvantage, and findings in previous studies are somewhat varying when considering the local Norwegian level and incumbency. The assumption that holding a position of power, will lead to decrease in electoral support is widely supported (see Nannestad and Paldam 1994). A number of aspects supported by the literature seem to indicate that this effect should be expected also in the case of the Progress Party on the Norwegian local level. For example, this effect is assumed to be stronger for anti-establishment and radical right-wing populist parties, such as the Progress party. Furthermore, the effect is also assumed to be stronger the more prominent of a position the party holds in any setting. In this thesis, the position of mayor will be used, arguable the most prominent political position in local Norwegian governance, and the only full time employed elected politician in the municipalities. This is an office most citizens in the given municipalities are familiar with, therefore the accountability should be significant.

On the other hand, despite the mayoral position's prominence on the local level, the de facto power of the mayor is fairly limited. Norway is a unitary state with restricted local power, it is therefore possible to argue that a position of power should not weaken the electoral support, as the accountability can be shifted to the state. Furthermore, the opposition plays a prominent part in the literature on the cost ruling, assuming that they benefit from not being held accountable. On the municipal level however, politics are to much greater degree based on consensus, and the grade of political conflict is lower (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015). The restricted power of local politics could both benefit and harm the mayor. The limited leeway in local politics could give the impression of an ineffective leader who should be replaced in the next election. On the other hand, she can benefit from it in by blaming ineffective leadership on limited funds on restrictive national policies and the state, therefore avoiding accountability. Responsiveness of the candidate is also a factor that could influence electoral support (Eulau and Karps 1977). Local representatives are closer to their electorates, and although responsiveness varies from mayor to mayor, the overall responsiveness should be higher at the

local rather than national level. It is possible that the voters are more forgiving on the local level, in addition, national politics is often given a lot more attention than the local politics, even though this is closer to home for the voters.

Due to the competing theories in the literature, I will first present two competing hypotheses. The mayoral position will be investigated, which is the most prominent position on the Local level, and therefore should, according to the party prominence thesis, be the most accountable and therefore vulnerable to incumbency disadvantage. Furthermore, the Progress Party is a radical right-wing populist party, which could mean they will be harder punished by voters in a position of power. Therefore, the first hypothesis will be the following:

H1: Gaining the position of mayor, will significantly weaken the electoral support for the Progress Party

On the other hand, the politics on the local level are more consensus based. The mayor gets a lot of media attention, and their closeness and responsiveness to the constituents could be positive. The second hypothesis will therefore be the following:

H2: Gaining the position of mayor, will significantly strengthen the electoral support for the Progress Party

It seems likely that the effect of incumbency could be different for different kinds of parties. Van Spanje (2011) found that radical right-wing populist parties suffers more from the cost of ruling than conventional parties. Bjørklund and Saglie (2005) found that the Progress Party performed noticeably better than the other parties when in a mayoral position from one election to another. Generally the literature seems to suggest that the radical right-wing populist parties, perform poorer electorally in a position of power. Due to the unique nature of the radical right-wing populist party family, I will explore whether or not the effect is exclusive to the Progress Party by running analyses for the other Norwegian political parties as well. This leads to the final hypothesis:

H3: Gaining the position of mayor will be more damaging for the Progress Party's electoral support compared to the remaining Norwegian political parties,

2.5 Summary

In this chapter I have outlined some of the leading theories on the incumbency effect. While there seems to be wide-ranging agreement that incumbency indeed has an effect, whether this effect is an advantage or disadvantage is generally disputed. I have presented theories from both ends of the incumbency dichotomy. The literature concerning the cost of ruling typically emphasize the accountability of incumbents (Mueller 1970; Nannestad and Paldam 1994), while the other end of the spectrum emphasize the visibility, decline in partisanship, and responsiveness of incumbents as a positive aspect (Johannes and McAdams 1981; Fiorina 1989; Eulau and Karps 1977). Theory additionally seems to suggest that radical right-wing populist parties could perform worse in a position of power, due to their radical and anti-establishment nature. Entering government might be considered “selling-out” their ideals by their supporters, or their policies might get curbed by their coalition partners (Akkerman, de Lange and Roodujin 2016; Karlsson and Gilljam 2016).

I have also elaborated on Norwegian local politics and the Progress Party. Within the Norwegian context at least, the Progress Party stand out as a radical right-wing populist party, despite starting as a neo-liberal anti-tax party (Bjørklund 2004; Jupskås 2016, 2017; Hagelund 2003). The political autonomy of the municipalities is limited, but the voters perceive local politics to be important nonetheless (Martinussen 2004; Bjørklund 2017). In the local politics, the position of mayor is the most prominent, the mayor is the municipalities’ only full-time employed politician, and the role has limited formal legal restraints (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015). The politics led by Norwegian mayors is often consensus based, and less polarized along party lines than the national politics (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015). The level of conflict does however vary across different municipalities (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005).

Based on the literature I have formed three hypotheses to explore whether the incumbency has a positive or negative effect on the Progress Party’s electoral support, and to what degree this effect is unique for the Progress Party.

3.0 Data and variables

In this chapter I will account for the dataset and variables that will be used in the thesis. The first section will describe the data and elaborate upon the process of cleaning the dataset. In the second part I will present both the treatment and prediction variables, which have been used in the main analysis, as well as the diagnostics.

3.1 Dataset

I will be using a modified version of a panel dataset made available by Fiva, Halse, and Natvik (2017). The dataset spans from 1971 to 2016 and includes all the municipalities in Norway during this period. The number of municipalities varies between 428 and 454 during the course of 42 years, as a substantial amount of the municipalities have changed borders or merged together over the years.

The dataset does not have a significant amount of missing data, but it was necessary to do some manual cleaning of the dataset. Two main criteria were deemed necessary in the data cleaning process. Firstly, the municipalities where the Progress Party has never been represented, are not good comparison units for the municipalities where the Progress Party is so popular that they gain mayoral representation. This led to the removal of 62 municipalities where the Progress Party was not present during the time series.

Secondly, due to the strict demands of the generalized control method for a sizeable pre-treatment period, it was also of necessity to consider the amount of time FrP had been active in the given municipality. Therefore, the municipalities where FrP has participated in less than six elections were removed. In the end, I had to choose a cut-off point where the balance between removed and remaining units seemed reasonable. Six out of eleven elections were chosen, as it is over half of the time series. 146 municipalities were removed due to this criterion.

In total 208 municipalities were removed due to these reasons. Additionally, Oslo and Bergen, cities who follow the parliamentary model instead of the chairmanship model followed in the

remaining municipalities were removed as well⁴. Because the Norwegian municipalities have been changing across the years, another 27 municipalities were removed, due to them being merged with other municipalities at an early point in the time series. As local elections only happen every four years, the intermittent years were removed, leaving only the years of election in the dataset⁵. This leaves us a dataset consisting of $N = 227$, and $T = 11$.

3.2 Variables

3.2.1 Dependent variable: Vote share for the Progress Party

The dependent variable measures the share of votes given to the Progress Party at the local elections. The variable also includes the election in 1975 where the party was called Anders Lange's party. The dependent variable measures the share of votes in percent and ranges from 0.00 to the maximum value of 49.

3.2.2 Treatment variable: FrP mayor

The treatment variable measures if the Progress Party holds the mayoral position in the given municipality. The variable has been coded to a dichotomous variable, where value one is given where the mayor represents the Progress Party, and value zero where the mayor represents any other party⁶.

⁴ In the end, removing these municipalities did not affect the final results.

⁵ This leaves us 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015. The 1971 election was removed, because the Progress Party was founded in 1973

⁶ During the process of coding the data, some anomalies were detected in this variable, after the 2015 election none of the remaining FrP mayors existed in the variable, in addition in some places the variable indicated a mayor in the wrong places. These mistakes were fixed manually.

Table 3.1 shows an overview of the treated municipalities and their respective mayors.⁷ A lot of mayors seem to have been gained in 2003 or 2007 and lost in 2011 or 2015.

Table 3.1 List of Progress Party mayors in the treated municipalities

Municipality	Region	Name	Time-period
Askøy	Hordaland	Knut Hanselmann	2007-
Austevoll	Hordaland	Helge Andre Njåstad	2003-2013
Bamble	Telemark	Jon Pieter Flølo	2007-
Fredrikstad	Østfold	Eva Kristin Andersen	2007-2011
Hadsel	Nordland	Kjell-Børge Freiber	2007-2015
Hvaler	Østfold	Eivind Normann Borge	2007-
Lyngen	Troms	Hans Karlsen	2007-2011
Mandal ⁸	Vest-Agder	Alf G. Møll	2007-2011
Nordreisa	Troms	John Karlsen	2003-2011
Nøtterøy	Vestfold	Bjørn Kåre Sevik	2003-2007
Stranda	Møre og Romsdal	Frank Sve	2002-2011
Tjøme	Vestfold	Per Hotvedt Nielsen	2003-2007
Tønsberg	Vestfold	Per Arne Olsen	2003-2009
Ullensaker	Akershus	Harald Esperud	2003-2015
Vestnes	Møre og Romsdal	Knut Flølo	2003-2007
Ørskog	Møre og Romsdal	Thorbjørn Fylling	2007-2015
Ørsta	Møre og Romsdal	Hans Olav Myklebust	2003-2007

Because I wish to study the effect of ruling after the representative have been elected, the treatment variable will be lagged by one election.

⁷ It is worth noting that this is not an exhaustive list of mayors from the Progress Party, these are the remaining mayors in the data set after cleaning, some mayors were removed due to short pre-treatment periods.

⁸ Frp gained the mayoral position again in Mandal in 2015, but as the variable will be lagged, this observation falls outside the time frame

Figure 3.1 shows the treatment status for the different municipalities over the span of the dataset, after the treatment variable has been lagged. The white lines indicate missing data, the light blue lines indicate units under control, and the dark blue lines indicate the units under treatment. Most mayors are gained towards the end of the time series. The missing data in this instance, stems from municipalities that were created between 1976 and 1980.

Figure 3.1 Treatment status for the units in the dataset

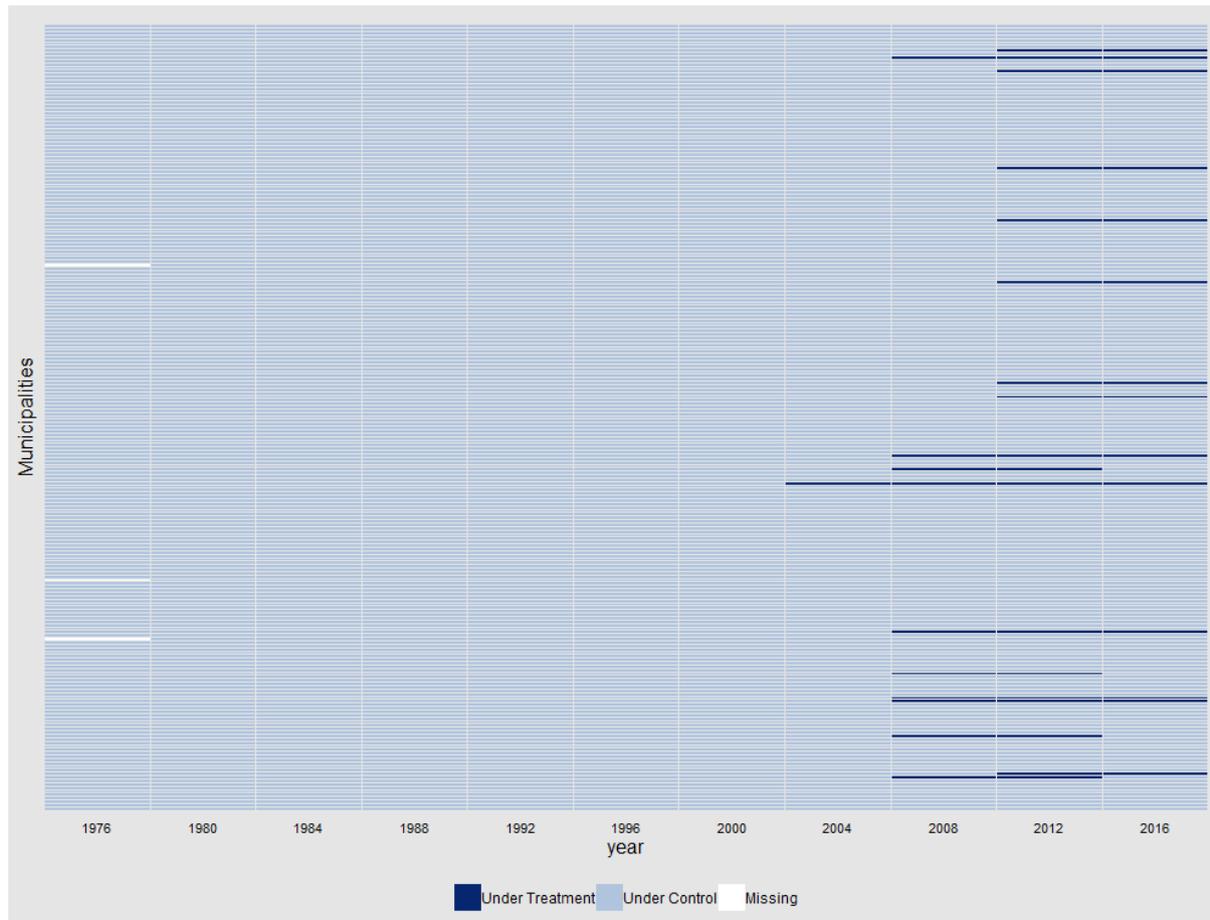
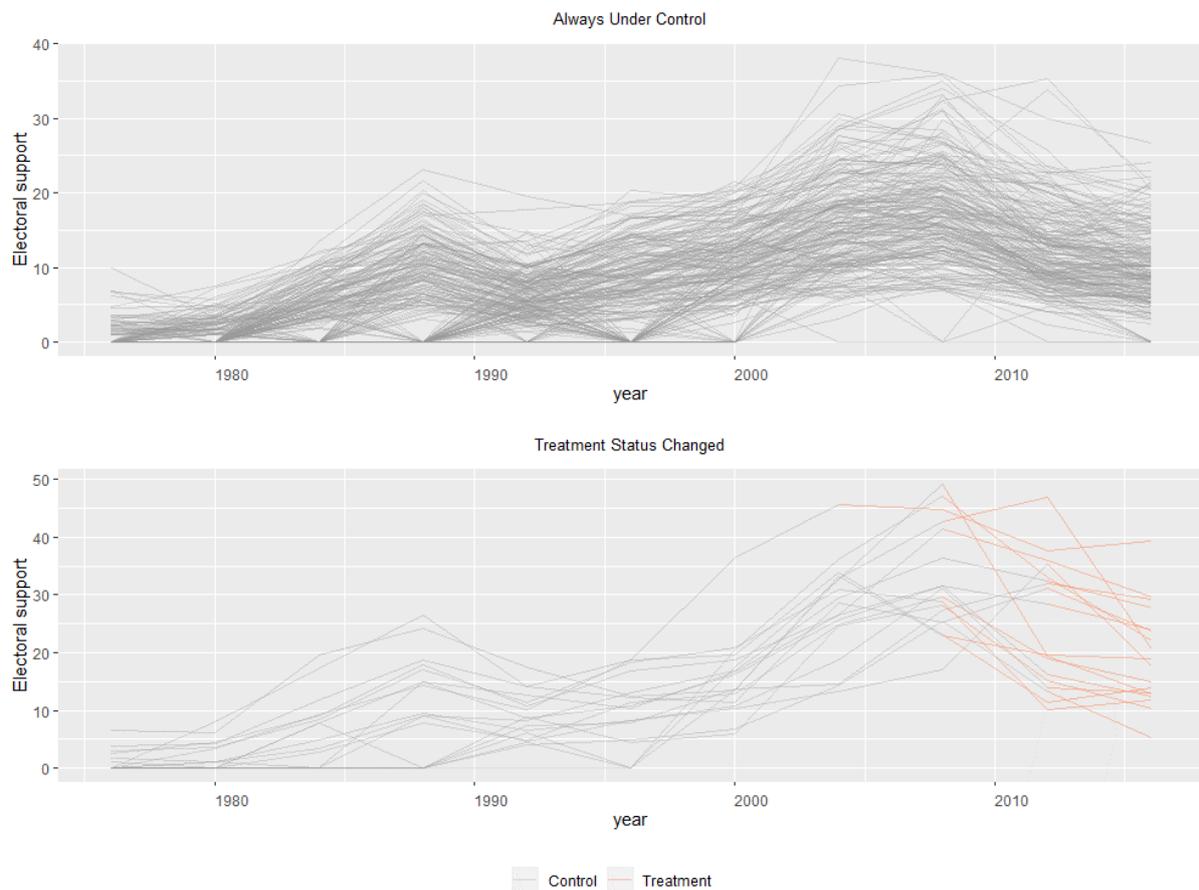


Figure 3.2 shows the raw data and the share of votes for FrP in the different municipalities. The figure separates the municipalities that are always under control, and the municipalities where the treatment status changed. After just a quick glance, the data seems to indicate that the largest spikes in figure 3.2 generally seem to correspond with FrP having a mayoral position, the support seems to decrease towards the end of the time series. On average these municipalities seem to have higher electoral support for the Progress Party after the treatment than most of the control units.

