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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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# DARING TO VOTE RIGHT: PARTY REPUTATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters demonstrated that, across the board, men are less likely to be deterred by negative social cues (Chapter 3), but also less committed to avoid parties with a prejudiced image (Chapter 4). It follows from these findings that, on the supply side, Radical Right parties' reputations matter for their gender gap. The logical next step is to investigate to what extent such reputations can explain interparty differences in the size of the gap. This final chapter turns to that task. By measuring *social stigma* as an aggregate of public opinion, I test whether stigmatized parties draw more male voters. This follows from the finding of Chapter 3 that men are less likely to be deterred by such cues. Following on the motivational findings of Chapter 4, I hypothesize that parties that are considered *extreme* will, too, attract more male voters.

In contrast to previous chapters, this chapter first “zooms out” to investigate a broader set of parties than the Radical Right alone. The reason is for this is that while reputations vary *within* the group of Radical Right parties, they can primarily be expected to distinguish Radical Right parties as a group from many – though certainly not all – other parties. This chapter therefore first takes a step back and investigates to what extent reputational factors explain variation in the gender balance for *all parties*, thus ensuring meaningful variation. Taking this broader selection of cases is in itself relevant in light of the literature, because little research has hitherto structurally investigated the role of stigma and extremity in determining the gender balance of parties. This chapter thus aims to put these novel explanations to a more general test. After establishing whether these factors matter, this chapter zooms in to see whether it explains further variation *within* the Radical Right.

Of course, this is not the first study to investigate why – in general – some parties are more popular among men, while others attract more women. As discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation, it is well-noted that before the 1970s, the Republican Party in the US attracted more female than male voters, while nowadays women are more likely to vote for the Democratic Party. Most other industrialized countries have,

too, experienced the emergence of this ‘modern gender gap’ in which women are more often left-leaning than men (Giger, 2009; Inglehart & Norris, 2000). Gender gaps are also likely to reflect gender differences in the distribution of policy preferences and saliency. Studies, including chapter 1, show that such differences indeed exist, although regarding many topics they are marginal. Still, despite these insights, a great deal of variation in the gender balance remains unexplained, both within and between party families. The reputational factors established to be relevant in earlier chapters can potentially provide such explanations.

This chapter builds on the literature on the demand side mechanisms discussed in Chapter 3 and 4. A first starting point is that men are on average less sensitive to social cues than women (see Chapter 3; Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Dalton & Ortegren, 2011; Carlsson *et al.*, 2010; Goldsmith *et al.*, 2005). This leads to the hypothesis that men are less deterred from voting for *socially stigmatized* parties. Following the same mechanism, it would also follow that men would be more likely to vote for *smaller* parties, which are after all socially less endorsed. The second finding inspiring this chapter is that men are on average less motivated to control prejudice, more supportive of social hierarches, and less concerned with social harmony than women (see Chapter 4; Block, 1984; Eagly 1987; Johnson & Marini 1998; Gilligan 1982; Costa *et al.* 2001). As I will elaborate below, this results in the hypothesis that men are more likely to vote for *extreme* parties of either the Left or Right.

These hypotheses are tested on CSES-data on the electorates of 340 party-year combinations in 28 countries in elections between 1996 and 2011, relying on cross-level interactions between gender (at the individual level) and party characteristics (at the party level). I show that parties with a social stigma – i.e., parties that are disliked by large majorities of the public – indeed deter women more strongly than men. This confirms the relevance of the findings of Chapter 3 for actual voting. Furthermore, in line with the social harmony expectation, extreme parties too attract more male voters. At the same time, there is no robust support for the hypothesis that women are generally more likely to vote for larger parties. In a final step, I estimate how well these models explain variation in the gender gap for Radical Right parties specifically.

## THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Few studies have been applied socio-psychological models to explain gender gaps in voting for a wide range of parties in various contexts. I aim to test which *reputational* party characteristics contribute to gender gaps in voting for all sorts of parties, and in particular Radical Right ones. I first discuss *social cues*: heuristics voters receive from their social context regarding the acceptability of a party, regardless of its conduct or ideological substance. I then turn to parties’ *ideological extremity*. Because these party characteristics are obviously correlated, this section finishes by discussing their interrelatedness.

