Under the veil of equality: a comparative analysis of gender issues of populist radical-right parties.

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Abstract: Central in this study is the position of women within the ideology of Western and Northern European populist radical-right parties. This position is assessed on the basis of election manifests from the 1990s up till 2016. This study shows that almost all parties included in this study hold conservative views regarding the position of women in the domain of the labour market, politics, care, and family. Furthermore, attention in this study is spend to the question how this conservative women position relates to anti-Islam criticism from a gender perspective. Populist radical-right parties, namely, accuse Muslims of having unequal values regarding women. It is shown in this study that populist radical-right parties become less conservative over the years, which is partly due to their Islam criticism from a gender perspective. In addition, it is also shown that populist radical-right parties pay less attention to women issues throughout the years. This indicates that the gender issues are losing its characteristic feature of populist radical-right parties (Kitschelt and McGann, 1997). Another claim that is made in this study, is the conservative views of populist radical-right parties regarding the position of women is partly responsible for the relative big gender-gap these parties experience. Thereby, this study broadens our understanding of the populist radical-right voting gap.

Keywords: gender, Islam, populism, radical-right, women issues.

1. Introduction

A recurrent finding since the electoral rise of the populist radical-right (PRR) parties is that more men than women vote for these parties (Givens, 2004; Mayer, 2002). For instance, Betz (1994) notes that in the late 1980s and early 1990s 60% of the supporters of the FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) and 57% of the FN (Front National) are men. In addition, Kitschelt and McGann (1997) note that men are 60-40 to 70-30 percent more likely to vote for PRR parties than women. They note that this observation underlines the anti-feminist sentiments of the extreme radical-right in European politics. Furthermore, Norris (2005) investigates the gap for Austria, Denmark and France and, again, finds that men outnumber women when it comes to voting for PRR parties.
Spierings and Zaslove (2015b) show, however, that we should be careful not to overstate the size of the gender-gap because mainstream right parties also experience a gender-gap, although smaller. Nevertheless, men stay overrepresented in voting for PRR parties. Research that focusses on why more men vote for these parties is relatively scarce (Fontana et al., 2006; Gidengil et al., 2005; Givens, 2004; Rippeyoung, 2007), which is remarkable since gender is important in explaining voting for PRR parties (Givens, 2004; Mayer, 2002; Norris, 2005). Research that investigates the gap, mainly tries to explain the gap on basis of demand-side (voters’ characteristics) explanations, in which two approaches are dominant.

The first focuses on socio-structural differences between men and women (Spierings and Zaslove, 2015). According to this model social positions can be seen as a determinant for vote choice. Hans-Georg Betz (1994) investigates the social fabric of PRR voters based on four social factors: religiosity, age, labour force participation, and occupational stratification. He shows that voters of the populist radical-right are both more likely to be young and less religious. Since, women are both more religious and overrepresented in older age groups, it is expected that this is responsible for the observation that more men vote for these parties than women (Mudde, 2007). A similar observation is made by Arzheimer and Carter (2009) who show that people who attend church regularly are less likely to vote for PRR parties due to their ties to Christian/ conservative democratic parties.

Thus, on the one hand, women are both more religious and overrepresented in older age groups. And, on the other hand, the electorate that supports PRR parties are characterized by being young and less religious. Therefore, it is expected that women are less likely to support PRR parties. However, Hartveld et al. (2015) show that socio-structural differences between men and women do exist but the extent to which they explain the gender-gap is limited. Thereby, it is primarily restricted to post-communist countries.

The second explanations focus on attitudinal differences between men and women. This approach builds on literature that identifies nativism and authoritarianism as core ideological concerns of the populist-radical right (Immerzeel, et al., 2015; Spierings and Zaslove, 2015, 2017). Research links these concerns with opposition to immigrants and support for stricter law-and-order policies (Spierings and Zaslove, 2015). The underlying assumption is that men are more in favour of stricter law-and-order and more opposed to immigration, which makes them more nativist and authoritarian. Again, Hartveld, et al. (2015)
show that attitudinal differences cannot explain the gender-gap, since, women are just as authoritarian as men, and even slightly more opposed to immigration.

Thus, so far, no satisfactory answer is given that can explain the gender-gap in relation the PRR voting based on demand-side –voters’ characteristics– explanations. Therefore, Immerzeel et al. (2015) link demand-side to supply-side –party characteristics– approaches. Based on party characteristics, they try to explain the gender-gap. They hypothesise that women refrain from voting for PRR parties because PRR parties are political outsiders – women are more likely to vote for successful parties– and because of their populist discourse – women are less attracted to political parties that use a polarizing style (Immerzeel, et al., 2015). Unfortunately, both did not seem to have an effect. So, looking at party-characteristics, such as political style and outsider image did also not help to explain the gender-gap.

All considered, to explain, or better: to broaden our understanding of the gender-gap we must look at different variables than those already examined in both the demand-side and supply-side approaches. Therefore, I will look at other party characteristics to further broaden our understanding of the gender-gap. Akkerman (2015) shows that PRR parties in Western Europe have conservative views regarding the position of women. Based on feminist political theory, which states that women are for a part overrepresented on the political liberal left because these parties pay attention to women issues from an emancipatory perspective. Therefore, I expect that the populist radical-right gender-gap is affected by the conservative position women have within their ideology. In addition, I will also look at the interplay between conservative stances towards the position of women and Islam criticism from a gender perspective because populist parties, throughout Europe, accuse Muslim immigrants of treating women unequal. They use this criticism to exemplify how Muslims are a threat to Western society (Akkerman, 2015; Akkerman and Hagelund, 2006; De Lange & Mügge, 2007; Moffitt, 2017).

To show that the gender-gap is partly affected by the position women have within the ideology of PRR parties in Northern and Western Europe, I have to assess their women position. This will be done on the basis of election programs. I expect that all PRR parties in Northern and Western Europe espouse conservative remarks regarding the position of women. The substantiation of this expectation is discussed in the theory section. In ‘data and methods’ I will reflect on the parties that are included in this study. After this follows an
overview of my results. In the conclusion I will reflect on the broader meaning of my results, shortcomings of my research, and I will give an advice for the direction of future research.

2. Literature

Central in this paper is if and how the size of the gender-gap is affected by the position women have within the ideologies of the populist radical-right parties over time. In addition, I will also focus on the current hot topic within the field of gender and the populist radical-right, namely, how the conservative position of women within the ideologies’ of PRR parties, relates to their anti-Islam criticism from a gender perspective. Therefore, the first part of this literature section, will examine what is known about the gender positions within the ideology of PRR parties. Second, I will discuss literature, which relates the conservative position of women within the ideology of PRR parties to their gendered Islam criticism. Last, in this theory section I will present theory on which I built my main hypothesis: the relative size of the gender-gap is affected by position women have within the ideologies’ of PRR parties.

2.1 Gender positions within the party family

Kitschelt and McGann (1997) show that gender is a frequently overlooked issue in research that investigates the populist radical-right. They argue that this is remarkable since gender issues are a characteristic feature of its ideology and part of its electoral appeal. The studies that do address gender within the populist radical-right show that all parties have conservative views when discussing the position of women (Amesberger and Halbmayr, 2002; Mudde, 2000; Rydgren, 2006). All PRR parties promote the family as the exclusive core institution of society. Furthermore, they are also opposed to same-sex marriages and abortion. Charles and Hintje (1998) show that, although, all parties can be identified as being conservative with regards to the position of women, the degree conservatism within the populist radical-right varies to a great degree.

