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Daring to vote right: Why men are more likely than women to vote for the radical right

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ANGRY WHITE (WO)MEN? SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, DISCONTENT, AND POLICY PREFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

As stated in this dissertation's Introduction, many studies have searched for explanations for the phenomenon that men are more likely to support Radical Right parties than women. These diverse studies usually have in common that they draw their hypothesized explanations from the *socio-structural* and *attitudinal* models discussed previously. However, these studies have yielded mixed results, and generally focused on a relatively small number of cases (an exception being Immerzeel et al., 2015). In addition, not all aspects of these two models have been tested in prior studies. In this chapter, I therefore systematically investigate the extent to which men and women fit the profile of a Radical Right voter in terms of their views on politics and society, as well as their socio-economic positions. Crucially, I also test a demand side mechanism that features less prominently in these studies: conditionality – in other words, the extent to which established determinants are equally relevant in explaining Radical Right voting among men and women (Howell & Day, 2000). In short, this chapter replicates and expands earlier work by conducting a systematic test of the socio-structural and attitudinal Radical Right demand among men and women.

This chapter starts out by first discussing to what extent gender differences in terms of socio-economic situation as well as attitudes can be expected on the basis of earlier research. Subsequently, this framework is tested on a large sample of voters in 16 countries, which enables an assessment of the robustness of the findings. Because the central aim is to develop and test general hypotheses, it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide in-depth analyses of individual countries. However, I will investigate whether patterns differ between the post-communist Central and Eastern European

countries and the countries of Western Europe, given that the nature and context of Radical Right parties differs between these two parts of the continent.

As stated above, this chapter moves beyond most earlier research by arguing that two separate demand side mechanisms might conceivably explain the gender gap in support for the Radical Right, one of which has hitherto been largely overlooked. The first possibility is that men and women differ on key characteristics and attitudes that influence a person's propensity to vote for populist radical parties. This *composition* effect has hitherto been the primary hypothesized explanation of the gender gap. Especially, it is usually implicitly or explicitly assumed that the gap means that fewer women than men agree with Radical Right ideology. However, empirical evidence for this explanation is weak. Summarizing research on this topic, Mudde (2007: 113) concludes that most studies show "no significant gender gap in terms of radical right attitudes". Gender differences in economic and social positions do continue to be substantial in most European societies, but these factors have generally been found to explain only a part of Radical Right support (Van der Brug & Fennema, 2007). A puzzle thus remains.

The second possible explanation for the gender gap has been less studied: different factors might explain the vote choice among men and women (for a discussion, see Howell & Day, 2000; Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999). This, too, might lead to differences in the electoral appeal of Radical Right parties. This mechanism of *conditionality* could potentially provide additional insights in the gap. Although explored in case studies (Fontana et al., 2006; Gidengil et al., 2005), moderation has not yet been systematically investigated on a large set of cases – even though, in the Swiss case, compositional effects proved "to be less revealing in terms of the gender gap than conditional effects" (Fontana et al., 2006: 263).

This chapter demonstrates that, across the board, men and women do not differ substantially in their attitudes towards Radical Right issues. However, many of the usual explanations of Radical Right voting predict men's vote choices much better than women's. In other words, women are less likely to support the Radical Right *even* if they agree with these parties' ideology. This suggests that the issues raised by Radical Right parties are more often deemed salient by men, but also that the Radical Right deters women for reasons other than the content of their political program. At the same time, while the general pattern applies to all European parties, gender differences in social-structural position are (still) responsible for a substantial part of the gender gap – especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

THEORY

Below, I discuss explanations of support for the Radical Right drawn from the socio-structural and attitudinal models. To do justice to different traditions in the literature, I further divide the attitudinal model into *attitudes towards the political system* ("protest voting") and *attitudes towards substantial societal issues* ("policy voting"). For each of these,

I discuss the theoretical plausibility of composition and conditional effects, in view of the literature.

The socio-structural model

As discussed in the Introduction, socio-structural explanations assume that voters rely on their social position as a cue to determine their vote. Indeed, research has shown that Radical Right voters tend to share certain social characteristics (Rydgren, 2012), and persistent gender differences in these characteristics provide reason to expect composition effects. In one of the early accounts of the Radical Right gender gap, Betz (1994) draws attention to four of such social factors: religiosity, age, labor force participation, and occupational stratification. Radical Right support is generally lower among the religious and the elderly, and women are more likely to be both.⁵ Arzheimer and Carter (2009) show that churchgoers are less likely to vote for the Radical Right due to their strong ties to traditional conservative or Christian-Democratic parties. At the same time, Radical Right parties' electorates tend to be relatively young, while women are overrepresented among the older age groups (Arzheimer, 2009; Betz, 1994; Gidengil et al., 2005).

Many of the earlier Radical Right parties relied on the 'petty bourgeoisie' of the small-scale self-employed, but the social base of the Radical Right has broadened to include the working and lower middle classes, as well as the unemployed (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Norris, 2005). Additionally, Radical Right voters tend to share a lower or middle level of education and higher levels of job insecurity. These 'losers of modernity' or 'angry white men' – notice the gendered connotation – feel threatened by rapid changes in post-industrial societies, and their support for the Radical Right is argued to stem from resentment of immigrants and political elites (Rydgren, 2012). As will be further discussed in Chapter 2, the overrepresentation of voters from lower social strata might explain why combining nativist ideology with a centrist or even center-left economic policy has been dubbed the 'new winning formula' for Radical Right parties (De Lange, 2007). This 'proletarianization' (Betz, 1994) appears to be an ongoing trend.

In many European countries, women still differ from men with regard to important socio-structural characteristics, such as occupation, income and education (the latter among older generations). This is the starting point for many studies on gender differences in political behavior (Abendschön & Steinmetz, 2014; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Vaus & McAllister, 1989). Importantly, in the context of Radical Right voters, women are more frequently employed in the public sector and less likely to be blue-collar workers. This could make them less likely to vote for Radical Right parties. Rippeyoung (2007) found support for this contention, while Gidengil et al. (2005), Givens (2004), and Fontana et al. (2006) did not find convincing evidence for social-economic

5 This formulation implies that women rather than men are the exception that needs to be explained. An alternative approach would be to describe why men are more likely to vote for the populist Radical Right.

conditions as the key to the gender gap. Coffé (2012: 138) summarizes research on this topic by concluding that '[m]ost of these studies found that [...] gender differences in class positions and patterns of employment fail to account for the gender gap in radical right voting'. Nevertheless, because socio-structural gender differences continue to be sizeable, it remains a plausible expectation that socio-structural characteristics contribute to a compositional gender gap.