Figure 3.2 Treatment status for raw data



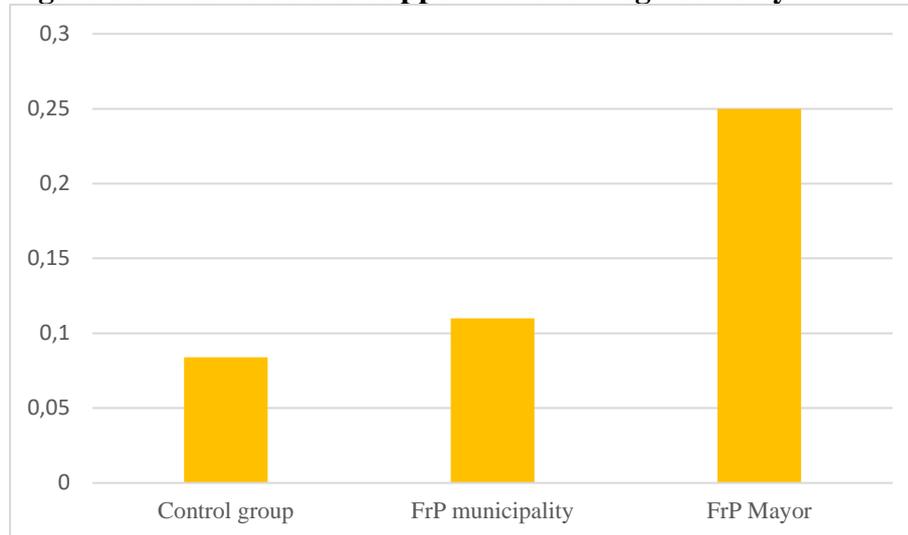
To further explore the data seen in figure 3.2, I will present the averages for the municipalities. Table 3.2 shows the different mean values across the groups. The control group consist of the municipalities where the Progress Party has never had a mayor. The next set of municipalities correspond with the municipalities from table 3.1, these are the ones who at some point in time will be exposed to the treatment, but the whole time series is included. The last group consists of the treated municipalities, but only during the treatment. As table 3.2 shows, the municipalities in the treatment group have a slightly higher mean than the municipalities in the control group. The effect of the treatment however does seem to have a substantial positive impact on the electoral support, suggesting that the electoral support in the period when the Progress Party has a mayor is on average 25 % and which is 14 more than the treated municipalities in general and 16.6 higher than in the control group. This corresponds with what figure 3.2 indicates.

Table 3.2 Mean electoral support for FrP in given municipalities

	Control group	FrP municipalities	FrP Mayor (lagged)
Mean electoral support for FrP	8.4	11	25

Figure 3.3 shows a graphical representation of the mean electoral support for FrP across the different sets of municipalities. The difference is quite staggering even though the Progress Party's first mayoral election is not included in the lagged variable. Further confirmation is, of course, necessary.

Figure 3.3 Mean electoral support for the Progress Party.



3.2.3 Prediction variables

The matrix completion method depends on the pre-treatment period of the treated and control units, to best estimate the treated counterfactual. It is also assisted by the choice of a few prediction variables. I have chosen four prediction variables for the sake of this thesis, although the MCM will in this case also benefit by the large number of control units.

3.2.3.1 Unemployment

The first variable is unemployment and measure the yearly average of registered unemployed residents in the given municipality between the age of 16-66. Unemployment is frequently used as a measure when studying economic factors contributing to the cost of ruling (Mueller 1970; Nannestad and Paldam 1994; Goodhart and Bhansali 1970). In this case the unemployment variable will be used to predict the Progress Party's electoral support before they enter a position of power. Generally high unemployment is expected to lead to dissatisfaction with the ruling party, although it is uncertain how strong this effect is expected to be on the municipal

level. High unemployment could lead inhabitants to vote for a different party, like the Progress Party. Nevertheless, this variable will contribute to municipalities with similar levels of unemployment being compared with each other, and hopefully constructing a suitable synthetic control.

3.2.3.2 Population

The second variable measures the population in the given municipality. The MCM does not allow time invariant variables, so it was not feasible to include, i.e. regional variables. Population size on the other hand will at least allow for the comparison of municipalities of similar population sizes.

3.2.3.3 Number of parties

The third variable measures the number of parties winning representation in the given municipality. This variable is relevant because number of parties often is connected to the amount of political competition. Therefore, one should expect increasing number of political parties in a municipality to increase fragmentation and contention. In the political theories of the cost of ruling a clear opposition is often emphasized, as they cannot be held accountable, and may therefore benefit from criticising the governing party (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016). It could therefore be relevant to compare the municipalities where the number of parties are similar.

3.2.3.4 Public spending

Finally, the last variable considers the total amount of spending on current expenditures and investment for the various spending programs. This includes expenses connected to childcare, education, elderly care, health and social services, cultural services, transport and infrastructure, central administration and other purposes. This variable is useful because it makes it possible to compare the amount of expenses between municipalities. Especially elderly care is an important cause for the Progress Party. On the other hand, however, the Progress Party is also negative towards excessive amounts of public spending. This variable

lacked values for 2015 however, and considering how MCM does not allow missing values, it was necessary to impute the values for 2015. This was simply done by moving the last known observation for any given municipality backwards. However, because the final dataset has been coded to only include the election years, the value will still be distinct from the value in 2011 and give a more updated value on the variable.

These prediction variables will be used to construct a synthetic control that hopefully closely matches the treated units in the pre-treatment period. Therefore, I have not included any variables that are explicitly supposed to affect a ruling party's support after they have achieved power.

3.2.4 Control variables for the panel data analysis

As I will be conducting a panel data fixed effects regression as a robustness check, this will allow me to test some additional variables.

3.2.4.1 Share of elderly people

I will control for the share of elderly people in the population of a given municipality⁹. The Progress Party has a focus on bettering the care for the elderly, as this case is important on the municipal level as well, the share of elderly people is expected to be positively correlated with the electoral support for the Progress Party.

3.2.4.2 Property tax per capita

This variable measures the revenues from commercial and residential property taxation¹⁰. The Progress Party started as a protest party against taxes, and they have remained negative to excessive taxation. The property tax is regulated by the municipalities, and it would be expected that the Progress Party wishes to decrease this tax. This variable does only have

⁹ Share of population aged 66 or older

¹⁰ Measured as 1000 per capita.

available data from 1991-2016 and was therefore not included as a predictor variable for the synthetic control unit. If the property tax increases, the voters may be expected to vote for the Progress Party as a protest.

3.3 Descriptive statistics

Table 3.3 shows descriptive statistics for the dependent, treatment and control variables¹¹. The table includes vote share and treatment variables for the remaining Norwegian parties that will also be included in the analysis¹².

Table 3.3 Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Dependent and treatment variables				
Vote share Progress Party	9	8	0.00	49
Progress Party mayor	0.17	0.13	0	1
Vote share Conservative Party	15	10	0.00	57
Conservative Party mayor	0.15	0.36	0	1
Vote share Norwegian Labour Party	33	13	0.00	78
Norwegian Labour Party mayor	0.36	0.48	0	1
Vote share Centre Party	17	11	0.00	64
Centre Party mayor	0.23	0.42	0	1
Vote share liberal Party	6.6	5.3	0.00	43
Liberal Party mayor	0.03	0.18	0	1
Vote share Christian Democratic Party	10	7.3	0.00	51
Christian Democratic Party mayor	0.09	0.28	0	1

¹¹ It should be noted that these variables are the ones used in the analysis, but after the data cleaning. Therefore, not the entirety of Norway's municipalities is included in these statistics.

¹² I have included the following parties: the Conservative Party (Høyre, H), the Norwegian Labour Party (Det Norske Arbeiderparti, AP), the Centre Party (Senterpartiet, SP), the Liberal Party (Venstre, V), the Christian Democratic party (Kristelig Folkeparti, KRF), and the Socialist Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti, SV).

Vote share Socialist Party	6.4	5.1	0.00	44
Socialist Party Mayor	0.009	0.09	0	1
Prediction variables				
Unemployment	0.02	0.012	0.0039	0.09
Population	13 695	17 134.5	576	187 353
Number of parties	6.8	1.26	0	12
Total public expenditure ¹³	46.17	19	18.3	137.1
Control variables				
Share of elderly population	14.5	3.3	5.2	26.5
Property tax per capita	1.3	2.6	0.00	31.3

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have presented the dataset that will be used, as well as the relevant variables. I will be using a modified panel data set, covering Norway's municipalities from 1971 to 2016. I have additionally presented the relevant Progress Party mayors and plotted raw data. Generally, looking at the mean electoral support for the Progress Party, they seem to fare better after gaining a mayoral position.

¹³ Measured as 1000 NOK per capita

4.0 Empirical strategy

In this chapter I will further elaborate on the empirical tools used to answer the research question. The matrix completion method is used to estimate a generalized synthetic control unit, which, again in many ways is an extension of the synthetic control method. Therefore, I will first present SCM before elaborating on GSCM and what makes this method such a useful tool, before explaining how the matrix completion estimator contributes to the analysis. I will in addition elaborate on the methods I will use to inspect and hopefully strengthen the results from the matrix completion method.

4.1 The synthetic control method

As was alluded to in chapter one, SCM shares some traits with more traditional methods typically used in social sciences. This section of the thesis will expand on the advantages and drawbacks of SCM and give a detailed description of the methodological process.

SCM is based on the same notion as Mill's method of difference, the goal is to isolate the effect of one intervention, in a specific case. Through comparative methods, this is achieved by comparing the unit or units of interest (the treated group), with other units not affected by the intervention (the control group), but otherwise similar, in an attempt to simulate a counterfactual situation (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2015, 496; 2010; 2011, 1). SCM takes this one step further by formalizing the choice of comparative units by data-driven procedures (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2010, 494). The control unit will not be any one unique unit, but rather the weighted average of several relevant units from the donor pool, creating a synthetic control unit. This is based on the assumption that a combination of units gives a better basis for comparison, than any one unit alone (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2010, 494). Comparison of well-suited units could be able to give an indication of the causal effect of an intervention.

Causal effect is the variation between a unit where an intervention of interest has taken place, and the same unit should the intervention not occur (Mao 2018, 19909). Each unit has two potential results, whether the intervention of interest did occur $Y_i(1)$, and the potential result if the intervention did not transpire $Y_i(0)$. The difference between these events can also be referred to as the causal impact of the treatment (Brodersen et al. 2015, 248). The challenge

lies in measuring this empirically, in reality, only one of these outcomes can be true for each case. For the treated unit, $Y_i(0)$ becomes the counterfactual, and vice versa (Mao 2018, 19909).

The general idea is to use the information available, to impute the missing information. Consider a panel data set, there are two different outcomes, the outcome given the active treatment $Y_{i,t}(1)$ and the outcome of the synthetic control $Y_{i,t}(0)$ (Doudchenko and Imbens 2016, 2). We differentiate between observations from the control units both before and after treatment $Y_{c,pre}^{obs}$, $Y_{c,post}^{obs}$ and from the treated units before and after treatment $Y_{t,pre}^{obs}$, $Y_{t,post}^{obs}$.

$Y_{c,post}^{obs}$, $Y_{t,pre}^{obs}$ and $Y_{c,pre}^{obs}$ are based on observations from the control group $Y_{i,t}(0)$ and $Y_{t,post}^{obs}$ is based on observations from the treated outcome $Y_{i,t}(1)$ (Doudchenko and Imbens 2016, 3). X indicates time consistent individual level characteristics for both the treated units X_t and the control units X_c (Doudchenko and Imbens 2016). This gives us the following matrices for the observed outcomes:

$$Y^{obs} = \begin{pmatrix} Y_{t,post}^{obs} & Y_{c,post}^{obs} \\ Y_{t,pre}^{obs} & Y_{c,pre}^{obs} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} Y_{t,post}(1) & Y_{c,post}(0) \\ Y_{t,pre}(0) & Y_{c,pre}(0) \end{pmatrix}, \text{ and } X = (X_t \ X_c).$$

The goal is to estimate the unknown $Y_{t,post}(1)$ for the synthetic control unit, based on the information we know, namely $Y_{t,pre}(0)$, $Y_{c,post}(0)$ and $Y_{c,pre}(0)$.

$$Y(0) = \begin{pmatrix} ? & Y_{c,post}(0) \\ Y_{t,pre}(0) & Y_{c,pre}(0) \end{pmatrix}$$

Using randomized experiments could give insights into the causal effect of an intervention, however such experiments can be quite unpractical and hard to implement when conducting social science research (Mao 2018, 19910). Using statistical techniques, the difference-in-differences (DID) design can be used to approximate the experimental design in social sciences, and is one of the most commonly used empirical designs (Xu 2017, 57). DID is based on the assumption of “parallel trends” meaning that should the intervention of interest not occur, the trajectory of the treated unit and the control unit would follow parallel paths (Xu 2017, 57; Imai 2017, 61). This assumption of “parallel trends” in the pre-treatment period is difficult to test empirically, making it reasonable to question whether the result for the post-intervention period is affected by the same flaw (Xu 2017, 57). Usually this failure is due to

unobserved time-varying confounders, SCM offers a solution by comparing the treated unit with a set of control units, as well as considering the fit of the pre-treatment period as a criteria (Xu 2017, 57). In the qualitative field, comparative case studies are often applied when researches wish to estimate causal effects empirically, when the number of units is low, however SCM solves some fundamental problems apparent with comparative case studies. Like for example choosing fitting comparative units.

The focus lies mainly on three types of different information available to construct a robust synthetic control unit, there is the time-series behaviour available in the pre-treatment period (Brodersen et al. 2015, 248). The second consists of the time-series of other units closely resembling the control unit before the intervention, assuming that should the intervention not have occurred, the control unit would resemble the trajectory of these similar units (Brodersen et al. 2015, 248). Finally, for Bayesian studies, information about the model parameters could be useful when constructing a counterfactual (Brodersen et al. 2015, 248)

Moreover, SCM has the ability to control for both time variant, and invariant confounders (Mao 2018, 19910). Additionally, SCM also offers transparency as to the precise contribution of each relevant unit to the synthetic counterfactual (Mao 2018, 19910; Xu 2017). Furthermore, SCM makes clear the likeness of the synthetic control and the affected unit, both before and after the intervention of interest occurs (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2010, 494). Ideally the synthetic control should closely resemble the treated units pre-intervention (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2011, 3). Having the synthetic control resemble the treated unit in the pre-intervention period allows us to assume that confounders or unobserved factors are controlled for to a greater extent (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2015, 498). Weights are applied to better adjust the synthetic control to the treated group, these weights can be chosen manually or by data-driven processes (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2011, 3).

In this thesis, the treated units will be the municipalities where FrP wins the mayoral position, and the controls will be municipalities where this intervention is not present. Note that also the treated unit will be synthetic, as it will be the average of the treated units. The donor pool in both instances will be all the viable municipalities in Norway. With a greater understanding of the synthetic control method, it will be feasible to expand upon the generalized synthetic control method, and the matrix completion method.

4.2 Generalized synthetic control and matrix completion method

Combining the synthetic control method with interactive fixed effect models (IFE) and a latent factor approach, the generalized synthetic control method offers several advantages. Firstly by using a two-way fixed effects model, it allows multiple treated units and variation in treatment periods (Xu 2017, 59). These qualities are useful in this analysis considering how there are several municipalities where the Progress Party has achieved the position of mayor, and this has happened at different times. GSC create treated counterfactuals for each treated unit in a single run negating the need to find matches for treated units one by one (Xu 2017, 59). Secondly GSC allows the user to draw information about model specifications by providing uncertainty estimates like standard errors and confidence intervals (Xu 2017, 59-60). Because the entire control group remains, GSC is able to extract more useful information, therefore is able to conduct more efficient synthetic matching. Finally, by estimating and selecting the factors for the IFE model automatically, GSC is relatively intuitive to apply (Xu 2017, 59).

However GSC is reliant on more pre-treatment data, and a relatively large number of control units to make sure the estimates of the treatment effects remain unbiased (Xu 2017, 59). At least 7 pre-treatment periods, and $N_{(co)} > 40$ are recommended. Moreover, modelling assumptions play an important role, and should the units not share common support in factor loadings, it may not be possible to create a synthetic control unit at all (Xu 2017, 59). To avoid making inaccurate assumptions based on the synthetic control, it is of importance to conduct diagnostic tests, such as plotting of raw data, fitted values and predicted counterfactuals (Xu 2017, 59).

4.2.1 The methodological process

GSC combines the synthetic matching methods from the synthetic control method with linear interactive fixed effects (IFE) models. Interactive fixed effects are used when unobservable effects can be correlated with the regressors (Bai 2009, 1229). GSC first estimates the IFE model, this is done by performing a factor analysis on the residuals of a linear model, choosing the model which best accounts for the specific number of latent factors, this is achieved using the data from the control group (Xu 2017, 63). GSC then calculates the factor loadings for the

treated units, before it creates treated counterfactuals based on the relevant number of factors and factor loadings (Xu 2017, 63). Based on the findings from the two first steps, the treated counterfactuals are calculated. The number of factors and factor loadings is estimated by running a cross validating procedure based on information from the treated units before treatment, and the control group (Xu 2017, 63). IFE models are estimated, and the best fitting model is chosen based on how well it is able to predict held back information (Xu 2017, 64).

Uncertainty estimates can be calculated using nonparametric bootstraps for large N_{tr} and parametric bootstraps for smaller N_{tr} (Xu 2017, 64). In these cases the serial correlation of the residuals is preserved, and the standard errors are thusly not underestimated due to serial correlation (Xu 2017, 64; Angrist and Pischke 2009, 300-301).