In a newer study Akkerman (2015) comes to the same conclusion. In “Gender and the radical-right in Western Europe” Akkerman investigates how Western PRR parties look at gender issues in the domain of the labour market, politics, care, and the family. Based on these issues, she argues, that all parties, included in her research, (National Front, French; Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang, Belgium; the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, Austria;
Schweizerische Volkspartei, Switzerland; Danks Folkeparti, Denmark; and the Partij voor de Vrijheid, Dutch) espouse conservative views regarding women but that the level of conservatism varies; with the Front National as most and the Schweizerische Volkspartei as the least conservative.

Since, it is essential in this paper to track down what position women have within the ideologies’ of PRR parties over time, I will assess this for all Western and Northern European countries. In doing this I both reassess Akkerman’s findings and extent them to the Nordic PRR parties. I have chosen to reassess Akkerman’s findings because the method she, and, I, use is qualitative. Therefore, I must look if my way of coding aligns with hers. I can only judge this by redoing the work she already did. Moreover, I will look at a longer time-period. I expect to find the same results as Akkerman did for both the Western and Northern European PRR parties. This expectation is formalised in the two hypotheses below.

Hypothesis 1: I expect that all parties espouse conservative views regarding the position of women in the domain of the labour market, politics, care, and family

Hypothesis 2: Although all parties have conservative views towards gender issues their level of conservatism will vary.

2.2 Islam, gender and the populist radical-right

Akkerman (2015) shows in “Gender and the radical-right in Western Europe” how the Islam is criticised on the basis of a women issues by PRR parties, and how this relates to their own women views. She notes that populist radical-right parties in Western Europe espouse conservative views in relation to the position of women, on the one hand. On the other, they heavily condemn any differences between man and woman in the culture and the religion (Islam) of immigrants. PRR parties argue that women are not equal to men in the Islam and that this indicates the backwardness of Muslims. Western PRR parties, strongly argue, that this backward position exemplifies their threat to Western civilisation (Akkerman, 2015; Akkerman and Hagelund, 2007; De Lange & Mügge, 2007; Moffitt, 2017; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015). Akkerman, therefore, concludes that these parties are ultimately ‘Janus-faced’ because they are against any policy that has the intention to improve the position of women, but they do position themselves as the true defenders of women in their anti-Islam
rhetoric’s. They even accuse leftist and liberals of disregarding discrimination against immigrant/ Muslim women (Betz, 2002).

Thus, PRR parties use gender issues in their anti-Islam rhetoric combined with conservative women views. Moffitt (2017) shows in “Liberal illiberalism” how the Northern PRR parties (Danish People’s Party, DF; Progress Party, FrP; Party for Freedom, PVV; and the Sweden Democrats, SD) uphold this difficult contrasting position by positioning themselves as defenders of gender equality, on the one hand. And, on the other, rejecting any policies that are designed to further equalise the position of women. He argues that both the more socially conservative (SD and DF) and the less socially conservative (FrP and PVV) Northern populist parties treat gender issue as if gender equality is already an established fact. In this way, gender equality is not perceived as a goal but as something that is already accomplished. The constructing of this social ‘fact’ enables PRR parties to “simultaneously support gender equality and simultaneously criticise further gender equality measures” (Moffitt, 2017, p. 115). This argument is especially strong in the case of the DF and FrP because these parties are led by women. They utilise this to show that gender equality is already established. They see any further measures to establish gender equality a form of social engineering by the elite. The more socially conservative SD and DF do this under the title of: equality is not positive discrimination. And, the less socially conservative parties, argue that any further measures of equalisation interferences with individual freedom and market choice (ibid.).

Thus, Moffitt (2017) shows how both the more and less socially conservative Northern PRR parties can uphold the contrasting position of condemning any measure to improve the position of women in combination with Islam criticism based on gender issues. Based on Moffitt’s work, I expect that PRR parties included in this study, will use similar defence methods. Furthermore, I expect that another method to avoid accusations of being Janus-faced is by lowering salience towards gender issues by PRR parties, or, by becoming less socially conservative. These expectations are formalised in the two hypotheses below.

Hypothesis 3: I expect that other PRR parties use similar justifications as the FD, FrP, PVV, and SD to uphold their contrasting position of criticising Islam on basis of gender equality in combination with (1) condemning any further measures to equalise the position of women in relation to man, and (2) with conservative views regarding the position of women.
Hypothesis 4: I expect that Islam criticism from a gender perspective will result in (1) a drop in the level of conservativism regarding the position of women, and (2) that gender issues will receive less when the Islam is attacked on the basis of gender issues.

2.3 Party characteristics and women’s vote choice

In this last part of the theory section I will elaborate why I expect that the gender-gap is affected by the conservative position women have within the ideologies’ of PRR parties (Akkerman, 2015). For this, I will present theories that explain why women are more inclined to vote for liberal left parties.

Inglehart and Norris (2000; 2003), for instance, show three developments in women’s voting behaviour. The first stage (lasting until the late 1970s) is characterised by an overrepresentation of women voting for conservative parties (also found by Campbell et al., 1960; Norris, 1988; Randall, 1987), which is called the ‘traditional gender-gap’. Drivers of this electoral behaviour are higher levels of religiosity among women on the one hand. And, on the other hand, their low level of labour market participation (Baxter and Lansing, 1983; Blankenburg, 1967; Manow and Emmenegger, 2012). The second stage lasted from the late 1970s to the late 1980s. This stage is the so-called party de-alignment stage because gender differences no longer play a role in explaining voting behaviour (Inglehart and Norris, 2000). This process is predominately being explained by modernisation and secularisation processes in combination with the overall decomposition of cleavages (Inglehart and Norris, 2000).

Surprisingly, new gendered voting behaviour re-emerged in advanced democracies (ibid). However, this time, the gender-gap exhibits a female preference for liberal left parties. This stage is called the modern gender voting gap. This new phenomenon is explained based on socio-structural/ situational and attitudinal explanations.

The socio-structural/ situational explanations focus on the role women have within society and family (Abenschön and Stienmetz, 2014). It is argued that women are more inclined to vote for liberal leftist parties due to their economic independence in combination with greater exposure to labour market and gender inequalities at work (De Vaus and McAllister 1989; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Manza and Brooks, 1998; Togeby 1994). Other explanations focus on the increased instability women are under because of changing gender stereotypes and family structures. It is expected that this development led to a situation in which women favour de-familisation of social services, the extension of public
welfare institutions and equal opportunity policies. Since, these issues are most addressed by liberal left parties, it is expected that this is responsible for the over representation of women on the political left (Erickson and O’Neill 2002; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Manza and Brooks 1998).

The attitudinal explanations focus on the question if attitudes and value orientations can explain the over representation of women on the political left (Abenschön and Steinmetz, 2014). It is expected that changes in the socio-structural position of women has led to corresponding value and attitudinal changes, which are expected to be responsible for the modern voting-gap (Giger, 2009; Manow and Emmenegger 2012; Studlar et al. 1998). A part of the attitudinal model focuses on the transmission of post-materialist and feminist ideas through the Western world. It is theorised that this development has led to the overrepresentation of liberal left orientated women voters, since liberal parties are more prominent defender of values such as gender equality than conservative parties (Conover, 1988; Frankovic, 1982; Gilligan, 1982).

Empirical evidence for this is mixed, however. McElroy and Marsh (2010), for instance, argue for the Finnish context, that men and women both find it equally important that a party pays attention to women issue. Moreover, Abenschön and Stienmetz (2014) do a similar finding. When they look at voting behaviour in both Western and Eastern European countries, they do not see a link between party characteristics – attention to women issues – and increased number of women voters for liberal left parties.