Conditional effects might also be present here. More specifically, it can be expected that socio-economic status and education are stronger determinants for men's vote choices than for women's. The reason is that, as a group, men have generally been part of the paid workforce for a longer period, which make it likely that class identities have rooted more deeply (Coffé, 2012). Furthermore, in the context of Radical Right parties it is relevant that a majority of (economic) migrants to Europe are male, and they are disproportionally represented in low-skilled jobs which have traditionally been male-dominated. To a greater extent than women, lower educated and working class men compete with immigrants. This makes it plausible that men are more sensitive than women to their economic position and consequently attach more weight to these factors when deciding which party to vote for. Moreover, evidence suggests that 'pocketbook voting' is in general more prevalent among men than among women (Chaney, Alvarez, & Nagler, 1998; Welch & Hibbing, 2009). Indeed, Coffé (2013) finds that class is a better predictor of Radical Right voting among men than among women in eight Western European countries, although the differences are not very large. Fontana et al. (2006) came to a similar conclusion. In this chapter, I will further investigate this in a larger number of cases.

The discontent model

The discontent (or protest vote) model is a first subtype of the attitudinal model. According to the discontent model, voters support Radical Right parties mainly to express discontent with 'the' political elite (Belanger & Aarts, 2006; Mayer & Perrineau, 1992). Radical Right party voters have indeed shown higher levels of distrust towards and dissatisfaction with the political system (Kitschelt, 1997; Lubbers et al., 2002; Söderlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009). If European men are more dissatisfied with the political elite than women, this might explain why men feel more attracted to Radical Right parties. However, there seems to be no theoretical or empirical reasons to expect political discontent to be higher among men than among women. A composition effect due to discontent is thus unlikely to be the cause of the gap.

With regard to conditional effects, there is reason to expect that evaluations of politics have a more pronounced impact on the male than on the female vote. The reason is internal political efficacy. The tendency for men to have higher levels of internal political efficacy was already noted in *The American Voter* (A. Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Donald, 1960) and has usually been attributed to men's higher levels of education and participation in the workforce. However, in spite of higher female participation on the labor market and tertiary education, gender differences in political efficacy and interest have not disappeared (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Mudde (2007) argues that lower levels

of political efficacy could well explain the disproportionately low representation of women among the Radical Right electorate. Along the same line, it could be argued it takes political self-confidence to vote for radical parties for anti-system reasons. As a consequence, less internally efficacious voters – more often women – are less likely to make such a protest vote. Indeed, Gidengil et. al. (2005) found that political discontent was a more important factor for men than for women in explaining the vote for the *Canadian Alliance*. We therefore expect discontent to be a less important determinant of the Radical Right vote for women than for men.⁶

The policy vote model

The policy vote model is the second subtype of the attitudinal model. It assumes that citizens vote for a party because they agree with the party on those policy issues they consider to be important. Since most voters lack detailed information about positions of parties, they rely on information shortcuts, such as party labels or ideological profiles in Left-Right terms. Electoral research has provided substantial support for the policy vote model, because policy preferences of voters – especially regarding immigration – were shown to be the strongest predictors of support for radical right parties (Lubbers et al., 2002; Mughan & Paxton, 2006; Van der Brug & Fennema, 2009).

Although Radical Right parties are a heterogeneous group, their programs are commonly believed to have a shared ideology, often defined by nativism, authoritarianism, and populism (Mudde, 2007). In ideological terms, these parties are seen by most voters as representing the far-right end of the left-right spectrum. So, the policy vote model predicts that voters are most likely to support a Radical Right party if they see themselves as being right, if they hold nativist attitudes – a combination of in-group preferences (or nationalism) and out-group fear (or xenophobia) – and if they hold authoritarian views – ‘the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely’ (Mudde, 2007: 23). The Radical Right’s populist element is likely to be mirrored in voters’ political discontent, as discussed in the previous section.

Several studies have suggested that men are more likely than women to agree with the positions of the Radical Right on authoritarianism (Beutel & Marini, 2013; Sidanius et al., 2000) and nativism (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Araya, 2000; Kuran & McCaffery, 2008). However, recent cross-country studies cast doubt on the existence of a universal and constant gender gap in the core ideology of the Radical Right. In an analysis of 22 countries, Coenders et al. (2004) even find that women have a slightly higher resistance towards immigrants than men. Mudde (2007: 113) summarizes the research by noting that “the difference between men and women in terms of nativist attitudes is

6 Ideally, I would directly test whether a compositional effect of internal political efficacy exists. Unfortunately, the data used in this chapter (EES) does not contain measures for this. As an alternative, I tested the role of efficacy in the alternative dataset, CSES (see Robustness section). This test showed that, while gender differences were indeed present, *no composition effect due to internal political efficacy exists*.

far from striking, if at all present". Likewise, the empirical evidence to expect women to be more authoritarian than men is also limited (Lippa & Arad, 1999). Existing research thus yields contradictory predictions as to whether gender differences in either nativism or authoritarianism might explain the gender gap in Radical Right support.

I also investigate voters' general ideological positions in Left-Right terms. Van der Brug and Fennema (2009) found Left-Right distances between voters and Radical Right parties to be the strongest determinant of support for such parties. Inglehart and Norris (2000) describe how, on average, across a large number of countries, women have moved towards the left of men over the last decades – and Left-wing voters are less likely to support the Radical Right than right-wing voters. Voters' self-placement on an overall ideological left-right scale are therefore also included, as well as the distance between voters and Radical Right parties on the left-right scale. This captures agreement with parties in a general ideological sense, in addition to our indicators of the specific themes of nativism and authoritarianism.

