

Members of Parliament, Voters, and Institutions: Understanding the Role of Individual Behavior in Constrained Environments

by

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To my family, especially my dad who taught me to love learning

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATT Average Treatment Effect on the Treated

BES British Election Study

BNP British National Party

CCA Canonical Correspondence Analysis

CHES Chapel Hill Expert Survey

CMP Comparative Manifesto Project

EU European Union

MPs Members of Parliament

MMP Mixed Member Proportional

PRRP Populist Radical Right Party

PCA Principal Component Analysis

PR Proportional Representation

SMD Single Member District

SVM Support Vector Machine

UK United Kingdom

UKIP United Kingdom Independence Party

US United States

ABSTRACT

How can we best measure and study issues related to political parties, and how can we break the parties as unitary actors assumption to study the level of the individual MP? Most work in comparative party politics has analyzed the party as the unit of analysis, but I challenge this assumption to look at the role of individual voters and MPs in the world of European party politics. I start with understanding how voter perceptions of a party's strategy influence vote choice, which shows the need to study the individual. Using the case of the 2015 UK General Election, I argue that voters decide between the Conservative Party and UKIP based on where they perceive the Conservative Party is on immigration, drawing on spatial theories at the party level from Downs (1957) and Meguid (2008). I find that regardless of attitudes towards immigration or the EU, voters who think the Conservative Party will not reduce immigration are more likely to vote for UKIP than those who perceive the Conservative Party will reduce immigration.

The next question is how can researchers measure individual MP behavior? Existing approaches use roll call votes, debates, and surveys- though these data sources have their potential flaws. I instead propose using social media data, which are accessible for the vast majority of MPs, are available over time, and are without any major differences by country (except language). Analyzing social media activity from MPs in France, Germany, and the UK, I argue that social media usage varies by

geographic context, demographic characteristics, and content of interest. I demonstrate why choice in social media data platform is important by replicating research from Sältzer (2020), who uses Twitter data, with Facebook data. This paper sets guidelines on how to use social media data when studying party politics.

My last paper studies the behavioral impact of institutional constraints using Facebook data. I investigate behavioral differences between MPs elected via SMD and PR in Germany, which has a mixed member proportional system where one can observe two different electoral systems under one context. First, I demonstrate using machine learning classifiers that there is a distinguishable difference between posts from SMD and PR MPs. I then show that there is a difference in how often SMD and PR MPs reference parties, meaning that PR MPs are more party oriented as they communicate with their constituents. Together, these three papers contribute a new dataset with years of social media data of MPs from multiple countries and platforms with guidelines on how to responsibly use these data. I also substantively contribute to the party competition, institutions, and intra-party literatures.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

How can we best measure and study issues related to political parties, and how can we break the parties as unitary actors assumption to study the level of the individual MP? Research in party politics has long focused on how to measure party positions over various dimensions of interest. By having valid sources of party measurements, we can compare parties across time and space to answer questions related to party competition, political representation, changes to issue salience, and much more. Similar to other political phenomena, finding data sources that provide valid measures of party positions is difficult as there are costs and benefits to all sources. This dissertation, which consists of three papers, looks at different ways and sources to study questions related to party politics. I focus specifically on data sources that are measured at the individual level, whether it is the individual member of parliament (MP) or voter. This dissertation serves as a guide for studying party politics, particularly focusing on best practices for using novel data sources for measuring party positioning.

The most widely cited sources in researching European party politics are party manifestos and surveys. For the most part, both these sources make the “parties as unitary actors” assumption, which assumes that parties act and operate as a single cohesive unit. This assumption is made for many reasons, but there are two important

reasons of note for this dissertation. First, this assumption is made in order to simplify the world. Instead of having as many observations for as many MPs there are in parliament (which can be in the 600s), there is only one observation per party. This is a particularly important simplification when looking at changes to the party spectrum over long periods of time. Second, this assumption is made because parties mostly do operate as unitary actors on the legislative floor to ensure the functioning of parliament. In order for coalition governments to legislate, parties have to vote in unison to ensure the passage of policy. While the sources used to measure parties have relatively remained the same, the methods used to study these sources have developed rapidly. While large scale qualitative coding is still somewhat seen as the “gold standard,” especially with manifestos, advances in quantitative text analysis has made it possible to study even more forms of political text.

This dissertation focuses on the individual as the unit of analysis. In doing so, it breaks the “parties as unitary actors” assumption for two main reasons. One, an MP’s time on the legislative floor is only one part of his or her daily activities. I assume that MPs fundamentally want to be reelected, meaning that they are reliant not only on their party to succeed, but they are also reliant on their constituents to vote them back into office (Strom, 1990). This reliance on one’s constituents will vary based on the institutional constraints that an MP faces. MPs in a pure Proportional Representation (PR) system are going to be less reliant on their constituents than MPs in a Single Member District (SMD) system. Either way, an MP needs votes to be reelected. Voters ultimately do not pay attention to manifestos or roll call votes, meaning that they take their cues on party positions from alternate sources. Second, I break this assumption because I want to understand what is going on at the most fine-grained level of analysis. By doing so, I can study questions related to how individual actions or thought processes lead to different results. I take the approach used in the party literature in the United States (US), which argues that

“Any theory of parties, therefore, must start at a lower, more fundamental, level- that of the individual, reelection-seeking legislator- and build up from there” (Cox and McCubbins, 2007, 7).

This dissertation contributes to the literature in the following ways. One, I provide a new major dataset, which includes a way to study European party politics over time and space. This dataset includes social media data from MPs from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK) in addition to demographic data on these MPs. This dataset is the first of its kind- it includes social media posts from multiple platforms, from over a two-year period, and from multiple different countries with over 2.5 million observations. Two, this dissertation contributes to the literature by providing guidelines on how to use these data. First, I show why focusing on the individual level is necessary. I then provide a way to study individual MPs by using social media data. I outline how these data are different than other sources used to study party and intraparty politics. Social media data are not one homogeneous category, and specific platforms suit specific questions better than others. Third, this dissertation contributes to the literature by looking at MP behavior outside of the legislative floor and the campaign period. Partly due to data limitations, most work focused on the MP level has not looked at daily MP behavior to understand how they communicate and represent constituents outside of their votes in parliament. I look at frequent and regular communication patterns to understand how different constraints impact daily behavior.

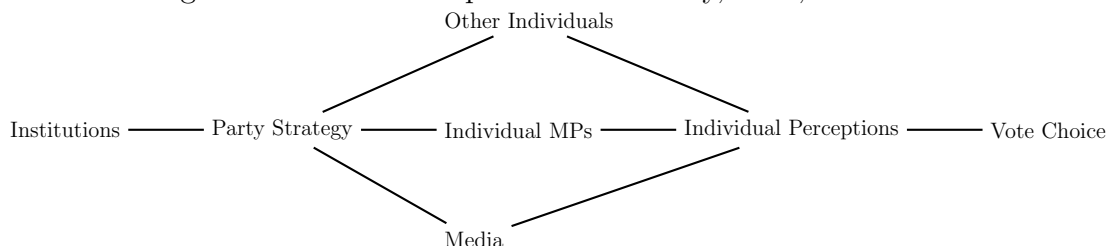
My dissertation starts with taking a question that has most often been studied at the party level. How do voters decide between a mainstream party and a niche party? Existing theories draw on Downs (1957) to argue that mainstream parties compete with niche parties, such a green or a Populist Radical Right Party (PRRP), by either moving closer or further away from the niche party on the dimension most relevant to the niche party (Bale, 2003; Meguid, 2008). This has been tested using manifesto

data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) to measure the mainstream party's positions on these dimensions (Volkens et al., 2016). Meguid (2008) finds that if a mainstream party moves closer to the niche party, then the vote share of the niche party will decline. When looking at explanations for support for niche parties at the individual level, existing research says that niche party voters share specific attitudinal characteristics, but many mainstream voters also have these attitudes. I draw on the theories of Downs (1957) and Meguid (2008) at the voter level to understand how voters decide to vote for a niche party over a mainstream party.

I use the case of the 2015 UK General Election using the British Election Study (BES) Panel survey from Fieldhouse et al. (2016) to understand how voters sharing similar attitudes on immigration decided between the Conservative Party and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which is a PRRP. How one decides between a mainstream and a PRRP is a particularly interesting question for the 2015 UK General Election as UKIP won nearly 13% of the vote, which is comparable to other PRRPs in Europe with more proportional electoral systems. I argue that voters make their decision to vote for a mainstream party or a PRRP based on their perceived placement of the mainstream party on immigration. Specifically for the case of the UK, if a voter perceives that the Conservative party is close to UKIP on immigration, then this voter will choose the Conservative Party over UKIP. I test this using the panel structure of the BES, which allows me to measure perceived placements of the Conservatives by voters prior to the actual election. The findings show that those who perceive the Conservative Party will reduce immigration are less likely to vote UKIP than those who perceive the Conservative Party will not reduce immigration. This relationship holds even when the respondent is highly Eurosceptic and anti-immigration.

I find that there is variation in voters' perceptions of a party's strategy, but from this paper, I cannot explain why voters vary in their perceptions. Figure 1.1 shows

Figure 1.1: Relationship Between a Party, MPs, and Voters



some potential sources of these varying perceptions. First, the specification of the institutions will determine the number and level of competition between parties, which will influence the party’s strategy. Previous work has ignored the role of individual MPs and individual perceptions. It has looked at the link between the party strategy and the vote choice at the aggregate level. Instead, I focus in on the role of individual MPs and individual voters to understand how information is portrayed to voters from MPs. When looking at Figure 1.1, the variation in perceptions of party positions could be from other individuals (friends, trusted sources, etc.), individual MPs, and/or the media. The rest of this dissertation focuses on the individual MP level to understand how to measure MP behavior and the best data sources to use. I narrow in on social media platforms as they are easily accessible by both voters and MPs, they are regularly monitored and checked by both MPs and voters, and they focus on all aspects of an MP’s activities.

To collect MP social media data, I first had to collect data on MPs serving in the lower house of each country from 2017-2019. I scraped each Parliament’s web page. France, Germany, and the UK all had varying amounts of information about their MPs. For instance, the UK had information on social media accounts (though many were incorrect). France did not include social media accounts, so they all had to be collected manually. Regardless of whether the social media account was provided, I (with help from a Research Assistant) manually collected and/or verified all Twitter and Facebook accounts of MPs. The accounts were verified to be the actual MP’s

account as opposed to being a “fan account” or an automated account created by an external party. I created my own Twitter and Facebook scrapers that gathered all existing posts of these accounts from 2017-2019 (provided they were public pages). All in all, I have over 2 million Tweets for the MPs during this time and over 500,000 Facebook posts.

I analyze these data and provide guidelines on how to use them in my second paper. While social media provide an exciting new way to study intraparty politics, we need to think strategically about what social media source we use (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and understand how each platform is used strategically by MPs. These data sources are becoming more easily accessible, making analyzing multiple platforms possible. While Facebook and Twitter have similarities in who and how people use them, they also have differences that have consequences for analysis. Facebook and Twitter data of MPs differ based on geographic context, demographic characteristics, and content of interest. I look at the cases of France, Germany, and the UK to understand which MPs use Facebook, Twitter, both, or neither between 2017-2019. I find that choice in social media platform is not random- usage varies based on population trends, gender, age, and content and features discussed and used.

To show why choice in social media platform matters, I replicate an existing study that uses Twitter data by using Facebook data. This replication takes work from Sältzer (2020) who scales Tweets of German MPs and finds that factional positioning can be replicated using Twitter data. I replicate his study using Facebook data. Facebook data are a better source to use when studying German MPs as there is much higher usage of Facebook than Twitter both by the German population as a whole, but also by German MPs. From this replication, I find that not only are the two most common dimensions not the same, but the relationship between these dimensions is different. While Sältzer (2020) finds evidence of an economic and a cultural dimension, I find evidence of one dimension on the level of government support and another

dimension on level of populism. I argue that Facebook more accurately depicts the German political space as it covers more MPs, especially MPs within the two largest parties. Also, the average number of words per post is longer, meaning it is more suitable for scaling methods that were designed to use on manifesto-like documents as opposed to short 180 character long posts.

Now that I have established guidelines on how to use social media data in a way that will lead to responsible conclusions that will benefit social science research, I turn to using these data in a practical example. How do electoral institutions influence the behavior of MPs outside of the legislative floor? Electoral systems with SMD encourage a direct relationship between constituents and the MP, leading to weaker parties. PR systems make the MP more beholden to the party as the party most often determines where the candidate sits on the party list. I use the case of Germany, which has a mixed member proportional system (MMP), to understand how different electoral constraints influence MP behavior not on the legislative floor and outside of electoral periods. Constituency MPs will be more personally oriented while list MPs will be more party oriented. Using my dataset of German MP Facebook posts from 2017-2019, I provide a way to measure MP communication with voters outside the legislative floor that has fewer constraints on MP behavior. Looking outside of the legislative floor is important because voters do not pay attention to activity on the legislative floor. Using quantitative text analysis, I show that there is a substantive difference between list and constituency MP communication styles in terms of the content they discuss on Facebook.

My dissertation starts by taking something that has been studied at the party level and studying it at the voter level. I show why focusing on at the level of the individual is important for research on party politics. I then turn to providing not only a dataset that can be used to study the individual MP level, but guidelines on how to use these data. I specifically look at social media data as it is one of the

newest data sources of individual MP behavior. I argue that Facebook and Twitter data are not interchangeable and show that they differ based on different measures and questions of interest. I lastly include a practical example of how social media data can be used to measure MP behavior. I find that institutional constraints can be recovered in ways that MPs speak on Facebook. I conclude with what this means for the future of party research in a comparative context.

CHAPTER II

Who Stays and Who Goes: Understanding the Immigration Vote in the 2015 UK General Election

How do voter perceptions of mainstream parties on niche issues relate to vote choice? More specifically, how do perceptions of a mainstream party's position on immigration relate to how a voter decides between a center-right or PRRP?¹ As niche parties, in particular PRRPs, increase their seat shares across Europe, they rely on support from many former mainstream party voters. This presents an interesting dilemma for voters- should they vote for the party that has more resources, a higher chance of being in government, a larger issue base, but is less extreme, or should they vote for the party that is an issue owner, but has fewer resources and experience? Voters that prioritize immigration in Europe have cohesive attitudes towards immigration reform and the role of the European Union (EU), regardless of their final vote choice. Despite this similarity in attitudes, they somehow make a final decision on which party gains their support- either a mainstream party or a PRRP. I delve into how this final decision is made for people that prioritize niche owned issues.

The existing literature breaks up PRRP support explanations into two groups: the demand and the supply side explanations. The demand side explanations say that PRRP voters are anti-immigration, Eurosceptic, older, male, working class, and less

¹Published online at Parliamentary Affairs: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsab005>

educated (Mudde, 2007). These predictors cannot explain why two voters that share identical attitudes or characteristics of these predictors may vote for different parties. The supply side explanations look at particular institutional factors that allow entry of PRRPs. Certain supply side arguments use spatial models of mainstream parties vis-à-vis their PRRP competitions. Work from Bale (2003), Meguid (2008), and Odmalm and Hepburn (2017) have drawn on Downs (1957) to argue that mainstream parties can influence PRRPs based on where they position themselves on the immigration spectrum. These spatial theories have not been tested at the voter level, which is an important next step, because “there is no reason to believe that voters react to an aggregate score of which they are unaware” (Blais et al., 2001, 85). The lines between the supply and demand side explanations are often blurred as many relevant factors in PRRP voting cannot be placed exclusively in either group (Arzheimer, 2018). Recent work from Spoon and Klüver (2019) shows that voter level perceptions of mainstream parties explain their electoral loss, but this is just done on the general left-right dimension. It is important to test the role of voter perceptions on the immigration dimension because this is the main dimension of competition for PRRPs.

A voter will choose between a mainstream party and a PRRP based on the perceived position of the mainstream party on immigration. During a campaign, voters receive information regarding the positions of parties on different issues. This information will come from the party’s manifesto, MPs running for office who may differ from the party, the media, and other voters. Every person will receive slightly different information, especially based on his or her own pre-existing preferences. The voter will compile all this information to construct a perceived ideological position of each party on different issues. Based on the source, amount, and type of information received, there will be variation in terms of a voter’s perceived positions of parties on different issues. This variation of information about party positions, in combination with pre-existing attitudes will explain vote choice (Bräuninger and Giger, 2018). In

the case of mainstream and PRRP competition, a voter will use his or her constructed position of the mainstream party on immigration to decide whether to vote for the mainstream party or the PRRP. If the voter perceives the mainstream party is far enough to the right on the immigration spectrum, meaning the party wants to reduce immigration, then the voter will choose the mainstream party over the PRRP.

I use the test case of the 2015 UK General Election. UKIP, a niche party that heavily campaigns on reducing immigration, won its first seat in this election. While UKIP today is no longer seen as a legitimate threat to any mainstream party in the UK, it showed a generalizable dynamic between a mainstream and a PRRP that is common across most of Europe in the 2015 election. It won 12.6% of the vote share, making it the third largest party in the UK by votes. This percentage is comparable to niche party support in other advanced democracies with proportional representation PR. Given the results of the 2015 election, why did 12.6% of voters risk a wasted vote to vote for UKIP? In particular, why did they do this when there was a risk of a hung parliament, and UKIP supporters would be much better represented with a Conservative government rather than Labour government? Voters ultimately chose UKIP because they thought the Conservative Party would not reduce immigration. They voted for the party to the right of the Conservative Party, which had a better chance of being elected than the other party to the right, the British National Party (BNP). While the BNP has a long history in the UK, it will not be analyzed in this paper due to the fact it has never been electorally successful (in particular in 2015- it only won 1.9% of the vote share).

I identify a specific voter of interest that is understudied due to data limitations. While PRRPs are gaining support in Europe, they still only appeal to people interested in lessening immigration and skeptical of the EU. By using the 2014-2017 British Election Study from Fieldhouse et al. (2016), I utilize the panel aspect of the data to select a group of people that think immigration is the largest priority for the

UK at any point in the 13-months leading up to the election. This allows me to study UKIP's target base- people that have the same priorities as the party. I measure perceptions of party positions prior to the results of the general election, meaning that rationalization is not as much of a problem (Blais et al., 2001). It is an individual's pre-existing attitudes in combination with perceptions party positions that predicts vote choice.

I start by reviewing the literature on PRRPs, and I pay special attention to the literature on the interaction between mainstream parties and PRRPs. There is a gap in the literature concerning how voters choose between a mainstream party or a PRRP partly because the PRRP literature has not focused on traditional theories of voting behavior (Arzheimer, 2018). I introduce the case of the 2015 UK General Election and test my argument with the BES Panel. I test the relationship between a voter's perceived position of the Conservative Party on immigration using logistic regressions. I interpret my results using predicted probabilities, and I then summarize what are the substantive implications of the results. I conclude with what my findings imply for future party competition on niche issues.

2.1 Literature

2.1.1 Party Competition

Niche parties campaign on non-traditional issues, such as the environment or immigration- this deviation from campaigning mainly on economic issues means that they stand out from the rest of the parties in the system (Bale, 2003; Meguid, 2008). Because niche parties are generally newer, have fewer resources, and are generally interested in a more targeted goal (i.e. protect the environment or reduce immigration), to compete with mainstream parties, niche parties campaign on only a few issues (Meguid, 2008). Existing explanations of PRRPs tend to downplay the role that

mainstream parties play in the success of PRRPs (Odmalm and Hepburn, 2017). As a type of niche party, PRRPs are known for their stances on immigration and Euroscepticism, but not necessarily for their economic or foreign policy preferences (Mudde, 2007). The popularity of niche parties raises the salience of non-traditional campaign issues by forcing other parties to discuss them (Bale, 2003). It is mainstream parties that are reacting to niche parties (though niche parties do emphasize their differences from mainstream parties) (Downes and Loveless, 2018; Spoon, 2011). Niche parties are much more constrained: Adams et al. (2006) find that if niche parties moderate their positions towards mainstream parties, then this leads to electoral loss.

PRRPs combine the ideologies of populism, nativism, and authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007). Given these ideologies, there are specific ways in which mainstream parties can react to PRRPs, which may or may not have electoral consequences. These strategies are mainly grouped into two camps- to “disengage” or “engage”. One problem with these studies is that the theoretical expectations do not always match the empirical results, especially at the voter level (Adams, 2012). The most common campaign strategy would be for mainstream parties to shift their policy positions on PRRP issues relative to the position of the PRRP. In general, PRRP voters are known to want stricter immigration policies, so this is an important dimension of competition for parties competing against PRRPs (Ivaresflaten, 2008).

Meguid (2008) argues that mainstream parties can influence the success of PRRPs through three distinct strategies- the accommodative, the adversarial, and the dismissive strategies. An accommodative strategy means that the mainstream party is moving closer to the issue position of the PRRP, minimizing the distance between those two parties on that issue. This suggests that the vote share of the PRRP should decrease, because people will vote for the mainstream party over the PRRP. The adversarial strategy means that the mainstream party is moving further away from the issue positioning of the PRRP, maximizing the distance between the two

parties. This says that the vote share of the PRRP should increase, because the space between the two parties is bigger. Lastly, the dismissive strategy states that the mainstream parties are ignoring the issues associated with PRRPs. These are similar to the adopt, diffuse, and hold strategies from Bale (2003), respectively. In this situation, the vote share of the niche parties is suspected to decrease, because the issues that concern PRRPs are not seen as salient, making them irrelevant. These theories have been further expanded upon in recent work by Odmalm and Hepburn (2017) who find that PRRPs are not the only option for voters who want a party that is tough on immigration- many mainstream parties have adopted tougher positions on immigration. This in turn, has resulted in a legitimization of the PRRPs in many cases, including in the UK (Odmalm and Hepburn, 2017).

There are various methods to measure the policy positions of mainstream parties on immigration. Most use party manifestos as a way to determine strategies- manifestos are released by the party during a campaign to outline its policy positions. While manifestos and corresponding manifesto data provide an important glance into what parties are conveying to voters, they do not get at what voters interpret from the parties. While parties might be saying one thing, voters could interpret these strategies in completely different ways. The chain for these existing theories state that mainstream parties form a strategy, voters interpret that strategy, and then voters will vote according to said strategy. This assumes high party cohesion where individual MPs echo the manifesto while campaigning- not only in their positioning on issues, but also in how much they reference them (Odmalm and Hepburn, 2017). It also assumes that voters know the campaign materials from the parties, such as manifestos. When understanding previous work related to the linkage between voters and party manifestos, Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu (2014) find in relation to positioning on European Integration that voters and experts do not respond to changes in party manifestos, but voter and expert perceptions seem to follow in the

same direction. This suggests that voters may not be as attentive to manifestos as us researchers may like, because “This pattern suggests that rank-and-file citizens- in common with experts- do not significantly weight party manifestos when estimating party positions” (Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu, 2014, 968).