On the other hand, there is empirical evidence that does find a connection between attention to women issues and more female votes. Wängnerud (2000) finds, for example, for the 1985, 1988, and 1994 Swedish elections that women are more favourable to vote for women candidates that belong to the political liberal left because they represent women issues from an equality perspective. A similar finding is done by Campbell (2006) who shows that women vote differently than men in the United States due different policy priorities. He finds that women hold higher value to gender-related issues compared to men, which influences their voting behaviour - women are more likely to vote for a candidate that they believe is more concerned about women issues. Akin to this observation is the finding of Plutzer and Zipp (1996). They find that candidates (in this case: women) for the Democratic party receive more female votes if they are not simply seen as ‘standing-for’ women but if they are perceived as ‘acting-for’ women. This means that the candidates have to be
perceived as attaching importance to women issues. Furthermore, Richardson and Freeman (2003) find that women do not ‘just’ vote for a candidate that is perceived as having gender equality views but that it is also important that they are vocal about these issues.

The above shows that women vote for parties and candidates based on policy issues. It seems that women find it overall important that a party is concerned with women-issues when voting. Furthermore, it shows that candidates that are both liberal with regard to women issues and vocal about these issues, are more likely to get female votes. Since, populist radical-right parties in North and West Europe are conservative with regard to women issues (Akkerman), I expect that having conservative women views is one of the reason why the populist radical-right is experiencing a gender-gap. To test this, I will look if the more conservative populist radical-right parties are experiencing bigger gender-gaps than the PRR parties with a less conservative position regarding women. Furthermore, since, being vocal about these issues also matters, I expect, that being vocal about these also affects the gender-gap. I think that parties that are liberal in relation to the position of women in combination with high salience regarding these topics, will experience a smaller gender gap than those parties that are conservative and vocal about it. These two expectations are formalised in two hypotheses below.

Hypothesis 5: The position women have within the ideology of North-West Europe will affect the number of female voters on populist radical right parties.

Hypothesis 6: The amount of salience women issues receive will affect the gender-gap.

- Conservative viewpoints in combination with high salience will result in a bigger gender-gap.
- Conservative viewpoints in combination with less salience will result in a smaller gender-gap.
- Liberal viewpoints in combination with less salience will result in the second smallest gender-gap
- Liberal viewpoints in combination with high salience will result in the smallest gender-gap

3. Data and case selection
To capture Northern and Western PPR parties’ gender ideology I have chosen to analyse national election manifestos for similar reasons other authors choose this method
(Akkerman, 2015; De Lange & Mügge, 2015; Klemmensen et al., 2007; Laver and Garry, 2000). First, content of election manifestos is in general more carefully phrased than internal literature or less official publications (Akkerman, 2015). Second, election programs are official and authoritative documents that party leaders can only depart from with great difficulty (Laver and Garry, 2000). And, third, they are reasonably comparable over time (Klemmensen et al., 2007). Problematic, however, is that the parties can speak with forked tongues in their election programs (Gospey and Macklin, 2011). Therefore, it is important that the front-stage data (election manifestos) should be checked by internal documents if I suspect incoherencies. Suspicion is the result of extensive investigation of all election programs.

Furthermore, to compare women positions with the number of female voters, I must establish an overview of the number of male and female voters for PRR parties. For this I used the datasets of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). CSES is a collaborative program of research, which studies political elections. The data available in the CSES data series range from 1996 up to 2016, and the number of countries that are included varies between the 32 and 44.

Since, I am only able to assess gender-gaps for the period between 1996 and 2016, I am limited to this time period in my research. Another limitation is sample size. To get significant results, I need at least 30 respondents/voters for an individual PRR party in the dataset. That is why I have chosen to exclude those parties, as the Alternative for Germany (AfD), because they did not have more than 30 respondents in any point in the dataset (1996-2016). In addition, I have chosen to only look at Western and Northern PRR parties because theory behind my hypothesis is based on Western countries. An important condition in these theories is a certain level of economic and societal development (Ingelhart & Norris, 2000, 2003). Since, this is not the case for Eastern European countries, I have chosen to exclude them from my research.

On the account of these limitations I have selected the following populist radical-right parties. Five of which are of long standing and are founded before 1990: the French Front national (National Front, FN), Vlaams Blok/ Vlaams Belang (Flemish Bloc/ Interest, VB); Norway’s Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party, FrP); Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden Democrats, SD); the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ). Two in the 1990s: the Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People’s Party, DF); Sannfinländarna/ Perussuomalaiset (True Finns/ Finns Party, PS). And the other two are newest members of the party family in this study:
Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People’s Party, SVP); and the Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom, PVV). Although, the SVP was founded in 1937, the new anti-immigrant profile the party developed in 2003 under the new leader Christoph Blocher, makes it a relevant to assess this party as a relatively new party to the family.

Most of the election programs of these parties can be found in the data set of the European Manifesto Project. Programs that were not included in the dataset are found on the parties’ websites. Unfortunately, I was not able to distract all party manifestos from the world wide web. These election programs are therefore missing data. Below is an overview for all the election manifestos that are included in the research.

![Figure 1: overview of election manifestos included in this study.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election manifesto’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden Democrats (SD)</td>
<td>2010, 2014</td>
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3.1 Independent variable

Gender position is the main explanatory variable in this research. To distract parties’ positions from election programs I use a qualitative analysis based on coding scheme. For this I use the coding scheme of Akkerman (2015) with fixed categories, which she inductively gathers from a survey of election manifestos. The categories include the domain of the family, care, politics and the labour market.

The issues range from labour market participation, equal rights, educational opportunities, political participation, equal rights, educational opportunities, political participation, public childcare, freedom of choice or family planning/abortion and the equal status of same-sex partnerships. When the parties support these policies, they get a negative
score (-1). Thus, the more negatives scores a party receives the more liberal they should be regarded in relation to women issues. In contrast, if they receive more positive scores, they should be seen as having conservative views regarding women positions. In some cases, however, it is not clear if a party should be regarded as conservative or liberal. In these cases, a party scores a zero.

In a “Gender and the radical right in Western Europe”, Akkerman presents some of these ambiguous cases. Support for parental leave, for instance, can have the intention to support equality between men and women, however, it can also have the intention to increase childbirth or to strengthen the traditional family. Another example are appeals to increase childcare allowances. It is not always clear if this is intended to improve the situation of single-mothers or to improve the situation of the traditional family. So, if intentions of a certain policy proposal are not clear, they score a zero.

To compare the parties cross-nationally scores must be standardised. Standardisation rules out the possibility that parties are assessed more liberal than other parties due to a higher number of remarks in relation to women issues. This is simply done by adding up all the scores and divide them by the total amount of remarks: \( PG = \frac{P_{\text{con}} - P_{\text{lib}}}{P_{\text{con}} + P_{\text{neutral}} + P_{\text{lib}}} \), where \( PG \) is parties' (P) on gender (G); \( P_{\text{con}} \) is conservative position; \( P_{\text{neutral}} \) is neutral position; and \( P_{\text{lib}} \) is a liberal position.

In addition, I also hypothesise that salience in combination with women position matters for the size of the gender-gap (see hypothesis 5). Therefore, I had to measure salience and multiply this by parties’ conservative/ liberal position. Salience can be measured in two ways. First, I can look at the number of remarks parties make in relation to gender issues. Second, I can look at the importance these issues have in their election program by dividing the number of words spend to gender issues by the total amount of words. I have chosen to use the latter, since comparability is not possible with the former method.\(^1\) The first only looks at number of remarks, however, if the party program of party A is twice as big as that of party B, it is likely that they will also have twice as much remarks about gender-issues, however, this does not indicate that they prioritise gender issues more than party B. Therefore, I have chosen to look at relative importance, which is possible with the second method.