Again, the explanation might be conditional rather than compositional. Evidence suggests that women assign more importance to issues that are secondary to the Radical Right, such as health and education, whereas men tend to attach more weight to issues such as crime (R. Campbell & Winters, 2012; Chaney et al., 1998; Gidengil, 1995; Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999). Even if many people agree with the positions of Radical Right parties on issues such as crime and immigration, the policy vote model would predict most support for these parties among people who give much weight to these issues. So, if men base their vote more strongly on their views on these issues than women, they will be more likely to support the Radical Right. Furthermore, if a large number of female voters disapproves of the Radical Right for reasons other than their ideology (as will be explored in Part II of this dissertation), this should too lead to the finding that their attitudes are weaker predictors of their vote for the Radical Right.⁷

East vs West

I argue that the three theoretical explanations discussed so far can potentially explain the gender gap in all countries where such a party exists. In the next chapter, I will focus on differences between parties. However, in this chapter I will already briefly investigate whether the models posited above differ in their explanatory power between countries. Moreover, special attention will be given to the distinction between the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Western European countries. As party systems are generally less consolidated in the East, ideological

7 In most countries, positions on the Left-Right dimension are associated with socio-economic issues as well as with socio-cultural issues such as crime and immigration. I am not familiar with research showing whether the effect of Left-Right position on party support is gendered. However, if the general Left-Right concept is more strongly associated with the issues that men find important than women, Left-Right distances to parties would matter more for men than for women. In that case, we would also expect the effect of Left-Right to be moderated by gender.

dimensions have rooted to a weaker extent and do not yet provide the strong cue they constitute in older democracies (Dahlberg et al., 2015; Van der Brug et al., 2008). Bustikova and Kitschelt (2009) argue that the legacy of communism has impacted the playing field for the Radical Right; in many of these countries, the mainstream right has already adopted exclusionary appeals. As a result, the radical right in Central and Eastern European countries have been argued to be often ideologically more extreme and organizationally more of a social movement phenomenon (Minkenberg, 2002). For these reasons, it is likely that our explanatory models impact Radical Right voting differently in the two groups of countries, and as a result different patterns might influence the gender gap. Separate analyses of East and West are provided at the end of the empirical section.

METHOD

In this chapter, composition and conditional effects are tested with data from the *European Election Studies (EES) 2009* (van Egmond, Sapir, van der Brug, Franklin, & Hobolt, 2009). This data allows for an examination of the support for Radical Right parties in 16 European countries, at the same time point, based on equivalent indicators. Although the data were collected at the time of the 2009 European parliamentary elections, many questions – including the party support questions used in this chapter – explicitly relate to national politics and national elections. A discussion of the quality and representativeness of the data can be found in Dahlberg and Persson (2014).⁸ For an overview of the selected parties, see Table 1.1 in the Results section. For each country, roughly 1,000 respondents were questioned on several topics. A list of descriptive statistics of all variables, as well as the distribution of key variables, can be found in Appendix A.

The dependent variable is the propensity to vote (PTV) for a Radical Right party. For each party surveyed, respondents were asked to indicate how likely they would be – on a scale from 0 to 10 – to ever vote for that party.⁹ These items are strongly correlated with party sympathy scores (thermometer scores), but the propensity to vote questions are more closely linked to the actual vote. As most respondents answered this question, this measure allows to make reliable inferences on the basis of a large number of voters with

8 Dahlberg and Persson (2014) show that the sample is not representative with regard to a number of factors, including age and education. They attribute this to the fact that the interviews were mainly conducted by telephone and the absence of a fixed sample. Because they show that weighting does not improve the estimations, I refrain from using weights.

9 The word 'ever' was included in the survey question to ensure that voters who were already certain about which party they would vote for in the next election could give a high score to their second or third choice of party.

different levels of attraction towards the Radical Right.¹⁰ To check the robustness of our findings, the main analyses were replicated using a dummy variable that indicated whether the respondent would vote for the Radical Right party ‘if elections were held today’. These findings are presented in the Robustness section.

To establish the size of the gender gap, a key variable in our model is a dummy for gender, which takes values 0 for men and 1 for women. The size of the coefficient of this variable reflects the difference between men and women in the propensity to support a Radical Right party. A negative coefficient of the gender dummy indicates that women are less likely to support a Radical Right party. The following predictors of support for Radical Right parties were used to operationalize the socio-structural model: age; a dummy for church attendance (more than once a year); a dummy for the lower educated (measured as lower secondary or lower)¹¹; a dummy for the working and lower middle classes¹²; a dummy for the unemployed; a dummy for both unskilled and semi-skilled workers; a dummy for the self-employed; and finally a dummy for public sector workers.

To operationalize the discontent model, the analysis includes the two most appropriate items available in this data set: a four-point scale of the extent of respondent satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in their country, and a dummy indicating whether the respondent approves of the government. While these measures cannot capture every dimension of political dissatisfaction, it can be argued that for many voters, dissatisfaction with the political elite coincides with dissatisfaction with the democratic system that produces and sustains such an elite. Furthermore, it has been found that, empirically, this measure is more strongly related to a particular government’s performance than to the assessment of democracy as an abstract ideal (Norris, 2005). Both scales were synchronized, added, and subsequently rescaled to a 0 to 1 range to facilitate comparability.¹³ Unfortunately, no measure of efficacy was available.

Finally, for the policy voting model, the model includes measures for nativist and authoritarianism policy preferences, as well as positions on an overall Left-Right scale. The EES questionnaire asks respondents to indicate whether they agree or disagree with 12 statements regarding policy issues. The nativism measure consists of respondents’ views on the following issues: “immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [the respondent’s country]” and “immigration to [the respondents’ country] should be decreased significantly”. For authoritarianism, the following items were combined: “people who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these

10 There is no reason to believe that this measure itself is gendered, i.e. that men report different propensities than women even under similar voting preferences. An aggregation of men’s and women’s PTV scores for all parties, so not only the Radical Right ones, shows that men and women report almost equal propensities in terms of means and standard deviations.

11 An alternative operationalization, education in years, yielded comparable effects.

12 As an alternative operationalization I used a five-point scale of socio-economic status as an interval measure. Again, this yielded comparable but less strong results.

13 In a principal component analysis, the variance explained by the underlying component is 0.69, with factor loadings of 0.71.

days” and “schools must teach children to obey authority”. Respondents indicated their position on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’; we added and rescaled the items, resulting in a 0 to 1 measure for both nativism and authoritarianism.¹⁴ Though often secondary for the Radical Right (see Chapter 2), economic issues continue to be important in the political arena. The policy vote model therefore also includes the item ‘income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people’. This item, too, was rescaled to a 0 to 1 scale.