Voters receive lots of information during campaigns, and depending on the source, the message will differ. For instance, whether the information is local or national, what the ideological leaning of the news source, etc. The media are an extremely important actor when considering how and what information a voter receives. Balch and Balabanova (2011) find that the UK media can create a “moral panic” on immigration. While PRRPs in general do not have equal access to the media as compared to their mainstream competitors, it generally takes a more negative tone to immigration, helping the cause of PRRPs (Ellinas, 2018). When studying party competition between mainstream and PRRPs, the party level theories have yet to be tested at the voter level, leaving a gap in the literature. The spatial models at the party level do not account for media bias, MPs deviating from the party line, and one’s own predisposition that may mediate the message that the party conveys. The party level analysis cannot account for variation in perceptions at the voter level that may influence behavior. This is why this paper will use individual level data on perceptions the Conservative Party’s strategy on immigration to provide more context to the party level work.

2.1.2 UK Specifics

Due to the nature of the UK’s electoral system, the costs associated with voting for a niche party are very high (almost ensuring a wasted vote). Immigration has been very politicized in the UK since the early 2000s- it became the public’s most important issue following the 2001 election, and it has continued to peak during election times (Carvalho, Eatwell and Wunderlich, 2015). The Conservative Party

has a right of center stance on immigration, meaning there is limited space for UKIP to move on the immigration spectrum (Goodwin and Dennison, 2018). This probably explains why UKIP's positions have been relatively stable for multiple election cycles (Odmalm and Hepburn, 2017).

The Conservative Party's stance on immigration makes voting for UKIP over the Conservative Party an even greater risk given the threat of a hung parliament. Rather than vote for UKIP, someone could vote for the Conservative Party. Voting for UKIP over the Conservatives means that Labour has an increased chance of winning. The gap between UKIP and Labour on immigration is much larger than the gap between UKIP and the Conservatives. Past work has found that the high polarization in the UK between Labour and the Conservatives actually discourages strategic voting (Hale, 2020). Therefore, if the voter truly prioritizes immigration while still acting rationally according to Downs (1957), then voting for the Conservatives would make most sense. UKIP has always been Eurosceptic, and this Euroscepticism has grown into anti-immigration position since the early 2000s when there was an increase of migration in the UK (Ford and Goodwin, 2014). UKIP has always prioritized issues owned by PRRPs (most importantly, the European integration and immigration).

When analyzing the ideological placement of parties in the UK with the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), the 2014 results show UKIP has an immigration position at a 10 out of 10, and the Conservative Party has a position at an 8 out of 10 (Bakker et al., 2015). The scale is from 0 (strongly opposes tough policy) to 10 (strongly favors tough policy) (Bakker et al., 2015). When investigating the issue priorities of UK parties, it shows a clear distinction between niche parties and mainstream parties as expected. UKIP's top three priorities are immigration, EU integration, and anti-elite rhetoric, which fit into three defining ideologies of PRRPs (Bakker et al., 2015). When analyzing the other parties that prioritize immigration, CHES puts it as the Conservatives' second priority and Labour's third priority. Ford, Goodwin and Cutts

(2012) call UKIP supporters in the 2009 EP Elections “strategic Eurosceptics and polite xenophobes.” Their findings match those of PRRP research: UKIP support is most likely to come from middle-aged men who are part of the working class that most likely would have voted Conservative before the formation of UKIP in the 1990s (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Ford, Goodwin and Cutts, 2012). Clarke et al. (2016) find people vote UKIP because of its specific positions on immigration and the EU.

When analyzing the 2015 general election, there were three important considerations: UKIP had the potential to gain a seat in the UK Parliament, everyone was trying to guess whether there would be another coalition government, and David Cameron’s 2013 call for a referendum for UK’s membership in the EU (now known as Brexit). Whatever party would be in government following the election would control whether there would be a referendum and how it would be managed (Cushion et al., 2016). Immigration and EU integration were extremely salient issues and considered top priority during the campaign- as they had been historically (Balch and Balabanova, 2011; Cushion et al., 2016). Evans and Mellon (2016) and Ford and Goodwin (2016) agree that the UKIP was most appealing among former and current Conservative Party voters in the 2015 election, and the Conservative Party had the most to lose from UKIP (Evans and Mellon, 2016; Ford and Goodwin, 2016). Voters that may have once voted Labour but would vote UKIP in 2015 had previously switched from Labour to Conservative prior to this election (Evans and Mellon, 2016). For this reason, I mainly focus on the Conservative’s perceived strategy on immigration rather than UKIP given the higher traffic between UKIP and the Conservatives as opposed to Labour and the Conservatives.

This paper tests the role of voter perceptions on niche issues in deciding vote choice. If a voter thinks that the Conservative Party is taking too loose of a stance on immigration (an equivalent of an adversarial strategy), will he or she actually vote UKIP? While the party level theories argue that it is both the center right and center

left parties that determine the success of the PRRP, this paper will mainly look at the perceived strategy of the Conservative Party. This can be done in the British case, because as previously mentioned, voters that defect to UKIP are probably former Conservative voters (Evans and Mellon, 2016). Another reason for just measuring the perceived strategy of the Conservative Party was that the Conservatives were the incumbent party- it has been in power since 2010. Not only is it the most visible party, but people have the potential to either punish or reward the party for its performance and its positions. Lastly, I will just look at the Conservative Party's perceived strategy because according to the CHES, the Conservative Party prioritizes immigration more than Labour, which means that it will be easier for voters to detect the immigration strategy of the Conservative Party, which fits with the expectations of other center right parties (Thränhardt, 1995). Therefore, my hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1.A: If respondent who prioritizes immigration perceives that the Conservative Party will reduce immigration, then that respondent will be less likely to vote for UKIP

Hypothesis 1.B: If respondent who prioritizes immigration perceives that the Conservative Party will not reduce immigration, then that respondent will be more likely to vote for UKIP.

2.2 Research Design

Because I am interested in voters' perceptions of parties, I need to be aware of potential sources of bias that could influence respondents. One such source of bias is rationalization due to being influenced by the election results (Blais et al., 2001). Voters could either be very happy or very angry about the election results- either of

these emotions could influence how a voter perceives a party. Therefore, by having the voters' perceptions before the election, yet still during the campaign when the issues are salient, then it helps reduce this source of bias. The major electoral survey in the UK, which encompasses the 2015 election, is the 2014-2017 BES Internet Panel Waves 1-6 from (Fieldhouse et al., 2016). Wave 1 was in March 2014 and continues through Wave 6 in May 2015 following the General Election. The first three waves came before the campaign started, the fourth and fifth waves were during the campaign, and Wave 6 was immediately after the election. There were around 30,000 respondents for each wave, and 16,799 respondents that completed the first six waves. The respondents came from England, Scotland, and Wales, and 52% were female.

When analyzing the survey, the first question of interest gauges vote intention. This question asks respondents if the election were held tomorrow, how would they vote (Fieldhouse et al., 2016). I am specifically interested in the vote choice of those who think that immigration is a priority, because these are the voters that prioritize same dimension as UKIP. During each wave, there is an open-ended question that asks voters what is the most important problem facing the UK. These responses are then manually coded by the BES into different subjects. I select those voters who at any point during the first four waves of the survey respond that immigration is the most important issue facing the UK. I call these voters the "immigration prioritizers." This includes a sample of 3,872 respondents. Given that UKIP is the only party in the UK that prioritizes immigration as its first issue, it is understandable why many of the prioritizers vote for UKIP. Why do some voters vote for UKIP and others for another party? This is especially relevant given UKIP had a vote potential of 22.1%, meaning over one-fifth of BES respondents indicated they intended to vote UKIP.

The categorical dependent variable is vote choice on the sample of those that prioritize immigration. To test my hypotheses, I use multinomial logistic regressions, because I am interested in explaining vote choice when there are more than two op-

tions. From this sample, I construct a three-level dependent variable: those who voted for UKIP (26%), those who voted for the Conservative Party (43%), and those who voted for Other (30%). Other here is defined as Labour, Liberal Democrat, Scottish National Party, and Plaid Cymru. These parties can be grouped into one category, because they all have an immigration position to the left of both the Conservative Party and UKIP. To ensure the robustness of my sample, I also run the analysis on the entire sample of voters with complete cases (11,360 respondents).

One question asked during the fourth wave (in March of 2015) was used to gauge the respondent's perception of the Conservative Party's strategy on immigration. It was worded, "Do you think the Conservative Party would try-if elected- to reduce the level of immigration in Britain?" (Fieldhouse et al., 2016). Response options were "yes," "no," or "don't know." This question determines how one perceives the positioning of the Conservative Party on immigration. While it is clear from the assumptions of Meguid (2008) and other work what the predicted vote choice would be for someone who thinks the Conservative Party would either reduce or not reduce immigration, the response of "don't know" is not as clear. On one hand, it could mean that a respondent does not care about immigration, and therefore does not pay any attention to the Conservative Party's stance on immigration. On the other hand, it could also mean that even if a respondent does care about immigration, he or she cannot decipher where the Conservative Party places itself on immigration. Of this sample, there were very few that responded "don't know" (only 4.67% responded "don't know" while 62.04% responded that the party would not reduce immigration and 33.29% responded that the Conservative Party would reduce immigration).

It is also important to consider UKIP's second priority of EU integration and leaving the EU. As Ford, Goodwin and Cutts (2012) found, attitudes towards EU integration were a predictor of one's probability of voting UKIP in EP Elections. This result also applies to other European cases (Hobolt, 2016; Werts, Scheepers

and Lubbers, 2012). A question in the survey asks respondents to place themselves on an EU integration scale from zero, which means “Unite fully with the European Union” to ten, which is “Protect our independence” (Fieldhouse et al., 2016). I use the fourth wave answer to this question to be consistent with the wave of the main independent variables. It is hypothesized that the more one wants to protect the independence of the UK (10), the more likely the respondent will be to vote UKIP over the other parties. The mean response is 8.53, suggesting this sample is already highly Eurosceptic.

Also, it is important to find another indicator of attitudes toward immigration that are not linked to the perception of a party’s performance on immigration- anti-immigration attitudes are a large predictor of PRRP support (see Ivarsflaten (2008), Lubbers, Gijssberts and Scheepers (2002), and Rydgren (2008)). It could be that a person is very anti-immigration, and therefore it does not matter where the Conservative Party places itself on immigration- it is not far enough to the right. I use a question in the BES that asks respondents whether they think immigration undermines or enriches cultural life; I used responses from Wave 4 of the survey for consistency. The question has a scale that ranges from “1-completely enriches cultural life” to “7-completely undermines cultural life” (Fieldhouse et al., 2016). It may just be that people who do not like immigration are more predisposed to vote UKIP rather than Conservative, regardless of how they think the Conservative party is dealing with immigration. From this sample, the mean is 5.74. It is expected that the more someone is against immigration (a 7 on the scale out of 7), the more likely he or she is to vote UKIP over the other parties. I also include an interaction term between one’s perceived position of the Conservative Party and one’s attitude towards immigration. These two measures are not independent- one’s attitude on immigration will inform whether the respondent thinks the Conservative Party will reduce immigration or not.

I also measured demographic factors, such sex and age. Based on the literature, men as well as older people are more likely to vote for far right parties (Ford and Goodwin, 2010; Spierings and Zaslove, 2015). Gender is expressed as a dummy variable with 52.84% of the sample identifying as male. Age is a numerical variable ranging from 17 to 93 with mean of 57 years old.² Another indicator that has been shown to influence PRRP voting is education (see Hobolt (2016) and Werts, Scheepers and Lubbers (2012)). I also identify those who consider themselves as part of the working class, given the increased likelihood of working class people vote for PRRPs (see Evans (2005), Golder (2003), Jackman and Volpert (1996)). To distinguish between those who attended university and those who did not, I created a binary variable. It is expected that respondents who are male, older, part of the working class, and without a university degree will be more likely to vote for UKIP.

Next, I included a measure of party identification. While a voter may think that the Conservative Party may not reduce immigration, this person may never defect from the Conservative Party due to the fact that he or she identifies with the party. It can also influence one's perception of the party- based on whether one identifies with the Conservative Party could bias his or her own opinion of the party's position on immigration. I include two Party ID variables measured during the fourth wave of the survey: one on whether the respondent identifies with the Conservative Party, and another on whether the respondent identifies with the Labour Party. In the immigration prioritizers sample, 46.6% identify with the Conservative Party and 25% identify as Labour.

Lastly, I controlled for the effects of the British electoral system that may dissuade voters from voting UKIP due to fear of a wasted vote. In the survey, there is a question that asks respondents why they voted the way they did. One possible response is

²Age was asked during the first wave of the survey, so if sometime was 17 during the first wave, they could have been 18 by the sixth wave, which was the wave of the election. Age is then transformed by dividing the value by 100.

that they preferred another party, but that party had no chance of winning in their constituency. People who responded this way are identified as people that voted strategically. In this sample, 13.8% respond having voted strategically.

2.3 Results

I regressed vote choice on the perceived strategy of the Conservative Party on immigration for the immigration prioritizers sample. The results are presented in the first two columns of Table 2.1. To interpret the results, I calculated predicted probabilities through bootstrapping. I calculated a predicted probability for each individual in the sample with 95% confidence intervals. This ensures that there are plausible combinations of independent variables. The results from Table 2.1 are shown in Table 2.2. My hypothesis is confirmed that those that perceive the Conservative Party will reduce immigration are less likely to vote for UKIP than those that perceive the Conservative Party will not reduce immigration. There is a difference of 16.2%, and it is statistically significant at the 95% level. This suggests that voters that prioritize immigration consider the placement of the Conservative Party on immigration while deciding whether to vote for UKIP. These results are shown graphically for both the immigration prioritizers in Figure 2.1.

The results are flipped for voting for the Conservative Party. If a voter perceives that the Conservative Party will reduce immigration, then he or she is 41.3% more likely to vote for the Conservative Party than if the respondent perceives that the party will not reduce immigration. For the Other category, the results in Table 2.2 suggest that if a respondent perceives that the Conservative Party will not reduce immigration, then they are more likely to vote for Other. As expected, I cannot infer anything from those that respond “Don’t Know”- they are not statistically different from those that perceive “Reduce” or those that perceive “Not Reduce.”

When understanding the effect of other variables of interest, one’s EU attitude

Table 2.1: Perceived Strategy and Vote Choice on Immigration Prioritizers

	Conservative	Other
Intercept	3.44*** (0.44)	4.66*** (0.42)
Conservative-Reduce	1.17* (0.53)	0.55 (0.57)
Conservative- Don't Know	3.30* (1.48)	1.46 (1.49)
EU Attitude	-0.27*** (0.03)	-0.37*** (0.03)
Attitude towards Immigration	-0.28*** (0.05)	-0.26*** (0.04)
Identify as Conservative	2.15*** (0.11)	-0.65*** (0.14)
Identify as Labour	0.28 (0.16)	1.73*** (0.12)
Age	-0.34 (0.39)	-0.26 (0.40)
Male Respondent	-0.52*** (0.10)	-0.42*** (0.10)
University Degree	-0.05 (0.11)	0.08 (0.12)
Strategic Vote	0.57** (0.19)	0.97*** (0.18)
Working Class	-0.30** (0.10)	0.06 (0.11)
Conservative-Reduce*Immigration Att.	0.01 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.09)
Conservative-Don't Know*Immigration Att.	-0.31 (0.23)	-0.03 (0.23)
AIC	5606.26	5606.26
BIC	5781.58	5781.58
Log Likelihood	-2775.13	-2775.13
Deviance	5550.26	5550.26
Num. obs.	3872	3872

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

and attitude with immigration are negatively correlated with voting for Conservative and Other relative to UKIP. Both the party identification variables are in the expected directions and are meaningfully related to vote choice. People that indicated they voted strategically are more likely to have voted for Labour or the Conservative

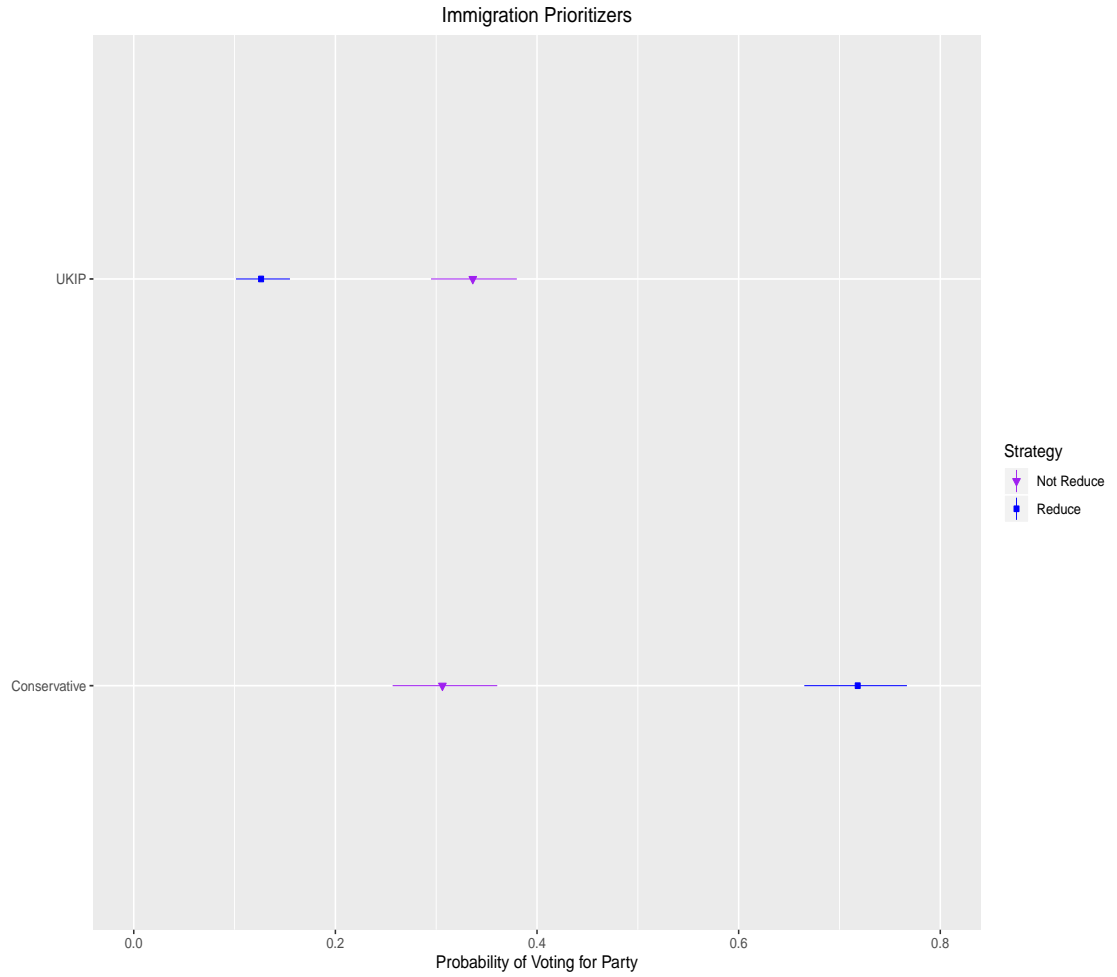
Table 2.2: Immigration Prioritizers: Predicted Probabilities from Table 2.1

Party	Strategy	Lower	Fit	Upper
UKIP	Not Reduce	0.287	0.337	0.391
	Don't Know	0.063	0.121	0.201
	Reduce	0.096	0.127	0.162
Conservative	Not Reduce	0.271	0.306	0.342
	Don't Know	0.455	0.514	0.566
	Reduce	0.676	0.719	0.759
Other	Not Reduce	0.318	0.357	0.394
	Don't Know	0.312	0.365	0.415
	Reduce	0.127	0.154	0.185

Party. Lastly, UKIP voters are more working class relative to Conservative voters, but they are not more working class relative to Other. These results confirm previous literature on PRRP voting, while also adding the importance of including one's perceived position of the mainstream party on immigration.

Testing the robustness of the result that a respondent's perceived position on immigration has on vote choice, I ran a simulation using bootstrapping over the possible ranges of one's attitudes towards immigration while holding other variables at their mean or modal values for the immigration prioritizers sample. The results are presented graphically in Figure 2.2. In this graph, the x-axis shows the possible values on the immigration score, a higher value represents someone who is more anti-immigration. The y-axis shows the predicted probabilities, and the lines are calculated with 95% confidence bars. The first graph shows the different predicted probabilities of those that perceive "Reduce" by party, the second graph shows those that perceive "Not Reduce" by party, and the last graph shows the difference between the predicted probabilities of the "Reduce" and "Not Reduce" strategies for voting UKIP. The third graph is especially relevant in highlighting the importance of one's perceived strategy of the Conservative Party and choosing to vote for UKIP. Holding one's attitude on immigration and European integration constant (as well as all other predictors), once a respondent is a three on the immigration scale, he is more likely

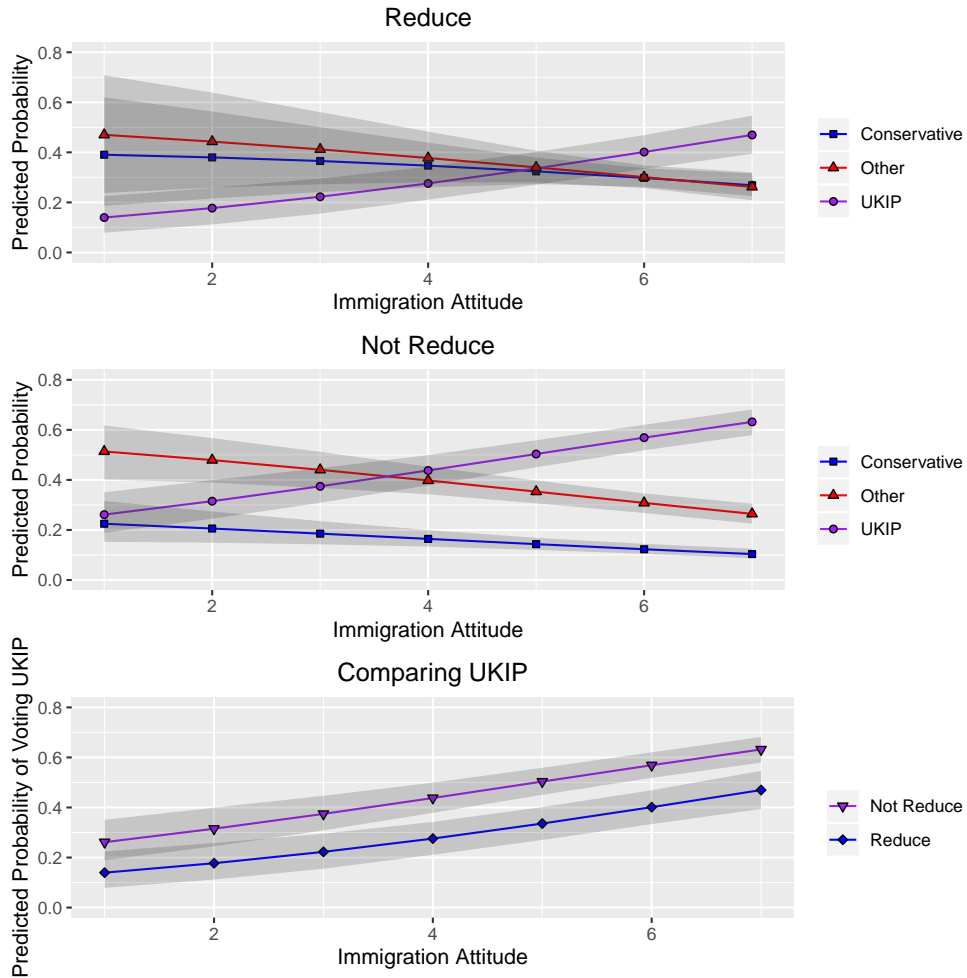
Figure 2.1: Predicted Probabilities of Perceived Strategy of the Conservative Party from Table 2.1



to vote for UKIP if he perceives the Conservative Party will not reduce immigration. It is important to note that in the immigration prioritizers sample, only 4% identify as a three or below on the immigration scale, and only 0.2% of the sample have an attitude of 3 or below and ultimately vote for UKIP. This result shows that explaining vote choice simply through attitudes towards immigration and European integration is not enough to explain PRRP support. I present the results for the entire sample with the same model as in Table 2.1 in the Appendix. The difference between those that perceive “Reduce” and those who perceive “Not Reduce” is in the same direction for both UKIP and Conservative. I also tested the role of a voter’s perceived strategy

on Labour using the same controls as in the previous models- the results are included in the Appendix.