\(^1\) For the absolute number of remarks see Appendix.
Furthermore, in line with Akkerman (2015), I have chosen to analyse paragraphs as unit of measurement rather than sentences, although, for a different reason. Akkerman argues that she chooses paragraphs because “paragraphs are objectively traceable units, and they have the advantage that they convey more coherent statements than sentences” (Akkerman, 2015, pp. 43-44). I found that this was not the case for most election programs. Contradictions were no exception in the election programs of PRR parties. For instance, some paragraphs start with the conservative statement that the family is the cornerstone of society, followed by gender equality remarks. This sometimes ambiguous and incoherent structure of paragraphs is precisely the reason why I choose to analyse paragraphs instead of sentences. Because if I only look at sentences, I could run the risk of miscalculating conservative/ liberal scores, and, thereby the corresponding score would not represent parties’ gender views.

For example, three relatively liberal statements can be made, although, the overall message of a paragraph is conservative because the first statement is so conservative that it cancels out the next liberal statements. Therefore, if find interpretation key in assessing election programs, which is easier done on the basis of paragraphs. And that is why I choose to analyse paragraphs instead of sentences. Problematic, however, with this method is that scores are more susceptible for interpretations errors, which can harm both the validity and trustworthiness of my research. That is why I will try to be as transparent as possible in my research. All the steps underlying the scores can, therefore, be asked upon request.

3.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable – gender-gap – is measured with CSES data. Between the period of 1996 and 2016 respondents are asked on which parties they voted in the last elections. To assess the gender-gaps I categorised women and men votes separately. An independent sample t-test was used to check if the differences between man and women are significant. The independent sample t-test shows that about 60% of the differences observed in the sample are significant. I expect that the non-significant results are due to small sample sizes (small N). The non-significant numbers are therefore also presented in this study; however,

2 The entire document (over 80 pages) of paragraphs upon which the gender position scores are calculated can be asked upon request: eliashissink@gmail.com.
we should interpret them with caution. In addition, I calculated the gender-gap by subtracting the percentage of male votes by the percentage of female votes. In the results it will show that all parties but one (Austrian Freedom Party in 2008) have a positive gender-gap in every election year, meaning: more men voted on these parties than women (note that not all gaps are significant). Again, to compare the gender-gaps cross-nationally, the gender-gap had to be standardised. This is done by calculating the gap size for the total number of male votes.

3.3 Control variables

It is likely that the size of the gender gap is affected by other variables. Therefore, I will control for two variables. The first control variable is ‘newness’. Roth (1989) showed that women are less likely to vote for new political parties because women are more hesitant to new political developments. Therefore, I will control for ‘newness’. Specifically, I look if PRR parties receive fewer female votes when they are in their early politically years. Newness is measured in years since the parties were founded.

Furthermore, I expect that the gender-gap is affected by female leadership for two reasons. First, because women are more inclined to vote for a female leader when they are in the ballot box (Giger, et al., 2012; Wängnerund, 2000). That is why I expect that the gender-gap will be smaller for the years PRR parties had a female leader (Austrian Freedom Party, Danish People’s Party, National Front, Progress Party). Second, I expect that female leadership will have its consequences for parties’ ideologies. When Marine Le Pen replaced her father as the leader of the party in 2012 she promoted a more modern image of the party. She referred to herself as a modern woman “a woman of her times...free...modern...divorced, a mother of three” (Senac and Parodi, 2013). Therefore, I expect that a party’s ideology is affected by a transition from male to female leadership in the context of gender issues, which, on its part, will increase the probability of women votes. Therefore, I expect that female leadership will affected the size of the gender-gap.
3.4 Analytical strategy

Ideally, I would use a linear regression model to test the main hypothesis: does gender positions influence the gender-gap. A regression analysis would enable me too to check if the voting-gap gap can be predicted based on gender position. To show this, I would first include gender-positions in the regression model for all parties and for every available election. Thereafter, I would include the control variables to see in which ways this affects the relationship between gender positions and the gap. Furthermore, I would perform multi-level modelling where a random slope of the gender effect on radical right voting is added and slope variance is explained by cross-level interactions of the party variables with gender (Hox, 2002). However, since my N is too small (19) a regression analysis would not be appropriate to include in this research. Therefore, I will present and elaborate the regression analysis in the appendix.

4. Results

4.1 Women’s position within the ideology of PRR parties

The blue line in Figure 2 represents the positions of populist radical-right parties on gender issues over time. The y-axis indicates the level of conservatism versus liberalism towards these issues. A positive score indicates conservative views and a negative score liberal views regarding gender issues. On the x-axis the election programs are represented by the years they were released. The graphs show that most parties are overall conservative throughout the years, although the level of conservatism varies. Furthermore, the bars indicate the level of importance women issues have within the election programs of the populist radical-right parties measured in percentages. In addition, the red dots represent Islam criticism from a gender perspective. Figure two shows that most parties pay about five percent of their election programs to women issues.

It stands out that the Party for Freedom (PVV) and the Danish People’s Party are not included in figure 2. The reason for this that women positions cannot be assessed because they do not pay enough attention to the position of women in their election programs. For the PVV this is remarkable, since their election programs are relatively extensive (up to 2017 their programs have around 50 to 60 pages). The election programs of the Danish People’s
Figure 2: The positions of the FN, FPO, FrP, PS, SD, SVP and VB with respect to gender issues, combined with salience and references to Islam from a gender perspective.
party, however, are all overall very brief, which explains their small attention to women issues.

When the PVV mentions gender issues this is almost always in relation to Islam. For instance: “Mass immigration has enormous consequences for all facets of our society ...and it flushes decades of women’s emancipation down the drain”.\(^3\) And: “The Koran dictates behaviour that is contrary to our state of law – like anti-Semitism, discrimination against women, killing of infidels and the holy war – until Islamic world dominance is a fact”.\(^4\) The only time the PVV mentions gender issues without remarks to the Islam is in their election program of 2012. In here, they state, that they are opposed to any quota that have the intention to improve the position of women on the labour market. All considered, the PVV does not pay enough attention to gender issues to judge what position women have within their ideology. I suspect that their opposition to quotas are led by an overall opposition to any forms of positive-discrimination. A finding that is shared by all PRR parties in Northern and Western Europe. Opposition against positive-discrimination is in my opinion the result of their anti-immigrant position because quotas are also used to improve the position of immigrants, since PRR parties do not believe immigrants should be helped (with government money), they oppose any forms of positive discrimination.

The remarkable silent stance towards gender issues by the PVV – only one mention in 2012, and none in 2010 and 2006 – is likely to be the result of the connection between the PVV and the Staatkundige Gereformeerde Partij (SGP, Orthodox Reformed Party) (Akkerman, 2015). In the period 2010-2012 the PVV was not formally in government but they were part of a political construction. In this construction the government rested on the support of the PVV for a majority in parliament. The SGP was a close ally of the PVV in this construction, therefore, the PVV was careful not to harm this relationship, and, since, the SGP holds very conservative views regarding women, the PVV were not outspoken about gender issues publicly. Abortion, for instance was something the PVV did not defend in this period. Furthermore, they even stated that the discrimination of women within the SGP had not to be settled in court but that it was an internal party matter. Thus, what position women have within the party ideology cannot be assessed based on election programs. For the period 2010-2012 this is likely to be the result of their political connection with the conservative

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\(^4\) Election program: Hun Brussel, Ons Europa (2010).
Orthodox Reformed Party. For the period therefor, and thereafter, I cannot find an explanation why the PVV does not elaborate more on women issues, especially, in comparison to other PPR parties in Europe. That the position of women within the ideology of the Danish People’s Party cannot be assessed based on election programs is less remarkable in contrast to the PVV. Their election programs range between one and four pages. Most of these programs consist of bullet points supplemented with pictures. Although, the party does make some about gender issues it is not enough to assess their score. However, when they do so, it is almost always from a conservative perspective. In the election program of 2005, for instance, they first mention the family by stating, first, that the “family is the cornerstone of the country”\textsuperscript{5}. And, second, the Danish People’s Party states that they will strengthen the position of the family, since “a safe and good family is the foundation for human being, and all that can contribute to it”\textsuperscript{6}. In 2011 the Danish People’s Party mentions for the first-time women in relation to Islam, although, very briefly: in the context of Islamic integration they mention that women should be able to move freely at nights. Implying that this is currently not the case, and that is due Muslim immigrants. All considered, the Danish People’s Party does not offer enough information to assess what position women have within their ideology based on election programs.

