

## The Gender Gap in Radical Right Voting: Explaining differences in the Netherlands

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### Abstract

Men and women differ in their level of radical right votes in most European countries. This research, a cross sectional survey study among 1125 Dutch respondents, examines both structural and attitudinal explanations for a difference between male and female voting patterns in the Netherlands. The differences in structural backgrounds, being self-employed, and the importance one attaches to its religion all appear to be factors that close the gender gap in radical right voting. Attitudinal explanations seemed to explain a large part of the variance in voting behavior for both sexes. Comparative analyses showed that the effect of both structural and attitudinal explanations had a higher explanatory power for males than they have for females.

**Keywords:** gender gap; radical right voting; structural and situational explanations; attitudinal explanations

### Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, radical right parties have received increasing electoral support in many Western countries. Thirty years ago, radical right parties existed, though were marginal. Until the early nineties, the radical right parties almost nowhere exceeded 2.5 percent of the total votes. However, the 1990's saw an upswing of radical right parties in most European countries. The first radical right parties that received a substantial amount of votes were found in France and Italy. In 1993, the French Front National received 12.4 percent of the total votes; the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano) in Italy received 13.4 percent of the votes one year later. An exception in this trend is Denmark, where the party defined as radical right, Danske FP, already received 8.9 percent of the vote in 1981 (Knigge 1998).

The rise in popularity of radical right parties necessarily led to research interest into this phenomenon. One main conclusion of such studies is that the

majority of votes for radical right parties came from men (Givens 2004; Gidengil et al. 2005; Fontana et al. 2006). In the 1988 French election, only 39 percent votes received by the extreme right were from females, and the German Republikaner never received more than 42 percent of their votes from women between 1989 and 1994 (Givens 2004). This overrepresentation of males, or underrepresentation of females, in the support of the radical right is referred to as the gender gap. None of the studies that examined the rise of the radical right clearly explained this gender gap. Different explanations were provided, though none accurately predicted why men are more likely to vote for the radical right than women. Most studies made a distinction between structural backgrounds and attitudinal explanations. The first of these variables, structural backgrounds (which referred to occupational status and being religious) did not have the expected effect on the gender gap (Givens 2004,

Fontana et al. 2006), and even showed an increase in the gender gap in the case of Canada (Gidengil et al. 2005). As regards attitudinal factors, the predicted effects were also not found in the analyses. In the case of Denmark, attitudinal factors resulted in a gender gap that was not present in the model that only contained control variables (Givens 2004). Of the five countries analyzed in these three studies, only one study explained the gender gap in terms of attitudinal explanations (Gidengil et al. 2005). Even though Gidengil et al. (2005) showed that the gender gap was explained by attitudinal factors, their analysis is subject to criticism. To illustrate, the scales they used were of questionable reliability, and this might have important implications for the results they reported.

It is also important to note in this connection that not much is known about the gender gap in radical right voting in the Netherlands. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explain the gender gap in radical right voting among the Dutch. We pose the following research question: *To what extent do men and women differ in the level of radical right voting in the Netherlands, and what explanations can account for this possible gender gap?*

In order to answer this question, we will first identify the extent of the gender gap in the Netherlands. Second, we will seek to explain the gender gap in radical right voting itself. Third, we will explore the differences between men and women who support Dutch radical right parties. The analyses will be conducted using the European Value Study (EVS) of 2008, which focuses on basic human values in Europe.

Since none of the previous studies unambiguously explained the gender gap in radical right voting, it is scientifically important to understand why males are overrepresented in radical right votes. Furthermore, in the Netherlands the radical right has flourished for about a decade, but real explanations for a possible gender gap

have not yet been tested. One relevant aspect of this question is its importance in electoral campaigns. Politicians might not be aware of the mechanisms behind the radical right vote itself, nor the differing effect that both structural and attitudinal factors might have among the sexes. All Dutch political parties, from left to right, might improve or reshape their arguments in accordance with solid findings regarding the gender gap. It is hoped that this study will contribute to such knowledge.

First, we present the definition of the radical right as provided by Mudde (2007). Second, a short overview of earlier studies on the gender gap in radical right voting and their main conclusions are discussed. Then, the theoretical explanations for the expected effects are examined, resulting in six hypotheses. The data and methods section explains how the constructs are translated into measurable items that will be tested and explained in the results section. Our last paragraph summarizes the conclusions and discusses the results that have been obtained.

