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# MAINSTREAMING THE FAR- RIGHT: The Use of Anti-Migrant Frames in Sweden and France

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the mainstreaming of far-right anti-migrant frames in Sweden and France. Using a qualitative approach combining frame theory and supplementary data from publicly available sources, the thesis documents when three anti-migrant frames transferred from the political manifestos of far-right to center and center-right political parties across three elections. The thesis also examines how differences in discursive opportunities, specifically the visibility of the increase in migration, and political context, specifically voter competition and political system type, impacted the transfer of frames. The empirical material includes party manifestos published by center, center-right, and far-right parties in Sweden and France between 2007-2018 and supplementary data between the 2002-2019, including immigration statistics, vote margins, and party GAL-TAN scores.

The thesis concludes that both center and center-right parties in Sweden and France incorporated far-right frames. In Sweden, far-right frames did not appear in mainstream manifestos in 2010 or 2014, but transferred by 2018. In France, far-right frames appeared in the manifestos of the center-right in 2007 and 2012, but less so by 2017. In both countries, political competition by far-right parties, and high migration rates that afforded the issue of migration visibility, encouraged the transfer of far-right frames. However, France's semi-presidential political system drove both the far and center-right parties to support the preferences of the median voter as the far-right gained power, decreasing the salience and transfer of far-right frames. By contrast, in Sweden, political competition by the far-right not only encouraged the transfer of frames by 2018, but drove the right and center-right to move away from the median voter.

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# 1. Introduction

Far-right frames, or interpretations of issues and events by far-right actors intended to shift public opinion, are becoming identifiable in mainstream political discourse across Europe, perceptible even in the platforms of mainstream political parties. Concurrently, far right political parties, or parties with culturally traditional, authoritarian, nativist, and/or nationalist platforms, are winning greater voting margins across Europe. As they rise to power, far-right parties are encroaching on the voter base of mainstream parties, modernizing their extremist stances and minimizing their historical associations with the extreme right to appeal to a greater number of voters (Downes 2020). Mainstream parties, particularly center and center-right parties, are responding to the broadening voter appeal of the far-right by reacting to their positions, taking on pieces of far-right platforms, and even rejecting liberal democratic values at the core of their belief systems (Downes 2020). In Europe, the gradual acceptance of far-right frames by mainstream political parties is observable across the continent. Previous research demonstrates that mainstream European political parties perceived increased competition over voters from far-right parties and adopted far-right frames around migration in response to both increased party competition and the arrival of high rates of migrants in Europe between 2014 and 2019 (Downes and Loveless 2018). While scholars have explored the impact of far-right frames on political outcomes for far-right parties (Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2008; Ellinas 2010; Elgenius and Rydgren 2019; Rooduijn 2020), few have addressed how framing processes, discursive opportunities,<sup>1</sup> and differences in political context enable far-right frames to enter the political mainstream.

Mainstreaming, the route by which information enters the popular dialogue or “the major current of opinion,” is a dynamic process involving a wide range of participants (Picciotto 2002: 322) It is an injection of new information into the “dominant culture” based on what is deemed publicly acceptable (Picciotto 2002: 322). While the mainstreaming of once-radical political issues like gender equity and environmentalism is well-documented, this process has not yet been broadly applied to the far-right. However, the phenomenon is evident today. Far-right frames, which are often anti-migrant, anti-elite, or xenophobic narratives around events, are repeated by media and mainstream politicians. Far-right media stories, published by far-right publications, are amplified

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<sup>1</sup> “Discursive opportunities” are “the aspects of the public discourse that determine a message’s chances of diffusion in the public sphere” (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 202). Koopmans and Olzak define three primary discursive opportunities as visibility, resonance and legitimacy. This concept will be further explained on page 17.

or quoted by mainstream media outlets and politicians. Burgeoning crises are framed by far-right ideologues and the narratives are picked up or built upon by mainstream media and politicians. As a result, the far-right influences bystanders and accumulates adherents, growing both its voter base and its ability to influence the greater current of public opinion as mainstream parties and politicians shift positions in response to the threat of voter loss (Downes and Loveless 2018; Rooduijn 2020).

Far right parties have become the fastest growing party family in Europe (Golder 2016; Bieber 2019). “In the past sixty years, no other party family has managed to make such significant electoral advances across so many countries in such a short time” (Ellinas 2010: 4). In Europe the 2000 breakthrough of the far-right Freedom Party in Austria and the 2001 entrance of the Danish People’s Party into a legislative agreement with the current government heralded the ascendance of a host of far-right parties previously shunned and derided for espousing what were perceived as extremist, fringe views (Biswas 2020). Far-right parties are now amassing the largest voting returns seen in Europe since WWII (Biswas 2020). Unable to ignore the electoral clout of the far-right and desperate to maintain their voting margins, center and center-right parties in Europe are starting to accede to and form coalitions with far-right parties, coopting and responding to their priority issues, and informally breaking the *cordon sanitaire*, an unspoken agreement among mainstream parties in many European countries to isolate and exclude the far-right (Chini 2019).

Mainstream parties in Europe are even changing their core ideological values and central aspects of their political platforms in response to the stances and frames of far-right parties. In historically migrant-tolerant Sweden, mainstream political parties sharply restricted immigration in 2016, responding to an increase in migration rates but also to growing political pressure by the far-right *Sverigedemokraterna* (Sweden Democrats) (Schroeder 2019). In France, the political mainstream has similarly acceded political ground to the far right. Emmanuel Macron, who ran as a “radical centrist,” awarded a rare interview to a far-right media organization in 2019 and presented legislation in December 2020 requiring federal oversight of mosques partially in response to criticism from France’s far-right *Rassemblement National* (National Rally) party and “to distract from his unpopular economic reforms” (Piser 2019: 1). The electoral success of far-right parties and politicians and their influence on the mainstream in Europe does not appear to be a fleeting trend.

The far-right maintains a growing voice in the mainstream political and media debate in Europe. Scholarship on the mainstreaming of far-right frames in European countries may encourage greater understanding of how this trend will impact mainstream European politics. One common perspective in the literature is that the so-called “migration crisis” transformed Europe politically and that the mainstreaming of far-right frames around migration is in part due to the arrival of thousands of migrants in Europe (Traar 2018). This thesis seeks to examine whether the “migration crisis” alone really did “change everything” or whether the transfer of far-right frames to the political manifestos of mainstream parties was also significantly impacted by differing political contexts in each country, such as differing levels of voter competition by the far-right or differences in political structures (Traar 2018: 1).

### *1.1 Research Aim and Question*

The objective of this thesis is to assess the following questions:

1. When and how were far-right anti-migrant frames incorporated in the platforms of center and center-right political parties in France and Sweden?
2. How did discursive opportunities that arose as a response to an increase in migration, and differing political contexts in each country, impact the mainstreaming of far-right anti-migrant frames by center and center-right parties in France and Sweden?

The study examines the mainstreaming of far-right anti-migrant frames in two cases—Sweden and France—to understand the general trend of how far-right frames enter the political mainstream in Europe. These case studies were selected because both are EU countries with strong far-right political parties. Both countries also accepted a large number of migrants during the height of the increase in migration. Given the impact of the increase in migration in Sweden and France, it is relevant to examine whether discursive opportunities provoked by the crisis, such as increased visibility of migrants and the migration issue, may have impacted the transfer of far-right frames. However, there are also important differences between France and Sweden. Between 1986 and 2007 in France, the far-right Front National party consistently won over ten percent of the vote and in 2002, won 17 percent in the national presidential election which advanced the party to the second round (Marthaler 2008). By contrast, Sweden did not have a strong far-right party



until 2010, when the Sweden Democrats entered the political scene. Additionally, both countries have different political systems. France has a semi-presidential and majoritarian political system. To win election, the presidential candidate must obtain a national majority in the first or second round and unlike a parliamentary system, the executive is not responsible to the legislature. In the Presidential election, the top two candidates from the first round compete against one another in a final run-off.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, Sweden has a parliamentary and proportional political system, where executive power resides in a Prime Minister rather than a President and legislative power is split evenly between the executive and legislature. Given the difference in political systems and historical strength of the far-right party, it is relevant to investigate whether different political contexts in the two countries could have impacted the transfer of far-right frames during the time period under study.

The period of time selected, 2007 to 2019, spans three most recent elections in each country (in France, 2007, 2012, and 2017 and in Sweden, 2010, 2014, and 2018) and includes a period of increasing migration, culminating in the so-called “migration crisis.” The material studied, political party manifestos, was selected because these documents reflect political party framing of immigration in these elections. By examining the incorporation of far-right frames by center and center-right political parties after an election, it is possible to assess how each party responded to increased or decreased competition by the far-right in the previous election. Data on far-right competition are provided for the election that occurred prior to the publication of the initial political manifesto (2002 in France and 2006 in Sweden). Data on migration for Europe from 2008 to 2019 are available from Eurostat (Eurostat 2021). These data allow assessment of increasing visibility from the impact of increasing migration and the “migration crisis” on party framing. One criticism may be made of the time period selected. The far-right in France won a significant electoral victory in 2002, but the far-right, center, and center-right political manifestos in the 2002 election in France are not included in this thesis due to time constraints. However, the success of the far-right in France in 2002 is a factor of note in analyzing the center-right manifesto in 2007.

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<sup>2</sup> The French parliamentary elections also follow a two round model, though this thesis focuses specifically on presidential results.

## *1.2 Outline*

To analyze how far-right frames have entered the mainstream, I begin by exploring previous research on the far-right, on mainstream and far-right political parties, on the response of mainstream parties to the political ascendance of the far-right, and on the mainstreaming of far-right frames. Next, I describe and apply framing theory and review prior applications in a political party context. To examine how far-right frames are mainstreamed, I analyze two case studies: France and Sweden. For my analysis, I initially document when three far-right frames appeared in far-right political party manifestos in both countries and track when and how these anti-migrant far-right frames transferred to mainstream center and center-right party platforms. Next, I examine two independent variables that may have impacted the transfer of far-right frames in each country. First, I analyze a discursive opportunity, visibility, that may have arisen as a result of migration rates during the time period under study. Second, I examine the impact of political context in each country, specifically examining vote margins and GAL-TAN scores, to assess whether differences in political context changed the incorporation of far-right frames by center and center-right parties. Finally, I underscore the implications of far-right frame mainstreaming in France and Sweden as examples of a greater European trend and suggest areas for future research.

## 2.0 Previous Research

The mainstreaming of far-right frames, and the far-right itself, is a nebulous and difficult phenomenon to study. The first part of this section describes existing research on the far-right in Europe by examining the various definitions of the term far-right and outlining the difference between the far-right and the extreme right. The second part of the section describes existing research on mainstream and far-right political parties in Europe, given that the thesis analyzes the party platforms of both mainstream and far-right parties in Sweden and France, and research on how mainstream political parties have responded to the far-right. The third part of the section reviews existing research on far-right frames and the mechanisms by which far-right frames enter the mainstream.

### 2.1 *The Far-Right*

Academics disagree on which term fits the far-right's wide-ranging spectrum of ideologies. The far-right pursues a range of goals using distinctly different means, and is referred to variously in the literature as "the extreme right, right wing, radical right, right wing radicalism, right wing extremism, right wing terrorism, white power, white nationalism, white supremacism, white separatism...counter-jihadism...identitarianism, racially and ethnically motivated extremism, alt right and alt lite" (Miller Idriss 2020: 15). In an extensive description of the various definitions applied to the term far-right, far-right researcher Cas Mudde notes that only five characteristics are mentioned across twenty-six academic definitions: "nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and the strong [or authoritarian] state" (Mudde 2000: 1).

Most frequently, the term "far-right" refers to individuals or groups with ideological and political beliefs that fall to the right of center-right parties on the left-right political spectrum. The concepts "left" and "right" were established in 1789 during the French Revolution, when traditionalist French supporters of a royal legislative veto sat on the right of the National Assembly floor, with their opponents to the left (Mavrogordatos 1987). Based on this historical interpretation, which has changed over time but remains an accepted political concept, the right, as the privileged class, supported cultural traditionalism, hierarchy and the maintenance of the status quo (Mavrogordatos 1987). The left favored change, progression and equality. The far-right, in this scaffolding, supports a return to traditional values, cultural conservatism, and what it perceives as natural hierarchies among individuals (Miller Idriss 2020).

The far-right does not align neatly with the government intervention and economics-based left-right spectrum proposed by Anthony Downs in his landmark spatial model of party competition (Downs 1957). Downs' model maintains that political parties are actors in a spatial field and that they change their position in relation to one another in order to win votes (Downs 1957). According to Downs, parties in a dual-party or majoritarian system often move toward the center to reflect the position of the median voter, while parties in a parliamentary or multiparty system are more likely to polarize away from one another (Magni-Berton & Panel 2017).<sup>3</sup> Based on Downs' model, as a far-right party in a presidential or semi-presidential majoritarian system becomes more competitive politically, it is therefore likely that the party's political manifestos will increasingly reflect the preferences of the median voter (Magni-Berton & Panel 2017). In a parliamentary or proportional political system, as the far-right becomes more competitive politically, it is likely that the far-right party will become increasingly disparate ideologically from other parties as it attempts to win votes (Magni-Berton & Panel 2017).

Downs interprets "left" and "right" based on receptiveness to government intervention. He describes the left as parties in support of "complete political control of the economy" and the right as parties in support of "no government interventions beyond the most limited state operations" (Stokes 1963: 368). As a result, far-right parties and groups largely do not adhere to Downs' concept of left and right. Far-right parties cannot be easily mapped in a spatial field that focuses on differences in preference toward government intervention because they are often authoritarian-leaning, which makes them favor government intervention as a solution to problems. These parties can be distrustful of government intervention in some cases, but usually when it comes from a supranational body (such as Euroskepticism). Unlike parties on the right of Downs' economic intervention-based model, far-right parties often openly support welfare policies with populist<sup>4</sup> appeal. However, unlike parties on the left side of the Downs' model, far-right parties are also culturally conservative, and prioritize cultural issues at the expense of economic issues. Therefore, far-right parties are not easily mapped onto Downs' model, falling somewhere in between right- and left-wing parties. Instead of focusing primarily on issues

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<sup>3</sup> With its two round presidential run off, France's semi-presidential system mimics a two party system, despite the fact that the country has multiple political parties. As the final run off is essentially a two party competition, the system should move candidates toward the preferences of the median voter.

<sup>4</sup> Mudde describes populists, in an interview, as individuals who want to "split society into 'two homogenous and antagonistic groups: the pure people on the one end and the corrupt elite on the other' (Friedman 2017: 1). Populists often say they're guided by the 'will of the people.'" (Friedman 2017: 1).

relating to economic intervention, “the defining characteristic of right-wing populist parties is that they take strong conservative and nationalist positions and emphasize traditional cultural and moral values, national self-interest and identity, and authority” (Bayerlein 2021: 3).

A new political model, introduced by Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson in 2002, better explains the position of far-right parties in relation to mainstream parties. The variable introduced by these researchers, GAL-TAN, juxtaposes parties that are green/alternative/libertarian (GAL) with parties that are traditional/authoritarian/nationalist (TAN). New scholarship claims that this model is more explanatory, as modern parties are “moving beyond left vs right as the hard, economic cleavage over redistribution begins to lose relative importance in the political landscape to one combining confrontations over immigration, minority rights, environmental policy, the role of traditions, and authority” (Filip 2019: 4). The new spatial model reflects a purported cultural divide that is taking precedent over the economic intervention-based model proposed by Downs (Filip 2019). On a scale of 1-10, far-right parties fall towards the higher end of the GAL-TAN scale, rated as traditional and authoritarian, while the lower end of the scale delineates parties that are libertarian or post materialist (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002).

