# IMMIGRATION AND POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT IN EUROPE: WRITING IMMIGRATION INTO POWER STRUGGLE IN FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, AND AUSTRIA.

## MASTER'S THESIS

Sulaiman GBONDO

**Department : International Relations**

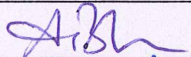**Thesis Supervisor : Assoc. Prof. Ali BALCI**

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# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled **"Immigration and Populist Radical Right in Europe: Writing Immigration into Power Struggle in France, the Netherlands and Austria"** was written by me in compliance with set scientific standards. This thesis is an original work and every study and material of others used in its content has been duly acknowledged. The data in this thesis has not been forged and no part of this thesis has been submitted for any purpose at any institution of learning.

**Sulaiman GBONDO**

--.--.2019

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

# DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my grandmother the late Jakah Bayoh Koroma (May her soul rest in peace).

# CONTENTS

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **BZÖ** | : | Alliance for the Future of Austria |
| **EU** | : | European Union |
| **FPÖ** | : | Freedom Party |
| **FN** | : | Front National |
| **ISIS** | : | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| **LPF** | : | Lijst Pim Fortuyn |
| **MEDEF** | : | Movement of the Enterprises of France |
| **ON** | : | Ordre Nouveau |
| **ÖVP** | : | Austrian People's Party |
| **PVV** | : | Party for Freedom |
| **SPÖ** | : | Social Democratic Party of Austria |
| **UMP** | : | Union for a Popular Movement |
| **VdU** | : | Federation of Independents |

## Sakarya University
## Institute of Social Sciences Abstract of Thesis

The immigration crisis in Europe culminated with the rise of populist radical right parties in the region. This research primarily investigates the connexion between the immigration crisis and the political success of populist radical right parties in France, the Netherlands and Austria. Contrary to the general claim that increased immigration automatically translates into voter gravitation toward the far-right, this study argues that immigration is a political tool utilized by far-right parties for their political success. This study employs post-structuralism as a theoretical framework to analyse the immigration discourse of the Front National in France, The Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, and the Freedom Party in Austria. This study covers the period between 2013 and 2017. Findings in this study prove that the immigration crisis was a political tool used to delegitimize mainstream immigration discourse and undercut the popularity of pro-immigration mainstream parties in France, the Netherlands and Austria. This study also finds that the Front National, the Party for Freedom, and the Freedom Party propagated an immigration discourse that facilitated the mainstreaming of their political ideology and also their popularity with the electorate. Consequently, resulting in their electoral success in recent elections.

<div align="center">Sakarya Üniversitesi</div>
<div align="center">Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Özeti</div>

| Yüksek Lisans | ■ | Doktora | |
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| **Tezin Başlığı:** Kanun Çalgısı İçin Geliştirilen Faydalı Model ve İcra Şeklinin Uzman Görüşlerine Göre Değerlendirilmesi ||||
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Avrupa'daki göç krizi, bölgedeki popülist radikal sağ partilerin yükselmesiyle sonuçlanmıştır. Bu çalışma özellikle Fransa, Hollanda ve Avusturya'daki popülist radikal sağ partilerin politik başarısı ile göç krizi arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktadır. Göçün otomatik olarak oyların aşırı sağa kaymasına yol açtığı iddiasının aksine bu çalışma, göçün aşırı sağ partiler tarafından seçimlerde başarı sağlamak için kullanılan bir araç olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmada post-yapısalcılık teorisi Fransa'daki Ulusal Cephe, Hollanda'daki Özgürlük Partisi ve Avusturya'daki Özgürlük Partisinin 2013-2017 tarihleri arasındaki göç söylemini analiz etmek için kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada elde edilen veriler, göç krizinin Fransa, Hollanda ve Avusturya'daki göç taraftarı ana akım partilerin popülerliğini ve göç söyleminin meşruiyetini azaltmak amacıyla politik bir araç olarak kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, Fransa'daki Ulusal Cephe ve Hollanda ve Avusturya'daki Özgürlük Partilerinin parti ideolojilerini yaymak ve seçmenlerin gözündeki popülaritelerini arttırmak amacıyla göç söylemini bir propoganda aracı haline getirdiklerini de göstermektedir. Bu politikaları, son seçimlerde başarılı olmalarını sağlamıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç, Popülist Radikal Sağ, Söylem, Fransa, Hollanda, Avusturya