### ***Defining the radical right***

Not all parties in Europe have the same characteristics, though some features do seem to be widely shared. A review of the articles on radical right parties over the last couple of decades reveals that these parties share the following characteristics: They object to the notion of a multicultural society and call for lower levels of immigration and rejection of foreign refugees seeking asylum, as well as more restrictive immigration policies (Knigge 1998). Further, they share authoritarian and hierarchical views on the governmental structure (Ignazi 1992 in: Knigge 1998). So, most of the radical right parties share a common platform which is based on populism, social conservatism and an anti-establishment attitude (Gidengil et al. 2005). Mudde (2007) specifies the key features of the radical right in a slightly different manner. He consistently calls it the “populist radical

right,” with the characteristics described as nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Nativism refers to the belief which states that a country should be inhabited solely by individuals which are part of the native group, with non-native persons (or ideas) being perceived as a threat to the homogeneity of the country (Mudde 2007). A call for clear rules, along with strict enforcement of these rules, reflects the authoritarian aspect of parties of the far right. Populism can be defined as an ideology that distinguishes two groups in society; the ‘pure people’ and the ‘corrupt elite’ with radical right parties claiming to be able to fulfill the will of the ‘pure people’ (Mudde 2010). Further, Mudde (2007) makes a distinction between ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalism.’ He explains that extremism is ‘anti-democratic’, in that it opposes the ‘liberal’ or ‘constitutional democracy.’ Thus, by definition, radical right parties are not ‘extreme’ since they take the democratic system for granted and participate in it. Nevertheless, such parties may have anti-democratic goals. Radical right parties sometimes take stances on gender issues that would seem to appeal more to men than to women. However, Mudde (2007) showed that these views differ to a large extent when different radical right parties are compared. Although the distinction between radicalism and extremism might clarify some ambiguity, as said by Mudde (2010), most prior research did not clearly make this distinction and can be said to have focused on the ‘far’ right. Because the focus of this paper is on differences in voting between men and women, and voting is a part of the democratic process, we will consistently use the term ‘radical right.’ This study will focus on the two radical right parties in the Netherlands; Trots Op Nederland (Proud of the Netherlands) and Partij Van de Vrijheid (Freedom Party).

### ***The gender gap in radical right voting and earlier research***

Two ways to define the gender gap are found in the literature. The first is the male/female ratio of the total votes received by the radical right, and the second compares the percentage of all female or male voters that voted for a radical right party. In the first case, when the proportion of women voters is lower for all parties, the gender gap is explained by overall lower numbers of female voters. Givens (2004) provides an overview of differences between sexes in voting patterns for radical right parties in Austria, France and Germany using the second definition of gender gap. The female votes for the Austrian FPÖ ranged from 38 percent in both 1997 and 1999 to 44 percent in 1993. Female votes for the French Front National ranged from 39 percent in 1988 to 50 percent in 1993; which is the only year in the overview with an equal number of male and female voters. In both the 1997 and 1999 elections, the gender gap in France re-emerged, with only 40 percent female votes for the Front National. A comparable gender gap is found in Germany, where women accounted for 36-42 percent of the votes for the Republikaner.

In our opinion, this is not the best way to define the gender gap, because it can lead to inaccurate conclusions. One might do better to compare the percentage of *all* male voters that voted for the radical right with the percentage of *all* female votes for the radical right. In this way, a possible overrepresentation of male or female votes in elections does not affect the measured gender gap. A study of the gender gap in radical right voting in Switzerland (Fontana et al. 2006) used this method of defining the gender gap. In 1995, the Swiss People's Party captured 16.9 percent of all male votes and 13.6 percent of all female votes. In 1999, these numbers increased to 26.5 percent of all males and 18.5 percent of the females. Both percentages increased once again in

2003, but a clear gender gap was maintained, with the Swiss People's Party capturing 28.6 percent of the male vote and 21.2 percent of the female vote (Fontana et al. 2006).

More recent numbers concerning the gender gap in various European

countries are presented in table 1. The numbers presented there indicate percentages of all male voters and all female voters who cast ballots for parties of the radical right.

**Table 1.** Gender gap in radical right voting patterns across Europe in 2008.

Country	Party	N	% Men <sup>a</sup>	% Women <sup>a</sup>	% Gap
Belgium	FN, VB	1 760	10.7	5.4	5.3
Bulgaria	Ataka	2 230	11.3	6.6	4.7
Croatia	HSP	1 484	4.6	2.0	2.6
Denmark	Danske FP	1 610	10.8	8.3	2.5
Finland	True Finns	2 195	5.1	2.7	2.4
France	FN, MNR	2 073	2.7	2.3	0.4
Germany	Republikaner, NPD/NVU	2 751	1.6	0.6	1.0
Greece	LAOS	2 072	5.1	2.6	2.5
Hungary	Jobbik	1 544	1.0	0.4	0.6
Latvia	LNNK	1 980	9.0	9.7	0.7
Netherlands	TON, PVV	1 778	4.6	3.9	0.7
Norway	Progress Party	1 549	17.3	14.0	3.3
Poland	League of Polish Families	1 619	0.4	2.4	-2.0
Romania	PRM	2 146	2.8	2.1	0.7
Russia	LDPR	2 512	10.1	4.4	5.7
Slovakia	SNS	5 088	9.1	3.9	5.2
Turkey	MHP	2 416	11.4	7.7	3.7

a = Percentage of radical right voting of the total electorate separated by sex.