Far-right groups often advocate for a return to the traditional past, the importance of “lines of superiority and inferiority, according to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion and sexuality,” and nationalist or nativist claims to citizenship (Miller Idriss 2020: 5). There are varying uses of criteria to define who belongs within the “in-group,” such as in countries like the Netherlands or France, where far-right political parties advocate for the protection of rights for women and LGBTQ individuals in an attempt to distance themselves from Islam, which they see as incompatible with national values. (Miller Idriss 2020). However, in most cases, far-right ideology invokes elements of nationalism,<sup>5</sup> nativism,<sup>6</sup> and even civilizationism, or the concept of

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<sup>5</sup> Nationalism is the concept that the state should belong to the individuals of a particular nation, and is associated with political action to achieve that goal. Máiz defines nationalism as a feature of a “community” with shared ethnicity that pursues similar national interests and a collective identity that inevitably “demands the right to self-determination and the establishment of a state that ensures self-government” (Máiz 2003: 196). While “nationalism exists wherever individuals feel they belong primarily to the nation, and whenever affective attachment and loyalty to that nation override all other attachments and loyalties,” “the essence of nationalism is the goal of national flourishing [and that] nationalists are people who identify with their historical group and want it to flourish” (Millard 2014: 4).

<sup>6</sup> Nativism has been defined by far-right scholar Cas Mudde in an interview as “xenophobic nationalism” that “wants congruence of state and nation—the political and the cultural unit. It wants one state for every nation and one nation for every state” (Friedman 2017: 1).

a shared Western transnational cultural heritage that must be preserved and protected. The far right in France and the Netherlands views acceptance, secularism, and open-mindedness as a traditional national value to be protected and conserved by the “true citizens” of the country, excluding individuals who have conflicting beliefs and therefore do not belong. Far-right groups or political parties frequently display xenophobia alongside nativism and nationalism. They often refer to two primary enemies, combining elements of populism and nationalism: the “other,” which is usually a “non-governmental or external threat (e.g. immigrants)” that menaces the community, state or people, and the “establishment,” which is an “internal enemy (e.g. the “traitors” in government and the political establishment)” that betrays the community it claims to operate on behalf of (Ravndal and Bjørge 2018: 6). Compared to a traditional mainstream political platform with a wide-range of stances on various political issues, the far-right usually prioritizes a few key issues—often immigration, security, corruption and foreign policy (Mudde 2019). All four of these issues are rooted in these parties’ core characteristics of nativism, nationalism, traditionalism and hierarchical exclusion.

While the far-right generally upholds cultural traditionalism, it often favors authoritarian-leaning<sup>7</sup> government structures. Some far-right thinkers “espouse beliefs that are antidemocratic [and] antiegalitarian,” promoting illiberal or authoritarian solutions to solve priority issues like immigration through “ethnic cleansing or ethnic migration, and the establishment of separate ethno-states or enclaves along racial and ethnic lines” (Miller Idriss 2020: 7). However, “the entire far-right does not share belief in all of these elements equally” and “in recent years there has been a tactical shift towards trying to undermine government from within” (Miller Idriss 2020: 5). In some circumstances, the far-right favors political ascendance via democratic means. In other cases, far-right parties and far-right individuals are willing to forgo democracy altogether. It is often a combination of both, depending on the expediency of the mechanism at hand and the probability of electoral success. Generally, the far-right is characterized by political authoritarianism and disrespect for the rule of law: “threatening hallmarks like free and fair

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<sup>7</sup> Authoritarians “implement tough security measures against threats from outsiders, promote a nativist brand of nationalism, demonstrate little tolerance of multiculturalism, and exercise a concentrated form of power involving strong, charismatic leadership” (Friedman 2017: 1). Comparative political scientists describe authoritarianism as “a regime that does not organize periodic free and fair elections” (Glasius 2018: 516). However, even if individuals with “authoritarian psychological profiles” rise to power through democratic mechanisms, they can pursue authoritarian practices or “a pattern of actions, embedded in an organized context, sabotaging accountability to people (‘the forum’) over whom a political actor exerts control, or their representatives, by disabling their access to information and/or disabling their voice (Glasius 2018: 516-527).

elections; systems of checks and balances; the protection of individual freedom; the rule of law; and freedoms of the press, religion, speech and assembly” (Miller Idris 2020: 4).

Within this broad category of “far-right,” researchers Jacob Ravndal and Tore Bjørgo refer to two separate groups—the radical far-right and the extreme far-right, based on Mudde’s 2002 landmark work (Ravndal and Tore Bjørgo 2018). While both the radical far-right and the extreme far-right are characterized by cultural traditionalism, authoritarian and nativist tendencies, and the belief that “social inequality—and corresponding social hierarchies—[are] inevitable, natural, or even desirable,” the radical right chooses to work within existing democratic political frameworks to achieve its goals, while the extreme right rejects the confines of democratic mechanisms alone and encourages violence to achieve its goals (Ravndal and Tore Bjørgo 2018). However, there is notable tactical overlap between these two groups, as demonstrated by President Donald Trump, who was fairly elected within the bounds of a democratic political system, but frequently openly and tacitly encouraged violence among his supporters to achieve his political goals. Acknowledging the intersections among all the groups that fit within the category “far-right,” is essential to understanding the movement’s diversity.

In this study, I will use the term “far-right” to refer to ideological beliefs and frames that are characterized by cultural traditionalism, nativism/nationalism/xenophobia, and hierarchical and exclusionary belief systems. By this definition, the far-right leans toward achieving goals through authoritarian solutions or anti-democratic means, even if they happen to be working through democratic frameworks. Existing research supports this definition—in their 2018 literature review, Ravndal and Bjørgo note that “far-right may thus be used as a collective term comprising both (democratic) radicals and (anti-democratic) extremists, who all share three key features: acceptance of social inequality, authoritarianism, and nativism” (Ravndal and Bjørgo 2018: 6). When referencing far-right groups working within democratic frameworks, I will describe these elements as the “far-right,” in contrast with far-right groups or individuals that do not operate within democratic frameworks, which I will refer to as “far-right extremists” or “far-right extremism.”

## *2.2 Mainstream and Far-Right Political Parties*

As discussed in the introduction of this analysis, the mainstream refers to a composite of “competing views and diverse beliefs” that “benefit from social approval” at any given time

(Picciotto 2002: 323). “To adopt mainstream attitudes is to ‘go with the flow’...To espouse mainstream views is to minimize the risk of confrontation and ostracism. To endorse mainstream policies and programs is to benefit from social approval” (322). Mainstreaming, a dynamic process, “requires...the exercise of compulsion and persuasion” and “innovation and adaptability combined with consistency of purpose and the ability to consolidate support for change” (Picciotto 2002: 325). Those individuals or groups who attempt to introduce their beliefs or priorities to the mainstream must therefore “strike an appropriate balance between conformity and diversity as well as between stability and change” (Picciotto 2002: 325).

The difference between mainstream and far-right political parties was explored in 2005 by Bonnie Meguid, who wrote a landmark paper on the interactions between mainstream political parties and “challenger” or “niche” political parties. Her work references Downs’ economic intervention-based spatial model of party competition (Downs 1957). In Downs’ model, parties change their stances in order to lure voters, and reposition themselves in the spatial model based on other parties’ movements (Mavrogordatos 1987). Meguid’s paper builds on this theory by discussing the reaction of mainstream parties to the introduction of smaller niche parties, a category within which she includes the far-right (Meguid 2005). She defines “mainstream” parties as “electorally dominant actors in the center-left, center, and center-right blocs on the Left-Right political spectrum” as described by Downs, who refers to the “traditional class-based orientation of politics” based on economic intervention by the government (Meguid 2005: 347).

By contrast, Meguid defines niche parties as parties who prioritize limited platforms and emphasize certain issues that “have previously been neglected by their already established competitors” (Meyer and Wagner 2013: 1248). Niche parties eschew the economic intervention-based Left-Right continuum of mainstream parties in favor of prioritizing “sets of issues which were previously outside the dimensions of party competition” and do not fall neatly along economic lines (Meguid 2005: 347). The niche party’s stance on their chosen issues are “not only novel [in terms of the issue raised] but they often do not coincide with existing lines of political division [and therefore] ...appeal to groups of voters that may cross-cut traditional partisan alignments” (Meguid 2005: 348). Finally, niche parties do not attempt to provide “the comprehensive policy platforms common to their mainstream party peers,” instead relying on the perceived resonance of a set of chosen issues to garner voter support (Meguid 2005: 348).



Meguid classifies the majority of far-right parties as niche parties which emphasize “the protection of (patriarchal) family values and a nationally oriented, immigrant-free way of life” (Meguid 2005: 348). Rather than compete on an economic intervention-driven platform, far-right parties prioritize a set of key issues—immigration, security, corruption and foreign policy—at the expense of the wide-ranging comprehensive platform of a mainstream party. To compete with mainstream parties as they grow in popularity, a far-right party may later adopt a wider policy platform. For example, “the anti-EU U.K. Independence Party [attempted] to broaden its profile as a strategy to get rid of its ‘single-issue party’ image” (Meyer and Wagner 2013: 1249). Similarly, mainstream parties may identify a niche issue or set of issues popularized by the far-right and choose to compete on them or prioritize them above other issues to win votes in a political environment where those issues are becoming salient, such as the Austrian Freedom Party’s shift from liberal mainstream party to nationalist niche party (Meyer and Wagner 2013).

In this study, I define mainstream political parties as electorally dominant actors championing a comprehensive platform of issues. Far right parties, by contrast, emphasize a set of niche issues that are deprioritized by mainstream parties and which correspond with the typical ideological markers of the far-right (nativism, nationalism, xenophobia, hierarchical exclusion, authoritarianism, and traditionalism) but do not adhere to Downs’ economic intervention-based political spectrum. An electorally dominant mainstream party championing a far-right issue within a comprehensive platform remains a mainstream party and similarly, a far-right party that broadens its platform to include a comprehensive range of issues while experiencing a surge of popular support may be considered to have become a mainstream party.

The differences in the success of far-right parties and the transfer of far-right frames across countries can be argued to be due to a range of factors. Antonis Ellinas argues that mainstream parties co-opt or incorporate far-right frames in response to two factors: increased voter competition and political context and discursive opportunities that arise as a result of media coverage and public responses to internal or external events (Ellinas 2010). This theory is supported by Meguid’s description of niche parties and Downs’ and Hooghe et. al’s spatial models, which maintain that the parties reposition themselves in response to one another’s ideological stances. Ellinas argues that while traditional economic intervention-based issues continue to drive the bulk of party competition in Western Europe, over “the past few decades, they have been supplemented by a set of non-materialist issues that cut across traditional party cleavages” (Ellinas

2010: 67). These cultural issues (Ellinas describes them as “immigration, citizenship, asylum, and historical memory”) are the “niche” issues defined by Meguid and measured by Hooghe, Marks and Wilson’s GAL-TAN variable that cut across traditional economic intervention-oriented voting blocs (Ellinas 2010: 67). Both far-right and mainstream parties are responding to increased voter receptiveness to cultural issues by incorporating “national identity themes into their programs, creating a new axis of party competition” (Ellinas 2010: 67).

The competitive relationship between far-right political parties and mainstream political parties is reinforcing: if mainstream parties incorporate far-right frames to compete for voters, the increased legitimacy afforded to the frames simultaneously heightens their potency in the political debate and increases the far-right’s likelihood of electoral success. The role of mainstream political parties in the mainstreaming of the far-right is further outlined by Mudde in his 2019 book, *The Far-Right Today*. Like Ellinas, he argues that the unique political context of each country, including voter competition and political structure, impacts the mainstreaming of far-right parties. However, there are four main strategies that mainstream parties take in response to the far-right, two of which are vehicles that encourage far-right frames to mainstream. Demarcation, the first strategy, is the exclusion of far-right political parties from politics through the use of the *cordon sanitaire*, first introduced as a strategy to prevent far-right parties from forming coalition governments (Mudde 2019: 135). Mainstream cordons “are starting to show cracks” and only hold until it “becomes expedient for a specific party to break the cordon” (134). Confrontation, the second strategy, defined as active opposition to far-right parties, “has become less and less common in the twenty-first century as populist and radical right parties have become more successful electorally and more relevant politically” (Mudde 2019: 136).

Both strategies can be observed in the response to the Sweden Democrats in Sweden and the National Rally (formerly National Front) in France. Both parties won significant electoral margins for the first time in the 2000s, as National Front figurehead Jean-Marie Le Pen “shocked the world by...qualifying for the second round of the presidential election” in 2002 and the Sweden Democrats won parliamentary representation in 2010 (Nathanson 2020: 1). In both cases, the parties were widely criticized by the media and swiftly siloed by mainstream political parties. Le Pen was stymied by a “republican front” formed by both the left and right in an attempt to stop him in his tracks” and Sweden’s five leading political parties joined forces in a statement that they would not negotiate with or seek parliamentary backing from the Sweden Democrats (Nathanson

2020: 1). It is notable that neither strategy appears to have been effective. The National Rally and the Sweden Democrats have since both moved to downplay their extremist past and as a result have “become more successful electorally and more relevant politically” (Mudde 2019: 136). In recent years, their electoral victories have not garnered equivalent levels of public outrage, which prevents mainstream parties from taking hardline stances.

The third and fourth strategies described by Mudde deal more directly with the mainstreaming of far-right frames. The third strategy, cooptation, involves the exclusion of far-right parties but not far-right frames. Excluding far-right parties but not their ideas is a difficult project, particularly if discursive opportunities such as visibility are increasing voter receptiveness to cultural issues, like the idea that migration is a threat to cultural identity, that are prioritized by the far-right. Ellinas describes how mainstream parties dipped a toe in “national identity issues,” a typical far-right niche (Ellinas 2010: 140). Recognizing the political salience of national and cultural identity in the wake of globalization, mainstream parties hoped to take advantage of an issue that cut across traditional voter blocs but this strategy made them politically vulnerable to far-right parties that prioritized these issues. Across Europe, far-right frames around migration began to enter the political mainstream in response to larger waves of immigration. Under political pressure, “liberal democratic parties primarily adopted populist right-wing radical discourse, problematizing...immigration and multiculturalism without substantially changing their policies” (Mudde 2019: 136). The final strategy described by Mudde, incorporation, is the mainstreaming and normalizing of far-right parties themselves, which can be observed in diminishing objections to the presence of far-right parties in mainstream politics (Mudde 2019). In many cases incorporation occurs as a result of large far-right voting margins that force mainstream parties to engage with far-right parties, often as a result of the success of the far-right party’s suppression of its extremist roots.