**INTRODUCTION**

## The Immigration Crisis in Europe

Immigration is not a strange phenomenon in European. It is part of the continent's history. Forced movement of people within Europe occurred at an alarming magnitude during the World Wars. The establishment of the European Union and the creation of the Schengen zone have also stimulated immigration within the European continent. Europe has also attracted immigrants from other continents as Africa, America, and Asia. Immigration in Europe is a normal activity. However, Europe encountered an overwhelming flow of migrants chiefly from the Middle East in recent years. The severity of the immigration crisis led the Migration Research Institute to describe it as a, "global large-scale movement of people."[1] The immigrants were predominantly from West Asian, South Asian, and African countries.[2] The said geographic regions have been inflicted with conflicts, poverty, and their related insecurities. Though a series of events served as reasons for the immigration crisis, conflicts in the Middle East were the single most prominent factor. In 2011, insecurity in the Middle East produced an unprecedented number of migrants.[3] Among other conflicts, the Syrian unrest which started in 2011 produced a shocking immigrant population. Syrians accounted for 1 million of the 1.7 million refugee population of the world in 2015.[4] Immigrants fleeing from poverty-stricken countries and conflict zones have mostly sought countries and continents with relative securities. One such content is Europe.

The incomparable rate at which immigrants have penetrated Europe is evident in asylum application figures. In 2013, over 400,000 people filed for asylum in member states of the European Union, including Norway and Switzerland.[5] In 2014, the asylum figure

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[1] Migration Research Institute, *Europe 's Migrant Crisis - a Comprehensive Analysis* (Budapest: Migration Research Institute, 2016), 4, http://www.migraciokutato.hu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Europes-Migrant-Crisis.pdf.

[2] Dinoj K. Upadhyay, *Migrant Crisis in Europe: Causes, Responses and Complexities* (New Delhi: Indian Council of World Affairs, 2016), 1, https://icwa.in/pdfs/guestcolumn/2014/MigrantCrisisinEurope26042016.pdf.

[3] Maria Muzalevskaya, "Europe 's Refugee Crisis : A Comparative Analysis of Germany and France," (Master thesis, Boston University, 2016), 3, https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.36322.94403.

[4] European Stability Initiative, *The Refugee Crisis through Statistics* (Berlin - Brussels - Istanbul: European Stability Initiative, 2017), 3, https://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20The%20refugee%20crisis%20through%20statistics%20-%2030%20Jan%202017.pdf.

[5] Philip Connor, *Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015,* (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2016), 9, http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/.

surged to almost 600,000.[6] Between 2014 and 2015, 2 million people filed for asylum in Europe, whereas in the preceding five years combined the figure was at 1.6 million.[7] Of the said 2 million people, an estimated 563,000 first time applicants sought asylum in Europe in 2014, and in 2015 the figure appreciated to 1.26 million.[8] These figures indicate the sharp increase in migration to Europe. The peak year of the immigration crisis in Europe was 2015. The claim is by 2015 it was obvious that there was no swift resolution to the Syrian conflict in sight. Therefore, many of the then 1.7 million Syrian refugees in Turkey decided to seek opportunities elsewhere.[9]

Immigrants targeted countries like Greece and Austria as countries of first-entry, from where they dispersed to other countries in Western Europe. The immigrants mostly used the Western Balkan route to access Europe. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of refugees went through the Western Balkan route.[10] Countries in the Western Balkan route include Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Austria.[11] Though the immigrants generally continued their journey to other countries like Germany, over 116,000 applied for asylum in Austria between 2014 and 2015.[12] According to the Migration Council for Austria, about 88,300 asylum applications were submitted in Austria in 2015, which was almost the same number of applications lodged between 2010 and 2014.[13] In 2017, Austria recorded 24,296 asylum applications.[14]

Another country which suffered the impact of the immigration crisis was France. The country's immigrant population increased by 22 percent in 2013.[15] In 2012, 55,000 people

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[6] Connor, *Number of Refugees to Europe,* 9.