Source: EVS 2008 dataset

As can be seen in table 1, a gender gap exists in all countries. Still, there are differences in the size of the gender gap among the different nations listed in the table. In Russia (5.7), Belgium (5.3) and Slovakia (5.2) the gender gap for radical right voting in 2008 is larger than that of the other countries listed. In countries like France (0.4) and the United Kingdom (0.3) the gender gap is minimal. Furthermore, there is one exception where a gender gap does exist but where women are overrepresented among supporters of the radical right, i.e. Poland (-2.0). Although this exception can be said to be as interesting as the gender gap itself, our focus here is not on the explanations of this exception.

### **Theory and hypotheses**

We will now provide possible explanations for the gender gap in the Netherlands in the form of six hypotheses. The first two hypotheses are related to globalization, migration and the resulting competition on the labor market. The third hypothesis concerns the effect of religion. The fourth, fifth and sixth hypothesis reflect attitudes towards immigrants, political dissatisfaction and interest in politics respectively.

*Unemployment.* The first effect considered is that of being unemployed. We expect that women are, on average, more frequently unemployed than men, and in this connection, it should be noted that a large percentage of women are not looking

for a job. They are, for example, full-time housewives. The same holds for the elderly, whether or not they are retirees. People who do not have a job and are not looking for one are, for the purpose of the present study defined as “voluntarily unemployed.” However, such a status is not predictive of likelihood to vote for the radical right. If we look at the involuntarily unemployed, we would expect an overrepresentation of males. Given that involuntary unemployment is a result of scarcity of jobs, this scarcity results in competition. Tajfel and Turner (1979) also mentioned the economic scarcity problem as having explanatory value, in that it increases rivalry among ethnic groups (Olzak 1994). Those who are looking for a job face competition from other job searchers, among whom are immigrants. Moreover, job searchers might be confronted with immigrants who occupy the jobs they lost. Since the majority of the immigrants are competing for jobs in this lower end, the competition will be most fierce in the lower social strata. As mentioned earlier, radical right parties state that natives of a given nation are the only persons who have the right to enjoy full citizenship of a nation, and therefore should also logically enjoy preference in terms of employment. Thus, it is expected that being involuntarily unemployed would increase the likelihood to vote for the radical right. And because men are more likely to have such a status, support for the radical right would logically more likely come from male voters. This results in the following hypothesis:

*H1. Involuntary unemployment increases the likelihood to vote for the radical right. Since males are expected to be overrepresented among the involuntarily unemployed, they are therefore more likely to vote for the radical right.*

*Occupational status.* This hypothesis builds on the competition mentioned in the first hypothesis. The most important

difference is that this hypothesis captures the competition mechanism that also influences those who are currently employed. Since immigrants are expected to have a relatively low job status compared to the labor force as a whole, only the ‘natives’ with lower job status face a threat from competition. Whether or not they are currently employed, the effect of ‘the shadow of the future’ might result in the same effect for the employed as for the involuntarily unemployed. Given that it is expected that males are overrepresented among the lower occupational statuses, they perceive a larger (future) ethnic threat of competition that makes them more likely to vote for the radical right. This gives rise to the following hypothesis:

*H2. Occupational status has a negative effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. Since males are overrepresented among those with lower occupational status, they are more likely to vote for the radical right.*

*Religion.* Religion is also noted as explanatory for the gender gap in voting for the radical right (Betz 1994; Givens 2004; Gidengil et al. 2005). Betz (1994) stated that women are more religious than men. Adhering to a religious ideology makes people more tolerant towards others and more aware of social problems. When tolerance is discussed, it can be seen as “...citizens’ willingness to respect the rights and liberties of others whose opinions and practices differ from their own...” (Robinson 2010, p 495). Therefore religious people are less favorable of the intolerant ideas of radical right parties. This disapproval of intolerant ideas can be due to the integration of an individual into a specific group. Being integrated into a specific group makes the individual follow norms and values of this group (Merton 1938). In the case of religion, such integration can lead to tolerance of others, which results in a less favorable attitude towards the radical right, since they stand

for less tolerance towards immigrants, for example. In general, women are more religious than men (Fontana et al. 2006) and are therefore less likely to support radical right parties than men. This leads to the following hypothesis.

*H3: Religious voters are less likely to vote for radical right parties. Women are generally more religious than men. Therefore women are less likely to support radical right parties than men.*

*Anti-immigrant attitude.* An important aspect of radical right parties is their nativism. The attitudes towards immigration and immigrants can therefore help explain the difference in voting for the radical right between men and women. Givens (2004) demonstrated that an anti-immigrant attitude is an important factor in explaining radical right voting. Both Givens (2004) and Fontana et al. (2006) linked the attitudes towards immigrants to their perceived threat (e.g., in competing for jobs). As a result, these researchers expect males to have a stronger anti-immigrant attitude. Since men are more active on the labor market, they face more ethnic competition and thus will be more attracted to radical right parties that want to reduce the number of immigrants in their country. Another point of consideration is that women might sympathize with immigrants, since women used to suffer discrimination on the labor market and therefore ‘know how it feels.’ This can result in a difference in attitudes towards immigrants between men and women, leading to the following hypothesis:

*H4: The stronger the anti-immigrant attitude one has, the more likely one is to support the radical right. Males are expected to have stronger anti-immigrant attitudes than women and are therefore more likely to vote for the radical right.*

*Political interest.* Important in voting behavior is one’s interest in politics (Jakee & Sun 2006), especially in a country like the Netherlands where voting is not mandatory, and where people that do not have any interest in politics mostly do not vote. Also the urge to change the political system by the radical right parties is of no concern for people that lack any interest in politics. It is even possible that people who lack political interest do not even know of the existence of specific radical right parties in their countries. Thus, parties of the radical right may be unable to reach the people that do not have any interest in politics. And if the politically uninterested decide to vote anyway, they are more likely to vote for traditional parties, which are more familiar to them. Since politics are generally of less concern for women than for men (Inglehart & Norris 2003) it is expected that men are more likely to vote for radical right parties. This results in the following hypothesis:

*H5: The more interested one is in politics, the more one is likely to support the radical right. Men are expected to have more interest in politics than women and are therefore more likely to vote for the radical right.*

*Political dissatisfaction.* Knigge (1998) states that radical right parties generally can be described as parties of dissatisfaction. This explains why, in general, situations viewed as ‘bad’ are expected to increase the likelihood to vote for the radical right. This ‘bad’ situation can be defined by the state of the economy and level of unemployment, but also as a general dissatisfaction with political institutions. This dissatisfaction with political institutions is defined as political dissatisfaction. Betz (1994) emphasizes the importance of political dissatisfaction for explaining the vote for the radical right. Also, Bustikova & Kitschelt (2009) state that political dissatisfaction is an important condition that helps radical right parties

flourish. Because radical right parties are against the current ‘corrupt’ political ‘elite,’ they attract the politically dissatisfied (Bustikova & Kitschelt 2009). This helps explain why political dissatisfaction is an important aspect of radical right voting, but this does not explain why a difference between men and women can be expected. Betz (1994) states that the ‘losers’ of modernity and globalization are the ones that are most dissatisfied with the political elite. These ‘losers’ are mostly ‘native’ men, since they lost their position in competition with immigrants. This loss makes them feel abandoned by the current politicians, whom they blame for their situation. Consequently, they might be expected to vote for radical right parties in order to demonstrate their antipathy to immigrants and the current political system. This results in the following hypothesis:

*H6: The greater one’s feeling of political dissatisfaction, the more likely one will support radical right parties. Because it is expected that men are more likely to have a feeling of political dissatisfaction, they are therefore more likely to support radical right parties than women.*

### **Data**

The analyses will be conducted with the use of the EVS 2008 dataset. The EVS 2008 is a cross-sectional and large-scale survey which measures human values in Europe. It presents information about beliefs, attitudes, values, opinions and preferences of European citizens. The EVS 2008 is a cross-national survey. Within this dataset, 47 countries/regions and 67,786 respondents are included. The selected data for this analysis contained 1554 respondents for the Netherlands. List-wise deletion of respondents who did not answer all questions used for analyses resulted in a dataset of 1125 respondents. We will now present the operationalization of the variables.

*Radical right vote.* This dependent item is constructed on the basis of the question ‘If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?’ From this, a dummy was computed for the votes for both TON (Proud of the Netherlands) and PVV (Freedom Party). This question followed the previous question of ‘Would you vote at a general election tomorrow?’ and therefore only respondents that replied ‘yes’ to the first question were used in our dependent item.

*Employment.* The second construct, employment, consists of six dichotomized groups, namely the employed, involuntarily unemployed, voluntary unemployed, self-employed, retired and other. These groups were constructed on the basis of the question whether the respondent currently had gainful employment or not. The ‘voluntary unemployed’ consist mainly of housewives and students. It is assumed that these two groups are not working because of their other time-consuming activities (respectively, household activities and studying). The groups unemployed, retired and self-employed were available as separate answers. A residual ‘other’ category was also included.

*Occupational status.* For occupational status, a continuous measure was chosen since it allowed us to use it as an interval scale. Therefore, we used the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational status (ISEI) of Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman (1992). For this measurement of occupational status, the job of the respondent was asked and later recoded into the ISEI-scale.

*Religion.* For religion, two different measures were used: how important religion is in one’s life, measured on a 4 - point scale, and whether one belongs to a religious denomination. Based on the hypothesized effect, the importance of religion in one’s life was used as the first

measure for religion. This item was recoded to show that a higher value means a greater importance of religion in one’s life. The second measure was “being religious,” which was dichotomized into two groups where one group consists of people that belong to a religious denomination and the other group consists out of people that indicated that they did not belong to a religious denomination.

*Anti-immigrant attitude.* A scale was constructed that contained seven variables,

which are shown in table 2. The questions and possible answers related to these variables are also displayed in table 2. Only respondents who answered at least four of the seven questions were included in the scale. Given the difference in coding, all variables were standardized and, with these standardized variables, the scale was constructed. A higher score on anti-immigrant attitude indicates a more negative attitude towards immigrants.