### *2.3 The Mainstreaming of Far-Right Frames by Political Parties*

Aristotle Kallas argues that the growing appeal of far-right frames in Europe “owes at least as much to the weakening defenses or cynical opportunism of the mainstream as to the dynamics and appeal of the radical right’s ideas themselves” (Kallas 2013: 221). Two factors are at play here. First, far-right parties are at once downplaying their links to extremism and taking advantage of the growing salience of cultural issues in the modern political ecosystem (Hooghe, Marks &

Wilson 2002). Second, by “embracing and reproducing (however strategically or opportunistically in many cases) aspects of the far right’s hyper-nationalist and xenophobic discourses” mainstream political parties are giving “indirect legitimacy to taboo ideas of extremist provenance, and effectively become agents of their mainstreaming” (Kallas 2013: 225). Kallas describes how both mainstream political parties and far-right political parties simultaneously encourage the mainstreaming of far-right frames, saying:

“at a time when far-right parties strategically calibrate their discourses to cater to shifting social demand and tone down accusations of extremism without usually changing the radical nature of their aggressive anti-immigration message, political mainstream constituencies have often shown an alarming tendency to grant legitimacy to such views, either by working with far-right parties in government or by appropriating some of their radical discourses. Either way, the far right has exercised a disproportionate effect on the shaping of the political agenda on key contemporary issues such as immigration, Islam, national identity, and national security” (Kallas 2013: 228).

Kallas’ argument is underscored by Ellinas, who argues that the response of mainstream political parties to far-right frames (whether co-optation or incorporation) is due to both increased political competition by the far-right and the existence of discursive opportunities that encourage far-right frames to enter the mainstream (Ellinas 2010).

Together, these trends—the political competitiveness of the far-right and the response of mainstream political parties to their success—flourish in an atmosphere of instability that both creates opportunities for far-right frames to cross into the mainstream and encourages public demand for these frames. Essentially, an increased receptiveness to far-right frames must coexist with their growing visibility in the public debate and a ripe political context. Kallas believes that a combination of “long-term trends (stereotypes and prejudices, lack of intimacy with ‘the other’)” and “short-term factors (such as periods of sustained difficulty or aggravation, including the debilitating effects of economic crisis and of rapidly increasing migration flows)” create moments of instability where the public becomes unusually receptive to far-right frames (Kallas 2013: 225). In such moments, far-right frames can “cross” the border of what is acceptable for discussion in a public forum, entering the mainstream.

Koopmans and Olzak elaborate on the mechanism that allows an issue, ideology or frame to rise to the top of the hundreds of issues and ideologies simultaneously competing for attention and acceptance in the mainstream debate (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 202). They define this phenomenon as “discursive opportunities,” or “the aspects of the public discourse that determine a message’s chances of diffusion in the public sphere” (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 202). Koopmans and Olzak’s theory of discursive opportunities bridges the gap between two existing theoretical bodies of literature on social movements: political context, which are the various “opportunities and constraints” of a political ecosystem at a given time, and framing theory, which describes how stakeholders interpret and frame events to intentionally influence and shape popular opinion (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 201). Koopmans and Olzak argue that framing theory, while effective at describing how actors create meaning around events to mobilize followers, falls short in explaining why some frames are more effective at motivating voters (Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Discursive opportunities, in addition to political context, may explain why certain frames are able to enter the mainstream more effectively than others. This study examines both political context and the discursive opportunity of the increase in migration to determine whether far-right frames were incorporated by center and center-right parties differently in Sweden and France.

According to Koopmans and Olzak’s theory on discursive opportunities, the public discourse, or the top issues being debated by media outlets, politicians and the general public, has a “finite carrying capacity at any point in time” (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 203). Three discursive opportunities—visibility, resonance, and legitimacy—determine which frames are prioritized, or get to enter the mainstream. First, visibility, or the “number of communicative channels by which a message is included and the prominence of such inclusion” is determined (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 203). The second factor is resonance, or the ability of a message to provoke a reaction, both positive or negative, from the gate keepers and the general public (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 204). The third factor, legitimacy, is “the degree to which, on average, reactions by third actors in the public sphere support an actor’s claims more than they reject them” (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 205). All three variables are vital to determining how far and wide a frame is diffused in the public sphere, attaining mainstream status if given the opportunity. In this thesis, the first of the three factors, visibility, will be considered, specifically the visibility of the increase in migration in France and Sweden.

## *2.4 Research Gap*

The majority of existing research on the mechanisms by which far-right frames enter the mainstream refers to social movement theory (Benford & Snow 1992, Benford & Snow 2000). In their overview of framing processes and social movements, Benford and Snow describe framing as the active work of agents involved in social movements to assign significance or greater meaning to “structural arrangements, unanticipated events, or existing ideologies” (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). Framing theory has also been applied to understand the influence of media on political opinion. Media outlets use framing techniques to help audiences interpret events (Scheufele 1999). “The framing and presentation of events and news in the mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand those events” (Scheufele 1999: 107). While framing theory is primarily applied to disciplines other than political science, in 2018 Elgenius and Rydgren noted the importance of applying framing theory to the study of political parties. They argued that political parties use frames to manipulate public opinion by presenting “a simplified image or representation of what a particular party represents” (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 585). Even “condensed into a few words or slogans,” political party frames can “influence how voters understand and interpret the world” (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 585). Political parties, politicians, and media outlets all use frames to shape public opinion.

This thesis hopes to contribute to the literature on framing by political parties by expanding on Elgenius and Rydgren’s 2018 article, which argued that far-right parties in Sweden used five anti-migrant frames to draw voters to the polls. The article specifically focused on the use of anti-migrant frames by the Sweden Democrats to analyze both how far-right parties frame their message over time and whether or not modernization resulted in a decreased salience of anti-migrant frames (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018). The article found that anti-migrant frames remained central to the message of the Sweden Democrats over time, arguing that “the success of recent elections is a matter of successful framing and the ability to identify and synchronize the perceived social problems in question, blaming those responsible, and providing solutions” (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 597). The five anti-migrant frames studied by Elgenius and Rydgren have been weaponized by far-right parties across Europe, in part because immigration is purportedly “the single most important reason as to why voters support the radical right” (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 584). The frames analyzed by Elgenius and Rydgren are as follows:

1. Migrants compete illegitimately for scarce resources such as jobs and housing.
2. Migrants reduce the level of welfare state benefits available to native citizens.
3. Migrants are a threat to the ethnonational identity of the country.
4. Migrants, particularly Islamic migrants, threaten the liberal values of the country.
5. Migrants are the main perpetrators of crime and as such are creating a security threat.

This thesis expands on Elgenius and Rydgren's 2018 article by first, documenting how and when three of the five far-right anti-migrant frames entered the political party manifestos of center and center-right parties in Sweden and France. The three frames under study in this thesis are 2, 3, and 5 (migrants commit crimes, migrants reduce welfare benefits, and migrants are a threat to the ethnonational identity of the country). These frames are chosen because the other two (jobs and housing and Islam as a threat to liberal values) do not offer a similar enough context in each country. For example, the jobs and housing frame refers to different social situations because unemployment rates and housing scarcity differ between Sweden and France during the time period studied. Additionally, the fourth frame, the impact of Islamic migrants on liberal values, is likely to differ in France compared to Sweden as a result of France's historical background of colonialism in countries where Islam is a major religion

The first of the five frames studied, the idea that an increased number of migrants leads to greater levels of crime, "depicts immigrants as a major cause of criminality and other kinds of social insecurity" (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 584). Far-right frames around this issue attribute any increase in crime or gang activity to increased migration rates and suggests limiting migration enforcing the removal of migrants who commit crimes. The migrant crime frame can also refer to terrorism, but in this thesis, frames referring to terrorism will be downplayed to reduce the difference in the rate of terror attacks on voter response to far-right frames in Sweden and France during the time period studied.

The second frame, welfare chauvinism, pits "the supposed costs of immigration against welfare state benefits that could have been used by the native citizens (i.e. welfare chauvinism)" (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 584). These far-right frames encourage native citizens of the country to believe that accepting more migrants translates into less available welfare funding or less access to limited resources. Therefore, argues the far-right, native citizens should be prioritized and access to resources and welfare should be limited or denied to migrants. The third frame, cultural unity,

argues that migrants are culturally incompatible with the native population and that this cultural incompatibility is driving tension and instability in the state. Far-right frames around national cultural identity “depict immigration as a threat to the ethno-national identity of the majority” (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 584). The far-right waxes nostalgic about the prior existence of a golden period of Western European Christian cultural heritage (593). Rather than pursue multicultural immigration policies, the far-right argues that the state should pursue assimilation, limit the number of migrants, and actively promote cultural programs underscoring a Christian and Western European national cultural identity. While research has examined the process by which frames are mainstreamed, and the importance of the use of frames by political parties, few studies have documented when and how frames championed by far-right parties enter the platforms of mainstream political parties. Even fewer have focused on the role of discursive opportunities and political context on the differences in how far-right frames are mainstreamed between countries. This thesis examines first, when the three far-right anti-migrant frames described above were incorporated by center and center-right political parties between 2007 and 2018, and second, the extent to which the visibility of the increase in migration as a discursive opportunity and the current political environment of each country changed how frames were incorporated in France and Sweden.



### 3.0 Theoretical Framework

Framing theory sheds light on how actors actively shape popular opinion surrounding events. It can be used to understand how far-right actors, in this case political parties, frame events to influence popular opinion and voter behavior. As Koopmans and Olzak demonstrate, framing allows far-right actors to mold public opinion while discursive opportunities can determine which frames enter the mainstream. Discursive opportunities provide an opening for far-right frames to achieve visibility and thereby enter the mainstream. This phenomenon can be observed in the emergence of far-right frames in center and center-right political party platforms.

Frames “define problems,” “diagnose causes,” “make moral judgements,” and “assign remedies” (Entman 1993: 52). They highlight certain events or aspects of an event as more or less important. They assign blame. They can omit facts, if useful to the framer. They boil problems down to simplistic, easy to understand concepts. Frames select certain events or “aspects of reality” and make them salient or important to the public discourse (Entman 1993: 52). In a political context, studying frames is more useful than studying ideologies because frames are less stable—voters can easily pick them up—and therefore can be applied more easily and strategically by far-right parties (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018).

Parties attempt to frame issues so that they might achieve the three discursive opportunities required to enter the mainstream—visibility, resonance, and legitimacy. Frames can be diagnostic (defining a problem), motivational (garnering support for action), or prognostic (identifying a preferred solution) (Benford and Snow 2000). Frames resonate with the public and help individuals to assign meaning and interpretation to the world around them “by simplifying and condensing” complicated events (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). They are “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings” that “inspire and legitimate the activities” of “political parties, policymakers, or social movement agents” and influence the behavior of the public, by garnering support and adherents (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). They drive people to attend protests, show up to elections, and even commit crimes. Simply put, they define “what is going on” or “should be going on” and why (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). Frames around cultural unity that promote national “myths about a shared history and cultural homogeneity” is an example of one frame employed frequently by the far-right (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018: 584).

One famous example of framing in a political context was U.S. President George W. Bush’s response to the 9/11 terror attacks. “Bush defined a problem in simple and emotional terms

as an “act of war” and identified its clear cause as an “enemy” that was “evil.” (Entman 2003: 415). He intentionally used the same frames over and over, using “evil fully five times and war twelve times in his State of the Union speech on January 29, 2002” (Entman 2003: 416). According to Entman, “repeating these terms was part of the Bush administration’s strategy of framing September 11 to ‘unite’ the country behind” his preferred solution, “a war against terrorism” (Entman 2003: 416). He hoped to influence public opinion in support of his solution by conveying “an unambiguous and emotionally compelling frame to the public” (Entman 2003: 416). As a result, he received “virtually unanimous assent from Congress and the media” (416). Media outlets and other politicians summarily took the cue—echoing his frame—to “overwhelming public approval” (Entman 2003: 416). In this case, Bush’s framing identified foreign governments harboring terrorists as the problem and war as the preferred solution.

Analyzing far-right frames as they enter center and center-right party platforms exposes the mechanisms by which far-right ideology becomes mainstreamed. Framing allows far-right parties to define the environment around them in a way that maximizes their chances of mobilizing potential voters. Discursive opportunities, such as visibility of a certain issue, determine which frames enter the political mainstream. Documenting the transfer of far-right frames creates an opportunity to analyze the discursive and political environments in which far-right frames have flourished and to understand why far-right frames are incorporated differently in different countries. If used effectively, framing can not only enable far-right frames to enter the mainstream in a single country. Far-right frames can be applied at a global level, encouraging the movement and transference of far-right ideology between countries, a fact which underscores the importance of studying this phenomenon.

### *3.1 Hypotheses*

This thesis first documents how three far-right anti-immigrant frames were adopted by mainstream center and center-right parties in France and Sweden between 2007 and 2018. Next, it analyzes how two independent variables—the increasing visibility of the increase in migration as a discursive opportunity and the political context, including vote margins and differences in political system—may have impacted the transfer of these frames differently in each country. Framing theory suggests that far-right frames would transfer more effectively between far-right

and center and center-right parties in countries where discursive opportunities arising as a result of the increase in migration influenced voters and in countries where the far-right was more politically competitive. In these contexts, center and center-right parties would respond to the changing political and discursive environment by incorporating far-right frames into their manifestos. Based on previous research by Bayerlein (2021), Downs (1957), Rydgren (2008), Magni-Berton and Panel (2017), Meguid (2005) and Mudde (2007), it is clear that parties interact with one another and change their position in the spatial model based on both the behavior of other parties and the current political context and discursive environment. As argued by Ellinas, frames transfer between far-right and mainstream parties as a result of both discursive opportunities created by the media and political structures and “party positioning in the competitive space” that encourage mainstream parties to compete for voters by adopting far-right frames (Ellinas 2010: 3). Mainstream parties will pursue Mudde’s strategy of cooptation, incorporating far-right frames in their political manifestos, if they believe that it is to their political benefit to do so. Specifically, if the far-right is competitive in the previous election, it is likely that center and center-right parties will incorporate far-right frames in the subsequent election manifesto. Additionally, the existence of discursive opportunities, in this case increased visibility of the increase in migration, should increase the likelihood that far-right frames will enter the manifestos of mainstream parties.

Given these arguments, I hypothesize the following:

**H1:** Increased visibility of the so-called “migration crisis” led to increased mainstream adoption of far-right frames by center and center-right parties.

**H2:** Increased political competition by the far-right increased the mainstream adoption of far-right frames by center and center-right parties.

Based on previous research, particularly Ellinas (2010), anti-migrant frames promoted by far-right political parties should transfer to the manifestos of center and center-right political parties in France and Sweden during the time period analyzed. This transfer should be impacted both by discursive opportunities arising from the increase in migration, specifically increased visibility of migration, in addition to the political context, specifically an increase in voter competition by the far-right and the unique political structure of each country.

## 4.0 Method and Material

In this section, I describe the method and materials used for this analysis. This thesis seeks to understand how discursive opportunities and political context impacted when and how far-right frames entered the mainstream. To do this, I first use frame analysis to document the point at which far-right frames crossed over to materials published by center and center-right parties. Second, I analyze how a single discursive opportunity, visibility of the increase in migration, and the unique political context of each country encouraged far-right frames to transfer.