Figure 2.2: Simulation of Perceived Strategy of the Conservative Party by Different Levels of Immigration Attitudes



2.4 Discussion

When understanding the larger applicability of these results to future cases, people may interpret the findings as mainstream parties need to move their immigration positions to the right to sway voters from voting for a PRRP. This is what the accommodative and adopt strategies suggest- move to the right to lessen the appeal of a PRRP. These results do not give a carte blanche for parties to take extreme positions

on immigration. My results show a lack of communication between the Conservative Party and its voters. Going back to the CHES, experts place the Conservative Party at an 8 out of 10 where 10 represents being strongly in favor of a tough immigration policy. The Conservative Party wants to reduce immigration, especially during the 2015 election- there is no question. Within the first page of their 2015 manifesto, the party writes, “Controlled immigration that benefits Britain,” which they repeat throughout the manifesto (Conservatives.com, 2015). It summarizes its plan on immigration as: “Our plan to control immigration will put you, your family and the British people first. We will reduce the number of people coming to our country with tough new welfare conditions and robust enforcement” (Conservatives.com, 2015). There is no doubt that the Conservative Party wants to reduce immigration.

These results are indicative of a problem of representation. Either the Conservative Party is not effectively communicating with voters that they will try to reduce immigration, or voters are not listening to or believing in what the party says. It could, and most likely, be a combination of both problems. Parties need to understand voters’ perceptions in conjunction with the party’s actual platform. These voters are an important group for the Conservative Party, so they need to be convinced that the Conservative Party would try to reduce immigration if elected. Instead of focusing on how to change its position on immigration, the Conservative Party needs to focus on how to effectively communicate it to voters. Almost every major European mainstream party is arguing for some form of immigration reform that reduces immigration. They are already moving their position to the right, but it is not working. Rather than become even more extreme, parties should ensure that voters are correctly interpreting and believing their messages. From the PRRP angle, it does further highlight the idea that niche parties gain electorally when they differentiate themselves from their mainstream competitors.

2.5 Conclusion

A center right party's strategy on immigration is a deciding factor of what party a potential UKIP voter will vote for, especially for those that prioritize immigration. I bring together both the supply side and demand side explanations for the rise of PRRPs at the voter level, which is an understudied part of the literature. Using spatial theories, like those from Meguid (2008) and Bale (2003), voters choose between a niche party or a mainstream party based on where the mainstream party places itself relative to the niche party.

I use the case of the 2015 UK General election where UKIP became the third largest party in the UK according to vote share. The costs of voting UKIP are high in a two-party system, and immigration was such a salient topic during this election. I use the 2014-2017 BES Data from Fieldhouse et al. (2016) to operationalize a voter's perceived strategy and vote choice in the election. I select a specific group of voters- those who indicate at some point during the survey prior to the election that immigration is the most important issue facing the UK. This is an interesting and relevant group of voters, because they are homogeneous on other traditional predictors of PRRP support, such as anti-immigration attitudes and European integration attitudes. The existing literature cannot explain why these immigration voters chose another party over UKIP (or vice versa). I use logistic regressions to show that voters who think the Conservative Party will reduce immigration will vote for the Conservative Party over UKIP. This is true even when regressing on the potential combinations of attitudes towards immigration and European integration.

I use both party level and individual level theories to understand vote choice between a mainstream and niche party. Those who think that the Conservative Party is not tough enough on immigration are the ones most likely to vote for the party that prioritizes immigration over everything else. This has interesting implications for mainstream parties beyond the UK as previously discussed. As the salience of

immigration and vote share of PRRPs continue to rise, parties have a responsibility to understand the consequences of their positions on immigration. This paper highlights the rationality of PRRP voters- they are unsatisfied with the policy positions of the center right party on immigration, so they move to the party further to the right on immigration. Moving forward, it would be interesting to look at how people form their perceived placement of parties on immigration.

CHAPTER III

The Assumptions we Make: Comparing Facebook versus Twitter Usage for Intraparty Politics

The study of European party politics has largely focused on how to measure party positioning on various dimensions. Most work assumes that European parties are unitary actors, meaning that there are high levels of party cohesion both on and off the parliamentary floor. Data sources focused with the party as the unit of analysis are party manifestos, expert surveys, and aggregating perceived positions from voter surveys. These sources have drawbacks in that they require a lot of human effort either in coding manifesto documents or constructing and fielding surveys. In addition, these data are fairly limited in how often they are released. For instance, manifestos only come out at election times. Recent work has argued the need to “open the black box” to look at individual Members of Parliament (MPs) as actors that are constrained by the party but not bound by the party (Ceron, 2017; Kam, 2009). By breaking the parties as unitary actors assumption, social scientists have the burden of finding alternate data sources that lead to valid testing and conclusions both across and within cases. This paper serves as a guide for using data focused on the intraparty level, specifically understanding the trade-offs of using social media data relative to other sources.

When analyzing other data sources that focus on the MP as the unit of analysis,

existing work uses roll call votes, debates, parliamentary questions, surveys of MPs, media sources, and social media data. The first three of these sources focus on behavior on the legislative floor, which is important for understanding issues related to party discipline. Party discipline, which is the amount that a party votes together on the parliamentary floor, is only one form of party cohesion, which is the amount that members within a party resemble each other (Kam, 2009). Because there are more constraints on the legislative floor than in other environments, these measures often overestimate party cohesion, suggesting that parties are more homogeneous than they actually are (Ceron, 2017). Also, different cases have different institutional rules regarding who can participate, how often votes are called, and other rules or norms that help influence levels of party discipline. Because of this, it makes comparing data sources from different cases problematic due to many confounding factors. Lastly, voters do not pay attention to events on the legislative floor, meaning that these sources do not provide a way to measure voter-MP interactions.

The second set of data sources mentioned, including surveys, media sources, and social media data, focus on behavior outside of parliament, which includes voter-MP interactions. Surveys provide a direct way to measure MP behavior, but they have low response rates, cannot be retroactive, and have problems with response bias (Barberá et al., 2015; Schumacher and Giger, 2018). Surveys of MPs, similar to surveys of voters, tend to only occur at election times, providing a segmented view of MP behavior as MPs will act differently during elections relative to throughout the entire legislative cycle. Traditional media sources can be difficult to work with due to the number of news sources as well as ensuring there is an ideological balance of news sources. This is particularly problematic if one wants to go back in time, especially prior to the mass digitization of news. Similar to problems with measures focused on the legislative floor, the probability of higher ranking MPs having more media time is greater than for MPs that tend to break from the party line (Budge, 1994). The

last, and the most recent contribution to the sources of measuring individual MP behavior, is social media data.

Social media data differ from other sources used to measure party or MP positioning in three main ways. One, social media data are accessible over time directly from the source with thousands, if not millions, of observations. Unlike manifestos, where there is only one observation per party per legislative cycle that can be nearly impossible to access historically if it is not part of the CMP dataset, or expert surveys, where one cannot go back in time and ask more questions or include more parties if the existing survey does not include it, social media data are accessible over time as long as the account is still active directly through either Facebook or Twitter with their API access. In addition, it is normal for MPs to post on a daily basis, providing a large-n dataset with many more observations per MP on average than existing sources. Two, social media data have a lot more noise associated with them than other data sources due to the vast number of observations and its casual nature. With manifestos or roll call votes, they serve a singular purpose- manifestos outline the projected policy goals of the party whereas roll call votes serve as a signal of support or opposition to a purposed policy. Social media data have posts on these topics, but they also have posts on an MP's favorite lunch spot in their constituency or their reaction to their favorite football team winning last night's game (for example). When analyzing social media data, steps must be taken to ensure that the data are clean by minimizing the amount of noise. Third, social media data are different from other data sources in that they are not one homogeneous category. Social media usually refers to Facebook and Twitter, which have been largely treated as interchangeable. I argue that this is not the case- choice in whether an MP uses Facebook or Twitter is a strategic one that should influence how and when we use each source. The purpose of this paper is to provide guidelines to ensure that social scientists use social media data in a way that improves research on intraparty politics.

Facebook and Twitter data are distinct from each other, because of their differing audiences and content. Choice of social media platform for intraparty research should be decided based upon the geographic context, the demographic characteristics, and the content of interest. First, pointing out geography, MP social media trends vary based upon population trends. In places where Facebook is used much more frequently than Twitter, such as Germany, then Facebook will be most commonly used by MPs. Second, it depends on which MPs one wants to capture- Twitter is more likely to have younger and female MPs. Lastly, it depends on the content of interest- one can either focus on the text of the post itself or the features of the post (such as the number of likes, comments, hashtags, etc.). If one wants to capture more substantive, ideological content, then Facebook provides less noise and more ideological centric content (it is used for more storytelling as opposed to reactions towards hard news). If one is interested in measures other than the text itself, Twitter provides generally higher usage of features. When choosing which social media platform to use, all three factors must be considered- which geographic context, which demographic characteristics, and what content one wants to capture. Only when analyzing all three will the best suited social media platform be visible, reducing potential threats to inference.

I contribute to the literature by having the first research on how social media data should be used responsibly for research on party politics across multiple platforms, countries, and time. I go beyond the “data availability” argument, which is the most commonly used explanation for choosing one source over the other. This argument is no longer valid as both Facebook and Twitter data are easily accessible through each platform’s API for public accounts or pages. I analyze how demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and time in office, impact whether an MP has a social media account as well as how he or she might use that account. I take a step back from the existing literature to delve into what is the sample bias introduced by just using Facebook, just Twitter, or both. Understanding how, why, and when MPs use

social media is necessary for social scientists to continue using social media data as a source of MP positioning. We should care about these differences, because “inferences from social media data run the risk of error if there are non-ignorable confounding relationships between the probability of self-selection into samples and the outcome variables of interest” (Mellon and Prosser, 2017, 1).

First, I start by summarizing the literature on intraparty politics using social media data, paying special attention to how existing research explains their respective choice in social media platform. I then explain why existing research largely uses the “data availability” argument that is no longer valid. I then explain my argument that MPs use Facebook and Twitter differently- it is a strategic choice that needs to be considered when studying intraparty politics using social media data. Specifically, this choice is due to geographic, demographic, and content differences. I show these differences based off of MP usage in France, Germany, and the UK from 2017-2019, and I find that there are noticeable differences between how MPs use Facebook and Twitter. I show the substantive implications of differences in social media platforms by replicating a paper that uses Twitter data by using Facebook. I conclude with how we should use social media data in the future.

3.1 Literature

I will briefly go through the use of roll call votes, parliamentary debates and questions, and surveys to understand why social media data are such a relevant and necessary tool for studying intraparty politics (though one that needs to be used with careful thought). First, roll call votes are the most used source for studying intraparty politics. Roll call votes are easy to measure- either a politician votes for, against, or abstains- but it is hard to understand the underlying motivation of the vote. Did the MP vote against the party line because he or she is against the policy, or because he or she is voting against the party (Kirkland and Slapin, 2018)? In the first case, the

MP is breaking the party line to take a stand against the party whereas the other is a case of representation. This becomes even blurrier when the party is in opposition as a vote against the government could be for many different reasons. Beyond studying the motivations, roll call votes are problematic when comparing multiple cases due to institutional differences that vary how often and when they are called, which party (or parties) is (or are) in government, and the pre-existing levels of party discipline. Roll call votes may provide a better estimate of government support as opposed to actual MP positions, and they underestimate intraparty conflict (Ceron, 2017; Sältzer, 2020; Spirling and McLean, 2007).

Next, parliamentary debates and questions provide more nuance than roll call votes as they can be on any topic and use words as opposed to votes, but they are still restricted to the legislative floor where certain MPs are more likely to participate than others based on institutional factors (Proksch and Slapin, 2015). This makes it hard to compare across cases and times due to the differences in constraints. Lastly, candidate or MP surveys provide a less constrained measure of MP behavior, but they have low response rates, cannot be retroactive, and have problems with response bias (Barberá et al., 2015; Schumacher and Giger, 2018).

With the constraints of the existing data sources used to study intraparty politics, it makes sense why social media are such an enticing alternative. They are accessible over time (for around 10 plus years) and have relatively no differences across countries (besides language). As such, there is little debate as to whether social media data can be useful for studying the behavior and attitudes of politicians- “As long as users publish information on their tastes and opinions, several scholars suggest that the analysis of social media allows to scale- on an ideological axis- the position of citizens and politicians” (Ceron, 2017, 8). Looking at the trajectory of social media data in party politics, it starts in the US context with Facebook and then moved onto Twitter. When understanding explanations of why researchers chose one platform

over the other, there is no clear reasoning. For instance, Barberá et al. (2015), one of the first to use Twitter data, argue that Twitter has ordinary citizens and political actors, has similar language and characteristics of text, is embedded in a common social network, has a large number of users, is not static, and it is possible to link Twitter with other sources of information. When understanding these explanations, they can apply for Facebook as well- it is easier to link Facebook data with other data, because there is more information about the individual as Bond and Messing (2015) argued. Overall, the findings of the early US literature showed that social media data could be used to measure intraparty politics, but it did not differentiate between different platforms. Following the early works in 2015, most research turned to Twitter as it became the more socially popular platform.

When analyzing the different research designs in the European literature, they can be grouped into the following categories: those that use a single platform and case, those that use multiple platforms but just one case, and those that look at multiple cases but a single platform. For the first group of those that use a single group, the most common reasoning behind which platform they use is either non-existent or the “data availability” argument. One of the first works to look at social media data and MPs in Europe was from Jackson and Lilleker (2011). They argue:

“...MPs will seek to attain a personal vote through being good constituency servants; however, in order to demonstrate the activities they carry out as a part of this role they must have an impression management strategy to publicise their achievements. We suggest Twitter can be one tool that can meet both objectives simultaneously” (Jackson and Lilleker, 2011, 89).

Though an important start to understanding how social media can be used to study intraparty politics, they do not explain why they might use Twitter over Facebook beyond saying what was available. This is especially important given that at the time Facebook was the more dominant social network.

More recent work looking at a specific case and a single platform expands what they do with the data, but the reasoning in choice of platform remains the same. For instance, Sältzer (2020) looks at intraparty conflict in Germany using Twitter data- this automatically restricts his sample to 498 out of the 709 (70%) members of the Bundestag (whereas in my dataset of MPs from 2017-2019, 88% have a Facebook account). Similar to explanations found before, Ennser-Jedenastik et al. (2021) argue they use Facebook, because it offers users “the possibility to collect immediate user feedback and to respond accordingly” (4). While this is true, it is not a reason to choose Facebook over Twitter or vice versa. They do add that they use Facebook, because it was the most used social media application in Austria in 2017, which goes beyond many explanations in the literature (Ennser-Jedenastik et al., 2021).

There is recognition that social media usage varies by country. For instance, van Vliet, Törnberg and Uitermark (2020) compile Twitter data from MPs from over 27 countries- they find that there are both cross-party and cross-national differences on how MPs use Twitter. They do not mention Facebook, and how there are differences within country between Facebook and Twitter usage. The few works that use multiple data sources to understand intraparty politics do so with multiple questions (and therefore using a different source for each question) or do so with sources other than social media data (Ceron, 2017; Peeters, Van Aelst and Praet, 2019). Understanding work outside of intraparty politics to see how others justify their choice of one platform over another, a clear example of why they chose Twitter over Facebook is from Silva and Proksch (2021). Here, they use the exogenous shock of Twitter removing bots to understand who benefits the most from bots on Twitter. It follows that Twitter is the better social media platform for this question because: bots are much more of a problem on Twitter, they were simply looking at the change of followers (instead of the content of the posts), and they were looking at a specific event (Silva and Proksch, 2021).

3.2 Argument

While there is interesting and exciting work on intraparty politics that breaks the parties as unitary actors assumption using social media, scholars have largely not justified their choice in data source. This creates the impression that Facebook and Twitter data are interchangeable, and one should use whichever source they can access. While this argument might have been valid in the early 2000s, it is no longer relevant today. APIs make it possible to scrape data from publicly available accounts, meaning that a choice between Facebook or Twitter data does not have to be for availability reasons. This is not a debate over whether social media data can be useful for studying intraparty politics. Social media are useful and will continue to be useful to study questions related to intraparty politics and more. Social media data have a lot of “noise” that needs to be cleaned before analysis, but that is true with many large-n data sources (Peeters, Van Aelst and Praet, 2019). As described before, all existing data sources have their flaws- it is about finding the source that has the fewest flaws for the question, method, and context of interest.

To understand why we need to think strategically when choosing a social media platform, it is important to understand the specifics of each platform. Twitter is quick, short, and easy where users are limited to 280 characters. Facebook is older, provides more options and complexity, but this allows users to link to more external content, post more photos, and more. On Twitter, it is more common to use features such as hashtags and tagging people, but that has since caught on with Facebook as well. Turning to how organizations and elites use social media, one study found that in the US, 82% of news organizations’ social media postings were on Twitter as compared to only 18% on Facebook (Cox, Fiva and Smith, 2016). Whereas Twitter had more hard news, “Facebook grants users greater opportunities to market their information visually, using photos, videos and even links with icons and pictures attached to them, making Facebook an ideal tool for stories of a softer, less timely

nature” (Cox, Fiva and Smith, 2016, 232). If we think about how this would apply to the social media accounts of MPs, Twitter is the place for breaking news where they want to provide a reaction. Alternatively, Facebook provides an arena to discuss ideological, policy-oriented activity that takes place over longer periods of time.

Beyond the limitations that the platforms provide, why are Facebook and Twitter data different? One such answer is it could be due to the different audiences on each platform. Within the work on the audiences of social media, it is commonly known that social media users are not generalizable to the entire population. For instance, like in other contexts, the British social media population is younger, more elite, and more likely to vote Labour (Mellon and Prosser, 2017). When understanding differences between platforms, Twitter users are younger than Facebook users, Facebook has slightly better gender balance as compared to Twitter having more male users, and Twitter is less educationally representative than Facebook (Mellon and Prosser, 2017). Based on previous findings, if we take the argument that Facebook is the place for “social storytelling” whereas Twitter is the place for quick dissemination of news, we can infer that the audiences of both platforms see them in a similar light. Twitter users want short to the point bites of information whereas Facebook users want a story, including pictures and or videos. These are the generalizable norms on social media platforms that people have become accustomed to and have continued to use and perpetuate, regardless of whether they are an ordinary person or an MP.

To put this in perspective, I will highlight an example of how these differences appear for current day MPs. Boris Johnson, current leader of the UK Conservative Party and Prime Minister, is an active user of both Twitter and Facebook (though he uses each platform slightly differently). For instance, on March 20, 2018, when he was the Foreign Secretary, Johnson Tweeted once and posted two Facebook posts. On Twitter, Johnson wrote:

“Utter tragedy today with loss of last male northern white [rhino]. We cannot just sit back & watch more species disappear. UK leading efforts to #endwildlifecrime & will bring world leaders together for talks this autumn. #RIPSudan”

This post is reactionary to a world event, short in length, easy to read, and it is hard news. It fits into what I have described as a typical Tweet. On Facebook, Johnson also posted this, but he also made another post:

“Hi folks, here’s my piece from today’s Telegraph on the lies and obfuscation emanating from Putin’s Kremlin. To understand why three people lie stricken in Salisbury, look at Vladimir Putin’s actions inside Russia. Yesterday he was proclaimed the winner of an election that resembled a coronation, complete with a triumphant ceremony outside the walls of the Kremlin. . . This is how Mr Putin behaves at home; we should not expect anything different abroad”

This post is much longer (almost 1,000 words), and it goes into detail regarding Putin’s actions and how the UK should react to them. This is not as reactionary as the Tweet- it shows a thought-out article published on an external site, but he is still reposting it to his personal Facebook page to ensure that there is a large audience to see it.

When choosing a social media platform for studying intraparty politics, one should consider the geographic context, demographic characteristics, and content of interest. First, analyzing geographic context, usage by MPs is going to follow population trends. Around 60% of Germany’s population uses Facebook, 49% of France’s, and 82% of the UK’s in 2021 (Statistica, 2021a). This is compared to Twitter in Germany with only 9% of the population as users, around 24% in France, and over 25% in the

UK in early 2021 (Statistica, 2021*b*). While Twitter seems to dominate the literature in intraparty politics, there are far more people on Facebook than Twitter. Politicians use social media to reach target populations, specifically their voters. If their voters do not use a certain platform, then there is little need or use of that platform. As Twitter is a newer platform, it has caught on in varying degrees across the world whereas Facebook seems to have high user engagement, regardless of country. Based on these population trends, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: The biggest difference of Facebook and Twitter usage by MPs will be in Germany where far more MPs will use Facebook than Twitter

Second, one should consider demographic characteristics of interest of MPs when choosing which social media platform to use. Facebook is an older social media platform, making it the first platform that many MPs adopted. As time progressed, Twitter became more popular, especially in the US context. Because of this, it makes sense that younger MPs will be more likely to use Twitter than Facebook. Pointing out work that has looked at users in general, British Twitter users have a mean age of 34, Facebook an age of 40, but the overall British population has a mean age closer to 48 (Mellon and Prosser, 2017). Similar trends have occurred with MPs- MPs first adopted Facebook, which then led to Twitter. If a younger MP wanted to bypass Facebook all together and just have a Twitter account, that is a viable option.