In contrast, the election programs of the National Front offers a lot of insight regarding their women views. Based on these programs I conclude that the National Front is one of the most conservative parties in my research. In the earlier programs (1997/2002) the National Front begins with elaborating the important place the family has within society. The FN argues that mothers of large families should receive maternal income “provided that they are French”\textsuperscript{7}. In addition, National front is in favour of family-voting, which means that French families should receive an additional number of votes in proportion to the number of minor children. This, “to reclaim the power of the family as the most important institute”.\textsuperscript{8}

Moreover, the National Front is one of the most outspoken anti-abortion party of this study. The FN use current French abortion legislation to exemplify what is wrong with current views regarding the family – it is not traditional enough. They, therefore, argue that the traditional

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\textsuperscript{5} Election program: Dit Land, Dit Valg..endnu (2005).
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} Election program: Un Programme Pour Governer (1997).
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
family is under attack and that it needs to be put “back in the spotlight”\textsuperscript{9}. The election program of 2007, five years later, indicates that family issues has come to a second place, after immigration issues. However, this does not mean that the National Front becomes less conservative. Again, the party is heavily anti-abortion and pro-large families and they state that birth rates should increase to fight the influx of immigrants. One way of establishing this is by enforcing maternal income. Again, five years later, when Marine Le Pen replaced her father as the leader of the National Front she promoted a more modern image. Although the party became slightly less conservative, especially with regards to abortion (she said to tolerate the legal situation in France regarding abortion), there overall position regarding the position of women did not really change. The family staid of “unmeasurable importance”. If we look at the election program of 2017, it looks, however, that Marine Le Pen was more able to reflect her more modern image of the party by defending individual and women rights. However, the lower score is not only the result of a change in ideology, but the lower score is mostly the result of less salience towards women issues in the last election program. Thus overall, the National Front is one of the most conservative parties in this study, although, it seems that the under the leadership of Marine Le Pen women issues become less important and slightly less conservative.

Similar, to the National Front is the Flemish Block/Interest in relation to women issues. They also espouse very conservative views. Especially, in the 1990s and 2000s. They see women mostly as mothers and as part of the family. The importance of this stance is reluctantly repeated throughout the 90s. VB argues again and again that they are a family-party, which holds high regard to traditional values. They argue, similar to the National Front, that the family is the most important institute of society, which should be protected against any forms of individualism. They are also strongly opposed to abortion, calling it homicide: “expansion of the abortus law is horrendous. A sickness of modern civilisation. The killing of children is homicide”.\textsuperscript{10} Furthermore, they argue that the “destruction of the family as institute” and modern abortion legislation is the result of individualism and feminism: “Feminism has led to an one-sided egocentrically en socially destructive mentality in which the natural female nature is terribly miss recognised and at which there is no place for children”.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{9} Election program: Programme du Front National (2002).
\textsuperscript{10} Election program: Uit Zelfverdediging (1991).
\textsuperscript{11} Election program: Nu Afrekenen! Vlaams Blok, Eigen volk eerst Verkiezingsprogramma (1995).
The election programs of the 2000s indicate that the position of the VB is slowly becoming less conservative, although, they still refer to themselves as a family-party that is strongly opposed to abortion, and in which women are still regarded as wives and mothers instead of individuals. The biggest change regarding the position of women can be found in the election program of 2010. It is the first time that the VB does not refer to themselves as a family-party with strong traditional views. Another, interesting finding is that VB does not talk about abortion anymore. Where abortion issues received lengthy room in their earlier election programs, the topic is no longer being discussed. This exemplifies their overall stance towards women issues – they do no longer pay attention to the topic. This trend continues in their program of 2014. Again, no attention is paid to gender issues. Thus, an interesting observation can be made on the basis of the election programs of the VB: their level of salience towards gender issues drops dramatically over the years, which also affects their level of conservatism.

Two other parties also display a big drop in their level of conservatism. First, The True Finns/ Finns Party (PS). In the first election program that is included in this study (2003) women issues and the family are relatively well represented. The PS views the family as “an invaluable foundation of society that must be given priority”. Moreover, just like the VB and FN, PS argues that birth-rates must increase to fight the influx of immigrants. They even claim that women should not pay intuition fees when attending university because these cost result in debts, which hinders in their turn childbirth because women must work to pay back their debts. Another interesting observation is that the PS pays a lot of attention to gender issues in 2003 compared to other years. Responsible for this seems to be the honour killing of Fadime Şahindal, which made a lot of impact in the Scandinavian countries (Hildebrant, 2002). In this period gender issues were broadly discussed in the Scandinavian countries. I, therefore, expect that their high salience towards gender issues in the party program of 2003 of the PS can be explained by the overall great attention women issues received in Scandinavian society.

I also expect this is responsible for the drop of conservatism score for the Progress Party (FrP). Before 2002 the FrP was considerably more conservative than after this period. The FrP’s views regarding the position of women is, in contrast to the other parties, harder to
assess, since they frame their arguments in very liberal terms. For instance: “The Progress Party’s policies are based on the liberal ideology that prioritises all people’s right to live as free and independent individuals, as long as they do not forcefully engage in the rights of others to free and independent living”.\(^{14}\) However, on the same page they argue that the welfare state is impairing the importance of the family in society, a development that must be fought to not further weaken the position of the family in society. In addition, they argue that the family is the most stable foundation of society and that women have a vital role to fulfil in the family. Therefore, the FrP states that they want to make it easier for women to stay at home. This position stays the same up to 2001. In 2001, conservative views are still framed from in liberal terms to defend the status-quo, in which the government should not interfere with personal matters, especially, when it comes to the traditional role of the family.\(^{15}\) After 2002, the period the honour-killing of Fadime Şahindal occurred, the FrP becomes less conservative, as already mentioned in the beginning of the paragraph. After 2006 the level of conservatism as their salience towards women issues drops further. I expect that this has the due with the female leadership of Siv Jensen. All considered, it seems for both the Scandinavian Progress Party and the Finns First/ Finns Party have changed their views regarding women from outspoken conservative to moderately conservative, which concurred with the death of Fadime Şahindal.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to assess if the death of Fadime Şahindal affected attitudes towards the position of women for the Sweden Democrats, since I miss their election programs prior to the election of 2010. Therefore, I cannot track down how the honour killing of Şahindal changed their women views. I can only state that the SD has a remarkable position compared to other PRR parties in Europe, since they are the least conservative party regarding women issues. In addition, their liberal character is remarkable, since the Sweden Democrats are categorised as a more socially conservative populist radical-right party (Moffitt, 2017). Another thing that stands out is that it seems that they pay relatively much attention to women issues. They spent around 12 percent of their election programs women issues, however, this score is mostly due to their small election programs. The remarks they make about the position of women are mixed. On the one hand, families should be helped financially, tax-funded support for gender educations should be abolished,

\(^{14}\) **Election program:** Prinsipp-og handlingsprogram (1993).
\(^{15}\) **Election program:** Prinsipp- og Handlingsprogram (2001)
and that there should be zero tolerance towards women-friendly attitudes in schools or other public institutions. On the other hand, the SD argues that more money must be spend on women shelters and that research to treatment of women diseases should receive more money. This ambivalent position to women issues shifts slightly to a more liberal stance in their election program of 2014, although, they still hold that the traditional family is an important institute. The following quote exemplifies this ambivalent position: “The Sweden democrats are for a Sweden with no discrimination on grounds of sex, ethnic background, age, sexual orientation or disability. A Sweden where there is room for those who want to break traditional patterns and at the same time we do not shame and blame the ones who want to live in accordance with such patterns”. Thus, Sweden Democrats are assessed as an outlier in this paper, since they are more liberal than the other parties. Unfortunately, I was only able to find two election programs of the SD. Therefore, it is hard to observe a trend and or to describe their views regarding the position of women before the period of 2010. Furthermore, as already noted at the beginning of this paragraph, it is interesting that I assess the Sweden Democrats as fairly liberal, since they are known for their socially conservative character. This is something on which I will reflect later in the discussion.