### 4.1 Method: Frame Analysis

Previous research has considered the reactions of mainstream parties to far-right parties (Ellinas 2010; Meguid 2005; Mudde 2000; 2007; 2019) and the use of frames by political parties (Elgenius & Rydgren 2018). However, few scholars have documented the transfer of far-right frames to the political manifestos of center and center-right parties or analyzed external factors (such as discursive opportunities and political competition) that impact their transfer. In this thesis, I consider when and how frames transferred from far-right to center and center-right political parties, and the discursive opportunities and political contexts that impact their transfer. This study examines the political manifestos of mainstream and far-right political parties in France and Sweden, using the qualitative method of frame analysis to document when three far-right anti-migrant frames appeared in the manifestos of center and center-right political parties and supplementary data to analyze the impact of visibility of the increase in migration and the political context of each country. Frame analysis is “a thematic analysis that classifies and quantifies the contents of media artifacts and political documents” (Ruzza 2006: 607). To conduct frame analysis, far-right frames in the text materials, political manifestos, are identified and their prevalence across the material under study is assessed (Connolly-Ahern and Broadway 2008; Entman 2007).

I conduct my analysis in two parts. First, I examine whether three of Elgenius and Rydgren’s far-right frames appear in the manifestos of far-right political parties in both France and Sweden between 2007 and 2018. I identify the common phrasing, language, and tone used by the far-right for the three frames in both countries in Figure 1. Next, I determined the point at which these frames appear in the political manifestos of center and center-right parties. Essentially, after identifying the common language used by the far right in both countries for all three frames, I

assess if similar language exists in the political manifestos of center and center-right parties. After searching for the frames identified in the platforms of the far-right parties in both Sweden and France, I next analyze the political manifestos of the three largest mainstream parties in each country to document when each frame appears. For the second part of my analysis, I assess supplementary data on migration rates, vote margins, and GAL-TAN scores to test my two hypotheses and examine the ways in which discursive opportunities (visibility of the increase in migration), and the political context of each country enabled far-right frames to resonate in the mainstream.

#### 4.2 Material

The materials for the first part of the analysis, frame documentation, are found in the Manifesto Project Database, which collates the official election manifestos of “1000 parties from 1945 until today in over 50 countries on five continents” (Burst et al. 2021). The Manifesto Project is funded by the German Science Foundation and the dataset is updated twice a year. In this analysis, I use official party manifestos from three large political parties in Sweden and France between 2007 and 2018 (one far-right party, a center party, and a center-right party). The largest center-right and center parties in Sweden are the *Moderata Samlingspartiet* (the Moderate Party), and the *Centerpartiet* (the Center Party), and the largest far-right party is the Sweden Democrats. I analyze political manifestos published by all three parties in 2010, 2014, and 2018. The two largest center-right and center parties in France are the *Union Pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP)/Les Républicains* (The Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)/The Republicans) and *La République En Marche! (LREM)* (The Republic on the Move (LREM), or *En Marche!*) which was founded in 2016 by Emmanuel Macron. The largest far-right party is the National Rally, which was renamed from the National Front in 2018. I analyze election manifestos published by UMP/The Républicains and the National Front in 2007 and 2012, and election manifestos published by all three parties in 2017.

Admittedly, analyzing only official party literature is a limited analysis. Far-right frames appear in the mainstream across several different types of publications, including position papers, line speeches, and the social media posts of politicians and party figures. Official party manifestos are less likely to take a controversial position in comparison with off the cuff remarks or less polished literature sources. Additionally, all forms of print, televised and social media play a role

in the mainstreaming process by creating discursive opportunities for far-right frames to gain visibility, resonance and legitimacy, increasing the likelihood that these frames will be picked up by mainstream politicians and mainstream media outlets.<sup>8</sup> A comprehensive approach would include media sources and additional political party statements and speeches, but due to limited time and resources, these materials are beyond the scope of this analysis. All of the manifestos were published in Swedish and French. I used Google Translate and my French language skills to translate the manifestos and had all Swedish translations reviewed by a native Swedish speaker.<sup>9</sup>

The materials for the second section of the analysis, the examination of the two hypotheses, come from several sources. First, the data used to assess visibility of the increase in migration as a discursive opportunity comes from Eurostat (Eurostat 2021). The data on voting margins comes from the national government websites of France and Sweden, Valmyndigheten (Sweden) and the website of the Ministère de L'Intérieur (France).<sup>10</sup> The GAL-TAN scores are found in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, conducted in 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2017.<sup>11</sup> All data is publicly available and easily replicable.

### *4.3 Operationalization*

This thesis answers two questions surrounding the mainstreaming of far-right anti-migrant frames from far-right parties to center and center-right parties. First, it documents when far-right anti-migrant frames transferred to the political manifestos of center and center-right parties in Sweden and France between 2007-2018. Second, it examines two independent variables: the discursive opportunities created by the increase in migration, specifically visibility, and the political context of each country—to assess how either may have impacted the dependent variable, the transfer of anti-migrant frames. In the second part of the analysis, I determine the validity of my two hypotheses (H1: discursive opportunities, specifically visibility, led to the transfer of far-right

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<sup>8</sup> As parties move and shift in response to an increase in voter receptiveness to far-right frames, media attention can impact both the ability of far-right parties to publicize their frames and the likelihood that mainstream parties will mimic or incorporate frames. The literature overwhelmingly supports the finding that media attention is essential to the mainstreaming of far-right frames (Ellinas 2010, Feischmidt and Hervik 2015, Kitschelt 1997, Gattinara and Froio 2019, Mudde 2007, Norris 2009, Schroeder 2019).

<sup>9</sup> The native Swedish speaker in this case was a fellow classmate in the University of Gothenburg program, Julia Strandquist.

<sup>10</sup> Sources: Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2002; Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2007; Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2012; Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2017; Valmyndigheten 2006; Valmyndigheten 2010; Valmyndigheten 2014; and Valmyndigheten 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Sources: Bakker et. al 2015; Polk et al. 2014; Polk et. al 2017.

frames and H2: increased political competition by far-right parties and the political structure of each country led to the transfer of far-right frames). Using frame analysis, I first examine the manifestos of the far-right parties in Sweden and France between 2007 and 2018, documenting when three of the five far-right anti-migrant frames highlighted by Elgenius and Rydgren (migrants commit crimes, migrants reduce the availability of welfare, migrants are a cultural threat) transfer to the political manifestos of center and center-right parties and therefore enter the political mainstream (Elgenius and Rydgren 2018). I conducted frame analysis to assess the specific language, phrasing and tone of each frame when it first appeared in the political party manifestos of far-right parties in Sweden and France between 2007 and 2018. Sweden's manifestos were published in 2010, 2014, and 2018. France's manifestos were published in 2007, 2012, and 2017. Next, I created a table (below) documenting the frames I created, ie: the general language, tone and phrasing of the frames as they appeared in the far-right political party manifestos during those years in both countries. Finally, I documented the point at which the frames found in the far-right manifestos appeared in the manifestos of center and center-right parties using the codes I created from examining the far-right frames. Figure 1 describes the language, tone and phrasing of the three far-right frames as I found them in the far-right political party manifestos of Sweden and France between 2007-2018.

**Figure 1: Coding of Anti-Migrant Far-Right Frames in 2007-2018 Far-Right Party Manifestos**

<b>Figure 1: Coding of Anti-Migrant Far Right Frames in 2007-2018 Far-Right Party Manifestos</b>	
<b>Frames</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Frame 1: Migrant Crime	References to migrants as the cause of crime or violence, references to gang activity or violence against women in relation to migrants, references to crime rates increasing as a result of migration, references to neighborhoods with high crime rates largely populated by migrants. References to migrants as a cause of terrorism. References to citizenship revocation or reduction of migration rates as a solution to crime rates.
Frame 2: Welfare Chauvinism	References to migrants as a drain or “suction pump” on the welfare state, references to prioritizing welfare access for native citizens or migrants who have achieved certain milestones (employment, language skills) or who have certain status (asylum/refugee migrants versus labor migrants, second versus first generation migrants).
Frame 3: Cultural Unity	References to migration as a threat to national culture, references to preserving cultural heritage or promoting Western European Christian cultural heritage. References to cultural incohesion as a result of migration. References to the ethnonationalism (implies that the national culture is Western European Christian culture). References to promoting assimilation policy over multiculturalism.
Source: Burst et al. 2021	

Next, I used the above codes to document when each frame appeared in political manifestos published by the center and center-right parties during election years between 2007 and 2018. For example, I recorded the point at which a far-right frame appeared in a far-right manifesto during the period of study, then when that frame appeared in a manifesto published by the center or center-right party. Finally, I developed a set of tables (found in the analysis) illustrating the year at which each far-right frame appeared in the manifestos of the center and center-right parties and far-right



party in each country. In conducting this analysis, I hoped to answer the first research question of the thesis: how and when did center and center-right parties in France and Sweden incorporate anti-migrant frames originally found in the platforms of far-right parties?

Finally, I answer the second research question, whether the visibility of the increase in migration, and the political context of each country (increased vote competition by the far-right and political structures) impacted the transfer of far-right frames. To do this, I examine publicly available supplementary data in a set of tables to test my hypotheses. In this thesis, I assess Koopmans and Olzak's (2004) first discursive opportunity, visibility, in terms of the migrant crisis, by analyzing how many immigrants entered France and Sweden during the time period and at what rate. By comparing the yearly change in immigrants, the yearly percentage change, and the ratio of immigrants to population between both countries, I assess the visibility of the increase in migration as a discursive opportunity in order to analyze its potential impact on frame transfer. Second, I analyze the unique political context of each country by comparing the vote margins for each party prior to the publication of each manifesto. For example, I examine the 2007 vote margins in France to determine whether increased political competition by the far-right may have impacted the incorporation of far-right frames in the 2012 manifestos of center and center-right parties. I also discuss the potential impact of differences in France and Sweden's political system on the transfer of frames based on previous literature. Finally, I also assess the GAL-TAN scores published by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey of the center-right, center, and far-right parties in each country prior to each election to understand how the parties changed position in the spatial model in relation to one another in response to increased voter competition. In doing so, I hope to draw conclusions about the impact of political context, particularly voter competition, on the incorporation of far-right frames by center and center-right parties in each following election.

#### *4.4 Validity and Reliability*

In terms of the frame analysis, by creating a table that clearly describes the far-right frame codes I created by examining the political manifestos of far-right parties between 2007 and 2018, I believe that intersubjectivity is achieved and that a second researcher will be able to apply the same codes and replicate my analysis. It is important to acknowledge that my personal background and bias may have impacted the creation of these codes, but because they are clearly stated in Figures 1 and 2, I hope that a second researcher will be able to interpret the codes I

created and determine the point at which they appear in the political manifestos of center and center-right parties in France and Sweden during the time period. Admittedly, if I had used a standard set of codes, or the researcher were to create their own codes for the far-right frames, intersubjectivity would decrease. However, no pre-existing set of qualitative codes for far-right frames in France and Sweden existed. I created the codes and coded the material during a specific time period to minimize the likelihood of achieving different results depending on personal circumstance. The second part of my analysis, which examines supplementary data, achieves the benchmarks of validity and reliability because I clearly describe how to locate the data in the tables and describe the method of my analysis. All of the supplementary data used in this thesis is publicly available.

The analysis achieves validity because the method and materials are suitable to the research questions and hypotheses presented in the text. The limitations of using political party manifestos to analyze frame transfer and the mainstreaming of far-right frames is discussed above. Similarly, in the second part of the analysis, this thesis only considers visibility rather than resonance or legitimacy as a discursive opportunity impacting the transfer of frames. Visibility was chosen as an independent variable because resonance and legitimacy are more difficult to measure with validity. Visibility of the increase in migration is analyzed in this thesis by comparing the yearly change in immigrants, the yearly percentage change, and the ratio of immigrants to population between both countries. Not only was this data easily found and publicly available, there is no need to consider the phrasing of the survey question and the data is available across the entire time period. Analyzing resonance (the extent to which the public reacts to a message) and legitimacy (or public support for a message) is more complex. Resonance may be measured through public opinion data on immigration, which is not available during each year of the time period studied, and is difficult to compare because the data is dependent on the phrasing of the survey question. Additionally, the historical background of each country (legacy of colonialism etc.) impacts the resonance of the migration issue in each country and this thesis does not have room to consider historical background. Legitimacy is difficult to analyze because of its circular logic in the context of mainstreaming. If center and center-right political parties incorporate far-right frames in their manifestos, it is likely that these frames have legitimacy (ie: have public support). However, given that the incorporation of frames is the dependent variable under study, it is difficult to assess legitimacy in this context.

Therefore, visibility is the most straightforward of the three discursive opportunities to analyze as an independent variable. Analyzing voting margins and GAL-TAN scores to understand how political context impacted the transfer of frames is reliable and valid because of the public nature of this data and the extensive use of these variables in previous literature around political parties.

## 5.0 Analysis

This analysis consists of two sections. First, I document when the three anti-migrant far-right frames appear in the political manifestos of far-right and mainstream parties in Sweden and France. Second, I examine the visibility of migration as a discursive opportunity by discussing the yearly change in immigrants, the yearly percentage change, and the ratio of immigrants to population in both countries. Finally, I examine the vote margins for each political party in the election prior to the publication of the previously examined political manifesto and the GAL-TAN scores of the political parties under observation in corresponding years. In examining these variables, I hope to conclude how political context and discursive opportunities, such as visibility, influenced the mainstreaming of far-right frames.

### *5.1 The Mainstreaming of Anti-Migrant Frames in France and Sweden*

In this section, I document when three anti-migrant far-right frames appeared in the political party manifestos of far-right, center, and center-right parties in Sweden and France. First, I examine at what point each far-right frame appears in the political party manifesto of the far-right party in each country, and next, document the point at which the center and center-right political parties in each country incorporate the frames.

#### **5.1.1 Frame 1: “Migrants commit crimes”**

In France, the National Front (FN) directly references immigrants in the party’s 2007 manifesto, stating that “foreigners commit more crimes and misdemeanors than French citizens: one in five crimes, even though they represent only 6% of the population” (National Front Manifesto 2007). According to the party, “criminality in our country is primarily aimed at people and it is mainly the result of immigration” and “four French regions concentrate more than half of the criminal acts...[and] account for the majority of immigration” (National Front Manifesto 2007). The party argued that the media depicts migrants committing crimes as “young” to downplay the gravity of their actions and that “policies implemented to restore calm have [failed]...by refusing to recognize that the perpetrators of violence are predominantly immigrants” (National Front Manifesto 2007). The party determined that migrants should be stripped of their citizenship if they commit a crime and deported, “either at the end of their sentence, or preferably within the

framework of bilateral transfer agreements allowing the effective execution of their sentence in their country of origin" (National Front Manifesto 2007). In 2012, the National Front echoed its frames on crime but mentioned migrants less explicitly, only maintaining that prison sentences against migrants should be executed in the country of origin. In 2017, the party expanded on earlier policies: "the State [should] take back control of lawless areas...introduce, in addition to the criminal penalty, the civil removal order" and "reinstate the automatic deportation of criminals and foreign offenders" (National Front Manifesto 2017). There are also several references to jihadist terror.

In 2007, The Union for a Popular Movement/The Republicans (UMP) directly referenced the migrant crime frame, particularly in talking about "the suburbs," a common far-right claim regarding the low-income *banlieues*<sup>12</sup> that has been echoed by far-right media globally (UMP Manifesto 2007). "Despite the significant public funds invested over the years in these neighborhoods, many feel abandoned by the Republic and violated in their dignity by the violence they endure on a daily basis and the living conditions that are theirs" (UMP Manifesto 2007). "Let us stop pretending that it is the excess of unemployment and the insufficiency of public funds which explain the situation of the suburbs...immigration [is] not controlled, [nor] religious fundamentalism" (UMP Manifesto 2007). "For a long time in our country, and still today among our opponents, we have sought excuses for delinquency...we ignored...the consequences of uncontrolled immigration, the reality of discrimination. We have allowed to build amalgams between insecurity and suburbs, between delinquency and immigration, between violence and Islam. We led the French to fold in on themselves" (UMP Manifesto 2007). The solution presented was to "prohibit any foreigner returned to their country of origin from obtaining a visa or a new residence permit in France within the next five years" (UMP Manifesto 2007).