**Table 2.** Variables used for the anti-immigrant attitude scale

<i>Variable label</i>	<i>Variable values</i>
Immigrants take away jobs from [nationality].	1 = “take away” ... 10 = “do not take away”
Immigrants undermine country’s cultural life.	1 = “undermine cultural life” ... 10 = “do not undermine cultural life”
Immigrants increase crime problems.	1 = “make it worse” ... 10 = “do not make it worse”
Immigrants are a strain on the welfare system.	1 = “are a strain” ... 10 = “are not a strain”
Immigrants will become a threat to society.	1 = “will become a threat” ... 10 = “will not become a threat”
Immigrants living in your country: feels like a stranger,	1 = “agree strongly” 2 = “agree” 3 = “neither agree/nor disagree” 4 = “disagree” 5 = “disagree strongly”
Immigrants living in your country: there are too many,	1 = “agree strongly” 2 = “agree” 3 = “neither agree/nor disagree” 4 = “disagree” 5 = “disagree strongly”

Source: EVS (2008)

The scale has a normal distribution. A principle component analysis was conducted that demonstrated that all items belong to one dimension. The factor loadings on the seven items ranged from .692 to .868. For this scale, a Cronbach’s alpha of .889 was obtained.

*Interest in politics.* Four items, presented in table 3, measured importance and interest in politics, and how often politics is followed through the media or discussed with friends. The scale only includes respondents that answered at least three of the four questions. The answer categories for these items differed, as can be seen in

table 3. Therefore this scale was constructed using standardization. All items are recoded to make the low scores match low interest in politics. The political interest scale is also normally distributed. One component is found with

principle component analysis, with factor loadings ranging from .692 to .876. The internal consistency method resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of .761.

**Table 3.** Variables used for the political interest scale

<i>Variable label</i>	<i>Variable values</i>
How important in your life is politics	1 = “very important” 2 = “quite important” 3 = “not important” 4 = “not at all important”
How often do you discuss politics with friends	1 = “frequently” 2 = “occasionally” 3 = “never”
How interested are you in politics?	1 = “very interested” 2 = “somewhat interested” 3 = “not very interested” 4 = “not at all interested”
How often do you follow politics in the media ?	1 = “every day” 2 = “several times a week” 3 = “once or twice a week” 4 = “less often” 5 = “never”

Source: EVS (2008)

*Political dissatisfaction.* This scale consists of six items, which are presented in table 4. Only respondents who answered at least four of the six questions were included in the scale. The questions and possible answers are also presented in table 4. All items were coded the same way, with the use of a 4-point scale. Therefore the higher the score on the scale, the greater the degree of political dissatisfaction.

The political dissatisfaction scale has a normal distribution. Similar to the other scales, one dimension was found for the

political dissatisfaction scale with the use of principle component analysis. The factor loadings range from .631 to .817. A Cronbach’s alpha of .809 was obtained.

*Control variables: Age & education.* The age of the respondent and the level of education were used as control variables. Years of education ranged from 0 to 17 years and was calculated on the basis of the following educational stages: Primary education - 6 years, MAVO - 4 years, Havo - 5 years, VWO - 6 years, MBO - 4 years, HBO - 4 years, WO - 3 years and master - 2 years.

**Table 4.** Variables used for the political dissatisfaction scale

<i>Variable label</i>	<i>Variable values</i>
How much confidence do you have in the parliament?	1 = "a great deal" 2 = "quite a lot" 3 = "not very much" 4 = "none at all"
How much confidence do you have in the civil service?	1 = "a great deal" 2 = "quite a lot" 3 = "not very much" 4 = "none at all"
How much confidence do you have in the social security system?	1 = "a great deal" 2 = "quite a lot" 3 = "not very much" 4 = "none at all"
How much confidence do you have in the european union?	1 = "a great deal" 2 = "quite a lot" 3 = "not very much" 4 = "none at all"
How much confidence do you have in the justice system?	1 = "a great deal" 2 = "quite a lot" 3 = "not very much" 4 = "none at all"
How much confidence do you have in the government?	1 = "a great deal" 2 = "quite a lot" 3 = "not very much" 4 = "none at all"

Source: EVS (2008)

## Methods

The first step in this analysis was to explore whether compositional differences in the independent variables exist among the sexes. For this purpose, an independent sample t-test was conducted for all explanatory items. When no compositional difference is present, there might still be differences in the effect this item has on the likelihood to vote for the radical right between men and women; such an effect might be conditional. Second, we performed a logistic regression in four steps. The first model tested the existence of the gender gap, controlling for age and education. The second and third model separately tested all structural background items and all attitudinal items described above. The fourth model contained all items. Finally, we presented an explorative analysis for the purpose of indicating whether conditional effects exist. Two

separate regression analyses were performed to determine whether the effect of the independent items differ between men and women.