Parametric bootstraps were used to calculate the uncertainty estimates due to a relatively low N_{tr} . The covariates are included in the analysis as well. The number of pre-treatment periods is recommended to be maximum possible number of factors plus two, in this case maximum possible number of factors is five. Given that the treatment variable is lagged by one election, I allowed the minimum pre-treatment periods to be eight instead of seven, without any loss of treated units. Among the 227 remaining units in the dataset, 17 units are identified as treated units. Os municipality was removed due to too short pre-treatment period.

While the both methods impute missing information in order to construct a synthetic counterfactual estimation, the matrix completion method uses a different method of estimation. Instead of the interactive fixed effects models relied upon by the generalized synthetic control method, the matrix completion method relies on matrix completion. The general idea is based on imputing data in a matrix based on the assumption that the complete matrix is the sum of a lower ranking matrix, and that the missing values to be imputed, are random (Athey et al. 2018). Athey et al. (2018) propose a generalization of the matrix completion methods, allowing for treatment at different points of time, and missing data that is not random. Furthermore, they show the similarities between the latent matrix assumed by the matrix completion method and the latent factors indicated by the interactive fixed effects models. The matrix completion method is shown to yield credible results, similarly when the matrix is unbalanced, either by being thin ($N > T$) or fat ($T > N$) (Athey et al. 2018, 23). Considering how the dataset used in this thesis is rather thin, ($N = 227$, $T = 11$) my main estimation will be estimated using the matrix completion method. The matrix completion method conducts cross validation

procedure, estimating the model with the least lambda and least MSPE. To conduct the analysis I use the program RStudio¹⁴, and the package “gsynth” made by Xu and Liu (2018). The matrix completion method is implemented in this package as well.

To answer H3: gaining the position of mayor will be more damaging for the Progress Party’s electoral support compared to the remaining Norwegian political parties, I will implement the matrix completion method with the remaining Norwegian parties. This will hopefully give some insights into whether the effect of gaining a position of power is different for the Progress Party. Due to their status as a radical right-wing populist party the effect could be unique to the specific nature of this party group. Therefore, cross checking with a different party may give an idea as to whether or not the results are unique to radical right-wing populist parties or possibly a more general phenomena on the municipal level as the party lines are somewhat blurred. To conduct the analysis the datasets were again cleaned based on the two criteria from chapter three, the existence and presence over time of the parties. Therefore, only the municipalities where the parties were prominent remained in their respective datasets. I used a lagged treatment variable to indicate when the given party gained the mayoral position. The dependent variable was the electoral support for the given party. It should be noted, that a lot of treated units were automatically removed from each of the analyses, as these parties have been active longer than FrP, leading to a lot of treated units with short pre-treatment periods.

4.2.2 Modelling assumptions

Some modelling assumptions are necessary on order to identify a causal relationship. The first assumption is also the most important one, of strict exogeneity. This indicates that there is no correlation between treatment assignment, observed covariates, temporal heterogeneities, and the error terms (Xu 2017, 61). This assumption is somewhat weaker for the GSC, as the latent factor approach should be able to identify potential unidentified confounders (Xu 2017, 62).

The next assumption does not allow for strong serial dependence, but weak serial correlations of the error terms is allowed (Xu 2017, 62). As I will be using panel data, serial correlation is likely, and is in fact useful in order to assume causal identification in this model. Regularity conditions is an assumption as well as it: “... specifies moment conditions that ensure the

¹⁴ R-script can be made available on request

convergence of the estimator” (Xu 2017, 62). If a non-parametric bootstrap procedure is used the residuals additionally need to be independent cross-sectionally and homoscedastic (Xu 2017, 62). I will, however, be using a parametric bootstrap procedure so this assumption can be relaxed. Should these modelling assumptions not be met, it is possible that the model will fail to generate.

Stationarity is one important assumption for most data relying on time-series and means that the mean and variance of the distribution is independent over time (Dougherty 2011, 481; Wooldridge 2016, 345). Furthermore, the covariance between any two points in time, must be a factor of these two observations and not time (Dougherty 2011, 481; Wooldridge 2016, 345). The dependent variable has been tested for stationarity, and this assumption holds¹⁵.

4.2.3 Limitations

It is necessary to discuss some of the limitations of the matrix and synthetic control methods. Although a useful tool to explore causal effects, SCM does not allow us to explore the causal mechanisms behind the effects. Thus, counterfactuals makes it possible to estimate the effects of the causes, but not the causes of effects (Morgan and Winship 2007, 217). However, exploring causal effects may lay the groundwork for future studies of causal mechanisms, theory may be able to shed some light on possible causal mechanisms as well.

Wrong estimation of the model might lead to erroneous conclusions however, this is true for all research. In this case, plotting of raw data, as well as studying the individual treated units should be able to shed some light on model estimation, as well as numerous robustness checks.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that the counterfactual estimation can only give an approximation of what the causal effect of the treatment is. It will never be able to give a perfect picture of reality. This is however true for most quantitative methods, and matrix completion method, allows, with some certainty, to measure the direct causal impact of an intervention, by controlling for possible confounders.

¹⁵ P-value < 0.01 in an augmented Dickey-Fuller test

Another limitation is more specific to the data material used in this thesis. Ideally the generalized synthetic control method requires a large number of pre-treatment periods preferably more than ten. Because of the Progress Party being created in 1973, and local elections only happening every four years, having ten pre-treatment periods would only leave one observation after the treatment as only eleven elections are included in the dataset. This is not ideal as the purpose of the thesis is to see how the electoral support develops after the treatment over the span of a few elections.

A short number of pre-treatment periods could potentially lead to biased estimations. Hopefully, this will not be the case for this analysis, but some extra precautions will be taken. As the N is quite high (N=227), and the T is rather low (T=11), the matrix completion method will be used for estimation of the models, as this method is proven somewhat superior to the GSC estimator on thin matrices (Athey et al. 2018). Furthermore, several diagnostics and robustness tests will be performed.

Furthermore, the matrix completion method assumes that all treated units remained treated throughout the time series. This means that the units where the Progress Party lose their mayoral position remain in the estimation. As losing a mayoral position will be the results of loss of electoral support, I will deem it feasible to keep these units in the analyses, as they could give important information about the potential loss of support in the aftermath of gaining power. However, an analysis will also be conducted without these units to explore what effect these specific units have on the final outcome.

4.3 Case studies

To explore potential causal mechanisms, and to gain further insight, I will study some treated municipalities more in-depth. I will choose my cases based on their performance in the analysis and will explore two cases where the Progress Party has performed well, and two cases where they have performed poorer, to see if there are any explanations for the different outcomes. To find information, I will use the news archive Retriever to find local news articles that can shed some light on the mechanisms behind more successful and less successful mayors. Hopefully I will gain some insight into how the mayors are perceived, and what enables them to continue in office.

4.4 Robustness tests

As a part of the diagnostics some checks will be performed, to explore the robustness of the results. I will perform a panel data analysis using fixed effects. The dependent variable will still be the electoral support for FrP, and the treatment variable will be included. This regression will hopefully be able to confirm the results of the matrix completion method, if the results point in the same direction. The regression analysis will however not be able to show us the causal effect to the same degree as the MCM and will therefore just be a part of the diagnosis. To conduct the panel data regression, I use the “plm” package written by Croissant and Millo (2008).

The regression will include fixed effects to control for differences between the municipalities and over time. Fixed effects enable the ability to control for unobserved time invariant confounders (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 221-222; Dougherty 2011). Furthermore, I will use robust standard errors to control for heteroscedasticity in the residuals (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 293). Robust standard errors can also be used to correct the standard errors from serial correlation (Wooldridge 2016, 388). As the dataset could suffer from serial correlation, I will apply group robust standard errors. The variables were tested for excessive multicollinearity by conducting a VIF test, as a rule of thumb, values over 10 indicate too high multicollinearity (Verbeek 2012, 44-45). The data does not seem to have any large problems with multicollinearity after conducting the test¹⁶.

I will also implement the generalized synthetic control method, to see if the results resemble that of the matrix completion method and see whether or not the estimation using GSC seems more robust.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter I have outlined for the empirical strategy of choice, as well as its strengths and limitations. I will be using the matrix completion method to estimate a synthetic control unit, to gain insight into a counterfactual situation. The goal is to draw inference from how the

¹⁶ The highest value was 1.7

electoral support for the Progress Party would have developed, should they not have gotten a mayoral position in a given municipality.

The synthetic control is estimated based on different types of information. The control units in the pre-treatment period and their relation to the treated unit, as well as the treated units both before and after the intervention of interest. Additionally, some prediction variables have been chosen to contribute to the estimation of the synthetic control.

To further explore the results from the matrix completion method, I will explore some municipalities more in-depth, to investigate possible causal mechanisms. In addition, I will perform a panel data analysis with fixed effects, and some additional variables.

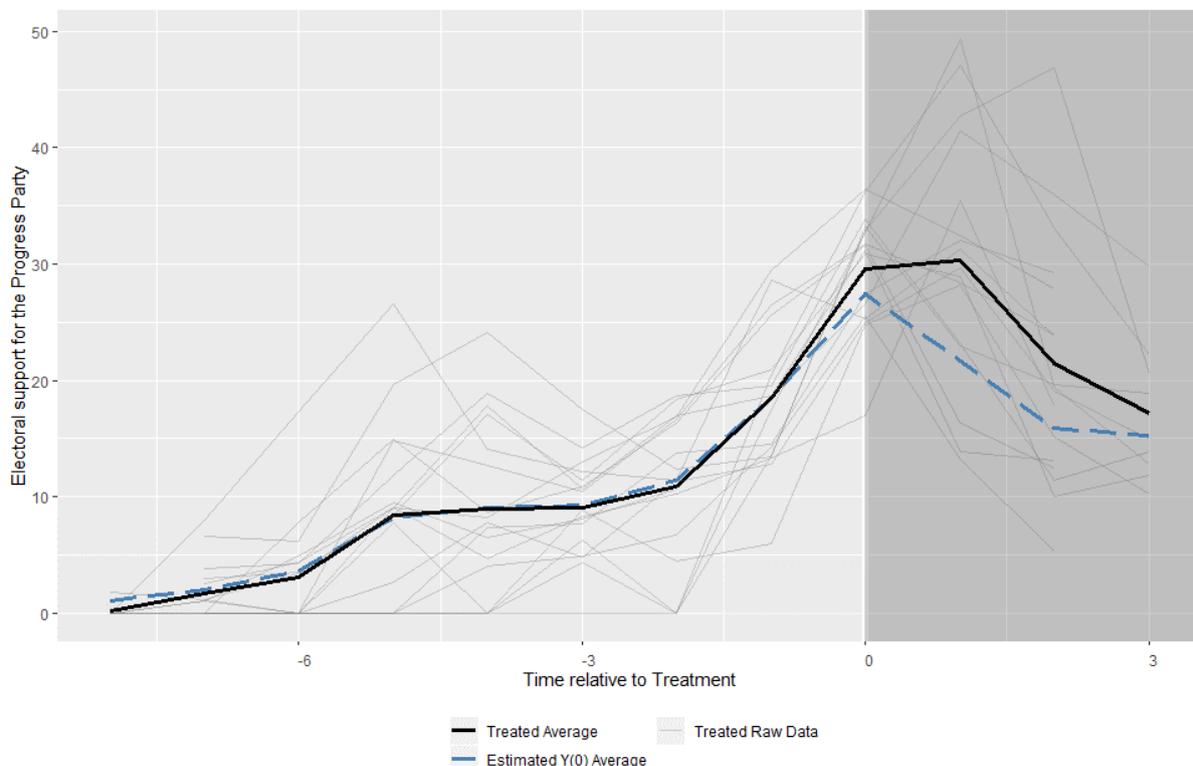
5.0 Results and discussion

In the first section of this chapter I will present and discuss the results from the matrix completion method. I will also explore three of the treated municipalities more in-depth, to seek information about the potential causal mechanisms at play. In the second part I will deliberate about the various robustness tests I have performed to examine, and either strengthen or weaken the estimated results from the matrix completion method. I have in addition performed separate matrix completion analyses, using the for the main Norwegian Political parties. This will grant some insight as to whether or not the observed causal effect is unique to the Progress Party, or if it could be a characteristic of local Norwegian government.

5.1 Results from the matrix completion method

After conducting the matrix completion method, the results appear to weaken H1: gaining the position of mayor will significantly weaken the electoral support for the Progress Party. The analysis shows that gaining a mayoral position actually strengthens the electoral support for the Progress Party. Figure 5.1 shows the treated and counterfactual averages based on the control and treated units. The thick black line represents the average of the municipalities exposed to the treatment effect, while the dotted blue line represents the synthetic counterfactual municipality based on the averages of weighted control units. The period after zero represent the period after the treatment. The thin grey lines represent the raw data from the different treated municipalities. Generally, the treated unit seems to follow the trend seen in the treated raw data. Figure 5.1 shows that although the electoral support for FrP has increased over time, the direct causal effect of the intervention seems to indicate a positive effect of gaining a mayoral position compared to the synthetic control. It is also worth noting that the synthetic control unit closely resembles the treated unit in the pre-treatment period, which is a sign that strengthens the credibility of the counterfactual averages.

Figure 5.1 The treated and counterfactual averages for the Progress Party



Furthermore, the results seems to correspond with the trend seen in the raw data in figure 3.2, with the treated units on average having higher electoral support.

Figure 5.2 shows the Average treatment effect on the treated (ATT). This figure shows us that the confidence intervals become larger towards the end of the time series. This is understandable as the number of treated units decrease towards the end, the effect decreases, and the estimates become more uncertain. The trend does however, still seem to be strongly positive at the start. Furthermore, figure 5.2 shows us that the first election after the treatment is significantly different from the previous election, the remaining elections however are not significantly different from each other.

Figure 5.2 The average treatment effect on the treated

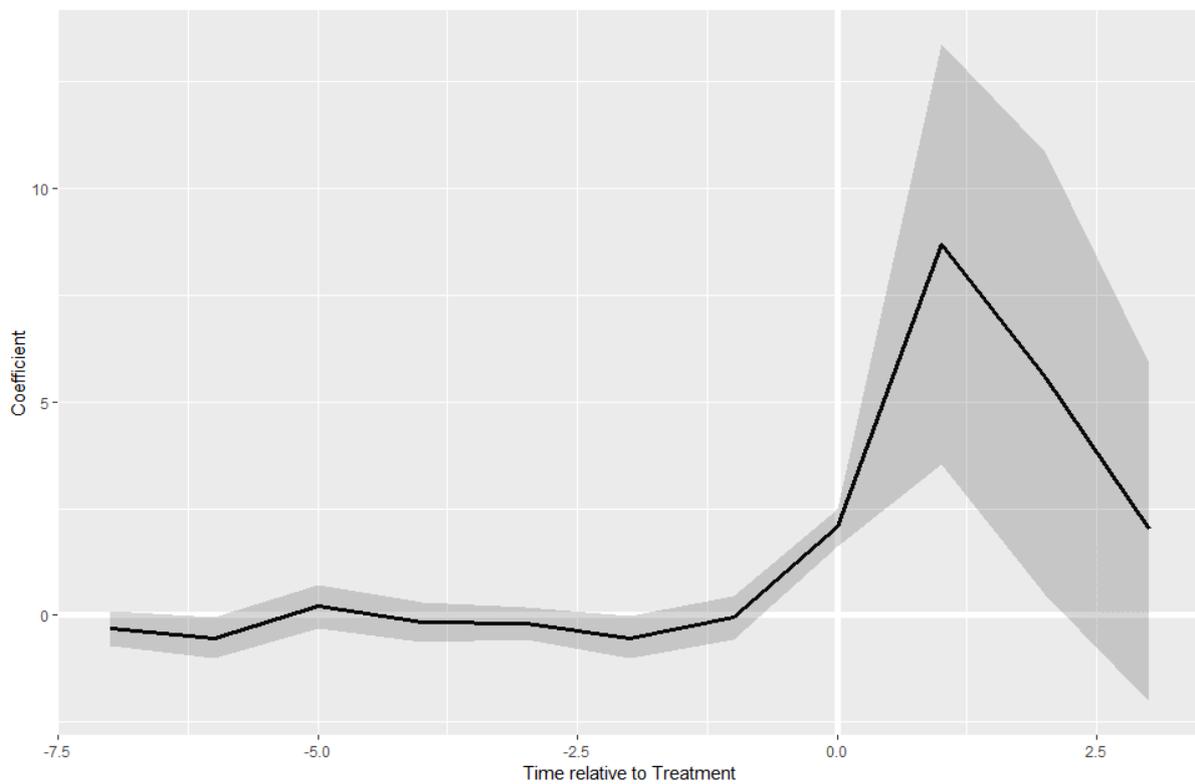


Table 5.1 shows the estimated results from the matrix completion method. The table includes confidence intervals P-value and standard errors, as well as the average treatment effect on the treated, and the number of treated units for each election relative to the intervention. The ATT measures the difference between the treated and control unit. The results from 0 to 2 are significant on the 5% level. Three elections after the treatment the results are no longer significant, possibly due to a low number of treated units. The two first elections however could give us a more reliable indication of the causal effect of gaining power on the local level. The average treatment effect on the treated unit is stronger and positive after the intervention of interest, it seems to increase the first election and then decrease in election two and three.