While social media users for the general population seem to be more male than female, I argue that this will not be the case for MPs (Mellon and Prosser, 2017). Women are minorities in parliaments in addition to having less access to positions of power. Women are generally excluded from male networks (Bjarnegård, 2013). Women also believe that they are more likely to be punished by voters, creating an incentive for them to create stronger links with their constituents (Eggers, Vivyan and

Wagner, 2018; Esarey and Chirillo, 2013). This means that women in higher office have to find alternate networks and means to communicate with their constituents, making social media an ideal option as it is low cost and easily accessible. Given that Twitter is the newer platform, women will be more likely to use Twitter over Facebook as women's political representation has increased over the past ten years, making it more likely for them to use the newer platform. Based on this, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2.A: Younger MPs will be more likely to use social media than older MPs, and younger MPs will use Twitter more frequently than Facebook

Hypothesis 2.B: Female MPs will be more likely to use social media than male MPs, and Female MPs will be more likely to use Twitter more frequently than Facebook

Third, social media usage should vary based on the content of interest. Intraparty politics can use many different measures, such as the text of the post itself, the network of mentions of people or organizations in the text, the use of hashtags, the number of followers, or more. I split these measures into two categories. One, the text of the post. Two, the features of the post, such as the number of likes, tagged accounts, hashtags, etc. While these exist on both platforms, their frequency of use varies across platforms. It is generally easier and more frequent to see these features on Twitter- as they became more ingrained in Twitter's daily use. On Twitter, it is much easier to search by hashtag, which is not something done on Facebook. Going back to the Boris Johnson example, it is easier to write more story like content on Facebook, making it more ideological as opposed to commenting on hard news.

Based on the content of interest, certain methods and questions are better suited for different platforms. On one hand, with Facebook data, one can do more quantitative text analysis, such as text scaling. Text scaling methods assume the text lies on a

single dimension, and scaling techniques were designed to use on election manifestos (meaning longer documents). Tweets are very different than Facebook posts in terms of length, making them hard to use with text scaling methods. The same general logic also applies to sentiment analysis- while sentiment has been found to map onto the general left-right dimension, this has only worked on longer spans of text (such as speeches) (Proksch et al., 2019). If interested more in the features of the content, such as the hashtags or tags, Twitter might be better suited. For this, one could do more network analysis or analyze trends over time. Based on this, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3.A: Twitter will contain a higher frequency of use of features, such as the number of likes and comments

Hypothesis 3.B: Facebook will contain more substantive or ideological driven text

To further highlight why we need to think carefully about which social media platform we use when studying intraparty politics in Europe, I have collected the MPs and their social media data from France, Germany, and the UK from 2017-2019. Along with demographic data, these data will show that when picking a social media platform, we need to choose based on the geographic context, demographic characteristics, and content of interest.

3.3 Data and Methods

To understand how social media usage varies by country, time, and MP, I look at the cases of France, Germany, and the UK. These countries provide interesting institutional variation that may affect MP behavior and the levels of party discipline and cohesion- the electoral system, the number of parties, and the number of seats in parliament. Another reason why these countries provide an interesting comparison is due to timing. All three countries had lower-level parliamentary elections sometime

in 2017. This means that all MPs are on a similar cycle- they have already won their election and are entering the legislative cycle.¹ This ensures that campaigning is over, and the MPs remain relatively stable, minus a few people that float in and out, throughout the period from 2017-2019. Another reason why this comparison is interesting is due to the different languages- most of the studies of MPs on social media is done in English, and those focused on other languages still restrict to a single language (Beltran et al., 2020). Lastly, these countries also have variation on the percentage of the population that use both Twitter and Facebook regularly. The largest variation is between Germany and the UK, especially with their respective Twitter usage by population.

To start, I scraped the parliamentary websites for the names of MPs from France, Germany, and the UK. To ensure that I got all MPs, I used archived versions of the parliamentary websites from 2017, 2018, and 2019 as there were some MPs that stepped down during this period. From these parliamentary websites, I also got their party and constituency. While both the UK and German websites included some social media account data for MPs, I found this information to be out of date or incorrect (either it was the wrong account or said someone did not have an account when they did). Following this, I also collected data on the age of the MP, their gender, and what year they entered office. In total, there are 1,946 MPs that served in the French, German, and UK Parliaments from mid-2017 to 2019- 574 from France, 719 from Germany, and 653 from the UK.

Next, I collected the social media accounts for MPs with the help of a research assistant. For the most part, it is easy to verify whether a certain Facebook or Twitter account is an official account of an MP as they are mostly verified (with a

¹To ensure equal comparison, I restrict the dates to July 2017 to December 2019 for France, September 2017 to December 2019 for Germany, and June 2017 to December 2019 (before the election) in the UK. This leaves a comparison of 875 days for France, 810 days for Germany, and 918 days for the UK. These are the months where Parliament resumed following each country's respective election.

blue check). For those that are not verified, we did our best to ensure that it was an account from an MP. We did not collect accounts if they were private as one can only scrape data from public accounts. While this was uncommon, some MPs used a private Facebook account (as opposed to a public page) or used a Twitter account where the account holder had to permit access to see the Tweets. We also did not collect the account information if it was for a ministerial position, constituency, or a local chapter of a party- we only collected accounts that were associated and ran by the MP or the MP's direct office. Likewise, we did not collect fan accounts or spoof accounts of people trying to impersonate an MP. Statistics for those that have a Facebook and Twitter account are very similar- over 95% of MPs hold either a Facebook or a Twitter account, and 73% hold both types of accounts across the three countries.

Just because an MP has a social media account does not mean that he or she actively uses it. This is where the differences between the usage on the two platforms become more apparent. After scraping and removing social media posts not within the time frame, this leaves over 2 million Tweets and nearly 500,000 Facebook posts (or over 26 million words on Facebook and 51 million words on Twitter). While Facebook has only 25% of the posts of Twitter, it has almost double the word count of Twitter on average per post- the average Tweet is 19 words long (with 75% of the data between 15 and 27 words long) as opposed to 30 words long on Facebook (with 75% of the data between 0 and 56 words long). This shows that on Facebook, unlike Twitter, it is somewhat common for MPs to post without any words- this would be the case of posting a sole photo or a link without any description.

For each MP, I have aggregated their number of posts, words, hashtags, mentions, shares, and number of comments from 2017-2019. These stats will help me understand how MPs use Facebook and Twitter, and how it might differ between the two. First, I will investigate what are the differences between MPs that do and do not have social

media accounts. I will analyze what are the differences between MP usage on Twitter and Facebook. I will conclude with what this means for our analysis of intraparty politics using social media in the future.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Understanding Who Has and Does Not Have a Social Media Account

First, I look at who has a social media account to test both Hypotheses 1 and 2. Then, I continue to test Hypotheses 1 and 2 by analyzing differences in usage between Facebook and Twitter. There is a high percentage of MPs that have social media, but what platform MPs use varies by country and the characteristics of MPs. This is shown descriptively in Table 3.1, which shows the percentage of MPs with a social media account (as well as broken up by social media account) by country. In the Appendix, Table B.1 shows the percentage of MPs with social media accounts by party. From Table 3.1, there is a high percentage of MPs that have at least one social media account- no more than 5% of MPs do not have a social media account. Relative to other sources, this is extremely high levels of compliance. The differences start to emerge when analyzing the differences between specific platforms- for instance, only 67% of German MPs have both types of accounts whereas 82% of French MPs hold both.

Table 3.1: Percentage of Social Media Accounts of MPs by Country

Country	SM Account	Facebook Account	Twitter Account	Both Accounts
France	98.95	85.71	94.95	81.71
Germany	95.41	87.62	74.83	67.04
UK	95.41	79.17	89.59	73.35

Turning to further investigate the relationship between social media accounts and MP characteristics, Table 3.2 is a binomial logistic regression showing the relationship

between MP characteristics and having either a Facebook or Twitter account. Not surprisingly, there is a relationship between having a Twitter and a Facebook account- if an MP has one, they are more likely to have the other. Age is a predictor of whether one has a Facebook or Twitter account. Unlike age, gender does not play a role in having an account. For Twitter, MPs elected via SMD are less likely to have a Twitter account than those elected under PR. This is not the case for Facebook. Lastly, MPs from Germany and the UK are both less likely to have Twitter accounts than MPs from France. Only MPs from the UK are less likely to have a Facebook account relative to France. These results show that there are geographic and demographic differences on who does have a social media account and who does not- though the direction of the relationship does not vary much by platform. There are institutional differences, such as the electoral system and country, that do influence whether MPs have or do not have social media accounts.

3.4.2 Understanding Differences between Usage on Facebook and Twitter

Just because an MP has a social media account, does not mean that they frequently use it- it could be something that they regularly update or something that they only infrequently update. To understand differences by country as to how MPs use both Facebook and Twitter, Figure 3.1 shows the mean levels of various measures of use by platform with 95% confidence intervals by country. What is first important to note is that there are many similarities across both countries and measures as to how MPs use Facebook and Twitter. For instance, there is a similar number of tags (mentioning someone else's account), hashtags, and comments per post across both platforms and all three countries. On average, there is a higher number of shares, posts, and likes per post on Twitter over Facebook- though the degree of this difference varies by country. While France and the UK seem to have a similar number of words per post both on Facebook and Twitter, German MPs use Facebook with much

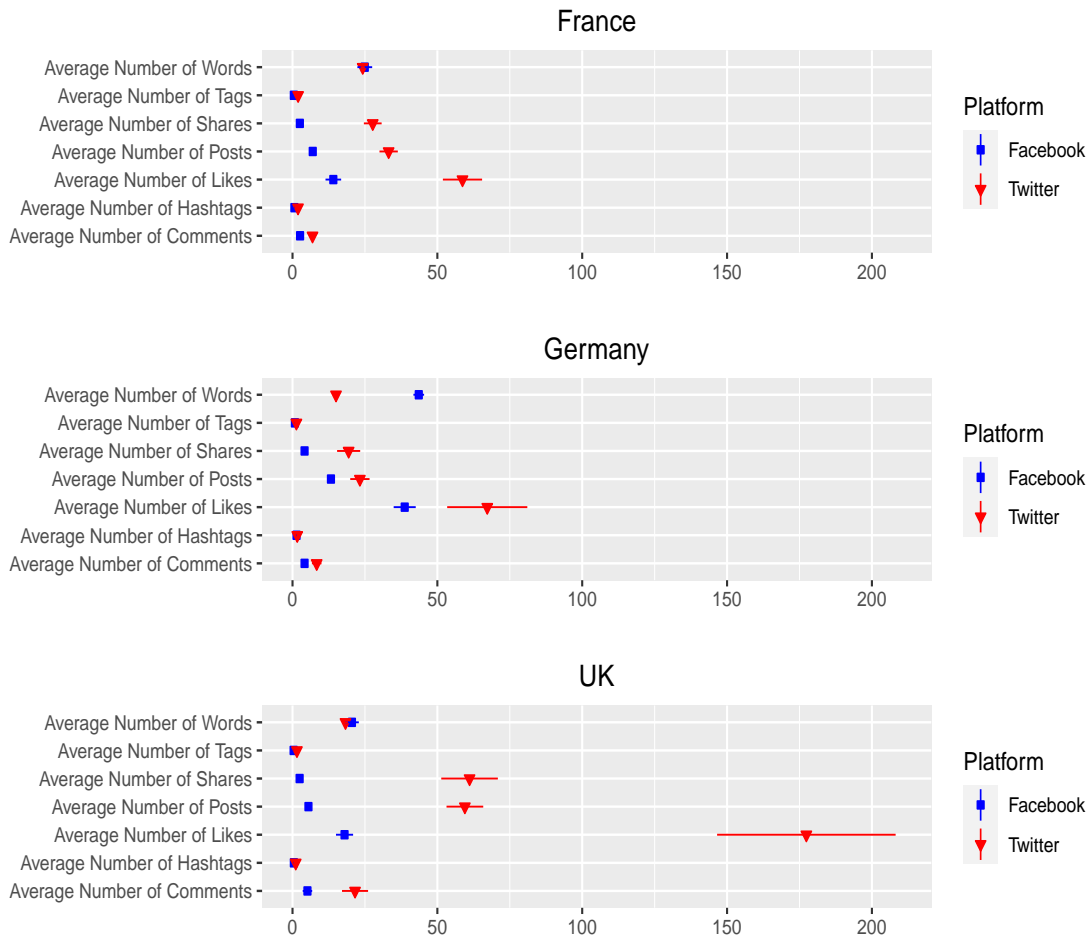
Table 3.2: The Effect of Demographic Characteristics on Having a Social Media Account

	Twitter	Facebook
Intercept	7.47*** (0.57)	3.36*** (0.52)
Facebook Account	0.60*** (0.18)	
Twitter Account		0.61*** (0.18)
Age	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Years in Office	-0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Woman	-0.06 (0.16)	0.13 (0.14)
Elected via SMD	-1.32*** (0.19)	0.07 (0.24)
Germany	-2.68*** (0.24)	0.38 (0.23)
UK	-0.63** (0.24)	-0.35* (0.16)
AIC	1327.41	1618.57
BIC	1372.00	1663.16
Log Likelihood	-655.71	-801.29
Deviance	1311.41	1602.57
Num. obs.	1945	1945

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

longer spans of text. When thinking about which aspects of social media data to use of social media data, it is important to understand these differences. For instance, if one is interested in measuring the number of likes per post, and compares France, Germany, and the UK, the UK is going to be a huge outlier on Twitter as compared to more like the other countries on Facebook.

Figure 3.1: Differences in Social Media Usage by Platform and Country



To understand frequency of use, I calculated the average number of posts an MP creates in a month on Twitter, Facebook, and both, and I regressed it on the same variables as in Table 3.2 to understand how different characteristics are related to using social media platforms. Table 3.3 shows the results- here both country and other demographic trends start to emerge. Starting with age, for each year older an

Table 3.3: The Effect of Demographic Characteristics on Monthly Use of Social Media

	Twitter	Facebook	Twitter and Facebook
Intercept	73.74*** (8.39)	13.46*** (1.60)	19.70 (11.19)
Avg. Facebook Posts per Month	0.86*** (0.12)		
Avg. Tweets per Month		0.03*** (0.00)	
Facebook Account			25.32*** (3.77)
Twitter Account			35.83*** (4.15)
Age	-0.77*** (0.12)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.60*** (0.13)
Years in Office	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.02)
Woman	7.46** (2.78)	-0.89 (0.53)	5.92* (2.86)
Elected via SMD	-9.92* (4.39)	-2.40** (0.84)	-6.74 (4.60)
Germany	-20.32*** (4.17)	5.14*** (0.79)	-0.26 (4.48)
UK	29.54*** (3.31)	-2.20*** (0.64)	29.88*** (3.41)
Num. obs.	1945	1945	1945
RMSE	57.45	10.95	59.09

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

MP is, they are expected to have 0.77 fewer Tweets per month all else equal (this is compared to only 0.09 Facebook posts per month). Second, gender is a large predictor of Twitter usage (though not of Facebook usage). Women are expected to have an additional 7.46 more Tweets per month compared to men.

The differences found at the country level change from those results in Table 3.2. First, both on Twitter and Facebook, MPs elected via SMD are expected to post less frequently than those elected through PR. This relationship does not remain when looking at both Facebook and Twitter- by using both, there are no electoral system differences. Second, MPs from Germany are expected to Tweet much less frequently

than those from France, but post more frequently on Facebook. Alternatively, those from the UK are expected to Tweet more frequently than those from Germany, but post less frequently on Facebook. This goes to say, Germany seems to use Facebook more frequently, and the UK uses Twitter more frequently. These results confirm both Hypotheses 1 and 2- there are both geographic and demographic differences among how MPs use Facebook and Twitter. These differences are important to note, and I will explain why they matter.

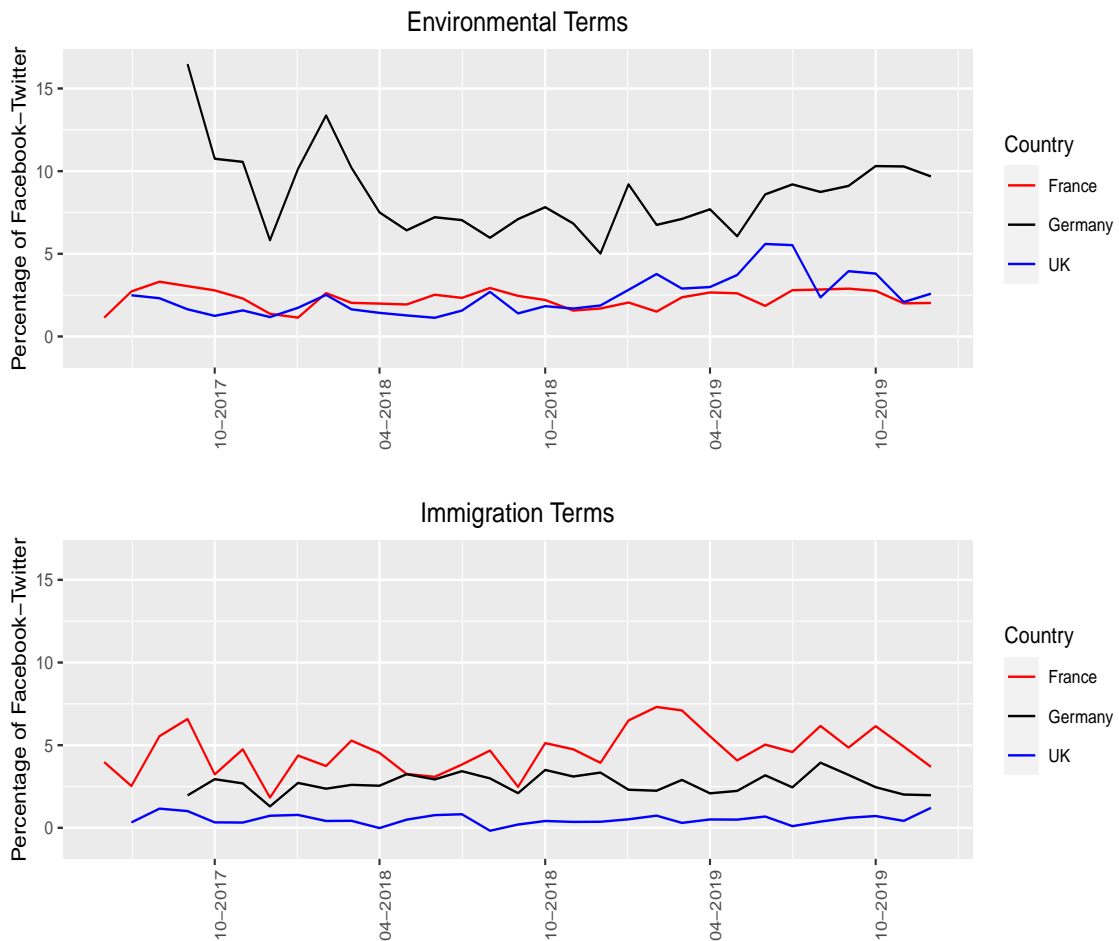
3.4.3 Understanding Content Differences

Now, I turn to the actual content of the posts to understand differences between Facebook and Twitter. I start by holding the topic of interest constant to reduce noise from other topics to understand how much ideologically driven data there are by platform. Based on this, I can start to test Hypothesis 3.B to see whether there is a difference in substantive or ideological content between Facebook and Twitter. I look at references to the niche issues of the environment and immigration as these are highly salient issues that all parties are discussing, regardless of ideological placement. In addition, these topics are relatively easy to identify through keyword identification (as opposed to identifying issues that are related to the economic dimension or a cultural dimension that does not have as defined boundaries as to what is and what is not an economic or cultural issue).

Figure 3.2 shows the percentage difference of posts by month that reference terms related to immigration or the environment on Facebook compared to Twitter during the entire time span. Here, immigration related terms are either a stem of immigration, refugee, or migration in French, English, or German. For environmental related terms, it is a stem of environment, climate, green, and global warming in French, English, or German. If the percentage is positive (which it always is), this indicates that there are more posts dealing with these terms on Facebook than Twitter. There

is more ideological driven content on Facebook than Twitter, meaning that not only due to the length of Facebook posts relative to Tweets, Facebook offers a stronger corpus to scale ideologically driven text. While this shows that Facebook tends to have more ideological content, when measured through terms related to immigration or the environment, it does not show a broad number of topics. To do this, I turn to replicate Sältzer (2020) by using Facebook data.

Figure 3.2: Difference of Percentage of Posts Mentioning Immigration and Environmental Related Terms on Facebook and Twitter



3.4.4 Replicating Twitter Results with Facebook

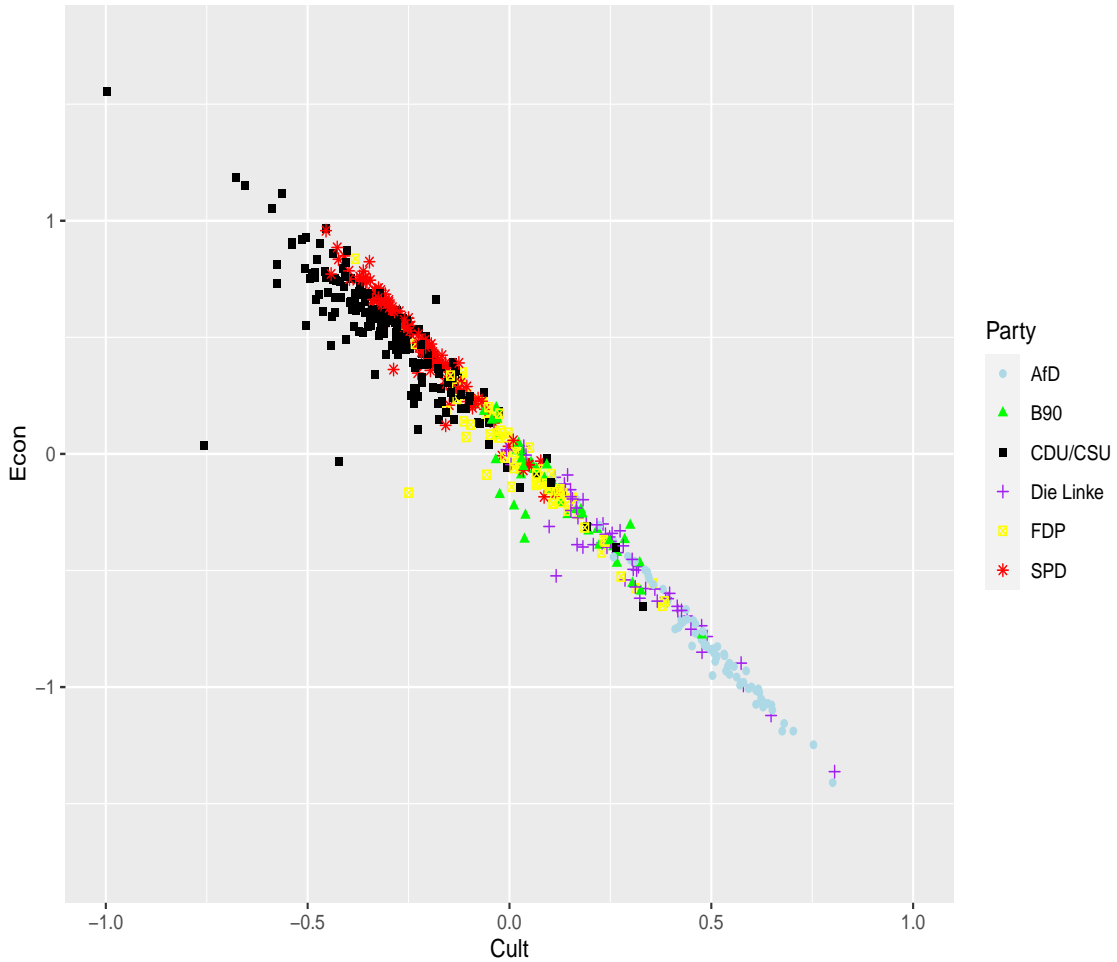
Sältzer (2020) looks at whether social media text can replicate party positions

and ideological dimensions, including factions within parties. He uses the test case of Germany, which has ideological variation both across and within parties (as well as factional variation). He uses Canonical Correspondence Analysis (CCA), which is similar to Principal Component Analysis (PCA), to measure the latent positions of MPs based on their Tweets (Lowe, 2016; Sältzer, 2020). He finds that the Tweets of MPs can be used to map onto the ideological spectrum (both the cultural and general economic dimensions). He also finds that for MPs where he can identify their factional membership, they as well map onto the results of the CCA. To understand the differences between Facebook and Twitter data, I replicate Sältzer’s (2020) study using Facebook data. This highlights how the content is different between Facebook and Twitter, implying that they are not interchangeable platforms.