Other parties that do not seem to follow the trend of declining conservatism are the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP). What position women have within the ideology of the FPÖ’s is hard to assess for the period between 1990 and 2000. In this period the party refrains from talking about women issues, with the only exception in 1994. In this year the FPÖ makes five remarks about the position of women. In all remarks the FPÖ espouses traditional views, in which women are seen as mothers and wives. Between 1999 and 2006, however, the party changes its position towards women issues. Not only do they spend much more attention to these issues, they also change their position towards a liberal one. For instance, the party stated in their election program of 2002 that the night-work ban for women was discriminatory and had to be abolished, that special programs had to be introduced of active labour market policies for women, and that the income gap between men and women had to be changed. However, this drastic different perception towards women issues is a strategy to decrease the underrepresentation of women voters (Akkerman and Hagelund, 2007). For this, the party not only changed it views

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16 Election program: VI VÄLJER VÄLFÄRD! (2014).
regarding women issues, the board of the party also appointed two female leaders to accomplish this strategy. Respectively, Susanne Riess-Passer for the period 2000-2000 and Ursula Haubner for the period 2004-2005. However, after the 2006 the party changed its position 180 degrees again. In the election programs of 2008 and 2010 the FPÖ does not only support the traditional family and motherhood, they also accept the underrepresentation of the woman in the labour market. Moreover, they even state that feminism is a threat to society. In addition, in the years preceding 2008, women had its own category in the election programs, however, after 2006 this chapter has entirely been replaced by the family, in which women are depicted as mothers needing special protection. Thus, in contrast to all other PRR parties discussed in the paper, the FPÖ is the only party that (1) tried to actively close the gender-gap by appointing women as leaders, and (2) did not become less but more conservative regarding women issues in the 2000s.

The Swiss People’s Party also shows a deviant trend compared to other PRR parties. Based on the first two election programs, included in this study, I assess the Swiss People’s Party with a fairly liberal score. This is due their traditional views “the family is the core of the community” and “house work deserves the same recognition as out-of-home work” in combination with calls for gender equality and equal rights. In the late 90s early 2000s, however, there is a swing towards more conservative viewpoints. The SVP argues “Equality Offices, Women’s Representatives and Gender Study Research Units are increasingly interfering in the division of husband and wife”. Also their anti-abortion stance and calls for the traditional family are more represented in their election programs during 1999-2003. In the election program of 2007, however, the SVP is becoming less conservative. Remarks of gender equality are again included in the program, however, the SVP states simultaneously that the state should not interfere with personal affairs of citizens and that the traditional family should be supported by tax reforms. The election program of 2011 does not mention the position of women anymore, surprisingly. Therefore, women position cannot be assessed for their election program of 2011. Thus, the SVP is a somewhat remarkable party, since their stances towards women issues vary to a great degree. Furthermore, just as most other PRR parties in Europe, there is a drop in their level of attention they spend towards women issues, which results in a drop of conservatism towards these issues.

18 Election program: Schweizer Qualität (2003).
The above is almost in line with what I expected – Hypothesis 1: I expected that all parties would espouse conservative views in relation to the position of women in the domain of the labour marked, politics, care, and family. If we look at the results presented in figure 2, I conclude that the Front National, the Progress Party, True Finns and the Flemish Bloc/Interest, all hold conservative views regarding women issues. Furthermore, the Swiss People’s Party can also be assessed as conservative overall, except for the period between 1991 and 1995. In addition, the Austrian People’s Party also expressed conservative women views except for the period between 1999 and 2006 when the party tried to decrease the size of the gender-gap. Thus, the results are mostly in line with my expectation: PRR parties have conservative views regarding the position of women.

In my second hypothesis I expected that the level of conservatism would vary when comparting the different PRR parties. Based on the findings presented above, this is exactly the case. Some parties changed their women views drastically over the years: the Austrian Freedom party and the Swiss People’s Party. Other parties became less conservative: the National Front, Progress Party, True Finns/Finns first, and the Flemish Block/Interest. And, one, the Sweden Democrats are assessed as liberal for the years their election programs are included. Thus, also the second hypothesis is confirmed.

Two additional conclusions can be drawn based on the results presented above. First, as expected, women leadership does affect a parties’ ideology. Where women were/are leading the party, respectively the Austrian People’s Party, the National Front and the Progress Party views regarding women issues became less conservative. This is an interesting finding, since women leadership thus affect a parties’ views regarding women issues in this study. Second, I found that the overall attention towards gender issues declined over the years for all parties, except the Austrian Freedom Party. This indicates that women issues, or: the position of women within the ideology of PRR parties is losing it importance. Thus, in contrast to Kitschelt and McGann (1997), I must conclude that gender issues are losing their defining character for PRR parties. In the next section I will elaborate if the decreasing importance of women issues is due to their Islam criticism from a gender perspective.
4.2 Islam, gender, and the populist radical-right

In the theory section I stated that I expect that PRR parties would become less conservative in the years they criticised Islam based on women issues and/or would pay less attention to women issues, since Islam criticism based on gender equality is hard to uphold with conservative views regarding the position of women. Furthermore, I expected that PRR parties would use similar strategies as the Danish People’s Party, Progress Party, Sweden Democrats and the Party for Freedom, to uphold Islam criticism from a gender perspective with an opposition to any emancipatory women policies. For instance: the more socially conservative parties, as the Sweden Democrats and Danish People’s Party, combine conservative women positions with Islam criticism based on gender equality by opposing policies that have the intention to improve the situation of women by stating that “equality is not the same as positive discrimination”. And, the less socially conservative parties, as the Party for Freedom and the Progress Party, oppose measures of further gender equality on the basis that it interferes with individual freedom and market choice.

If we look at the red dots in figure 2, which represents Islam criticism from a gender perspective, we can observe that not all parties criticise Islam from a women’s perspective in their election program. The parties that do use this line of argument are: the Front National (2017), the Austrian Freedom Party (2008), True Finns/ Finns Party (2011), the Swiss People’s Party (2011); and the Flemish Bloc/ Interest (1994, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2010). What else stands out is that the parties that refer to Islam from a women perspective, do not do this consistently throughout the years in their election programs. In addition, figure two also indicates that criticising Islam based on women issues is something of the last years, except for the Flemish Interest/ Bloc, who already used this strategy in 1995 in their election programs: “Everybody can see that immigrants from an Arabic background, even the third-generation immigrants, still hold to cultural patterns that are inconceivable with ours. For example, Islam regards no difference between state and religion, polygamy is allowed, and women are not treated equal in relation to man”. ¹⁹

However, the interplay between Islam criticism from a women perspective, on the one hand. And on the other hand, parties’ views regarding women position and salience towards these issues is hard to assess for two reasons. First, there is the problem of data.