Table 5.1. Estimated results from the matrix completion method

Time relative to intervention	ATT	Standard errors	CI. Lower	CI. Upper	P-value	Number of treated units
-7	-0.3	0.21	-0.71	0.09	0.14	0
-6	-0.52	0.24	-0.99	-0.03	0.038	0
-5	0.22	0.25	-0.29	0.73	0.378	0
-4	-0.14	0.23	-0.006	0.003	0.576	0
-3	-0.2	0.18	-0.56	0. 81	0.280	0
-2	-0.5	0.26	-1.01	-0.001	0.05	0
-1	-0.04	0.26	-0.56	0.44	0.874	0
0	2.1	0.23	1.6	2.4	0.000	0
1	8.6	2.44	3.53	13.366	0.000	17
2	5.57	2.6	0. 5	10.1	0.026	17
3	2	2.1	-2	5.9	0.38	9

Table 5.2 shows the average ATT for the significant terms for the treated units. Estimating the average electoral gain for the Progress Party when getting a mayoral position to be about 6.1%.

Table 5.2 The ATT average of the matrix completion method

ATT average	Standard errors	CI. lower	CI. upper	P-value
6.1	2.17	1.6	10.17	0.002

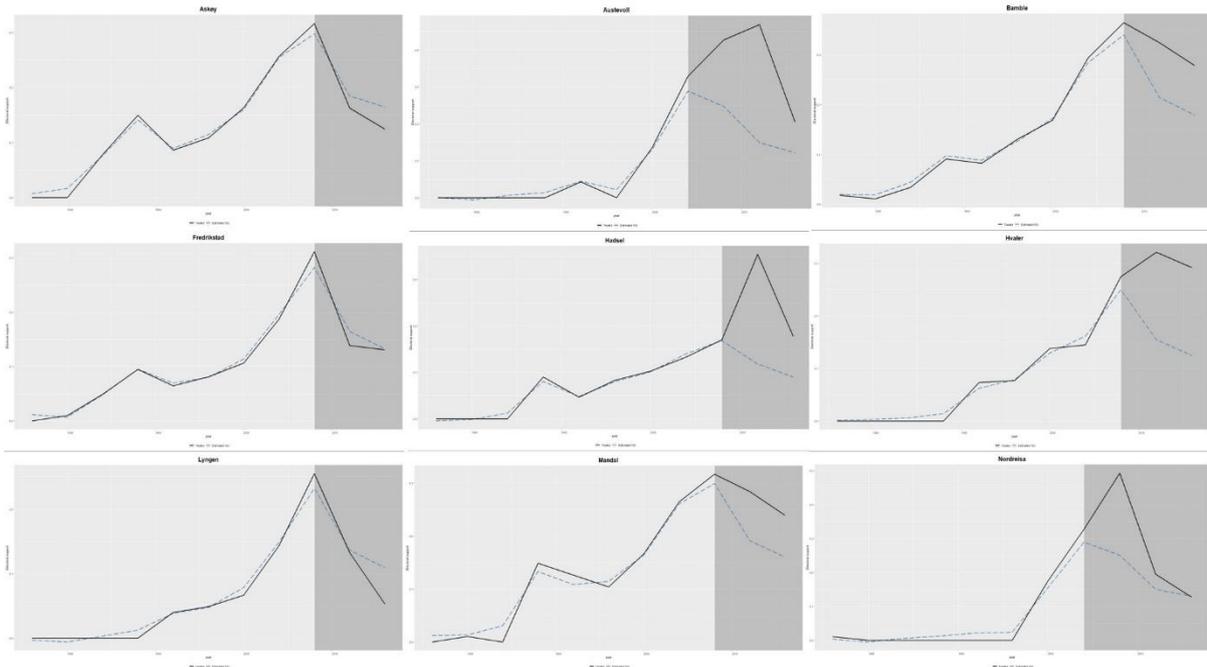
Table 5.3 shows the coefficients for the prediction variables used in the matrix completion method. The variable measuring unemployment indicates a negative correlation in the pre-treatment period, this effect is, however, not statistically significant. Neither is the effect of population, which indicate weak negative correlation. The variable measuring number of parties indicate a positive effect, which is significant. An increase in parties leads to a significant increase in the dependent variable. This suggests a positive relationship between the number of parties, and the increase in electoral support for the Progress Party before gaining a mayoral position. The last variable suggests a weak negative relationship between total public expenditures and the average electoral support. Meaning decreased public spending could lead to increase in electoral support for the Progress Party, this effect is, however, not significant. Only the variable measuring number of parties is significant, but the matrix completion estimator still managed to create a counterfactual unit that closely resembles the treated unit in the pre-treatment period.

Table 5.3 Coefficients for the prediction variables

Variable	beta	Standard Error	CI. lower	CI. upper	P.value
Unemployment	-9.4	13	-33.4	18.6	0.512
Population	-1.01e-05	4.8e-07	-1.17e-04	7.8e-07	0.868
Number of parties	0.3	0.14	0.08	0.64	0.008
Total public expenditures	-0.025	0.001	-0.05	-0.007	0.134

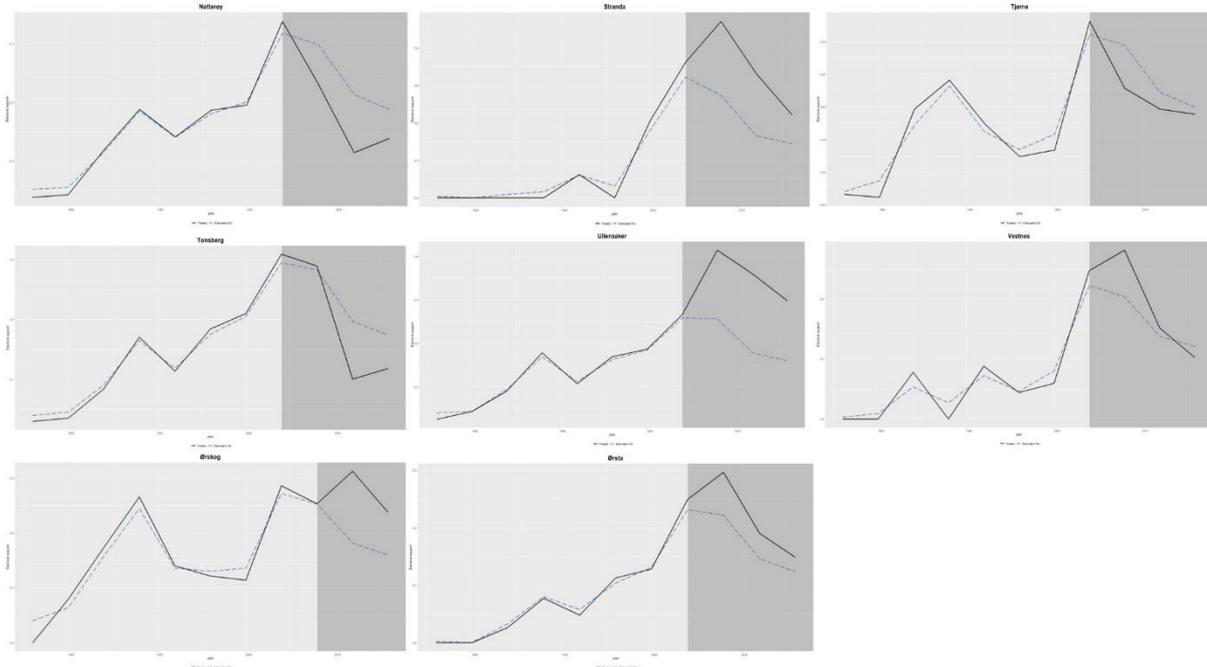
It is of interest to plot the individual treated units to examine how the general trend is represented across the municipalities. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 shows the treated and counterfactual for the treated municipalities. The counterfactual fit is a bit more imprecise for these units, and the effects often more drastic. The general trend does however, seem to confirm the results of the generalized treated and counterfactual units. Seemingly, the effect appears to wear off after a small number of elections.

Figure 5.3 The treated and counterfactual effects for each treated unit



Showing nine out of 17 municipalities, from the left Askøy, Austevoll, Bamble, Fredrikstad, Hadsel, Hvaler, Lyngen, Mandal, and Nordreisa.

Figure 5.4 The treated and counterfactual effects for each treated unit



Showing eight out of 17 treated municipalities, from the left Nøtterøy, Stranda, Tjøme, Tønsberg, Ullensaker, and Vestnes.

Most of the treated units mirror the effect seen in figure 5.1, where the electoral support is larger compared to the counterfactual estimation. In some municipalities however, the treatment seems to have the opposite effect, most notably in Nøtterøy and Tjøme, but also in Tønsberg after an additional election. Fredrikstad and Lyngen also see a significant decrease in electoral support in the election following their mayoral appointment. Based on the results of figure 5.3 and 5.4 I will study some of these municipalities more in-depth.

5.2 Robustness tests

As part of the diagnose of the results of the matrix completion method, it is necessary to explore some other methods of estimation.

To further examine and evaluate the results from the matrix completion estimation, I also performed a panel data fixed effects regression. This regression includes four different models. The model specification is found at the bottom of table 5.5 The main trend remains across the different models.

Table 5.4 Regression results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
FrP Mayor	15.3 ***	9.54***	9.7***	7.3***
	(1.23)	(2.3)	(2.34)	(2.01)
Population			-3.9e-05	-1.5e-04*
			(4.1e-05)	(6.7e-05)
Total			-0.02	-0.008
expenditures			(0.01)	(0.02)
Unemployment			-8.6	8.4
			(15.4)	(21)
Number of			0.39*	0.15
parties			(0.16)	(0.2)
Elderly				0.13
				(0.18)
Property tax per				0.12
capita				(0.18)
Observations	2494	2494	2494	1 360
R-squared	0.26	0.47	0.47	0.7
Adjusted R-	0.19	0.41	0.41	0.63
squared				
Unit fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Time fixed effects	x	✓	✓	✓
Robust standard	✓	✓	✓	✓
errors				

(Signif, codes: *p<0.1; **p<0.5; ***p<0.01)

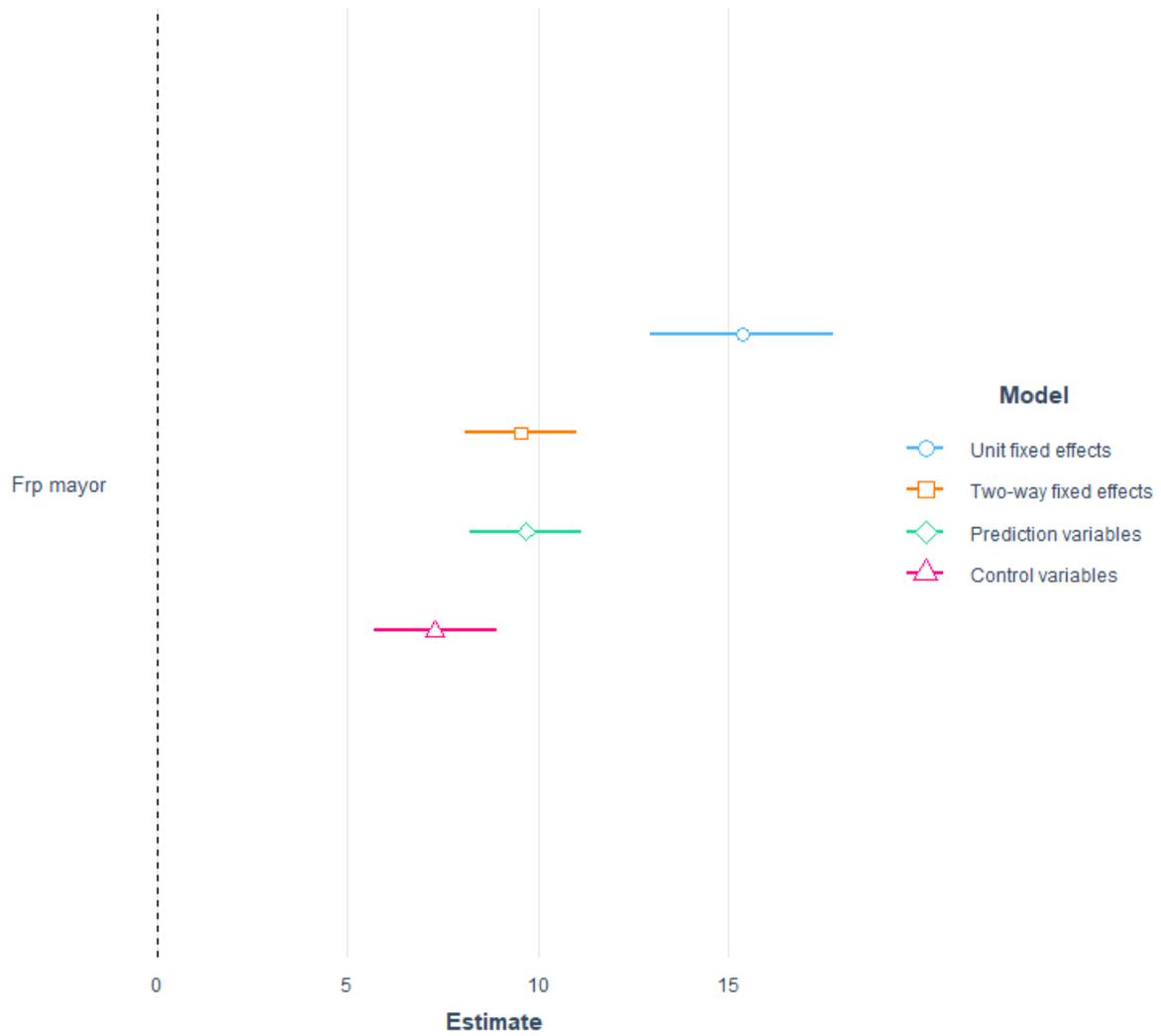
Table 5.4 shows the results of the regression. Across the models the independent variable FrP Mayor remains significant and positive, even when both time and unit invariant factors are controlled for with fixed effects. The effect decreases a noteworthy amount when adding the time fixed effects. These results, being the results of a regression on time series data, do of course suffer from the possibility of among other things, serial correlation. The matrix

completion model does account for serial correlation, but in addition group robust standard errors are included in order to account for some of the correlation. Furthermore, the fixed municipality and time effects control for some of the time invariant effects between municipalities, and over time. In model three, the predictor variables are included, none of which have a large impact on the treatment variable, but the variable measuring the number of parties has a scarcely significant and positive effect.

In model four, the control variables are included, for the most part these variables are not significant. The only variable that has a significant effect except for the variable indicating the Progress Party mayor, is population, this variable is only significant on the 10% level. The effect is negative, suggesting that there is a correlation between the decrease in population in a municipality and the increase of electoral support for the Progress Party. Even though this effect is significant, it still does not remove the significance of having a mayor from the Progress Party, although the strength of the effect does decrease a little. This could also be due to the decrease in observations in model four caused by the missing values in the property tax variable. Either way, the positive, significant effect of having a mayor from the Progress Party remains across the different models. This corresponds with and strengthens the results from the matrix completion method.

Figure 5.5 shows a coefficient plot including the fixed effects model. Adding time fixed effects lead to a weaker effect of the treatment variable, but it is still positive and significant. Adding prediction or control variables does not affect this to any large degree either.

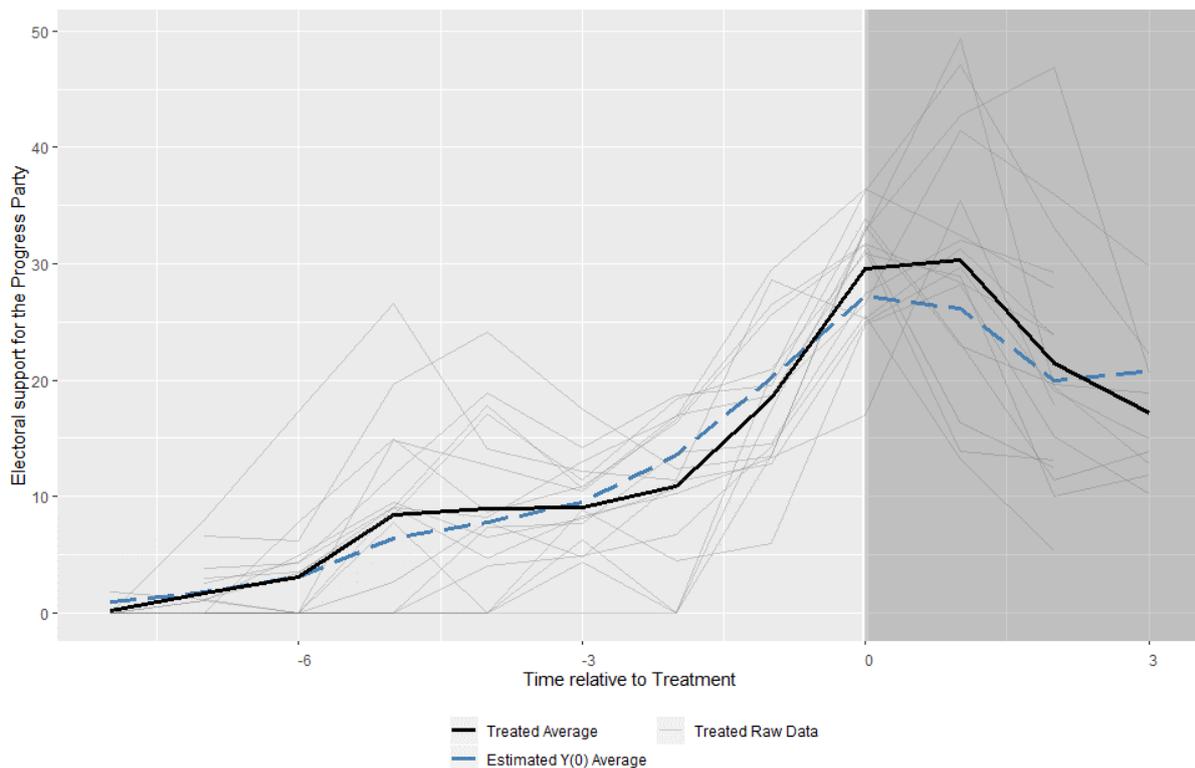
Figure 5.5 Coefficient plot



5.2.1 Generalized synthetic control method

Even though the matrix completion method generally outperforms most other estimations when the matrix is unbalanced, including results from the generalized synthetic control method also seems feasible, in order to explore whether or not they express the same traits and trends. This estimator is based on interactive fixed effects and figure 5.6 shows the results from the GSC. The ATT is somewhat weaker, both in significance and strength, but the results are mostly similar, especially when considering the T_1 the first election after the treatment. Based on the data provided, the model with two latent factors gave the lowest MSPE, therefore this model was chosen. The factors and factor loadings are shown in Appendix 1.A and 1.B these are rarely intuitively interpretable.

