

**Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and radical right voting:
A cross-national study in eight Western European countries**

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Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Political Science

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to challenge the dominant modes of conceiving the empirical link between citizens' negative perceptions of immigrants and electoral support for Western European radical right parties, and in doing so, to offer a deeper understanding of the dynamics of radical right voting behavior based on an analysis of radical right parties' online activities. Despite radical right parties' great popularity and important presence online, little scholarly attention has been paid to their activities in an online space. Accordingly, most empirical research on radical right voting behavior has been conducted in an offline context, ignoring the potential role the Internet plays in connecting radical right parties and voters. Building on Norris's demand-supply framework, I consider the largely ignored factor, citizens' online activities, in my quantitative model and, ultimately, develop formal links between citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes and electoral support for radical right parties conditional on their level of Internet usage. Thereby, I aim to provide an answer to the following research question: Does citizens' Internet usage moderate the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting? Using data from the 9th wave of the European Social Survey (ESS), I test whether voters' high level of Internet consumption strengthens the positive relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and electoral support for radical right parties in eight Western European countries. The results show that my expectations are strongly supported at the cross-national level and partially confirmed at the national level by Belgium, Germany, and Italy. My findings hold promise for future work in designing more elaborate and practical voting models.

Keywords: radical right voting behavior, elections, online political communication, anti-immigration attitudes, public opinion, social psychology, political psychology, comparative politics

Acknowledgments

Throughout my Master's program, I have had the great fortune to receive *immense* support from a number of people around me.

In acknowledging the various kinds of invaluable help and support I received in the preparation of this thesis, I would first of all like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Daniel Stockemer, who challenged me to do my best and enabled me to realize and develop my academic potential. His constructive advice, tender consideration, kind encouragement, as well as his willing assistance played an important role in bringing my thesis project to a successful conclusion. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis committee members, Prof. André Lecours and Prof. Benjamin Ferland, for their numerous thoughtful and invaluable comments and suggestions over the period in which this thesis was written.

Secondly, I would like to record my heartfelt thanks to Prof. Saba Hersi, Prof. Sébastien Polikar, Prof. Eowyn Gault, Prof. Vlasta Cech, Prof. Zinat Goodarzi, and Prof. Kelly Holmes for helping me to improve my academic English writing skills. I would also like to thank all my friends for their warm support and friendship throughout my graduate program. I would like to express my special thanks to an academic staff member of the Political Science Department, May Hamouie, who always kindly responded to my every email inquiry.

Finally, I would like to have this opportunity to express my most sincere gratitude to my family, especially my Mom and Dad, for all their biggest support, encouragement, and endless love from Korea. If it had not been for their love, care, and positive energy, I would never have had the courage to complete this journey. My parents always motivated me to work hard and live a life of giving, and they instilled in me the idea that knowledge has the power to change people's lives. I deeply appreciate their giving me the opportunity to pursue a Master's degree in Ottawa.

Also, I am grateful to my older sister and brother-in-law for letting me live with them and build good memories throughout my entire graduate program. Thanks to their care and love, I was able to adapt to life in Ottawa quickly and to be devoted to my studies. I particularly thank my older sister for always being by my side whenever I go through hard times and for motivating me to carry on with my studies. I am grateful that we can rely on each other in Ottawa. I would also like to express my special thanks to my brother-in-law for always being nice to me.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The popularity of radical right parties in Western Europe is continuing to grow. Their electoral breakthrough in recent general elections and the 2019 European parliamentary elections show that radical right parties are becoming an increasingly significant political force. Along with this, one important trend that is being commonly observed recently across Western Europe is their high online activities. Radical right parties currently have a strong presence online, and they rely highly on various Internet applications and platforms to reach and communicate with audiences, disseminate their anti-immigrant program, and maintain their political viability. Despite their great popularity and important presence online, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to radical right parties' political activities on the web. Accordingly, most empirical research on radical right voting behavior has been conducted in an offline context, ignoring how citizens' online activity may impact electoral support for the radical right party family.

The goal of my thesis is to close this research gap. I seek to examine the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and voting for radical right parties. More specifically, I aim to provide an answer to the following research question: Does online activity moderate the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting? To do this, I combine both the literature on immigration and the literature on radical right parties' online activity together based on Norris's demand-supply framework. Using the 9th wave of the European Social Survey (ESS), I propose a new quantitative model that investigates the role of electorates' online activities on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and the radical right vote. By approaching radical right voting behavior

both in an offline context and in an online context, my thesis makes an original contribution to the current discussion on factors affecting electoral support for the radical right.

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two, titled “Review of Literature,” presents two main theoretical approaches widely used for elucidating the electoral success of Western European radical right parties and then critically reviews the scholarships on immigration and on radical right parties’ online activities, respectively. Chapter Three, titled “Constructing a Conceptual Framework,” points out the research problem identified from the literature review and proposes a research question with a relevant hypothesis based on critical reasoning. Chapter Four, titled “Research Design and Methodology,” presents the theoretical model, introduces the data source utilized in this thesis, and describes the operationalization of the main and control variables.

Chapter Five, titled “Research Results,” provides the descriptive statistics of the main variables and analyzes the binary logistic regression models while pointing out what was similar and what was different from the expected results. Chapter Six, titled “Discussions,” further elaborates the implications of research findings and discusses the limitations of my research design. Chapter Seven, titled “Conclusion,” concludes with a brief overview of the literature and of the process to formulate my hypothesis, a summary of the key findings and the contribution to the existing literature, and a suggested agenda for future research.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

A. Approaches to explaining electoral support for the radical right

The most common way to illustrate the success of radical right parties in terms of electoral performance is to analyze several factors leading to their success by dividing them into two categories: demand-side factors and supply-side factors (Elinas, 2010; Art 2011; Eatwell 2016; Golder 2016; Kitchelt 1997; Mudde 2007; Norris 2005; Rydgren, 2007; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007). Demand-side factors usually refer to attitudes and socioeconomic characteristics that voters hold under structural changes in society, whereas supply-side factors refer to either all aspects of radical right parties, such as their characteristics and institution frameworks, or political opportunity structures, such as socioeconomic conditions (e.g., the number of immigrants, and unemployment rates) and the party systems (Kestilä, 2006, p. 171; Golder 2003, Knigge, 1998), that influence their electoral performance (Alonso and Rovira 2015; Golder 2016; Rydgren 2007). Regarding the supply-side factors, some scholars (for example, Mudde, 2007; Muis and Immerzeel, 2017) further divide them into internal factors (e.g., party ideology, organizational characteristics, and leadership) and external factors (e.g., political space and media environment). Among these factor-based explanations, the most influential and widely used explanatory approach is Norris's (2005) demand-supply approach. Its central argument holds that electoral performance, namely party competition, should be seen as the result of the interaction between "public demand" and "party supply" within the "regulated electoral marketplace" (Norris, 2005, p. 16).

However, not all researchers approach their electoral success from the same point of view as Norris. For example, Eatwell (2016, p. 419), in his article, criticizes the predominant focus on either the demand-side perspective or the supply-side perspective and suggests the need for expanding this dichotomous framework into a micro-meso-macro framework. Similarly, Arzheimer (2018, pp. 144-145), who implemented this three-dimensional model in his article, contends that the main drawback of the demand-supply approach is that it neglects to consider other factors that may serve as a mediator between demand-side factors and supply-side factors. Notwithstanding these convincing arguments, this thesis applies a demand-supply framework based on Norris's concept, as this approach allows us to focus on the dynamic interaction between *voters* and *radical right parties* and, thus, explain these parties' electoral success in a simple but effective way.

B. Demand-side explanations: Immigration

Immigration is the most heavily discussed topic in the literature on the radical right. Above all, it has been one of the most important factors in explaining radical right voting behavior (Cutts et al., 2011, p. 420; Rydgren, 2007, p. 250; Rydgren and Ruth, 2011, p. 209; Amengay and Stockemer, 2019, p. 4; Mudde 2007, p. 220). To understand the relationship between immigration and the radical right vote, it is important, first, to situate the resurgence of radical right parties in their historical context. This is because such a radical right phenomenon has not unfolded in a socioeconomic and cultural vacuum.

1. Historical background

Two waves of post-war radical right and immigration

In the 1960s, countries in Western Europe initially began to explicitly import foreigners to address labor shortages caused by the Second World War (Givens, 2005, p. 74). While the importation of labor workers was discontinued after the 1972 oil shock, the number of immigrants entering Europe continued to grow (Givens, 2005, p. 74). As a result, Western European countries underwent an unprecedented influx of non-European immigrants and asylum seekers during the 1980s and early 1990s, and this “immigration crisis,” resulted from increased globalization and post-industrialization, has transformed immigration into a salient political issue all over Europe (Arzheimer, 2008, p. 174; Ignazi, 1992, p. 23). Yet at the same time, this period was when the so-called “third wave” of the radical right (i.e., radical right parties’ first successful post-war period from 1980 to 2000) emerged, and when several radical right parties thus began to regain their political strength (Elinas, 2010, p. 81; Mudde, 1996, p. 227; Mudde, 2019b, p. 3; De Lange, 2007, p. 411). Therefore, the rise of these parties coincided in scope and timing with the “immigration crisis of the 1980s and 1990s” (Ivarsflaten, 2008, p. 8; Betz, 1994). This simultaneous occurrence of the two phenomena has brought substantial academic interest to the connection between the issue of immigration and radical right voting, and, accordingly, a wealth of literature in this area has started to be generated in full-scale since the late 1980s.

Immigration issues have become inextricably linked to electoral support for radical right parties since the new millennium when the “fourth wave” of the radical right began (Mudde, 2019b, p. 3). Since that time, they have profited considerably in political and electoral terms from three major “crises,” which are: the Islamist terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, the Great Recession of 2008, and the “refugee crisis” of 2015 (Mudde,

2019b, p. 20). Among these crises, the September 11th attacks served as the most immediate and powerful catalyst for fostering the negative public climate for immigration and immigrants in Western Europe (Kallis, 2018, pp. 46-47; Mudde, 2007, p. 84). In particular, the attacks resulted in fueling an "irrational fear of Islam or Muslims" within society at large (Mudde, 2019b, p. 28). Radical right parties did not miss the opportunity to exploit such a social ferment of *Islamophobia* (Kallis, 2018, pp. 44-48; Mudde, 2007, p. 85), which gave justification for them not only to take a more authoritarian stance on Islam and the Muslim community (Mudde, 2007, p. 149) but also to aggressively spread hatred against Islam (Kallis, 2018, pp. 44-48; Mudde, 2007, p. 85). The strategy of the negative framing of Islam has provided these parties with “powerful electoral and agenda-setting advantages” (Kallis, 2018, p. 44).

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the radical right party family has gained another significant electoral momentum by the so-called “refugee crisis” of 2015 (Mude, 2020, p. 301). The refugee crisis played a central role in mainstreaming and normalizing the radical right, which is what differentiates the fourth wave from the third wave (Mudde, 2019a, p. 32; 2019b, p. 20). Along with the 2015 refugee crisis, a series of terrorist attacks committed by foreigners across Europe have heightened public concerns about immigration, making the public more receptive to the radical right appeal (Mudde, 2019a, p. 25; Kallis, 2018, pp. 47-48). Therefore, in the fourth wave, which continues today, immigration issues have become more salient, serving as one of the most influential factors explaining radical right support.

2. Theoretical background

Ethnic competition theory

Numerous scholars have attempted to propose theoretical explanations that link immigration to increased electoral support for the radical right party family. Among several theories illustrating the relationship between immigration and the radical right vote in the demand-side literature, the most prominent theory is the Ethnic Competition Theory (ECT). As the name suggests, the ECT explains electoral support for the radical right party family by associating it with the competition among ethnically different groups. The ECT originates from two influential theories, which are the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) and the Social Identity Theory (SIT). The realistic group conflict theory and the social identity theory come from social psychology that attempts to understand negative human behavior in intergroup relationships from a psychological point of view. More specifically, the two theories focus on finding how intergroup conflicts manifest, namely how individuals develop hostile attitudes towards social groups that are different from their own.

The realistic group conflict theory is based on the idea that antagonistic inter-group attitudes arise from an economic threat caused by competition over scarce resources, such as housing, employment, and social welfare (Blalock, 1967; Lewis, 1956; Bobo, 1988; Blumber, 1958). In other words, competition in the context of the realistic group conflict theory is a zero-sum competition, meaning that one person's gain equals the other person's loss. On the contrary, according to the social identity theory, antagonistic attitudes towards other groups occur regardless of socioeconomic competition over limited resources. The inter-group conflict fundamentally derives from the fact that every individual belongs to a

different social group (Tajfel et al., 1979; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982). Such difference between groups leads individuals to identify their in-groups through the mental process of social identification and social contra-identification (Stockemer et al., 2018, p. 330). Since every individual has an innate need to achieve a positive in-group identity, this group identification develops into ‘in-group favoritism’ and ‘out-group derogation,’ which results in inter-group conflict (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). In the end, the social identity theory posits that antagonistic intergroup conflicts derive from a cultural threat caused by the presence of different social out-groups (Coenders et al., 2017, pp. 10-17).

The main difference of the ethnic competition theory compared to the other two theories is that it approaches intergroup conflicts or competition in a more ethnic sense. Therefore, the ethnic competition theory combines both the realistic group conflict theory and the social identity theory, thereby reflecting both the RGCT’s “situational” concepts and the SIT’s “dispositional” concepts (Coenders et al., 2017, pp.16-18; Savelkoul et al., 2010, p. 743; Janssen et al., 2019, p. 554). Since competition in the context of the ECT could be material or non-material (i.e., symbolic) competition among ethnic groups (Janssen et al., 2019, p. 554), threats in the ECT could be economic or cultural (e.g., identity, language, religion, or physical appearance) threats caused by different ethnic groups. The ECT highlights that intense realistic or symbolic competition with immigrants makes voters feel threatened from the economic and cultural perspectives and that this ethnic threat leads them ultimately to support radical right parties that promise to limit immigration. In summary, the essence of this theory is that the more and stronger competition between native majorities and ethnic minorities, the more negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities among natives due to perceived ethnic threat, which in turn

induce natives to vote for radical right parties that seek to reduce ethnic competition (Golder, 2016, p. 484; Scheepers et al., 2002, p. 19; Rydgren, 2008 p. 754; Rydgren and Ruth, 2011, p. 209; Stockemer, 2016, p. 1000; Werts et al., 2013, p. 185).

3. Empirical research trajectory of the link between immigration and radical right voting

1) Two ways of operationalizing immigration

Empirically, the theory of ethnic competition has been tested at both individual and aggregate levels. Accordingly, immigration in the literature on the radical right voting behavior has been multi-level variables, mostly operationalized in the following two ways: (1) the ‘objective’ (i.e., absolute) number of foreigners in a country, or (2) voters’ ‘subjective’ (i.e., relative) views on immigrants. Regarding the latter, Arzheimer (2018) states in his article that the term “anti-immigrant sentiment” has been used as a “catchall term” for measuring negative attitudes towards immigrants, immigration, and immigration policies (p. 147). In this thesis, I use the term ‘negative attitudes towards immigrants’ or ‘anti-immigrant attitudes’ as a catchall term that includes negative attitudes towards immigration and immigration policies.

a. Objective number of immigrants

Regarding the number of immigrants, the vast majority of empirical research supports the theory of ethnic competition. Knigge (1998), for example, reports, based on the cross-time and cross-national studies that employ aggregated data from the Eurobarometer survey, that a high proportion of immigration positively correlates with the vote intention for radical right parties (pp. 262- 266). This observation at the cross-national level is in line with the findings of Arzheimer (2009, p. 269), Swank and Betz (2003, p. 239), Edo and his colleagues (2019, pp. 113-114), and Georgiadou and his colleagues

(2018, p. 112). Notably, Golder (2003, pp. 451-452, 514) provides empirical evidence that the radical right vote is positively linked not only to the level of immigration itself but also to the interaction term between the immigration rate and the unemployment rate. However, the empirical finding of the interaction term between immigration and unemployment is somewhat mixed. In his cross-regional study from 1990 to 2013, Stockemer (2017, pp. 50-51) demonstrates that there are no significant effects of the interaction between immigrants and unemployment on radical right preferences. Meanwhile, several studies have also provided empirical evidence at the national level that supports the positive relationship between the immigration rate and the radical right vote (Rydgren and Ruth, 2011, pp. 212-215; Coffé et al., 2007, p. 150; Lubbers et al., 2002, p. 371; Fitzgerald and Lawrence, 2011, pp. 840-841).

b. Subjective views on immigrants.

In terms of voters' subjective view on immigrants, previous research has provided ample evidence supporting the ethnic competition theory (Lubbers and Coenders, 2017, p. 111; Allen, 2017, p. 280; Cutts et al., 2011, p. 432; Scheepers et al. 2002, p. 26; Ivarsflaten, 2008, p. 15; Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012, p. 566; Norris, 2005, p. 182; Rydgren, 2008, p. 754; Rooduijn, 2016, p. 61). Scheepers and his colleagues (2002), based on their cross-national study in 15 European countries in 1997, demonstrate that perceived ethnic threat serves as the most crucial determinant of the radical right vote (p. 26). They also identify that the effect of perceptions of ethnic threat is stronger than that of perceptions of personal threat (Scheepers et al., 2002, p. 26). This finding is in line with the study by Zhirkow (2014), who also finds that negative perceptions of immigration play a central role in voting for the radical right party family (pp. 291-293). Lubbers and Coenders (2017) reach a

similar conclusion that the perceived migrant threat is the strongest predictor of supporting the radical right party family (pp. 110-111). Interestingly, in her cross-national research in seven countries, Ivarsflaten (2008) reveals that people who desire more restrictive immigration policies are more willing to cast a vote for radical right parties (p. 15). Meanwhile, in their cross-national study, Lubbers and his colleagues (2002) discover that people who believe that there are too many immigrants in their countries show a greater propensity to vote for radical right parties; however, no significant interactions are observed between negative sentiments towards immigrants and unemployment levels (pp. 365-370).

National-level studies have also demonstrated support for the theory of ethnic competition. Aichholzer and his colleagues (2014) provide evidence that anti-immigration views have a positive and significant impact on voting for the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) (p. 130). In the context of Germany, Arzheimer and Berning (2019, pp. 7-8) and Hansen and Olsen (2019, p. 13) provide evidence that voters' anti-immigrant sentiments were the predominant predictor of casting a vote for the Alternative for Germany (AfD).

2) Contradicting results

While the vast majority of the empirical studies present evidence supporting the ethnic competition theory, there are a few studies that have resulted in conflicting findings. Concerning the objective variables of immigration, Lubbers and Scheepers (2000, p. 83), for instance, find that there is no empirical link between the proportion of immigrants and the vote share of the radical right in Germany. This observation also corresponds with a recent Finnish study by Westinen (2014, p. 139). In their cross-national study, Van der Brug and colleagues (2005, pp. 555-558) find that the number of asylum seekers does not

have a significant impact on radical right party preferences in nine European countries between 1989 and 1999. Regarding the subjective variables of immigration, Stockemer and his colleagues (2018, pp. 573-574), in their over-time and cross-country analysis, provide evidence that only 51 percent (i.e., 239) of a total of 470 variables related to anti-immigrant attitudes positively affect electoral support for radical right parties. Similarly, in their three-wave study in the Netherlands, Coffé and Van den Berg (2017, p. 885) find that there is no significant relationship between citizens' increased negative attitudes towards immigrants and their change of the party preference from any party to the Party for Freedom (PVV).

Furthermore, among national and sub-national level studies, some scholars have found the negative relationship between the proportions of immigrants and radical right support (e.g., Coffé et al., 2007, p. 150), while others have found such correlation to be even curvilinear (e.g., Charitopoulou and García-Manglano, 2018, p. 861). Chapin (1997, pp. 66-67) identifies that electoral support for radical right parties was lower in immigration-dense areas than in areas with a low ratio of foreigners. This result also corresponds with the findings of Van der Waal and his colleagues (2013, pp. 763-766), who confirm that the higher ethnic segregation predisposes citizens to support radical right parties in the Netherlands. Such negative effects of ethnic out-group size on radical right voting have been mainly explained by the intergroup contact theory, which stands in contrast to the ethnic competition theory. The intergroup contact theory posits that a larger out-group size results in increasing the opportunity for native majorities to have 'positive contact' with ethnic out-groups and that the resulting 'reduced prejudice' against foreigners leads to diminishing the likelihood of their electoral support for radical right parties

(Rydgren, 2008, p. 756, Stockemer, 2016, p. 1000; Van der Waal et al., 2013, p. 755; Charitopoulou, and García-Manglano, 2018, p. 851).

3) Reasons for the mixed empirical results

Regarding the reasons for some conflicting findings of the effect of immigration on radical right support, three factors have been mainly discussed: differences in data choice and levels of analysis, ambiguity in the degree of anti-immigrant attitudes, and methodological inconsistency in operationalizing the immigration.

First, Mudde (2007) suggests that the difference in choice of data sets or units of analysis (i.e., cross-national, national, or subnational) may result in different empirical results (p. 211). He especially points out that the almost exclusive use of a secondary data set for analysis can be problematic because there may be occasions when data sets are debatable sources (p. 295). Also, Stockemer and his colleagues (2018) posit that regarding variables of attitudes towards immigrants, the absence of considering the strength of the degree of anti-immigrant attitudes (i.e., moderate, xenophobic, or racist) may be the cause of the mixed findings (p. 574). Related to this point, Rydgren (2008), in his work, categorizes anti-immigration attitudes into immigration skepticism, xenophobia, and racism and finds that the impact of immigration skepticism is the most effective for the radical right preferences (p. 760). Lastly, it has been largely argued that analysis results may differ depending on how immigration-related factors are operationalized. Indeed, measurements of immigration can be highly heterogeneous depending on the survey questions and the type of immigrant group (e.g., Muslims, refugees, or ethnic minorities) (Norris, 2005, pp. 177-179). In their time-series and cross-national meta-analysis of structural factors, Amengay and Stockemer (2019) find that the proportion of the foreign-

born population shows more than twice the success rate of the radical right vote (57%), compared to the number of immigrants that enter the country every year (24%) (pp. 33-34).