## Results

Table 5 provides the descriptive statistics of all items used in the analysis: means, standard deviations and sample size. The first step was to test whether there are compositional differences that might explain the difference in voting for the radical right between men and women. For all items, independent sample t-tests were conducted.

Men and women clearly differed in the proportion of radical right votes. A total of 8.6 percent of the females voted for the radical right whereas, for males, the proportion is 12.7 percent ( $t = -2.199$ ,  $p = .014$ ). This first t-test confirms the

existence of a gender gap in radical right voting. Among the involuntarily unemployed, no difference between men and women was found. This result runs counter to the expectation formulated in the first hypothesis that males are overrepresented among the involuntarily unemployed. For occupational status, the compositional effect that was formulated in the second hypothesis is not confirmed. Males on average had a higher occupational status ( $m = 51.77$ ) than females ( $m = 46.07$ ,  $t = -6.053$ ,  $p = .000$ ), even though they had been expected to be overrepresented among the lower statuses.

Females were overrepresented among the voluntary unemployed (16.8 percent), while 8.6 percent of the males were voluntarily unemployed ( $t = 10.120$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Males were overrepresented among the retired (32 percent) whereas 24.4 percent of the females were retired ( $t = -2.881$ ,  $p = .002$ ). In the group of self-employed, a significant difference was found ( $t = -3.478$ ,  $p = .001$ ), with males more likely to be self-employed (10.7 percent) than women (4.9 percent). For the employment items, we have to conclude that the expected compositional differences between males and females were not found.

**Table 5.** Descriptive statistics ( $N = 1125$ )

Item (range)	Range	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean women (n = 590)	Mean male (n = 535)	T	Sign.
Radical right vote	0-1	.106	-	.086	.127	-2.199	*
Male	0-1	.476	-	-	-	-	
Occupational status	16-88	48.78	16.03	46.07	51.77	-6.053	***
<i>Employment status:</i>							
Employed	0-1	.507	-	.497	.518	-.708	
Voluntary unemployed	0-1	.092	-	.168	.086	10.120	***
Retired	0-1	.279	-	.242	.320	-2.881	**
Unemployed	0-1	.012	-	.007	.017	-1.542	
Self-employed	0-1	.076	-	.049	.105	-3.478	***
Other	0-1	.036	-	.037	.034	.329	
<i>Religion:</i>							
Religion: importance	1-4	2.444	1.036	2.529	2.351	2.878	**
Religion: belonging	0-1	.530	-	.551	.507	1.487	
<i>Attitudes:</i>							
Attitude towards immigrants	-1.98 - 1.83	-.067	.759	-.101	-.029	-1.588	
Interested in politics	-1.92 - 1.42	.152	.702	.067	.245	-4.298	***
Political dissatisfaction	1-4	2.513	.499	2.554	2.469	2.840	**
<i>Control variables:</i>							
Education (in years) <sup>a</sup>	0-17	12.127	2.885	11.988	12.271	-1.644	
Age <sup>a</sup>	18-95	54.527	16.672	54.841	54.181	.661	

$p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , one sided; a = tested two sided since no hypothesis is stated;

Source: EVS (2008)

A significant difference between men and women was found for the importance religion has in one's life ( $t = 2.878$ ,  $p = .002$ ). On average, women in our sample attached more importance to religion ( $m = 2.529$ ) than men ( $m = 2.351$ ), confirming the third hypothesis. Besides the importance one attaches to its religion, being religious did not show any difference between males and females.

The first attitudinal item, attitude towards immigrants revealed no compositional significant difference between men and women, which is in line with earlier research (Lubbers et al. 2002; Givens 2004). The second attitudinal item, interest in politics, showed males to be more interested (65.2 percent) than females (55.9 percent,  $t = -3.203$ ,  $p = .001$ ). This confirms the expected compositional difference of the fifth hypothesis, which states that men are more likely to be interested in politics. For political dissatisfaction, the compositional difference was found ( $t = 2.840$ ,  $p = .003$ ), though the effect is in the opposite direction from what was expected in the sixth hypothesis. Males in the study sample were politically less dissatisfied ( $m = 2.469$ ) than women ( $m = 2.554$ ).

In table 6, we present the logistic regression analysis, which was conducted in four steps, one separate analysis for the gender variable and the controls (for the purpose of testing whether a gender gap was present when the control variables were added). In model 2, we added the structural background items. The third model tested only the effect of attitudinal items. The final model contains both the structural background and attitudinal items.

The results of the logistic regression analysis are shown in table 6. The first model confirms the existence of the gender gap. Males have a 56.05% ( $e^{.445}$ ) higher odds than women to vote for

the radical right. This is in line with earlier research.