Figure 5.6 Results using the generalized synthetic control method

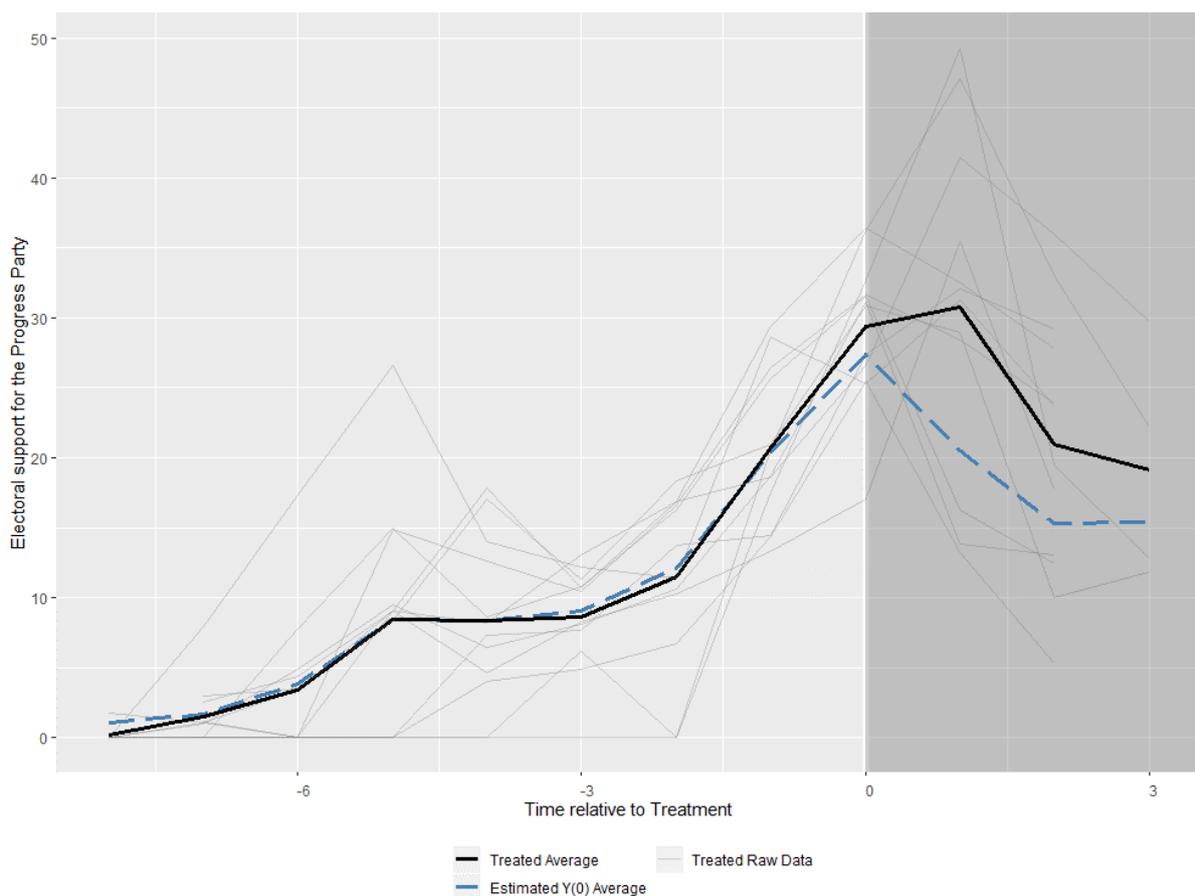


As expected, the fit in the pre-treatment period is more accurate when estimating using the matrix completion method. It therefore seems likely that the estimations using the matrix completion method are more robust.

5.2.2 Removing the municipalities with treatment reversals

Some of the units included in the dataset¹⁷ experience treatment reversals during the span of the time series, these units remain in the original analysis. Furthermore, the mayor of Austevoll was not democratically removed, but resigned after gaining a position in the national legislative assembly. Even though I am interested in these municipalities where the mayors lose their position and what happens to their electoral support in the aftermath. To test the robustness of the findings, it seems feasible to run an analysis without these units as well, to see how strongly they affect the results. Figure 5.7 shows that, despite a somewhat stronger ATT, removing the units with treatment reversals had no major implications on the results.

Figure 5.7 Results from the matrix completion method without the units with treatment reversals



¹⁷ Austevoll, Nøtterøy, Tjøme, Tønsberg, Vestnes, Ørsta

5.3 Further examination of treated municipalities

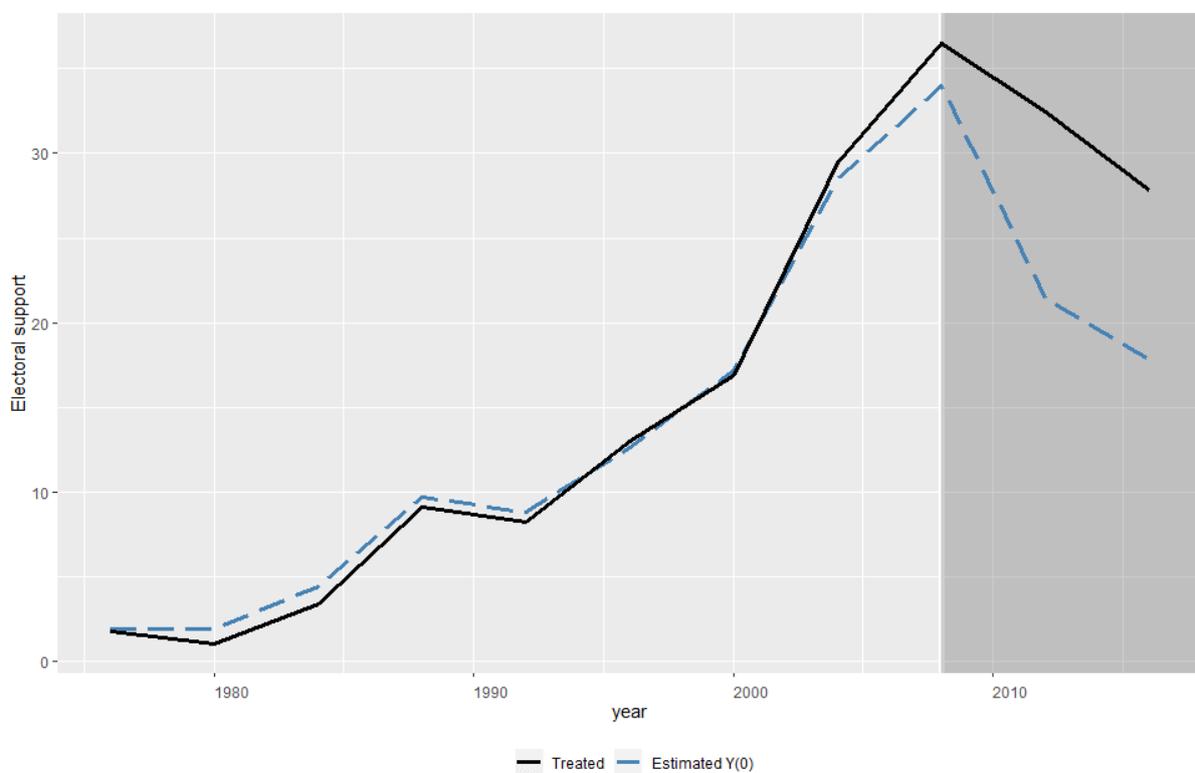
The results indicate a somewhat surprising turn of events. The progress Party gaining mayoral power seem to increase their electoral support, rather than decrease it, as should be expected according to the cost of ruling literature. The causal effect of the analysis seems rather strong and tests indicates a robust effect. Could it be the nature of the Norwegian mayoral position creating these results, or is it more closely linked to the nature of the Progress Party?

In order to further explore this effect, I will study four municipalities more closely. I have chosen four municipalities based on the results in figure 5.3 and 5.4. Two municipalities where the Progress Party experienced success, Bamble and Hvaler, and two municipalities where they performed poorer, Lyngen and Tjøme were chosen. Hopefully this section will be able to give some insights into the mechanisms behind either electoral success or failure.

5.3.1 Bamble

Bamble municipality belongs to Telemark county and has a population of about 14 000 inhabitants. Figure 5.8 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for the municipality. According to the estimation, the Progress Party has gotten increased electoral support over the years, topping in 2007 election. Despite losing the mayoral position in 2015, Bamble remains one of the municipalities where the Progress Party is most prominent in Norway (Hansen 2015a; Wennerød 2015).

Figure 5.8 Estimated treated and counterfactual averages for Bamble



Jon Pieter Flølo was a former policeman turned mayor in the Norwegian municipality Bamble. He represented the Progress Party and held the position of mayor for two election from 2007-2015. Initially he was promised a discreet place on the local list for the Progress Party, but his good reputation as a police officer led to him getting voted far up the list (Wennerød 2015). After four years away from politics he was offered the position of first candidate for Bamble FrP in 2007: “[...] I said yes and not long after I was mayor. This I did not expect. Anne Blaker had a strong position as mayor for the Norwegian Labour Party in Bamble at that point”

(Wennerød 2015) (My translation¹⁸). Flølo states that his experience as a police officer aided him in his work as mayor, he knew the municipality and its people, and they knew him, additionally, when he worked in the police force he got a lot of media coverage (Wennerød 2015). Being well known and getting media coverage is considered as an advantage in the literature dealing with the incumbency effect (Johannes and McAdams 1981). Getting media coverage on the regular, and being well known by constituents, is likely a large advantage before running for local elections as well.

In an article written by Bamble municipality, Flølo is described accordingly:

“When Jon Pieter is out and about in the municipality, he gets recognized everywhere. Several of the inhabitants wants to talk to him. This is not surprising, he [Flølo] says, with over 30 years working for the Bamble municipality police force, and eight years as mayor, people will get to know you. The people he meets, either at the grocery store, on the street, or other places, often ask him about things they need fixed in the municipality. Sometimes he feels like an ombudsman” (Bamble kommune 2015) (My translation¹⁹).

This quote seems to indicate that the mayoral role, at least in Bamble municipality, is quite responsive. Fiorina (1989) theorizes that a shift in the representatives’ roles, from politician to ombudsman leads to more stable election results. In a more bureaucratic role, experience matters, leading to re-election. Level of responsiveness to the constituents is theoretically important (Eulau and Karps 1977). Meeting and talking to constituents on a regular basis around the municipality could correspond with both service and symbolic responsiveness.

In the 2015 election, Flølo still won by popular votes, but was dismissed from office due to disagreement from the cooperating parties (Løkkebø 2015; Wennerød 2015; Schulstok 2015). Not only was the 2015 election a decent election for Bamble FrP, a lot of the votes Flølo got,

¹⁸ «Jeg sa ja, og ikke lenge etter var jeg ordfører. Det hadde jeg ikke regna med. Anne Blaker hadde en sterk posisjon som Ap-ordfører i Bamble på den tida.» (Wennerød 2015)

¹⁹ «Når Jon Pieter er ute i kommunen og farter, blir han gjenkjent overalt. Mange ønsker en liten bit av ham. Det er ikke rart det sier han, med over 30 år i politiet i Bamble kommune, samt ordfører de siste 8, da blir folk kjent med deg. Folk han møter, enten i butikken, på gata eller andre steder, spør ham ofte spørsmål om en ting de trenger å få løst mot kommunen. Noen ganger føler han seg som en ombudsmann» (Bamble kommune 2015).

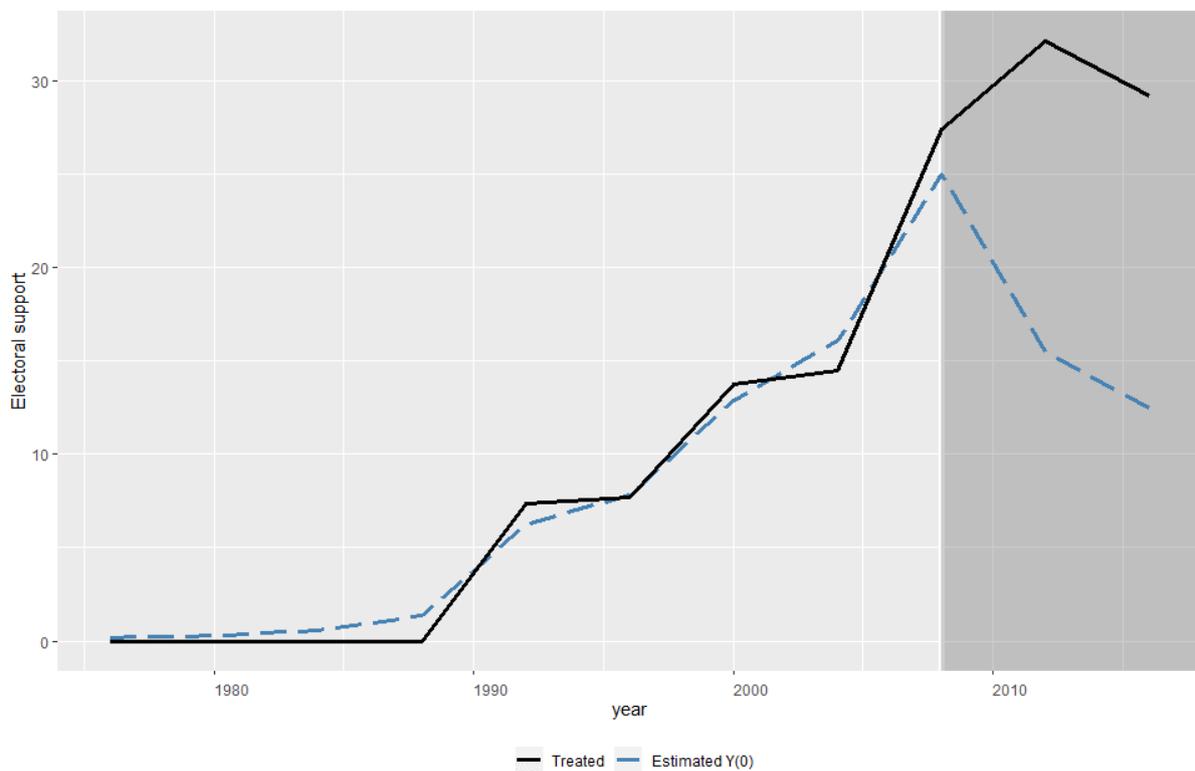
was personal votes from people who voted for other party lists (Wennerød 2015; Hansen 2015a). He also received a decent amount of personal votes in the 2011 election (Lie-Hagen 2011). It could be argued that the local politics in Norway is more removed from the party ties on the national level, often local matters are on the forefront for local elections. This could be why the Progress Party, which on the national level is quite polarizing, will on the local level be able to attract voters from other parties. The focus on private persons as opposed to parties, could also be greater on the local level, as seems to be the case with Flølo. However, local party lists do not seem totally exempt from the national party program, Flølo went strongly out against immigration in a local debate, calling the stream of refugees a threat against democracy and public safety (Hansen 2015b). Despite this, the general consensus seems to indicate that there is no clear “FrP mark” on Bamble municipality (Løkkebø 2015).

Flølo will run for the 2019 local election in Bamble, but the local FrP list has been greatly reduced as three local members have decided to run on their own newly founded list instead (Lie-Hagen 2019; Enger 2019).

5.3.2 Hvaler

Hvaler municipality belongs to the region of Østfold and boasts about 4 500 inhabitants. With their 4 300 cottages, Hvaler is the municipality with most cottages per square meter in Norway (Skovly 2017). The municipality is a popular spot for tourists in the summer. Having been in a position of power since 2007, Hvaler municipality with their mayor Evind Normann Borge is one of the Progress Party's strongest municipalities. Furthermore, prognosis indicates that Borge will probably keep the mayoral position in the 2019 election as well (Fløtaker 2018). Figure 5.9 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for Hvaler, and the estimation indicates that having the mayoral position has been very lucrative indeed.

Figure 5.9 Treated and counterfactual averages for Hvaler



Member of the municipal board in Hvaler Wiggo Sørlien (2018) states that in a growing uncertain political climate, Hvaler FrP is a steady option for the constituents. He remarks that:

“For many it might seem strange that the local parties do not always agree with the mother parties. Hvaler is a good example that we do not always root for Siv, Erna or Jonas in cases like residence requirements, municipal reforms and the environment”(Sørlien 2018) (My translation²⁰).

Confirming this is an article written by mayor Borge, where he states that Hvaler FrP does not care about which party suggests a certain policy, as long as it is policy that will make life better for the inhabitants of Hvaler, FrP will vote for it (Borge 2007). Borge has also been in the news, defending the property tax that national party leader Siv Jensen wishes to remove, he states that the tax is important to keep the quality of the public services as good as possible (NRK 2017). The property tax is vital for the municipality, considering how Hvaler has more vacation houses than “normal” homes (Fredriksen 2015). Despite this their political program states that they wish to abolish the tax. Hvaler FrP did vote against the tax, but was overruled by the other parties in the municipal council, Borge expresses that he has no problem with this conclusion (Fredriksen 2015).