### Social cues

As discussed in Chapter 3, men and women have repeatedly been shown to differ in the extent to which they are sensitive of and responsive to signals from others (Bond & Smith, 1996; Croson & Gneezy, 2009; Dalton & Ortegren, 2011). To recall some of the evidence cited in that chapter, Goldsmith et al. (Goldsmith et al., 2005: 593) find that “women [have] higher scores on conformity than men”, and men have been found to be less likely to conform to majority opinions (Bond & Smith, 1996) as well as less responsive to social cues in the environment compared to other stimuli (Carlsson et al., 2010; Williams & Best, 1982). I therefore expect that a party which is considered socially highly unacceptable – in other words, a *stigmatized* party – will attract relatively more male than female voters. Reversely, a party that receives wide electoral support – and is thus broadly ‘endorsed’ – can be especially attractive for voters sensitive to social cues. In short, we expect the gender balance among the supporters of parties to be affected by their *stigma* and their size. Below, I will discuss these in turn.

Goffman (2009 [1963]: 12) defines *stigma* as “an attribute that is deeply discrediting”. He stresses that the characteristic responsible for the stigma is neither creditable nor discreditable in itself; rather, it is the *reaction of others* that ‘spoils’ the stigmatized person’s identity. As such, stigma is socially defined. While Goffman mainly refers to individuals, stigma can also be considered an attribute of entities such as parties. From the point of view of a voter, a party experiences stigma if it is regarded as unacceptable by a large proportion of the people that constitute the social context in which this voter lives.

As also discussed in Chapter 3, the Radical Right parties are a well-documented example of the existence of a social taboo. The findings of that chapter confirmed that, at least in the Swedish case, a strong social taboo exists with regard to the Radical Right, both at citizens’ primary groups and at the societal level. However, such stigma can be present for other parties as well; for instance, for Communist parties, or for centrist parties that face scandals or corruption charges. The presence of stigma can be expected to function as a strong social heuristic. Stigmatizing by fellow citizens is dissuasive for many voters, male as well as female. Yet, the evidence presented in Chapter 3 and the research cited in that chapter predicts stigma to be less deterring to men. Stigmatized parties are thus expected to have relatively few female voters.

H1    *Men are more likely than women to vote for stigmatized parties, ceteris paribus.*

In this chapter, stigma is studied as a societal characteristic – that is, as an aggregate of public opinion. Of course, stigma on a more local level – among primary groups – is also relevant. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to research the role of cues from primary group in a reliable cross-national way. At the same time, Chapter 3 showed that perceptions of local and societal-level stigma correlate strongly. It also suggested that the deterring effects of primary groups cues are even stronger than perceptions of acceptability on the general level, which means any results I do find are conservative about the total role played by social cues at all levels.

If the proposed mechanisms holds, one would also expect a reverse mechanism: parties that are widely endorsed could be expected to attract relatively more female than male voters, *ceteris paribus*. While I expect stigma to be the stronger social cue, parties' electoral success is also hypothesized to provide a heuristic for voters. Of course, this outcome is not yet known at the time of the election, but voters can be expected to be able to estimate the support for a party through election polls and earlier electoral performance. If a party is supported by a large share of the electorate, this gives a signal of acceptability. Apparently, such a party has managed to bring together a broad range of citizens, which is appealing to voters who are sensitive to 'social consensus' information (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). Reversely, a vote for a party that is hardly supported by other voters is unattractive to people who are sensitive to social cues. It is important to note that this reasoning is related to but not the same as the reasoning underlying the effect of stigma: theoretically and empirically, most small parties are *not* necessarily stigmatized. Again, male voters can be expected to be generally less likely to be influenced by this cue than female voters.

H2 Men are more likely than women to vote for smaller parties, *ceteris paribus*.

Possibly, the effect of size is non-linear: when parties are 'large enough', additional growth might become less important for the image of social acceptability.

### Extremity

For the third hypothesis, I shift the emphasis from the social phenomenon of stigma – which might exist as a social reality regardless of political color – to the *substantial* reputation of parties. While empirically related to stigma, the mechanism here is theoretically different, as discussed in Chapter 4. That chapter found that women were more often "triggered" by the extreme nature of Radical Right parties to refrain from voting for them – except when parties have a 'reputational shield' and are not associated with racism or violence. This leads to the general expectation that the *extremity* of a party presents another heuristic in the process of decision making, which will affect the gender balance in parties' support base. Mudde (2007: 116) made exactly this point when he noted that "men and women hold fairly similar views on all aspects of the populist radical right except extremism and violence, which are rejected far more by women than by men". Mayer and Sineau (2002), too, argue that the extremist image of France's *National Front* deters female voters. As discussed in Chapter 4, women are generally socialized into stronger feelings of connection to others, as well as more communal behavior (Gilligan, 1982). Studies have found (in 25 of the 26 cultures studied) gender differences in agreeableness, which reflects a general concern for social harmony (Costa Jr, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001). Men have been found to be more accepting of hierarchical social dominance and its enforcement, even by means of violence (Sidanius et al., 2000).