In model 2, we added the structural background items employment, occupational status and religion to model 1. The unemployment items, being retired, voluntarily unemployed and involuntarily unemployed, did not have a significant effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. Occupational status had no effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right, and neither did belonging to a religious denomination. On the other hand, the importance one attaches to one's religion was shown to be related to the likelihood to vote for radical right parties. Respondents who identified their religion as important for themselves have a 38.10% ( $1 - e^{-.463 * 1.036}$ ) lower odds to vote for a radical right party with every increase of one standard deviation on this item. Being self-employed increased the likelihood of voting for the radical right. Self-employed individuals had a 153.20% ( $e^{.929}$ ) higher odds than the employed to vote for the radical right. Most importantly, the effect of being male lost its significance when the structural background items were added. This indicates that the gender gap is explained by the structural background of the individual. For the radical right vote itself, the explained variance is 8.4 percent. Our third model tested the attitudinal aspects of the likelihood to vote for the radical right and its effect on the gender item. Attitude towards immigrants was shown to be significantly predictive of a tendency to vote for the radical right. With every increase of one standard deviation on the attitude towards immigrant scale, the odds of voting for the radical right increase by 189.61% ( $e^{1.401 * .759}$ ). Interest in politics was shown to have no effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. Politically dissatisfied individuals seemed to be more likely to vote for the radical right. With every increase of one standard deviation on the political dissatisfaction

scale, the odds of voting for the radical right increase by 67.19 % ( $e^{1.030 \cdot 499}$ ). The explained variance for the third model is 27.2 percent. From this, we can conclude that a large part of the variance in the radical right vote is explained by the attitudinal items. But, the gender gap is not

explained by attitudinal factors. In this model, men have a 59.20% ( $e^{.465}$ ) higher odds to vote for the radical right than women. Consequently, these items together did not explain the gender gap.

**Table 6.** Logistic regression analysis of radical right voting in the Netherlands

	+ control variables		+ structural background variables		+ attitudinal variables		+ attitudinal variables and structural background variables	
Item	B	se	B	se	B	se	B	se
Male	.445	.197*	.357	.217 <sup>ns</sup>	.465	.218*	.260	.241 <sup>ns</sup>
Occupational status			.000	.008 <sup>ns</sup>			.009	.009 <sup>ns</sup>
Employed			Ref.	-			Ref.	-
Voluntary unemployed			.533	.377 <sup>ns</sup>			.150	.424 <sup>ns</sup>
Retired			.447	.356 <sup>ns</sup>			.280	.383 <sup>ns</sup>
Unemployed			1.084	.703 <sup>ns</sup>			.872	.776 <sup>ns</sup>
Self-employed			.929	.315**			.994	.351*
Other			-.182	.637 <sup>ns</sup>			-.536	.709 <sup>ns</sup>
Religion: importance			-.463	.136***			-.357	.152**
Religious: belonging			.191	.270 <sup>ns</sup>			.084	.296 <sup>ns</sup>
Attitude towards immigrants					1.401	.179***	1.448	.182***
Interested in politics					-.003	.153 <sup>ns</sup>	-.012	.160 <sup>ns</sup>
Political dissatisfaction					1.030	.216***	.950	.223***
Education (in years) <sup>a</sup>	-.127	.034***	-.121	.041**	-.008	.042 <sup>ns</sup>	-.035	.048 <sup>ns</sup>
Age <sup>a</sup>	-.014	.006*	-.014	.009 <sup>ns</sup>	-.016	.007*	-.015	.010 <sup>ns</sup>
Constant <sup>a</sup>	-.095	.622 <sup>ns</sup>	.616	.711 <sup>ns</sup>	-4.490	.965***	-3.763	1.064***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.035		.084		.272		.305	
N	1125		1125		1125		1125	

NS = not significant, \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001, one sided  
a = tested two sided since no hypothesis is stated. Source: EVS (2008)

Our fourth and final model contained both the structural background and the attitudinal items. Being unemployed, whether voluntarily or not, was not shown to have any effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. The self-employed respondents in the present study had a 170.20% ( $e^{.994}$ ) higher odds than the employed to vote for the radical right. Occupational status showed no significant effect, nor did being religious. But the importance of religion in one's life significantly decreased the likelihood to vote for the radical right, with every increase of a standard deviation of this item, respondents had a 30.92% ( $1 - e^{-.357 * 1.036}$ ) lower odds to vote for the radical right. For the structural backgrounds, the effects that were significant in the second model remained significant in the full model. The same is the case for the attitudinal items. One's attitude towards immigrants is significantly explanatory for one's likelihood to vote for the radical right. With every increase of a standard deviation on this item, respondents had a 200.13% ( $e^{1.448 * .759}$ ) higher odds of voting for the radical right. Being interested in politics did not have an effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right, while being politically dissatisfied increased the likelihood to do so. With every increase of one standard deviation, the odds of voting for the radical right increase with a 60.65% ( $e^{.950 * .499}$ ). The gender dummy, indicating the gender gap, is not significant in the full model. From this, we can conclude that the gender gap is explained. Moreover, the coefficient of the gender dummy is lower than in the second model. So although the attitudinal aspects themselves did not have the expected effect, the effect that being male had on the likelihood to vote for the radical right decreased when the attitudinal aspects were added.