However, the mayor is not completely removed from the ideologies of the national party. Borge has been in the media expressing disdain against housing more refugees in the municipality (Tinlund 2015). In addition, he has been quoted blaming the liberal press for the Progress Party’s decline in polls (Bolstad 2015).

Fiorina (1989) states that decline in partisanship is a central part of the incumbency effect in USA. Borge’s willingness to go against party lines to do what he thinks best benefits the municipality might be some of the reason of why he experiences such extensive electoral support. Borge going out to the press defending the local policies gives him both visibility and makes him seem responsive to the constituents. At the same time, he avoids the accountability

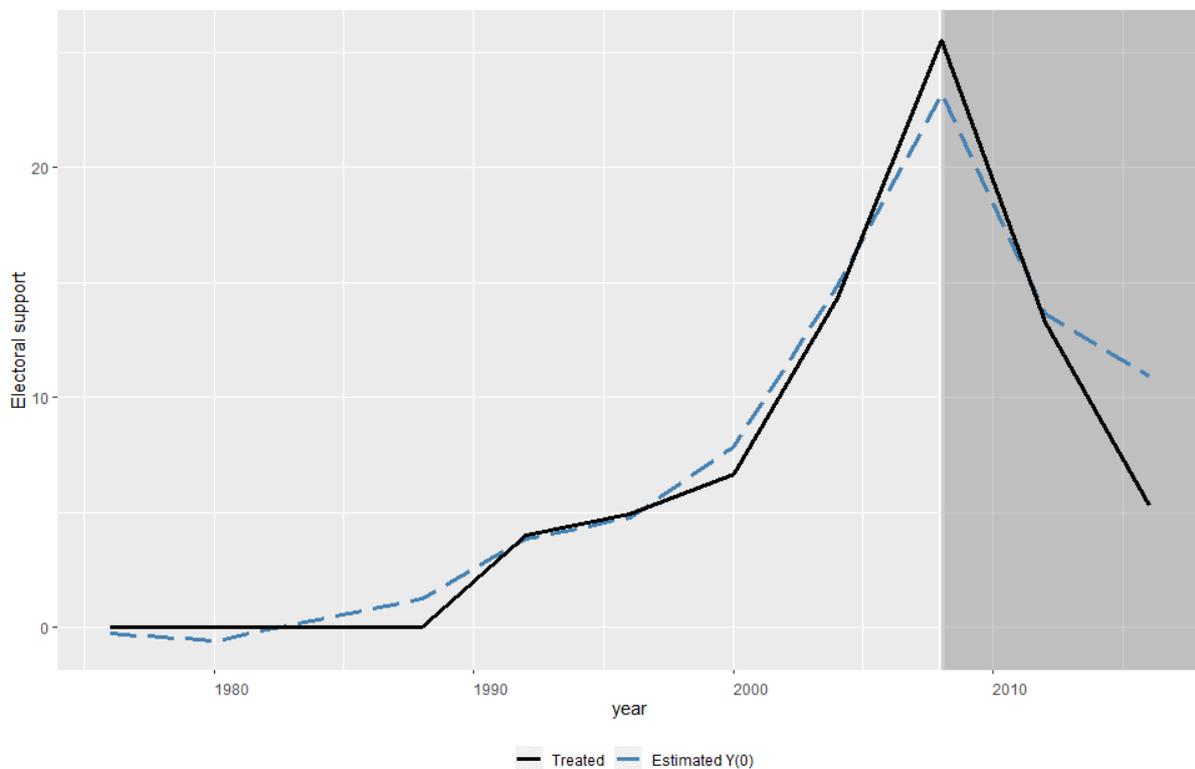
²⁰ «For mange kan det virke underlig at partiene lokalt ikke alltid er enig med moderpartiene. Hvaler er et godt eksempel på at vi ikke alltid heier på Siv, Erna eller Jonas, i saker som for eksempel boplikt, kommunereform og miljø.» (Sørlien 2018).

of the property tax by arguing that he voted against it in the first place. Possibly, it is the openness around Borge's wish to put the municipality's needs before the national party program that is the reason behind his popularity in Hvaler. Another reason could be the allegedly healing hands of the mayor that ensure his electoral success (Gangstøe and Pedersen 2009).

5.3.3 Lyngen

It is of interest to not only research the success stories of the FrP mayors, but also the stories where the party has been less successful. Lyngen is one of the municipalities where the counterfactual municipality where FrP never got the mayoral position outperforms the treated municipality, as seen in figure 5.10. Lyngen is a municipality in northern Norway, and belongs to the region of Troms, the municipality has about 2 800 inhabitants. Mayor Hans Karlsen from the Progress Party only sat for one period between 2007-2011.

Figure 5.10 Counterfactual and treated averages for Lyngen



Northern Norway is often considered to be leaning heavily to the left politically, despite this, the Progress Party has been making electoral progress in this region. Karlsens brother John Karlsen, a mayor for the Progress Party in Nordreisa has the following to say about the Progress Party's increased support in northern Norway: "*We want to grant more funds to the municipalities, the people living in the districts will be better off with us. I think we have been doing a good job meeting people in the municipalities*" (Anensen 2007) (My translation²¹). Hans Karlsen himself states that his job as a salesman has helped him achieve the mayoral position (Ellingsen 2007). Again, the importance of visibility is brought up when talking about electoral prowess in the municipalities.

The 2007 election was generally a good local election for FrP, most of their mayors were re-elected, but the mayor in Nøtterøy lost his position as he was not able to deliver on his promise to prevent a road toll station (Magnus 2007). In the 2011 election Lyngen FrP experienced a massive recession electorally, and Hans Karlsen lost mayoral mantle. The reason behind the significant downturn for the party, was allegedly their inability to remove the property tax that they promised to abolish running for election in 2007 (Teigen 2011).

In many ways it seems that Karlsen, and the mayor in and Nøtterøy, were held responsible for their promises during their electoral campaigns. This corresponds to a large degree with Mueller's (1970) theories. During campaigns, electoral candidates often make promises they cannot keep, leading to them losing support in later elections. This is also something that could be extra relevant to radical right-wing populist parties, with them having to adjust to the relevant political climate in the governing coalition, often unable to implement their promised policies.

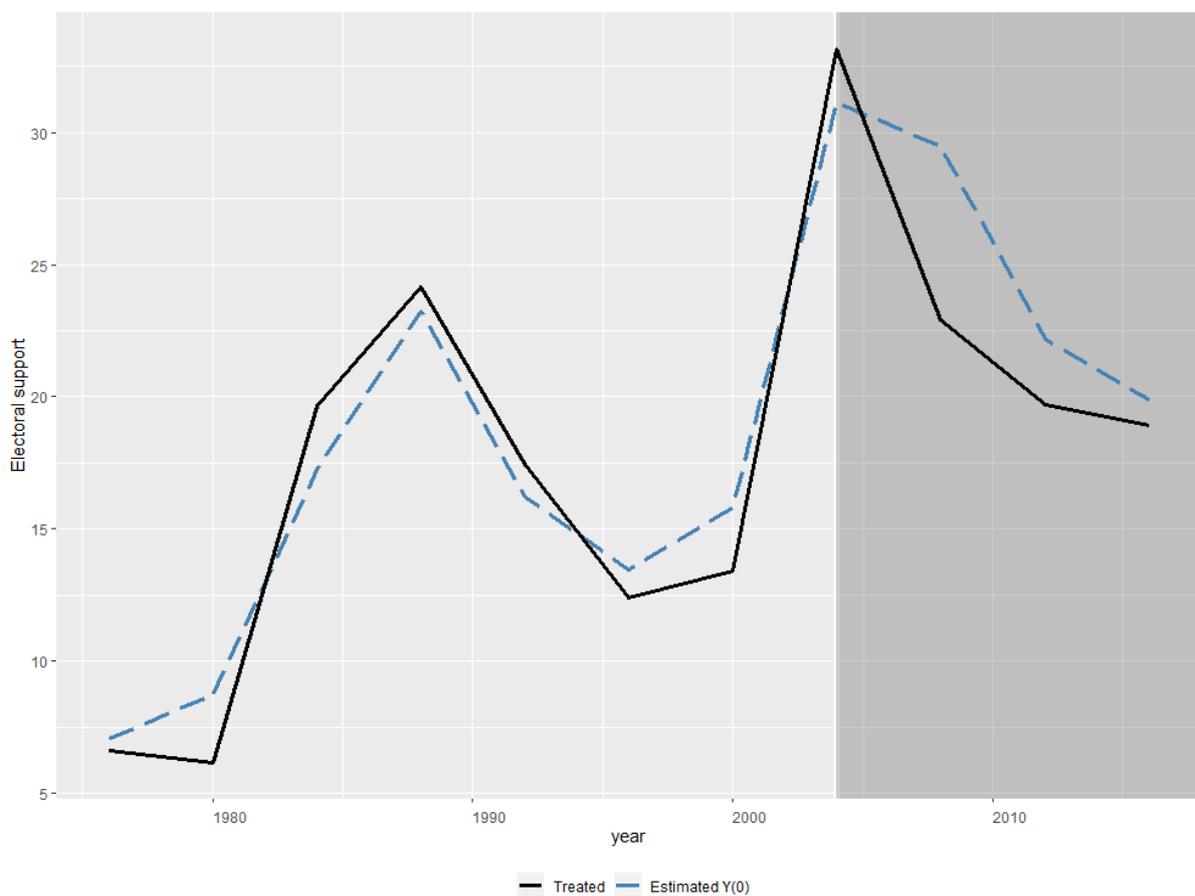
In 2019 Karlsen will again run as mayoral candidate, with a promise to lower property tax (Teigen 2019). It will be interesting to see whether or not he is able to keep his promise this time around.

²¹ «Vi vil bevilge mer til kommunene, og også folk i distriktene får det bedre med oss. Jeg tror vi har vært flinke til å møte folk i kommunene» (Anensen 2007)

5.3.4 Tjøme

Tjøme is an island municipality with approximately 4971 inhabitants. The island is a popular summer destination. From 2018 Tjøme has been part of the newly established municipality of Færder. Figure 5.11 shows the treated and counterfactual estimates for Tjøme municipality which shows a significant decline in electoral support after one term in a position of power. The decline is so substantial, that FrP would likely have fared better should they not have gained a mayoral position.

Figure 5.11 Treated and counterfactual averages for Tjøme



In 2003 Per Hotvedt Nielsen was elected the mayor of Tjøme, representing Tjøme FrP and the party achieved, for the first time in the party's history, both the position of mayor and deputy mayor in the same municipality (Baastad 2003; NTB 2003). Nielsen had virtually no political experience and had drifted an animal store in 20 years before being elected (Ramnefjell 2004). The same election led to FrP-mayors in the three neighbouring municipalities of Tjøme, Nøtterøy and Tønsberg (Ramnefjell 2004). The reason behind the sudden surge of FrP mayors

could be the plan, decided by the national government, to finance the building of a road in the proximity of the municipalities by road toll (Ramnefjell 2004). FrP in Tjøme was pro a new road, but against the road toll, causing them to gain a lot of the voters usually belonging to the Conservative Party and the Norwegian Labour Party (Ramnefjell 2004). The most outraged citizens even created their own list against the road toll.

Early in his term as mayor Nielsen lent his support to a hotel chain wishing to build a large hotel near the Tjøme beach line, something that was very unpopular with his constituents (Dalsegg 2004). Adding insult to injury Tjøme FrP were crippled by an intern power struggle, making it necessary to depose half of the party's board members (Langestrand 2006). Early in the year 2007 Nielsen changed his mind about an important municipal policy, namely residence requirements²², he had initially expressed that he wanted to keep the residence requirement (Wilhelmsen 2007). For Nielsen, it was important to be done with the business of the residence requirements before the local elections, to make sure that the upcoming election will not be based entirely on this the controversy surrounding this policy (Wilhelmsen 2007). Nielsen's flip flopping on the case of residence requirements as well as his inability to remove the road toll which was promised in the running up to the 2003 election was not popular with the residents of Tjøme (Tønsbergs Blad 2007b).

In the end, the 2007 election very much became focused on the resident requirements, and Nielsen suffered a staggering loss of 10% electoral support (Tønsbergs Blad 2007a; Larsen 2007). Nielsen is now retired, living in his home with eleven cats (Blix 2018).

In the neighbouring municipality of Nøtterøy, FrP lost the mayoral mantle as well, due to their inability to remove the road toll (Tønsbergs Blad 2007a). In Tønsberg, FrP managed to keep their mayor, Tønsbergs Blad (2007a) states that this is because the mayor of Tønsberg managed to rule with a pragmatic consensus based policies.

Residence requirements were also on the agenda in the 2007 election in Hvaler municipality. Hvaler FrP is against residence requirements as well, but admitted that they would rather have

²² Requirements stating that in order to purchase property, you must live in it. This is to prevent inflation of property prices.

a local referendum to settle the business, as it is a policy that will affect many of their inhabitants (Larsen 2007). It is in line with FrP's populist nature to call for referenda, but it is also an effective way to avoid accountability on a disputed political topic. For Borge in Hvaler, it seems that being able to bend after public opinion, rather than strictly adhering to party politics have benefited him.

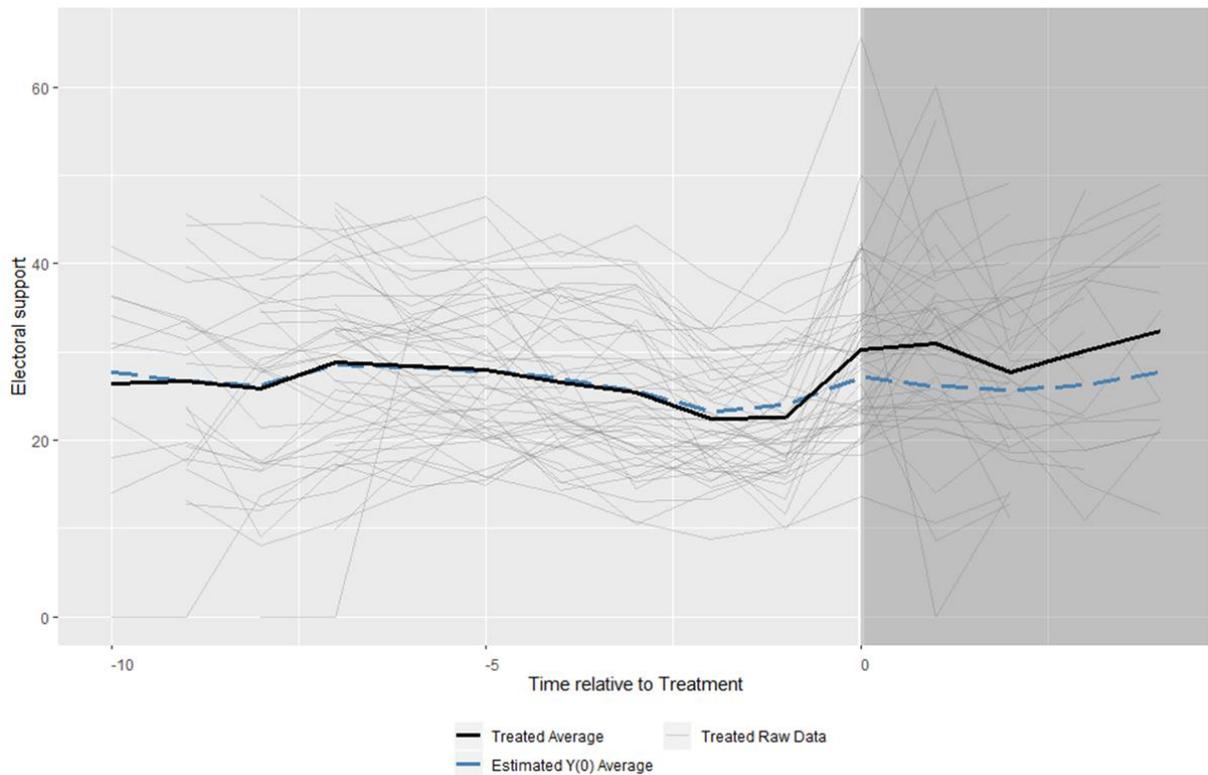
5.4 The incumbency advantage – relevant for all the Norwegian parties?

To explore whether or not the incumbency effect is something unique for radical right-wing populist parties like the Progress Party, or perhaps something more symptomatic of the Norwegian municipal system, I have implemented the matrix completion method using the remaining Norwegian political parties as well. I have used variables indicating the electoral support for the given party as well as a lagged dummy variable indicating when they get a mayoral position.

Figure 5.12 and 5.13 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for the Conservative Party and the Norwegian Labour Party. These are the two most prominent parties in Norwegian politics and they are present in most of the Norwegian municipalities. They are so popular, that the number of control units (municipalities where they have never achieved the mayoral position) is quite small although not lower than $N_c = 40$. In the municipalities where the Progress Party achieve the mayoral position, the Conservative Party is often a part of their coalition, often holding the position of deputy mayor. Sometimes they are also joined by the Christian Democratic Party. When Flølo (Bamble), Karlsen (Lyngen) and Nielsen (Tjøme) lost their mayoral mantle, they were succeeded by mayors from the Norwegian Labour Party. A lot of municipalities were dropped from these specific parties as the pre-treatment period was too short. Figure 5.12 and 5.13 shows that both parties benefit from having a position of power. The effect is on average somewhat lower than that of the Progress Party but seems more stable over time.