For present purposes, a political party can be considered extreme to the extent that it aims to fundamentally revise the societal and political system – by overturning

class relations (extreme left) or pitching against minorities (extreme right); see Mudde (2007). To some extent, parties proposing such a disruption are inherently discordant in nature. Not only are their programs ideologically highly distinct from those of most other parties and voters, they also tend to contend that more or less incompatible cleavages exist between ethnic groups or economic classes. A related argument is that extreme parties have (historically) been connected to verbal or physical aggression. A certain amount of aggressive or revolutionary discourse is inherent to parties that wish to profoundly change the status quo. So, even though most parties at the extreme right or extreme left discard the use of physical violence, their discourse is often quite aggressive. If this is true, there should not only be a gap among extreme parties of the right, but also of the left. After all, extreme left parties have also been associated with revolutionary language and political violence (March & Mudde, 2005; Monaghan, 1999). Such reputations can be expected to be deterring to voters who are concerned about social harmony. Since this is across the board of more concern for women than for men, extreme parties are expected to attract fewer female voters.

H3 *Men are more likely than women to vote for extreme parties, ceteris paribus.*

#### Relations between the variables

In this chapter, the main focus lies with the main effects of these three party characteristics, and particularly on the question whether these exert a different effect on the likelihood of men and women to vote for a party. However, given that the three characteristics are likely to be related in various ways, I will also investigate patterns of mediation, spuriousness and conditionality. With regard to mediation, it is likely that extreme parties are more often stigmatized, and for that reason (even) more likely to draw relatively more male voters. However, it is also possible that any effect of stigma is spurious due to the fact that extreme parties would be more likely to be stigmatized. Furthermore, extreme parties are often rather small, so any effect of party size could be due to these party's extremity. In short, it is necessary to investigate whether direct effects of stigma, size and extremity are also found in a multivariate model. Finally, interactions between the variables might also be present. While I refrain from formulating specific hypotheses regarding such interactions, they will be investigated after testing the direct and indirect effects.

## DATA, DESIGN, AND OPERATIONALIZATION

The hypotheses are tested using the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* modules 1, 2 and 3, which were collected in 1996-2001, 2001-2004 and 2006-2011 respectively during

post-election surveys in dozens of countries (CSES, 2003; CSES, 2007; CSES, 2013).<sup>33</sup> This data was collected as a common module in a large number of post-election studies in countries around the world. This allows to test the hypothesis on the broadest number of cases possible. Because gender identities are to a large extent the product of socialization, their role will differ between cultural contexts. The analyses are therefore limited to the sphere of Western countries, which is the source of the research on gender differences cited above. This selection also ensures that the Left-Right scale, which forms the basis of one of the predictors and also functions as a control variable, is meaningful. Furthermore, only countries that are considered 'free' according to the *Freedom House* categorization are included. Finally, to ensure a focus on parties rather than candidates, the analyses are restricted to parliamentary rather than presidential elections. On the basis of this selection, the gender gap of parties can be investigated in 28 countries.<sup>34</sup> In total, the data covers 65 elections and represents the views of 86,811 respondents. Descriptive statistics of the core variables can be found in Appendix N.

The main unit of analysis is the 'voter-party dyad' – that is, voters' evaluation of each individual party – as the unit of analysis. The hypotheses are tested by investigating cross-level interaction effects between gender and party characteristics. This is the most thorough test of the hypotheses, because it allows to control for individual-level characteristics that may be correlated with gender. The robustness of the findings is assessed by also investigating aggregated data at the party-level. This way, the macro-level outcome of these individual-level processes can be assessed: which types of parties are dominated by male and which by female voters? This party-level analysis is presented in Appendix P and briefly discussed later in this chapter.

The dataset was transposed to a long format to create voter-party dyads ( $n = 392,906$ ). Because the set of parties differs per country and election, a conditional logit regression is not feasible. Instead, logistic regressions are estimated with the vote choice (0 means 'did not vote for the party', 1 means 'voted for the party') as the dependent variable. The three hypotheses are tested by estimating interaction effects between a gender dummy (0 is female, 1 is male) and the party characteristics. The observations are nested in respondents and party-election dyads with random intercepts. The control variables in the individual level analysis are income (measured in quintiles), high education (defined as higher than secondary education) and ideological distance between the respondent and the party (calculated as the absolute distance between the position of the respondent and that of the respective party on a 0 to 10 Left-Right scale). These factors have been established as important predictors of vote choices. Unfortunately, no

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33 All data, as well as full information on the collection procedures, are available at [www.cses.org](http://www.cses.org),

34 The final selection of countries for which all (control) variables were available in CSES, and which conform to all criteria, is the following: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

indicator of religiosity was available in several countries, so this factor is not included as a control variable in the main models.