[7] Andreas Steinmayr, "Did the Refugee Crisis Contribute to the Recent Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe?," *CESifo DICE Report* 15, no. (2017): 24.

[8] Barbara Giovanna Bello, *A Look At the "Refugee Crisis" Across Europe : Challenges, Debates and Projects,* (Milano: European Union/Council of Europe, nd) 5, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9488616/Analytical+paper_Refugees_7sept.pdf/29daca6f-9d5a-4836-a259-7f2629289f1f.

[9] European Stability Initiative, The Refugee Crisis through Statistics, 15.

[10] Steinmayr, "Did the Refugee Crisis Contribute to the Recent Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe?," 24.

[11] International Rescue Committee, *The Refugee Crisis in Europe and the Middle East*, (New York: International Rescue Committee, 2016), 4, https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/911/irccrisisappealcompositerevaugust.pdf.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Migration Council for Austria, *Understanding Migration – Managing Migration,* (Vienna: Migration Council for Austria, 2016), 17, https://bmi.gv.at/Downloads/files/Bericht_des_Migrationsrats_PDF_komplett_ENG_23_3_17.pdf.

[14] Asylkoordination Österreich, "Statistic Austria" *Asylum Information Database*, 2018, accessed September 8, 2018, https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/austria/statistics.

[15] Ben McPartland, "Some truths about immigration in France," *The Local*, October 13, 2015, accessed September 8, 2018, https://www.thelocal.fr/20151013/some-truths-about-migration-to-and-from-france.

applied for asylum in France.[16] In 2015, France recorded 71,000 asylum claims.[17] The figure rose to 85,000, In 2016.[18] In 2017, asylum applications again appreciated to around 100,000.[19] These figures signify that between 2012 and 2017 the number of asylum seekers in France almost doubled.

The tide of the immigration crisis also swept across the Netherlands. Immigration from non-Western countries to the Netherlands appreciated to 52,046 in 2013, from 47,469 in 2012.[20] In 2015, 56,900 people applied for asylum in the Netherlands.[21] However, between January and November 2016, the figure depreciated to 26,600.[22] The population of the Netherlands appreciated by 21,000 Syrians, 2,000 Ethiopians and 3,000 Eritreans in 2015 alone.[23] In the first six months of 2016, 15,000 first time Syrian applicants applied for asylum in the Netherlands, and within the same period in 2017, asylum application by Syrians surged to about 11,000.[24] It is estimated that a total of 100,000 immigrants entered the Netherlands in the first half of 2017.[25]

**The Rise of Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe**

The political landscape in Europe is changing. Political parties that were once considered marginal and at the periphery of European politics are becoming mainstream parties. "Far-right populism is once again rearing its ugly head across Europe."[26] The resurgence of far-right parties in Europe is evident in their recent electoral triumph. Far-right parties

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[16] Alex Dunham, "Immigration in France in ten states that matter," *The Local*, December 1, 2014, accessed August 27, 2018, https://www.thelocal.fr/20141201/immigration-in-france-10-key-stats.
[17] Connor, Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015, 10.
[18] "Asylum and Immigration," Gouvernement.fr, accessed September 8, 2018, https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/asylum-and-immigration.
[19] Andy J. Semotiuk "France Struggles with Its Immigrants in The Midst of National Security Concerns," *Forbes,* January 17, 2018, accessed September 8, 2018, https://www.forbes.com/sites/andyjsemotiuk/2018/01/17/france-struggles-with-its-immigrants-in-the-midst-of-national-security-concerns/#49a7de145efc.
[20] "Total number of Western and non-Western immigrants in the Netherlands from 2007 to 2017," Central Bureau of Statistics, accessed September 10, 2018, https://www.statista.com/statistics/525898/netherlands-number-of-immigrants-by-origin/.
[21] Rebecca Flood, "Anti-migrant protests erupt in Netherlands as refugees housed in tiny town of 8,000," *Express*, December 27, 2016, accessed September 9, 2018, https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/747543/migrant-protest-Netherlands-village-tension-vigilante.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ton Toemen, "Population growth fueled by immigration," *CBS*, January 28, 2016, accessed September 9, 2018, https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2016/04/population-growth-fuelled-by-immigration.
[24] Janene Pieters, "Immigration Drives Dutch Population Growth," *NL.Times.NL*, July 31, 2017, accessed September 11, 2018, https://nltimes.nl/2017/07/31/immigration-drives-dutch-population-growth.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Patrick Sullivan, "The Wave: The Rise of European Far-Right Populism," *Social Science Works*, February 15, 2017, accessed May 11, 2018, http://socialscienceworks.org/2017/02/the-wave-the-rise-of-european-far-right-populism/#_ftn4.