Ideological distance was measured using respondents self-reported position on an 11-point Left-Right scale, ranging from ‘Left’ (0) to ‘Right’ (10). Respondents were not only asked to place themselves on this scale, but also to indicate where parties are to be located on it. In the policy vote model, I include a measure of the (absolute) distance between the respondent’s own position on the Left-Right scale and his or her perception of the position of the Radical Right party on the same scale. Left-right position and left-right distance to the Radical Right were rescaled to a 0 (Left) to 1 (Right) and a 0 (minimum distance) to 1 (maximum distance) range, respectively.

As most variables contain missing values, multiple imputation was used to obtain an equal number of cases in each model.¹⁵ Analyses of the models on the basis of actual observations yields substantially equal results as those based on multiple imputation.

The mediating models were tested as follows. The starting point is a model in which the propensity to vote (PTV) for a Radical Right party is explained by the dummy for gender only. The size of this coefficient reflects the average difference between men and women’s propensity to support each of these parties. Subsequently, the indicators of each of the explanatory models were added in turn. If the effect of gender is indeed indirect and channeled through one or more of these differences in characteristics and attitudes, the (direct) effect of the female dummy should decrease, or even become insignificant, once these mediating variables have been added to the model.

The moderation models were tested by including interaction effects (with centered variables). If men and women support Radical Right parties on the basis of different considerations, the effect of these variables should differ between men and women. In that case, one would expect to find significant interaction effects between the female dummy on the one hand and each of the predictors of support for Radical Right parties on the other. The model includes all 16 countries. It contains fixed effects for these countries. The analyses were repeated on the subsamples of Western-European and post-communist Central and Eastern European countries (see the final section of this chapter).¹⁶

14 PCA of the nativism and authoritarianism results in an explained variance of 0.70 and 0.69, respectively; factor loadings are 0.71 for both. Analysis of the separate items yields similar results as the analysis using the scale; because conditional effects can more easily be assessed using a single scale, we report the latter.

15 We performed 5 imputations, filling in missing values on the basis of multivariate regression using all other independent variables, as well as the dependent variable (see Schafer, 1997).

16 The EU-member states that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, except Malta and Cyprus.

RESULTS

Below, I first describe the distribution of relevant characteristics and values among men and women. I then turn to a test of the moderation and mediation mechanisms.

Parties, gaps, and attitudes

Table 1.1 shows voting preferences of men and women as well as the size of the gender gap for each party included in our analysis. The gaps are calculated as the difference in support for the Radical Right between men and women in terms of (a) the propensity to vote (PTV) score and (b) whether they would actually vote for the party, expressed as a percentage of the male propensity or share. For instance, women's average propensity to vote score for the Danish People's Party is 16% lower than men's, and women report 34% less often that would actually vote for that party. It is important to note that, even though the percentages in both columns obviously differ in absolute terms, they are strongly correlated ($r = 0.82$). This strengthens confidence in using the PTV questions.

Table 1.1 Overview of parties and their gender gap (2009)

Country	Party	Actual vote				Propensity to vote			
		Electorate	Men	Women	Gap	Electorate	Men	Women	Gap
Austria	Freedom Party	10.5%	10.7%	10.3%	-3%	2.30	2.40	2.22	-8%
Belgium	Flemish Interest	5.4%	6.4%	4.3%	-32%	1.84	2.08	1.58	-24%
Bulgaria	Attack	9.9%	13.9%	7.3%	-48%	1.61	2.11	1.32	-37%
Denmark	Danish People's Party	11.2%	13.5%	8.9%	-34%	2.43	2.64	2.22	-16%
Finland	True Finns	10.1%	14.2%	6.5%	-55%	3.47	3.87	3.12	-19%
France	National Front	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	-9%	0.93	1.06	0.83	-22%
Greece	Popular Orthodox Rally	6.2%	8.6%	4.3%	-50%	2.07	2.28	1.91	-16%
Hungary	Jobbik	12.5%	14.7%	10.3%	-30%	3.19	3.66	2.76	-25%
Italy	Northern League	12.6%	11.0%	14.2%	29%	3.05	3.09	3.01	-2%
Lithuania	Order and Justice	12.6%	12.6%	12.6%	0%	3.36	3.22	3.47	8%
Romania	Greater Romania Party	11.1%	14.8%	7.8%	-47%	2.32	2.62	2.07	-21%
Slovakia	Slovak National Party	6.5%	8.5%	5.3%	-38%	2.76	2.90	2.67	-8%
Slovenia	Slovenian National Party	4.9%	7.3%	3.0%	-58%	2.74	2.85	2.66	-7%
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	1.7%	2.7%	0.5%	-80%	0.70	0.86	0.53	-39%
Netherlands	Party for Freedom	9.1%	11.6%	6.7%	-42%	1.82	2.02	1.64	-19%
UK	British National Party	2.1%	1.2%	3.1%	160%	1.14	0.94	1.30	38%

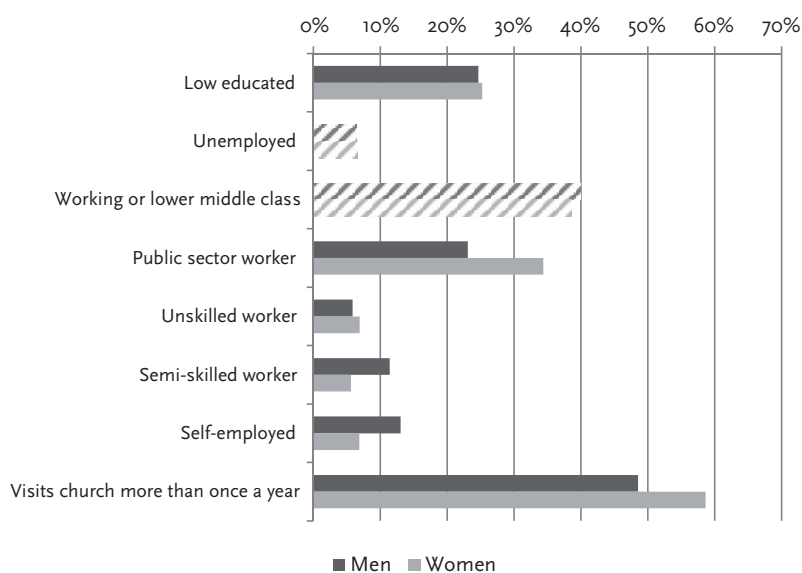
Note: Gaps express the difference between men's and women's share (actual vote) or average PTV, expressed as a percentage of the share (actual vote) or average PTV among men. Source: European Election Study 2009

Surprisingly, and contrary to empirical findings in other studies (Goodwin, 2013), the British National Party has a reversed gender gap both in the propensity to vote and the actual vote questions. I was unable to establish the origin of this deviation, which might

be a methodological artefact. At any rate, robustness analysis shows that in- or excluding this case does not alter the results. BNP aside, Table 1.1 confirms that the Radical Right is more popular among men.