While Left-Right distance can be expected to be negatively related to a vote for all parties, the effect of income and education obviously varies per party. So, for each combination of parties and years (340), two interaction effects would need to be included (one for each control variable). Since the inclusion of 680 interaction variables yields estimation problems, the y-hat procedure is used to create a 'generic' control variable (for more information, see Study 2 in Chapter 3).

In roughly 20 percent of the party-voter dyads the respondent did not locate the party on a Left-Right scale. In these cases, the distance towards the party is calculated on the basis of the interpolated median placement of the party by the rest of the respondents. In the case of missing values on the other control variables, the mean score of these variables within that country (and year) is used. As a robustness check, the main models were replicated using listwise deletion. This resulted in highly similar conclusion in terms of significance, effect size and coefficient size.

#### Operationalization of party characteristics

To find out whether reputations matters, measures are needed of parties' *social stigma* and *extremity*. The former, as an aggregate of public opinion, can most directly be measured using voters' views about parties. The latter is established on the basis of voters' perceptions of parties' ideological positions.<sup>35</sup> Below, the measures are discussed in turn.

Parties' *social stigma* is measured by the proportion of voters that 'strongly dislikes' the party (a score of 0 on an 11-point like-dislike scale, which ranges from 0 to 10). While assigning a low score (such as 2 or 3) indicates low likeability of a party, it can be argued that the extreme low point points to an aversion that goes further than mere non-support. If a substantial share of the respondents assigns such a score to a party, this party can be expected to be stigmatized. Indeed, an assessment of the scores suggests a high face validity of this measure. In many cases of parties that have been described in the literature as being stigmatized, more than half of the respondents assigns the absolutely lowest score – for instance, the *National Front* in France and the *Communist Refoundation Party* in Italy. This already suggests a strong relationship between social stigma and extremity. However, some Radical Right parties that are seen as relatively extreme are not stigmatized, especially those that were founded originally on a different platform than anti-immigration (Ivarsflaten 2008). This group includes the *True Finns* (10% extreme dislikes) and the *Progress Party* in Norway (13%). Furthermore, non-extreme parties can score high on social stigma as well, such as Italy's scandal-ridden

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35 Ideally, this perceptual measure of extremity should be validated by expert surveys, party histories or a content analysis of media, but gathering such data for the wide number of cases this is beyond the scope of this chapter.



Christian Democrats (49%). While it is obvious that stigmatized parties generally have fewer voters, this does not in itself affect the gender balance. Still, if a disproportionate part of those who ‘extremely dislike’ a party is female, the reasoning could become circular. To ascertain that this is not the case, the models will also be tested by measuring social stigma on the basis of male respondents only, which is exogenous to women’s vote choice.

Parties’ size is straightforwardly measured by the fraction of the respondents that voted for a party. Of course, this information is not yet available at the time of actual voting. However, it could be argued that voters are aware (through earlier elections and polls) which parties are likely to be well-supported and which parties are not.<sup>36</sup>

The measure of parties’ *extremity* relies on voters’ placement of parties on a Left-Right scale, of which only the extremes are labeled ‘left’ (at 0) and ‘right’ (at 10). This ‘wisdom of the crowds’ (aggregated placement by voters) has been shown to provide valid measurements of party positions (Markus, 1982; Van der Brug & Van der Eijk, 1999). Furthermore, the argument relies on the extreme *image* of parties, which can best be captured by asking voters themselves. While the specific meaning of the terms ‘Left’ and ‘Right’ varies by context and time, it accurately captures how centrist or extreme parties are according to respondents. A party is considered to be more extreme to the extent that it is located further away from the middle of the scale (5). This extremity is based on the interpolated median of all respondents’ answers, rather than the mean placement. This reduces the sensitivity of the measurement to respondents with outlying perceptions of the parties.<sup>37</sup> Because the extremity measure is calculated as the absolute difference between 5 and the interpolated median, it captures both left- and right-wing extremism.

## RESULTS: ZOOMING OUT

In this section I investigate the gender balance of all types of parties. The section starts by assessing whether the party characteristics discussed above affect men’s and women’s vote choices differently by modelling interactions between party characteristics and gender. That is followed by investigating whether the conclusions hold in a multivariate analysis controlling for the other party characteristics. Subsequently, the interaction between party characteristics is investigated. After that there follows a replication at the party level. In the subsequent section, I will zoom out to investigate the role of reputations in shaping the gender balance for different party families, and in particular the Radical Right one.

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36 An alternative operationalization would be to use parties’ share of the votes at the previous election. However, this measure is not available for the new parties in the data.