When using Facebook data instead of Twitter data, I do not recover the same cultural and economic dimensions as the primary dimensions in Sältzer’s (2020) findings. In addition, the relationship between the two dimensions is not the same. Sältzer (2020) finds a positive linear relationship between the two dimensions as opposed to me finding a negative linear relationship between the two dimensions. Instead of a general left-right economic dimension and a cultural dimension, I find evidence of a “populism” dimension and a “government support” dimension. I discuss potential reasons for these differences between the results of Sältzer (2020) using Twitter data and my results using Facebook data. I then discuss why these differences matter. It is important to discuss Sältzer’s (2020) choice of social media platform. As shown earlier, German MPs are more frequent users of Facebook than Twitter. More MPs from the CDU/CSU do not have a Twitter account (as opposed to having one). I show that using Twitter for the case of Germany maps well onto the extremes of the ideological spectrum- the smaller niche parties are covered- but it misses a lot at the center.

First, I started with understanding which MPs Sältzer (2020) included in his study.

Figure 3.3: Ideological Placement of MPs with Facebook Data (Sältzer (2020) Figure Replication)



By using Twitter data, he has a total of 489 out of 719 MPs that serve between 2017 and 2019. When breaking it down by party, he includes 127 of 248 CDU/CSU MPs and 100 of 157 SPD MPs with high coverage of MPs from B90, Die Linke, and FDP. In comparison, by using Facebook data, I cover 630 of 719 MPs with 210 of 248 CDU/CSU MPs and 143 of 157 SPD MPs. Even beyond the coverage of the data, the average word count of an MP's posts on Facebook in Germany is nearly 20,000 words as opposed to under 14,000 words for the Tweets of German MPs. Given the differences in sample structure, not only because of the differences of MPs, but also the differences of words available per MP, it is important to see how this impacts the

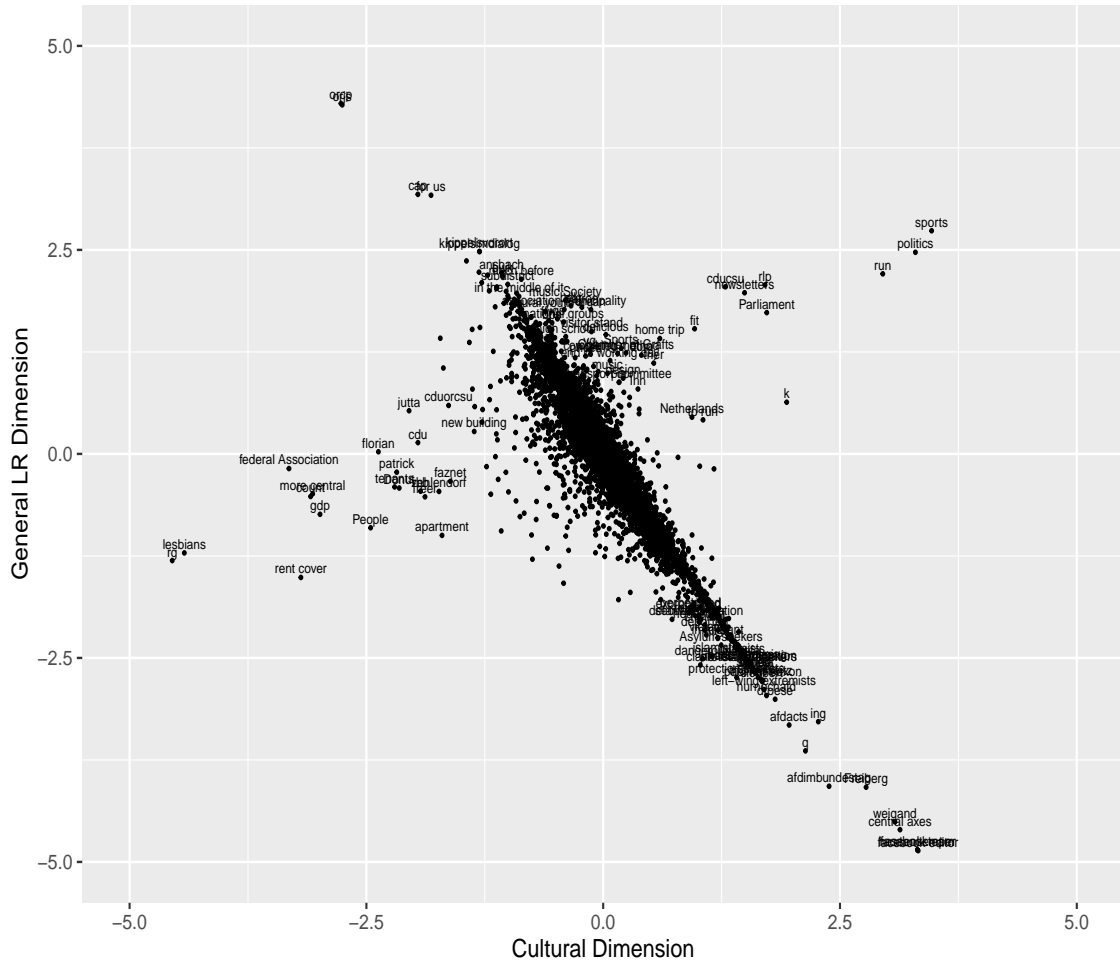
results of the CCA.

I used the same text cleaning techniques as Sältzer (2020)- removing URLs, lowercased text, removed HTML code (emojis), stopwords, names of politicians, punctuation, numbers, and unique words used in less than 100 accounts. This left 8,939 unique words to estimate positioning from using CCA from the R package from de Leeuw and Mair (2009). Sältzer (2020) finds that the first dimension is related to migration while the second is the general left right dimension. To show these results graphically, I calculate the first dimension by adding the first three dimensions together, and I calculate the second dimension by subtracting the second dimension from the first and third dimension. Sältzer (2020) does this, because “Dimensions one and three can only be interpreted in combination with the underlying left-right dimension. They have to be separated” (6). I will discuss the applicability of these dimensions for fitting Facebook data later, and I will show alternate specifications that may fit the data better using Facebook data.

Figure 3.3 shows the estimated positions of MPs and Figure 3.4 shows the estimated positions of words on the two defined dimensions from Sältzer (2020)- these replicate the two graphs making up his Figure 1 (6). The first thing to note is the direction of the relationship. With Twitter data, (Sältzer, 2020) finds a positive linear relationship between the two dimensions, but with Facebook data, I find a negative linear relationship. The x-axis displays Sältzer’s (2020) Cultural Dimension while the y-axis shows the General Economic Dimension. Though the direction of the relationship between the two dimensions is different, there is homogeneity within parties. Similarly, the overall placement of the parties is relatively the same as Sältzer (2020) for the SPD, FDP, and AfD. The CDU/CSU is more to the left on the Cultural Dimension, and B90 are more to the right on the Cultural Dimension.

To understand why the MPs were placed in these specific positions, Figure 3.4 shows the placement of words on the two dimensions. Here is where the differences

Figure 3.4: Ideological Placement of Words with Facebook Data (Sältzer (2020) Figure Replication)



between the Facebook and Twitter results start to emerge. Figure 3.3 shows that the dimensionality of Facebook and Twitter data are different, and why it is important to think about which social media source to use. Using Sältzer’s (2020) specification of the dimensions, some of the words make sense as to why they are on the right of the cultural ideological spectrum- words referring to the “AfD” or “asylum seekers.” On the other hand, words on the general LR Dimension are not as indicative of the general LR dimension- for instance, the words “sports” and “politics.”

Not only is the relationship between the two main dimensions found with Facebook data different from those with Twitter data, the names of the two dimensions are dif-

ferent. Sältzer (2020) calls his two main dimensions the “Cultural” and “Economic” dimensions. Instead, I find that the positions map onto two also very salient dimensions, the “populism” dimension and the “government support” dimension. The first dimension, what I call the “populism” dimension matches onto the order found on the 2017 CHES scale for “People vs. Elites” (Bakker et al., 2015). This dimension is measured with the question of how much power the people should have in deciding the most important issues (through voting directly in referendums) relative to elected officials- here a 0 means that elected officials should make all the decisions compared to a 10, which means that the people should make all decisions. The aggregated results from the 2017 CHES from Germany put the CDU/CSU at the low end of the spectrum (2.25) with the AfD at the high end of the spectrum (7.65). The order matches that exactly of what is found on the “Cult” dimension in Figure 3.3. This “populism” dimension could be argued to be part of a cultural dimension, especially when considering what defines who are the “people.”

When understanding the second dimension, what is called the Economic dimension, the Facebook results do not map exactly onto the general positions. Instead, these positions and words map onto the level of government support. At the left side of the spectrum, with low levels of government support, are the AfD and Die Linke, who are by far the largest opponents to the CDU/CSU and SPD Grand Coalition. On the right-hand side, with high levels of government support, are the CDU/CSU and SPD who are the two parties in government. Of course, there are outliers- CDU/CSU MPs that are not as supportive of the line set by their party, which highlights the need for studying intraparty politics. Overall, these two labels for the dimensions fit the Facebook data better than those specified with Twitter data- this shows that the issues discussed on Facebook and Twitter are different, leading to different conclusions based on what source one uses. Like the Sältzer (2020) results, the CCA is able to recover the general clustering of parties with Facebook, but the Facebook results

show a more accurate version of the German political space.

To compare this to an alternate specification of the dimensions, Figures B.1 and B.2 in the Appendix show the first two dimensions without subtracting off any other dimension (which is what Sältzer (2020) does). These results still hold up to my two proposed dimensions- the “populism” and the “government support” dimensions. These results show that there are differences when measuring the latent positions of MPs using Facebook or Twitter data, especially when adding in more individuals. By adding over 100 or more MPs and using longer spans of text, the same dimensions are not recovered by Facebook data, so the exact positions of MPs shift. If one wants to know the positions of individual MPs, then these differing results matter. This, in addition to Figures 3.1 and 3.2, confirms Hypothesis 3- Facebook and Twitter vary based off of their content.

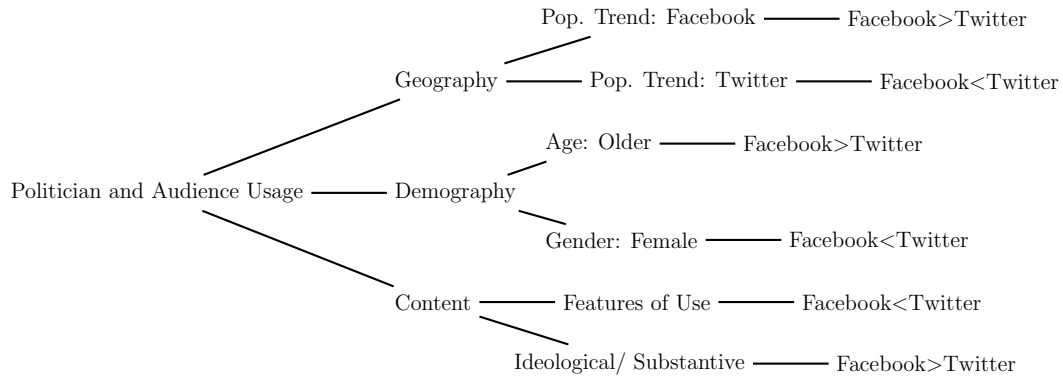
3.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Research interested in party politics has long asked the question of how to measure the placement of parties across multiple dimensions and cases. Most work on European party politics has assumed that parties are unitary actors, meaning that there is no need to measure individual MP positioning. With the change of moving to the MP level, there are multiple data sources to turn to that all come with compromises and biases that threaten the validity of the results. Roll call votes, debates, parliamentary questions, MP surveys, and media reports are either incomparable across cases, overestimate levels of party cohesion, and/or have low levels of compliance (Ceron, 2017). Alternatively, there are social media data, which have standardized platform rules across different countries, are historically accessible, and have high levels of compliance (both in terms of who has an account and who regularly uses the account). Just like any other data source, social media data come with compromises that must be understood to understand the best practices of social science research.

Social media differ from alternative data sources in that they are largely accessible over time directly from the source with a large number of observations, they have a lot of noise that must be cleaned prior to use, and they are not one homogeneous category. MPs use social media for various reasons, and not all are relevant for studying the positioning of MPs. For instance, while support of an initiative is important, their thoughts on yesterday’s traffic may not be as relevant. This is compared to a manifesto which has a single objective of outlining policy goals or an expert survey that asks specific questions. For this, when using social media data, practitioners must narrow down what is their topic and question of interest and understand how this noise may or may not influence their results. Next, and fundamental to the guidelines set forth in this paper, social media data are not one homogeneous category. Social media data are a large category that contain many different platforms and consequently different users and content. Based on this, it is only natural that the conclusions drawn from different social media platforms vary. Facebook and Twitter are the two most common social media platforms used not only by the world but also politicians.

Despite these differences, social media data offer endless opportunities to measure MP behavior. No work has looked at what biases exist with these data, and how to go about choosing one platform over the other. This paper presents a guidebook on how to do social science research better when using social media data. Researchers need to think about the question, method, and context of interest when deciding which platform to use. The traditional “data availability” argument, which is where someone argues they use one platform over the other because of what is available, is no longer valid due to each platform being easily accessible to academic research through each platform’s respective API. I argue the main differences by platform are because of geographic, demographic, and content differences based on who is on the platform and how they use the platform. I show the extent of these differences across the cases of France, Germany, and the UK from 2017 to 2019.

Figure 3.5: Costs and Benefits of Using Facebook or Twitter



To summarize the findings, Figure 3.5 shows the direction of the relationships and trends between Facebook and Twitter. From Figure 3.5, there is no clear “winner” between Facebook or Twitter data- it depends on what the population and measures of interest are. First, with geographic context, the population trends by country map onto the trends seen with the MPs- Germany uses Facebook more and the UK uses Twitter more. MPs want to talk with their voters, so they are going to use the platform that their voters use. When thinking about why this matters, the Sältzer (2020) replication highlights this point. Less than 75% of German MPs have a Twitter account compared to almost 88% of MPs that have a Facebook account. This difference of percentage of people with Twitter relative to Facebook accounts is not distributed equally between parties- from Table B.1, only 55% of CDU/CSU MPs have a Twitter account (and almost 85% have a Facebook account) relative to almost 93% of B90 MPs (and over 76% have a Facebook account). This means that when using Twitter to study Germany, it is not capturing almost half of all MPs from the largest party in the German Bundestag. When compared to the UK, over 75% of Conservative MPs have a Facebook account and over 86% have a Twitter account. While there are differences between the Conservative MPs, it is nowhere as large as the differences between CDU/CSU MPs. This maps on to population trends of Facebook and Twitter in the two countries- a more similar percentage of

the population use Facebook and Twitter in the UK as in Germany. When making conclusions using a platform that is not as representative as an alternative, it changes the results.

Second, there are demographic differences both in terms of who uses social media as well as differences between platforms. Unlike trends in the general population, female MPs are more likely to use Twitter. This highlights how women are excluded from traditional male dominated networks, making them turn to social media as a means to create their own networks (Bjarnegård, 2013). Similar to trends in the population, younger MPs are more likely to frequently use Twitter. It is the newer of the two platforms, and it generally attracts a younger user base. When thinking about the potential biases introduced when choosing one over the other, Facebook may indicate higher levels of cohesion than Twitter as it is more likely to have male and older MPs, which also happen to be higher-ranking MPs. Higher ranking MPs are more likely to set the party line, making them more likely to be more cohesive than other more extreme MPs. If thinking about issue attention, minorities, whether it be gender or ethnic minorities, are more likely to discuss different issues (following principles of substantive representation) (Dolezal et al., 2014; Pitkin, 1967).

Lastly, turning to the substantive implications of these data, Facebook has more ideological and substantive driven content whereas Twitter has more features. The replication of Sältzer (2020) shows that the general positions of parties can be replicated both with Facebook and Twitter data. The differences emerge when analyzing relative placements, specific MPs (in particular, along the center of the ideological spectrum), and the relationship between the two main dimensions. Facebook seems to be the more reasonable choice of social media platform for the case of Germany- more MPs use it, and it contains longer spans of text. Twitter significantly underrepresents the most important party in terms of governing- the CDU/CSU. Similarly, Figure 3.2 shows that a higher percentage of posts that contain immigration or en-

vironmental related terms appear on Facebook compared to Twitter, regardless of time.

This echoes the general statement that Facebook is the storytelling platform whereas Twitter is the fast news platform. If trying to scale text to recover ideological positioning based on Tweets, this will lead to potentially biased results for many reasons. First, it is hard to scale short amounts of text, especially when removing stopwords, infrequent words, digits, or other forms of pre-processing text. Second, while not testing across the entire issue base of parties, Twitter seems to contain less ideological (or policy specific) text relative to Facebook. This means that scaling text from Twitter, the dimensions recovered may be more along the lines of how often they talk about food as opposed to the general left-right dimension.

It is not that either Facebook or Twitter are going to be 100% correct, it is just that one platform over the other may offer less bias and higher compliance, which leads to a more valid measure of ideology. Twitter offers more features, such as tagging, hashtags, and retweets that allow for different forms of analysis. When choosing which platform to use, there needs to be dedicated thought into which option (or options) provide the best source for the question and measure of interest. As other social media platforms grow alongside Facebook and Twitter, such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Parlor, and more, this is only more and more of a problem. Not only will it become impossible for an MP to actively maintain all these accounts at once, each platform will have a more specific identity, making these biases grow larger.

If possible, the best practice is to use one platform for the main analysis and to use another one as an external validity check. This will ensure that the general trends are consistent across both platforms- if there are significantly varying results, then this is an indication that the results are not robust. This is an ideal solution and maybe not realistic for all work, which is why there needs to be specific understanding on how to choose social media platforms for best use. Overall, we need to stop using

the “data availability” argument and choose a platform that is best suited for each project’s individual assumptions and goals. Future research should investigate further differences between Facebook and Twitter data both across and within country as well as compare social media data to alternate data sources.

CHAPTER IV

Speaking Two Different Languages: the Electoral Constraints of MPs on Social Media

How do institutions influence the daily behavior of MPs outside of the legislative floor? What role does the electoral system have in governing how MPs communicate with voters? Based on whether a system has a PR or SMD electoral system, the party is expected to have more or less control. With PR, MPs must be reliant on the party being reelected, making MPs more beholden to the demands of the party. With SMD, MPs must be reliant on their constituents to be reelected, making them less responsive to the demands of the party. It is expected that these constraints influence MP behavior in how they communicate with their voters. SMD MPs will spend more time on constituency efforts, creating personalized links with their voters. Alternatively, PR MPs will spend more time on party-based efforts in parliament as opposed to in their home base. Existing work that has looked at this finds mixed results based on the method, unit of analysis, and measure used.

Most work that measures MP behavior uses data sources that are not directly monitored by voters, such as roll call votes or parliamentary debates. The findings of these works are important for understanding intraparty dynamics, but they do not help us understand how institutional constraints are conveyed directly to voters as voters rarely monitor these activities. Other work looks only at campaign behavior,

which is a specific time during a life cycle of an MP where there is an extra incentive to appeal to voters. In addition, during campaigns there is an incentive for all MPs to rely on individualized campaigning, regardless of institutional status. Both roll call votes and campaigns are more exceptional behaviors of MPs as opposed to daily routines.

It is important to look beyond the legislative floor and campaign activity to see how MPs directly communicate with voters for three reasons. One, it is something that voters can use on a regular basis to update their priors against a given MP without having to investigate an MP's voting behavior or newspaper coverage. Two, it signals the everyday activities of an MP, which goes beyond voting on the legislative floor by focusing on the amount of time spent on constituency services versus party centered work. This is particularly important as measures on the legislative floor have been shown to overestimate party cohesion (Ceron, 2017). Three, a life cycle of an MP is so much more than the few months that they campaign or less than 5% of the votes they cast- work they did on day one of being an MP will help determine their viability as an MP (Sieberer et al., 2020).

While there are these theoretical expectations, there are certain reasons to believe that there will not be major differences between SMD and PR MPs. There may be other incentives that are stronger than the electoral incentives, such as those set out by the party or those that change based on electoral cycles. An MP being completely vote seeking (as opposed to office or policy seeking) is an ideal type that will never be perfectly achieved (Strom, 1990). Put simply, "Electoral incentives firstly *affect* but do not *determine* actual behaviour single handedly!...The impact of electoral system features should thus not be written off on the basis of past evidence but should be analysed continuously" (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008, 982). Similarly, when analyzing systems where there is a form of mixed electoral system that provide an opportunity to see both SMD and PR MPs under the same context, there has been

a guiding principle in the literature that voters do not distinguish between the two sides of the ballot (Nohlen, 1986). Because of this, it was thought that there was little incentive for MPs to behave differently based on their status (Nohlen, 1986). Recently, this assumption has been challenged, making it understandable why constituency MPs may act differently compared to their list counterparts under similar conditions (Gschwend and Zittel, 2015).

