

# MA Thesis Structure

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## **Abstract**

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## **Introduction**

- Thesis overview
- Thesis relevance and motivation
  - EU's Freedom of Movement, a foundational aspect of the EU, and its impact on emigration in Europe, especially new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)
  - Effects of emigration on sending countries as a blind spot in political science research

## **Literature Review and Theory**

- Emigration affects voting behaviour and electoral outcomes. It changes the electoral composition and influences the people left behind.
- Emigration benefits populist and radical right parties in Sweden (Dancygier et al., 2022). I argue that this also applies to CEE EU member states. I also argue that if voters cast their ballots retrospectively, it is not only populist parties that may benefit. Rather, emigration could also lead to an increase in anti-incumbent voting.
- Research question following Dancygier et al. (2022): Which emigration-induced service cuts have a negative impact on the sending country's incumbent vote share?
- Service cuts to be examined:
  - School closures, based on Sageman (2022)
  - Hospital closures, based on ageing population (Lim 2023)
  - Third places closures, based on Bolet (2021)
- Causal chain of events based on research question: Emigration → Service Cuts → Grievances → Anti-Incumbent Vote
- Hypotheses
  - H1: Service cuts to schools lead to an increase in the region's anti-incumbent vote.
  - H2: Service cuts to hospitals lead to an increase in the region's anti-incumbent vote.
  - H3: Service cuts to "third places" lead to an increase in the region's anti-incumbent vote.

## **Data and Methods**

- Overview of available data, how it was collected and transformed
  - Inexplicable decrease in Romanian schools in early 2000s, potential use of number of classrooms as a proxy

- Preliminary Analysis
  - Does EU accession affect emigration?
  - Does emigration cause service cuts?
  - Does emigration cause grievances?
  - Does emigration affect incumbent vote share?
- Defining incumbent party: Under what circumstances are parties defined as incumbent in the context of this thesis?
- Operationalising DV and IV
  - Service Cuts: Ratio of target audience to institutions, e.g., number of school children per school, and its average change between two elections
  - Incumbent vote change between national parliamentary elections
- Selecting Poland and Romania as typical CEE EU member states with high emigration rates
- Models: Mediation analysis, interactions and fixed effects
  - Empirical specification based on operationalised variables
  - Control variables: Emigration rate (based on Dancygier et al., 2022, 17), electoral volatility, GDP, grievances

## Results

- Do emigration induced service cuts effect incumbent vote share in Poland and Romania?
- Hypotheses acceptance or rejection
- Discussion of Polish and Romanian service cut models and their respective differences
  - Stronger effect of emigration on incumbent vote share in Romania
  - Generally stronger effects of service cuts in Romania than Poland

## Conclusion

- Summary of thesis and findings
- Thesis limits: Effects seem country specific, no broad generalisations possible
- Interpreting results in the broader context of further European integration
- Future research
  - Uncovering country specific service cuts
  - Effect of incumbent party on emigration
  - Other effects of emigration on sending countries, e.g. impact on democratic institutions

## Appendix

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## Literature

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