In general, the electoral support the Labour Party been quite stable. According to table 5.5 the average treatment effect for both the parties is around 4%, and the effect is on average significant. For the Norwegian Labour party, $N_{co} = 60$, $N_{tr} = 47$ and the total number of units is 107.

Figure 5.12 The treated and counterfactual averages for the Norwegian Labour Party



The Conservative Party has $N_{tr} = 53$ and $N_{co} = 170$, with a total N of 223. At the end of the time series, the Conservative Party sees a decrease in support while the Labour Party's support increase. This could be an effect of the Conservative Party having power on the national level.

Figure 5.13 The treated and counterfactual averages for the Conservative Party

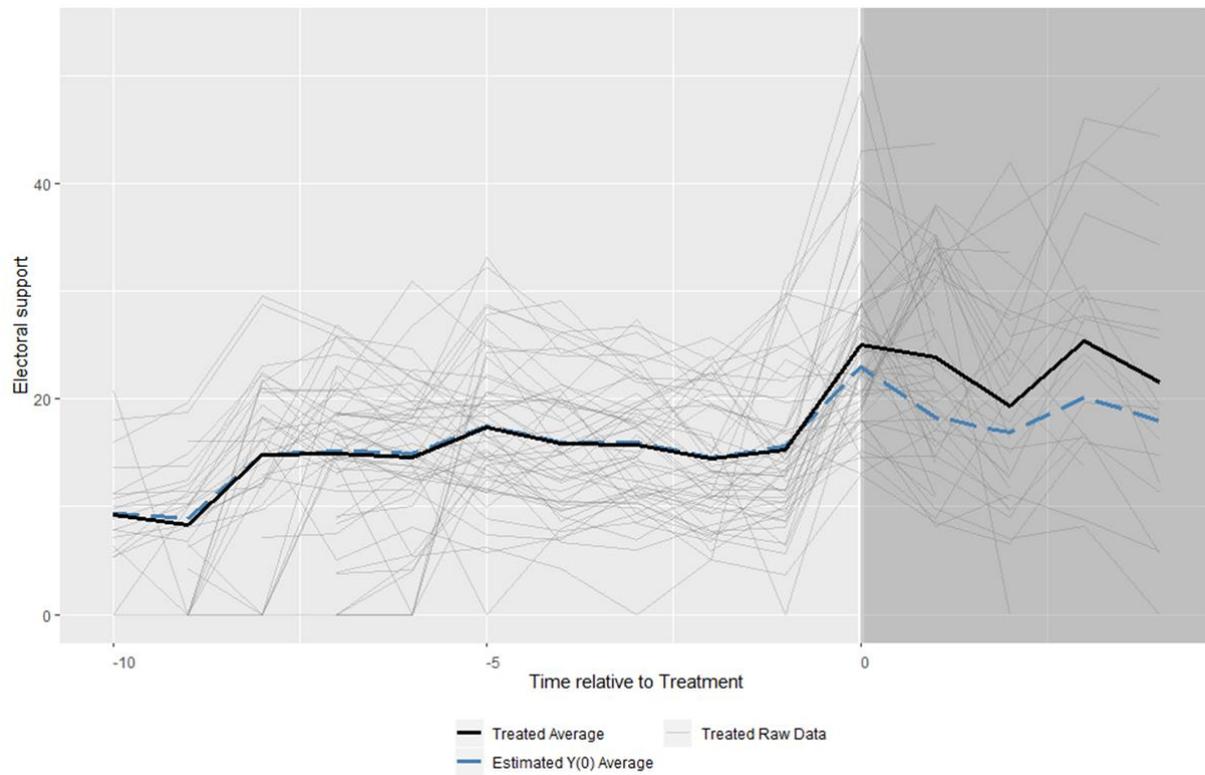
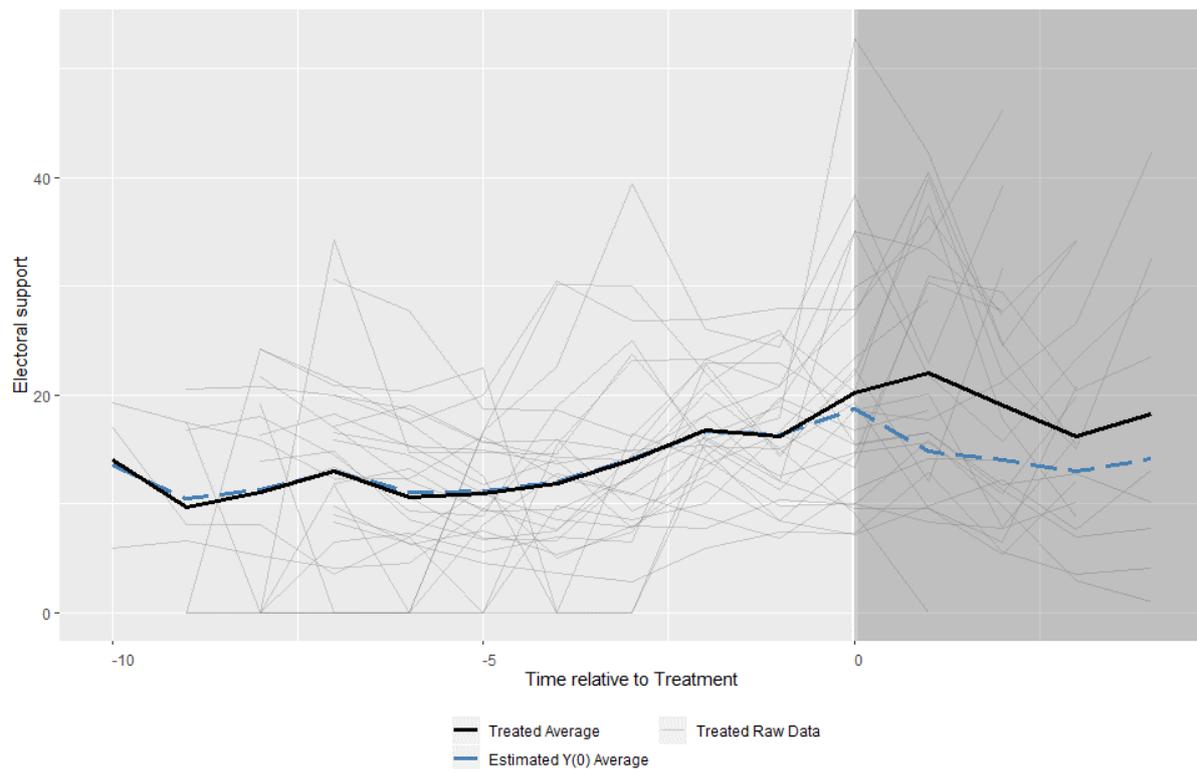


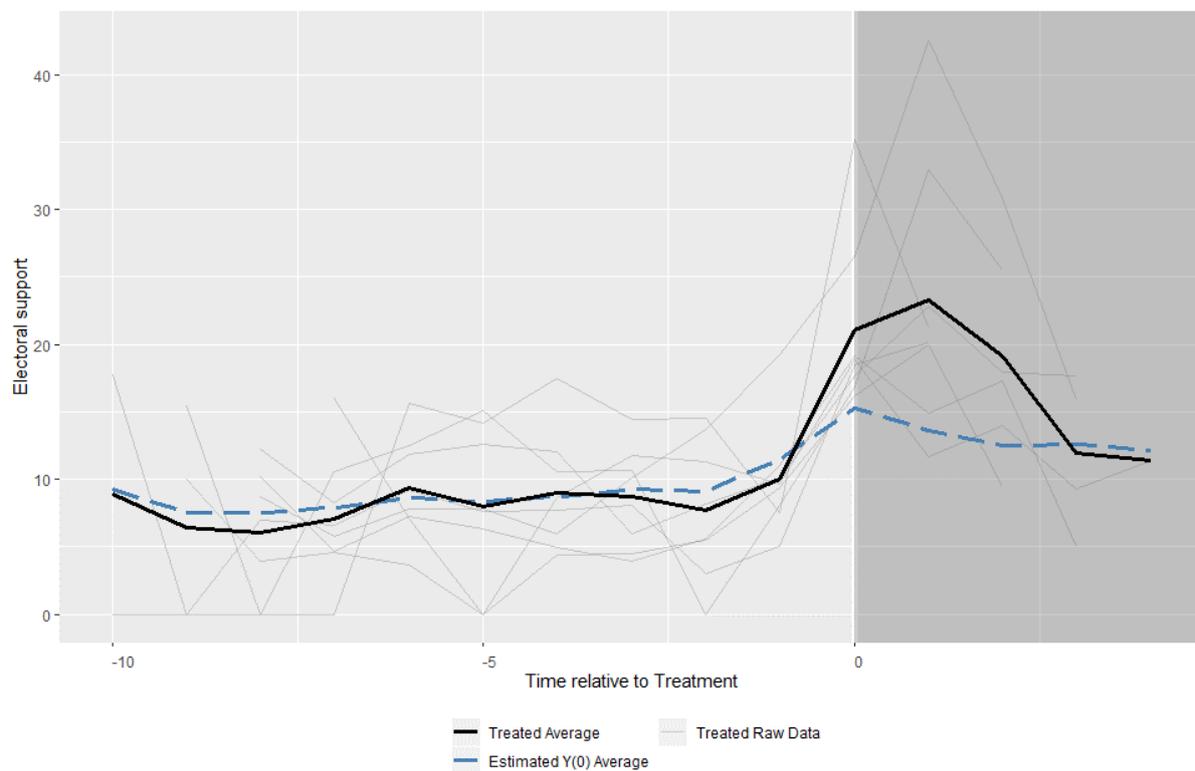
Figure 5.14 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for the Centre Party. The Centre Party is the Norwegian agrarian party and has a generally high popularity in the rural municipalities. The analysis includes $N = 142$ for the Centre Party, where $N_{tr} = 27$ and $N_{co} = 115$. Incumbency seems to have a quite substantial positive effect for the party with an average at about 5% and the effect is significant.

Figure 5.14 The treated and counterfactual averages for the Centre Party



The Liberal party is Norway's oldest party, despite this, their presence in the municipalities is not quite as big as the previous parties, and on national level the party is quite small. The Liberal Party has $N = 222$, where $N_{tr} = 8$ and $N_{co} = 214$. Figure 5.15 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for the Liberal Party. Having a mayor seems to have a drastically positive effect for the party, although the effect seems to wear off after a couple elections. On average the increase in support is about 6% and the effect is significant.

Figure 5.15 Treated and counterfactual averages for the Liberal Party



For the two remaining parties, the positive trend continues, but the effect is more moderate. Figure 5.16 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for the Christian Democratic Party. For the Christian Democratic Party, the effect is at around 3.5%, and is significant on a 5% level. The Christian Democratic party has $N = 196$, where $N_{tr} = 12$, and $N_{co} = 184$.

Figure 5.16 The treated and counterfactual averages for the Christian Democratic Party

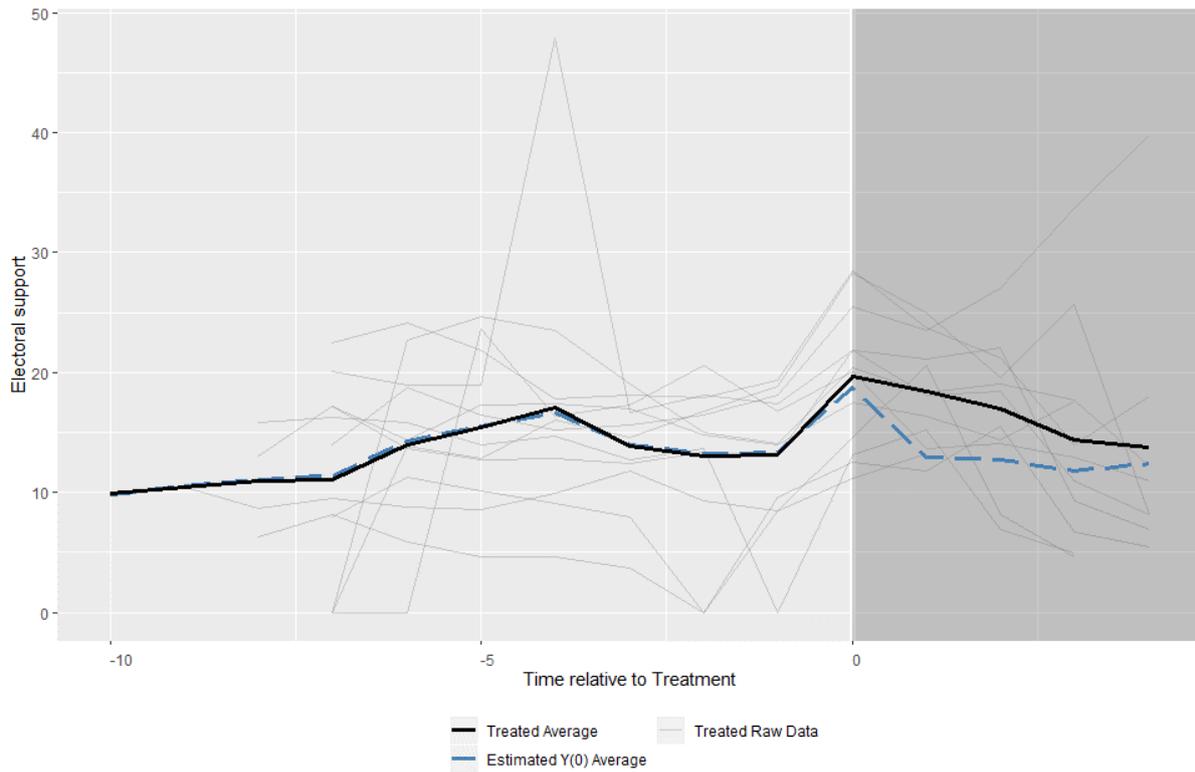


Figure 5.17 shows the treated and counterfactual averages for the Socialist Party. For the Socialist Party this effect is only 3%, and the effect is not significant at all. The party sees a substantial decline after gaining the mayoral position, but it seems likely to be a general loss, as the counterfactual municipality follows the trend. The Socialist party has $N = 270$ where $N_{tr} = 7$ and $N_{co} = 263$.

Figure 5.17 Treated and counterfactual averages for the Socialist Party

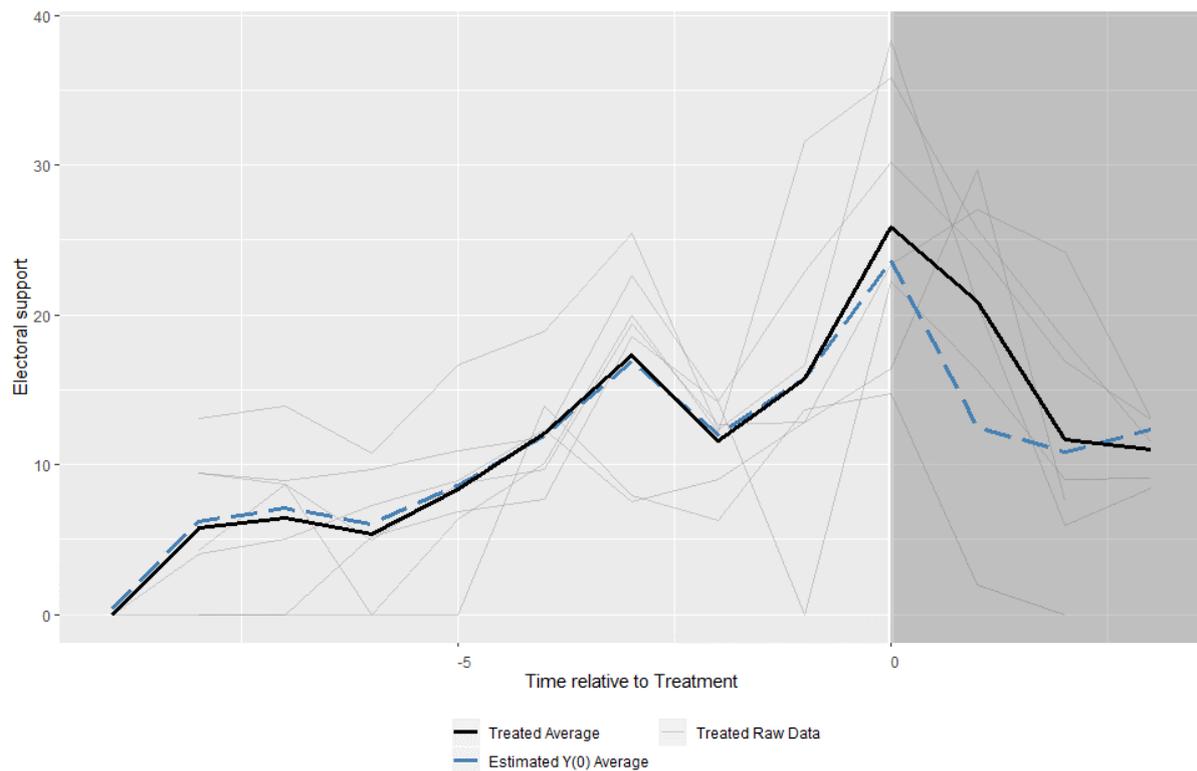


Table 5.5 shows the average values of the average treatment effect on the treated unit for the respective political parties. The effects are generally significant, except for the Socialist Party. All the given parties experienced an increase in electoral support after gaining a mayoral position.