Differences of MP behavior due to electoral rule constraints will be based on how much they focus on the individual and how much they focus on the party. MPs elected under PR will be more likely to focus on the party as the party is the gatekeeper. MPs elected under SMD will be freer to break from the party and be more focused on their personal activities and behavior to portray themselves as individuals to constituents. To test this theory, I use the case of Germany where MPs within the Bundestag are elected under Mixed Member Proportional (MMP). Under this system, some MPs are elected under SMD while others are elected under PR. Germany is said to be a hard test case for analyzing electoral constraints as it is a mix of two systems as opposed to comparing two “pure” systems (Sieberer, 2010). I use a novel dataset of daily MP behavior from the Facebook accounts of German MPs in office from 2017-2019. Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform by German MPs (disproportionately so), making it have high levels of coverage across both electoral status and party. Social media data provide a direct means of communication with voters. Unlike roll call votes, social media accounts are not highly monitored by the party, making it possible for MPs to display varying levels of allegiances to the party versus their constituents.

I contribute to the literature by having the first study to look at differences of MP behavior outside of the legislative floor and campaign period. I argue that differences in the results of the literature are due to the methods used, unit of aggregation, measures used, and specific time periods analyzed. I justify my choice of using social

media data for studying differences in behavior of MPs, as these data look at daily interactions between MPs and constituents, study at a two-year period, and I use various methods to understand my results. I find that while there is a difference in how SMD and PR MPs discuss parties, there is not a difference between the level of individualization of SMD and PR MPs (when the model is correctly specified). I argue that this suggests that references to parties and individualization are not two ends of the same spectrum. While PR MPs are more beholden to the party, this does not mean that SMD MPs are more connected to their constituents.

I start by summarizing the literature on intraparty politics and electoral constraints, and I explain why there is variation in the existing literature. I then discuss the case of Germany, and why it serves a suitable test case for understanding the effect of electoral constraints. Then, I lay out how I measure personal versus party centered behavior using my novel dataset of social media data. I explain why my choice of method, unit of analysis, measure, and time period overcome the existing problems in the literature. I start with a machine learning classifier to show that there are distinguishable differences between how SMD and PR MPs communicate to voters on Facebook. I then turn to testing these exact differences, and I summarize my findings as PR MPs are more likely to reference parties. I conclude with what this means for MP behavior at large, suggesting that institutional constraints spillover outside of the legislative floor to environments that voters monitor.

4.1 Literature

First, I start by summarizing the fundamental literature on parties and the role of institutions. I then turn to discuss the debates in the intraparty literature, then I narrow in on the behavioral expectations of MPs as well as the reasons behind the different empirical results, and I conclude with the literature on Germany. Within the intraparty literature, scholars are focused on within a party who participates in

party activities and who deviates from the party line. Past research has focused on the role of the electoral system, seniority within a party, executive positions, electoral vulnerability, gender, ideology, governing status, income, and more (André, Depauw and Beyens, 2015; Benedetto and Hix, 2007; Gschwend and Zittel, 2015; Kirkland and Slapin, 2018; Mai, 2020; Olivella and Tavits, 2014; Zittel and Nyhuis, 2021). The results of these studies are quite mixed as to what actually influences MP behavior- in particular for the role of the electoral system and the constraints it puts on MP behavior (Carty, Eagles and Sayers, 2003; Chiru, 2015; De Winter and Baudewyns, 2015; Eder, Jenny and Müller, 2015; Giebler and Wüst, 2011; Olivella and Tavits, 2014; Zittel and Gschwend, 2008; Zittel and Nyhuis, 2021). These debates focus on whether the electoral system influences MP behavior, which MPs it is likely to influence, and how it influences MP behavior. These results vary from finding no mandate effect (Morgenstern and Swindle, 2005), to finding a mandate effect (Gschwend and Zittel, 2015; Olivella and Tavits, 2014), and to finding a small effect but a bigger effect due to other institutional variables of interest (Bhattacharya and Papageorgiou, 2019). The debates as to why these results are different stem from differences in methodological approaches (especially the unit of aggregation), the selection of the measure (especially in regard to the choice of specific roll call votes), and the time period in question (Olivella and Tavits, 2014; Sieberer, 2010; Zittel and Gschwend, 2008).

4.1.1 The General Causal Argument

Institutions shape the “structure of political opportunities” for parties, meaning that different institutional structures will create different incentives, leading to different behaviors by MPs (Schlesinger, 1985). These different incentives are both direct, meaning the institutions themselves shape behaviors, and indirect, meaning that the institutions shape other rules, which then shapes behavior (Schlesinger, 1985; Strom,

1990). Electoral institutions shape political opportunities through the translation of votes to seats- the level of proportionality will determine the amount of distortion between the percentage of votes won relative to the number of seats allocated (Strom, 1990). MPs rely on being members of parties as they aggregate resources, ideology, and money, which makes them a solution to the collective action problem (Aldrich, 1995; Cox and McCubbins, 2007). Parties serve as gatekeepers- by either providing opportunities for advancement or by restricting such opportunities.

MPs have to balance policy, office, and vote goals, which do not necessarily align (Müller and Strom, 1999). While some MPs stress one or two of these goals more than the other(s), no MP is purely policy, office, or vote-seeking (Strom, 1990; Müller and Strom, 1999). For the purpose of this paper, I am assuming that MPs pursue all three goals. To achieve their policy and office goals, MPs need to please their party, but to achieve their vote goals, they need to please voters (assuming that the party and the voters have slightly different preferences). Politicians are constantly making decisions and compromises to pursue their goals- “Even when making decisions does not mean choosing the lesser of two evils, there may well be severe and uncomfortable trade-offs between different goals they have set themselves” (Müller and Strom, 1999, 1).

MPs are ultimately constrained by two main actors- the party (and its elites) and the voter. By an MP representing the interests of his or her constituents (being ideologically closer to his or her constituents), it shows both trust and integrity, which are valuable qualities to constituents (Campbell et al., 2019). Constituents want their MPs to break with the party line if it means their interests are represented in parliament (Vivyan and Wagner, 2015). To do this, MPs have multiple channels, which have varying levels of monitoring by both the party and the voter, to signal to voters that they are representing their interests. These range from signals on the legislative floor that are not monitored by voters, such as roll call votes and

parliamentary questions, to speeches and media reports, which are more visible to voters. These are the tools that MPs use to balance the competing constraints of party loyalty and voter preferences. The party, MPs, and voters all have tools that act as points of leverage in a system of competing interests and constraints.

Based on the electoral rule, it is expected that the constraints an MP faces from the party and voters will vary. In certain scenarios with more proportional systems, MPs will have to be more responsive to the party than the voters. In other scenarios with less proportionality but more direct representation, MPs will be more responsive to their voters. Perfect mandate representation, which is where the party elites in government are perfect agents of their party and parties are perfect agents of their voters, does not exist. MPs within a party deviate from the expressed wishes of their voters and party (Samuels and Shugart, 2010). Different institutional formats, including the electoral system, will determine the level and details of this chain of mandate representation (Samuels and Shugart, 2010). There should be more local control of parties under SMD electoral systems whereas more central, national, level control under PR (Bowler, Farrell and Katz, 1999). With localized control, it can create incentives for MPs to create a strong local following, which can be in conflict with the party line (Bowler, Farrell and Katz, 1999). Party discipline must be higher in PR countries than SMD simply to ensure the survival of coalition governments. Despite these theoretical expectations, the empirical results of finding a “mandate divide” are mixed. I will discuss the reasons behind why there are such differences in the literature next.

4.1.2 Methodologies

When narrowing down the role of the electoral rule on MP behavior, there are multiple potential threats to causal inference. First, a country’s electoral system is not randomly assigned. The choice of a more or less proportional electoral system

is endogenous to other institutions that may influence MP behavior (Manow, 2008). Second, varying contexts will influence MP behavior. When understanding the results of the literature, most studies that use multiple cases find no effect of the electoral system on MP behavior during both campaigns and votes on the legislative floor (Morgenstern and Swindle, 2005). These null findings have been boiled down to the use of multiple cases (and contexts)- there are too many confounders to isolate the causal effect (Olivella and Tavits, 2014).

Germany, and more particularly its MMP electoral system, overcomes many of these potential threats to inference by having MPs elected by SMD as well as MPs elected by regional lists via PR (constituency and list MPs, respectively). Countries, such as Germany, with MMP can be “crucial” and “controlled” experiments that vary the constraints of the electoral rule while holding the context stable (Moser, 2001; Olivella and Tavits, 2014; Shugart, Valdini and Suominen, 2005). MMP is seen as having the best of both worlds in that constituents get a direct representative through their constituency MP while still having smaller parties represented through their list MPs. Because of these theoretical expectations, it would make sense if constituency and list MPs have different roles- one being more focused on constituent efforts while the other being more focused on the party.

While Germany offers a test case with the context somewhat held constant, it still has potential threats to inference. First, and most importantly, whether one is a constituency or list MP is a strategic choice (Patzelt, 2007). Because of that, constituency MPs tend to be older, male, more experienced, and from larger parties (Patzelt, 2007). As such, any study that looks at the role of the electoral rule on MP behavior must account for these confounders (Olivella and Tavits, 2014). If not done, it is not clear whether any differences are due to the electoral system or other factors that are correlated with the electoral system.

Those that directly deal with these threats to inference do so in one of two main

ways. First, one could look only at MPs who have switched from one side of the ballot to the other to isolate a change in behavior (Olivella and Tavits, 2014). While this ensures that we are analyzing similar MPs, the context varies. This means it is not clear whether the MP is changing his or her own behavior due to the change in electoral status or some other events. Very few MPs switch from one side to the other, making large scale analysis difficult. Another way to approach this is by using matching or weighting to ensure balance on covariates that may affect both the electoral system status and the outcome of interest. While it is impossible to control for all possible confounders, this approach does allow for a constant context. Based on the method of choice, the results show that there are either distinct types, or that all MPs are more responsive to the party and can be treated as a cohesive unit (André, Depauw and Beyens, 2015; Bhattacharya and Papageorgiou, 2019; Manow, 2008; Ohmura, 2014; Sieberer, 2010).

4.1.3 Unit of Analysis

There is debate over what should be the unit of analysis, and this can lead to differences in results. Some aggregate up to the level of the MP while others leave the unit of analysis as the individual vote or other measure. The general approach seems to be to aggregate to the unit of the MP, which is problematic for a few reasons. First, related to time, an MP's behavior can change throughout the legislative or electoral cycle, making his votes early in the cycle different than those later in the cycle (Sieberer, 2010). Second, when aggregating to the level of the MP, this can aggregate different ideological dimensions. An MP may always vote with the party line, except for on votes about a specific dimension (Sieberer, 2010). When aggregating up to the level of the MP, this loses this contextual information. When using disaggregated data, we must be sure to have the correct model specification as the observations are not independent.

4.1.4 Measure

Part of these differing results may be due to the various measures of MP behavior. Most of the measures are focused on the legislative floor. The legislative floor is the environment in which the party has the most control, making it one of the least likely places to detect differences in MP behavior (Ceron, 2017). Certain parties are more or less likely to make their MPs toe the party line, which will lead to differences in results given the different constraints on MPs from different parties (Bhattacharya and Papageorgiou, 2019). In addition, voters do not monitor roll call votes or debates, so there is not as much of a push for MPs to differ themselves based on their electoral status. Work that has been done on electoral differences of MPs using measures outside of the legislative floor have used surveys of German MPs that have low response rates (Patzelt, 2007; Zittel and Gschwend, 2008). While surveys allow a direct response on items of interest, there is a major question of who of the less than 50% of MPs are responding. Also, there is the question of whether they are responding with their “true” preferences.

While behavior on the legislative floor is interesting and important to understand, it is not reflective of all the activities that an MP does. Roll call votes are only one very small part of an MP’s activities, and it does not show the work that most influences the daily lives of constituents. Roll call votes are only meaningful for MPs within government- MP defection, the most common measure of MP behavior is only measurable when an MP is in government and votes against his or her own party (Dewan and Spirling, 2011; Kam, 2009). Second, roll call votes are relatively rare in the German context- they only make up around 5% of all votes, and they are on topics that are highly salient (Sieberer et al., 2020). A more continuous measure of MP behavior used in the literature is debates and parliamentary questions- though these again are focused on the legislative floor where access is permitted through the party (Proksch and Slapin, 2015). This means that higher ranking MPs, who

are more likely to toe the party line, are more likely to participate in debates and parliamentary questions in PR systems (Proksch and Slapin, 2015).

4.1.5 Time

While not discussed as frequently, there are differences in the literature due to timing. Most work looks at either votes within a specific legislative term or during a campaign. Levels of deviation and ties to the party may vary based on the contextual circumstances (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008). During election periods, MPs are more likely to be focused on vote-seeking behavior as opposed to non-electoral periods where they are more office-seeking (Strom, 1990). Different events will be more likely to draw a response from certain MPs that are either higher up in the party or “issue owners” of the topic (Huber et al., 2020). Any analysis must take electoral cycles and changing context into account when studying the effect of electoral rules.

Work on German MPs and differences due to the electoral system has looked at whether constituency MPs run more individualized campaigns- this strand of research has looked during electoral periods (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008; Zittel and Nyhuis, 2021). Given that constituency MPs are less responsible to their party than list MPs, constituency MPs should run more individualized campaigns by breaking from their party in order to seek a personal vote (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008). These studies measure campaign individualization through surveys and semi-structured interviews asking MPs to rank themselves on the level of individualization of the campaign. Constituency MPs are more likely to have individualized campaigns, but it is unclear how these behavioral differences roll over into non-electoral periods. Recently, Zittel and Nyhuis (2021) have found that MPs that run more individualized campaigns tend to be more likely to defect from roll call votes, suggesting that there is a link between electoral and legislative behavior. To further this work, it is both interesting and important to understand how individualization and party-centered tactics apply

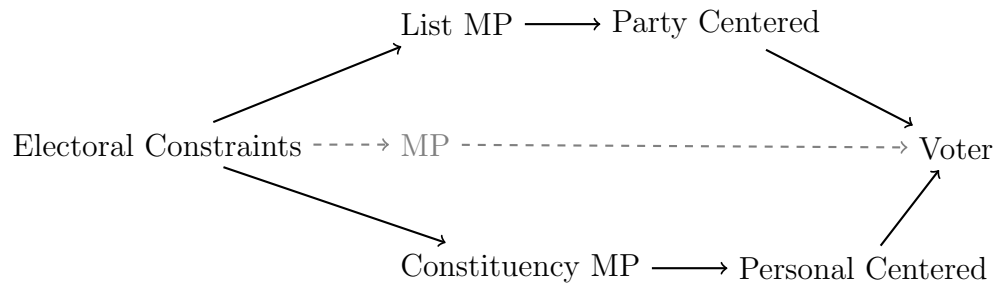
to non-electoral times while using a measure of MP behavior that is monitored by voters.

4.2 Argument

Constituency and list MPs face different constraints based on their electoral rule. In a country like Germany, where there are MPs elected by two different electoral rules, constituency MPs should act differently than list MPs. Empirically, the results of the existing literature on MPs in Germany are quite mixed- some finding that there are differences while others finding no differences (André, Depauw and Beyens, 2015; Bhattacharya and Papageorgiou, 2019; Manow, 2013; Ohmura, 2014; Sieberer, 2010). Previous work has focused on specific highly constrained measures of MP behavior during exceptional times (during elections or times of important legislative events), have not controlled for potential confounders, or aggregate the data losing contextual information. I look at MP behavior during the first two years of the legislative cycle during a non-election time and by using a measure outside of the legislative arena that is in direct communication with voters.

List and constituency MPs will either try to emphasize being more party centered or personal centered. Personal centered means that MPs will only focus on breaking from the party by being more individualized- this could be driven by their own personal preferences or by the preferences of their constituents. Party centered means MPs will only focus on the concerns and message of the party without regard to their own personal interests. These two emphases are not mutually exclusive and are ideal types- all MPs must balance both individual and party issues to stay elected. Constituency MPs should try to distinguish themselves from the party and portray themselves as more individualized relative to list MPs. They emphasize personal issues more than party ones. Alternatively, list MPs should be more focused on the party and the party-level relative to constituency MPs. These behavioral expecta-

Figure 4.1: Role of Electoral Constraints on MP Behavior



tions should last beyond the electoral period, making them a distinguishing feature of list and constituency MPs at all times of the legislative cycle. An MP can find a balance between both emphasizing personal and party related interests, depending on the context.

Figure 4.1 shows the theorized behavioral expectations of MPs with the black lines. In an MMP system, there will be two sets of electoral constraints- one set for list MPs that will be expected to be more responsive to the party and another set for constituency MPs that will be expected to be more responsive to constituency efforts. These distinct behaviors will be conveyed directly to the voter through an MP’s communication style. If this theoretical model does not exist, which is shown in the light grey line, then it is expected that all MPs face the same electoral constraints regardless of MP type, making there no behavioral differences based on the electoral rule. While the literature has found this to be the case during electoral times, little work has understood this behavior during non-electoral times using measures that voters actively monitor.

To test the behavioral expectations of MPs based on the electoral constraints, I focus on social media posts. Social media posts present a medium of direct communication with voters, and therefore can be used as a proxy for MP behavior, especially outside the legislative floor. Social media data present an ideal tool for measuring MP behavior, because of their accessibility as well as their regular use. Twitter data have

been found to reproduce ideological positioning of MPs in multiple contexts, but little work has been done on Facebook pages of MPs despite this being a medium that is heavily used by politicians (Barberá et al., 2015; Ceron, 2017; Sältzer, 2020). Social media posts present a measure that is comparable over time and space. Social media have been used for similar purposes for their entire existence. They serve as a way for MPs to communicate directly with larger audiences without having to mediate their message through the party or a media outlet. While defecting from roll call votes carry different consequences based on the subject matter and other characteristics, social media posts do not carry as high of sanctions if an MP were to defect from the party line. Unlike legislative measures that sometimes must be restricted to just the governing parties, social media posts can be observed for all parties, regardless of governing status.

MPs tend to have multiple social media platforms- from Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. In Germany, the most used social media platform is Facebook. Of the 709 MPs that have held seats in the Bundestag from September 2017 to December 2019, 628 have public Facebook accounts and 580 regularly use their accounts. In addition, unlike Twitter, Facebook posts do not have text length limitations, making it up to the MP to decide how much he or she wants to write. Facebook data have been relatively understudied compared to Twitter data due to data availability issues. MPs use publicly available pages, which allows me to collect their pages (as compared to if they were private pages). Given the freedom and the frequency to which MPs use Facebook, it provides an interesting and valid approach to measure MP communication with voters.

To give an example of these differences, these two posts show an example of “ideal types” of posts by list and constituency MPs. Josip Juratovic, an SPD list MP from Baden-Württemberg posted on November 22, 2017 (translated into English):

“The AfD is calling for an agreement in the Bundestag to promote the return of Syrian refugees. This is cynical to demand at this time because Syria is not sure, the humanitarian situation is a catastrophe and the ruler Assad is not a reliable negotiating partner.”

On the other hand, Dr. Anja Weisgerber, a CSU constituency MP from Bayern posted on February 15, 2018 (translated into English):

“Many thanks to the gardeners in Bavaria and the Schweinfurt gardening group for the lovely Valentine that Gerd Heimrich from Gosheim gave me. I hope you have a great Valentine’s Day”

Juratovic’s post is focused on the AfD and actions within the Bundestag. Weisgerber’s post is focused on places as well as thanking people for their gifts. One is directed more at the party level, focusing on party level differences on foreign policy. The other is directed at constituency level relations, pointing out the individual side of being an MP. It is not that one or the other behavioral expectation of an MP is better- they both serve important roles in the democratic process. To distinguish these differences, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1.A: List MPs will be more party focused by referencing parties and systemic level institutions more than constituency MPs

Hypothesis 1.B: Constituency MPs will be more personal focusing by referencing themselves and personal actions more frequently than list MPs

4.3 Research Design

To understand how list and constituency MPs distinguish themselves on the individual versus party centered spectrum, I have collected data on publicly available

Facebook posts from MPs in Germany from 2017-2019. In this sense, I have the “universe” of currently available posts. To start this process, I first scraped the German Bundestag website to get all MPs. Then, with the help of a research assistant, we verified and collected the Facebook public pages for the MPs. Then, I scraped the Facebook pages. This dataset does not look at a specific time or a specific MP- there are data both in electoral, non-electoral, and during times of influential events. Comparing social media posts to alternative measures outside of the legislative floor, social media have the advantage of high participation. For instance, surveys of MPs have low response rates- the one used by Patzelt (2007), which is the most commonly used survey of German MPs, only had a response rate of 32%. In my sample, I have 262,638 Facebook posts from 580 MPs with an average of 452 posts per MP.

Here, I define the treatment as 1 if an MP is a constituency MP and 0 if an MP is a list MP. In my sample of 580 MPs, 40.3% are constituency MPs and 59.7% are list MPs- this is very similar to the percentage of constituency and list MPs in the Bundestag (42.2% constituency seats and 58.7% list seats). This suggests that having a Facebook page is not related to the treatment, which is as expected- accessibility to social media sites should be equal across both groups. Given that the treatment is not randomly assigned, I gathered data on other potential confounders that may influence MP behavior. First, experience and age. Constituency seats are seen as “safer” than list seats (Patzelt, 2007). Because of this, constituency MPs tend to be older and have been in office longer than list MPs (Patzelt, 2007). It could be that whether one is a list or constituency MP does not play a role in differences in behavior. It is simply that constituency MPs serve in office longer, and it is their experience that makes them more individualized.

I collected data on the number of years an MP has held his or her seat consecutively as well as their age as of 2019. Both variables can be found on the Bundestag webpage. Overall, the average age of an MP with a Facebook page is very similar to

those that are list and those that are constituency (50.8 versus 51.0), but the average number of years in parliament is different between list and constituency MPs (5.4 years versus 9.1 years). This means that constituency MPs, although around the same age as list MPs, have about double the amount of experience in parliament as list MPs. I also collected data on gender- while gender has been rarely found to play a role in party defection, males are much more likely to serve in a constituency seat (Bhattacharya and Papageorgiou, 2019; Cowley and Childs, 2003). Table C.1 in the Appendix includes descriptive statistics by party and electoral status.

As whether one has a constituency or list seat is not random, I have to adjust for differences between the two types of MPs that may explain behavioral differences that are not because of their electoral status. From Table C.1, most constituency seats go to larger parties- B90 only has one SMD seat compared to their 66 PR seats. Therefore, differences found between SMD and PR MPs could be just because SMD MPs are most likely to be from the CDU/CSU or the SPD. This is a central aspect of the MMP electoral aspect- larger parties have direct representation while smaller parties are still able to gain seats through proportionality. Despite there not being many SMD MPs from smaller parties, any differences found on the aggregate between SMD and PR MPs are nonetheless interesting. To ensure that these non-random differences are not the main drivers of the results, I calculated Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT) weights through propensity scores to help balance the treatment and control groups. I construct these weights from an MP's age, number of years in office, party, gender, and number of posts.