Do men and women differ in the extent to which they fit the profile of the Radical Right voter? To assess this with regard to the socio-structural model, Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of men and women in categories of economic and social conditions that have been found to be related to Radical Right voting. Apart from levels of unemployment and self-reported membership of the working and lower middle classes, men and women differ significantly on all indicators, though not always substantively. The most important differences can be found in the share of public sector workers and regular church attendance, which are notably higher among women. Important differences can also be noted in the nature of work: men more often are semi-skilled workers or self-employed – conditions that relate positively to Radical Right voting. The ingredients for compositional effects due to socio-structural characteristics are thus present.

Figure 1.1 Average scores of men and women on socio-structural indicators



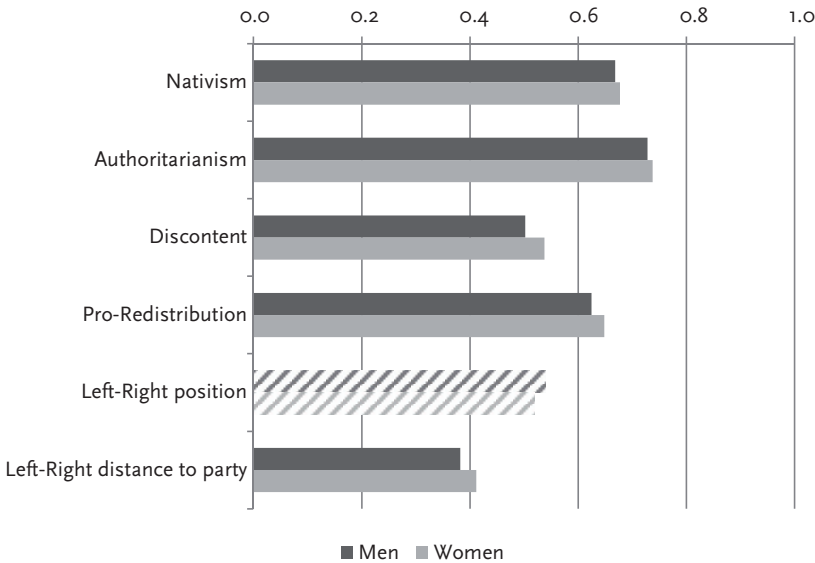
Note: striped bars indicate non-significant differences between men and women at the 5% level.

Turning to the attitudinal model, Figure 1.2 reports the mean scores of men and women on the synchronized ideological scales (all ranging from 0 to 1). The dissimilarities in nativism and authoritarianism are by no means substantive, and suggest that European women are on average at least as nativist and authoritarian as men. Across the board, men and women seem equally attracted to the core of Radical Right ideology. With regard to discontent, women even turn out to be slightly more discontented than men. Interestingly, women’s average Left-Right position does not differ significantly from

that of male voters. This does not refute Inglehart and Norris' (2000) 'modern gender gap', as their notion referred to post-industrial, established democracies societies. Indeed, in the post-communist countries under study, women report to be on average somewhat more right-wing than men, whereas the reverse is true in established democracies.

Furthermore, the distribution of Left-Right self-placement scores in Appendix A shows that, across the board, slightly more women than men assign themselves a far right position (10) on the left-right scale (while on 8 and 9 both sexes score the same). Again, the potential for Radical Right voting is at least as strong among women as among men. Replication on our subsamples shows that this is the case in both the Western and Eastern part of Europe. These findings makes it unlikely that the gender gap in Radical Right voting is due to attitudinal composition effects: across the board, men and women do not differ with regard to Radical Right ideology. If anything, women would be expected to show a slightly higher rather than lower support for the Radical Right.

Figure 1.2 Average scores of men and women on attitudinal indicators



Note: striped bars indicate non-significant differences between men and women at the 5% level.

Composition effects

I now turn to a more formal test of composition effects. Table 1.2 shows the results of several regression models. The dependent variable is the propensity to vote for a Radical Right party. In the first model, gender is the only explanatory variable. Its coefficients is -0.32, which shows that, across the 16 countries and parties, the average support for Radical Right parties among men is 0.32 points higher on the 11-point party preference scale than it is among women. Indeed, the average propensity is 2.32 among

and 2.00 among women. Although this difference might seem small, it is responsible for pronounced differences in *actual* voting (Radical Right parties draw on average 9% among male voters against 6% among female voters). This 3:2 ratio corresponds to the magnitude reported in earlier studies.

Other independent variables are now added in separate blocks. Model II shows that controlling for age and religion provides no explanation of the gap: if anything, the gap increases rather than decreases when controlling for differences between men and women on these factors. This is due to the fact that – on average – women are more religious than men, while at the same time higher levels of religiousness are associated with a higher propensity to vote for Radical Right parties. This positive connection is especially strong in the Eastern part of the continent, whereas in Western European countries church-going is mostly weakly negatively (if at all) related to the Radical Right vote. The link between church-attendance and Radical Right voting is thus different in East and West, but provides no substantial explanation of the gender gap in both. In Model III, adding the indicators for work, class and education does reduce the size of the gender gap by 11%. Additional analyses show that this is due mainly to the share of public sector workers among women, rather than differences in unemployment, class or education. Although socio-structural characteristics thus partly function as mediators of the female vote, this is only a partial explanation of the gap – at least, across all countries.

The discontent model (in Model IV) does not diminish the gap either: male-female differences in discontent cannot explain the gap. This is not surprising, given the earlier descriptive finding that discontent is generally not higher among men. In a similar vein, Model V shows that controlling for nativism, authoritarianism and redistribution attitudes *increases* rather than explains the gap. Given their views on these topics, women would be expected to express *more* rather than less support for the Radical Right. The gap clearly does not originate in gender differences in the level of agreement with the core of the Radical Right's program.