Despite such inconclusive findings, the balance of evidence proves that immigration-related factors are the primary reason for voters' support for radical right parties in the context of Western Europe (Mudde, 2007, p. 220).

C. Supply-side explanations

When studying the electoral success of Western European radical right parties, it is difficult to understand this phenomenon thoroughly without considering various supply-side explanations, particularly radical right parties themselves. This is because, as an organization unit, 'political parties' function as providing a basis for interest aggregation and voting differentiation (Williams, 2006, p. 23). In this sense, it is necessary to look at the characteristics of radical right parties. The best way to do this is by investigating the common features of their political programs that reflect their political strategies and ideologies.

1. Anti-immigrant program and the radical right

1) Ideological background

Anti-immigration has been the linchpin of Western European radical right parties' political program while dominating the images that voters have of these parties (Rydgren, 2008, p. 740). Indeed, most radical right parties are openly anti-immigrant, opposing equal access to rights and resources for immigrants (Rink et al., 2009, p. 413). In order to investigate how anti-immigration is closely related to the political program of radical right parties, it is necessary first to know the general ideological features of the "left" and "right."

Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio (1996) made a particularly seminal contribution to the distinction between left and right. According to Bobbio (1996), what decisively distinguishes the political left and right is their views on egalitarianism. The two have fundamentally conflicting views on the essence of equality. The left is defined as ‘the egalitarian,’ which considers equality to be ‘natural’ and views social inequalities as something negative that has to be fought against in order to regain and mainstream natural equality (Bobbio, 1996, pp. 67-69). On the contrary, the right is defined as ‘the anti-egalitarian,’ which sees equality as rather negative and artificial, considers inequality between people to be accordingly natural and inevitable (Bobbio, 1996, p. 67), and consequently “condemns social equality in the name of natural inequality” (Bobbio, 1996, p. 69). Following Bobbio’s logic, parties of the ‘radical’ right are, in the end, inherently ‘hostile’ to measures that are aimed at reducing social inequalities that they think should be left as it is (Bar-On, 2018, p. 3), and they ultimately seek to ‘defend’ inequalities of various types (e.g., economy, culture, race, and religion, as legitimate (Mudde, 2019b, p. 7).

The notion of inequality by the radical right party family can be more precisely explained through the concept of “ethnic nationalism” (Bar-On, 2018). Ethnic nationalism, which is also dubbed as “ethno-nationalism” (Rydgren 2008) or “nativism” (Mudde 2007), is one of the core ideologies commonly shared by this party family in Western Europe (Mudde 2007). It was built on the idea of ethnopluralism elaborated by the French *nouvelle droite* (Rydgren 2008, p. 745; Rydgren, 2018, p. 3). The French *nouvelle droite* developed the concept of ethnopluralism as an alternative to traditional racism, which is racial discrimination that is based on biological hierarchies and has virtually lost its power after

the Second World War (Rydgren, 2008, p. 743; Arzheimer, 2018, p. 147). The ethnopluralism from the *nouvelle droite* posits the “right to difference” of all nations in cultural terms, ultimately pursuing the call for segregation of ethnicities to maintain a nation’s unique hegemonic cultures and traditions against liberal democracy, multiculturalism, and capitalist globalization (Bar-On, 2018, p. 28; Rydgren 2007, p. 244; Mudde, 2007, p. 18).

In sum, ethnic nationalism, which deploys an ethnic-pluralist logic, brings the protection of national values and interests to the forefront in order to protect the “right to difference” and natural inequality in terms of ethnicity and immigration status (Bar-On, 2018, pp. 3, 31). Accordingly, radical right parties view immigrants as a destroyer of natural inequality and ultimately as a threat to the “health” of the nation in terms of almost all genres of contemporary political issues, including national identity, social unrest, unemployment, and native welfare (Rydgren, 2008, p. 739; Bar-On, 2018, p. 28). Such negative views on immigrants have brought about the development of an anti-immigrant program aiming to maintain and augment inequalities that are in favor of the “natives” (Rydgren, 2018, p. 3).

2) Exemplary background: case examples

From the explanation above, we can understand that the contemporary radical right party family is fundamentally in favor of immigration restriction in terms of the policy (Van Spanje, 2011, p. 293). Most Western European radical right parties have begun to seriously adopt the policy line of ‘anti-immigration’ as the third wave of the radical right resulting from mass immigration across Europe began. Most notably, anti-Islam has become central to most radical right parties’ propaganda since the September 11th attacks

(Mudde, 2007, p. 84). As a result, today, the ardent opposition to immigrants lies at the core of the political platforms of the radical right (Eger and Valdez, 2015, p. 11; Art, 2011, p. 24; Mudde, 2007, pp. 69-70; Rydgren, 2007, p. 244; Ivarsflaten, 2008, pp. 3, 157). Indeed, Lubbers and Scheepers (2000, p. 72) argue that “an end to immigration” has been dominantly presented in “all” European radical right parties’ political programs. In a similar vein, Rydgren and Ruth (2011, p. 209) contend that the success of European radical right parties results from their anti-immigration programs. In more recent literature, Edo and his colleagues (2019, p. 102) suggest that the radical right parties’ political programs commonly include restrictive immigration laws and anti-foreign provisions. Likewise, Jylhä and her colleagues (2019, p. 221) assert that European radical right parties all hold an ethno-nationalist ideology and that their political programs aim for the restoration of a more ethnically homogeneous nation.

Such arguments become more evident when looking at each radical right party by country. In the Netherlands, for example, the PVV’s 2010 party program calls for a “combat against Islam” (*islamberstrijding*) and a stop to “the mass immigration” (Slootman, 2018, p. 63). In the general elections in the same year, the PVV fiercely railed against Muslim immigrants arguing that “eradicating Islam should be the primary target of Dutch foreign policy” (Bar-On, 2018, p. 31). In particular, its leader Wilders has been extremely hostile towards Islam and Muslim communities. His central electoral pledges in his election campaigns have always been struggling against Islam, advocating immigration from Muslim countries, banning mosque construction, and closing existing mosques (Prins, 2017, pp. 4-5; Kallis, 2018, p. 51, Bar-On, 2018, pp. 32-33).

In the case of France, the National Rally (RN, formerly National Front, FN) has taken very clear positions on immigration since the 1990s (Givens, 2005, p. 38). The RN's 1993 party program focuses on advocating national preference (Bar-On, 2018, p. 32). It regards immigration to be "at the heart of the French crisis," viewing it as a threat to national peace and a severe cause of unemployment (Givens, 2005, p. 38). Notably, the RN has mainly targeted Islam and Muslim communities. Indeed, its "party formula" was to make a parallel between Islam and the "occupation of France" and to make an argument that Muslims occupy France with Islamic values and ultimately dilute the concept of the nation (Bar-On, 2018, p. 32). Apart from this, in its political program published in 2016, the RN clearly notes that "immigration must be stopped" (Bar-On, 2018, p. 33).

In a neighboring country, Belgium, the Vlaams Belang (VB), founded on 9 November 2004, has been highly concerned about immigration issues (Erk 2005, p. 493). The party's precursor, the Vlaams Blok, addressed the theme of immigration in its party platform initially in 1980, calling for a ban on immigration (Coffé, 2005, pp. 207-208). Due to its extremely strong racial attitudes toward immigrants, the Vlaams Blok was even outlawed in 2004 by the anti-racism law of 1981, which stipulates that racist remarks and hate speech based on race, skin color, or nationality is illegal (Matamoros-Fernández, 2018, p.4; Coffé, 2005, p. 215; Williams, 2006 p. 139). Accordingly, the Vlaams Blok had to re-establish itself by changing its name to Vlaams Belang (VB) in the same year to keep receiving government subsidies (Erk, 2005, p. 493; Williams, 2006, p. 139). Although it has softened xenophobic attitudes to maintain a legally acceptable political agenda as a part of its rebranding, the current VB still maintains a strong anti-immigration stance (Erk, 2005,

pp. 495-497), considering particularly Muslim communities to be a “machine to kill the peoples” (Bar-On, 2018, p. 32).

Lastly, in the case of Switzerland, the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) has constantly imposed tight restrictions and controls on immigration, aiming for an end to what the party calls the “asylum chaos” (Backes, 2018, p. 465). For example, during the 2007 election campaign, the SVP pledged to create two new laws that seek to ban the constructions of minarets and to deport foreign criminals, both of which passed into law on 29 November 2009 and 29 November 2010, respectively (Art, 2011, p. 150; Purtschert, 2018, p. 287; Kallis, 2018, p. 50). Also, the SVP launched another popular initiative “against mass immigration” that calls for quotas on all immigrants entering Switzerland, and this initiative was adopted by 50.3% of the population on 9 February 2014 (Kriesi, 2015, p. 731). In the end, all cases show that anti-immigrant programs are the common ground of contemporary radical right parties in Western Europe.

2. Radical right parties and the Internet

1) Online activities of the radical right

The literature on radical right parties’ online activities is an emerging field of study and, thus, relatively new. In the last few decades, radical right parties have made significant electoral advances in most countries across Western Europe. Without a doubt, the resurrection of these parties has been attributed primarily to their strong anti-immigration programs. However, if we take a deeper dive into political strategies that radical right parties employ, we get to know that it is indeed impossible to speak of their electoral success without referencing the role of online communication platforms in this

development. In particular, their success in ‘recent’ years can be explained at least partly by their high online activities and adeptness at utilizing a variety of digital platforms.

As digital technologies became widely spread in politics, political communication and the way of campaigning has changed dramatically. Indeed, today, political parties no longer rely only on the ‘classic’ tools of political communication, including posters, paper press, and a presence in mainstream media; rather, they vigorously adopt new communication technologies such as personal websites, e-mail, blog, as well as the plethora of social media in order to reach wide audiences (Sauer and Pingaud, 2016, p. 26). In particular, social media are the most widespread and used communication tool in politics (Pajnik and Sauer, 2017, p. 46), and they have become an indispensable political marketing instrument for candidates and parties to improve their visibility in the public sphere (Enli and Skogerbø, 2013, p. 763). Such a transformation of the political environment caused by the Internet had a significant impact on radical right parties, which created opportunities for them to build up a greater presence on the political stage.

The electoral success of Western European radical right parties, especially their recent success, cannot be fully understood without taking their superior online performance into account. The contemporary radical right party family has “some of the best party websites in their countries” (Mudde, 2007, p. 259), and this family extensively uses the Internet for broadcasting their messages and interacting with potential voters (Ellinas, 2010, p. 216). Radical right parties currently dominate almost every online sphere in terms of visibility, and the majority of them have the strongest presence on Facebook, the most popular and widespread social media site in Western Europe (Bartlett et al., 2011, p. 16).

For example, as of April 2020, the Italian League (Lega, formerly, the Lega Nord, LN), the Belgian Vlaams Belang (VB), The Alternative for Germany (AfD), the French National Rally (RN) have 818,733 followers, 550,950 followers, 523,315 followers, 437,393 followers respectively on their official Facebook pages. Meanwhile, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Finnish Finns Party (PS), and the Swiss People's Party (SVP) have 137,393 followers, 47,225 followers, and 25,565 followers respectively on their Facebook pages. All these parties remain active on Facebook, and they currently have the second-highest (i.e., the Lega and the SVP) or the highest (i.e., the other five parties) number of Facebook followers amongst all major political parties in their own country (as of April 2020). Especially, the number of Facebook followers of the AfD is more than double that of the second-placed party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), with 218,260 followers.

Despite such great popularity and sizeable presence on online platforms, little scientific attention has been devoted to radical right parties on the web for a long time, not to mention a lack of a systematic comparative analysis on how these parties make use of the web infrastructure in different countries (Caiani and Parenti, 2016, p. 1). For this reason, current studies on the online activities of radical right parties remain marginal. However, as radical right parties rapidly grow as an important political force, this situation appears to be changing for the better. Recent researchers have started to become increasingly interested in investigating the Internet's virtual space as a field of study of the radical right. Accordingly, a growing body of research evidence, although not many, is being accumulated, indicating that Western European radical right parties have an important online presence and that they heavily use the Internet in their political work (Bartlett et al.,

2011; Aalberg et al., 2016; Caiani and Parenti, 2016; Fielitz and Thurston, 2019; Dittrich, 2017a; Engesser et al., 2017a; Ernst et al., 2017a; Sauer and Pingaud, 2016; Schumann et al., 2019; Mazzoleni and Bracciale, 2018; Doroshenko, 2018; Novelli and Johansson, 2019).

2) Evidence on high online activity by radical right parties and leaders

a. Alternative for Germany

The first and the most obvious radical right party that illustrates high online activity is the Alternative for Germany (AfD). Among contemporary radical right parties in Western Europe, the AfD has probably benefited the most from the Internet. As a “relatively new party” established in 2013 (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019, p. 4), it has resorted heavily on the web from the very beginning. This has led the party to gain several nicknames, such as “the first true internet party” [die erste wirkliche Internetpartei] (Bender, 2017, p. 61), “the first successful Internet party” [die erste erfolgreiche Internetpartei] (Dittrich, 2017b, p. 3), and “the first Facebook party of Germany” (Grieshaber, 2019).

Increasingly, studies empirically demonstrate that the AfD is very active on the web. In his article, Arzheimer (2015), for instance, identifies that the AfD updates its official party website and Facebook pages regularly and that it strategically makes extensive use of video clips and hyperlinks (pp. 547-550). In more recent work, Arzheimer and Berning (2019, p. 3) report that the AfD publishes several Facebook posts a day while having the strongest presence on Facebook among all German parties.

In a similar vein, Schelter and his colleagues (2016) analyzes the Facebook activities of the AfD and the other five major German political parties during the years 2014 and 2015. The authors find that the AfD has the highest numbers of posts, followers,

as well as of Likes and comments (Schelter et al., 2016, p. 442). They conclude that the AfD's wide use of digital platforms and the capability to mobilize its fans online are the major cause of its electoral success (Schelter et al., 2016, p. 444). More robust and comprehensive evidence on the AfD's high online activity can be obtained in Serrano and his collaborators' study (2019), which analyzes the top seven German political parties' official accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram from a longitudinal perspective between 2013 and 2018. They demonstrate that the party has a solid online presence across all platforms while having the highest number of Facebook posts (n = 2,363) and tweets (n = 9,193) among the parties (Serrano et al., 2019, pp. 218-221).

b. Freedom Party of Austria

The active adoption of various internet applications and platforms by radical right parties is also mirrored in Austria. The FPÖ is currently at the forefront of using the Internet in its political work in Austria. It maintains its strong online presence through various websites, ranging from party-specific web pages, including an official party website and an official blog called *Unzensuriert* (in English: Uncensored) to social media sites (Schmuck et al., 2016, p. 92). The party has increasingly turned to web-based digital media as its main political communication channel since 2005 when Heinz-Christian Strache, the former vice-chancellor of Austria and former FPÖ leader, took over and revamped the party (Forchtner et al., 2013, p. 214).

Among social media platforms, Facebook is the party's most frequently used platform, and it has played an important role in broadening and maximizing the party's membership. Bartlett and his colleagues (2011, p. 33) report that in 2011, the Facebook membership of the FPÖ was twice as large as its formal party membership (n = 40,000).

Facebook has also been used as the party's main election campaign tool, which is especially true in recent years. Indeed, a week prior to the 2019 snap election, the FPÖ spent 95,000 euros on Facebook in an attempt to promote the lead candidate and the party's account, which was more than the combined amount spent by the ÖVP, SPÖ, and NEOS (Eberl et al., 2020, p. 1355). Apart from this, the party has its official channel on YouTube, where it regularly posts a variety of content ranging from recordings of party member's interviews and speeches to rap songs¹ and short films made for election campaigns (Forchtner et al., 2013, p. 214).

c. National Rally

The French RN is another classical radical right party that employs the Internet to a large degree in its political work. The RN has been highly active on the web ever since it entered the digital ground (Benveniste & Pingaud, 2016, p. 63). It currently updates its official website daily (Benveniste & Pingaud, 2016, p. 63) while having a robust presence on several social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Moreover, the party has a long history of being online: it recognized the political potential of the Internet relatively early compared to the other political parties, which has led to the early establishment of its online presence. Indeed, the RN was not only the first political party in France that created its national website in 1996 but also the earliest French party to open a Facebook account in 2006 (Williams, 2006, p. 88; Boyadjian,

¹ The most representative example is HC Strache's rap song entitled *Viennese Blood* [Wiener Blut] released in 2010 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0510mbtg2c>). As of September 2020, the song has reached over 455,000 views on YouTube.

2015, p. 141). The party was also the first political party in Europe to open a virtual office in the online game, *Second Life*², in 2006 (Dézé, 2011, p. 140).

The RN's rapid embracement and the active usage of digital platforms result from the openness to new digital communication technologies by Jean-Marie Le Pen (JMLP), the founder and former leader of the party. While the Internet received lukewarm attention in France in the 1990s, JMLP believed that it could be a powerful communication and marketing tool in the political scene (Bratten, 2005, pp. 518-519). His insight led to a change in party strategy, which enabled the party to quickly adopt the Internet in the 1990s and use the party website as an instrument of image-making, publication, and direct communication with the public (Bratten, 2005, p. 520; Ellinas, 2018, p. 276). As part of its online-based strategy, the party even utilized its self-developed Pac-Man game in which JMLP appears as a Pac-Man as a communication tool to appeal to wider audiences (Dufour, 2017).

The RN got more organized online as his daughter Marin Le Pen (MLP) succeeded him as head of the party in 2011. Under the new leadership of MLP, the RN began to invest in online platforms in earnest and make its election campaign more digitalized (Boyadjian, 2015, p. 141). In an effort to build an effective presence online, the party continued to upgrade its website in terms of its visual outcome and content, and, compared with the RN under JMLP, it began focusing more on its activities within social media platforms. The RN's increase in social media activities especially brought about the rapid growth of its Facebook account: in 2015, the RN came to have the highest follower count on Facebook

² "Second Life" is an online 3D game where anyone can join and build a virtual life while interacting with real people. For more information on this, visit <https://secondlife.com>.

with a large gap separating the second-placed party, the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) (224,079 against 121,217) (Boyadjian, 2015, p. 150).

Furthermore, as for running an election campaign, the RN under MLP has become more active and adept at utilizing various online platforms. For example, in the presidential election year of 2017, the RN aggressively deployed its self-created and Pokémon-inspired RPG game, “Marine Présidente 2017,” as a campaign tool (Milhat, 2017). In the same year, the party also extensively used several hashtags on Twitter as a communication tool to criticize its opponents and promote MLP’s candidacy (Panahi et al., 2017). As a result of all such efforts, the RN’s presence online has become stronger and more dynamic, which has enabled the party to make the online space “a highly professional information hub” for visitors interested in the party (Esser et al., 2017, p. 377).

d. Vlaams Belang and Swiss People’s Party

In addition to the RN, the Belgian VB and the Swiss SVP have also been active online. Similar to the RN, the VB is one of the well-organized radical right parties in Europe (Mudde, 2007, p.259), and it relies on the Internet to a large extent. Notably, the VB is fully committed to social media, publishing a variety of content several times a week (Galindo, 2020).

Amongst the VB’s several social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, Facebook is its primary communication channel in which the party has the most followers. Indeed, the party’s popularity on Facebook is rapidly increasing every day. On February 18, 2020, the VB broke half a million Likes on Facebook (n = 500,720), which was almost double that of the New-Flemish Alliance (N-VA) (n= 278,487), the VB’s closest rival party and the most popular and largest party in

Flanders and Belgium (Galindo, 2020). Besides, the VB has been strategically spending a colossal amount of money on Facebook advertisements as it recently turned to Facebook as a primary vehicle of its communication and election campaign. During the May 2019 election campaign, the party spent more than 149,800 euros on Facebook advertising, which was more than the amount spent by all the other Belgian parties (Galindo, 2019).

Just like the VB, the SVP has energetically exploited the Internet as a political communication tool. It currently maintains an extensive presence on various Internet platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the party's website. While its official website serves as the most central information portal about the party (Gimenez and Schwawrz, 2016, p. 216), the SVP actively exploits different social media platforms to communicate with their supporters and to spread their populist messages (Ernst et al., 2017b). Indeed, in their empirical analysis, Keller and his colleagues (2018) find that among 246 members of the Swiss Parliament in 2015, members of the SVP have the highest presence on Facebook while receiving the highest number of comments, Likes, and shares (p.6).

e. League

The last example to mention is the Italian League (Lega). Having a huge online fan base, the Lega is currently extremely active on the web. An intuitive example that shows this party's high online activity is the average number of its daily posts on social media. It currently updates its Facebook and Twitter profiles a dozen times a day on average, and on April 30, 2020, the party even uploaded 126 posts on its Facebook page. More importantly, previous studies have validated this trend empirically. According to the study by Novelli and Johansson (2019), the number of Facebook posts generated by the Lega ($n = 2,214$)

was almost four times higher than that of the second party in the ranking, the Italian Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) (n = 620), and the party generated the highest number of online posts among twenty European political parties during the last four weeks of the 2019 European election campaign (p. 26).