The items in the full model explained 30.5 percent of the variance in the radical right votes. From this analysis,

we can conclude that the gender gap is explained by structural background, although the items related to structural background do not explain much of the variance in the radical right vote. Furthermore, the items that do explain a large part of the variance in the radical right votes did not close the gender gap. Mainly, it was the differences in structural backgrounds that explain why males were more likely to vote for the radical right. The attitudes do explain why people in general vote for the radical right.

But there is more to say about conclusions about the observed effects. Items that showed no compositional difference might still have a conditional effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. For the item 'attitude towards immigrants', for example, no compositional difference was found. In addition, in items where a significant difference was found, the presence of a conditional effect may have compensated for or enhanced its compositional effect. Therefore, our last step was to explore whether there was an indication of conditional effects of specific items on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. To do this, two separate logistic regression analyses were conducted for men and women. Due to empty cells, we decided to combine the two unemployment items, and also combined the 'retired' and 'other' categories.

Table 7 shows the results of this analysis. The overall model explained 34.9 percent of the variance in radical right votes for males, and 25.6 percent of the variance for females. Besides this difference, there are also some interesting differences in the effect of specific items. Occupational status did not show any significant effect for women, whereas for men both occupational status and being self-employed did have a positive effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right.

**Table 7.** Logistic regression of radical right voting in the Netherlands, divided by gender

Item	Male			Female		
	B	Se	Sign.	B	Se	Sign.
Occupational status	.020	.012	*	.000	.013	
<i>Employment status:</i>						
Employed	Ref.	-		Ref.	-	
Unemployed	1.139	.794		.039	.461	
Self-employed	1.300	.434	**	.499	.642	
Other	.246	.499		.001	.561	
<i>Religion:</i>						
Religion: importance	-.325	.212		-.416	.223	*
Religion: belonging	.208	.405		-.010	.444	
<i>Attitudes:</i>						
Attitude towards immigrants	1.551	.261	***	1.402	.259	***
Interested in politics	-.154	.218		.162	.237	
Political dissatisfaction	1.090	.308	***	.737	.323	*
<i>Control variables:</i>						
Education (in years) <sup>a</sup>	-.022	.063		-.059	.077	
Age <sup>a</sup>	-.012	.013		-.016	.014	
Constant <sup>a</sup>	-5.060	1.405	***	-2.100	1.632	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.349			.256		
N	535			590		

NS = not significant, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , one sided.

a = tested two sided since no hypothesis is stated. Source: EVS (2008)

Comparing the effect of importance one attaches to religion on the likelihood to vote for the radical right only proved to be significant for women. The effect of an anti-immigrant attitude had a positive effect for both men and women. For political dissatisfaction, the coefficient is higher for males than for females. Because these differences were not tested for significance, we cannot draw conclusions on the gender gap from this analysis. It might indicate that the effect that a specific item has on the likelihood to vote for the radical right differs between men and women (i.e. that there is a conditional effect). Future research might provide more insight into this approach to the gender gap.

### Conclusion and Discussion

In this paper, we tested whether a gender gap in radical right voting can be found in the Netherlands, and whether differences in structural backgrounds or attitudes accounted for this gender gap. We used the most recent version of the European Value Survey 2008 for our analysis. Two parties in the Netherlands, the PVV and TON, meet the requirements of the definition of radical right political parties provided by Mudde (2007). Our analysis was conducted in two steps, and included both an independent sample t-test for all items, and a logistic regression analysis to test the effect of specific items on the likelihood to vote for the radical right. We found that a gender gap in radical right voting is present in the Netherlands, with an overrepresentation of males among radical right voters. This gender gap was

explained by differences in structural backgrounds; by both the importance one attaches to religion in one's life and being self-employed. The higher the importance one attaches to religion, the less likely he or she is to vote for the radical right. Being self-employed, however, increases the likelihood to vote for the radical right. Attitudinal factors explained a large part of the variance in the radical right vote, but did not explain the gender gap. In conclusion, a gender gap is present in the Netherlands, and we found that differences in structural backgrounds, specifically the importance one attaches to religion in one's life and being self-employed, account for the difference between men and women in their level of radical right voting. Whether the presented effect is compositional or conditional remains unsolved. It could be that a compositional difference is present, but the salience one attaches to this item in deciding who to vote for might differ, and compensate for the compositional difference. We explored whether there might be indications for conditional effects by performing the logistic regression separately for men and women. In this analysis, the importance one attaches to religion in one's life only proved to be significant for women.

Moreover, being self-employed and occupational status was only shown to have an effect on the likelihood to vote for the radical right for men.

On the basis of our findings, it is clear that more research is needed to improve our insight into the gender gap in radical right voting. This paper focused primarily on whether compositional differences exist, and if conditional differences could also be present. The presented explorative analysis of differences in effect between men and women might be an indication of conditional effects. Therefore, future research should look at possible conditional explanations. Given the scarcity of research conducted on this topic, it is advisable to analyze a broader range of countries.

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