increased their voter percentages in electoral contests that followed the immigration crisis. The political triumph of the far-right was evident in both national and European Parliamentary elections. Electoral gain is not the only signifier of the revamp in political success of the far-right. Commenting on the 2014 European Parliamentary elections and the significant electoral achievement of the far-right, Siobhán Lloyd, argued that the actual concern was the influence that the electoral results would have on domestic politics and European Union discourse.[27] Far-right political discourse is being normalized and mainstreamed, and it has influenced mainstream parties' political agenda and discourse.[28] The ability to influence mainstream political discourse underscores the amplified influence of far-right parties on politics in Europe.

One of the far-right parties that recently had an unparalleled success in its electoral history is the Front National in France (FN). Between 2012 and 2017 the FN almost doubled its voter percentage in national elections. In the 2012 presidential elections the Front National acquired 17.9 percent.[29] In the first round of the 2017 presidential elections the party won 21.7 percent of casted votes,[30] and in the second round it secured 33.9 percent.[31] The electoral success of the Front National was replicated at the European level. In 2014, the Front National's voter percentage in the European Parliamentary elections quadrupled and the party gained 20 more seats in the European Parliament. In the 2009 European elections the FN won 6.3 percent and secured 3 seats in the European Parliament.[32] In the subsequent 2014 elections the party won around 25 percent,[33] which translated into 23 seats in the European Parliament.[34]

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[27] Siobhán Loyd, "What can we learn from the European elections? It wasn't just the far right that did well," *Socialist Lawyer,* no. 67, (2014): 31.

[28] Selcen Öner, "Different Manifestations of the Rise of Far-Right in European Politics: The case of Germany and Austria," *Marmara Journal of European Studies* 22, no. 2 (2014): 86.

[29] Hugh Schofield, "What next for Marine Le Pen's National Front," *BBC News*, April 24, 2012, accessed May 4, 2018,  http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17824436.

[30] Yasmeen Serhan, "Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron Advance," *The Atlantic*, April 23, 2017, accessed May 19, 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2017/04/french-election-results-first-round/523965/.

[31] Sean Clarke and Josh Holder, "French presidential election May 2017 – full second round results and analysis," *The Guardian*, May 26, 2017, accessed May 7, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2017/may/07/french-presidential-election-results-latest.

[32] "Results of the 2014 European elections," European Parliament, accessed, May 12, 2018, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-nl-2014.html.

[33] Marcus Stadelmann, "The Marinisation of France Marine Le Pen and the French National Front," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 4, no. 10, (2014): 1.

[34] Ibid.

The rise of the populist radical right in Europe is also evident in the recent electoral records of the Freedom Party in Austria (FPÖ). In the 2013 Austrian parliamentary elections the FPÖ secured 20.5 percent.[35] In the following 2017 parliamentary elections it won 26 percent of the votes and secured 51 seats, from the 40 seats it had acquired in 2013.[36] Evidently, between 2013 and 2017 the Freedom Party increased its voter percentage in national parliamentary elections by 5.5 percent, and also raised its representation in the lower house of parliament by 11 seats. Also, between the 2010 and 2016 presidential elections the FPÖ more than doubled its voter percentage. In the 2010 presidential elections the FPÖ won 15.6 percent of the votes.[37] In the following 2016 presidential elections the party obtained 35 percent in the first round.[38] In the second round it won 49.65 percent,[39] and in the third round it obtained 46.7 percent of the votes.[40] The FPÖ made a similar electoral gain at the European level. In the 2009 European Parliamentary elections the party won 12.71 percent and in the subsequent 2014 polls its voter percentage rose to 19.70 percent.[41] The FPÖ's representation in the European Parliament went from two seats in 2009 to four seats in 2014, and its position among Austrian parties shifted from forth to third place.[42]

The Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands is another far-right party that experienced political growth in recent Dutch elections. In the 2006 Dutch Parliamentary elections the PVV won 6 seats.[43] In the snap election which was conducted in 2010 the

[35] Martin Dolezal & Eva Zeglovits, "Almost an Earthquake: The Austrian Parliamentary Election of 2013," *West European Politics* 37, no. 3 (2014): 649.