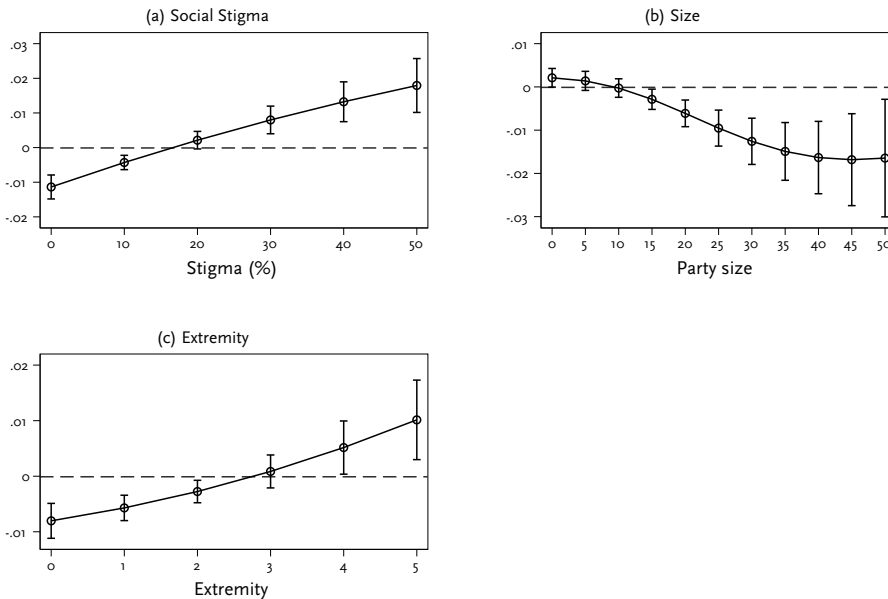
37 Usually, the interpolated median and the mean values are approximately equal. However, in some instances the interpolated median is a better indicator of a party’s position than the mean value (Dahlberg, 2009).

At this point it is important to point out that, even if the hypotheses hold, very strong relationships are not likely to appear. Many country- and election-specific factors contribute to the gender balance of parties' electorates in individual elections, which cannot be captured by an analysis across 65 elections. Still, precisely *because* the factors described above are difficult to isolate in individual cases, it is highly relevant to search for trends underlying a large number of parties and elections.

Interactions between party characteristics and gender

The first step is to estimate interactions between the individual party-level characteristics and gender, controlling for Left-Right distance as well as background characteristics (by means of the  $\hat{y}$  procedure). In the case of size, where the hypothesized effects might be non-linear, a squared term for the party characteristic was added. Because large tables with higher-level interactions are difficult to interpret, the results are presented visually in Figure 5.1a to Figure 5.1c. In each graph, the y-axis represents the marginal effect of the male dummy. Positive values thus indicate that men are overrepresented, negative values that women are. If the hypotheses hold, one should observe that women are overrepresented at one side of the spectrum (for instance, among non-extreme parties) and men at the other (i.e. extreme parties). The full regression tables are presented in Appendix O.

**Figure 5.1 Marginal effect of gender for different values of the three party characteristics (all parties)**



Source: CSES

The graphs provide ample evidence for all three hypotheses. All three interactions between the party characteristic and the dummy for gender are significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Figure 5.1a shows that stigma affects men and women to a different extent. Parties that score high on the stigma measure are male-dominated, whereas non-stigmatized parties draw relatively many female voters. Male voters thus seem less discouraged by stigma than female voters, as expected by H1. This interaction is significant and substantive: additional calculations show that for highly stigmatized parties the predicted voting probability among men is more than 25% higher than among women.

It could be argued that this finding is a possible artifact of endogeneity. This would be the case if, compared to men, women assign particularly low like-dislike scores to parties they do not vote for. To rule out this possibility, we estimate an interaction using stigma calculated among male respondents only. This results in a marginally smaller ( $b = 0.62$  instead of 0.74) but still sizeable and significant interaction term, strengthening confidence in the conclusion that the general level of stigma affects men and women differently. Although this finding is based on all parties, it strongly suggests that the Radical Right's gender gap will at least partly be due to this party family's relatively high level of stigma. This will be investigated in the next section.

The second predictor of the gender gap, the size of a party, also has a significant interaction with gender (Figure 5.1b). Men are more likely to vote for small parties; larger parties are generally more popular among women. While male overrepresentation seems to apply to only a small range of the scale, it is important to note that more than a third of the parties obtained fewer than 10% of the votes. H2 is thus also supported.