It was not that long ago that the Lega became extremely active online as it is now. Traditionally, Italian political parties made very poor use of online platforms; the Lega was no exception to this, with its website having been outdated in many ways for several years (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 28). However, since July 2012, when Roberto Maroni became a provisional leader as a successor to Umberto Bossi — the party founder who led the Lega for 20 years and had an alleged funding scandal in the same year— the Lega’s party website has been largely improved in its design and content (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 28). The Lega’s full-scale use of the Internet began in December 2013 with the new party leader Matteo Salvini. The party’s online activity had explosively soared in the run-up to the 2018 general election, which was the time when it underwent a significant ideological transformation by Salvini’s party strategy (Mazzoleni and Ruzza, 2018, p. 981).

In the aftermath of Bossi’s funding scandal in 2012, Lega’s party image was heavily tarnished, and, despite Maroni’s effort to improve the party’s reputation, it won only 4.1 percent of the vote in the 2013 general election (Sandri et al., 2019, p. 91; Albertazzi et al., 2018, p. 651). Under the new leadership of Salvini, the party seemed to recover from the 2013 crisis, but it suffered a sustained electoral loss, notably after 2015 (Vampa, 2017, pp. 40-43). To restore the damaged party image and regain electoral support, the Lega needed “a wave of change,” leading Salvini to formulate a new winning strategy to transform the

party's political identity that has long been regarded as Italy's traditional regionalist party in preparation for the 2018 general election (Albertazzi et al., 2018, p. 662).

The first strategy that Salvini devised to change the party's ideological position was changing the party name: he rebranded the party as “Lega [League]” by eliminating the term “Nord [North]” from the original party name “Lega Nord [Northern League].” By doing so, he tried to diminish the party's regionalistic characteristic and represent the whole country as ‘national’ Lega instead (Albertazzi et al., 2018, pp. 649-650). Salvini also broadened the party's agenda-setting (e.g., immigration and Europe) by focusing more on statewide and national interests and by embracing nationalist stances instead of committing to Northern Italian autonomy and its reform (Albertazzi et al., 2018, p. 662; Mazzoleni and Ruzza, 2018, p. 982).

To completely shift its ideological position, the party had to establish a new communication style. It was particularly in this respect that social media became important for the Lega. The second strategy that Salvini devised for this was employing social media as the party's foremost campaign tool, with the assistance of social media specialists (Albertazzi et al., 2018, p. 651). Social media played a central role in changing the party's old communication. As a result of the online-based campaign strategy driven by Salvini, the Lega was not only able to achieve its best-ever electoral performance (17.4%) in the 2018 general election but also to become the largest party of the center-right coalition (Mazzoleni and Ruzza, 2018, p. 982). Since then, the Lega has maintained a high level of online activities.

3) Evidence of radical right party leaders' high online activity

Not only radical right parties but also their leaders themselves use the Internet to a great extent, and their web presence and popularity tend to be even greater than that of the parties. In Italy, Lega's current leader Matteo Salvini is one of the most active Italian politicians on social media with the most fans (Bobba, 2019, p. 12). His personal social media accounts are indeed comparable to those of other major political leaders in Italy (Albertazzi et al., 2018, p. 651).

For instance, while the Lega's official Facebook page is the second most popular page (around 1.4 million followers) after the Facebook page of the Five Star Movement (M5S), the personal account of Salvini currently has the widest audience on both Facebook (4.1 million followers) and Instagram (2 million followers) among major Italian political party leaders, followed by Luigi di Maio of the M5S who has around 2.3 million followers on Facebook and 886,000 followers on Instagram (As of April 2020). Notably, the number of his Facebook fans has increased by more than 2.2 million since December 2017. Given that the number of his Facebook followers has increased by roughly 1.79 million between 2013 and 2017 (Bobba, 2019, p. 14), such an increase shows how popular he currently is in Italy. Currently, his remarks made via his social media accounts are very influential to the point that television news and the press report them immediately (Albertazzi et al., 2018, p. 651).

In France, Marine Le Pen of the RN is also one of the most popular political leaders in Europe. She is currently the second most followed French politician on Facebook and Twitter after French President Emmanuel Macron, with more than 1.5 million followers on Facebook and 2.3 million followers on Twitter. Le Pen remains active on her Facebook,

Twitter, and Instagram accounts. More importantly, she is adept at using various online platforms and mobilizing masses. Indeed, to make her slogan “Au nom du peuple [In the name of the people]” go viral during the 2017 presidential election, she uploaded a short campaign video with a hashtag #AuNomDuPeuple on her Twitter account and encouraged audiences to share her post (Le Pen, 2017a). She also encouraged people to share a similar post on her Facebook to get more shares (Le Pen, 2017b).

Geert Wilders of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) is another radical right party leader who is highly active online and has a significant presence on the web. As one of the most quoted politicians in Dutch (Elinas, 2010, p. 210), Wilders is currently the most followed Dutch politician on Facebook and the second most followed politician on Twitter after Prime Minister Mark Rutte, with over 360,000 followers on Facebook and 816,000 followers on Twitter (As of May 2020). Notably, his Facebook page has long been served as the party’s official Facebook page. Unlike most radical right party leaders, Wilders communicates his messages mostly via Twitter because Twitter is the most popular social media platform among Dutch politicians (Weber Shandwick, 2014, p. 9). He is also well known for his numerous tweets, which are up to 4-20 times more than that of other Dutch major party leaders (Jacobs and Spierings, 2019, pp. 1688, 1691). Similar to MLP, Wilders is also highly adept at mobilizing masses on the web (Kaya, 2019, p. 3). Apart from Facebook and Twitter, he has maintained his blog since 2005 to mainly express his anti-immigrant views.

A similar example can be found in Finland as well. Jussi Halla-aho of the Finns Party (PS, previously known as the True Finns) is one of the most popular politicians in Finland, and he was also the most Googled Finnish politician in 2009 (Horsti, 2015, p. 356).

He heavily makes use of digital media, especially blogs. Just like Wilders, Halla-aho has run his personal blog *Scripta* since 2003, and he has exploited the blog mainly to voice his blatant anti-immigrant views (Horsti, 2015, p. 358). *Scripta* has played a crucial role in developing the anti-immigration movement and gaining political traction, which is a significant part of the PS's success (Elinas, 2018, p. 276). Halla-aho's active blogging even led him to enter politics in 2008 as a candidate of the Finns Party (Horsti, 2015, p. 351). In addition to his blog, Halla-aho has his personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and Twitter is among his most frequently used online platform, with over 41,000 followers.

The last political figure to address is Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria. Strache resigned as both vice-chancellor of Austria and leader of the FPÖ in May 2019 because he had been found to be involved in the so-called 'Ibiza-gate' scandal (see Eberl et al., 2020). Strache opened his new Facebook page, "Heinz-Christian Strache /HC Strache," on April 12, 2020, on which he has 10,491 followers. Before his original Facebook page "HC Strache" had been removed in the aftermath of the Ibiza affair, he was the most followed Austrian politician on Facebook, with more than 746,000 followers (Fuchs, 2019, p. 197).

4) Reason for radical right parties' high online activity

The rise of the electoral success of radical right parties is closely related to their strategic exploitation of the Internet. The contemporary radical right party family in Western Europe has been more active in an online environment compared to an offline environment for several reasons, which can be clustered into two major categories: (1) party's situational constraints and (2) the Internet's functional and strategic advantages.

a. Party's situational constraints

Radical right parties have become active online because Internet applications and platforms enable them to overcome multiple constraints they are facing. In the past, these parties were largely considered as fringe parties and as political outsiders, so they had to face very high political and social hurdles. In Germany, for example, the activities of radical right parties and politicians were extremely limited by strict legal regulations, and they were heavily stigmatized as socially 'unacceptable' due to historical legacies that brought about the strong social norm against voting for extremists in post-war (Arzheimer and Berning, 2019, pp. 1-2; Caiani and Parenti, 2016, p. 16; Mudde, 2007, p. 245).

The situation was very much the same in other Western European countries. While there are some exceptions, such as the SVP and the FPÖ (Art, 2011, p. 148; Mudde, 2016, p. 15), most parties of the radical right in the past had weak organizations; had a limited resource base; suffered political exclusion in the form of other parties' refusal to cooperate with them (e.g., a cordon sanitaire); were under strong social control; and were often locked out of the traditional media because of strict journalistic gatekeeping resulting from their negative party image (Strandberg, 2009, p. 836; Esser et al., 2017, p. 1; Erk, 2005, p. 496; Akkerman et al., 2016, pp. 45-48; Krämer, 2017, p. 1304; Gibson and Ward, 2000, p. 302; Ellinas 2010, p. 176).

Such political and social isolation, together with their limited organizational infrastructure as well as human and financial resources, have consequently forced them to look for alternative communication channels (Ellinas, 2018, pp. 272-273). The Internet has made it possible for these parties to circumvent gatekeepers of the established media while disseminating their ideology and messages directly to a large number of audiences at low

cost (Jacobs and Spierings, 2019, p. 1685; Engesser et al., 2017a, p. 1113; Ernst et al., 2017a, p. 1350; Krämer, 2014, p. 45, Kriesi 2014, p. 363). In summary, parties of the radical right have become more active online because the Internet helps them to close the communicative resource gap, to overcome their disadvantaged competitive positions, and ultimately, to escape ‘marginalization’ (Ellinas, 2018, p. 272; Mudde, 2007, p. 259, Ellinas, 2010; p. 216; Vergeer 2015, p. 748).

b. Internet’s functional and strategic advantages

Apart from situational reasons, radical right parties have heavily resorted to the Internet because it has many functional advantages and provides much more favorable environmental conditions in implementing their political strategies in at least three ways.

First, radical right parties are highly active online because the Internet allows them to easily implement the strategy of ‘normalization’ — a strategy of making themselves appear to be ‘similar’ to other political parties and to be more politically and socially ‘acceptable’ (Dézé, 2011, p. 142, pp. 152-154; Boyadjian, 2015, pp. 152-153). Most radical right parties have developed political strategies to lose their social and political stigma and escape marginalization in response to their negative public image. In other words, the primary focus of their strategies has been to improve their public image and ultimately to make themselves appear “legitimate” (Bos et al., 2011, p. 183). As a way of achieving such a goal, they have made an effort first and foremost to increase their online presence. This is because high online visibility can signal their political significance to audiences (Ellinas, 2010, p. 32), thus contributing to gaining political legitimation and making them more acceptable parties. Besides, attaining high visibility online has a “self-reinforcing effect” (Dittrich, 2017a, p. 9), which can help reduce political marginalization. For example, the

number of Likes, followers, and shares that social media sites offer enables every online audience to immediately identify these parties' success or failures by simply looking at their posts and profiles (Dittrich, 2017a, p. 9). Such a normalization effect resulting from high online visibility has led them to actively utilize the Internet in their political work as part of electoral strategies.

Second, radical right parties rely on the Internet to a great degree because it enables them to bolster their anti-immigrant program. Compared to offline space, online space gives these parties much more freedom in terms of content production because they can virtually 'remove' social and political controls they are suffering from (Jacobs and Spierings, 2019, p. 1685; Engesser et al., 2017a, p. 1110). Therefore, they can repeatedly generate information that they want to emphasize, targeting a specific group of people. For this reason, parties of the radical right have highlighted immigration issues mostly online. Indeed, in their study, Heiss and Matthes (2020) reveal that Austrian and German radical right parties make more references to anti-immigrant rhetoric than other political parties in each country (p. 2).

In addition, in promoting their anti-immigrant program, the viral nature of the Internet helps their messages evoking perceived ethnic threats to spread more rapidly and extensively (Engesser et al., 2017a, p. 1110). Indeed, the VB has highly relied upon social media sites as a means of disseminating its Islamophobic political program, which stresses the message of hatred and discrimination towards immigrants (Matamoros-Fernández, 2018, p. 4). Also, the Internet allows them to visualize their ideological messages with the help of various audiovisual materials, which can reinforce their political strategies of excluding out-groups (Krämer, 2017, p. 1305). For instance, in an attempt to spread and

stress his messages of anti-Islam, the PVV's leader Wilders launched a short online film 'Fitna' in the Netherlands in 2008, which portrays Islam as a violent, dogmatic, and intolerant ideology of hatred (Kallis, 2018, p. 48; Elinas, 2010, p. 211). Similarly, in order to emphasize the negative image of Muslims and to increase audiences' perceived threat related to immigrants, the SVP ran a short film on its official website titled "Heaven of Hell" as part of the 2007 campaign (Arts, 2011, p. 150).

Lastly, radical right parties have actively employed the Internet because it facilitates the process of recruitment and mobilization (Caiani and Parenti, 2016, p. 10; Pajnik and Sauer, 2017, p. 1; Jacobs and Spierings, 2019, p. 1691, Engesser et al., 2017b, p. 1286). Many of these parties have used social media as a recruitment tool (Bartlett et al., 2011, p. 18), and the PVV's leader Wilders is particularly adept at using Facebook and Twitter for such a purpose (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 25). In addition, radical right parties are also adept at mobilizing their supporters, so they are able to generate a high-level user engagement (Novelli and Johansson, 2019; p. 28). For example, Serrano and his colleagues (2019) demonstrate that, in the period from January 2015 to May 2018, the number of shares of the AfD's Facebook post (2,891,377) was larger than the sum of the shares of all posts from the rest of six main political parties (2,250,276), and, in the period from July 2017 to July 2018, the AfD's tweets were retweeted more than the tweets of all the other parties combined (Serrano et al., 2019, pp. 218-219). Also, in their analysis of Facebook timelines of five Italian political leaders throughout the period between October 2016 to October 2017, Mazzoleni and Bracciale (2018, p. 4) show that Matteo Salvini's every post received the highest average of more than 25,000 interactions (i.e., Likes, reactions, comments, and shares) among the five Italian political leaders in the examined period.

Similarly, Dittrich (2017a) shows that Marin le pen receives the highest number of Likes, reactions, comments, and shares on Facebook during the research period from 2015 to 2016 (pp. 12-13).

Chapter III

Constructing a Conceptual Framework

A. Identification of research gaps and problem statement

Thus far, we have reviewed two strands of the literature on the rise of radical right parties from a demand-side and a supply-side point of view. Both lines of research attempt to provide acceptable explanations for the underlying cause of electoral support for the radical right, yet a closer look at them reveals significant gaps and shortcomings. While numerous scholars in the literature on the relationship between immigration and radical right voting have identified that immigration issues are the backbone for constituencies' electoral support for radical right parties, some contradictory findings that do not support this view remain to be fully elucidated. As noted earlier, the reason for this empirical disagreement could be due to methodological differences in the study design in terms of territorial levels (e.g., regional, national, or cross-national level) or operationalization.

However, another potential reason for such inconclusive evidence could be due to the *complexity* of the relationship between immigration-related factors and radical right voting. While high immigration rates and anti-immigrant attitudes still serve as the strongest determinant of radical right voting, some mixed findings give hints that the relationship between immigration-related factors and the radical right vote is not as simple as it appears. This means that immigration-related factors by themselves may not fully account for electoral support for the radical right, and the relationship between them may

thus depend on another factor. Therefore, the current literature on immigration may suggest the need for much further systematic research investigating the extent to which immigration-related factors are associated with radical right voting when taking other factors into account.

Meanwhile, in the literature on online activities of the radical right, we have identified that radical right parties are highly active in an online environment. However, the study has one critical drawback, which is a paucity of research on this topic. Researchers have made relatively few attempts to quantify the association between radical right parties' vigorous online activity and their electoral success. While some progress has been made in this field recently, most of the studies still have a qualitative nature, with the tendency of focusing mainly on the critical analysis of these parties' discourse and discursive practices rather than on their 'actual' level of online activity (Heiss & Matthes, 2020; Matamoros-Fernández, 2018; Krämer, 2017; Jacobs and Spierings, 2019; Gimenez and Schwarz, 2016; Mazzoleni and Bracciale, 2018). For this reason, to date, there is still a shortage of empirical studies, which thus makes it difficult to justify empirical results.

Furthermore, the majority of existing analysis on the parties' online presence has been performed at the national level. For this reason, only a handful of studies have provided a cross-national comparison of their level of online activity (e.g., Bartlett et al., 2011; Fielitz and Thurston, 2018; Dittrich, 2017; Novelli and Johansson, 2019; Caiani and Parenti, 2016). Such lack of comparative examination across countries can be problematic since, in the words of Rydgren (2007, p. 247), "by ignoring research done on similar parties in other countries, it often leads to ad hoc theorizing."

It is remarkable how little attention is paid to radical right parties' online presence, particularly given that they have considerably benefited from their high level of online activity. The fact that these parties have a strong presence on several digital platforms deserves much more scholarly attention for two reasons. First, research on this topic can enrich our understanding of radical right voting. As numerous scholars argue (Mudde 2010; Arts 2011; Carter 2013; Givens 2005; Norris 2005; Eatwell 2016; Rydgren 2012; Golder 2016), the electoral success of radical right parties cannot be adequately illustrated in the absence of the supply-side context. Demand-side factors are unquestionably "the necessary prior condition" for their success, but they are "not sufficient" (Eatwell, 2016, p. 418). Unless we know *what* strategies these parties pursue as a strategic actor and *how* they execute their actions to "best respond to their political and institutional environments" (Carter, 2013, p. 3), it is difficult to understand this phenomenon of the radical right truly. In other words, supply-side factors show how radical right parties develop a *link* with their potential voters based on their political programs (see Gómez-Reino and Llamazares, 2013). In this sense, studies on radical right parties' online presence provide valuable insights that the online space creates a favorable strategic environment in which these parties can easily cultivate an electoral connection with a specific group of citizens who are willing to vote for them.

Second, research on the online presence of radical right parties can also help to indirectly reveal new information regarding their voters. One of the crucial structural features of new online platforms that distinguish from traditional media platforms is interactivity, i.e., the two-way communication between the sender and the receiver (Stromer-Galley, 2019, p. 1, Mazzoleni and Bracciale, 2018, p. 3). In a political context,

this means that on online platforms, party supporters can play a leading role in establishing interactive relations with their preferred parties through generating information or replying in various ways to the original messages from the parties (Stromer-Galley, 2000, p. 117). From the second literature review, we have noticed that radical right parties have higher online interaction rates compared to their competitors, receiving a large number of Likes, comments, and shares. Given the interactive nature of the Internet, it can be inferred that supporters of radical right parties are also highly active online, compared to those of other parties. In the end, exploring these parties' online presence can, in part, help to unearth such hidden profiles of radical right voters in the online context.

In summary, although both literature studies have advanced the current understanding of radical right parties' electoral success, there are still significant gaps that need to be addressed. These gaps include inconsistent results about the relationship between immigration and radical right support, as well as a dearth of research examining the parties' online presence. Above all, despite radical right parties' strong online presence, very few studies have attempted to explore the conditions of radical right voting while considering such a background of the parties. Accordingly, whether and to what extent online activities of radical right parties influence the relationship between immigration and radical right vote choice has yet to be systematically studied, which is a research problem of this study.

B. Aim of the thesis and research question

What factors create a fertile breeding ground for electoral support for radical right parties? The main objective of the thesis is to provide new insight into this question. Combining two literature streams, I aim to narrow the gaps identified above, if not wholly,

and thereby to provide a better understanding of radical right voting behavior. Ultimately, I seek to propose a new quantitative model that investigates the role of electorates' online activities on the relationship between immigration and the radical right vote at the cross-national level. More specifically, drawing on Norris's demand-supply framework, I attempt to quantify the effect of voters' Internet usage on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and electoral support for radical right parties. Therefore, I posit the following research question (RQ):

RQ: Does citizens' Internet usage moderate the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting?

C. Hypothesis

1. Norris' demand-supply framework and voters' online activities

To formulate my hypothesis, I bridge two strands of literature reviewed together based on Norris' framework. When we look at the two literature streams individually, they are seemingly unrelated to each other. However, once we take Norris' demand-supply framework into account, it becomes apparent that they are somehow connected. According to Norris's (2005) framework, there are two prerequisites for radical right voting to occur: (1) there needs to be both voters' demand for and radical right parties' supply of an electoral product in the electoral marketplace; and (2) the two have to interact (meet) with each other. When it comes to the interaction between demand and supply, the two, in general, do not automatically come together (Art, 2011, p. 188). Instead, they are brought together in the process of voters and radical right parties' pursuing each political goal (Givens, 2005, p. 153). In the end, from Norris's perspectives, the interaction between voters' demand for and radical right parties' supply of an electoral product is the essence of what brings about

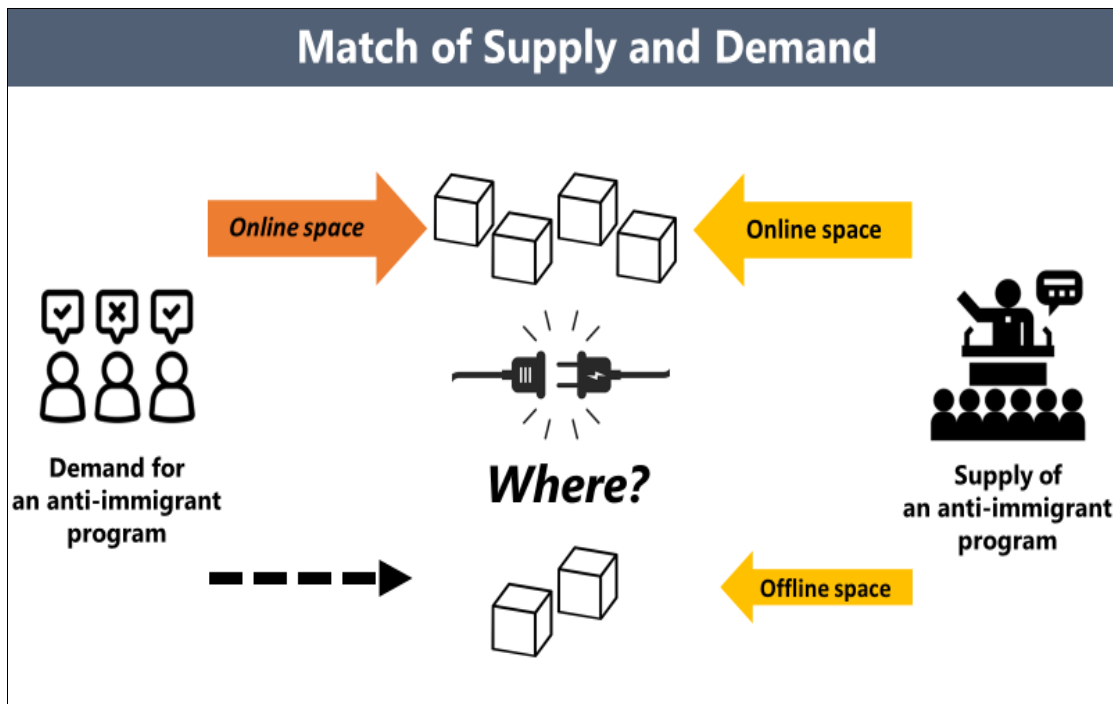
radical right voting. Due to this interaction, we can say that the two bodies of literature are linked to each other.