In 2012, the UMP stated that additional expenditures "will focus on the execution of sentences, with the opening of new prison places...and the rigorous management of immigration with an increase in the capacities of administrative detention centers" (UMP Manifesto 2012). In 2017, UMP (now Les Républicains) focused more explicitly on terrorism, stating "we will prohibit the return of bi-nationals who have traveled abroad to areas of terrorist operations and jihadists.

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<sup>12</sup> *Banlieue* is the term commonly used for low-income housing projects in France, particularly on the outskirts of Paris. Many of these neighborhoods are have large first or second-generation migrant populations and the term evokes cultural stigma (Angélic & Siress 2012).

We will automatically expel foreigners with links to terrorist movements" (Les Républicains Manifesto 2017). "We will strengthen the resources and coordination of intelligence services interior, as well as European cooperation in the fight against terrorism" (Les Républicains Manifesto 2017). In 2017, the center party, the Republic on the Move (LREM), or *En Marche* also discussed terrorism, stating that that "our international security will be part of a strategy of peacekeeping and the fight against Islamist terrorism. Internal security will require significant investment in our security forces, their reorganization, but also in the vigilance that our entire Nation must regain" (LREM Manifesto 2017). "Fear is now what we can experience at the time of us go to a station, to the terrace of a coffee, at a gathering that could to be a target for terrorists" (LREM Manifesto 2017). The focus shifted from the National Front's emphasis on the *banlieues* in 2007 to terrorism, arguably as a result of the 2015 and 2016 major terror attacks in France. To conclude, I document that the migrant crime frame transferred to the center-right party manifestos in France in 2007 and 2012, but not in 2017. The frame does not transfer to the manifesto of the center party in 2017, with the exception of a focus on terrorism.

Migrant crime was referred in the Sweden Democrat manifestos throughout the period 2010-2018. While the party did not specifically reference migrants as the primary group committing crimes until 2018, compulsory deportation and citizenship revocation as a response to crime were mentioned in 2010. "The introduction of compulsory deportation for all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes" (Swedish Democrats Manifesto 2010). "People with dual citizenship who violate this ban must be able to have their Swedish citizenship revoked" (Swedish Democrats Manifesto 2014). In this way, migration was tied to crime in all of the manifestos published throughout the period. The Sweden Democrats framed crime as the result of high migration rates as early as 2010, but strengthened this framing by 2018. The solutions presented were compulsory deportation and citizenship revocation for foreign nationals who committed crimes, a direct reference to migrants as the culprits behind a rise of criminal activity in the country. Compulsory deportation was referenced as early as 2010, with citizenship revocation included by 2014.

By 2018 the language was unambiguous about implicating migrants as a security threat, and included both compulsory deportation and citizenship revocation as solutions. "Fire brigades and ambulances cannot pull out into immigrant-dominated areas without armed escorts. Those who live and work in our suburbs have their shops robbed, smashed or taken over by criminals."

(Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2018). “Today, tens of thousands of people live illegally within the country's borders and Sweden is internationally known for unrest and citizens who are active in terrorist networks” (2018). “Security has been jeopardized because requirements and controls have been very weak, both in terms of stay in the country or granting citizenship” (2018). “As a result of uncontrolled immigration, terrorists with war experience roam the streets and squares freely and take advantage of our welfare and asylum system” (2018) These phrases directly reference migrants in relation to perceived increases in crime. The solution proposed is to “introduce compulsory deportation of serious criminal aliens and the possibility of revoking citizenship in the event of a terrorist crime” (2018). By 2018, migrants were referred to as “terrorists” and “aliens” rather than “foreign nationals,” as they were in 2014.

References to the migrant crime frame did not appear in the platforms of the mainstream Swedish parties until 2018, and only the center-right party. By 2018, the crime frames introduced by the Sweden Democrats in 2010 appeared verbatim in the manifesto of the Moderate Party. In the 2010 manifestos of the Moderate Party and Center Party, neither made any connection between migrants and crime. There was no reference to migrants as criminals in either manifesto. The Moderate Party even directly refuted the claims of the Sweden Democrats that migrants are the cause of crime, saying “it is poorly functioning systems and structures that have created these problems, not the people who have come here.” (the Moderate Party Manifesto 2010).

By 2014 the migrant crime frame began to become visible in the manifesto of the Moderate Party, but only in reference to individuals joining terrorist organizations abroad. “It is a serious problem that Swedish citizens are fighting abroad for terrorist organizations,” stated the manifesto of the Moderate Party, “they threaten not just the lives of others, they risk their own lives and they pose also a potential security risk after returning to Sweden” (2014). The party stated that migrant citizens may join terrorist organizations abroad and become a security threat at home. The solution presented in response is “measures, including further criminalization, against travel preparation for the purpose of participating in combat or weapons training abroad for terrorist organizations” and “the possibility of confiscating passports to stop such planned trips” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2014). By contrast, the Center Party reinforced a commitment to open migration and did not reference a connection between migration and crime, stating that “an open Sweden where new people are welcome to become our neighbors is of great importance to us” (Center Party Manifesto 2014).

However, the migrant crime frame introduced by the Sweden Democrats in 2010 was directly replicated in the 2018 manifesto of the Moderate Party. The 2018 manifesto referenced a “shadow society” of illegal immigrants overstaying their welcome "characterized by vulnerability, exploitation and crime" (Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). The solution was identical to that of the Sweden Democrats. “Increase the number of deportations and internal aliens checks carried out" (2018). "Revoke the citizenship of the person committing serious crimes against the state" (2018). "Crimes should more often lead to deportation" (2018). "Foreign nationals who have committed crimes in Sweden must serve [their] sentence in [their] home country" (2018). The party directly implicated migrants in a perceived rise in crime rates and suggested deportation, sentences served in the migrant’s country of origin, and citizenship revocation as solutions. These frames around migrant crime mirrored those of the Sweden Democrats, showing that the New Moderate party changed their frames around migrant crime to reflect the far-right between 2010-2018.

The Center Party did not replicate the migrant crime frame of the Sweden Democrats by 2018. In 2018, they modeled the Moderate Party’s 2014 migrant crime frame, which referenced migrants only as potential terror suspects and emphasized criminalizing terrorism and ending support to terrorism. The party describes “criminalizing participation in terrorism organizations” and stated that the Swedish government should “increase efforts to prevent radicalization and support defector activities” and that “penalties for terrorism-related crimes must be sharpened” (Center Party Manifesto 2018). Overall, the analysis supports that only the center-right party incorporated the migrant crime frame introduced by the Sweden Democrats and only in 2018. The center party only referenced terrorism in 2014 and 2018.



**Figure 2: Mainstreaming of Migrant Crime Frame in France and Sweden**

Figure 2: Mainstreaming of Migrant Crime Frame in France and Sweden			
Mainstreaming of Migrant Crime Frame in France			
	Political Parties		
<b>Frames 1</b>	LREM	UMP/LR	FN
2007	n/a	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported and lose nationality.
2012	n/a	Admission that migrants commit crime, link between crime and migration	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported and lose nationality.
2017	Crime noted only in relation to terrorism.	Crime noted only in relation to terrorism.	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported and lose nationality.
Mainstreaming of Migrant Crime Frame in Sweden			
	Political Parties		
<b>Frame 1</b>	C	M	SD
2010	No mention of migrants in relation to crime.	Admission that migrants commit crime, but states that migrants are not responsible for crime	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported
2014	No mention of migrants in relation to crime.	Crime noted only in relation to terrorism, passport revocation for those who travel abroad to commit terrorism	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported
2018	Crime noted only in relation to terrorism.	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported	Admission that foreign nationals commit crimes and all foreign nationals who commit serious crimes should be deported
<b>Note:</b> yellow shading indicates far-right frame transfer			
<b>Key:</b> FN: Front National, UMP: The Union for a Popular Movement, LR: Les Républicains, LREM: La République En Marche, SWD: Sweden Democrats, M: Moderates, C: Center			
<b>Source:</b> Burst et al. 2021			

### 5.1.2 Frame 2: “Migrants drain welfare state”

In 2007, the National Front used a vivid metaphor for welfare afforded to migrants, particularly those who immigrated as a result of family reunification, calling them “suction pumps for the populations of the Third World” (National Front Manifesto 2007). “The immigrant national and his family are not only becoming less and less deportable...they can claim full support from social mechanisms” (National Front Manifesto 2007). The party directly linked welfare available to immigrants as a cost to the French economy, saying “each immigrant national costs collective infrastructure four years of salary and twenty years if he comes with a wife and children” (National Front Manifesto 2007). As a solution, the party recommended France “reserve social assistance for the French. The illegals will no longer receive this aid which will be paid only to French citizens” (National Front Manifesto 2007).

In 2012, the National Front echoed this framing. “Suction pumps from illegal immigration will be suppressed, such as State Medical Aid, reserved for illegal migrants and which allows them to seek free treatment in France” (National Front Manifesto 2012). “A proactive action plan... [must be] implemented to identify and drastically reduce unnecessary and harmful expenses for

[France, including the] weight of uncontrolled immigration on social budgets” (National Front Manifesto 2012). In 2017, this language was only slightly modified, requesting a reduction in immigration rates rather than a full prohibition on immigration. “Achieve savings by abolishing State Medical Aid reserved for illegal immigrants [and] combating fraud” (National Front Manifesto 2017). "Reduce legal immigration to an annual balance of 10,000. End automatic family reunification and reunification as well as the automatic acquisition of French nationality by marriage. Remove suction pumps from immigration" (National Front Manifesto 2017). While the extreme language of the 2007 frame was downplayed, the majority of the recommendations remained the same.

In 2007, the UMP stated that immigration should be “based on work, not on the receipt of social benefits” and requested a “balanced policy that recognizes the contributions of immigration to our country, but within a controlled framework, compatible with our reception capacities (UMP Manifesto 2007). In 2012, the UMP hoped that “all French people must be able to express their talents without any discrimination and benefit from the same level of public service, whatever they are, and whatever their place of residence” (UMP Manifesto 2012). However, they asserted a commitment “against fraud” from “the ‘stowaway’” (UMP Manifesto 2012). By 2017, Les Républicains’ argument against immigrants on welfare was also strong, stating that “the generosity of our social model is not without limits: a stranger just arrived in France should not benefit from social benefits immediately” (Les Républicains Manifesto 2017). By 2017, Les Républicains took on the anti-migrant frame around welfare significantly—their language becomes more similar to that of the National Front. In 2017, LREM did not mention welfare in relation to migrants. To conclude, the welfare chauvinism frame transfers effectively to the center-right in France all three years of the analysis but does not transfer to the center.

In Sweden, the Sweden Democrats framed welfare as a limited resource that is overused by migrant citizens at the expense of native Swedes. The party argued that migrants are “taking” welfare meant for Swedish citizens (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2010). "In our Sweden we help people in need, but the Swedish welfare and the country's well-being comes first" (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2010). To solve the problem, they suggested limiting access to welfare programs based on citizenship requirements. The frame is reflected and strengthened in the Sweden Democrats’ 2014 and 2018 manifestos. The party wanted “a Sweden where the law-abiding resident population is not discriminated against in healthcare compared to foreign citizens

who stay illegally in the country" (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2014). This wording was echoed in the 2018 manifesto. The party offered a number of solutions to this problem that largely fell under the category of limiting welfare for immigrants and prioritizing native Swedes.

Importantly, the party specifically framed welfare available to migrants in opposition to welfare available to native Swedes. "[Reduce] societal costs and [create] strong incentives for responsibility and integration by limiting...immigrants' access to benefit systems during the first years in the country" (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2014). "Newly arrived immigrants will receive help in acquiring the most basic tools for social adaptation, but otherwise have the same social support as native Swedes. No more no less" (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2014). "Abolition of the practically free medical and dental care for illegal immigrants" (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2014). "A Sweden that extends a helping hand to countries and people in need, but which at the same time does not forget the responsibility towards its own population or reduce the great needs that exist at home" (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2014). "Abolish, in practice, free medical and dental care for illegal immigrants and introduce clear rules for non-citizens' right to tax-financed welfare" (Sweden Democrats Manifesto 2018). The party argued that the state should directly tie citizenship status to access to welfare and limit the availability of welfare to non-citizens, even at the expense of improved integration, such as the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) program that provides subsistence payments to migrants that allow them to take Swedish language and cultural classes.

In 2010 and 2014, the center and center-right parties in Sweden maintained that immigration was an asset to Swedish society and that welfare programs should be available to immigrants. This frame changed only in 2018, and only for the center-right. In 2010, the Center Party discussed making welfare more available to immigrants due to their vulnerable status, stating that they "want to continue investing in women's entrepreneurship, not least among the group immigrant women" and that "the quality of teaching for immigrants [should be] raised" (Center Party Manifesto 2010). The Moderate Party concurred, stating that welfare should be available to all "regardless of whether we were born in Sweden or have come to Sweden from any other part of the world" (Moderate Party Manifesto 2010). These pro-migrant frames held in the 2014 manifestos. The Moderate Party stated in 2014 that "what [migrants] have in common is that they are involved and contribute to our common welfare, not least by five out of ten doctors, every fourth dentist and every fourth university teacher was born abroad" and argued that immigrants

contribute, rather than take from the welfare pie. The Center Party concurred that welfare “must benefit everyone” and should be “available to the whole country” (Center Party Manifesto 2014).

However, by 2018 the Moderate Party transformed their stance on welfare chauvinism to closely mirror that of the Sweden Democrats. Rather than argue that immigrants contribute to the common welfare, the party framed immigrants as large “costs” “for the state and municipality” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). Solutions included “only emergency assistance and emergency care should be provided persons residing in Sweden without a permit” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). “People who come to Sweden will...gradually be entitled to a greater degree various benefits and social benefits, instead of automatically access very large parts of the Swedish social insurance system” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). Refugees and migrants should not be able to access special benefits to improve their chances of integration. Rather, “the same qualification rules shall apply to all” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). Sweden should “remove the exemptions for refugees in guarantee pension and sickness and activity compensation” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). The Center Party presented similar, if less harsh solutions, including a reference to citizenship as a requirement for accessing welfare: “full access to the Swedish welfare systems, in addition to care and school, should be qualified for, through work and residence time” (Center Party Manifesto 2014). The references to immigration as a positive benefit to Swedish society evaporated. However, the center party’s arguments are not strong enough to be considered frame transfer. To conclude, only the center-right party experienced frame transfer and only in 2018.