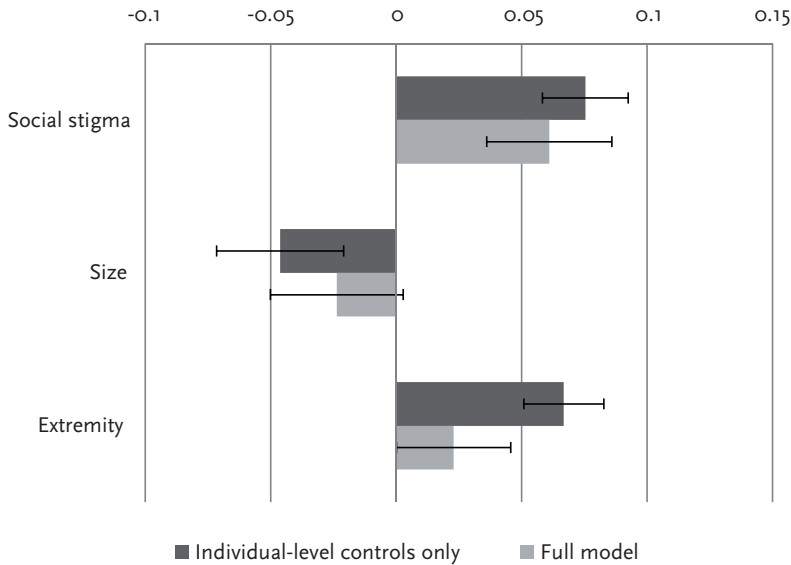
Figure 5.1c suggests that extremity, like stigma, is less deterring to male than to female voters. Men are more likely to vote for parties that score high on the extremity measure; centrist parties are dominated by female voters. The turning-point is situated around an extremity score of 2, which reflects a position on the Left-Right scale either between 0 and 3 (left) or between 7 and 10 (right). So, even when controlling for Left-Right distances between voters and parties, men are more likely than women to support non-centrist parties. An additional analysis shows that the effect of extremity exists both on the Left and the Right side of the spectrum. On the basis of these bivariate relationships, H3 is thus also supported. Again, this is likely to be relevant in explaining the gender gap in voting for the ideologically relatively extreme Radical Right.

#### Full model

Sofar, the analysis suggest that men are overrepresented in the electorates of stigmatized, extreme and small parties. Of course, these party characteristics are themselves related to each other: extreme parties are generally small and they are at the same time more likely to be stigmatized than center parties, etcetera. I therefore turn to a full model including all party level characteristics and their interactions with gender. The full table is again sizeable and difficult to interpret, and therefore presented in Appendix O, while Figure 5.2 summarizes the results. For each party characteristic, the graph shows the 95% confidence intervals of the size of its interaction with gender, both with and without full controls for the other party characteristics. The party characteristics were

standardized; this makes a comparison of the size of the interactions meaningful.<sup>38</sup> A positive interaction indicates that the effect of a characteristic is *more positive* among men compared to women; a negative interaction indicates that the effect is *more negative* among men compared to women.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 5.2** Effect size of gender for various models



Note: In the case of size, the interaction with the squared term is insignificant and left out of the graph.

Source: CSES

Figure 5.2 shows that, after controlling for the other party characteristics, stigma and extremity continue to interact with gender. The interaction with extremity is reduced substantially (and significantly) when controlling for the other characteristics. Additional analysis shows that this reduction is fully attributable to the inclusion of stigma. This means that the effect of extremity is strongly mediated by stigma: extreme parties are more often stigmatized, which is in turn less attractive to relatively many female voters. Extreme parties thus discourage female voters more strongly than men due to their extreme stance, but also due to the social undesirability of a vote for

38 The coefficients were estimated using the  $y$ -standardization procedure (Winship & Mare, 1984), to make comparison between models possible; see Chapter 4.

39 In the analyses presented here, no weights were applied. Controversy exists whether weighting is feasible in a multilevel logistic context, and weights are not universally available in the CSES data. However, I checked whether the results were replicated when applying sampling weights. These results showed the same patterns of direction and significance, and were also highly similar in terms of effect sizes.

an extreme party. In terms of effect size, social stigma remains the strongest factor interacting with gender. The effect of stigma is thus independent and not attributable to the extremity of many stigmatized parties. Finally, Figure 5.2 shows that in a full model the effect of parties' size is somewhat reduced and now only significant at the 10% level.

In addition, all three possible interactions between the predictors were estimated. None of these interactions turn out to be statistically significant at the 5% or 10% level. They are presented in Appendix Q.