Model VI shows that the single best predictor of Radical Right voting is the Left-Right distance to the Radical Right party. This effect is remarkably stronger than that of the actual left-right position. Taken individually, left-right distance reduces the gap substantially, from -0.32 to -0.20, whereas left-right positions hardly brings about a reduction (to -0.30). While this variable could be argued to be partly endogenous, it is relevant to note here that additional analyses (not shown here) show that women report a systematically larger distance between themselves and Radical Right parties *even when controlling for* differences in their position on the Left-Right scale or on concrete policy positions.

Table 1.2 Regression models with propensity to vote for the Radical Right as the dependent variable

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI	Model VII
	Gender only	Age and Religion	Socio-structural position	Discontent	Policy preference	Left-Right position and distance	Full model
Gender (female)	-0.322*** (0.050)	-0.333*** (0.050)	-0.285*** (0.051)	-0.329*** (0.050)	-0.364*** (0.049)	-0.198*** (0.047)	-0.224*** (0.047)
Age		-0.012*** (0.002)					-0.016*** (0.001)
Church attendance		0.212*** (0.054)					-0.088 (0.050)
Lower education			0.400*** (0.064)				0.281*** (0.063)
Lower class			0.224*** (0.056)				0.228*** (0.052)
Unemployed			0.342*** (0.104)				0.179 (0.097)
Unskilled worker			-0.049 (0.107)				-0.165 (0.100)
Semi-skilled worker			0.165 (0.103)				-0.027 (0.093)
Self-employed			0.066 (0.094)				-0.025 (0.085)
Public sector worker			-0.295*** (0.059)				-0.048 (0.056)
Discontent				0.303*** (0.084)			0.367*** (0.082)
Nativism					2.931*** (0.118)		2.312*** (0.116)
Authoritarianism					0.813*** (0.131)		0.279* (0.129)
Pro-redistribution					0.063 (0.087)		0.425*** (0.086)
Left-Right position						0.854*** (0.096)	0.760*** (0.100)
Left-Right distance						-3.870*** (0.098)	-3.518*** (0.098)
Intercept	2.336*** (0.037)	2.347*** (0.037)	2.325*** (0.037)	2.340*** (0.037)	2.361*** (0.036)	2.262*** (0.035)	2.277*** (0.034)
N	14965	14965	14965	14965	14965	14965	14965
Change in gap		+3%	-11%	+2%	+15%	-40%	-31%

Note: Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Fixed effects for parties.

Source: European Election Studies 2009

Rather than being based on ideological disagreement, the gender gap in Radical Right voting thus partially seems to originate in gender differences in the *perceived distance* between their own ideological position and those of Radical Right parties. This suggests that, regardless of their ideology, Radical Right parties seem especially remote to female voters; this is further underlined by Appendix A, which shows that more women than men assign an extreme low propensity to vote for the party (0). All in all, it seems that Radical Right parties share characteristics other than their core ideology that, to relatively many women, discredit them. This possibility will be further elaborated in Part II.

The last column of Table 1.2 shows the results of a full model including all variables. Obviously, some of the indicators are causally prior to others: socio-economic indicators explain attitudes, which in turn explain voting (for a discussion in the context of gender, see Bergh 2007). It is therefore not surprising that many variables of the socio-structural model lose significance once controlling for attitudes. The most important explanations of Radical Right support – nativism and Left-Right distance – remain strong predictors while controlling for background characteristics, which shows that the correlations observed in earlier models are not spurious. In terms of the coefficient of gender, the gender gap is less reduced than in the model with only Left-Right position and distance, because the inclusion of attitudinal variables boost rather than explain the gap. Again, we conclude that – controlling for all sorts of background indicators – the gender gap seems to be the result of differences between men and women in the perceived distance to the Radical Right.

Conditional effects

To assess whether men and women employ different considerations when deciding on their party preferences, Table 1.3 reports the size of the effects for men and for women per model. To save space, the table only reports those variables that exert a significant effect among men, women, or both. A grey font indicates non-significance of the effect at the 5% level. The last column reports the *p*-value of the difference between the effects for men and women, obtained by estimating the interaction between gender and the other coefficients in separate models.

When comparing the coefficients of the social-structural indicators in both separate regressions, some differences can be noticed between men and women. As expected, the coefficients for lower class status and low education are substantially lower in the model among female respondents. However, none of the interactions between gender and socio-structural indicators are significant, which means that these factors predict support for Radical Right parties equally well for men and women. When deciding what party to support, socio-structural background characteristics play a similar role for both genders (see Coffé 2013).

Interestingly, all of the policy vote indicators, as well as the measure of discontent, have a stronger impact among men than among women. These differences are in most cases significant at the 5% level (nativism and Left-Right distance), and in others (authoritarianism and Left-Right position) at the 10% level. Although the difference in

the effect of discontent between men and women is insignificant, its coefficient does not significantly differ from zero for women, while it does so for men. We therefore conclude that the usual determinants of Radical Right voting predict men's preferences better than women's. As predicted, discontent – although equally present among both sexes – has a stronger effect among men than among women on support for Radical Right parties. Nativism and a general right-wing ideology are also less likely to generate support for the Radical Right among women than among men. Even though the nominal differences are small for most indicators, taken together they could well explain the gender gap. In the next section we investigate the extent to which they do.

Table 1.3 Separate regressions for men and women

	Effect size		p-value of difference
	Among men	Among women	
Age	-0.01	-0.01	0.89
Church attendance	0.21	0.21	0.96
Lower educated	0.44	0.36	0.47
Lower classes	0.27	0.20	0.44
Unemployed	0.29	0.39	0.63
Public Sector	-0.35	-0.26	0.48
Discontent	0.43	0.16	0.09
Nativism	3.13	2.74	0.05
Authoritarianism	1.00	0.65	0.11
Left-Right position	1.01	0.73	0.10
Left-Right distance	-4.20	-3.58	0.00

Note: A grey font indicates non-significance of the effect at the two-sided 5% level.