**Figure 3: Mainstreaming of Welfare Chauvinism Frame in France and Sweden**

Figure 3: Mainstreaming of Welfare Chauvinism Frame in France and Sweden			
Mainstreaming of Welfare Chauvinism Frame in France			
	Political Parties		
Frame 2	LREM	UMP/LR	FN
2007	n/a	Migration rates should be limited to only as many as can be taken without putting a strain on the welfare state. Welfare should be prioritized for citizens and limited for migrants. Receipt of benefits should be linked to work.	Migrants are a drain on the welfare state, "suction pumps," references to the Great Replacement theory. Welfare should be prioritized for citizens and limited for migrants. Receipt of benefits should be linked to work. Migration should be abolished.
2012	n/a	Migration rates should be limited to only as many as can be taken without putting a strain on the welfare state. Welfare should be prioritized for citizens and limited for migrants. Receipt of benefits should be linked to work.	Migrants are a drain on the welfare state, "suction pumps." Welfare should be prioritized for citizens and limited for migrants. Receipt of benefits should be linked to work. Migration should be abolished.
2017	No reference to migrants as drains on the welfare state	Migration rates should be limited to only as many as can be taken without putting a strain on the welfare state. Welfare should be prioritized for citizens and limited for migrants. Receipt of benefits should be linked to work.	Migration rates should be limited to only as many as can be taken without putting a strain on the welfare state. Welfare should be prioritized for citizens and limited for migrants. Receipt of benefits should be linked to work.
Mainstreaming of Welfare Chauvinism Frame in Sweden			
	Political Parties		
Frames	C	M	SD
2010	Migrants should be helped and have equal access to welfare as native citizens	Migrants should be helped and have equal access to welfare as native citizens	Migrants overuse welfare, welfare should be prioritized for native Swedes and limited for migrants
2014	Migrants should be helped and have equal access to welfare as native citizens	Migrants should be helped and have equal access to welfare as native citizens	Migrants overuse welfare, welfare should be prioritized for native Swedes and limited for migrants
2018	Welfare should be qualified for through work and residence time	Migrants overuse welfare, welfare should be prioritized for native Swedes and limited for migrants	Migrants overuse welfare, welfare should be prioritized for native Swedes and limited for migrants
<b>Note:</b> yellow shading indicates far-right frame transfer			
<b>Key:</b> FN: Front National, UMP: The Union for a Popular Movement, LR: Les Républicains, LREM: La République En Marche, SWD: Sweden Democrats, M: Moderates, C: Center			
<b>Source:</b> Burst et al. 2021			

### 5.1.3 Frame 3: “Migrants as a threat to cultural unity”

Cultural threat framing—the idea that migrants are culturally incompatible with French citizens and as a result indirectly create social tension—showed up strongly in the 2007 National Front manifesto. The frame described a “culture clash” changing the society for the worse and proposed a variety of solutions including abandoning multiculturalism, or the co-existence of divergent identities, in favor of assimilationism, which forces migrants to take on French culture. The party manifesto referred frequently to the “exceptional thousand-year-old civilization” of the French, the “Fatherland” (National Front Manifesto 2007). The party argued that France’s national identity has been “fixed for more than two millennia” and is “the result of the merger of three European components: Celtic, Latin, Germanic” (National Front Manifesto 2007). References to a shared Western European heritage are characteristic of far-right frames around cultural threat. The National Front motivated its audience using fear tactics, saying “if we allow our demography to collapse and replace it with settlement immigration, explode crime or ‘demonize’ our origins, we

might as well let France dissolve into the globalist melting pot” (National Front Manifesto 2007). “The presence on French territory of more and more ethnic groups, including members who prioritize their community membership over their assimilation to the French model, ultimately poses a problem of civil peace” (National Front Manifesto 2007).

The party leaned into the far-right extremist Great Replacement theory, stating that “the anti-family policy pursued for three decades has an unacknowledged but deliberate objective: the desire to make France disappear by limiting the number of French people to be born while calling on our soil a growing number of immigrant nationals” (National Front Manifesto 2007). It argued that the decision to welcome immigrants is made “on the grounds of balancing [French] pension systems” and suggests a conspiracy, which is characteristic of far-right extremism, saying “the date of measures hostile to the family and favorable to mass immigration have coincided too much for the last thirty years for it to be just a coincidence” (National Rally Manifesto 2007). As a solution, it suggested that France prohibit immigration and dual nationality and that “only citizens can vote and only those born on French soil [should be] citizens” (National Front Manifesto 2007).

The National Front manifesto in 2012 largely moderated this language, but maintained that citizenship should be reserved for citizens born to French parents and that naturalized citizenship or the right to be born French should be abolished with a reform to the nationality code. “Naturalization [should be] earned and will be subject to conditions [such as] strict peaceful and prolonged presence in the territory...[after] fluency in the French language and proof of assimilation” (National Front Manifesto 2012). The party maintained the prohibition on dual citizenship and suggested that a “a major birth policy is preferable to expensive and destabilizing immigration” as a solution to grow the population to keep up with welfare expenditures (National Front Manifesto 2012). While explicit references to a shared Western European heritage were not maintained, the party stated that “our heritage and our culture will be enhanced: the defense of heritage will be brought back to the fore, whether it is historical monuments or rural heritage” (National Front Manifesto 2012). In 2017, the solutions of ending “the right to the soil,” ending dual nationality, and requiring demanding standards for naturalization were maintained. The party echoed the 2007 argument that assimilation migrant integration policy was preferable to multiculturalism—France should “promote republican assimilation,” refrain from “teaching languages and cultures of origin,” and “defend the national identity, values and traditions of French civilization” (National Front Manifesto 2017).

In 2007, the UMP promoted “the multicultural character of French society,” stating “we must be determined to defend French and European culture as well as the Francophonie” and that diversity “strengthens our ability to influence the world” (UMP Manifesto 2007). The UMP hoped to link naturalization and family reunification to knowledge of French and “respect for Republican values” (UMP Manifesto 2007). The UMP also wanted “migrants who express our fundamental values: secularism, equality between men and women, role of family, promotion through work and education” (UMP Manifesto 2007). Overall, in 2007, the center-right party in France supported multiculturalism but there were traces of references to a cultural threat in the UMP platform, in the reference to linking migrant rights to proof of assimilation and an emphasis on accepting migrants who express French fundamental values. However, by 2012, the UMP emphasized “common values” such as “freedom, equality, fraternity, but also secularism [and] security” (UMP Manifesto 2012). Notably, the UMP wanted “to continue to link nationality and the will to be French” and “the right to vote [with] French or European citizenship,” both of which are frames mentioned by the far-right (UMP Manifesto 2012). In 2017, the center-right discussed the “value of French cultural heritage” but there are no major reference to migrants as a cultural threat (Les Républicains Manifesto 2017). LREM criticized the far-right cultural threat frame in 2017, stating that France must “reconnect with patriotism without giving up to our multiple histories” and “fight against discrimination as a national priority” (LREM Manifesto 2017). Of the center and center-right parties, only the UMP referenced the cultural threat frame, and only in 2012.

The Sweden Democrats argue that “immigrants must adapt to Swedish society and not the other way around” (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2010). Reducing migration is a potential solution, as is promoting “Swedish culture,” which is defined as a Western European Christian culture. According to the party, “in every Swede, the Swedish cultural heritage is preserved, a folk home built on a common values and the Swedes' right to develop their culture on their own terms” (2010). This cultural identity is marked by Christianity and “the central importance of ethics and Western humanism for our society, “a Sweden that is aware of its place in the Nordic, European, Western, Christian and human community,” as opposed to a Sweden characterized by multiculturalism (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2010).

In 2014, the Sweden Democrats described Sweden as “a country with a strong interior cohesion and solidarity, built on a common identity” (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2014). By 2014, the list of solutions of the Sweden Democrats increased beyond assimilationism to reducing

migration, abolishing integration policy, promoting “Western European” or “Nordic” cultural teachings and Christianity and generally opposing Islam in both foreign and domestic policy. According to the Sweden Democrats, Sweden needed to undergo a “shift from the regular granting of permanent residence permits to temporary ones and a sharp reduction in the extent of asylum and immigration to a level that each society can handle and which is not higher than that in our neighboring countries Denmark and Finland” (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2014). “Abolition of all state integration policy with the exception of teaching Swedish” and “an increase in the value of citizenship through the introduction of language and knowledge tests and by expanding the time one must have lived in Sweden with impeccable conduct before an application for citizenship can be made” (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2014).

Migrants are blamed openly for a decrease in cultural cohesion by 2018, notably after the onset of the “migration crisis.” “Sweden is today a divided country, divided between immigrants and Swedes, city and country, older and younger” (Sweden Democrat Manifesto 2018). The Sweden Democrats claimed that “very high reception of asylum seekers and relatives has divided the society” and “cultivated exclusion” and that “Sweden's migration policy has for decades been handled in an irresponsible and ignorant manner, with serious consequences for Swedish society” (2018). “Foreign citizens who wish to become Swedish should clearly show that they are ready and willing to take part in the collective responsibility for Sweden” (2018). “Strengthen cultural cohesion through local cultural pilots with the task of collecting, marketing and integrating the local cultural heritage in welfare activities and establishing the Sweden Center in the country's most vulnerable areas” (2018). “Expand the social orientation offered to immigrants and make it mandatory for everyone who receives a residence permit” (2018).

The cultural threat frame is not readily taken up by the Sweden center and center-right political parties, even by 2018. The parties maintained a strong commitment to a “an enterprising, green, secure, liberal and open society” (Center Party Manifesto 2010). They claimed that multiculturalism is beneficial and “new influences have enriched Sweden culturally, economically and cognitively throughout the ages” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2010). In 2014, the parties acknowledged the rise of ethnonationalism but claimed to “fight for openness and tolerance when we see how xenophobic forces strengthen their positions” (Center Party Manifesto 2014) and “resist the forces that advocate protectionism and reduced transparency” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2014). The Moderate Party argued that multiculturalism strengthens Swedish society,



that “those who come to Sweden today have knowledge and experiences that are valuable for us” that they “add skills to our country and it makes it easier for companies to recruit” (Moderate Party Manifesto 2014).

“Migrants as a threat to cultural unity” is one of the least effectively mainstreamed frames in Sweden—the first and second frames both transfer more effectively. The Center Party and the Moderates do mention integration in their manifestos, saying “integration [has failed],” that “education in Swedish and norms/societal behavior should be mandatory and start early” (Center Party Manifesto 2018) and that “integration is about more than work and self-sufficiency. It is also about [shared] values and community” (The Moderate Party Manifesto 2018). However, overall, the cultural threat frame did not effectively transfer to the center and center-right parties in Sweden between 2010-2018.

**Figure 4: Mainstreaming of Cultural Unity Frame in France and Sweden**

Figure 4: Mainstreaming of Cultural Unity Frame in France and Sweden			
Mainstreaming of Cultural Unity Frame in France			
	Political Parties		
Frame 3	LREM	UMP/LR	FN
2007	n/a	Diversity is a strength but migrants who express French fundamental values should be supported. Must defend French and European culture while promoting diversity.	Migration and lack of assimilation poses a threat to civil peace. Naturalization should be based on cultural assimilation. References to Western European Christian culture as the national culture of France. Eliminate "right to the soil" citizenship. Prioritize hiring of French citizens, promote birth policy over immigration. Eliminate dual nationality. Promote assimilation. Link right to vote to citizenship.
2012	n/a	Link citizenship to assimilation. Link right to vote to citizenship.	Promote birth policy over immigration. Eliminate dual nationality. Promote assimilation. French cultural heritage should be particularly prioritized and defended. Prioritize hiring of French citizens. Link citizenship to assimilation.
2017	No reference.	French cultural heritage should be particularly prioritized. No reference to diversity as a strength.	Promote birth policy over immigration. Eliminate dual nationality. Promote assimilation. French cultural heritage should be particularly prioritized and defended. Link citizenship to assimilation.
Mainstreaming of Cultural Unity Frame in Sweden			
	Political Parties		
Frame 3	C	M	SD
2010	No reference.	Diversity is beneficial.	Cultural incohesion. Assimilation should be prioritized.
2014	Diversity is beneficial.	Diversity is beneficial.	Cultural incohesion. Assimilation, reduce migration, abolish integration policy, promote Western European cultural teachings/Christianity.
2018	Integration is failing but diversity is beneficial.	Integration should be based on values and community but diversity is beneficial and xenophobia is bad.	Cultural incohesion, assimilation, promote Western European cultural teachings/Christianity, oppose Islam, voluntary return.
<b>Note:</b> yellow shading indicates far-right frame transfer			
<b>Key:</b> FN: Front National, UMP: The Union for a Popular Movement, LR: Les Républicains, LREM: La République En Marche, SWD: Sweden Democrats, M: Moderates, C: Center			
<b>Source:</b> Burst et al. 2021			

## *5.2 Discursive Opportunities and Political Context*

Far-right parties in Sweden and France developed anti-migrant frames blaming migrants for the existence of several problems (a perceived increase in crime, a tenuous welfare state, and cultural and religious tensions). In this section I examine whether the transfer of these frames was influenced both by the discursive opportunity of increased visibility of the migration issue and differing political contexts between France and Sweden, with a focus on increased vote competition by the far-right. I use supplementary data to analyze my two hypotheses (H1: discursive opportunities, specifically visibility, led to the transfer of far-right frames and H2: increased political competition by far-right parties and the political structure of each country led to the transfer of far-right frames) to determine the impact of these two independent variables on frame transfer between far-right and center and center-right parties.

### **5.2.1 Discursive Opportunities (Visibility)**

In their 2004 work, Koopmans and Olzak argued that frame theory describes how actors shape public opinion around events or information to achieve goals. However, the authors acknowledge the limitations of frame theory—frame theory does not explain which frames enter the mainstream and why. Discursive opportunities, or the elements of the public debate that determine a frame’s chances of entering the mainstream, in combination with the political context of each country, are crucial to understanding the mainstreaming process. In this analysis, I use migration data to show how the migration issue achieved the first of the three discursive opportunities described by Koopmans and Olzak, visibility, which may have influenced the ability of far-right anti-migrant frames to cross into the mainstream.

The far-right’s anti-migrant frames were afforded visibility (how often an issue is talked about and how extensively it is covered in the public sphere) as a result of the increase in migration. High migration rates to Europe—which peaked in 2016—exacerbated and highlighted the problems the far-right blamed on migration.<sup>13</sup> The so-called “refugee crisis” was “one of the most heavily mediated world events of the past decade” (Trilling 2019: 1). As the situation developed, it “allowed certain advantages to the kind of media coverage that was produced...quick and clear

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<sup>13</sup> Another issue impacting discursive opportunities that impacted the transfer of far-right frames was a notable increase in terror attacks across Europe, particularly in France in 2015. The attacks significantly impacted public attitudes in France. According to Byman, “after the attacks, most of the French public agreed with the statement that France is ‘at war’” (Byman 2019).

reporting on emergency situations as they developed,” resulting in extensive coverage of the events (Trilling 2019: 1). “Political observers, the media, and politicians themselves have speculated that the refugee situation helped to fuel support for the far-right” by generating media coverage of frames which discussed “crimes conducted by refugees” or “concerns over the overall fiscal impacts of refugee immigration” (Steinmayr 2017: 24). As migration to France and Sweden increased, the issue of migration achieved visibility, creating a discursive opportunity for the far-right’s anti-migrant frames.