#### Replication on the party-level

This chapter started with the question why some parties have more male than female voters, and vice versa. In this section I therefore analyze whether the conclusions are similar at the party-level – that is, when taking the parties as the unit of analysis, rather than the individual voter. The dependent variable in the party-level analysis is the share of male voters as a percentage of all voters for each party. Appendix P shows the full regression tables of these analyses, as well as more details on the methodology. The results are very similar to those at the individual level. Stigma and extremity have a significant effect on the gender balance: both are associated with an underrepresentation of women. Again, the effect of stigma on the gender balance is particularly strong. Party size is also related to a female-dominated electorate, but not significantly so.

Looking at the party level also allows an assessment of the relative explanatory power of the indicators. The extremity of a party explains roughly 2,5%, whereas stigma explains almost 10% of the variance in the gender balance of parties. While these percentages are not very large, the variance explained by – especially – stigma is impressive if considered in the light of the sizeable variation that can be expected due to country- and party-specific circumstances.

#### Robustness checks

To rule out the possibility that the results are affected by individual countries with high leverage, the main individual-level model was estimated 30 times, each time leaving out a different country. All interactions between gender and party characteristics remained significant in all regressions, except for – again – party size (which was not significant in regressions without either Austria, Denmark, or Finland). Again, it can be concluded that gender differences in the effects of stigma and extremity are robust.

## RESULTS: ZOOMING IN ON THE RADICAL RIGHT

Now that the effect of stigma – and to a lesser extent extremity – has been established as substantial and robust, it is time to start “zooming in”. Below, I first discuss how well these factors explain the gender balance of various party families, including the Radical Right. I then turn to the latter party family specifically to investigate whether stigma and extremity explain variation in the gender gap *within* the Radical Right.

### Party families

To provide an indication of how well these factors explain the gender gap of particular party families, I rely on a party family classification, by CSES experts, of a sizeable subsample of the parties in the CSES data. Unfortunately, Radical Right parties are not included as a separate category in the CSES classification. I therefore manually added a Radical Right category and labelled parties as such based on the literature (mainly Mudde, 2007). Because this category overlapped to a very large extent with the (smaller) category of “Nationalist” parties in the CSES scheme, the two classifications were merged under the label “Radical Right”.

Table 5.1 lists the party families in the first column. The second column describes the average size of the gender gap of parties that are member of these party families. The number shows the relative overrepresentation of men, expressed as the difference in percentage points from a 50% balance. A gap of ‘5%’ thus means 55% men, 45% women. By means of multivariate regressions on the party-level data, the remaining size of the gender gaps for the same parties is then calculated after controlling for individual-level or party-level characteristics. The average difference between these two estimates describes how well the gender gap for each specific party family is explained, expressed as a percentage reduction. This way, it is possible to assess whether stigma, extremity and size explain less, more, or just as much as classic ideological-demographic explanations of gender gaps.

**Table 5.1** Analysis per party family

Party family	Nominal Gap	% of gap explained by				
		Indiv. Level	Party level			
			Stigma	Extremity	Size	All Party-level
Ecology	-6%	39%	6%	3%	-6%	3%
Communist	5%	28%	3%	42%	5%	59%
Socialist	-4%	47%	1%	27%	1%	22%
Social-Democratic	-1%					
Liberal	2%					
Christian-Democratic	-4%	44%	8%	9%	-1%	12%
Conservative	2%					
Radical Right	5%	21%	28%	16%	3%	33%
Agrarian	6%	17%	-3%	27%	5%	22%

Note: The nominal gap shows the overrepresentation of men, expressed as difference in percentage points from a 50% balance. For instance, a 5% gap for Communist parties indicates that on average 55% of the voters are male and 45% is female. Gray numbers indicate that the gap is not (or no longer) significant at the 10% level. No explanation is provided for nominal gaps of 2% or smaller due to unreliability of estimates.

Table 5.1 shows, first of all, that the largest gender gaps can be found among Ecological (Green), Communist, Radical Right, and Agrarian parties. The latter three are male-dominated, while women are overrepresented among the supporters of Green parties. This is in line with the literature on the Greens (Dolezal, 2010; Mudde, 2007). Socialist, Social Democratic and Christian Democratic parties also attract relatively many female

voters. The table shows that the Radical Right is not the only party family experiencing a substantial gender gap, though it is the largest one for a party family of its size (compared to Agrarian or Communist parties), while others are not as universally and consistently present (given the gradual emergence of the Green gender gap).