Next, I focused on measuring party centered versus personal centered behavior. To do this, I used a dictionary approach understanding differences in words used. Constituency MPs wanting to portray an individualized persona to their constituency will use more personal pronouns. Therefore, it is expected that constituency MPs will make more use of words like "me", "my", and "I." On the other hand, list MPs will

Table 4.1: Personal versus Party Centered Words

Personal Words	Party Words
Ich	AfD
Meine	CDU
Meins	CSU
Mir	Die Linke
Mich	FDP
Meins	Fraktion
Meiner	Freien Demokraten
	GroKo
	SPD
	Sozialdemokratischen Partei

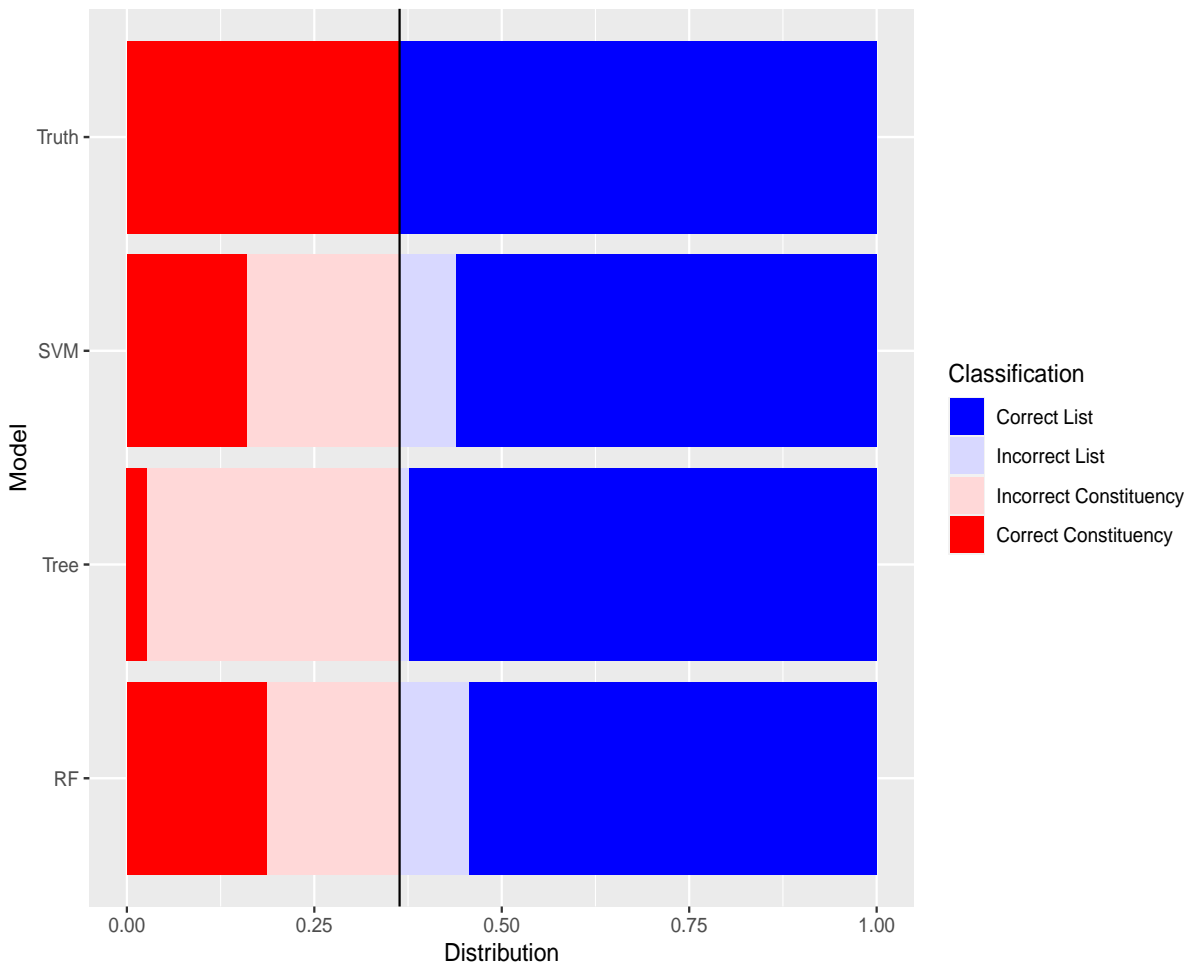
focus more on the party and use more party level language. This will be both through referencing parties more than pronouns, and this includes all parties not just their own party. The exact words that are representative of personal versus party centered behavior are shown in Table 4.1. This variable is constructed as a count variable- the number of times either a personal or party centered word is used within each post. In total, there are an average of 0.2 references of personal pronouns per post and an average of 0.3 references to parties per post.

4.4 Results

I started with testing whether there is a detectable difference in Facebook posts between list and constituency MPs. To do this, I pre-processed the text by removing stopwords, numbers, stemming words, and removing infrequent words. These are common text cleaning practices that help isolate differences in communication patterns. To detect differences in constituency and list MPs, I ran a classifier. A classifier uses a training set of data to understand what are typical frequent words used by constituency MPs compared to those of list MPs. Then, the classifier runs a test set where it tries to classify the posts on its own. Here, the classifier assumes that word order does not matter- it is solely the presence or absence of words that

matter (called bag-of-words). I ran multiple types of classifiers- Support Vector Machine (SVM), Tree, and Random Forest models- these have different assumptions about the underlying distribution of the data. The results are presented in Figure 4.3. The red represents the correctly classified constituency posts, the lighter red are the posts that are truly constituency but incorrectly classified as list, the blue are the correctly classified list posts, and the light blue are posts that are truly list but incorrectly classified as constituency.

Figure 4.2: Classifier Results



As expected, the model over predicts list posts as compared to constituency posts as there are more list posts than constituency posts (similarly, more list MPs to constituency MPs). Overall, the best performing model is the Random Forest model,

followed by the SVM, and lastly the Tree model. For the Random Forest model, the F1 score is 0.58, suggesting a relatively good fit to the data (as compared to the Tree model that has an F1 score of 0.1). From these results, in particular the Random Forest model, I can conclude that there is a distinguishable difference between constituency and list MPs. The classifier can detect a difference between the two types of MPs, meaning that there is something different in their communication styles.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics of of Correctly Classified Posts with Random Forest Model

	Posts	Age	Time in Office	Male	Female	Words	SMD	PR
Incorrect Cl.	0.27	50.31	7.54	0.27	0.26	48.60	0.49	0.15
Correct Cl.	0.73	49.83	5.70	0.73	0.74	55.12	0.51	0.85

Table 4.2 shows descriptive statistics based on whether a post is correctly or incorrectly classified using the Random Forest Model. Following Figure 4.2, 73% of all posts are correctly classified, meaning that the classifier correctly identifies as post as either coming from an SMD or PR MP. Overall, there are not many descriptors that correlate with the precision of the classifier. Precision does not vary based on the MP’s age or gender- the average age is similar between groups and the percentage of posts correctly classified posts does not differ based on whether the MP is male or female. There are slight differences based on time in office, but this is most likely due to the fact that MPs in SMD seats tend to have been in office longer than PR MPs, and the classifier had higher precision with PR posts (85% as compared to 51%) as there were more PR posts. Word count tends to vary on accuracy as well- correctly classified posts were slightly longer than incorrectly classified posts.

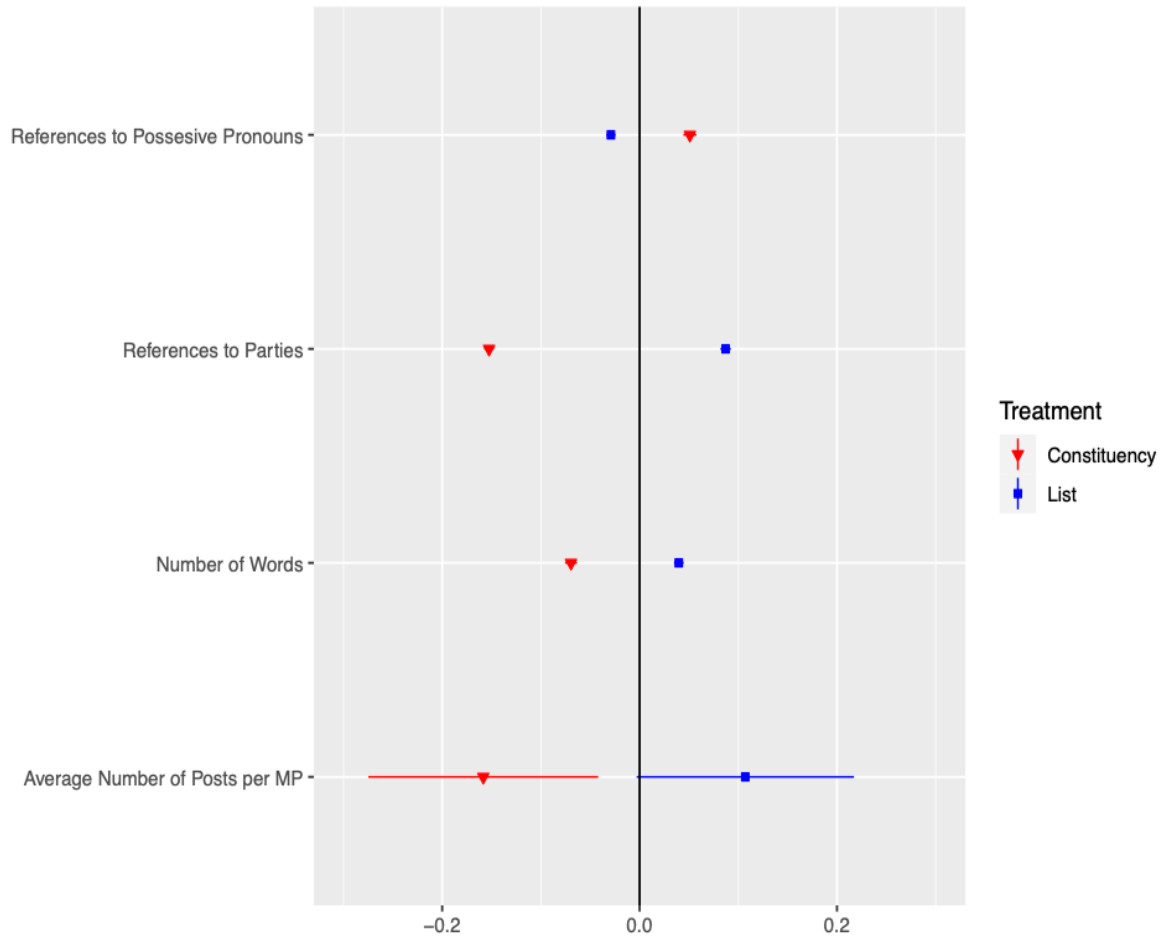
When identifying frequent terms in correctly classified posts, I gathered the fifty most common words in correctly classified SMD and PR post with the Random Forest Model. Most words are as expected- for instance, both correctly classified SMD and PR posts mention “Bundestag.” On the other hand, SMD MPs frequently use “Berlin” though PR MPs frequently use “Deutschland” (PR MPs do not use

“Berlin” as frequently as SMD MPs do not use “Deutschland”). This suggests that there could be some differences between SMD and PR MPs due to their level of analysis- SMD MPs are more focused on the locality as opposed to PR MPs who are focused on the country as a whole. While just anecdotal evidence, this fits with the expected behavioral differences of SMD and PR MPs.

Next, I looked at the MP level to understand details regarding MPs the classifier had high accuracy in predicting constituency status. Overall, the classifier correctly predicted every post of 16 PR MPs- again, this is the easier test as there were many more PR posts than SMD posts. The SMD MPs with the highest percentage of correctly classified posts are Dr. Michael Meister and Patrick Schneider- both have around 90% of their posts correctly classified (19 out of 21 and 151 out of 168, respectively). Both of these MPs are from the CDU and from constituencies in the Southwest of Germany, suggesting that locality could play a role as well.

Now that I have confirmed that there is a distinguishable difference between posts of SMD and PR MPs, I tested my two hypotheses to understand what exactly are these differences. While the machine learning classifier can detect a difference between SMD and PR posts, it cannot specify what exactly these differences are (beyond looking at the summary statistics described above, including frequent word counts). To do this, I turn to simpler, yet highly effective methods, such as summary statistics and regression modeling. I started by analyzing more general trends at the post level that may explain differences between SMD and PR MPs. Figure 4.3 shows the mean difference between the two groups with 95% confidence intervals. At first glance, constituency MPs reference possessive pronouns more frequently than list MPs whereas the reverse is true for references to parties. List MPs tend to use slightly more words per post than constituency MPs, and there is the least amount of difference in terms of the number of posts per MP between list and constituency MPs. This is the first indication that there are some differences on how list and constituency MPs

Figure 4.3: Standardized Distribution of MP Facebook Variables



use social media. That being said, these differences could be solely due to the other differences as discussed above (mainly party, age, and/or experience).

To specifically test Hypotheses 1.A and 1.B, I wanted to understand counts of references to parties and personalized pronouns. To do this, I used a Poisson regression with a count variable as the explanatory variable, which was the number of references to personal and party centered words as the dependent variable as shown in Table 4.3.¹ The first two columns show the results of the models- first for personal centered

¹I decided to use the count as opposed to the ratio of words as it is the mere mention of personal pronouns or mention of a party that is important as opposed to the ratio of words. Instead, I simply control for the number of words at the post level as the more words a post has the higher likelihood it is that the post references a personal pronoun or a party name. Here, the big difference will be between zero and one references. For instance, zero references to personal pronouns means it is not personally oriented whereas one reference suggests it is. When operationalizing the dependent

and the second for party centered. The models include controls for electoral status, age, time in office (years), party, gender, word count, and they also include ATT weights calculated from the propensity scores. As discussed earlier, the propensity scores were based on the MP's age, number of years in office, party, gender, and number of posts as all these could affect the treatment. While I could do direct matching, which would remove certain MPs, I decided to solely use weights and not disregard any MPs as analyzing all MPs provides a full picture of the entire system.

At first glance at Model 1 in Table 4.3, constituency MPs elected through SMD are more likely to reference personal words than list MPs elected through PR.² Turning to Model 2, constituency MPs are less likely to reference party centered words as compared to list MPs. Older and more experienced MPs are slightly less likely to reference both personal and party centered words. Relative to the AfD, which is the reference category, MPs from all the parties are more likely to reference personal words and less likely to reference parties. This makes sense given that the AfD, a PRRP, is somewhat of an outsider in the Bundestag with only one constituency seat. This, along with their ideology, makes them focused on being aggressive towards the other parties in the Bundestag. Males are less likely to reference personal words and more likely to reference party centered words as compared to females. Lastly, I controlled for the number of words in a post as the higher number of words makes it more likely that an MP will use party or personal centered words. As expected, this coefficient is positive and significant for both models.

As one MP's Facebook post is not independent from other Facebook posts from the same MP, Models 3 and 4 include clustered standard errors at the MP level

variable as a binary variable and using a logistic regression, the results do not change. Therefore, I use the Poisson model.

²In these models, I do not include an interaction between governing status and electoral status. This is simply because the vast majority of SMD MPs come from the SPD and CDU/CSU who are in government for the entirety of this period. Given the election results from September 2021 where it is currently highly unlikely that there will be another Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and SPD, it would be interesting to rerun this test when there would be more variation between electoral status and governing status.

Table 4.3: Regression Results of MP Type on Party or Personal Centered

	Personal (1)	Party (2)	Personal (3)	Party (4)
SMD MP	0.062*** (0.011)	-0.292*** (0.010)	0.062 (0.061)	-0.292*** (0.109)
Age	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.013*** (0.001)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.013* (0.007)
Years in Office	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.020*** (0.001)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.020** (0.010)
B90	0.534*** (0.132)	-0.824*** (0.097)	0.534*** (0.130)	-0.824*** (0.152)
CDU/CSU	0.837*** (0.087)	-0.734*** (0.037)	0.837*** (0.121)	-0.734*** (0.177)
Die Linke	0.792*** (0.093)	-0.394*** (0.046)	0.792*** (0.128)	-0.394** (0.158)
FDP	0.440*** (0.124)	-0.216*** (0.062)	0.440*** (0.128)	-0.216 (0.158)
Independent	0.178 (0.109)	-0.584*** (0.059)	0.178 (0.414)	-0.584* (0.355)
SPD	0.846*** (0.088)	-0.383*** (0.038)	0.846*** (0.134)	-0.383*** (0.143)
Male	-0.022* (0.012)	0.174*** (0.012)	-0.022 (0.058)	0.174* (0.089)
Word Count	0.012*** (0.0001)	0.012*** (0.0001)	0.012*** (0.001)	0.012*** (0.001)
Constant	-3.007*** (0.094)	-0.820*** (0.048)	-3.007*** (0.230)	-0.820** (0.362)
Observations	262,638	262,638	262,638	262,638
Clustered SEs	No	No	Yes	Yes
Weights	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

with otherwise the same model specification as Models 1 and 2 in Table 2 (Sieberer, 2010). Here, the effect of being a constituency MP on referencing personal words loses significance, suggesting that the effect found in Model 1 is due to something else at the MP level, not one's electoral status. The effects found in Model 2 of constituency MPs using fewer party centered words than list MPs is robust. Overall, I cannot reject the null for Hypothesis 1.B, suggesting that constituency MPs are not more personal centered than list MPs. I can reject the null for Hypothesis 1.A- list MPs are more party centered than constituency MPs. All else equal, a constituency MP uses around 25% fewer references to parties than a list MP. Otherwise put, for four posts in which a list MP references a party, a constituency MP will only have only three comparable posts. While this does not seem like a large magnitude of difference, when put into perspective that in a period of there is an average of 452 posts per MP, a list MP could have more than 100 more posts about parties than a constituency MP.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

There are theoretical expectations of behavioral differences between list and constituency MPs. MPs elected through PR have less of a connection with their constituents, but they have a greater expectation to be responsive to their party. MPs elected through SMD should be more responsive to their constituents and focus less on the demands of their party. It is difficult to test this argument as countries with different electoral systems have different contexts, making it impossible to know what is driving the differences in results. Germany provides a case where there are two electoral rules. With this system, it is possible to observe the behavior of MPs elected by both SMD and PR. List MPs, elected by PR, will be more constrained to focus on their party in how they communicate with their voters. Constituency MPs, elected by SMD, will be more individualized and will focus less on the party.

Existing work has conflicting results due to differences in methodologies, the unit of analysis, the measure, and the time periods considered. Overall, there are no clear results as to whether there are consistent differences between SMD and PR MPs in a similar context. I test the differences in how MPs communicate with voters by analyzing social media data. Social media data, and in particular Facebook data, provide a frequent way to observe how MPs communicate with the wider public. Social media have high levels of participation with low barriers to entry, and voters follow social media. Unlike other measures, it provides a frequent measure of how MPs communicate directly with those who are responsible for electing them into office.

The results can be summarized as follows: there is a difference in how constituency and list MPs communicate with voters. Using a machine learning classifier, a Random Forest Model can predict accurately 73% of the time whether a Facebook post comes from a SMD or PR MP. The accuracy of this classifier is not dependent on factors such as the MP's age, gender, or number of words per post. Pointing out words that help the classifier, "Bundestag" is equally prevalent among both SMD and PR MPs, but "Berlin" is only frequently used by SMD MPs whereas "Deutschland" is only frequently used by PR MPs. The classifier results provide a first level of analysis on the differences between SMD and PR MPs in their communication styles on Facebook. I then turned to understanding more of these specifics by understanding references to parties and personal pronouns.

List MPs are more likely to reference parties than constituency MPs, signaling that list MPs are more beholden to the party. On the other hand, constituency MPs do not reference personal words more than list MPs, meaning that constituency MPs are not more individualized than list MPs (specifically analyzing non-electoral times). Turning back to Figure 1, the upper pathway exists- the electoral constraints placed on list MPs impel them to be more party focused when communicating with voters

on social media. This fits into the existing literature that MPs elected under PR, regardless of whether there is another existing electoral rule in the country, will be more beholden to the party as they are more reliant on the party for resources and being re-elected. Existing work analyzing this have focused on measures with highly constrained environments on the legislative floor or used surveys with low response rates, and has had differing conclusions (André, Depauw and Beyens, 2015; Bhattacharya and Papageorgiou, 2019; Manow, 2013; Ohmura, 2014; Sieberer, 2010). Focusing on social media accounts of elected MPs is an important next step to understand how MPs communicate with voters, especially since it is such an important networking tool for MPs today.

Constituency MPs do not indicate that they have more personalized messaging styles on Facebook, which is also an interesting finding. Just because they reference parties less often does not mean that they reference individualized messaging more. This highlights how party centered versus personal centered messaging are not opposites of the same spectrum- they represent distinct messaging styles that can be used together. List MPs are more beholden to the party, and they communicate this to their voters. Moving forward, it would be interesting to analyze how and whether voters perceive these differences. While previous research has found that voters do not see constituency and list MPs as different actors, it would be interesting to see how this may change as MPs have been able to have more direct communication with voters with the rise of social media and the personalization of parties (Gschwend, 2007; Nohlen, 1986).

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Most work on comparative party politics studies the party as the unit of analysis. This choice is for both theoretical and empirical reasons. First, theoretically, it is because parties mostly operate as unitary actors on the legislative floor by voting together. It is then a simplification to measure parties as a single unit with one observation as opposed to as many observations as there are members of parliament (MPs) per party. Empirically, parties are studied as a single unit because there is a lack of data sources that capture MP positioning, especially over time and comparable across cases. Roll call votes, parliamentary questions, and debates have become popular and useful ways to measure MP behavior, but they all focus on activities on the legislative floor, and they are hard to compare across different institutional setups due to differing rules for participation. Given that MPs do not always operate fully in unison with their party, how do we measure individual MP positions in various contexts? This paper asks the question of whether it is necessary to focus on the level of the individual as the unit of analysis, and then it provides a way to measure the individual. I contribute both a new data source as well as a guide on how to use these data to study party politics at the level of the individual MP. I set guidelines on how to continue using social media data responsibly when studying intraparty politics, and I provide an application that demonstrates those principles.

I start by analyzing how variation in voter perceptions of a party's strategy influences vote choice. Individual voters have varying perceptions of party positions, which explains how they choose to vote for one party over the other. Most work studying party positions have used manifesto data to measure party strategies. Work from Downs (1957), and later Bale (2003) and Meguid (2008), argue that mainstream parties can win or lose relative to niche parties based on where they place themselves on the dimensions that niche parties own. These theories are measured at the party level, and they do not consider the individual mechanism of how voters decide on which party to support. I test this theory at the voter level to see whether individual perceptions of a mainstream party on immigration influence whether a voter chooses a mainstream party or a populist radical right party (PRRP). I ask how do a set of voters that hold anti-immigration attitudes and are anti-EU choose between a mainstream party and a PRRP? Using the case of the 2015 United Kingdom (UK) General Election and the British Election Study (BES), I find that one's perception of the Conservative Party's placement on immigration is influential for how the voter chooses between the Conservative Party and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). In the discussion, I pose the question of why are there varying perceptions of the Conservative Party's position? One reason I suggest is that different MPs within the same party convey different information to different constituencies. Different Conservative MPs have different positions on immigration, leading to varying perceptions by voters. This opens the door to show why it is important to study the individual MP as the unit of analysis.