In the demand-side literature, we have identified that although immigration-related factors are the most important predictor of the radical right vote, some contradicting findings exist. Meanwhile, I have argued that the reason why the effect of immigration-related factors on radical right voting does not provide sufficient clarity may be due to the complexity of the relationship between immigration-related factors and electoral support for the radical right. One major drawback of previous studies on the effect of immigration on radical right voting in this regard is that almost all research has been conducted in an offline context: most research has considered the interaction between voters and radical right parties as occurring mostly offline. Such a research model makes it difficult to reflect a complex association of immigration with radical right voting.

It is here that Norris' framework becomes important. To address the problem above and systematically examine the link between immigration and radical right support, we have to go beyond the current dominant discourse. The first step towards this is to identify *where* the interaction between voters' demand for and radical right parties' supply of an electoral product takes place. That is, we have to recognize a space where the supplies of an anti-immigrant program, i.e., the parties' most unique and significant selling point (Fennema and Van der Brug, 2007), mainly come from. Identifying such political interface between voters and radical right parties requires looking at how radical right parties perform their strategies to attract voters and cultivate an electoral connection with their constituencies. It is especially in this respect that the supply-side literature becomes of importance.

The supply-side literature reviewed above teaches us that online space is the radical right parties' primary political playing field to reach wider audiences, propagate their anti-immigrant discourse, and ultimately maintain their political viability. In short, the second literature review suggests that radical right parties are remarkably active and visible online. If this argument is correct, they should then be more likely to pursue their political strategies in an online space and, accordingly, to attract more voters who are engaged online. As a result, radical right parties' products of anti-immigrant programs should be offered more online. Accordingly, a dominant space where voters and radical parties interact with each other, namely, a space where voters find radical right parties' electoral products of anti-immigrant programs, should be a digital space (see Figure 1 below for details).

Figure 1. Conceptual framework, created by an author



In short, since radical right parties offer their products to their constituencies mainly online, the interaction between them should accordingly occur mainly online. This logic is a key idea of bridging two literature streams and underpins the reason for considering voters' online activities in my research model. Further, it also offers grounds for my choice of anti-immigrant attitudes among various immigration-related factors, including the objective size of immigrant populations. Since my research focuses on *electorates'* radical right voting behavior, an individual-level factor of anti-immigrant attitudes, instead of an aggregate-level factor of the actual proportion of immigrants, fits the model better.

2. Online partisan Information seeking and polarization of attitudes

When it comes to providing the theoretical grounding for the relationship among citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes, online activities, and voting for radical right parties, it is fundamental first to understand the link between negative emotions and political information-seeking. As Mudde (2007) suggests, the sentiments can influence various human motivations, such as personal, economic, cultural, and political motivations (p. 222). Research on political psychology has provided strong evidence that experiencing negative emotions results in greater attention to and interest in messages that threaten individuals themselves, leading them to be more inclined to seek relevant political information (Valentino et al., 2008; Valentino et al., 2009; Huddy et al., 2007; Marcus et al., 2000; Huddy et al., 2005). We know from the demand-side literature that anti-immigrant attitudes derive from perceived ethnic threat shaped by native citizens' socio-economic or symbolic competition with immigrants as ethnic out-groups. In other words, perceived ethnic threats are related to the perception that immigrants of ethnic minorities threaten natives' dominant status in a demographic, economic, and cultural term. Therefore, such ethnic threats

engender economic or cultural grievances against immigrants, which results in provoking discrete negative emotions such as feelings of fear or anger. In the end, anti-immigrant attitudes are essentially associated with negative emotions, more specifically, feelings of fear or anger. Given this background, those who hold negative views on immigrants are highly likely to have a greater interest in threatening messages associated with immigration issues (Huddy et al., 2007), which is consequently highly likely to translate into seeking relevant information.

Also, when it comes to searching for information, people tend to select the information that is congenial with their pre-existing views and to avoid counter-attitudinal information (Stroud, 2017; Wollebæk et al., 2019; Garrett, 2009; Sears and Freedman, 1967; Iyengar et al., 2008; Marquart et al., 2016; Hameleers, Bos, and Vreese, 2018; Krämer, 2017). In a more political sense, such concept of ‘selective exposure’ can develop into “partisan selective exposure,” behavior that individuals seek to selectively expose themselves to political information on the basis of their political affinity (Stroud, 2010, p. 557; Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p. 29; Bennett and Iyengar; 2008, p. 719). Both selective exposure and partisan selective exposure generally occur more on the Internet than in an offline environment, such as radio and cable television (Stroud 2008; p. 347). This is because the Internet provides a purposive and high-choice environment wherein people can consume information in a more selective manner (Bimber and Davis, 2003, p. 6; Heiss and Matthes, 2020, p. 1). For this reason, it is more likely that people with anti-immigrant attitudes seek exposure to politically like-minded content online.

In light of the above, if native voters have hostile attitudes towards immigrants resulting from perceived ethnic threat, they are highly likely to desire restrictive

immigration policies in order to defend their status quo and protect ethnic in-groups' interests and values against ethnic out-groups. This desire for strict immigration policies should then be turned into a desire for an anti-immigrant program that promises to limit immigration. At the same time, since they hold feelings of fear or anger toward immigrants, it is highly likely that they have a greater interest in immigration-related content and ultimately seek attitude-congruent political information on immigration in a selective way via the Internet. Once they decide to be exposed to such partisan information on immigration through the Internet, they are more likely to find radical right parties' electoral products of anti-immigrant programs, compared to those who seek such content in an offline space. This is because, due to their high visibility online, radical right parties attract more voters who are engaged online and accordingly offer their signature electoral product of an anti-immigrant program dominantly on the web. For this reason, if native voters with negative attitudes towards immigrants frequently use the Internet to seek partisan content that is congruent with their views on immigrants, they should be able to find the parties' anti-immigrant products with more ease.

Once these voters find the product via different Internet platforms and applications — such as official party websites, party blogs, banners, and official party social media sites — they are highly likely to connect to these parties by joining these parties' like-minded online network communities. As part of their electoral strategies to sell their electoral products effectively, radical right parties have focused on establishing a connection with a politically like-minded network of supporters who are receptive to their anti-immigrant programmatic appeals (Kluknavská and Hruška, 2019, p. 60). Thus, their several online applications and platforms have acted as partisan media outlets that especially target

audiences who oppose immigrants (Stroud, 2011, pp. 118-119). In other words, they have strategically generated a large number of partisan contents on their online platforms, repeatedly discussing and emphasizing multiple topics of ‘immigration,’ for which they have issue-ownership, in a blatant and aggressive tone of voice (Heidenreich et al., 2020, p. 1265; Schelter et al., 2016, p. 440; Schumann et al., 2019, p. 3; Serrano et al., 2019; p. 215).

With this in mind, and given that online communities are a social aggregation of specific people with similar values and interests (Klein and Muis, 2019, p. 542), those who actively seek anti-immigrant content within the parties’ several online platforms are highly likely to be exposed to such content more easily and frequently. The enhanced partisan exposure to anti-immigrant messages, which confirms their pre-existing worldviews, should then result in the polarization of attitudes, i.e., the strengthening of their original negative attitude towards immigration (Stroud, 2010, p. 557; Garret et al., 2014, p. 681; Heiss and Matthes, 2020, p. 18; Bennett and Iyengar, 2008, p. 720). If voters' initial attitudes of opposing immigrants become stronger as a result of partisan selective exposure, they are highly likely to feel more threatened by immigrants. This should then engender a greater desire for stricter immigration policies in response to higher perceived ethnic threats, which should ultimately lead to a stronger commitment to vote for radical right parties that can offer anti-immigrant programs that best satisfy their demand. In other words, the frequent use of the Internet should increase the positive effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on the radical right vote.

Based on the reasoning above, I hypothesize that the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on voting for the radical right increase with the frequent use of the Internet. In

other words, I assume that among voters who hold negative positions on immigrants, only those who are active online should be more likely to vote for radical right parties. The reason for the mixed findings of the link between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting may lie in the absence of considering voters' online activity. If radical right parties successfully tap into their online strategies of spreading anti-immigrant messages by accusing immigrants of threatening society in both economic and cultural terms, active use of the Internet by immigration opponents should amplify the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on radical right voting. As a result, I have reason to expect that only voters who both have hostility to immigrants and use the Internet on a frequent basis should be more likely to vote for radical right parties. Hence, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: The more the frequent use of the Internet, the stronger the positive relationship between citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes and voting for radical right parties.

D. Expected contribution to the literature

This thesis adds to the existing literature on radical right voting behavior in at least two ways. First, it makes an original contribution to the current discussion on factors affecting radical right voting by connecting the demand-side literature with the supply-side literature. To the best of my knowledge, no studies to date have been carried out to examine the role of citizens' Internet use and anti-immigrant attitudes in the radical right vote. This thesis extends previous work in the field of immigration by taking voters' online activity, which has been largely ignored by previous work (for an exception, see Schumann et al., 2019), into account in the model. In doing so, it allows us to obtain a full view of negative attitudes towards immigrants and their relationship with vote choice for radical right parties.

Second, it put forwards a more systematically conceptualized model in deciphering citizens' intentions to vote for radical right parties. One of the advantages of comparative cross-national study is that it enables us to draw general conclusions from particular cases and, thereby, to impose "some sort of order" on complex political events or phenomena that are difficult to illustrate (Burnham et al., 2008, pp. 72-73). Through the analysis of cross-national commonalities and variations, this thesis contributes to presenting a more reliable generalization, as part of such 'order,' about radical right voting behavior in Western Europe.

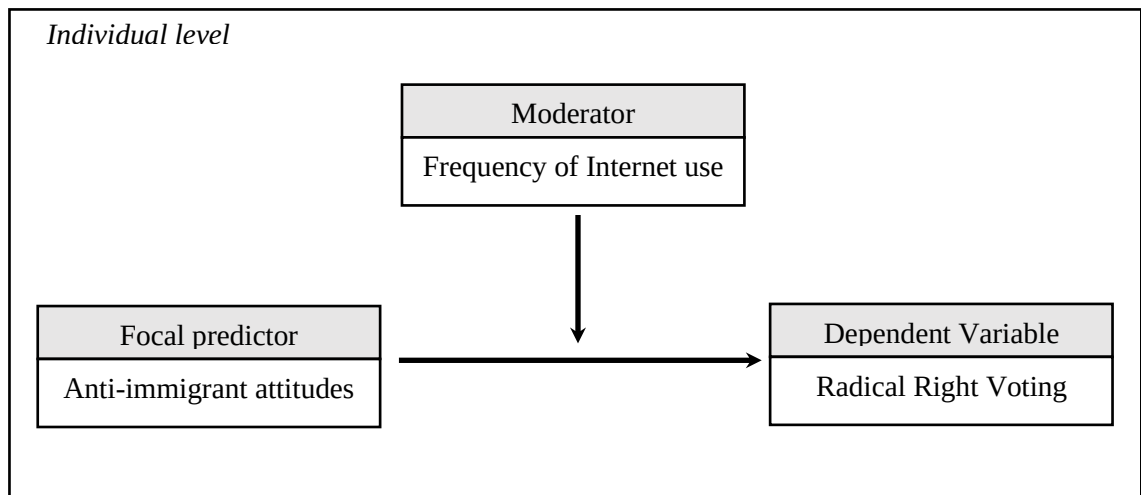
Chapter IV

Research Design and Methodology

A. Research model

This study aims to test whether the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on radical right voting is conditioned by the level of Internet use. To answer my research questions, I designed a quantitative research model containing individual-level variables. Figure 2 depicts my research model that is to be empirically tested in this thesis.

Figure 2. Research model: the role of Internet use on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting



B. Data resources

To investigate the role of anti-immigrant attitudes and online activities in the radical right vote, I employ the 9th wave of European Social Survey (ESS), which is secondary data fielded in late 2018 and early 2019. As one of the most used and standardized data sources for European studies, the ESS covers more than 30 countries in Europe, which allows me to perform cross-national comparisons of radical right voting. Above all, the survey is ideally suited for my research model, as it includes various types of items needed for testing my hypothesis.

Since my study specifically addresses radical right parties in Western Europe, only the following eight countries were selected: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. The countries considered are those that have at least one radical right party surpassing the generally accepted electoral threshold of five percent in any parliamentary election in or prior to 2018. Regarding the sample, I excluded all the missing variables from the empirical analysis and did a complete case analysis accordingly. More specifically, all respondents who are younger than 18 years old; who are not a citizen of the country; who have not voted in the last national election; who have cast a blank vote; and who answered “not applicable,” “refusal,” “don’t know,” or “no answer” were excluded from the analysis. As a result, my full research samples were restricted to a total of 9,192 samples. The table below presents the full sample size for the pooled sample and country-specific samples.

Table 1. Number of total samples

	All	AT	BE	CH	DE	FI	FR	IT	NE
Full sample	9,192	1,571	1,080	586	1,573	1,181	896	1,166	1,138

Source: ESS round 9

C. Variables and measures

1. *Dependent variables*

My dependent variable – ‘radical right voting’ – was measured based on the survey question on respondents’ actual vote choice at the last national election. To examine cross-national similarity and variation in electoral support for radical right parties, I operationalized radical right voting at both the national and cross-national level. I first constructed a set of eight individual-level dichotomous variables, coded ‘1’ if respondents voted for a radical right party in the last election in their own country and ‘0’ if they voted for any other political party. I then made another dummy variable that combines the vote for all radical right parties included in the analysis, using the same operationalization (coded ‘1’ for radical right vote choice, and ‘0’ for any other vote choice).

In the literature on the radical right, deciding whether political parties are categorized as the radical right has always been a central issue. Even though the literature on the radical right in Western Europe has expanded tremendously since the start of the third wave of the radical right (von Beyme, 1988), the generally accepted definition of the radical right is still lacking. Indeed, scholars have provided the definition of the radical right in many different ways (Liang, 2016), including, but not limited to, *Extreme Right* (e.g., Mudde 2000; Carter 2013; Hainsworth 2016; Caiani and Parenti 2016; Bruter and Harrison 2011), *Radical Right* (Rydgren, 2018; Ellinas, 2018; Norris, 2005; Givens, 2005; Kitschelt, 1997; Lubbers and Coenders, 2017; Art, 2011; Lange, 2007; Van der Brug and Fennema, 2007), *Far Right* (Ellinas, 2010; Golder, 2016; Allen, 2017; Mudde, 2019b), and *Populist Radical Right* (Mudde 2007; Eatwell, 2016; Muis and Immerzeel, 2017; Schumann et al., 2019). At times, some of these designations even overlap (Padovani, 2016): for example, Mudde has used “populist radical right,” “far right,” and “extreme

right” interchangeably. This terminological quagmire stems from the absence of the unequivocal definition itself rather than from the disagreement among scholars (Mudde, 2007, p. 12). In order to circumvent this problem with the minimum definition, scholars have tended to explain the concept of the radical right by delineating its features and ideology.

In this thesis, I choose the term ‘radical right’ based on the classic classification of the radical right made by Rydgren (2018, pp. 1-2) and Golder (2016, pp. 481-482), which considers the radical right as a subgroup of the far right. As a result, a total of nine radical right parties were selected. All selected parties are considered to be the radical right party family in previous research (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018). The list of countries and radical right parties can be found in Table A1 in Appendix A.

2. Independent variables

The first independent variable as a focal variable is anti-immigrant attitudes. To operationalize immigrant derogation, I used the question “Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?” among available indicators in the survey. The responses are classified in eleven scale points (0 = worse place to live and 10 = better place to live). For ease of interpretation, I recoded these values inversely so that higher values indicate more negative attitudes towards immigrants.

The second independent variable as a moderator is the frequency of Internet use. To measure the level of Internet use, I used the question stated: “People can use the Internet on different devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones. How often do you use the Internet on these or any other devices, whether for work or personal use?” The answers were given on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “never” (1) to “every day” (5).

3. Control variables

1) Socio-demographic background

Apart from main variables, I also considered a series of individual-level control variables that have been often utilized in the previous literature or that might serve as a significant potential predictor of the radical right vote.

The first control variable is *gender*. Existing studies have always been shown that male voters are another strong predictor of the radical right vote (Givens, 2004; Stockemer et al., 2018; Immerzeel et al., 2015, Coffé, 2018). I made a dummy with ‘1’ for male and ‘0’ for female. Age was recoded into six categories (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+).

Education level was recoded into three categories: low-level education, intermediate-level education, and high-level education. Individuals whose education level is lower secondary or less than lower secondary were coded ‘low-level education,’ and Individuals whose education level is lower-tier upper secondary, upper-tier upper secondary, or advanced vocational are coded as ‘intermediate level education.’ Individuals whose education is lower tertiary education or higher tertiary education were coded as ‘high-level education.’

I also controlled *economic strain* and *employment status* because previous research has shown that people who are unemployed or suffering economic hardships are more likely to support radical right parties (Amengay and Stockemer, 2018; Norris 2005). To measure economic strain, I used a question asking respondents’ subjective feelings about their household’s income. The four answer categories ranged from ‘1’ (living comfortably on present income) to ‘4’ (finding it very difficult on present income). The variable was coded ‘1’ if they answered that they are suffering economic strain (scale value 3 to 4) and ‘0’ otherwise. For the employment status, I used an item asking respondents’ objective

employment status, namely their main activity in recent days. I recoded nine categories into three categories: employed, unemployed, and other.

I Included *city residents* to control for the level of urbanization that has been often used as a control variable (Poznyak et al., 2011; Rydgren 2012). I used the item asking the area where respondents are living. The five answer categories ranged from ‘1’ (big city) to ‘5’ (farm or home in the countryside). City residents were coded ‘1’ for those who live in the city (scale value 1 to 3), and ‘0’ otherwise.

2) Political background

Since my research model is closely related to political activities, I additionally included *political interest*, *experience of online political participation*, and *political interest*. To measure political interest, I used the question stated: “How interested would you say you are in politics?” The four answer categories ranged from ‘1’ (very interested) to ‘4’ (not at all interested). Those who have political interests (scale value 1 to 2) were coded ‘1.’ Online political participation experience was measured as a dichotomous variable. Those who have ever posted or shared any political content on online platforms, including social media sites, during the last 12 months were coded ‘1,’ and ‘0’ otherwise. Political news consumption was measured by asking respondents' time spent reading, watching, or listening to news related to political content. The variable was measured as a continuous variable in minutes.

Authoritarian attitudes were included because authoritarianism, which is often the opposite concept of libertarianism (Mudde, 2007), is one of the most prominent ideology in the radical right (Golder 2016; Mudde, 2007). The variable was operationalized by the question of whether it is important to do what is told and follow the rules. The six

answer categories ranged from ‘1’ (very much like me) to ‘6’ (not like me at all). The variable was coded ‘1’ if the respondents answered, “very much like me,” “like me,” somewhat like me,” or “a little like me,” and ‘0’ otherwise.

Lastly, *Political dissatisfaction* was measured by using the question stated: “Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?” The variable is an eleven-point scale ranging from ‘0’ (extremely dissatisfied) to ‘10’ (extremely satisfied). Those who are dissatisfied with the national government were coded ‘1’ (scale value 0 to 4) and ‘0’ otherwise. All variables except for the political news consumption variable were measured as dummy variables. For variable descriptions, see Appendix B, Table B1.

4. Research method and procedures

Due to the dichotomous nature of my dependent variable, I employ the method of binary logistic regression. In terms of interpretation, while linear regression, such as ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, generally focuses on analyzing *how much* influence independent variables have on the dependent variable (e.g., change in Y caused by X), binary logistic regression focuses on finding which independent variables *determine* whether or not a certain event p occurs. Since my research focus is to find determinants of the probability of radical right voting (i.e., the event p), the binary logistic regression model calculating such a probability fits best for my study.