The next column shows the extent to which each gap can be explained by individual-level characteristics: Left-Right distance, self-perceived class, level of education, and age.<sup>40</sup> It shows that such variables can account for a sizeable part of most gaps, but far from the whole of it. Much remains unexplained of the largest gaps, above all of the gap in voting for Communists and Christian Democrats.<sup>41</sup>

The remaining columns show how well the three party-level factors discussed in this chapter explain the gaps. They were calculated based using the same method of calculating gaps and reductions, but this time on the basis of the party-level data. It turns out that social stigma explains about a third of the gap in voting for both Communist and Radical Right parties. Extremity explains part of these gaps, too. In combination with size, the party-level variables explain 59% and 33% of the overrepresentation of men in the electorate of Communist and Radical Right parties, respectively. That is remarkably sizeable, and at any rate larger than the explanation provided by a range of individual-level variables. Stigma and the other factors explain the gap in voting for other party families to a smaller extent, but their explanation is not restricted to Communist and Radical Right parties. The explanatory power of stigma and extremity is thus non-trivial for several party families and very large for some.

In addition, the three variables can still explain the gender balance of individual parties even when they do not do so at the aggregated gap level. This is especially likely for more heterogeneous party groups.

#### Explaining gaps within the Radical Right

In this final section, I fully “zoom in” by returning to the Radical Right. Can variation in stigma and extremity explain differences in vote choices for individual Radical Right parties? To find out, I repeat the individual-level analysis on the subset of 23 party-election combinations of the Radical Right category in the CSES dataset. The full table is presented in Appendix R.

This yields evidence that the mechanisms at work at large also determine voting for Radical Right parties specifically. There is a significant interaction ( $p = 0.00$ ) between stigma and gender, as well as between extremity and gender. The effects of stigma are, again, particularly strong. The level of stigma of a Radical Right party does not affect the

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40 Specifically, for each party family, voting was predicted, first, by gender, and second, by gender and the controls (by means of a  $\hat{y}$  procedure). The gender gap in both models, as well as its reduction after controlling, was then calculated in the same way as for the other columns.

41 A larger part (23%) of the gap in voting for the Christian-Democrats can be explained by also controlling for religiosity. However, because this variable is not included in one-third of the CSES cases, we left it out in the general analysis.

probability of voting for it among men, while it does deter women. When parties have a low level of stigma (10%), they are predicted to *have no gender gap at all*; when the stigma is large (50%), the model predicts men to be twice as likely to vote for a party. This shows that stigma not only explains the aggregate gender gap of the Radical Right as a party family, but also further predicts differences between such parties. There is a significant interaction between gender and extremity: the Radical Right's extremity slightly deters women, while it has a positive effect among men ( $p = 0.00$ ). Size, too, seems to affect the gender balance: larger parties obviously draw more voters, but more clearly so among women. In short, those gendered patterns observed among all parties are also at work explaining men's and women's vote choices for Radical Right parties specifically.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I investigated the role of the supply side in shaping the gender gap based on the socio-psychological model. In doing so, this chapter aimed not only at explaining the gender gap in voting for the Radical Right, but also at broadening our understanding of the gender balance of the electorates of *all* parties. After all, research has so far mostly provided explanations for individual parties and party families, or mapped very broad trends such as women's general move towards the political left in industrialized countries. The novel explanation proposed in this chapter applies to parties across different countries and can account for variation between party families.

This chapter started from the two mechanisms discerned in the previous two chapters. The finding that men are less likely to incorporate cues from their social context when making a decision (Chapter 3) led to the hypothesis that they are more likely to vote for stigmatized and small parties. The finding that women are more negatively triggered by a prejudiced reputation (Chapter 4) inspired the expectation that they are less likely to vote for extreme parties in general.

An analysis of 340 party-election combinations in 28 countries provides strong evidence that the hypothesized mechanisms are at work in shaping the gender balance for many parties. Even when controlling for ideological distance and background variables, the level of social stigma attached to a party was found to deter female voters much more strongly than male ones. The more a party is stigmatized, the smaller its relative share of female voters becomes. Similarly, the analysis yielded some evidence that smaller parties are less attractive for female voters, although this result is less robust. Furthermore, and in line with the social harmony mechanism, extreme parties – both of the Left and the Right – were found to draw more male voters than moderate parties do, even when controlling for voters' own Left-Right positions. At the same time, this effect is for a large part indirect, due to the higher stigma of most extreme parties. In other words, the explanation for the relatively low support for extreme parties among women partly reflects the low social desirability of such an extreme vote – a *social fact*.

In short, the analyses show that, even across a very broad sample of over a hundred parties in dozens of countries, parties' stigma and extremity can predict a sizeable part



of the variance in the gender balance of their voters. Nevertheless, these very general models explained by no means *all* of the variance in men's and women's vote choices. This suggests that other mechanisms exist that shape the gender balance but which were not taken into account. This chapter might therefore inspire further research into different gendered (social) explanations of voting employing the same methodology. Conceivably, sensitivity to social cues and social harmony is also associated with class, age, cultural background and many other characteristics related to voting. As a result, it is likely to shape parties' electorates in more ways.