To analyze the visibility of the migration issue during the time period under study, the following table (Figure 5) presents the yearly change in immigrants, the yearly percentage change, and the ratio of immigrants to population in each country between 2008 and 2019. These years were chosen because they correspond to the height of the so-called “migration crisis” (2014-2019). The data was extracted on July 1 2021 from Eurostat (2021):

**Figure 5: Comparison of Immigration in France and Sweden 2008-2019**

**Figure 5: Change in Rates of Immigration in France and Sweden Between 2008 and 2018**

COUNTRY	YEAR											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>France</b>												
Immigrants (thousands)	296.6	297	307.1	319.8	327.4	338.8	340.4	364.2	377.7	369.6	387.2	385.6
Yearly change	---	362	10,141	12,705	7,615	11,321	1,631	23,838	13,488	-8,088	17,537	-1,567
Yearly percent change	---	0.10%	3.40%	4.10%	2.40%	3.50%	0.50%	7.00%	3.70%	-2.10%	4.70%	-0.40%
Immigrants per million pop	4,609.30	4,592.90	4,726.30	4,899.40	4,991.30	5,119.70	5,121.80	5,465.60	5,653.50	5,514.60	5,763.20	5,727.70
Population (millions)	64,350,226	64,658,856	64,978,721	65,276,983	65,600,350	66,165,980	66,458,153	66,638,391	66,809,816	67,026,224	67,177,636	67,320,216
<b>Sweden</b>												
Immigrants (thousands)	101.2	102.3	98.8	96.5	103.1	115.8	127	134.2	163	144.5	132.6	115.8
Yearly change	---	1,109	-3,479	-2,334	6,592	12,786	11,121	7,274	28,765	-18,516	-11,887	-16,797
Yearly percent change	---	1.10%	-3.40%	-2.40%	6.80%	12.40%	9.60%	5.70%	21.40%	-11.40%	-8.20%	-12.70%
Immigrants per million pop	10,929.90	10,949.90	10,493.40	10,172.80	10,784.90	12,011.10	13,025.70	13,627.00	16,308.40	14,277.20	12,961.80	11,213.20
Population (1000s)	9,256,347	9,340,682	9,415,570	9,482,855	9,555,893	9,644,864	9,747,355	9,851,017	9,995,153	10,120,242	10,230,185	10,327,589

Source: Eurostat 2021

These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that the increase in migration created a discursive opportunity for far-right frames through increased visibility of the migration issue. Between 2007 and 2016, in both Sweden and France, the total number of migrants entering the country increased year on year, with a dip in 2010 and 2011 for Sweden. The number of migrants entering both countries began to decrease in 2017 as the “migration crisis” came to an end (though in 2018, the rate went up in France and decreased again in 2019). Overall, Sweden had slightly more than double the rate of migrants compared to France throughout the time period studied. In

2016, the ratio is almost three times as large. The data reveals a steady increase in migration to France between 2009 and 2016. The Swedish case has a more dramatic rise, with a large 2016 peak, and later starts to drop. Immigration was greater in per capita terms in Sweden than France, indicating that the visibility of migration could have had a greater impact on the transfer of frames in Sweden, particularly toward the end of the period studied. The total number of immigrants in both countries nearly doubled and the ratio of immigrants in both countries increased by 20 percent in the middle of the 2010s when compared to the late 2000s. Additionally, the number of migrants as a percentage of the population increased in both countries year on year, though began to taper off in France in 2017. High numbers of migrants (in total and by percent of population) likely impacted the ability of anti-migrant far-right frames to be picked up by center and center-right political parties.

Looking at this data from the perspective of election years, it is clear that in Sweden, migration rates did not begin to dramatically increase until 2016, the year prior to the 2018 election. Migration increased somewhat prior to the 2014 election, but not as dramatically. The immigration issue was less important in Sweden prior to the 2010 election because the increase in migration did not begin until 2014. While France's colonial history may have influenced the immigration issue in the 2007 election, this thesis focuses specifically on the time period of the so-called "migration crisis." Between 2010 and 2012, there was a positive shift in the number of migrants, but the height of the increase in migration for France was in 2016. By the 2017 election, the numbers had started to noticeably decrease. Notably, even at the height of France's increase in migration, the yearly percentage change never broke 10 percent, while in Sweden the yearly percentage change exceeded 20 percent at its height in 2016.

### **5.2.2 Political Context**

The literature argues that political context, particularly competition over voters between the far-right and center and center-right parties, should influence the transfer of anti-migrant frames in Sweden and France. Since political contexts differed based on different political structure and voter competition in Sweden and France, this difference between countries should impact the mainstreaming of frames. In this section, I present and analyze the vote margins of political parties in Sweden and France across three elections between 2002 and 2018. Next, I present and analyze the GAL-TAN scores of each political party across the same three elections to analyze how the

parties changed ideologically in relation to one another in the Hooghe, Marks and Wilson spatial model and determine how increased competition by the far-right may have impacted their movement.

The following table (Figure 6) presents the voting margins of mainstream political parties in France and Sweden between 2002-2018. Afterwards, I discuss how an increase in voter competition by the far-right in France and Sweden may have impacted the transfer of far-right frames to center and center-right parties. The data are as follows:

**Figure 6: Voting Margins in France and Sweden Between 2002 and 2018**

Figure 6: Voting Margins in France and Sweden Between 2002 and 2018								
TIME	2002 (France)	2006 (Sweden)	2007 (France)	2010 (Sweden)	2012 (France)	2014 (Sweden)	2017 (France)	2018 (Sweden)
<b>France (Round I)</b>								
FN	16.9		10.4		17.9		21.3	
UMP/LR	19.9		31.2		27.1		20.0	
LREM	n/a		n/a		n/a		24.0	
S	16.9		25.9		28.6		6.3	
<b>France (Round II)</b>								
FN	17.8						33.9	
UMP/LR	82.2		53.0		48.3			
LREM							66.1	
S			46.9		51.6			
<b>Sweden</b>								
SWD		2.9		5.7		12.8		17.5
M		26.2		30.1		23.3		19.8
C		7.9		6.6		6.1		8.6
SOD		34.9		30.7		31.0		28.3

Sources: Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2002; Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2007; Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2012; Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2017; Valmyndigheten 2006; Valmyndigheten 2010; Valmyndigheten 2014; Valmyndigheten 2018

Key: FN: Front National, UMP: The Union for a Popular Movement, LR: Les Républicains, RFR: Rally for the Republic, LREM: La République En Marche, S: Socialist Party, SWD: Sweden Democrats, M: Moderates, C: Center, SOD: Social Democrat Party

First, I discuss the impact of voting margins to show trends in political competition related to changes in frames. While, the *Front National* (National Front, renamed *Rassemblement National*, or National Rally, in June 2018) did not achieve significant electoral success during the first decade of its existence, “between 1986 and the 2007 presidential election [the party] consistently won between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the national vote” (Marthaler 2008: 384). The 1980s and 1990s saw a reconfiguration of the French political system from “bipolarization to ‘tripartition,’ as a result of the “strong and persistent presence of the far-right alongside the moderate right and left” (Marthaler 2008: 385). Fearing the loss of voters to the National Front, the center-right initially outwardly refused electoral alliances with the far-right while simultaneously incorporating

far-right frames in their platform, in an attempt to compete with the National Front while also “placing a *cordon sanitaire* around Le Pen and his party” (Marthaler 2008: 385). While mainstream parties frequently referenced immigration in the 1980s, the 1990s saw a minimization of the immigration issue in the political debate. Simultaneously, “media coverage of [confrontations in the banlieues and Islamic fundamentalist terror attacks] was becoming more sensationalist and playing a more significant role in shaping public political debate” (Marthaler 2008: 386). These factors resulted in a “crushing rebuke” for the mainstream in 2002 when Jean-Marie Le Pen “polled 17 per cent” in the presidential election, finishing just behind the precursor for UMP, Chirac’s party Rassemblement pour la République (Rally for the Republic), which received 20 percent of the vote. Le Pen was defeated by Chirac in the second-round-run off (Marthaler 2008: 384).

In France, according to Marthaler, “the outcome of the 2002 presidential election indicated that the immigration policy of both the centre-left and centre-right was perceived by key sections of the electorate as being too lax” (Marthaler 2008: 387). While explicitly anti-migrant stances had been less successful politically in the 1990s thanks to a combination of factors including low unemployment, the “victory of a multi-ethnic French football team in the World Cup,” and internal divisions weakening the National Front, the September 2001 terror attacks “created a new anti-Muslim paranoia” that only strengthened the willingness of mainstream parties to incorporate anti-migrant frames to win votes (Marthaler 2008: 386; Davidson 2021: 1).

In 2007, center-right candidate Nicolas Sarkozy, a former Minister of the Interior in the Chirac administration who had presided over “two major pieces of legislation covering immigration control, nationality and integration,” swept to victory with 31 percent of the vote in the first round and 53 percent of the vote for Sarkozy in the final run-off (Marthaler 2008: 387). Sarkozy’s win ushered in a new era of social and fiscal conservatism and anti-migrant stances (Sciolino 2007). The National Front polled at 10 percent, comparatively, with the Socialist party at 26 percent (Ministère de L’Intérieur n.d. 2007). Sarkozy’s platform contained several elements of far-right frames promoted by Le Pen—he was accused of “fueling tensions” with ethno-nationalist rhetoric and demanded an aggressive police presence in the *banlieues* (Sciolino 2007: 1). Upon winning the presidency, Sarkozy diverged from the pro-migrant stance of the Socialist party, promising to crack down on immigration and creating a new Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development (Marthaler 2008). The Ministry’s “nationalist

and xenophobic overtones” were “highly controversial since it made explicit what had hitherto been an implicit association between migrants and French national identity” (Marthaler 2008: 382). The center-right had successfully won back far-right voters by “addressing their concerns,” at the expense of normalizing far-right anti-migrant political frames and inviting “a growing acceptance of Le Pen’s ideas, which only 34 per cent found unacceptable in 2006 compared with 48 per cent in 1997” (Marthaler 2008: 388).

In hopes of making the party more competitive, Jean Le Pen’s daughter, Marine Le Pen, took over the party in 2011, ousting her father from power. This change marked the National Front’s re-entrance into the political mainstream. Her father’s inflammatory and provocative rhetoric, including a statement that the gas chambers used in the Holocaust were a “minor” historical detail, harmed the party’s reputation and prevented Jean Le Pen from being seriously considered as a presidential candidate in 2007 against Sarkozy (Bénard 2017: 1). Marine Le Pen was a young leader who hoped to reinvent the party after the disappointing 2007 result (Bénard 2017). The change was significant. “Overly radical members were excluded; the speeches were softened and a stronger focus was placed on social issues rather than immigration. In August 2015, Jean-Marie Le Pen, honorary president of the party by now, was expelled” (Bénard 2017: 1). The reinvented National Front was a populist, nationalist party stressing the harms of globalization, demanding improvements in security, and promoting a social hierarchy that favored French citizens over immigrants, in an attempt to compete electorally with the center-right (Bénard 2017). It was a successful move—in 2012, Marine Le Pen came third in the first round of the presidential election with 18 percent of the vote, compared to UMP’s 27 percent and the Socialists’ 29 percent (Ministère de L’Intérieur n.d. 2012).<sup>14</sup> This result was greater than her father’s second place percentage in 2002.

The 2017 election marked the founding of a new party: Emmanuel Macron’s La République En Marche, which aimed to be a centrist and socially and economically liberal party in favor of globalization and accepting of migration. In 2017, Marine Le Pen finished with 21 percent of the vote to upstart challenger Macron with 24 percent in the first round, and 34 percent of the vote to La République En Marche’s 66 percent of the vote in the second round (Ministère de L’Intérieur

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<sup>14</sup> In the final run-off in 2007, UMP achieved 48 percent of the vote and the Socialists achieved 52 percent of the vote (Ministère de L’Intérieur n.d. 2012).

n.d. 2017).<sup>15</sup> The center-right party, now Les Républicains, did not make it to the final run-off and received 20 percent of the vote in the first round. Macron characterized his newly formed party as “neither right nor left wing” and therefore succeeded in forming a broad political coalition that slowed the ascendance of the far-right in France, particularly in an election that came on the heels of the 2016 election of U.S. President Donald Trump. (Davidson 2021: 1).

I next discuss the potential impact of voting margins as a measure of political context on the transfer of far-right frames in Sweden. In Sweden, a “centrist consensus” controlled primarily by the powerful Social Democrat party governed Sweden for “the better part of the twentieth century,” allowing the country to construct an elaborate and extensive welfare state and firmly sideline far-right elements of the political spectrum (Tomson 2020: 1). Sweden enjoyed “one of the most stable” party systems in all of Europe, characterized by the dominance of five mainstream parties in two major political blocs—center left and center right—for over sixty years (Aylott & Bolin 2018: 1). Unlike other European countries, including Denmark and France, in the post WWII era, Sweden had no longstanding far-right political party. With the exception of the short-lived success of the New Democracy party in the early 1990s, far-right political parties stagnated on the sidelines until the breakthrough of the Sweden Democrats (Bjørge 1993: 118; Schroeder 2019).

Despite “ties to [extremists] at its founding in 1988,” the Sweden Democrats are “now the third largest party in the Riksdag, the Swedish parliament” (Tomson 2020: 1). The party entered the political stage to widespread controversy and marginalization. In the 1980s and 90s, the Sweden Democrats had little media exposure and even fewer votes. “Most commentators disregarded it as an immature movement with neo-Nazi tinges”<sup>16</sup> that had grown “out of skinhead and neo-Nazi circles” (Hellström et al. 2012: 187; Feder and Mannheimer 2017: 1). While the party claimed to be closer to the mainstream than its extremist counterparts, it initially made little effort to discourage this characterization, even electing a party chairman linked to the extremist Nordic Realm Party (Tomson 2020). However, like many other far-right parties in Europe, the party learned to hide its extremist roots to win elections, condemning images of party members

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<sup>15</sup> In 2017, UMP won 20 percent of the vote in the first round and the Socialists achieved 6 percent (Ministère de L'Intérieur n.d. 2017).

<sup>16</sup> “Neo-Nazis are one of the main segments of the white supremacist movement in the United States and many other countries. They revere Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany and sometimes try to adopt some Nazi principles to their own times and geographic locations, though many neo-Nazis primarily adopt the trappings, symbology and mythology of the Third Reich” (Anti-Defamation League 2021).



wearing Nazi uniforms that surfaced in the 1990s and “banning the wearing of uniforms of any kind” (Tomson 2020: 1). The shift towards the political mainstream intensified with the election of the young, fresh-faced Jimmie Åkesson as party leader in 2005. He quickly “expelled a stream of members for racist statements” (Duxbury 2021: 1). The party won 3 percent of the vote in 2006, which did not reach the threshold for seats in the Riksdag.

The Sweden Democrats experienced their first major groundswell of electoral support in 2010, breaking onto the political stage with 6 percent of the national vote (Tomson 2020). Initially, the Swedish mainstream created mechanisms to exclude the far-right from the public debate. Six major mainstream parties formed a *cordon sanitaire* preventing the Sweden Democrats “from playing the kingmaker role, which their parliamentary representation could have afforded them since neither the left nor the right bloc of parties achieved a majority” (Schroeder 2019: 68). Instead, the center-right and center-left mainstream parties chose to back the leadership of their former political enemies, the Social Democrats, to keep the far-right out of power. At this stage, the mainstream in Sweden did not fear the far-right. The Social Democrats maintained a firm grip on power with 30 percent of the vote, followed by the Moderates, the center-right, at 30 percent and the Center party, the center, at 6.6 percent (Valmyndigheten 2010).