For research procedures, I conduct an analysis in two phases, using the statistical software of the Stata version 16 and the Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 27. First, I report the descriptive statistics of the main variables, which are the dependent and independent variables. Second, to test whether the effect of citizens’

negative attitudes towards immigrants on radical right voting differs systematically as a function of the level of their Internet use, I perform binary logistic regression on both the pooled sample and country-specific level in two steps. I first introduce two independent variables of the anti-immigrant attitudes variable (i.e., focal predictor variable) and the Internet use variable (i.e., moderator variable), and the interaction term (i.e., the arithmetic product of these two variables) into the basic model with no control variables (i.e., model 1). Next, I add an eleven set of individual-level control variables to the controlled model (i.e., model 2). Regarding models with the pooled sample, country dummy variables are additionally included in both models 1 and 2 to control for country-specific effects and hence ensure the robustness of the results. All the observations are statistically weighted by the ESS design weights.

Chapter V

Research Results

A. Descriptive statistics analysis

Before starting a logistic regression analysis, we need to take a closer look at the range, mean value, as well as distribution of main variables by using descriptive statistics to identify their key characteristics. This will help understand the research findings that will be presented later.

Table 2 presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for radical right voting in the pooled and country-specific samples. In the pooled sample, slightly over 12 % ($n = 1,115$) of the respondents across eight countries reported that they voted for their own country's radical right party in the last national election. The standard deviation ($= 0.32655$) of the combined radical right vote was higher than its mean value, indicating that the data

distribution is heavily skewed to the right (see Appendix B, Figure B1). In the country-specific samples, two major observations were made. First, as one may have expected, vast variance in the vote share of the radical right was found across countries. The average share of votes cast for selected radical right parties turned out to be high in Switzerland (23.72 %), Italy (21.11 %), and Austria (17.56 %), above-average in France (11.96 %) and Finland (11.35 %), average in Germany (6.86 %) and Netherlands (6.77 %), and low in Belgium (2.6 %). The difference in the radical right vote share between Switzerland and Belgium was more than 20 percentage points. Also, as in the pooled sample, the standard deviation of the dependent variables by country was higher than their mean level in all countries except Belgium, implying a high degree of heterogeneity in each sample.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the radical right vote

Country	<i>Observations</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
All	1,115	0	1	0.1213	0.32655
Austria	276	0	1	0.1756	0.38058
Belgium	28	0	1	0.0260	0.15932
Switzerland	139	0	1	0.2372	0.42573
Germany	108	0	1	0.0686	0.25288
Finland	134	0	1	0.1135	0.31729
France	107	0	1	0.1196	0.32472
Italy	246	0	1	0.2111	0.40829
Netherlands	77	0	1	0.0677	0.25129

Table 3 reports summary statistics for independent variables in the pooled and country-specific samples. In the pooled sample, the mean value for anti-immigrant attitudes by citizens from eight Western European countries was 4.8792 (SD= 2.20366) out of 10. Among total respondents, groups with a positive position towards immigrants (scale value 0 to 4) held the highest percentage of 38.9% (see Appendix B, Figure B2). This indicates

that public mood and attitudes towards immigrants are somewhat positive on average across countries. Meanwhile, the mean value for the frequency of Internet use was 4.21 (SD = 1.380) out of 5, and the proportion of groups using the Internet most days or more often was the highest (78.3 %) of all respondents (see Appendix B, Figure B3). Similar patterns were also observed in the country-specific samples, with few exceptions. While the positive public climate towards immigrants remained dominant in most countries, Italy (49.8 %) and Austria (47.4 %) had the highest percentage of respondents exhibiting negative attitudes towards immigrants, indicating that these two countries are the least tolerant of immigrants. Meanwhile, respondents who use the Internet most days or more often accounted for the highest portion in all countries. Full descriptive statistics for the pooled and country-specific samples are provided in Appendix B (Table B2, Table B3a, and Table B3b).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the explanatory variables

Country		Anti-immigrant attitudes	Frequency of Internet use
All	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.8792	4.21
	<i>Std.</i>	2.20366	1.380
Austria	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	5.6058	3.99
	<i>Std.</i>	2.31428	1.516
Belgium	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.8140	4.22
	<i>Std.</i>	1.94504	1.369
Switzerland	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.3055	4.31
	<i>Std.</i>	1.80991	1.262
Germany	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.5597	4.21
	<i>Std.</i>	2.18646	1.379

Table 3. (continued)

Country		Anti-immigrant attitudes	Frequency of Internet use
Finland	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.1931	4.48
	<i>Std.</i>	2.06668	1.203
France	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.8903	4.14
	<i>Std.</i>	2.22452	1.416
Italy	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	5.9022	3.85
	<i>Std.</i>	2.39235	1.558
Netherlands	<i>Min</i>	0	1
	<i>Max</i>	10	5
	<i>Mean</i>	4.3299	4.62
	<i>Std.</i>	1.69356	0.990

Source: European social survey, round 9 (2018/19).

B. Research results

1. Cross-national level results

Before analyzing the results, we need to understand the characteristics of the logistic regression model first. Since logistic regression, unlike the OLS regression, is closely related to the concept of probability, we need to be careful of interpreting the results. In the logistic regression model, the positive sign of the coefficient ' B^3 ' means that individuals are likely to belong to a group where the event p occurs as the independent variable increases, whereas the negative sign of B indicates that individuals are less likely to belong to groups where the event occurs as the independent variable increases. To explain "by what factor the odds change" when the independent variable increases by one unit (Jones and Peery, 2019, p. 4), the concept of Odds Ratio (OR) is also used, which

³ In the logistic regression output, the coefficient is presented on the *log odds* scale (see Szumilas, 2010; Hayes and Matthes, 2009). The logistic regression method mathematically transforms the 'probability' to 'log odds' so that the dependent variable's original range of 0 to 1 can be transformed into a new range of negative infinity to positive infinity just as in the OLS regression model. Here, the concept of *odds* is a ratio of *probabilities*: the probability of the event occurring ($p[\text{success}]$) divided by the probability of it not occurring ($1-p[\text{failure}]$) (see Szumilas, 2010; Grimes and Schulz, 2008, p.423). Therefore, 'odds' are fundamentally different from 'probability.'

denotes a ratio of two odds: a ratio of the odds of an event occurring in the exposed group (e.g., those exposed to drugs) to the odds of it happening in the non-exposed group (e.g., those not exposed to drugs) (Grimes and Schulz, 2008, p. 423). The baseline for the odds ratios is 1, and if the value of odds ratios, or the value of the predicted change in odds, is greater than 1, it indicates that the event p is more likely to happen in the first group (i.e., the exposed group coded as 1) (Grimes and Schulz, 2008, p. 425). Conversely, if the value of odds ratios is less than 1, it means that the event p is less likely to occur in the first group (Kalra, 2016, p. 50).

To assess whether the impact of citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes on voting support for a radical right party is conditional on the level of their Internet use, I ran a binary logistic regression analysis. Table 4 presents the results of the model in the pooled-eight nation sample. Entries in the first through fourth columns represent respectively the unstandardized beta coefficients (B) (with standard errors (SE) below), odds ratios (OR), 95% confidence interval (CI) for odds ratios, and the significance (p) of coefficients. The first thing to explain is the result of the Hosmer and Lemeshow test that evaluates the validity of the results for logistic regression. The p -value for the Hosmer-Lemeshow test was found to be greater than 0.05 for both models, meaning that these logistic regression models provide a good fit for the data. The Nagelkerke R-squared value of the first and second models was 0.223 and 0.246, indicating 22.3% and 24.6% of predictive power, respectively.

The findings presented in Table 4 strongly support my hypothesis that there is an interaction effect between citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes and the level of online activities on electoral support for radical right parties at the cross-national level. In model

1, the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes for those who never use the Internet is statistically significant at the 0.001 level ($B = 0.180$, $p = 0.000$), and more importantly, the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes for those who are active online is, as expected, statistically significant at the 0.001 level ($B = 0.061$, $p = 0.000$). The fact that the interaction term's coefficient has a significant positive sign shows that those who both have negative attitudes toward immigrants and are active on the Internet are highly likely to belong to a group where the event of radical right voting occurs as the level of the two increases.

Compared to the OLS model, raw coefficients in the logistic regression model do not have immediate interpretation due to the model's non-linear nature (Brambor et al., 2006). In this case, the odds ratios, which are calculated from coefficients, can be informative in that they provide "the percent change in the odds for each one-unit increase in the independent variable" (Westgaard and Van der Wijst, 2001, pp. 346-347). To accurately interpret the odds ratios, we need to convert them to percentages, which are obtained by subtracting 1 from the odds ratios and multiplying by 100 (Westgaard and Van der Wijst, 2001, p. 346). The value of the odds ratio of the interaction term in model 1 is 1.063, indicating that an increase in one unit of the interaction term increases the odds of being in the group of radical right supporters by $\{(1-1.063) \times 100\} = 6.3\%$ at the cross-national level.

In regard to the Internet usage variable, the results yield some interesting findings. As indicated by its coefficient ($B = -0.380$), the level of Internet use has a significant and strong negative relationship to the radical right vote ($p = 0.000$). This implies that the absence of citizens' hostile attitudes towards immigrants gives their level of Internet usage a very weak incentive to foster electoral support for radical right parties in Western Europe.

More specifically, its odds ratio is 0.684, indicating that for a one-unit increase in the level of Internet use by those who do not hold anti-immigrant attitudes, the odds of being in the group of voters of the radical right decrease by $\{(1-0.684) \times 100\} = 31.6\%$ at the cross-national level. However, given that such an effect among those with anti-immigrant attitudes is positively and significantly different from zero, as observed above, negative attitudes towards immigrants seem to reduce the negative impact of the level of Internet use on voting support for Western European radical right parties. The same significant pattern is observed in model 2, where 11 individual-level control variables and country dummies are included, which proves the robustness of the research model.

Table 4. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and Radical Right voting, Pooled eight-nation sample

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.180*** (0.046)	1.197	(1.094~1.311)	0.000	0.174*** (0.046)	1.190	(1.087~1.303)	0.000
Frequency of Internet use	-0.380*** (0.072)	0.684	(0.594~0.787)	0.000	-0.357*** (0.075)	0.700	(0.604~0.810)	0.000
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.061*** (0.011)	1.063	(1.041~1.086)	0.000	0.057*** (0.011)	1.058	(1.036~1.081)	0.000
Male					0.318*** (0.073)	1.375	(1.192~1.585)	0.000
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					0.119 (0.194)	1.126	(0.771~1.646)	0.540
25-34 years					0.470** (0.158)	1.600	(1.174~2.181)	0.003
35-44 years					0.374* (0.149)	1.453	(1.084~1.947)	0.012
45-54 years					0.458*** (0.139)	1.581	(1.204~2.076)	0.001
55-64 years					0.208 (0.121)	1.231	(0.971~1.562)	0.086
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					1.146*** (0.138)	3.147	(2.399~4.128)	0.000
Intermediate education					0.856*** (0.113)	2.355	(1.887~2.939)	0.000

Table 4. (continued)

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Economic strain					0.049 (0.104)	1.050	(0.857~1.288)	0.636
Employment status (employed = ref.)								
Unemployed					-0.228 (0.189)	0.796	(0.550~1.154)	0.229
Other					0.036 (0.102)	1.037	(0.848~1.267)	0.726
City resident					-0.014 (0.072)	0.986	(0.857~1.135)	0.848
Interested in politics					0.009 (0.078)	1.009	(0.866~1.175)	0.908
Online political participation experience					0.212* (0.093)	1.236	(1.031~1.482)	0.022
Political news consumption					0.000 (0.000)	1.000	(1.000~1.001)	0.059
Authoritarian attitudes					-0.037 (0.089)	0.963	(0.810~1.146)	0.672
Dissatisfaction with government					0.029 (0.079)	1.029	(0.882~1.201)	0.717
Country (Netherlands = ref.)								
Austria	0.450** (0.143)	1.569	(1.185~2.077)	0.002	0.388** (0.149)	1.475	(1.102~1.973)	0.009
Belgium	-1.358*** (0.230)	0.257	(0.164~0.404)	0.000	-1.445*** (0.236)	0.236	(0.149~0.374)	0.000
Switzerland	1.546*** (0.159)	4.694	(3.436~6.412)	0.000	1.545*** (0.164)	4.686	(3.398~6.462)	0.000
Germany	-0.259 (0.161)	0.772	(0.563~1.058)	0.107	-0.238 (0.168)	0.789	(0.567~1.097)	0.158
Finland	0.542*** (0.156)	1.720	(1.267~2.333)	0.000	0.600*** (0.160)	1.821	(1.332~2.491)	0.000
France	0.296 (0.164)	1.344	(0.974~1.855)	0.072	0.262 (0.173)	1.300	(0.927~1.823)	0.128
Italy	0.576*** (0.148)	1.779	(1.331~2.376)	0.000	0.430** (0.154)	1.538	(1.137~2.080)	0.005
Constant	-3.137*** (0.331)	0.043		0.000	-4.276*** (0.373)	0.014		0.000
<i>N</i>			9192				9192	
-2 <i>LL</i>			5655.024 ^a				5530.103 ^a	
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²			0.223				0.246	
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2			12.022				9.562	
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>			0.150				0.297	

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

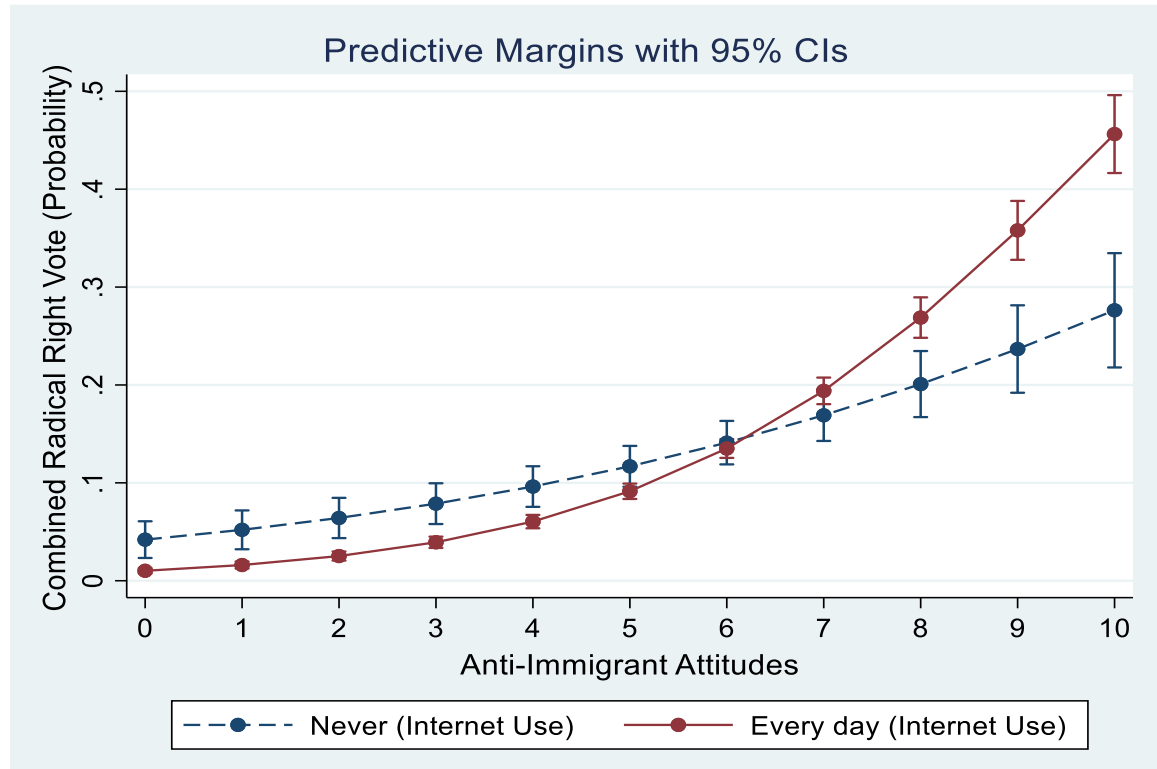
Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

While we have confirmed the statistical significance of the interaction effects between voters' anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet use with the help of coefficients and the odds ratios, the interpretation of the interplay still remains elusive. This is because raw coefficients and the odds ratios from the logistic regression output are not substantially helpful in holistically estimating predictions of the probability of cross-national radical right voting across the meaningful range of our two independent variables. A statistical software, Stata, addresses such limitations that non-linear models have by providing options to calculate predictive margins. Using Stata's 'margins' command, we can graphically illustrate the predicted probability of cross-national radical right voting based on interactions.

Figure 3 displays the predicted probability of cross-national radical right vote choice by citizens' level of Internet use at different levels of hostile attitudes towards immigrants. Here, the Y-axis is labeled on the probability scale, so this visualized graph is much more helpful in intuitively understanding the relationship among anti-immigrant attitudes, online activities, and electoral support for radical right parties than the raw coefficients from the logistic regression output. While the level of Internet use is distributed between 1 and 5 in my data, I focused only on meaningful values for an effective analysis. Thus, the presented graph shows the degree of impact that anti-immigrant attitudes have for two types of radical right voters: one group of voters who use the Internet every day (=5), and the other group of voters who never use the Internet (=1).

Figure 3. Predictive margins of anti-immigrant attitudes on the combined radical right vote conditioned by types of Internet use groups



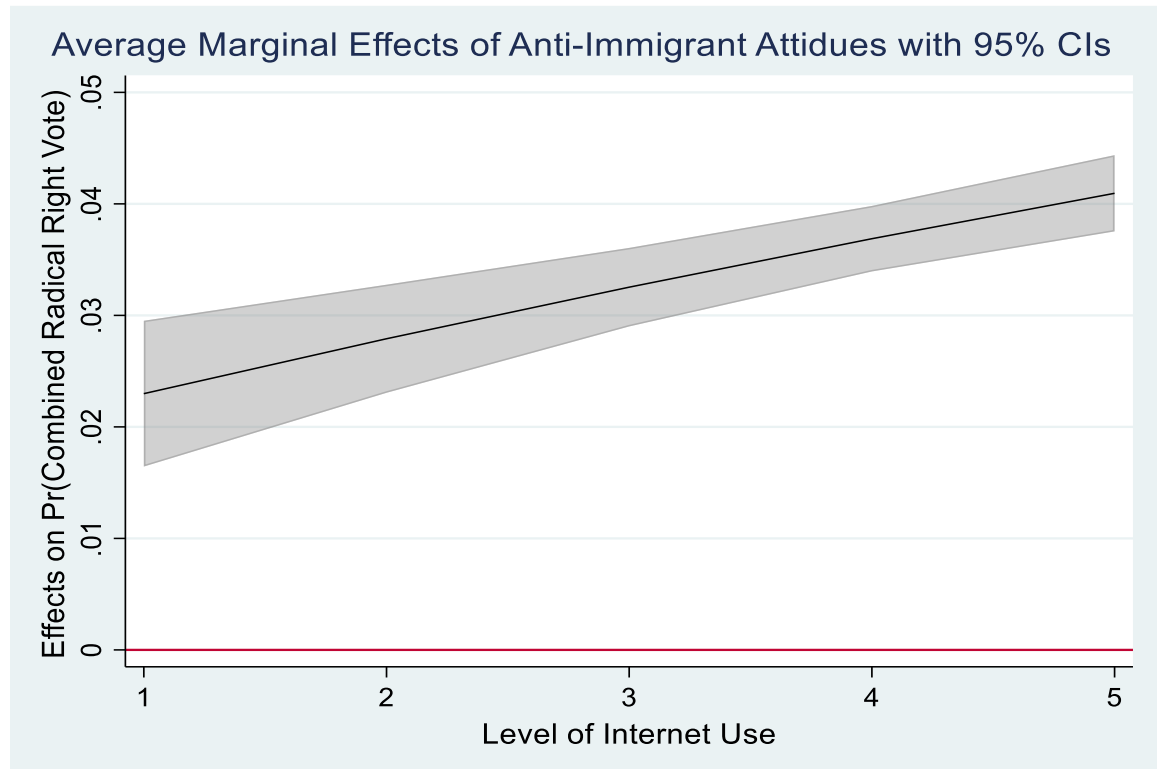
The interplay between anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet use is clearly depicted in the figure. When citizens' perceptions of immigrants are positive, the probability of cross-national radical right voting for the active Internet user group is small, and the difference between the two groups is quite negligible. Especially, when citizens hold completely positive attitudes towards immigrant (i.e., value 0 on the X-axis), the predicted probability of the radical right vote for the active Internet user group is near to zero, which clearly demonstrates the meaning of the Internet use variable's negative coefficient sign in both models in Table 4. However, once they come to hold negative perceptions of immigrants, the probability of radical right vote choice is higher for the active Internet user group than for the non-Internet user group at the cross-national level. In Particular, when the level of anti-immigrant attitudes rises above 8, the difference in the likelihood of radical

right support in eight Western European countries becomes more pronounced between the two groups. Thus, although anti-immigrant attitudes provide incentives for all two types of voters to cast a vote for radical right parties, voters who are highly active on the web seem to be more easily and heavily exposed to such an impact.

To systematically evaluate the interaction effect, I present the average marginal effect plot in Figure 4. While the predictive margins plot in the logistic regression model calculates the predicted ‘probability’ of the event (i.e., radical right voting) occurring, the marginal effect plot in the logistic regression model measures the marginal probability effects, i.e., the ‘magnitude’ of probability changes (see Brambor et al., 2006; McCabe et al., 2018). Thus, unlike the predictive margins plot, the marginal effect plot allows us to *fully* explore the interactions; because it examines marginal effects of the focal predictor ‘anti-immigrant attitudes’ with respect to the probability of radical right voting and shows explicitly how such effects vary across the *entire* range of the moderating variable ‘levels of Internet use’ (McCabe et al., 2018; Golder 2003). By looking at the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and electoral support for radical right parties across the range of Internet use from 1 to 5, we can better understand this complex interplay between the two explanatory variables.