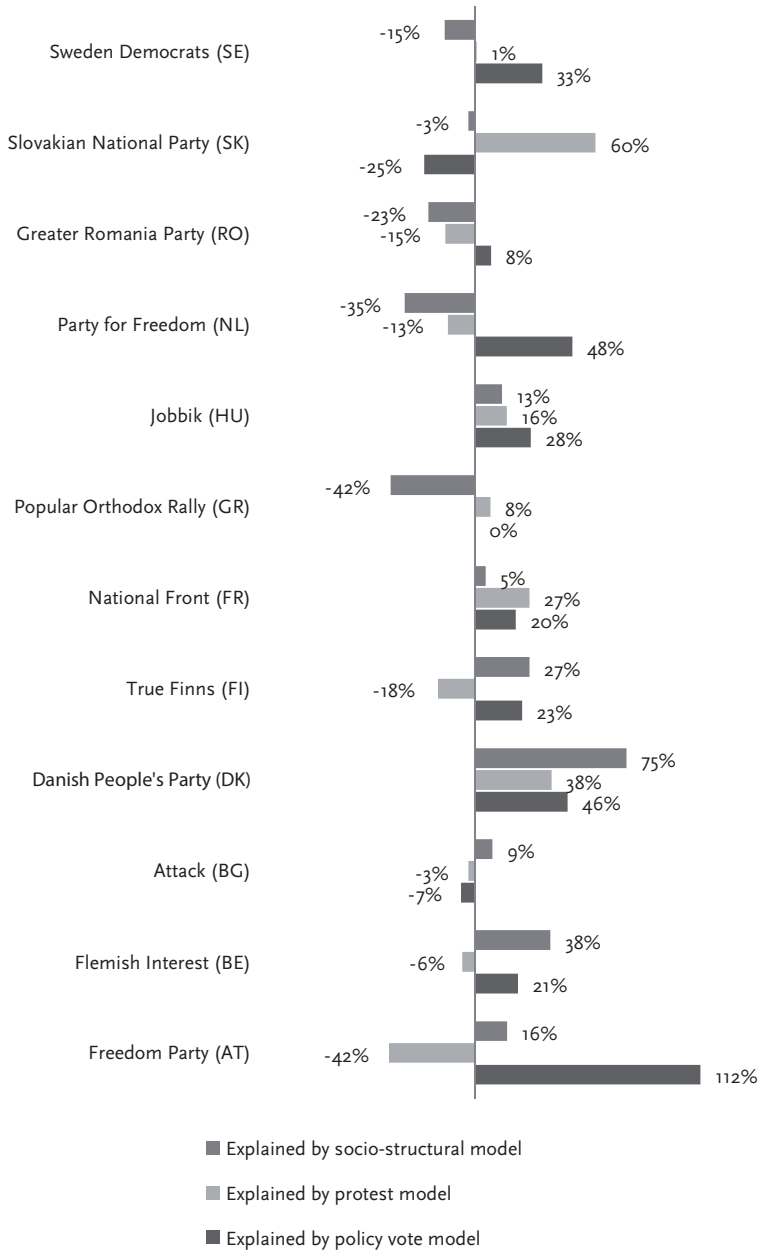
Differences between countries

Until now, both compositional and conditional effects have proven to provide some clue about the gender gap, though neither explains it fully. However, given the diversity of the different European Radical Right parties, it seems plausible that individual parties show different patterns. In turn, such variation might predict which aspects of the supply side are most relevant (see Chapters 2 and 5). This section therefore first presents the compositional and conditional models for *individual countries*. After that, I report the models for two *groups of countries*: those in Western and East-Central Europe.

Figure 1.3 shows the percentage of the gap that is explained by each model for those parties for which the gap is substantial enough to allow it be reliably dissected further.¹⁷

17 Technically, the percentage reduction of the nominal gap (i.e. the effect of the gender dummy in an empty model) after controlling for variables belonging to these models. This can even be higher than 100% if after controlling the direction of the effect of the female dummy switches from negative to positive.

Figure 1.3 Percentage of the gender gap that can be explained by each of the models



It is important to note that the numbers are not completely additive, as different models might explain the same variance. Nevertheless, the graph makes clear that important differences exist between countries, both in the extent to which individual models provide an explanation, as well as how well they fare overall. Whereas differences in

socio-structural position could explain only 13% of the gap in general, it can explain 75% for the Danish People's Party, 38% for Flemish Interest and 27% for the True Finns. These parties thus appear to draw voters from certain social classes that are dominated by males. In case of the Danish People's Party and True Finns, this might reflect the socio-economically relatively left-wing stance of these parties according to some of the secondary literature (Betz & Meret, 2012). This link between adherence to the 'new winning formula' (de Lange, 2007) and 'proletarianization' (Betz, 1994) will be explored further in Chapter 2.

Ideological differences, especially Left-Right distance, are particularly contributing to a gender gap in case of the Austrian Freedom Party and Dutch Party for Freedom, as well as again the Danish People's Party. Among the other parties, the policy model often explains at least 10% and often more than 20%, making it the best explaining model across countries. Gender differences in discontent are the single most important explanation for the gap in France, as well as a secondary explanation in Denmark and Hungary; in many other countries it plays no role. In sum, the socio-structural and discontent models performed poorly in an overall model but do have relevance in particular cases. The policy vote, and most importantly Left-Right distance, is important for all parties – with the exception of Attack and Popular Orthodox Rally in the Balkans. At any rate, the clearly varying patterns show that an investigation of the supply side is necessary (Chapters 2 and 5).

With regard to conditional effects (analysis not presented here), no structural difference appears between countries. While in most countries there are small variations in the effect sizes among men and in women, they mostly fail to be either significant or substantial. This suggests that, while differences in the distribution of socio-structural and issue positions can at times contribute to a gap, the finding that *the usual determinants of voting predict men's votes better than women's* is a very consistent finding.

A final step is to take a closer look at specifically the differences between Western European countries on the one hand and the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) on the other, given the generally different nature of the political system in general and the Radical Right in particular in these two parts of the continent (Minkenbergh, 2002). Table 1.4 presents the reduction in the gender gap by each model for the two groups of countries separately. It shows, first of all, that the gender gap is substantially larger in post-Communist countries. Furthermore, the part of the gender gap that can be explained by socio-structural differences is also much larger in those countries compared to the others (17% versus 5%, respectively), while controlling for Left-Right position and distance brings about a smaller reduction in the Eastern part of the continent than in the West. This probably reflects that the trend among women to move to the left is more pronounced in established democracies than in newer ones, but also fits the finding that ideological position is a generally weaker explanation of voting in former communist countries (Van der Brug et al., 2008). Gender differences in employment and sector are relatively important drivers of the gender gap in East-Central European countries. On the other hand, differences between men and women in nativism, authoritarianism or redistribution attitudes cannot explain the gender gap in either part of the continent.