However, in just three elections, the Sweden Democrats doubled and nearly tripled their percent of the vote, earning 13 percent of the vote in 2014 and 17. percent in 2018 (Henley 2018). Today, as a result of the rise of the Sweden Democrats, “neither of the [mainstream] blocs is anywhere near to winning its own majority” (Aylott & Bolin 2018: 1). Increasingly tolerant stances by mainstream policies on immigration in combination with discursive opportunities created by high migration rates opened the door for a new party that was skeptical of immigration (Aylott & Bolin 2018). As the Sweden Democrats won larger margins, Sweden’s mainstream parties faced an erosion of their voter base. In 2012, the Social Democrats saw a limited increase to 31 percent of the vote, but the Moderates’ support fell sharply to 23 percent (the Center Party remained steady at 6 percent) (Valmyndigheten 2012). The Moderate Prime Minister and party leader, Fredrik Reinfeldt, lost his election and rescinded his leadership of the party. As a result of the Sweden Democrats third place finish, at 13 percent of the vote, the mainstream had two choices: to form a center-left and center-right coalition excluding the Sweden Democrats or for one or more parties to break ranks and cooperate (Aylott & Bolin 2018). The parties chose to maintain the *cordon*, nearly risking a government crisis as a result of a hung parliament (Kennedy 2018).

In 2018, the Social Democrats fell to 28 percent of the vote, the Moderates decreased their percentage to 20 percent, and the Centre Party saw a small increase to 8 percent (Valmyndigheten 2018). In light of these results, and the significant reduction in their share of the vote, it is unsurprising that in 2019, the Moderate Party agreed to open talks with the Sweden Democrats (Milne 2019). By contrast, the centrist Liberal and Center parties, both of which had lost fewer votes, once again allied with the Social Democrats, openly refusing to form a government with the Sweden Democrats despite their standing as the Riksdag's third largest party (Tomson 2020).

But by 2021, three center-right parties: Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Party (which had backed the center-left in 2014 to halt the rise of the Sweden Democrats) agreed to meet with the Sweden Democrats (Duxbury 2021: 1). In the run-up to the 2022 elections, party leader Åkesson argues that he has consolidated enough political power to convince the chiefs of the three parties that “they will need his support to take power from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, a Social Democrat” and to sell that support for the price of “policy concessions from his would-be new allies in order to secure real influence for his party for the first time since it entered parliament in 2010” (Duxbury 2021: 1). The political environment is unprecedented in Sweden, where mainstream parties had up to this point vocally condemned the electoral victories of the Sweden Democrats and maintained the cordon sanitaire. “In 2010, former Moderate Party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt, Sweden’s prime minister from 2006 until 2014, called them a “xenophobic force” and refused to discuss policy with them at all (Duxbury 2021: 1). Today, the Moderate Party stands ready to conform its platforms to, or even possibly form a coalition with, the Sweden Democrats (Duxbury 2021).

Sanandaji argues that the Sweden Democrats’ ability to capitalize on the migration issue is in part a result of the fact that discussing the potential downsides of migration became taboo among most political elites in Sweden and the political establishment on both sides rejected any opposition to open borders and advocated for the idea of “Swedish exceptionalism,” which was perceived as a welcoming, tolerant pro-migration platform (Sanandaji 2018: 1). The lack of debate over the migration issue created a political opening for “a new, one-issue party — belonging to neither bloc” to court the votes of a “silent majority” that was “never in favor of increasing migration to Sweden” (Sanandaji 2018: 1). As Sweden’s center-left-led government accepted greater numbers of migrants, the Sweden Democrats were “able to brand themselves as the country’s only legitimate anti-immigration voice” (Standish 2018: 1). The visibility of the migration issue during

the increase in migration tipped the scales and created a bloc of voters, media organizations and politicians who opposed immigration. Voter dissatisfaction regarding migration and migrant integration existed prior to 2011—a platform calling for a “90 percent reduction in immigration” allowed the Sweden Democrats to win twenty seats out of 349 in the Riksdag in 2010 (Castle 2010: 1). However, the introduction of hundreds of thousands of migrants, in combination with a political context that rewarded a migration-focused party that cut across opposing swaths of the voter base, ensured the ultimate success of anti-migrant frames. In 2018, the center-right Moderate Party lost votes to the Sweden Democrats (Standish 2018). By blaming migration for Sweden’s problems at a time when being anti-migrant was politically beneficial, and through the responsive incorporation of mainstream parties seeking to remain relevant, the far-right’s anti-migrant collective action frame was able to enter the mainstream. The results support the argument that in both Sweden and France, increased voter competition by the far-right impacted the transfer of far-right frames between center and center-right parties. The timing of the vote margins displayed above also suggests that the visibility of the migration issue likely boosted the vote for the far-right in both countries. In Sweden and France, the vote for the far right reached a high after the 2016 increase in migration. While the visibility of the increase in migration didn’t impact the mainstreaming of frames in 2017, there is a chance that any increase in visibility of the issue may impact vote margins in future elections.

To assess how parties moved ideologically in the spatial model during the time period under study, I examine the GAL-TAN scores of each political party in Sweden and France (Bakker et. al 2015, Polk et al. 2014; Polk et. al 2017). The GAL-TAN, as described in the literature review, measures a spatial model of parties that was introduced to describe the emerging cultural issues impacting political parties and extends beyond Downs’ economics-based model (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002). GAL (green, alternative, liberal) parties support greater personal freedoms while TAN (traditional, authoritarian, nationalist) parties, support cultural conservatism and government control at the expense of personal freedoms. The GAL-TAN variable ranges between 0 and 10, TAN standing for 10 and GAL standing for 0. To assess how parties may have moved in the spatial model during elections as a result of increased voter competition by the far-right between 2007 and 2018, I present the following results. Figure 7 was extracted from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey on July 1, 2021 (time series data) (Bakker et. al 2015, Polk et al. 2014; Polk et. al 2017):

**Figure 7: GAL-TAN Scores of Center, Center-Right and Far-Right Political Parties in Sweden and France between 2002-2017**

<b>Figure 7: GAL-TAN Scores of Center, Center-Right and Far-Right Political Parties in Sweden and France between 2002 and 2017</b>					
<b>TIME</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>France</b>					
FN	9.8	9.3	10	8.9	8.7
UMP/LR/(RFR 2002)	7.3	7.1	6.3	7.2	7.4
LREM	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.5
S	3.2	2.6	2.3	3.4	
<b>Sweden</b>					
SWD	n/a	n/a	8.3	9.2	8.9
M	4.6	6.0	5.2	4.6	5.9
C	6.3	5.4	5.0	3.0	2.2
SOD	4.8	4.2	4.2	3.6	4.4
Source: Bakker et. al 2015, Polk et al. 2014; Polk et. al 2017					
<b>Key:</b> FN: Front National, UMP: The Union for a Popular Movement, LR: Les Républicains, RFR: Rally for the Republic, LREM: La République En Marche, S: Socialist Party, SWD: Sweden Democrats, M: Moderates, C: Center, SOD: Social Democrat Party					

In assessing the GAL-TAN scores of center and center-right political parties in Sweden and France, the data supports trends similar to those observed in the transfer of frames. In France, between 2006 and 2017, the FN had a lowering TAN score over time, showing a move away from the extreme score (with a slight upward fluctuation in 2010). Meanwhile, UMP/LR stayed relatively steady over the time period under study, with a slight downturn in 2010 (which corresponds to a weakened Front National in the Sarkozy era) and a slight upturn in 2017, as the Front National entered the final presidential run-off. This result is congruent with the transfer of far-right frames between far-right and center-right parties. LR/UMP incorporated fewer far-right frames over time and had the least in 2017, and the party's GAL-TAN scores remain steady over the time period. Downs' model supports this conclusion, as France's semi-presidential system and presidential run-off mimics a two-party system. In a two-party system, over time, parties move toward the median voter. Despite the fact that the far-right became more politically competitive

over time, FN converged toward the center-right party. LREM's 2017 victory also reflects the political power of the median voter in France over time and the absence of far-right frames in the party's 2017 political manifesto supports the conclusion that parties in France moved toward the median voter over time.

In Sweden, between 2010 and 2017, the Sweden Democrats received an increasingly high TAN score, with a dip in 2017 prior to their largest electoral performance. The Moderate party experienced greater fluctuations in their GAL-TAN score than UMP/LR. The party had their highest scores in 2006 and 2017. This shift may indicate that between 2010 and 2014, when the Moderate vote percentage was still above 30 percent, the center-right in Sweden attempted to compete with the far-right by emphasizing the winning "open hearts" immigration policies pursued for so many years by the Social Democrats (and therefore the party's GAL-TAN score is more similar to the Social Democrats) (Löfgren 2020). However, after the Moderates were rebuked with a more than 7 percent loss in 2014, the party seems to have responded by shifting back toward the Sweden Democrats, earning a higher GAL-TAN score.

In sum, between 2007-2018 there was an increase in political competition by the far-right in both Sweden and France (though in France, the far-right was also competitive in 2002 and less competitive in 2007). The difference in political structure between the two countries, as a semi-presidential and parliamentary system respectively, influenced how the center-right parties shifted in response to that competition. While the highly visible discursive opportunity of the increase in migration in the mid-2010s impacted the transfer of frames, political competition by the far-right and political structure also played a role.

## 6.0 Conclusions

This thesis analyzed how and when far-right anti-migrant frames were incorporated in the platforms of mainstream political parties in France and Sweden and how the discursive opportunity of visibility and differences in political contexts and systems impacted their mainstreaming. It is the hope of this author that this thesis will contribute to understanding a greater trend surrounding the political mainstreaming of far-right frames across Europe.

Returning to my hypotheses, I find that both are supported by the data. Increased visibility of the increase in migration during the 2010s led to increased mainstream adoption of far-right frames by center and center-right parties. Additionally, increased political competition by the far-right led to increased mainstream adoption of far-right frames by center and center-right parties.

In the first section of the analysis, I document that center and center-right parties in both Sweden and France incorporated far-right frames in their political manifestos between 2007 and 2018. In Sweden, by 2018, two of three frames (migrant crime and welfare chauvinism) were incorporated by the center-right party. The third frame (cultural unity) did not transfer. In France, the first two frames (migrant crime and welfare chauvinism) transferred between the right and center-right in 2007 and 2012, and the third frame (cultural unity) transferred to the center-right in 2012. However, in 2017 in France, only the migrant crime frame transferred to the center-right. The center party in both countries did not incorporate far-right frames, though the center in both France and Sweden referred to terrorism, which is related to the migrant crime frame.

For the first hypothesis, the data supports that a discursive opportunity (increased visibility of migration) occurred in both France and Sweden. Steady increases in migration, peaking in 2016 (France) and 2016 (Sweden), made immigration a highly visible issue. However, increases were greater in percentage terms and in rate compared to total population in Sweden, suggesting even more visibility of the migration issue in that country. In Sweden, a dramatic increase in migrants in 2016 likely impacted the transfer of frames in the 2018 political manifestos. In France, while the data supports that visibility of the increase in migration impacted the transfer of frames, the historical strength of the far-right party may have minimized the impact of the visibility variable. As center-right parties had competed with the far-right for a longer period of time, the incorporation of far-right frames has a longer history in France. The visibility of the migration issue in the mid 2010s therefore may have had a less dramatic effect on frame transfer in France.

In regards to the impact of political context, both countries experienced increased competition over voters by the far-right. In Sweden, a steady increase in competition over voters by the far-right over time, which also corresponded to a steady increase in migration, caused the Moderate party to incorporate far-right frames after a political rebuke in 2014. The Moderate party initially hesitated to incorporate far-right frames in 2010 and 2014. In 2014, during the run-up to the election that the party would lose, former Moderate Party leader and Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt called on Swedes to “open their hearts” (Löfgren 2020: 1) The Sweden Democrats, by contrast, called for a “total ban on asylum seekers” (Johnson & Sennero 2016: 1). In 2018, after experiencing lower voting margins, the Moderate party finally incorporated far-right frames (migrant crime and welfare chauvinism). Today, the voters of the Moderate Party are in the sights of the Sweden Democrats. According to party leader Jimmie Åkesson, the party hopes “to tell the Moderates in particular ‘how to govern the country [as]...we strengthen our kingmaker role. We will have an immense influence over what happens in Sweden in the coming weeks, months, years” (Henley 2018: 1). As supported by Downs’ theory of spatial models and Hooghe, Marks and Wilson’s model, the center and center-right parties in Sweden ran to the right of the GAL-TAN scale, indicating that they moved away from the median voter, which is likely a result of Sweden’s parliamentary multi-party-political system.

In France, where the far-right had been competitive for a longer period of time and therefore the visibility of migration was a less influential factor, the center-right and far-right incorporated far-right frames in 2007 and 2012, but backed off in 2017. Given the extensive historical background of the far-right in France, it is not surprising that the center-right party had already incorporated far-right frames in the first years of the analysis. Anti-migrant rhetoric has characterized French politics since the early 1980s. In France, mainstream parties had been “borrowing” from the far-right for much longer, with both center-right and center-left candidates describing immigration as an “invasion” and warning that France had “gone beyond the threshold of tolerance” as early as the 1990s (Davidson 2021: 1) In terms of political structure, both the far-right and center-right in France decreased the frequency of far-right frames by 2017 (as observed in the GAL-TAN scores) even as the far-right became more competitive politically. The growing trend toward the median voter of the right and center-right (as observed in the GAL-TAN scores) could be because France’s semi-presidential political system encouraged the far-right and center-right to run to the median voter in response to the far-right’s growing political power. This result

is also supported by French political results since 2017, which show LREM incorporating far-right frames and the National Rally becoming more centrist.

Today, LREM's initial hesitation to accept anti-migrant frames in 2017 no longer remains the case. Macron has incorporated significant elements of his rival's toned down anti-migrant frames in order to successfully compete for the median voter, a result supported by Downs' hypothesis that a semi-presidential system mimics a two-party system. While Macron's 2017 victory nodded at a tolerant, welcoming stance towards migrants, he quickly backtracked as a result of a hostile electoral environment. Today, the two parties have nearly identical stances on migration, to the point where Le Pen was accused of being "soft" on immigration by Macron's interior minister in February 2021 (Davidson 2021). While far-right frames in France did not see the same rapid, dramatic acceptance as seen in the Swedish center-right manifestos between 2010 and 2018, in large part the mainstream in France has always been forced to accept and legitimize elements of an anti-migrant frame. In conclusion, the heightened visibility of migration in Sweden combined with a dramatic increase competition over voters led to the adoption of far-right frames by the center-right in 2018. In France, the semi-presidential structure had a moderating effect on the impact of the discursive opportunity caused by the increase in migration. Visibility was important, but despite an increase in competition by the far-right, the impact was not as strong in France as in Sweden.

By analyzing the incorporation of anti-migrant frames in the manifestos of center and center-right parties in Sweden and France, I underscore the potential of far-right frames to become a force reckoned with by mainstream parties across Europe. This thesis had several limitations, including the salience of the material, the validity and replicability of the analysis given the personal role of the author in creating the far-right codes for the frames, and the lack of analysis of the role of media, which plays an essential role in the development of discursive opportunities. However, the mainstreaming issue is important and should be afforded further study. Many mainstream European parties are currently forced with the choice of either continuing to maintain the *cordon* or co-opting or incorporating the frames of far-right parties. Further study should analyze the role of media in the mainstreaming process, which plays a critical function in creating discursive opportunities or consider examining additional European countries, with different political contexts and political systems, to analyze whether discursive opportunities such as visibility are more or less impactful depending on the country.



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