The solid sloping line in the figure shows how the marginal effects of anti-immigrant attitudes on the probability of radical right support change with levels of Internet use. The shaded grey area indicates the area that includes the 95% confidence interval, which enables us to ascertain under which points of anti-immigrant attitudes have a statistically significant impact on the probability of the combined radical right vote.

Figure 4. Average marginal effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on the combined radical right vote



Note: Grey areas are confidence intervals

For the marginal effects of anti-immigrant attitudes to be statistically significant, both the upper and lower boundary lines of the confidence interval should not include zero (i.e., not crossing the zero line) (Brambor et al., 2006, p. 76). As can be seen in the picture, the slope is positive, and all the given confidence intervals do not include zero, suggesting that Western European citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes have a positive and significant impact on the probability of radical right voting across the full range of Internet use from 1 to 5. In other words, the graph shows that in eight Western European countries, citizens' level of Internet use, whether it is low or high, always strengthens the positive relationship between negative attitudes towards immigrants and the radical right vote.

2. Country-level results

In order to determine whether our findings from cross-national analysis hold at the national level as well, I additionally conducted a logistic regression analysis at the national level. On the whole, acceptable goodness-of-fit and explanatory power were observed in all models in eight countries. Our empirical expectations were that negative attitudes towards immigrants would be a stronger predictor of radical right vote choice in groups who are active online than in groups who are not active online. The country-by-country results reveal that this assumption holds partially true and that, more specifically, our research model works well in Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Tables 5 to 7 below present the results of each country's logistic regression analysis, which provides two interesting results.

First, in general terms, the interaction term in all three countries holds statistically significant in both basic and controlled models in the predictive direction. One notable finding is that, unlike at the cross-national level, in each three-country, citizens' negative attitudes towards immigrants have no statistically significant effect on voting support for each radical right party when the level of their Internet usage is zero. Moreover, in the context of Belgium, the coefficient sign of the anti-immigrant attitudes variable is even negative, albeit not statistically significant. However, once Belgian, German, and Italian citizens holding a hostile position towards immigrants come to be highly active on the web, the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on the radical right vote for these groups becomes statistically significant. This demonstrates that at least in these three countries, citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with an increase in the probability of electoral support for radical right parties only when the condition of Internet use is present.

Second, as in the pooled sample, significant negative effects of the level of Internet use are observed in all three countries in both models 1 and 2. This indicates that the impact of citizens' high level of Internet use in the context of Belgium, Germany, and Italy has no effect when they do not hold anti-immigrant attitudes. Once such citizens who are highly active online come to hold negative attitudes towards immigrants, however, the effect of high online activity on the radical right vote becomes statistically significant. Particularly, while the significance level of Internet use and the interaction term in Belgium and Germany remains at the 0.05 level in the controlled model (model 2), their significance level in Italy is stronger, remaining at the 0.01 level. This means that the research model works much better in Italy than in Belgium and Germany.

Just as in the previous combined sample, I further inspect the interaction effect by providing visual displays of predictive margins and average marginal effects for each three-country model in Figure D1 in Appendix D. Thereby, we can thoroughly investigate how the impact that anti-immigrant attitudes have on country-level radical right vote choice differs depending on two types of radical right voters and how the marginal effects of anti-immigrant attitudes change across the full range of the Internet use variable. Regarding predictive margins, two prediction lines are presented: voters scoring '1' on the level of Internet use represent the peripheral base of radical right parties, whereas voters scoring '5' on the same item represent the core support base of these parties.

Table 5. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the VB vote, Belgium

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	-0.347 (0.311)	0.707	(0.384~1.301)	0.265	-0.328 (0.351)	0.721	(0.362~1.433)	0.350
Frequency of Internet use	-1.057** (0.400)	0.347	(0.159~0.760)	0.008	-0.972* (0.465)	0.378	(0.152~0.941)	0.036
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.190** (0.070)	1.210	(1.054~1.388)	0.007	0.176* (0.079)	1.192	(1.022~1.391)	0.025
Male					-0.028 (0.453)	0.972	(0.400~2.363)	0.950
Age (65 years = ref.)								
18-24 years					1.506 (1.099)	4.507	(0.523~38.820)	0.171
25-34 years					0.922 (0.919)	2.515	(0.415~15.231)	0.316
35-44 years					0.897 (0.984)	2.453	(0.356~16.883)	0.362
45-54 years					1.386 (0.749)	3.999	(0.922~17.350)	0.064
55-64 years					0.101 (0.780)	1.106	(0.240~5.098)	0.897
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					2.153* (0.863)	8.610	(1.587~46.705)	0.013
Intermediate education					1.987* (0.781)	7.290	(1.578~33.691)	0.011
Economic strain					-1.500* (0.722)	0.223	(0.054~0.918)	0.038
Employment status (employed=ref.)								
Unemployed					0.357 (1.170)	1.429	(0.144~14.165)	0.761
Other					0.554 (0.558)	1.740	(0.583~5.191)	0.321
City resident					-0.938 (0.493)	0.391	(0.149~1.029)	0.057
Interested in politics					0.008 (0.440)	1.008	(0.425~2.390)	0.985
Online political participation experience					0.793 (0.506)	2.210	(0.821~5.954)	0.117
Political news consumption					0.001* (0.001)	1.001	(1.000~1.002)	0.047
Authoritarian attitudes					-0.045 (0.506)	0.956	(0.354~2.579)	0.929
Dissatisfaction with government					-0.498 (0.465)	0.608	(0.244~1.512)	0.285
Constant	-1.818 (1.672)	0.162		0.277	-3.655 (2.097)	0.026		0.081
<i>N</i>		1,080				1,080		
-2 <i>LL</i>		228.695 ^b				197.285 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.136				0.266		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2		6.112				12.347		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.527				0.136		

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Table 6. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the AfD/NPD vote, Germany

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.234 (0.169)	1.264	(0.908~1.761)	0.165	0.197 (0.172)	1.218	(0.870~1.705)	0.250
Frequency of Internet use	-0.533* (0.267)	0.587	(0.348~0.990)	0.046	-0.572* (0.280)	0.564	(0.326~0.976)	0.041
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.105** (0.039)	1.110	(1.029~1.198)	0.007	0.100* (0.040)	1.105	(1.022~1.195)	0.012
Male					0.496* (0.251)	1.642	(1.005~2.682)	0.048
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					-0.053 (0.626)	0.948	(0.278~3.233)	0.932
25-34 years					0.502 (0.522)	1.652	(0.594~4.596)	0.336
35-44 years					0.694 (0.475)	2.001	(0.789~5.075)	0.144
45-54 years					0.273 (0.452)	1.313	(0.542~3.184)	0.546
55-64 years					-0.264 (0.413)	0.768	(0.342~1.725)	0.522
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					1.122 (0.615)	3.072	(0.921~10.249)	0.068
Intermediate education					1.023** (0.362)	2.780	(1.368~5.652)	0.005
Economic strain					0.926* (0.361)	2.526	(1.245~5.122)	0.010
Employment status (employed = ref.)								
Unemployed					-1.208 (1.075)	0.299	(0.036~2.458)	0.261
Other					-0.080 (0.323)	0.923	(0.489~1.740)	0.804
City resident					-0.105 (0.245)	0.900	(0.557~1.455)	0.667
Interested in politics					0.252 (0.291)	1.286	(0.727~2.274)	0.387
Online political participation experience					0.709* (0.281)	2.032	(1.171~3.527)	0.012
Political news consumption					0.002* (0.001)	1.002	(1.000~1.004)	0.013
Authoritarian attitudes					0.254 (0.265)	1.289	(0.767~2.168)	0.338
Dissatisfaction with government					0.967** (0.298)	2.629	(1.467~4.711)	0.001
Constant	-4.300*** (1.154)	0.014		0.000	-6.523*** (1.288)	0.001		0.000
<i>N</i>		1,573				1,573		
-2 <i>LL</i>		587.802 ^b				531.330 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.302				0.381		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2		4.925				7.503		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.766				0.483		

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Table 7. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the Lega vote, Italy

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.084 (0.078)	1.088	(0.934~1.267)	0.279	0.078 (0.083)	1.081	(0.919~1.271)	0.348
Frequency of Internet use	-0.455** (0.139)	0.635	(0.483~0.833)	0.001	-0.440** (0.156)	0.644	(0.475~0.874)	0.005
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.057** (0.020)	1.059	(1.018~1.101)	0.004	0.065** (0.021)	1.067	(1.023~1.112)	0.002
Male					-0.092 (0.162)	0.912	(0.663~1.253)	0.568
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					-0.867* (0.438)	0.420	(0.178~0.992)	0.048
25-34 years					-0.681 (0.371)	0.506	(0.245~1.046)	0.066
35-44 years					-0.524 (0.327)	0.592	(0.312~1.125)	0.109
45-54 years					-0.369 (0.307)	0.691	(0.378~1.263)	0.230
55-64 years					-0.390 (0.278)	0.677	(0.393~1.167)	0.160
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					0.696* (0.300)	2.006	(1.115~3.608)	0.020
Intermediate education					0.203 (0.269)	1.225	(0.723~2.077)	0.450
Economic strain					-0.773*** (0.220)	0.461	(0.300~0.710)	0.000
Employment status (employed =ref.)								
Unemployed					-0.106 (0.293)	0.899	(0.506~1.597)	0.716
Other					-0.583 (0.242)	0.558	(0.348~0.896)	0.016
City resident					-0.386* (0.159)	0.680	(0.498~0.928)	0.015
Interested in politics					0.310 (0.173)	1.364	(0.971~1.915)	0.073
Online political participation experience					-0.104 (0.220)	0.901	(0.586~1.385)	0.634
Political news consumption					0.000 (0.000)	1.000	(1.000~1.001)	0.428
Authoritarian attitudes					0.477 (0.302)	1.612	(0.892~2.911)	0.114
Dissatisfaction with government					-0.978*** (0.181)	0.376	(0.263~0.537)	0.000
Constant	-1.508** (0.542)	0.221		0.005	-1.976** (0.741)	0.139		0.008
<i>N</i>		1,166				1,166		
-2 <i>LL</i>		1103.338 ^b				1032.597 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.126				0.210		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>x</i> ²		7.311				13.127		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.397				0.108		

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

[FIGURE D1 ABOUT HERE]

Figure D1 clearly substantiates that there is an interaction effect between voters' anti-immigrant attitudes and levels of Internet use in three countries. All the left panels in the figure follow similar patterns to the pooled sample's graph (Figure 3), suggesting that the probability of radical right vote choice is different between two types of radical right voters and that the positive effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on radical right support is more distinct in the active Internet user group. In other words, the graphs show that the probability of radical right voting is likely to increase as citizens' level of both anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet use is high.⁴

At low levels of hostile attitudes towards immigrants, the gap in the predicted probability of radical right voting between two groups of Internet users is narrow, and for Belgian, German, and Italian citizens, completely pro-immigrant attitudes (value 0 on the X-axis) have virtually no effect on the probability of radical right support even for those who are highly active online. This implies that, in this case, they are more likely to cast a vote for other mainstream or minor political parties. Such graphical trends illustrate why the coefficient of the Internet use variable has a significant but negative sign in all three models presented in Tables 5 to 7. However, the gap in the predicted probability curves between two groups of Internet users becomes considerably larger at high levels of anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., value 8-10 on the X-axis). Especially, in the context of Germany, at the highest level of anti-immigrant position (=10), the probability of radical right support

⁴ While we have previously identified that the Italian model has the strongest significant interaction effect among three countries, the confidence intervals of two groups overlap in the graph. Therefore, the visual output results need to be interpreted with caution. For more detailed discussions of this issue, visit <https://statisticsbyjim.com/hypothesis-testing/confidence-intervals-compare-means/>.

for active Internet users is more than two times higher than for those who never use the Internet.

Meanwhile, the Belgian graph clearly explains why the coefficient of the anti-immigrant attitudes variable and the interaction term has a negative and positive sign, respectively, in Table 5. If we look at the dotted prediction line, we can intuitively see that it shows the downward trend, meaning the negative relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and the probability of radical right vote. This is valid only if Belgian citizens never use the Internet, and once their level of online activities increases to the maximum value, such negative relationships transform into positive relationships. This, in turn, demonstrates that levels of online activities indeed have a moderating effect on the relationship between the probability of radical right support and anti-immigrant attitudes.

Lastly, we can get a better understanding of the interplay between anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet use in these countries by looking at the average marginal effect plots presented in the right panels in the same figure. Overall, all marginal effect plots have an upward trend, but two major characteristics can be found in the figure. First, in the context of Belgium, citizens' hostile attitudes towards immigrants, in general, have a reductive impact on the VB vote when their level of Internet use is low, and these average marginal effects have no statistically significant predictive power since the confidence intervals contain zero. Such a decreasing effect, however, declines as the level of Internet use increases. More specifically, once the voters' level of Internet use reaches above around 3.5, where the grey area does not contain zero, their anti-immigrant attitudes come to have a statistically significant explanatory power over the probability of the VB vote.

Second, in the context of Germany and Italy, the marginal effect plots of these countries show a similar pattern to the cross-national marginal effect plot that we previously examined. All the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval are above zero on the Y-axis, which means that there are no statistical significance transition points in these graphs. Thus, the graphs show that the average marginal effects of anti-immigrant attitudes always and statistically significantly lead to a greater probability of the AfD/NPD or the Lega vote regardless of citizens' level of Internet use. In other words, the graphs demonstrate the clear moderating effect of citizens' Internet use on the positive relationship between their hostile attitudes towards immigrants and electoral support for German or Italian radical right parties

Chapter VI

Discussions

A. Implication of the results

In this thesis, we found that the level of Internet use strengthens the positive relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and voting support for the radical right at the cross-national level. At the national level, however, more nuanced patterns were revealed, meaning partial support for the hypothesis. Such heterogeneity of the findings by country seems to imply that whether our research model can be applied universally across countries is somewhat a complicated issue.

I start by discussing the results of the descriptive statistics in the Italian sample. What is interesting is that the average vote share of the Lega in the ESS is higher than the party's actual vote share in the Italian elections (see Appendix E, Table E1 for the average vote for radical right parties in recent elections). Given that the 9th wave of the ESS is

fielded in late 2018 and early 2019, the Lega's vote share in the ESS (21.11 %) is about 3 % higher than its actual vote share in the 2018 Italian general election (17.35 %). Even calculating the average vote share of the Lega in the raw ESS data, it is still higher (20.6%) than the actual vote share of the party.

Two possible reasons may explain this pattern. First, it might be speculated that the percentage of Lega voters over total voters in the ESS may be higher than that ratio in the actual electoral database of the Italian general election. This could happen especially during the sampling procedures by the ESS. Another possibility is that respondents may disguise non-radical right vote choice as radical right one during the survey. Given that there has in general always been the issue of "social acceptability" of radical right parties across Western Europe (Bruter and Harrison, 2011, p. 153) and that radical right voters have accordingly been considered to be "socially undesirable" (Bruter and Harrison, 2011, p. 157), the chances of this misrepresent by respondents is likely to extremely low. But if that is the case, the task at hand would be then investigating possible psychological motivations for such types of behavior.

Regarding the logistic regression analysis, it is interesting that the results are found to be somewhat inconsistent. At both the cross-national and national levels, it clearly shows that the level of Internet use strengthens the positive relationship between citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes and their electoral support for radical right parties. However, when it comes to whether citizens' high level of Internet use is truly determinative of the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right vote choice, these two levels of models appear to suggest different answers. At the cross-national level, the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes still fosters electoral support for radical right parties even when

the effect of Internet use is zero. This seems to indicate that that, at least at the cross-national level, the high level of Internet use may not be necessary for citizens' negative attitudes towards immigrants to influence radical right vote choice. On the contrary, at the national level, all Belgium, German, and Italian models show that the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes towards radical right voting is not statistically significant in the absence of the effect of the level of Internet use. This implies that at least in the context of Belgium, Germany, and Italian, a high level of Internet use is determinative of the positive link between citizens' hostile attitudes towards immigrants and their electoral support for radical right parties. Such contradictory findings highlight the need for more empirical evidence based on a comparative approach.

B. Limitations

There are two potential limitations to this thesis. The first limitation is that the operationalization of the anti-immigrant attitudes variable may be too broad to test the hypothesis. To construct this variable, I used a single item in the survey that asks the general position towards immigrants. Given that many previous studies have examined the effect of individuals' negative attitudes towards immigrants on the radical right vote from an economic and cultural point of view (Norris, 2005; Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012), the anti-immigrant attitudes variable used in this thesis may not reflect the variance between the effect of economic ethnic threat and that of cultural ethnic threat on the radical right vote. Another limitation of this variable is that it does not consider the specific *type* of foreigners. For instance, the impact of anti-immigrant attitudes on citizens' radical right vote choice may differ whether the foreigners are criminals (Dinas and Spanje, 2011), Muslims (Norris 2005; Lubbers and Coenders, 2017), or refugees. In particular, since most

radical right parties have targeted Muslim communities as a source of creating the climate of public fear towards them (Killas, 2018; Williams, 2018), the reason for the mixed findings of my research may lie in the failure to elaborate the variable measuring anti-immigrant attitudes.

The second limitation is that the Internet use variable has several methodological problems. The first is that the purpose of Internet use in my variable is not confined only to political purposes. This means that the case where individuals use the Internet for non-political purposes is also considered. Given that radical right parties mostly generate content in online political communities and that my conceptual framework is closely related to the concept of partisan political information seeking, such an Internet use for general purposes may not truly detect the conditional effect of citizen's Internet use on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and the radical right vote. Secondly, the variable is too broad in that it does not distinguish the various *types* of Internet applications and platforms. Given that most of the radical right parties' online activities are occurring on social media, the effect of social media may better predict our hypothesis. Lastly, in terms of the level of Internet use, my variable may also be too broad. According to the descriptive statistic analysis, more than 70 % of the respondents use the Internet 'every day,' which is the highest value of this variable. Such an uneven sample distribution may result in inaccurate research results.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

A. Summary of the literature review and a conceptual framework

Over the past six chapters, this thesis has spotlighted the interactive relationships between voters and parties of the radical right. The central purpose of this thesis has been to better gauge the dynamics of and variance in radical right voting behavior across countries. As a first step to constructing the conceptual framework, we have separately looked at the literature on the electoral success of Western European radical right parties from a demand-side and a supply-side point of view, which focuses on radical right voters and parties, respectively. On the demand-side literature, we have first closely discussed *why* and *how* immigration has been related to citizen's electoral support for radical right parties from the perspective of history and theory. As for the theory, we have focused on looking at the ethnic competition theory (ECT) asserting that the increased perceived or real ethnic threat caused by ethnic competition is the reason for radical right voting. We have then reviewed the empirical evidence testing the ECT, which has been somewhat inconclusive.

In an attempt to investigate the cause of such mixed findings thoroughly, we have looked through the supply-side literature. To get the gist of the general characteristics of radical right parties, we have first investigated their political programs. Based on their ethno-nationalist stance and exemplary cases of these parties' programs, we have confirmed that anti-immigrant programs have been the common denominator of the radical right. With this in mind, we have then looked at what has long received the least close critical attention: radical right parties' online activities. While research in this field is still

in its early stage and thus lacks sufficient evidence, we have identified that radical right parties in Western Europe are highly active online and adept at using various digital applications and platforms.

By reviewing two strands of the literature on the radical right, we have identified research gaps that need to be addressed, which are (1) the mixed findings of the relationship between immigration and radical right voting and (2) the lack of empirical studies on the radical right parties' online activities. Based on Norris's demand-supply framework, which posits that radical right vote choice is the consequence of the interaction between voters' demand for and parties' supply of an electoral product, we have focused on the *place* where such an interaction takes place. The supply-side literature review showing that radical right parties are openly anti-immigrant and that they are more active online than offline has ultimately led us to take voters' online activities into account, as the process of their finding radical right parties' anti-immigrant product. As a result of combining Norris's framework, research on political communication, and research on social psychology, I have constructed a conceptual framework that the positive impact of anti-immigrant attitudes on electoral support for radical right parties is conditioned by their level of Internet use.

B. Key findings of the study and contribution to the existing literature

Based on the conceptual framework above, I have empirically tested the conditional effect of voters' level of Internet use on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting. In general terms, my thesis has two main findings. First, at the cross-national level, my hypothesis received highly strong support at the significance level of 0.001 even after including various individual-level control variables, showing that the high level of Internet use does strengthen the positive effect of citizens' negative position

towards immigrants on radical right vote choice across eight countries. Second, at the national level, the hypothesis received partial support from Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Especially, contrary to Belgium and Germany, Italy showed strong support at a significance level of 0.01 to the hypothesis in both basic and controlled models.

The contribution of my thesis to the existing literature on the radical right is twofold. First, this thesis is the first, to my knowledge, to empirically investigate and yield supportive evidence, albeit partially, on the role of citizens' level of Internet use on the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and the radical right vote. In other words, this thesis documents, for the first time, the 'complexity' of the relationship between citizens' anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting in the online context. Although numerous studies have been done on the relationship between immigration and radical right voting, most of the literature on this subject has exclusively focused on offline factors. For instance, while the crime rates (Dinas, 2011), unemployment rates (Golder, 2003), or even immigration-culture in the society depicted as shared attitudes and integration regimes (Baur et al., 2016) have been empirically tested as factors that constitute an interaction effect, none of these factors has explained the effect of immigration on radical right vote choice from the online perspective. My thesis goes beyond such limitations of offline-focused previous research on immigration, providing a steppingstone for developing an account of radical right voting behavior both in the online and offline context.