Some PRR parties simply do not refer to the Islam from a women perspective in their election programs. Second, if they do use this form of criticism they do not do it consistently. Like the Austrian Freedom Party, which criticises the Islam based on women issues in 2008 but not in 2013. Therefore, it is hard to see a relationship between women positions and Islam criticism for a gender perspective.

However, there are some remarks that I can make. For instance, for the National Front, the Finns Party/ Finns First, and the Swiss People’s party, it shows that their attention to both women issues and their level of conservatism towards gender issues drops in the years they criticise Islam on basis of gender issues, as I expected. However, for the National front this observation can be affected by the appointment of Marine Le Pen, as the party leader. Above it is argued that her leadership role has affected the parties' ideology regarding women issues.

In addition, there is no relationship between Islam criticism from a gender perspective and salience towards gender issues/ the level of conservatism when we look at the Flemish Bloc/ Interest. They have always combined very conservative viewpoints with Islam criticism from a gender perspective. Based on their election programs, they never feel the need to defend this ambiguous stance. However, they do make remarks similar to those found by Moffitt that equality is not the same as positive discrimination. This is also the case for Austrian Freedom Party and the National Front. They do also not try to defend their own conservative views regarding women when they criticise Islam from a gender perspective. However, they repeatedly make the argument that “although men and women are equal this does not mean they are the same”. Thus, it seems that this implicitly works as a justification for the contrasting position of being against policies that have the intention to improve the situation of women and Islam criticism from a gender perspective. In addition, the True Finns/ Finns Party and the Swiss People’s Party can be categorised into the same category as the Party for Freedom and the Progress Party when it comes to upholding their women position in their Islam criticism from a gender perspective. They also do this by implicitly arguing the importance to not interfere with the individual and the free market, as the Party for Freedom and the Progress Party do.

Concluding, it is hard to assess a relationship between salience, gender position and Islam criticism based on women issues. For some parties, National Front, Swiss People’s Party, and True Finns/ Finns party, it does show that salience and conservatism levels drop
when they criticise the Islam from a gender perspective in their election programs. However, this is not the case for all other parties. Furthermore, I looked how these parties tried to uphold their conservative position with Islam criticism from a gender perspective. Based on the election programs it showed that not one party actively tried to defend this contrasting position. However, they indirectly made similar remarks as those found by Moffitt (2017) when he discussed Northern PRR parties: the more social conservative parties made references about “equality is not positive discrimination” and that the less social cultural parties elaborated on the fact that government should not interfere with personal freedom.

4.3 The gender-gap

The results of the fifth hypothesis are presented in figure 3. I expected that parties that are more conservative with regards to women issues would have experience a bigger gender-gap. The blue line in the figure 3 represents women score, and the red line represents the size of the gender-gap. On the y-axis indicate how conservative the parties are in relation to women issues. On the x-axes the years are presented when the election programs were released. Next to years is the level of significance presented.

Furthermore, figure 3 shows the Danish People’s party, the Party for Freedom, the Swiss People’s Party, and the Sweden Democrats are not represented. For the Party for Freedom and the Danish People’s Party this is due the fact that I was not able to assess their conservative/ liberal score, since they do not pay enough attention to the position of women in their election programs. For the other parties this is because I was not able to calculate the gender-gap, since the CSES dataset did not include these parties. Furthermore, figure 3 shows less timepoints than figure 2. Again, this is due to lack of data regarding the gender-gap in the CSES dataset.
**Figure 3:** women score and gender-gap.

- **VB** (red gender-gap)
- **FN** (red is gender-gap)
- **FrP** (red is gender-gap)
- **SVP** (red is gender-gap)
- **PS** (red is gender-gap)

*p<0.10  *p<0.05  **p<0.01  ***p<0.001

**Figure 4:** women score in combination with salience.

- **VB** (multiply)
- **FN**
- **FrP**
- **SVP**
- **PS**
The first hypothesis would be confirmed if the red and blue line would follow the same trend. I expected that if the women score would drop (blue line) that the gender-gap (red line) also would drop, and vice versa. This relationship is only observable for the Progress Party for the period 2001-2009; the Swiss People’s party for the period 1999-2007; and for the True Finns/ Finns Party for the period 2003-2011. All considered, this is not enough to talk about a relationship between the size of gender-gap and views regarding women positions, which can be due to fact that there is simply no relationship, or due a lack of data.

With the last hypothesis I expected that the gender-gap would be affected by salience towards women issues. I hypothesised that a conservative woman score in combination with high salience towards these issues would result in a bigger gender-gap, and that little attention combined with a liberal or conservative score would have less effect. The right side of figure 3 represents salience in combination with women view’s. The blue line is the result of a multiplication of women score by the percentage of attention it received in their election program. I choose not to include the gender-gap line in figure 4, since the y-axis in figure 4 displays much larger numbers. If I included the gender-gap line this would lead to a distortion of the line since the values on the y-axis changed. Therefore, we have to look simultaneously at figure 3 and 4.

When we look at the two graphs simultaneously it shows that a multiplication of gender attention by gender score is a better predictor for the gender-gap for the Front National (period 2002-2007); the Progress Party (period 1997-2005), the Swiss People’s Party (period 1999-2006); and the True Finns/ Finns Party (period 2003). Based on this it seems that attention to women issues in combination with women positions is a better predictor for the gender-gap than only looking at women positions. Unfortunately, I am not able to test it statistically due to a too small N.

5.1 Conclusion
The intention of this paper was to broaden our understanding of the populist radical-right gender-gap. I chose to investigate this gap from a supply side approach. I looked if women’s position within the ideologies of the Northern and Western European populist radical-right parties could explain why some parties experience bigger gender-gaps compared to other PRR parties. Therefore, I first had to establish women positions. This is done based on election
programs. These programs are carefully read and, subsequently, coded on the basis of four domains: the labour market, politics, care, and the family.

In the results it showed that almost all parties hold conservative women views. With the exception of the Sweden Democrats, which is somewhat remarkable, since the Sweden Democrats are known for having socially conservative views (Moffitt, 2017). Furthermore, the results show that almost all parties, except the Austrian Freedom Party, are becoming less conservative, and that their attention to women issues is decreasing over the years.

Next, I focused on the question if this decreasing importance of women issues and declining level of conservatism has a connection with their Islam criticism, which is framed from a women’s perspective. In figure 2 it shows that the National Front, the, The True Finns/Finns Party, and the Swiss People’s Party, both drop their level of conservatism and salience towards women issues the moment they criticised Islam on the basis of women issues in their election program. However, for the other parties there seems to be no connection.

In addition, I researched how the parties try to uphold this ambiguous position of criticising the Islam of being unequal to women, and, simultaneously, being against any measure which has the intention to improve the position of women within society. Although not one party actively defends this contrasting position, they do make statements similar to those found by Moffit: the more socially conservative Northern European PRR parties defend this contrasting position by stating that equality is not positive discrimination, and the less socially conservative parties state that we should not interfere with individual freedom and the free market.

In the last section of this study, I focused on the question if the gender-gap can be explained based on the position women have within the ideology of PRR parties and/or the level of salience these parties have towards women issues. This study shows that a combination of gender positions and attention to women issues is better in explaining the size of the gender-gap than only looking at women’s position within the ideology of PRR parties.