Table 5.5 Average ATT for the remaining Norwegian political parties

Party	ATT	Standard errors	CI. lower	CI. upper	P-value
The Conservative Party	4.3	0.12	2.7	6.57	0.000
The Norwegian Labour Party	3.7	1.2	1.81	6.18	0.004
The Centre Party	5.2	1.3	2.6	7.7	0.000
The Liberal Party	6	2.4	1.9	11.5	0.004
The Christian Democratic Party	3.5	1.5	0.63	6.8	0.02
The Socialist Party	3	2.1	-1.3	7.1	0.164

5.5 Discussion

The presented results indicate a different direction than what the cost of ruling literature would have predicted. The estimated causal effect moves in the opposite direction from H1: gaining the position of mayor will significantly decrease the electoral support for the Progress Party. The findings seem more in line with the counter hypothesis H2: gaining the position of mayor will significantly strengthen the electoral support for the Progress Party. Could it be attributed to a political climate more prone to consensus than polarization, or maybe a bigger focus on individual candidates and experience rather than broad policies? I will first discuss the results concerning the Progress Party in-depth, before discussing the implications of the remaining parties.

The economic explanations for the cost of ruling advocate for a relationship between economic and electoral performance, this relationship is asymmetric indicating harder times take a harder toll on electoral support, but better times do not have an equivalent positive effect (Mueller 1970; Nannestad and Paldam 1994). Economic factors might be less prevalent on the municipal level, as the economic freedom of the municipalities is mainly limited to regulation of property tax. Considering how economic performance is a kind of zero-sum game for incumbents, the

fact that this accountability does not apply to the same degree at the municipal level might be a part of the explanation.

On the other hand, the property tax was often mentioned in the articles surrounding the mayors from the Progress Party, and Hans Karlsen lost both his position and a significant amount of support over this issue. At the same time, Borge, with his more rational relationship considering both property tax, and municipal policies seemed to benefit. This could of course be quite symptomatic of Hvaler and their rather unique situation of dependence on this tax. As citizens often consider the sosiotropic factors to be relevant when they judge economic performance, citizens of Hvaler may realize their benefits from this tax as a whole. Furthermore, in Tjøme, Nielsen suffered electoral loss due to his wish to remove residence requirements, despite his constituent's notion that this law benefits the municipality and their local housing market.

A powerholding party could end up alienating groups of minorities to the point where they lose their electoral majority (Downs 1957a; Mueller 1970). However, a mayor that either, cannot be directly held accountable or works more as a bureaucrat or ombudsman, could have a chance to not alienate that many voter groups. The local Norwegian politics is based more on consensus than polarization (Mikalsen and Bjørnå 2015). All the parties represented in the municipal board may therefore be held accountable for lack of efficiency or low performance. This notion should in theory lead to better co-operation and more efficient local governance. Furthermore, decline of clear party lines could lead to a bigger focus on private persons, making it possible to draw parallels to American congressional elections. In Bamble, for example, the mayor stated that he often met, and listened to the citizens of the municipality, suggesting that the mayoral role can be highly responsive.

Should this be the case, it would certainly explain why some of the traditional cost of ruling theories do not apply. With consensus based, more person focused politics, voters would not necessarily have a taste for change, as a change in power would not automatically lead to much difference one way or another. With Paldam and Skott's (1995) theory, the median voter switch between party blocks to ensure that policies remain mostly in the middle of the political spectrum. This theory will probably apply to a lesser degree if the political climate was focused on which policies might benefit their specific municipality, rather than ideological divides.

Another function of the median voter theorem is that the incumbency disadvantage increases over the duration of the period in power (Stevenson 2002). We see a tendency of this in the results, the initial high incumbency advantages decrease somewhat over time. According to Stevenson (2002) this is a function of the median voters wishing to stick to the political status quo. As the ability to make big policy changes is somewhat limited on the Norwegian municipal level, this explanation might not be the most relevant. It could be more likely that the longer duration of incumbency, the greater likelihood that they alienate more voters, or that the voters simply seem to wish for change in leadership. On the other hand, the decrease in support is not statistically significant, and seems to be in tune with a more general electoral decrease for the Progress Party, as the synthetic unit also suffers losses around this time.

Cost of ruling is more directly relevant for the parties holding a more prominent position in government (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016). In local governance, the mayor is the most well-known figure, and therefore most likely to be held accountable, and to some degree they seem to be, as seen in Tjøme, Nøtterøy and Lyngen. The local electoral campaign is strongly focused on local matters (Bjørklund 2017). It therefore makes sense that they are held accountable for their specific promises. In the municipalities where the mayors managed to function more as a trained bureaucrat or ombudsman they seemed to be able to avoid some of this accountability, as in Hvaler and Bamble. In these cases, the visibility, experience and familiarity gained by having the mayoral position is likely to be of advantage to them. From the cases, being visible also seemed to help them get elected as mayors in the first place.

The candidates on the local level also have the ability to be more responsive to their constituents, especially the symbolic responsiveness, their ability to create a relationship based on trust with them and their constituents, seems applicable (Eulau and Karps 1977). Service responsiveness, the ability to respond and grant boons to their constituents seems especially relevant as well (Eulau and Karps 1977). The degree of responsiveness should in general be easier to apply, the lower the level of governance. As the distance between constituents and candidate decrease, the responsiveness should increase. Fiorina (1989) notes that incumbency advantage is less prevalent in senate and presidential elections than for congressional elections, which arguably correspond with having fewer constituents.

Some theories highlight how radical right-wing populist parties suffer from incumbency disadvantage to an even greater degree than other parties. This could potentially be, because in

order to achieve electoral success these parties will have to moderate to gain votes, and therefore lose their main demographic (Berman 2008; Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016). Furthermore, entering a coalition with more moderate parties, will make it very unlikely that the radical right-wing populist parties will be able to implement most of their policies, thereby ending up breaking promises made to their constituents (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016; Van Spanje 2011). Finally, the duties of government may leave the radical right-wing populist parties little time to work on their radical ideologies (Berman 2008).

The notion that the Progress Party might have de-radicalized on the local level could very well be plausible. Whether it is in an attempt to win votes, or because partisan ties are weaker on the local level, is difficult to say, and it could be a combination of both. The cases that the Progress Party have the most controversial opinions about, are not as relevant on the municipal level. This is policies like number of refugees allowed in Norway, and the focus on stronger penitentiary punishment (Jupskås 2017). It could be that the potential stigma of voting for this party is lower on the local level, especially if the party has had a conceived successful term as mayor. Successfully adapting to a position of responsibility, especially as a classic anti-establishment party, could be perceived as positive by the public (Bjørklund and Saglie 2005).

On the other hand, the Progress Party mayors in both Bamble and Hvaler went out in public against placing more refugees in their own municipalities, so the local parties do not seem completely exempt their more radical ties (Hansen 2015b; Tinlund 2015). The inhabitants of Bamble however, does note that the municipality does not seem very typical of FrP after eight years under the party's rule (Løkkebø 2015). Theory dictates that the radical right-wing populist parties might lose votes because they are unable to keep the promises they made to their constituents when they gain power. It could be that the loss of accountability that belongs with the municipal level benefit these parties. The mayors are able to express unhappiness with the number of refugees entering Norway, without being expected to be able to do something about it.

5.5.1 The incumbency advantage across party lines

Surprisingly we see that all the Norwegian parties exhibit the same trend. The mayoral position contributes on average to an increased electoral support compared with the counterfactual municipality. Seemingly, there is nothing unique about the Progress Party that causes this effect. However, an argument could be made that the incumbency advantage seems a bit bigger for the smaller parties like the Progress Party and the Liberal Party. These parties exhibit a somewhat similar trend, with an initial increase in support, and decline after a few elections. The Socialist Party however, does not seem to benefit that much from having a mayoral position, and this is arguably a small party as well.

The results from the analysis across party lines increases the likeliness that it is, indeed, an effect possibly symptomatic of the Norwegian municipal political climate. The strongest positive effect we find with the Liberal Party and the Progress Party, both at around 6%. The Liberal Party sees a massive decline in support against the end of the time series, this could have a connection with the party's decline in support nationally as well. However, the synthetic unit remains stable, so this could be unlikely. The socialist Party has the weakest effect, and the seemingly most volatile support. The Socialist party has likewise suffered electorally the last elections on the national level. The remaining parties have been able to persist with a rather stable trend across the time series.

It seems likely that one of the reasons behind this general trend could be a decline in partisanship on the municipal level. Being a radical right-wing populist party does not seem factor notably neither in favour nor disfavour for the Progress Party as compared to the other parties. It is possible that local political cases matter more than specific party programs. Furthermore, visibility and experience are likely to benefit any mayor, from any party.

Some similarities between the Norwegian local elections and the American congressional elections could possibly be drawn. The members of congress experience a high re-election rate and incumbency advantage, independent of which political party they belong to. They seem to be assessed to a larger degree on how well they provide for their constituency, and how responsive they are. Their electoral success could also have an indirect effect, by intimidating capable competitors deterring them from running against the incumbent. Some of these factors might be true for the Norwegian mayors as well. Higher visibility and responsiveness combined

with ability to provide services for their constituents seems to be relevant in order to gain an incumbency advantage in Norway as well. Furthermore, the high focus on consensus based politics on the municipal level, likely leads to less political contention, and lower dissatisfaction with the voters, again reinforcing the electoral support for the party.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter I have presented the results from the analyses and discussed them thoroughly. I find that having a mayoral position likely increases the electoral support for the Progress Party, and the remaining main Norwegian parties as well. I have also explored some municipalities more in-depth, in which some tendencies, also recognizable in the literature, reveal themselves. It seems, for example, like prioritizing the will of the constituents over the party programme is beneficial for a mayor.

6.0 Conclusion

In this thesis I have attempted to figure out which way the incumbency effect leans in the Norwegian municipalities, and how it specifically relates to radical right-wing populist parties, like the Progress Party. I have attempted to answer the following research question:

In what way will gaining the position of mayor on the Norwegian local level affect the Progress Party's electoral support?

In this context, I have been considering if having the mayoral position is a disadvantage (**H1**) or advantage electorally (**H2**) for the Progress Party. Furthermore, I wished to explore whether or not the given effect was unique for the Progress Party (**H3**). To conclude I will first summarize my findings and discuss their implications.

6.1 Findings

To test **H1** and **H2** I implemented the matrix completion method. My dependent variable was the electoral support for the Progress Party, and the treatment variable specify when the party has the mayoral position. I used a lagged treatment variable to best indicate the effect of the incumbency after one election. I find that the Progress Party actually performs better when having a position of power than if they do not. The Progress Party has on average about 6% higher electoral support than in the counterfactual municipalities. With few exceptions this effect is also supported in the individual treated municipalities. These results weaken **H1** and strengthen the support for **H2**. Based on the case studies and the theoretical framework, a likely explanation seems to be that the party lines weaken on the local level, and that the media exposure and responsiveness of the mayor has a positive effect on electoral support. The mayors seem to be held accountable should they make specific promises they do not manage to uphold. The findings generally appear robust and share support in the panel data fixed effects regression.

To test **H3** I conducted six new analyses, using the main remaining Norwegian parties. The results weaken **H3** as the general trend seems to translate between the different parties. For the

parties in general the mayoral position appears to strengthen their support. Now it should be noted that I have not been able to explore these results to the same degree as the results from the Progress Party, and I have not conducted any robustness tests for these parties. Still it seems plausible that the effect is robust, as the trend is so persistent across party lines. The treated and counterfactual units mimic each other closely in the pre-treatment period on general across the parties, which strengthen the results overall. Although the effect appears to be a little stronger for the Progress Party than most of the other parties, nothing seems to indicate that this incumbency advantage is especially unique for the Progress Party. It seems more likely that the party lines become more blurred on the municipal level, and personal abilities, responsiveness and visibility.

These results do not correspond with the general theories about the cost of ruling and incumbency disadvantage, it seems relevant to compare the results with earlier studies and discuss their possible implications.

6.2 Implications

In this thesis I have included studies that attempt to explore the cost of ruling on the sub-national level. In this section I will summarize these articles and compare their results to my own.

Karlsson and Gilljam (2016) find that there is indeed a cost of ruling on the municipal level, but a slight advantage can be seen for the mayoral party²³. In that regard, a case could be made that the effect of the mayoral position seems to be positive for electoral support both in Norway and Sweden. Karlsson and Gilljam (2016, 710) also find that being an anti-establishment party leads to a higher cost of ruling. These are results I do not find support for in my findings. The effects seem to be strongly positive for the Progress Party, and it even seems a bit stronger than for the other parties. It could be that the incumbency effect is strong enough to cancel out the electoral disadvantage of being an anti-establishment party, but that should indicate that the other parties performed better.

²³ That said, this variable is strongly correlated with another variable indicating the party holding the majority of seats in the municipal council, which has a slightly negative effect (Karlsson and Gilljam 2016, 709)

Martinussen (2004, 250) finds that the cost of ruling exists on the municipal level as well, he also finds that functions like being in a minority coalition has a positive effect on the electoral support, while having a one-party status²⁴ has a negative effect. These are factors I have not included in my analyses and could be a potential weakness. The effect I find is however quite robust, and it seems hard to believe that across all the parties included in the analyses, that i.e. minority coalition should account for all the incumbency advantage.

Studies with results that are more in line with the findings from my thesis are Bjørklund and Saglie (2005), Fiva and Smith (2018) and Kang, Park, and Song (2018). Bjørklund and Saglie (2005, 41) find the Progress Party increase their electoral support from one election to another, when having a mayoral position. Fiva and Smith (2018) find incumbency advantage for legislators on the national level in Norway. Kang, Park, and Song (2018) find an incumbency advantage with the South Korean mayors, and disadvantage for powerholders on the national level. My thesis expands on these findings by implementing an empirical approach that operates under the assumption of strict exogeneity.

To summarize, my findings correspond to a varying degree with the existing findings from the studies included. In general, there seems to be empirical support that suggest the effect of incumbency to assume the same direction I find in my thesis.

6.3 Concluding remarks

In the future, it could be interesting to explore the results from the remaining Norwegian parties. I was not able to explore these parties more in-depth in this thesis. For example, further research could explore whether the slight differences we see between the parties is due to different party politics, or if it can all be added up to the individual mayors. It would be of interest to plot the different treated municipalities and explore whether there are any municipalities that may shed some extra light on the effect. Furthermore, it could be relevant to explore some of the treated municipalities more in depth.

²⁴ Mayor and deputy mayor from the same party

A study somewhat related to the last suggestion, would be a more qualitative approach where mayors from the Progress Party (or other parties) are interviewed in an attempt to learn more about the present causal mechanisms. It would be fascinating to learn about what the mayors themselves think are the reasons behind their electoral success. Such a study would of course be very extensive, but it could possibly yield interesting results.

To conclude I will answer the research question, it seems that having a mayoral position does to some degree strengthen the electoral support for the Progress party compared to the municipalities where they do not have a position of power. This effect does however seem to be general for the Norwegian municipal level, and not exactly unique for the Progress Party. With their anti-establishment rhetoric and radical right-wing populist nature, it is quite interesting to see that the differences across party lines are slight. This could for example be due to the consensus based local politics, or it could indicate a stronger focus on individuals or specific local matters.

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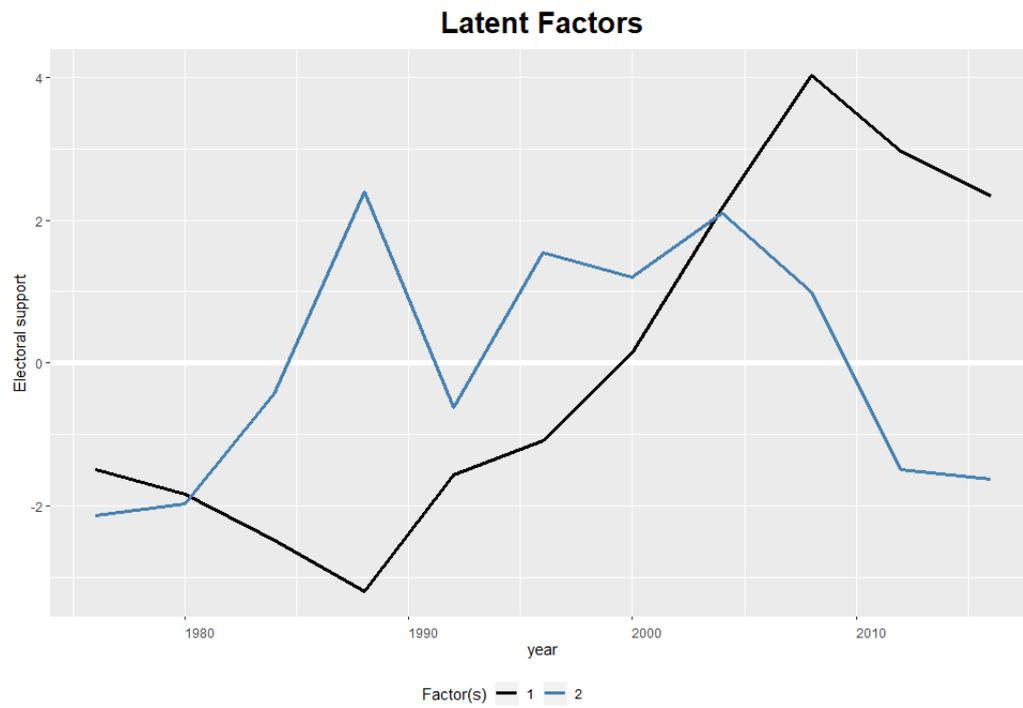
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Appendix

A.1 Latent factors



A.2 Factor loadings