Second, different results from the pooled sample and country-specific data demonstrate that whether my hypothesis is supported or not is highly dependent on the national context. The fact that the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on the radical right vote in the absence of the effect of Internet use is significant at the cross-national level but

is insignificant at the national level supports this argument. This means that more systematic country-specific research on radical right parties' online activities related to immigration content is needed. In that regard, this thesis shows that my hypothesis should be tested through a comparative approach for a more reliable generalization.

C. Towards a more generalizable and reliable model for radical right voting behavior

While my thesis advances the hypothesis by considering the breeding ground for radical right parties both in offline and online contexts, the mixed empirical results leave open the question of whether our model can be generalizable to various countries. To address this problem, I present three avenues for future research that appears to be particularly promising in developing my research model.

The first is to combine a quantitative research method with a qualitative one. Although quantitative methods do have advantages in that it allows us to prove hypotheses in a more objective way, the qualitative nature, especially in my model, is needed to better understand how the interactions between radical right voters and radical right parties occur in an online space, and which type of online content of radical right parties generates more activities by their constituencies. This can be done by critically analyzing radical right parties' discourse, especially discourse related to immigrants. This process would enable us to design more adequate variables predicting this hypothesis.

Another possible avenue increasing the generalizability of my model is conducting research on radical right parties' online activities more systematically by comparing them with mainstream parties' online activities. This is because the effect of citizen's anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet consumption on electoral support for radical right parties might be greater when these parties' online activities are more active relative to their rivals,

mainstream parties. Considering such party competition would allow us to make a more practical research model.

Lastly, it might be promising to consider social groups in the model. Given that not all social groups are completely evenly distributed as a consumer of radical right parties' online content, the interaction effects between anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet consumption on radical right voting may differ depending on individual's social class. Therefore, reflecting the fact that not all social groups (e.g., manual workers) have the same Internet accessibility may contribute to improving the research model.

Radical right parties are no longer a fringe party, and they have started to become 'mainstreamed' rapidly. This trend, together with the result of the party competition, has made numerous Western European mainstream parties become more radicalized and has led them to take more radical and restrictive policies accordingly. The fact that radical right parties are highly active and relatively more successful in an online environment implies that their influence in an online space is not marginal. In particular, in the COVID-19 era, where the "digitalization" of daily activities and work is accelerated (Kanda and Kivimaa, 2020, p. 1), political communication is expected to be more digitalized, and radical right parties will have thus a greater presence online over time. In this case, their political strategies of creating the public fear of foreigners might be more successful and powerful to attract potential radical right voters who are active online. Such a changing environment suggests that the impact of online political communication on political campaigns and elections would be more pronounced.

This thesis informs the literature on these aspects. By providing an overall review of the literature on how radical right parties are active in an online space, and by presenting statistically significant results of the role of citizens' Internet consumption on the positive relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and radical right voting, it signals the importance of and needs for conducting research on these parties' online political communication. Since my thesis has developed an initial model testing the relationship between the radical right vote and the interaction of citizens' negative position on immigrants and their level of Internet consumption, it is expected that future investigators will be more interested in this area and attempt to formulate a more elaborate research design. This will consequently enrich the literature on radical right voting behavior that reflects the online context.

My thesis aimed to break out of the comfort zone of established studies, to present an original voting model that reflects the changing nature of political communication based on previous mixed empirical findings, and, ultimately, to provide fruitful avenues for future research on radical right voting behavior in Western Europe. If this thesis has at least provided some productive insights into these aspects, it has attained its major target.

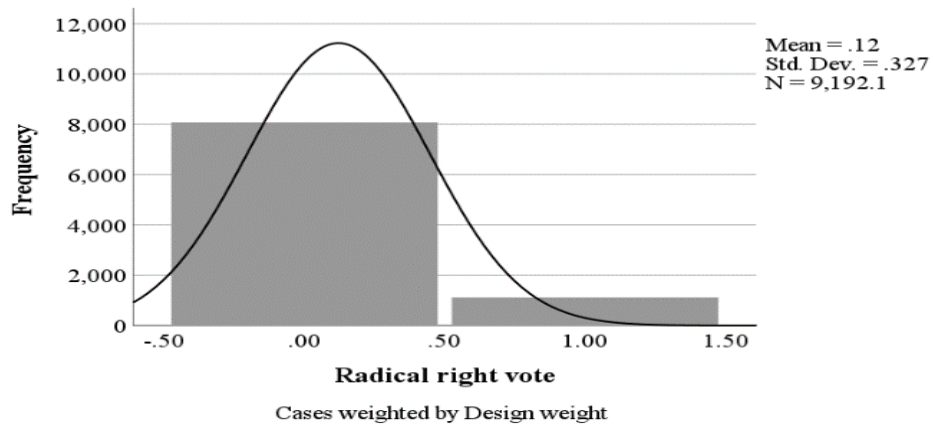
Appendix A

Table A1. List of parties classified as the Radical right

<i>Country</i>	<i>Radical Right Party</i>	<i>Abbreviations</i>
Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria)	FPÖ
Belgium	Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)	VB
Switzerland	Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party)	SVP
Germany	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)	AfD
	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)	NPD
Finland	Perussuomalaiset (Finns Party)	PS
France	Rassemblement National (National Rally)	RN
Italy	Lega per Salvini Premier (League)	Lega
Netherlands	Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom).	PVV

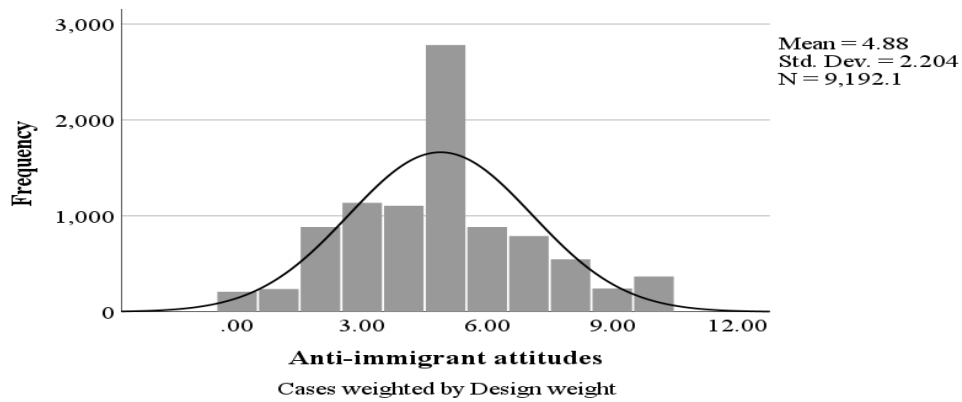
Appendix B

Figure B1. Histogram of radical right voting in 8 countries



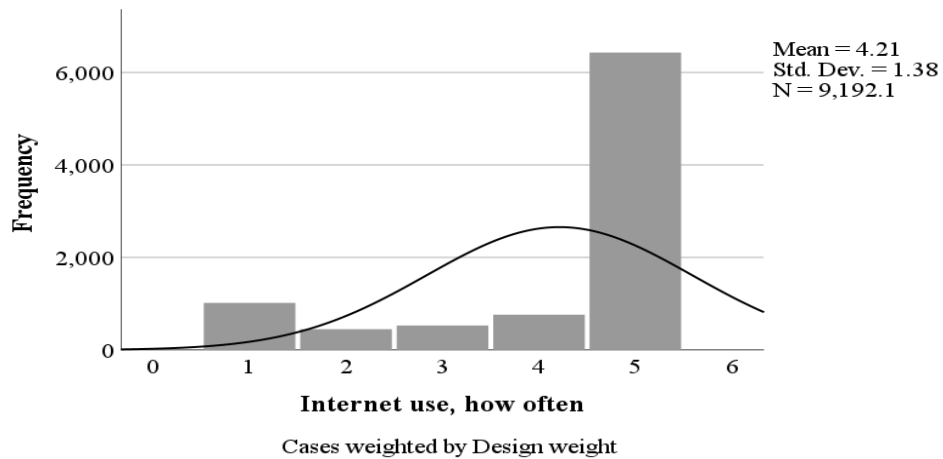
Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

Figure B2. Histogram of anti-immigrant attitudes in 8 countries



Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

Figure B3. Histogram of frequency of Internet use in 8 countries



Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19)

Table B1. Variable Descriptions

Type of variable	Name of variable	Description
Dependent variable	Radical right vote	Voted for a radical right party in the last election (= 1)
Independent variable	Anti-immigration attitudes	“Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?” 0 (<i>better place to live</i>) to 10 (<i>worse place to live</i>)
	Internet use	“People can use the internet on different devices such as computers, tablets and smartphones. How often do you use the internet on these or any other devices, whether for work or personal use?” 1(<i>never</i>) to 5(<i>every day</i>)
Control variable	Male	Male (=1)
	18-24 years	Age from 18 years to 24 years (= 1)
	25-34 years	Age from 25 years to 34 years (= 1)
	35-44 years	Age from 35 years to 44 years (= 1)
	45-54 years	Age from 45 years to 54 years (= 1)
	55-64 years	Age from 55 years to 64 years (= 1)
	Low education	ISCED I (<i>less than lower secondary</i>) and II (<i>lower secondary</i>) (= 1)
	Intermediate education	ISCED IIIb (<i>lower-tier upper secondary</i>), IIIa (<i>upper-tier upper secondary</i>) and IV (<i>advanced vocational, sub degree</i>) (= 1)
	Economic strain	“Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household’s income nowadays?” 1 <i>living comfortably on present income</i> , 2 <i>coping on present income</i> , 3 <i>finding it difficult on present income</i> , 4 <i>finding it very difficult on present income</i> (<i>difficult, very difficult</i> = 1)
	Unemployed	Main activity groups 3 and 4: unemployed, not looking for job, unemployed, looking for job (= 1)
	City resident	“Which phrase on this card best describes the area where you live?” 1 <i>a big city</i> , 2 <i>the suburbs or outskirts of a big city</i> , 3 <i>a town or a small city</i> , 4 <i>a country village</i> , 5 <i>a farm or home in the countryside</i> (1 to 3 = 1)
	Political interest	“How interested would you say you are in politics?” 1 <i>very interested</i> , 2 <i>quite interested</i> , 3 <i>hardly interested</i> , 4 <i>not at all interested</i> (<i>very interested, quite interested</i> = 1)
	Online political participation experience	“There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help things from going wrong. During the last months, have you posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter?” 1 <i>yes</i> , 2 <i>no</i> (yes =1)
	Political news consumption	“On a typical day, about how much time do you spend watching, reading or listening to news about politics and current affairs?” (minutes)
	Authoritarian attitudes	“Important to do what is told and follow rules” 1 <i>very much like me</i> , 2 <i>like me</i> , 3 <i>somewhat like me</i> , 4 <i>a little like me</i> , 5 <i>not like me</i> , 6 <i>not like me at all</i> (1 to 4 = 1)
	Dissatisfaction with government	“Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job? 0 <i>extremely dissatisfied</i> 10 <i>extremely satisfied</i> (0 to 4 = 1)

Table B2. Full summary of descriptive statistics, Pooled eight-nation sample

Variable	All countries (<i>n</i> =9192)			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Radical right vote	0.00	1.00	0.1213	0.32655
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.00	10.00	4.8792	2.20366
Frequency of Internet use	1.00	5.00	4.21	1.380
Male	0.00	1.00	0.5115	0.49989
<i>Age</i>	1.00	6.00	4.2150	1.54783
18-24 years	0.00	1.00	0.0519	0.22188
25-34 years	0.00	1.00	0.1232	0.32871
35-44 years	0.00	1.00	0.1495	0.35657
45-54 years	0.00	1.00	0.1914	0.39344
55-64 years	0.00	1.00	0.2013	0.40097
65 years+	0.00	1.00	0.2827	0.45034
<i>Education level</i>	1.00	3.00	2.1173	0.66731
Low education	0.00	1.00	0.1708	0.37639
Intermediate education	0.00	1.00	0.5410	0.49835
High education	0.00	1.00	0.2882	0.45294

(continued)

Table B2. (continued)

Variable	All countries (<i>n</i> =9192)			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>
Economic strain	0.00	1.00	0.1144	0.31836
<i>Employment status</i>	1.00	3.00	1.8866	0.97742
Employed	0.00	1.00	0.5408	0.49836
Unemployed	0.00	1.00	0.0319	0.17573
Other	0.00	1.00	0.4273	0.49472
City resident	0.00	1.00	0.5711	0.49495
Interest in politics	0.00	1.00	0.6329	0.48205
Online political participation experience	0.00	1.00	0.2033	0.40249
Political news consumption	0.00	1233	91.44	155.334
Authoritarian attitudes	0.00	1.00	0.7588	0.42782
Dissatisfaction with government	0.00	1.00	0.3663	0.48182

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19)

Table B3a. Full summary of descriptive statistics by country (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany).

Variable	Austria (n=1571)				Belgium (n=1080)				Switzerland (n=586)				Germany (n=1573)			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD.</i>
Radical right vote	0.00	1.00	0.1756	0.38058	0.00	1.00	0.0260	0.15932	0.00	1.00	0.2372	0.42573	0.00	1.00	0.0686	0.25288
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.00	10.00	5.6058	2.31428	0.00	10.00	4.8140	1.94504	0.00	10.00	4.3055	1.80991	0.00	10.00	4.5597	2.18646
Frequency of Internet use	1.00	5.00	3.99	1.516	1.00	5.00	4.22	1.369	1.00	5.00	4.31	1.262	1.00	5.00	4.21	1.379
Male	0.00	1.00	0.4955	0.50014	0.00	1.00	0.5111	0.50011	0.00	1.00	0.5478	0.49814	0.00	1.00	0.5241	0.49958
Age	1.00	6.00	4.1344	1.53814	1.00	6.00	4.1361	1.52313	1.00	6.00	4.3857	1.49691	1.00	6.00	4.2065	1.58744
18-24 years	0.00	1.00	0.0590	0.23564	0.00	1.00	0.0324	0.17706	0.00	1.00	0.0375	0.19025	0.00	1.00	0.0661	0.24849
25-34 years	0.00	1.00	0.1160	0.32030	0.00	1.00	0.1612	0.36787	0.00	1.00	0.1075	0.31002	0.00	1.00	0.1252	0.33100
35-44 years	0.00	1.00	0.1620	0.36856	0.00	1.00	0.1602	0.36697	0.00	1.00	0.1399	0.34721	0.00	1.00	0.1245	0.33028
45-54 years	0.00	1.00	0.2181	0.41310	0.00	1.00	0.1926	0.39450	0.00	1.00	0.1741	0.37949	0.00	1.00	0.1855	0.38884
55-64 years	0.00	1.00	0.1847	0.38815	0.00	1.00	0.1915	0.39369	0.00	1.00	0.2287	0.42033	0.00	1.00	0.2179	0.41296
65 years+	0.00	1.00	0.2603	0.43893	0.00	1.00	0.2621	0.43999	0.00	1.00	0.3123	0.46382	0.00	1.00	0.2808	0.44954
Education level	1.00	3.00	2.0188	0.51526	1.00	3.00	2.1999	0.76813	1.00	3.00	2.1246	0.59901	1.00	3.00	2.2490	0.52911
Low education	0.00	1.00	0.1234	0.32904	0.00	1.00	0.2148	0.41084	0.00	1.00	0.1246	0.33052	0.00	1.00	0.0464	0.21037
Intermediate education	0.00	1.00	0.7343	0.44183	0.00	1.00	0.3705	0.48318	0.00	1.00	0.6263	0.48420	0.00	1.00	0.6582	0.47447
High education	0.00	1.00	0.1422	0.34941	0.00	1.00	0.4147	0.49290	0.00	1.00	0.2491	0.43289	0.00	1.00	0.2954	0.45638

(continued)

Table B3a. (continued)

Variable	Austria (n=1571)				Belgium (n=1080)				Switzerland (n=586)				Germany (n=1573)			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Economic strain	0.00	1.00	0.1148	0.31887	0.00	1.00	0.1666	0.37283	0.00	1.00	0.0802	0.27184	0.00	1.00	0.0629	0.24285
<i>Employment status</i>	1.00	3.00	1.8570	0.97823	1.00	3.00	1.8529	0.97399	1.00	3.00	1.8823	0.98612	1.00	3.00	1.9187	0.98932
Employed	0.00	1.00	0.5599	0.49656	0.00	1.00	0.5583	0.49683	0.00	1.00	0.5512	0.49780	0.00	1.00	0.5330	0.49907
Unemployed	0.00	1.00	0.0232	0.15064	0.00	1.00	0.0306	0.17229	0.00	1.00	0.0154	0.12308	0.00	1.00	0.0152	0.12258
Other	0.00	1.00	0.4169	0.49320	0.00	1.00	0.4112	0.49227	0.00	1.00	0.4334	0.49597	0.00	1.00	0.4517	0.49782
City resident	0.00	1.00	0.5397	0.49858	0.00	1.00	0.4814	0.49989	0.00	1.00	0.4044	0.49120	0.00	1.00	0.6557	0.47531
Interest in politics	0.00	1.00	0.6092	0.48809	0.00	1.00	0.5259	0.49956	0.00	1.00	0.7389	0.43961	0.00	1.00	0.7554	0.42999
Online political participation experience	0.00	1.00	0.1779	0.38258	0.00	1.00	0.2072	0.40550	0.00	1.00	0.2065	0.40513	0.00	1.00	0.1982	0.39879
Political news consumption	0.00	420	48.87	43.917	0.00	1220	144.88	262.779	0.00	820	67.21	72.420	0.00	1200	68.37	82.000
Authoritarian attitudes	0.00	1.00	0.8133	0.38983	0.00	1.00	0.7889	0.40830	0.00	1.00	0.6604	0.47397	0.00	1.00	0.6741	0.46887
Dissatisfaction with government	0.00	1.00	0.3153	0.46479	0.00	1.00	0.3638	0.48132	0.00	1.00	0.1007	0.30117	0.00	1.00	0.5445	0.49818

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19)

Table B3b. Full summary of descriptive statistics by country (Finland, France, Italy, Netherlands)

Variable	Finland (n=1181)				France (n=896)				Italy (n=1166)				Netherlands (n=1138)			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>
Radical right vote	0.00	1.00	0.1135	0.31729	0.00	1.00	0.1196	0.32472	0.00	1.00	0.2111	0.40829	0.00	1.00	0.0677	0.25129
Anti-immigration attitudes	0.00	10.00	4.1931	2.06668	0.00	10.00	4.8903	2.22452	0.00	10.00	5.9022	2.39235	0.00	10.00	4.3299	1.69356
Frequency of Internet use	1.00	5.00	4.48	1.203	1.00	5.00	4.14	1.416	1.00	5.00	3.85	1.558	1.00	5.00	4.62	0.990
Male	0.00	1.00	0.4894	0.50010	0.00	1.00	0.5079	0.50022	0.00	1.00	0.5233	0.49967	0.00	1.00	0.5117	0.50008
Age	1.00	6.00	4.3421	1.48888	1.00	6.00	4.4754	1.45627	1.00	6.00	4.1734	1.60071	1.00	6.00	4.0309	1.58980
18-24 years	0.00	1.00	0.0246	0.15483	0.00	1.00	0.0373	0.18953	0.00	1.00	0.0676	0.25119	0.00	1.00	0.0724	0.25930
25-34 years	0.00	1.00	0.1228	0.32832	0.00	1.00	0.0773	0.26717	0.00	1.00	0.1210	0.32621	0.00	1.00	0.1416	0.34878
35-44 years	0.00	1.00	0.1668	0.37296	0.00	1.00	0.1419	0.34910	0.00	1.00	0.1499	0.35717	0.00	1.00	0.1489	0.35614
45-54 years	0.00	1.00	0.1702	0.37596	0.00	1.00	0.1972	0.39813	0.00	1.00	0.1833	0.38708	0.00	1.00	0.1963	0.39736
55-64 years	0.00	1.00	0.2032	0.40256	0.00	1.00	0.2092	0.40694	0.00	1.00	0.1883	0.39112	0.00	1.00	0.2014	0.40119
65 years+	0.00	1.00	0.3124	0.46369	0.00	1.00	0.3372	0.47302	0.00	1.00	0.2899	0.45390	0.00	1.00	0.2394	0.42693
Education level	1.00	3.00	2.2489	0.67824	1.00	3.00	2.1228	0.64980	1.00	3.00	1.7949	0.70922	1.00	3.00	2.1788	0.77694
Low education	0.00	1.00	0.1363	0.34328	0.00	1.00	0.1570	0.36401	0.00	1.00	0.3748	0.48429	0.00	1.00	0.2281	0.41982
Intermediate education	0.00	1.00	0.4784	0.49975	0.00	1.00	0.5631	0.49627	0.00	1.00	0.4554	0.49822	0.00	1.00	0.3649	0.48162
High education	0.00	1.00	0.3853	0.48686	0.00	1.00	0.2798	0.44917	0.00	1.00	0.1698	0.37560	0.00	1.00	0.4069	0.49148

(continued)

Table B3b. (continued)