Table 1.4 Size of the gender gap in 'East' and 'West'

	Gender only		Socio-structural		Discontent		Attitudes		LR position and distance	
	b	%	b	%	b	%	b	%	b	%
Western Europe	-0.28		-0.27	-5%	-0.27	-3%	-0.29	+5%	-0.13	-54%
East-Central Europe	-0.40		-0.33	-17%	-0.38	-4%	-0.42	+6%	-0.28	-29%

Note: "b" reports the coefficient of the gender dummy; "%" the change of in the size of the gap after controlling

ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Jack-knife analysis

To assess how sensitive the results are for the inclusion or exclusion of individual parties, jack-knife analyses were conducted with parties as sampling clusters. In terms of size, direction and significance, this yielded highly comparable results, which increases confidence in the robustness of the conclusions presented in this chapter.

Alternative data: CSES

To the extent that this was possible, the analyses were replicated using the Comparative Studies of Electoral Systems (CSES) dataset in 20 countries.¹⁸ The dependent variable in these analyses is the party sympathy score, which is also strongly related to party choice, albeit less strong than the propensity to vote questions included in the EES. Unfortunately, this data set lacks indicators for nativism and authoritarianism. However, for most other compositional and conditional models, the analysis can be replicated in a slightly simplified form (see Appendix B). The results are highly comparable to those of the EES analysis. With regard to compositional effects, CSES analyses confirm that Left-Right distance (rather than Left-Right position) is the most important driver of the gender gap. Discontent plays no mediating role, and neither do most economic variables, except (again) public sector employment. The existence of conditional effects is also confirmed. Left-Right position is significantly less important for women than for men. Again, discontent is not a significant predictor of Radical Right support for women, while it is so for men. Although the sets of cases do not completely overlap, the replication thus yields comparable results.

¹⁸ The data in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) modules 1, 2 and 3 were collected in 1996-2001, 2001-2004 and 2006-2011 respectively during post-election surveys. Data can be downloaded from www.cses.org.

Alternative dependent variable: actual vote intention

To further check the robustness, the models were replicated using *actual vote intention*, a dichotomous dependent variable indicating whether the respondent would vote for a Radical Right party 'if there were elections tomorrow'. Appendix C shows the results of this multilevel logistic analysis. Because the number of respondents in the sample that would actually vote for such a party is small (on average only about 50 per country), one should be cautious to make strong inferences on the basis of this indicator. At best, it allows for a tentative assessment of whether the conclusions point in a similar direction. I first assess compositional effects. Again, socio-economic differences explain part of the gap, and to an even stronger extent than it did when the continuous dependent variable was used. Controlling for nativism and authoritarianism increases the gap, while including Left-Right distance decreases it, but more modestly. The general picture is thus in line with our earlier findings.

With regard to moderation, I again find a stronger effect of Left-Right position among men. In fact, most of the policy model effects are again stronger among men than among women, but none of them are significantly so. This is probably to a large degree due to technical reasons, as logistic regression with a highly skewed indicator can lead to high standard errors. Alternatively, it might indicate some difference in the translation from the willingness to vote Radical Right to actually doing so in the end. I therefore conclude that this analysis largely confirms the compositional results, and neither confirms nor falsifies the conditionality findings.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I investigated differences in support for the Radical Right among men and women, starting from socio-structural and attitudinal models of voting. With regard to the attitudinal model, I further distinguished a 'protest vote' from a 'policy vote'. For various indicators of all these models, I investigated to what extent the gender gap can be attributed to composition effects (due to gender differences on key characteristics and attitudes) and/or to conditional effects (due to gender differences in the relative importance of these characteristics and attitudes). The hypotheses were tested on European Election Studies 2009 data. While several of these hypotheses have been studied in previous studies on smaller sets of cases (Gidengil et al., 2005; Givens, 2004; Rippeyoung, 2007), this chapter is the first to provide a systematic test of all these models of voting, testing for composition effects as well as conditionality, in such wide a range of cases. Two main findings stand out.

First, mixed evidence was found for socio-structural explanations of the gender gap. Across a large number of parties, gender differences in (mainly) occupational position explain a part of the gap. Most importantly, the large share of public sector workers among women can explain why some of them are less supportive of the Radical Right. Male-female differences in economic vulnerability due to unemployment or lower education provide little clue to the gap. Interestingly, the extent to which

socio-structural conditions contribute to a gap is especially substantive in the former Communist countries of East-Central Europe. This is likely to reflect the fact that the electorate of Radical Right parties in East-Central Europe is relatively strongly concentrated among working class voters (Van der Brug et al., 2012). This will be further investigated in Chapter 2.

Second, theories that link the gender gap to female resistance towards the core Radical Right ideology have to be refuted. Most men are not more nativist or authoritarian than women – across the board they are even slightly less so. Rather, this chapter shows that such attitudes predict women's support for the Radical Right less strongly than men's. The same goes for discontent. Women are not more satisfied than men with the working of democracy or the performance of the government – in fact, they are slightly less so on average. However, among women, discontent does not translate to Radical Right support as strongly as it does among men – which is in line with Gidengil et al. (2005)'s study on the support for the *Canadian Alliance*. This shows that studying conditional effects can be at least as important as compositional effects in order to explain male and female support for the Radical Right (see Howell & Day, 2000).

At this point, there are two possible interpretations of the existence of strong conditional effects of gender. First, even if men do usually not agree more strongly with the Radical Right on their programmatic core, they might attach higher *salience* to these topics. Even if men and women are to the same extent 'tough' on issues such as immigration and law and order, such attitudes are more likely to be translated into a willingness to support the Radical Right among those voters for whom these topics are most important; and these are most often men. However, an alternative explanation of the established moderation is that ideology is not the only factor determining Radical Right voting. Other characteristics of the Radical Right might deter women more strongly than men, resulting in a weaker correlation between women's issue positions and their vote for the Radical Right. This will be explored in Part II of this dissertation.

At the same time, strong differences were found between parties in terms of the size of their gender gap, as well as in the extent to which the various compositional models could explain it. Apparently, different mechanisms are at work for different parties. This means it is crucial to incorporate what parties have on offer ideologically. The next chapter therefore continues by incorporating the *supply side*.