Based on these results, I present a new data source that measures individual MP behavior through the social media activity of MPs. Social media data, unlike other data sources focused on the MP level, such as roll call votes or debates, show MP behavior outside of the legislative floor. Little work in political science has created guidelines on how to use this new data source, and most existing work uses different

social media platforms interchangeably. In my second paper, I ask the question of how can we use social media data to do social science research better? I show that choice in social media platform is not random. Social science researchers should choose their social media platform of interest based on the geographic context, demographic characteristics, and content of interest. I find that social media usage is not random, meaning that by choosing one platform over another, it may introduce bias into the results. To understand this more, I replicate an existing study from Sältzer (2020), who uses Twitter data to measure the positioning of German MPs, using Facebook data. I find that there are major substantive differences between the two results.

I find that there are two completely different dimensions recovered with Facebook data than what Sältzer (2020) finds with Twitter. While Sältzer (2020) finds evidence of an economic and a cultural dimension, I find evidence of a government support and populism dimension. I verify this with comparing my results to placements from the CHES Bakker et al. (2015). I argue that Facebook is more accurate in the case of Germany and scaling methods as it covers a higher percentage of MPs, and it has a longer word count per post, making it more suitable for scaling methods. With these results, Facebook data are more reflective of the German political space than Twitter data. This furthers my point that different social media platforms are not interchangeable. I conclude that Facebook data are the better choice when analyzing German MPs as there is much higher MP usage of Facebook relative to Twitter, which supports my argument that choice in social media platform should be decided based on the geographic context, demographic characteristics, and content of interest.

I next turn to an application of these data, using the guidelines I set forth in the second paper. I ask how are institutional constraints conveyed directly to voters? Using the case of Germany, which has a mixed member proportional representation (MMP) electoral system, I can observe MPs elected under single member district (SMD) seats and proportional representation (PR) seats while holding the context

constant. The results of whether there is a difference between the behavior of SMD and PR MPs, especially in the German context, are quite mixed (André, Depauw and Beyens, 2015; Benedetto and Hix, 2007; Gschwend and Zittel, 2015; Mai, 2020; Olivella and Tavits, 2014; Zittel and Nyhuis, 2021). I argue the differences in the literature are due to differences in methodologies, the unit of analysis, the measure of interest, and the time period of focus. Using Facebook data, which the most commonly used social media platform by German MPs, the correct model specification, and analyzing a wide time period, I overcome many of the existing problems in the literature. I start by showing that there is a detectable difference in social media posts from SMD MPs compared to PR MPs by running a machine learning classifier. The best performing model can correctly identify 73% of all posts. Then, I look at what exactly are the differences between SMD and PR MPs. I find that PR MPs are more party focused than PR MPs, but SMD MPs are not more individualized than PR MPs. I conclude that while PR MPs are more party oriented, SMD MPs are not more individualized than PR MPs. SMD and PR MPs in Germany communicate differently on Facebook, showing that institutional constraints can be recovered with text data.

This dissertation uses many different sources of data, showing the many different ways to study party politics. I first use multi-wave survey data, using the panel structure of the data to reduce potential sources of bias. I then turn to my original dataset of social media posts from MPs from France, Germany, and the UK. Beyond just the text of the posts, I also gathered the number of likes, comments, and shares per post. I also included information as to whether the post included links or photos. With these data, I also compiled demographic information on MPs, which included information on their party, gender, age, time in office, and constituency. I coupled these data with evidence from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to show how data at the party level can be used with data from the individual MP level (Bakker

et al., 2015). Beyond the theoretical conclusions that I draw, these data will be a huge contribution to the study of party politics in France, Germany, and the UK.

I also make large theoretical contributions in the party competition, institutions, and intraparty politics literature. Beyond showing why it is necessary to focus on the level of the individual, I show that electoral constraints spillover outside of the legislature. This means that voters receive slightly different messages based on whether their MP is elected via SMD or PR. This has implications for both comparative literature as well as single case studies (such as Germany). Future work could continue to look at this by adding in addition cases that have “pure” PR as opposed to MMP (as found in Germany).

Party politics research needs to keep studying the MP as the unit of analysis. This should be done using novel data sources, like the one presented in this dissertation, but also new data sources that have become more popular with the rise of the digitization of politics. These data sources should not be studied in isolation. They should be used in conjunction with data focused on the party and individual level, such as manifestos, surveys, roll call votes, parliamentary questions, and more. Understanding when and where these data lead to similar or differing results will provide understanding to the specifics of party cohesion. By using multiple data sources, we can look at questions such as: do the topics an MP asks during question time mirror posts on social media, what content does the party put forth on its social media and does it match the content discussed in its manifesto, and how do voter perceptions of an MP influence his or her social media activity?

Lastly, researchers should think about when not to use social media data. While social media data have the potential to benefit social science research, it is not a miraculous solution to all questions related to the study of party politics. While social media data are reflective of many activities that an MP does on a daily basis, there are other sources that are either more reflective or more suited for research.

For instance, if interested in legislative behavior, then debates, roll call votes, and parliamentary questions will be a better suited data source than social media data as they specifically look at legislative behavior. Similarly, if interested in questions about how parties have changed over the past thirty years, social media data will not provide coverage for that time period. This dissertation outlines why social science research should analyze the individual MP as the unit of analysis, provides guidelines on how to do so, and sets a practical example of how party research using social media data can be done in a way that leads to valid conclusions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Appendix: Who Stays and Who Goes: Understanding the Immigration Vote in the 2015 UK General Election

Figure A.1: Predicted Probabilities of Perceived Strategy of the Labour Party by Sample

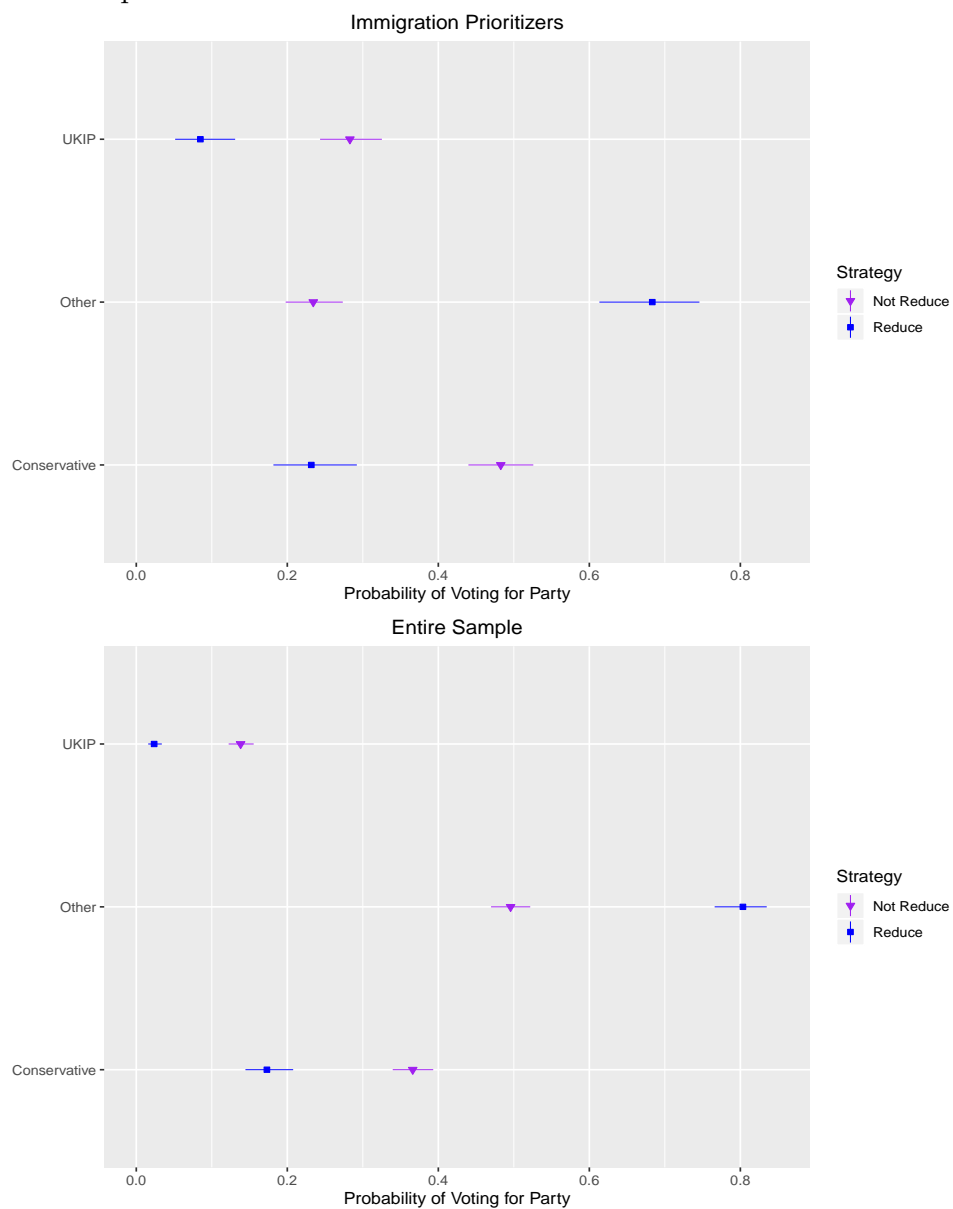


Table A.1: Perceived Strategy and Vote Choice on Entire Sample

	Conservative	Other
Intercept	4.45*** (0.28)	6.96*** (0.27)
Conservative-Reduce	0.48 (0.32)	1.35*** (0.32)
Conservative- Don't Know	2.64** (1.01)	2.27* (1.00)
EU Attitude	-0.31*** (0.02)	-0.45*** (0.02)
Attitude towards Immigration	-0.34*** (0.03)	-0.38*** (0.03)
Identify as Conservative	2.22*** (0.09)	-0.98*** (0.10)
Identify as Labour	0.28* (0.12)	1.64*** (0.10)
Age	-0.57* (0.28)	-0.86** (0.28)
Male Respondent	-0.51*** (0.08)	-0.49*** (0.08)
University Degree	0.06 (0.08)	0.23** (0.09)
Strategic Vote	0.02 (0.14)	0.82*** (0.14)
Working Class	-0.33*** (0.08)	-0.05 (0.08)
Conservative-Reduce*Immigration Att.	0.12* (0.06)	-0.14* (0.06)
Conservative-Don't Know*Immigration Att.	-0.19 (0.17)	-0.14 (0.16)
AIC	11872.49	11872.49
BIC	12077.95	12077.95
Log Likelihood	-5908.24	-5908.24
Deviance	11816.49	11816.49
Num. obs.	11360	11360

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table A.2: All Voters: Predicted Probabilities for Voting UKIP in Table A.1

Strategy	Lower	Fit	Upper
Not Reduce	0.163	0.185	0.208
Don't Know	0.028	0.048	0.075
Reduce	0.038	0.047	0.058

Table A.3: All Voters: Predicted Probabilities for Voting Conservative in Table A.1

Strategy	Lower	Fit	Upper
Not Reduce	0.243	0.272	0.303
Don't Know	0.323	0.359	0.396
Reduce	0.365	0.391	0.417

Table A.4: All Voters: Predicted Probabilities for Voting Other in Table A.1

Strategy	Lower	Fit	Upper
Not Reduce	0.510	0.543	0.576
Don't Know	0.556	0.594	0.629
Reduce	0.538	0.562	0.585

Table A.5: Perceived Strategy and Vote Choice on Immigration Prioritizers

	Conservative	Other
Intercept	3.75*** (0.41)	4.67*** (0.42)
Labour-Reduce	-0.14 (0.77)	0.02 (0.71)
Labour- Don't Know	2.78 (1.47)	1.37 (1.48)
EU Attitude	-0.28*** (0.03)	-0.37*** (0.03)
Attitude towards Immigration	-0.30*** (0.04)	-0.28*** (0.04)
Identify as Conservative	2.42*** (0.11)	-0.54*** (0.13)
Identify as Labour	0.11 (0.16)	1.50*** (0.12)
Age	-0.05 (0.38)	-0.27 (0.40)
Male Respondent	-0.40*** (0.10)	-0.36*** (0.10)
University Degree	0.02 (0.11)	0.09 (0.12)
Strategic Vote	0.53** (0.19)	0.99*** (0.18)
Working Class	-0.34*** (0.10)	0.04 (0.11)
Labour-Reduce*Immigration Att.	0.11 (0.14)	0.22 (0.12)
Labour-Don't Know*Immigration Att.	-0.28 (0.23)	-0.01 (0.23)
AIC	5688.99	5688.99
BIC	5864.31	5864.31
Log Likelihood	-2816.50	-2816.50
Deviance	5632.99	5632.99
Num. obs.	3872	3872

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

APPENDIX B

Appendix: The Assumptions we Make: Comparing Facebook versus Twitter Usage for Intraparty Politics

Table B.1: Percentage of Social Media Accounts of MPs by Party

Country	Party	Account	FB Account	TW Account	Both Accounts
France	Gauche	100.00	94.12	76.47	70.59
France	LFI	100.00	94.12	100.00	94.12
France	LREM	99.67	89.40	97.02	86.75
France	Les Républicains	96.19	73.33	92.38	69.52
France	LT	100.00	94.44	100.00	94.44
France	MoDem	97.83	86.96	93.48	82.61
France	Non inscrit	100.00	83.33	100.00	83.33
France	Socialistes	100.00	73.33	93.33	66.67
France	UDI	100.00	88.89	88.89	77.78
Germany	AfD	98.95	90.53	86.32	77.89
Germany	B90	95.52	76.12	92.54	73.13
Germany	CDU/CSU	90.32	84.68	55.24	49.60
Germany	Die Linke	98.57	92.86	88.57	82.86
Germany	FDP	100.00	91.46	92.68	84.15
Germany	SPD	97.45	91.08	75.80	69.43
UK	Conservative	94.72	75.58	86.14	67.00
UK	DUP	88.89	77.78	88.89	77.78
UK	Green Party	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
UK	Independent	100.00	84.21	94.74	78.95
UK	Labour	94.90	79.61	91.76	76.47
UK	Liberal Democrat	100.00	93.33	100.00	93.33
UK	Plaid Cymru	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
UK	SNP	100.00	91.43	91.43	82.86
UK	Sinn Féin	100.00	85.71	100.00	85.71
UK	Change UK	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Figure B.1: Ideological Placement of MPs with Facebook Data (Alternate Dimensions)

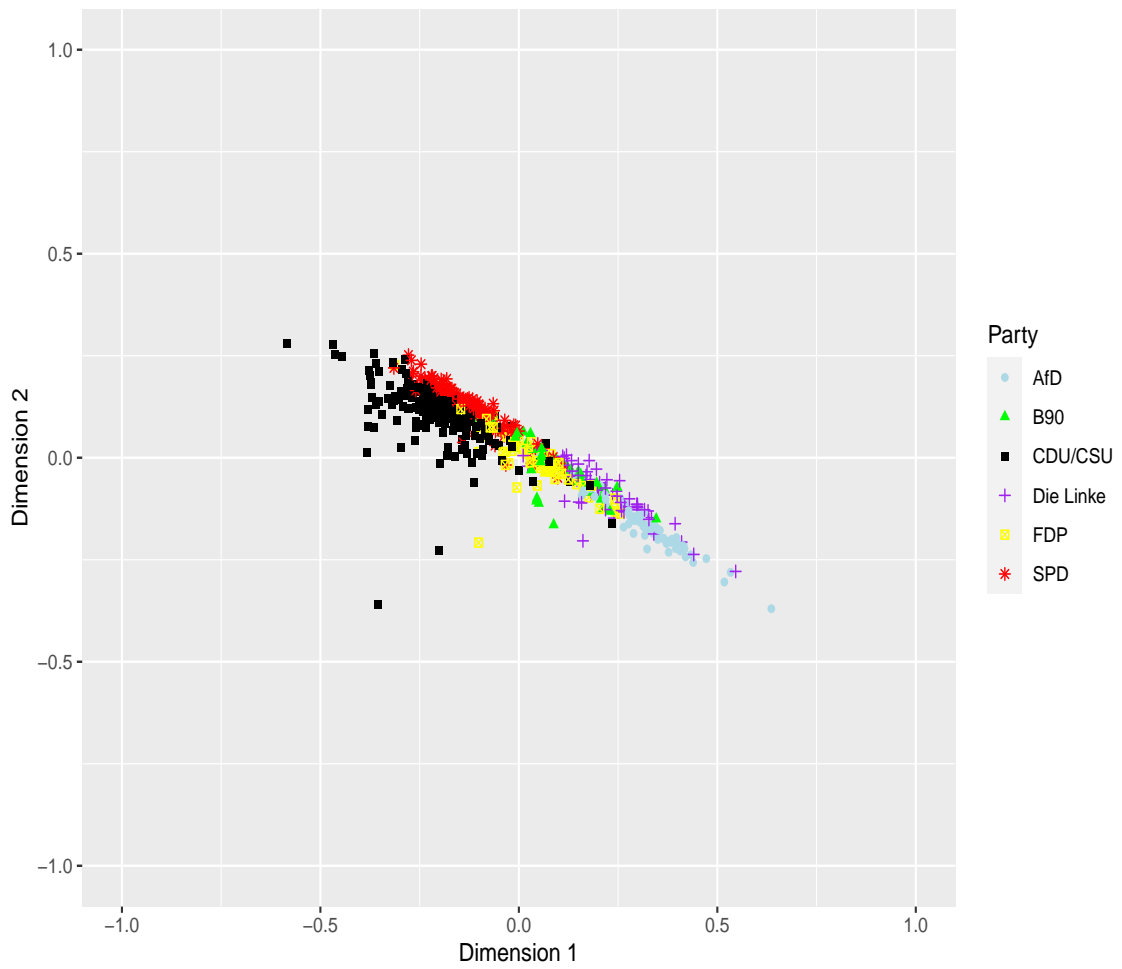
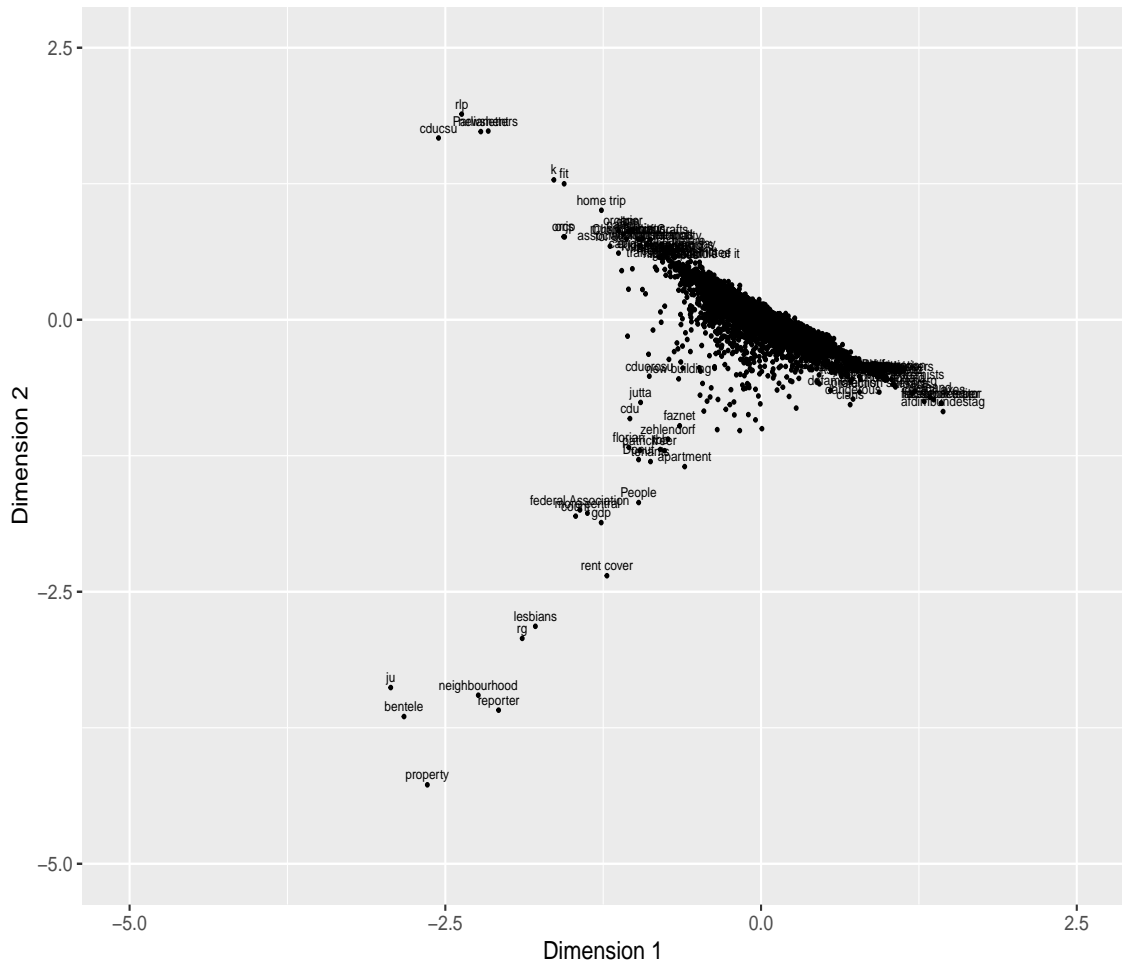


Figure B.2: Ideological Placement of Words with Facebook Data (Alternate Dimensions)



APPENDIX C

Appendix: Speaking Two Different Languages: the Electoral Constraints of MPs on Social Media

Table C.1: Descriptive Statistics of MPs by Electoral Status and Party

Electoral Status	Party	N	Age	Time in Office	Male
PR	AfD	89	53.92	3.00	79
SMD	AfD	2	50.50	3.00	2
PR	B90	66	50.12	8.91	29
SMD	B90	1	54.00	3.00	0
PR	CDU/CSU	19	52.53	8.11	11
SMD	CDU/CSU	226	53.02	10.58	183
PR	Die Linke	65	53.18	8.28	30
SMD	Die Linke	5	55.80	13.80	3
PR	FDP	80	48.77	3.00	61
SMD	FDP	1	53.00	3.00	1
PR	Independent	1	62.00	3.00	1
SMD	Independent	3	46.33	8.00	2
PR	SPD	99	54.45	9.72	46
SMD	SPD	57	51.67	10.18	42

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