Variable	Finland (<i>n</i> =1181)				France (<i>n</i> =896)				Italy (<i>n</i> =1166)				Netherlands (<i>n</i> =1138)			
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>
Economic strain	0.00	1.00	0.0923	0.28956	0.00	1.00	0.1326	0.33932	0.00	1.00	0.2105	0.40784	0.00	1.00	0.0636	0.24410
<i>Employment status</i>	1.00	3.00	1.8891	0.97965	1.00	3.00	1.9546	0.98460	1.00	3.00	1.9204	0.94876	1.00	3.00	1.8264	0.97619
Employed	0.00	1.00	0.5411	0.49852	0.00	1.00	0.5079	0.50022	0.00	1.00	0.4926	0.50016	0.00	1.00	0.5779	0.49411
Unemployed	0.00	1.00	0.0288	0.16728	0.00	1.00	0.0296	0.16952	0.00	1.00	0.0943	0.29236	0.00	1.00	0.0178	0.13211
Other	0.00	1.00	0.4301	0.49531	0.00	1.00	0.4625	0.49887	0.00	1.00	0.4131	0.49260	0.00	1.00	0.4043	0.49098
City resident	0.00	1.00	0.6765	0.46799	0.00	1.00	0.6032	0.48951	0.00	1.00	0.5699	0.49531	0.00	1.00	0.5347	0.49901
Interest in politics	0.00	1.00	0.6825	0.46571	0.00	1.00	0.5736	0.49483	0.00	1.00	0.4474	0.49744	0.00	1.00	0.7283	0.44502
Online political participation experience	0.00	1.00	0.2176	0.41280	0.00	1.00	0.2437	0.42953	0.00	1.00	0.2151	0.41110	0.00	1.00	0.1814	0.38549
Political news consumption	0.00	480	64.80	50.466	0.00	1202	111.04	174.301	0.00	1233	171.51	260.472	0.00	930	74.02	67.826
Authoritarian attitudes	0.00	1.00	0.8315	0.37447	0.00	1.00	0.5287	0.49945	0.00	1.00	0.9191	0.27273	0.00	1.00	0.7645	0.42452
Dissatisfaction with government	0.00	1.00	0.3251	0.46863	0.00	1.00	0.5827	0.49339	0.00	1.00	0.3674	0.48230	0.00	1.00	0.2008	0.40076

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19)

Appendix C

Table C1. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the Radical Right vote, Austria

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.350** (0.102)	1.420	(1.161~1.735)	0.001	0.329** (0.105)	1.390	(1.132~1.707)	0.002
Frequency of Internet use	-0.104 (0.173)	0.901	(0.643~1.264)	0.548	-0.103 (0.181)	0.902	(0.632~1.287)	0.570
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.025 (0.024)	1.026	(0.979~1.075)	0.288	0.022 (0.024)	1.022	(0.974~1.072)	0.368
Male					0.136 (0.157)	1.145	(0.842~1.558)	0.387
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					0.581 (0.392)	1.787	(0.829~3.854)	0.139
25-34 years					0.861* (0.340)	2.366	(1.214~4.610)	0.011
35-44 years					0.201 (0.329)	1.223	(0.641~2.332)	0.541
45-54 years					0.635* (0.302)	1.887	(1.044~3.409)	0.035
55-64 years					0.414 (0.256)	1.513	(0.916~2.499)	0.106
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					1.198** (0.432)	3.313	(1.421~7.722)	0.006
Intermediate education					1.322*** (0.373)	3.752	(1.805~7.800)	0.000
Economic strain					0.319 (0.211)	1.376	(0.910~2.082)	0.131
Employment status (employed=ref.)								
Unemployed					0.329 (0.439)	1.389	(0.587~3.287)	0.454
Other					0.369 (0.220)	1.446	(0.939~2.226)	0.094
City resident					0.402** (0.153)	1.495	(1.108~2.018)	0.009
Interested in politics					-0.068 (0.172)	0.934	(0.668~1.308)	0.693
Online political participation experience					0.135 (0.214)	1.144	(0.753~1.739)	0.528
Political news consumption					0.000 (0.002)	1.000	(0.996~1.004)	0.973
Authoritarian attitudes					-0.218 (0.201)	0.804	(0.542~1.192)	0.278
Dissatisfaction with government					-0.622** (0.187)	0.537	(0.372~0.774)	0.001
Constant	-3.971*** (0.742)	0.019		0.000	-5.133*** (0.873)	0.006		0.000
<i>N</i>		1,571				1,571		
-2LL		1267.829 ^b				1214.355 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.190				0.239		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>x</i> ²		15.060				9.672		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.058				0.289		

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Table C2. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the Radical Right vote, Switzerland

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.203 (0.182)	1.225	(0.857~1.749)	0.265	0.188 (0.190)	1.207	(0.831~1.752)	0.323
Frequency of Internet use	-0.422 (0.224)	0.656	(0.422~1.017)	0.060	-0.396 (0.245)	0.673	(0.416~1.089)	0.107
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.052 (0.043)	1.053	(0.968~1.146)	0.229	0.050 (0.045)	1.051	(0.962~1.149)	0.270
Male					0.459 (0.235)	1.583	(0.998~2.510)	0.051
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					-0.782 (0.711)	0.457	(0.114~1.843)	0.271
25-34 years					0.306 (0.482)	1.358	(0.528~3.495)	0.526
35-44 years					0.407 (0.439)	1.502	(0.635~3.553)	0.355
45-54 years					0.232 (0.428)	1.261	(0.545~2.915)	0.588
55-64 years					-0.321 (0.371)	0.726	(0.350~1.503)	0.388
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					1.206** (0.439)	3.340	(1.412~7.902)	0.006
Intermediate education					1.001** (0.320)	2.721	(1.453~5.096)	0.002
Economic strain					-0.279 (0.424)	0.756	(0.329~1.738)	0.510
Employment status (employed =ref.)								
Unemployed					-0.850 (1.129)	0.428	(0.047~3.912)	0.452
Other					0.082 (0.322)	1.086	(0.578~2.041)	0.798
City resident					-0.360 (0.235)	0.697	(0.440~1.106)	0.125
Interested in politics					0.433 (0.253)	1.542	(0.939~2.535)	0.087
Online political participation experience					-0.115 (0.002)	0.892	(0.503~1.582)	0.695
Political news consumption					-0.002 (0.002)	0.998	(0.994~1.001)	0.235
Authoritarian attitudes					0.551* (0.251)	1.736	(1.062~2.838)	0.028
Dissatisfaction with government					0.018 (0.349)	1.019	(0.514~2.018)	0.958
Constant	-1.329 (0.954)	0.265		0.164	-2.831* (1.111)	0.059		0.011
<i>N</i>		586				586		
-2 <i>LL</i>		583.488 ^b				546.807 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.143				0.225		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2		2.422				8.712		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.877				0.367		

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Table C3. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the Radical Right vote, Finland

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.071 (0.170)	1.073	(0.769~1.499)	0.677	0.073 (0.175)	1.07 5	(0.763~1.515)	0.678
Frequency of Internet use	-0.334 (0.207)	0.716	(0.477~1.075)	0.107	-0.292 (0.220)	0.74 7	(0.485~1.149)	0.184
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.071 (0.037)	1.074	(1.000~1.154)	0.052	0.060 (0.038)	1.06 2	(0.987~1.143)	0.109
Male					1.106*** (0.218)	3.02 2	(1.970~4.635)	0.000
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					-0.187 (0.827)	0.83 0	(0.164~4.194)	0.821
25-34 years					0.381 (0.442)	1.46 3	(0.615~3.479)	0.389
35-44 years					0.852 (0.435)	2.34 4	(0.999~5.500)	0.050
45-54 years					0.433 (0.430)	1.54 2	(0.665~3.580)	0.313
55-64 years					0.609 (0.354)	1.83 9	(0.919~3.679)	0.085
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					0.624 (0.358)	1.86 6	(0.925~3.766)	0.082
Intermediate education					0.360 (0.248)	1.43 3	(0.881~2.330)	0.147
Economic strain					0.227 (0.323)	1.25 4	(0.666~2.363)	0.483
Employment status (employed = ref.)								
Unemployed					0.632 (0.508)	1.88 1	(0.694~5.094)	0.214
Other					0.305 (0.302)	1.35 7	(0.751~2.453)	0.312
City resident					0.063 (0.215)	1.06 5	(0.699~1.621)	0.771
Interested in politics					-0.095 (0.229)	0.90 9	(0.580~1.424)	0.677
Online political participation experience					0.102 (0.262)	1.10 8	(0.663~1.850)	0.696
Political news consumption					-0.001 (0.002)	0.99 9	(0.995~1.004)	0.787
Authoritarian attitudes					-0.234 (0.267)	0.79 1	(0.469~1.334)	0.379
Dissatisfaction with government					0.349 (0.216)	1.41 8	(0.929~2.164)	0.105
Constant	-2.441* (0.955)	0.087		0.011	-3.511** (1.096)	0.03 0		0.001
<i>N</i>			1,181				1,181	
-2 <i>LL</i>			750.574 ^b				705.076 ^b	
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²			0.137				0.206	
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2			5.742				9.293	
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>			0.453				0.318	

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Table C4. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the Radical Right vote, France

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.421* (0.166)	1.523	(1.100~2.108)	0.011	0.334 (0.174)	1.397	(0.992~1.965)	0.055
Frequency of Internet use	0.002 (0.278)	1.002	(0.581~1.729)	0.993	-0.221 (0.306)	0.802	(0.440~1.460)	0.469
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.023 (0.038)	1.023	(0.949~1.102)	0.552	0.035 (0.041)	1.036	(0.956~1.122)	0.390
Male					-0.104 (0.249)	0.902	(0.553~1.468)	0.677
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					2.079** (0.651)	7.999	(2.232~28.668)	0.001
25-34 years					2.559*** (0.603)	12.926	(3.961~42.183)	0.000
35-44 years					1.755** (0.572)	5.782	(1.885~17.730)	0.002
45-54 years					1.429** (0.525)	4.175	(1.492~11.685)	0.006
55-64 years					0.487 (0.422)	1.628	(0.712~3.720)	0.248
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					1.117* (0.475)	3.054	(1.203~7.751)	0.019
Intermediate education					0.797* (0.375)	2.220	(1.064~4.632)	0.034
Economic strain					0.414 (0.296)	1.513	(0.847~2.701)	0.161
Employment status (employed = ref.)								
Unemployed					-0.275 (0.746)	0.759	(0.176~3.276)	0.712
Other					0.349 (0.381)	1.417	(0.671~2.991)	0.361
City resident					-0.085 (0.246)	0.919	(0.568~1.486)	0.730
Interested in politics					-0.171 (0.265)	0.843	(0.501~1.417)	0.518
Online political participation experience					-0.080 (0.306)	0.924	(0.507~1.683)	0.795
Political news consumption					0.001 (0.001)	1.001	(0.999~1.002)	0.297
Authoritarian attitudes					-0.491* (0.244)	0.612	(0.380~0.987)	0.044
Dissatisfaction with government					0.994** (0.331)	2.703	(1.412~5.173)	0.003
Constant	-4.934*** (1.244)	0.007		0.000	-5.751*** (1.392)	0.003		0.000
<i>N</i>		896				896		
-2LL		551.292 ^b				486.290 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.213				0.333		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2		10.350				11.717		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.170				0.164		

Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Table C5. Anti-immigrant attitudes, Internet use, and the Radical Right vote, Netherlands

	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>95% CI for OR</i>	<i>p</i>
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.136 (0.239)	1.146	(0.717~1.832)	0.570	0.201 (0.270)	1.223	(0.720~2.078)	0.456
Frequency of Internet use	-0.525 (0.295)	0.592	(0.332~1.054)	0.075	-0.269 (0.338)	0.764	(0.394~1.482)	0.426
Anti-immigrant attitudes × Frequency of Internet use	0.061 (0.053)	1.063	(0.958~1.180)	0.247	0.021 (0.059)	1.021	(0.909~1.147)	0.723
Male					0.777** (0.282)	2.176	(1.253~3.777)	0.006
Age (65+ years = ref.)								
18-24 years					-0.042 (0.693)	0.959	(0.247~3.727)	0.952
25-34 years					0.421 (0.582)	1.524	(0.487~4.773)	0.469
35-44 years					0.613 (0.576)	1.845	(0.597~5.704)	0.287
45-54 years					1.126* (0.513)	3.083	(1.128~8.427)	0.028
55-64 years					0.663 (0.462)	1.940	(0.784~4.799)	0.152
Education level (higher education = ref.)								
Lower education					2.264*** (0.489)	9.619	(3.692~25.063)	0.000
Intermediate education					1.732*** (0.460)	5.651	(2.295~13.914)	0.000
Economic strain					0.373 (0.447)	1.452	(0.605~3.487)	0.404
Employment status (employed = ref.)								
Unemployed					-0.774 (1.113)	0.461	(0.052~4.085)	0.487
Other					0.163 (0.345)	1.177	(0.599~2.315)	0.636
City resident					0.072 (0.264)	1.075	(0.641~1.802)	0.785
Interested in politics					-0.393 (0.285)	0.675	(0.386~1.180)	0.168
Online political participation experience					0.294 (0.337)	1.341	(0.693~2.596)	0.384
Political news consumption					-0.001 (0.002)	0.999	(0.995~1.003)	0.618
Authoritarian attitudes					-0.149 (0.297)	0.862	(0.482~1.541)	0.616
Dissatisfaction with government					0.604* (0.286)	1.830	(1.044~3.208)	0.035
Constant	-2.257 (1.331)	0.105		0.090	-5.113** (1.630)	0.006		0.002
<i>N</i>		1,138				1,138		
-2 <i>LL</i>		521.531 ^b				457.530 ^b		
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²		0.093				0.228		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>x</i> ²		5.364				4.448		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: <i>p</i>		0.498				0.815		

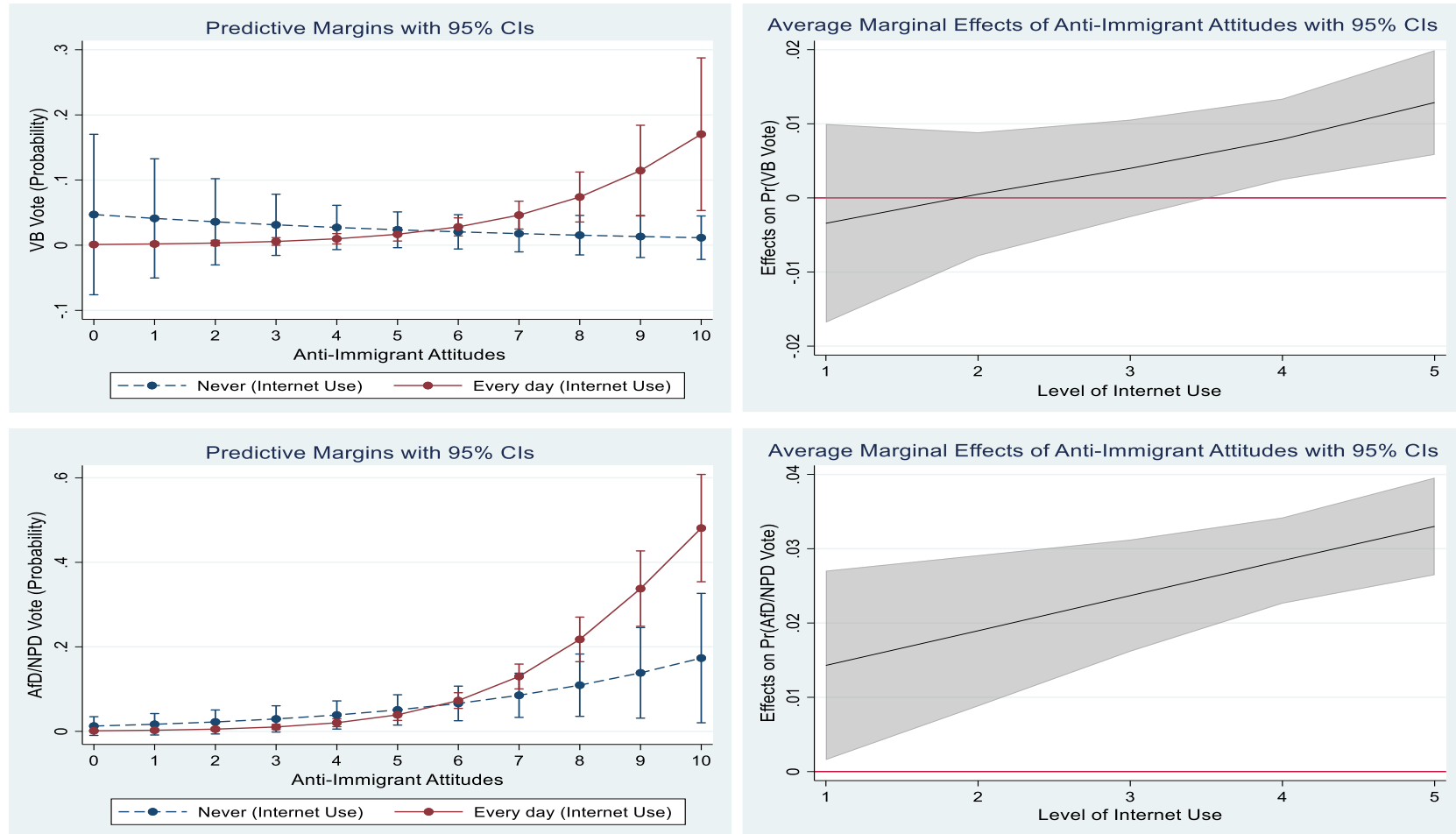
Notes: if the reference category is not mentioned, all variables except for political news consumption were coded as either present or not present.

Source: European Social Survey, round 9 (2018/19).

p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001. Figures in brackets are standard error values.

Appendix D

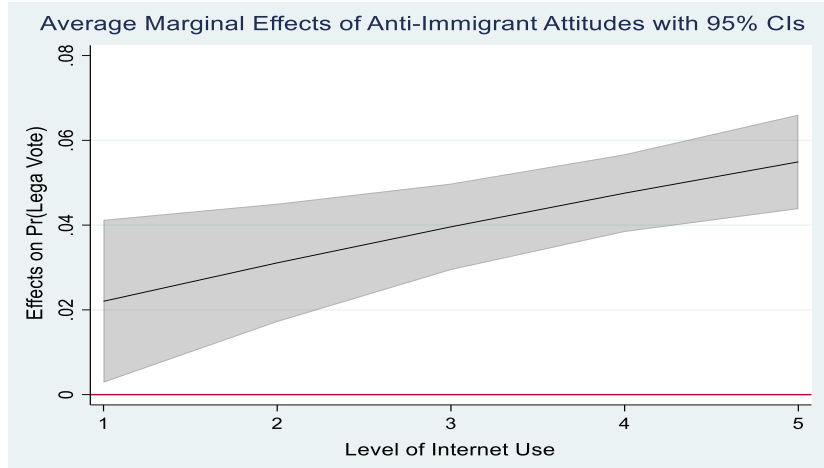
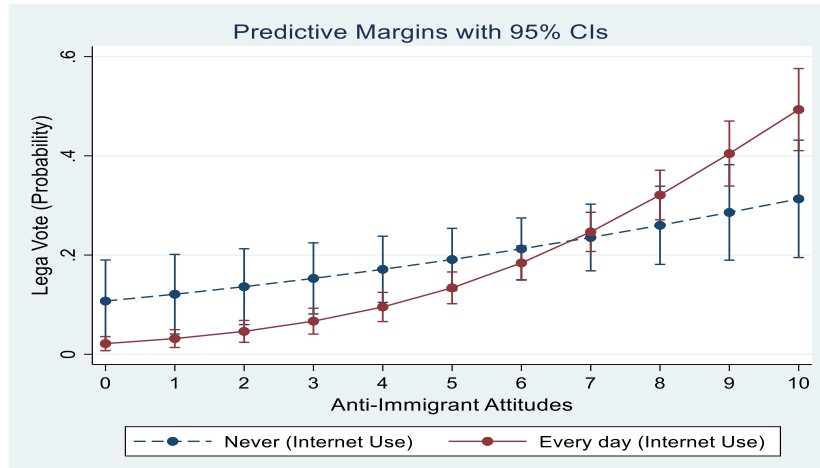
Figure D1. Interaction effects between anti-immigrant attitudes and Internet use on radical right voting in Belgium, Germany, and Italy



Note: Grey areas are confidence intervals

(Continued)

Figure D1. (Continued)



Note: Grey areas are confidence intervals

Appendix E

Table E1. Average vote (%) for radical right parties in recent national elections in 8 selected countries, 2012-2019

Country	Radical right party	Election results in the national elections
Austria	FPÖ	25.97 (2017) ^a
		16.2 (2019) ^a
Belgium	VB	3.67 (2014) ^b
		11.95 (2019) ^b
Switzerland	SVP	29.4 (2015) ^c
		25.6 (2019) ^c
Germany	AfD	4.7 (2013) ^d
		12.6 (2017) ^d
	NPD	1.3 (2013) ^d
		0.4 (2017) ^d
Finland	PS	17.65 (2015) ^e
		17.48 (2019) ^e
France	RN	3.7 (2012) ^f
		8.8 (2017) ^f
Italy	Lega	4.08 (2013) ^g
		17.35 (2018) ^g
Netherlands	PVV	10.08 (2012) ^h
		13.1 (2017) ^h

^a source: Bundesministerium für Inneres [Ministry of the Interior], <https://www.bmi.gv.at/>.

^b source: Service public fédéral Intérieur [Federal Public Service interior], <https://elections.fgov.be/>.

^c source: Bundesamt für Statistik [Federal Statistical Office], <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home.html/>.

^d source: Der Bundeswahlleiter [Federal Returning Officer], <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/>.

^e source: Vaalit (the Ministry of Justice's official election website), <https://vaalit.fi/etusivu/>.

^f source: *Ministère de l'intérieur* [Minister of the Interior], <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/>.

^g source: Ministero dell'Interno [Minister of the Interior], <https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/>.

^h source: *Kiesraad* [Electoral Council], <https://www.kiesraad.nl/>.

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