Unfortunately, due to a too small N, I was not able to test this finding statistically. I therefore, advice future research to look more in this direction and to supplement my findings with more data. Thereby, I think that it is relevant to control for mainstream right parties, since the research of Spierings and Zaslove (2015) show that the gender-gap for PRR parties is less significant when we look at the gender-gap of the mainstream right. In addition, I think that more attention should be spend to the ideological changes PRR parties undergo.
when leadership changes from male to female. A repetitive finding in this study is that PRR parties become either less conservative regarding women issues or they pay less attention to women issues when females takes leadership of the party.
Literature


**Appendix 1.**

Codebook used from Akkerman (2015): positions regarding gender relations in the domain of family relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1 Public</th>
<th>A2 Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Labour Market</td>
<td>11 Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended/restrict</td>
<td>Extended/restrict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities for women</td>
<td>Participation by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/restrict</td>
<td>For/against gender quota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal rights</td>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/restrict</td>
<td>Support/restrict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education for girls</td>
<td>(influence) of women’s organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of individuals/families</td>
<td>Support equal share of traditional roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td>(-1/-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Support public/private care for family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support equal share of traditional roles</td>
<td>Support equal share of traditional roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/-1)</td>
<td>(-1/-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Support for (non)-traditional family;</td>
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<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td>Mixed marriages positive/negative</td>
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<td>213</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/restrict</td>
<td>Family-planning free choice/no free choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education for girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
<td>(-1/+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-nationalist positions for large families as cornerstone of nation</td>
<td>Pro-nationalist positions for large families as cornerstone of nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: overview party programs.

Units of analyse (Parties and party programs)

- **Party for Freedom** (PVV) (COMPLEET)
  - 2006, Plain Speaking (Klare Wijn).
  - 2010, The Agenda of Hope and Optimism (De Agenda van Hoop en Optimisme).
  - 2012, Their Brussels, Our Netherlands (Hun Brussel, Ons Nederland).

- **Danish People’s Party** (DF)
  - 1997, Party Program (principprogram)
  - 1998, Vote Danish or do not Vote (Stem dansk stem nej)
  - 2000, Keep the Crown – vote Danish (Bevar kronen – stem dansk)
  - 2001, Common Values – Shared Responsibility (Fælles værdier - fælles ansvar)
  - 2002, Party Program (principprogram)
  - 2004, Your Country, Your Choice.. Yet (Dit land – dit valg ... endnu)
  - 2005, EU Politics (EU-politik)
  - 2005, We Want a Safe Country (Vi vil have et trygt land)
  - 2005, This Country, Your Choice (Dit land – dit vlag)
  - 2006, Dit land – dit valg
  - 2009, Danish People’s Party Labour Program (Dansk Folkepartis Arbejdsprogram)
  - 2011, Battle of Denmark (Slaget om Danmark).

- **Swiss People’s Party** (SVP)
  - 1991, No Party Program Name
  - 1995, Priority Program 1995 of the SVP (Schwerpunktprogramm 1995 der SVP)
  - 2003, Swiss Quality (Schweizer Qualitât).
  - 2007, My Home, our Switzerland (Mein Zuhause – unsere Schweiz)
  - 2011, Swiss Choose SVP, (Schweizer wählen SVP)

- **National Front** (FN)
  - 1997, A Program to Govern (UN PROGRAMME POUR GOUVERNER.
  - 2002, Programme of National Front (Programme du Front National)
  - 2007, Electoral program of Jean-Marie Le Pen (Programme électoral de Jean-Marie Le Pen)
  - 2012, My Project For France and the French (MON PROJET POUR LA FRANCE ET LES FRANÇAIS)
  - 2017, 144 presidential commitments in the name of the people (144 AU NOM DU PEUPLE ENGAGEMENTS PRÉSIDENTIELS)

- **Swedish Democrats** (SD)
  - 2010, 99 suggestions for a better Sweden (99 förslag för ett bättre Sverige).
  - 2014, We Choose Welfare (VI VÄLJER VÄLFÄRD!)

- **Flemish Block** (VB)/Flemish Interest (VB)
  - Flemish Bloc
  - 1991, Out of self-protection (Uit zelfverdediging)
- **Austria’s Freedom Party** FPO
  - 1990, For Austria’s Future (*FOR ÖSTERREICHS ZUKUNFT*)
  - 1994, Austria independence declaration (*Österreichs Unabhängigkeitserklärung*)
  - 1999, One of these words counts (*Einer dieser wort zählt*).
  - 2002, We Form Austria (*Wir gestalten Österrich*).
  - 2008, Austria in one word (*Österreich in wort*).
  - 2013, Love your Neighbour (*Liebe deine Nächste*).
- **True Finns** (PS)
  - 2003, New Direction for Finland – a correction for previous misfortunes (*Uusi suunta suomelle - korjauskia epäkohtiin*).
  - 2007, The True Finns (*Perussuomalaiset*).
  - 2011, Most Suitable for Finns (*Suomalaiselle sopivin*).
- **Progress Party** (FrP) (COMPLEET)
  - 1993, Principle and Action Program (*Prinsipp-og handlingsprogram*).
  - 1997, Principles’ of the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiets prinsipper*).
  - 2001, Principle and Action Program (*Prinsipp- og Handlingsprogram*)
  - 2005, Principle and Action Program (*Prinsipp-og handlingsprogram*).
  - 2009, Operational Program (*Handlingsprogram*).
  - 2013, Oslo FrP (*Oslo FrP*).
  - 2017, Final Program of Principles (*Endelig prinsipprogram*).
Appendix 3: overview remarks in election programs.

Austrian Freedom Party

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<th>Female leader</th>
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<td>113</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>Sussanne Riess 2000-2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>334</td>
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<td>Ursula Haubner 2003-2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(immigrant)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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Flemish Interest

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<td>8</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1079</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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National Front

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>3.94</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Marine Le Pen (2011)</td>
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Progress Party

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<tbody>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1299</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Siv Jensen (officially stated in 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>2.19</td>
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Sweden Democrats

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<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>695</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam and gender</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female leader</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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Swiss People's Party

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>2669</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>554</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>9.29</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X (immigrants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female leader</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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True Finns/ Finns Party

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
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<td>Islam and gender</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female leader</td>
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Appendix 4: regression analysis.

Appendix: linear regression models explaining the relative size of the PRR gender-gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>33.082**</td>
<td>58***</td>
<td>23.823</td>
<td>40.244***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women Position</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position plus salience</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03**</td>
<td>0.03***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newness</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.732*</td>
<td>-0.645***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>-12.466*</td>
<td>-8.391*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<0.001

The first model in the regression analysis shows if the size of the gender-gap can be predicted on the basis of what position women have within the ideologies of populist radical-right parties. The Adjusted R and the ANOVA in the first model of the regression analysis above shows that women positions has very limited insignificant explanatory power. In the second model I included the control variables (newness and female leader). Model 2 shows that women position in combination with newness and female leadership can significantly explain 44 percent of the size of the gender-gap, which is due the small N remarkably high. Furthermore, we can see that both newness and female leadership have an effect. Female leadership is coded as a dichotomous variable. If a female leader was present I give it the score 1, if not, it received a 0. Model 2 shows that the size of the gender-gap becomes 12.5 points smaller if a female leader is present. It thus seems that female leadership has a strong effect on the gender-gap. Also, newness effects the gender-gap, although, less strong. For every year a party is longer in parliament the size of the gender-gap decreases with 0.732. These two findings are both in line with my expectations.

Furthermore, in model 3, I looked if a combination of salience and women position could explain the size of the gender-gap. If we look at the ANOVA we can see that this variable (combination of salience and women position) can significantly explain the size of the gap, however, the small Adjusted R Square indicates that it has only minimal explanatory power. In addition, we see that that the combination of salience and women position only has a small effect on the size of the gender-gap (0.03). In model 4 I included the control variables, which indicates that the control variables in combination with salience plus women position score can account for 35 percent the size of the gender-gap, which is again a remarkable high score regarding the small N. Moreover, we can observe again that female leadership and newness have similar effects as in model 2, although, smaller.