[36] "Election for Nationalrat (Austrian National Council)," IFES, accessed September 18, 2018, http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3026/.

[37] "Austrian President Wins Landslide Second Term," The Guardian, accessed September 19, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/25/austrian-president-wins-second-term.

[38] Melissa Eddy, "Austrian Presidential Vote Gives Edge to Right-Wing Candidate," *New York Times*, April 24, 2016, accessed May 17, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/25/world/europe/austrian-presidential-vote-gives-edge-to-right-wing-candidate.html.

[39] Philip Oltermann, "Austria rejects far-right candidate Norbert Hofer in presidential elections," *The Guardian*, December 4, 2016, accessed May 7, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/04/far-right-party-concedes-defeat-in-austrian-presidential-election.

[40] Roland Oliphant and Balazs Cseko, "Austria elections: Far Right leader Norbert Hofer concedes defeat to Alexander Van der Bellen," *The Telegram*, December 5, 2016, accessed May 13, 2018, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/04/austria-election-norbert-hofer-cusp-becoming-europes-first-far/.

[41] Öner, "Different Manifestations of the Rise of Far-Right in European Politics: The case of Germany and Austria," 90.

[42] "Results of the 2014 European elections." European Parliament, September 22, 2014, accessed May 18, 2018, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-nl-2014.html.

[43] Sam Wilson, "Vote fragments Dutch politics," *BBC News*, November 23, 2006, accessed May 19, 2018, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6175956.stm.

party gained 24 seats in parliament.[44] Another snap election was conducted in 2012 in which the party won 15 seats.[45] In 2015, electoral support for the Party for Freedom appreciated considerably, but gradually declined from the beginning of 2016.[46] This decline was however transitory. In the 2017 parliamentary elections the PVV won 20 seats and became the second largest party in the Dutch parliament. [47] Though the electoral gains of the PVV at the national level does not show a stable upward trend, given that the party went from winning 24 seats in 2010 to winning 20 seats in 2017, the revamp in its electoral success is evident between 2012 and 2017. During this period the party increased its representation in the Dutch parliament by 5 seats. However, at the European level the Party for Freedom has maintained a fixed representation in the European Parliament, while its voter percentage has depreciated. In the 2009 European Parliamentary elections the party won 16.97 percent of the votes and secured 4 seats, and in 2014 it gained 13.32 percent and maintained its 4 seats in the European Parliament.[48] Though the PVV has not been able to replicate its national electoral success at the European level, its resurgence at the national level is a significant indication of the growing political influence of this party.

The rise of the populist radical right during the immigration crisis begs the following question: Is there a connexion between the upswing in electoral success of the populist radical right and the immigration crisis?

**Literature Review**

A plethora of studies has been conducted to provide explanations for the rise of the far-right. The studies have sought to identify the factors and conditions which cause the political triumph of far-right parties. Through such investigations various explanations for the rise of the populist radical right have been provided. Arguably, the most prominent

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[44] Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk, "Economy and culture in the 2010 Dutch elections," (paper prepared for the Research Workshop What were the elections about? How do we know it?, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, 24-26, October 2010), 21. http://www.cses.org/plancom/2010TelAviv/CSES_2010TelAviv_Aarts.pdf.
[45] "Dutch election: Pro-Europe VVD and Labour parties win," BBC News, accessed May 14, 2018. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19566165.
[46] Tom Louwerse, "The 2017 Netherlands election: Polls suggest mid-sized parties are now the new norm in Dutch politics," *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, January 24, 2017, accessed May 12, 2018, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/01/24/2017-netherlands-election-mid-sized-parties-the-new-norm/.
[47] "Dutch election: European relief as mainstream triumphs," BBC News, accessed May 16, 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39297355.
[48] European Parliament, "Results of the 2014 European elections."

explanation in studies on the electoral growth of the populist radical right is premised on the immigration nexus. Daniel J. Della Posta recognizes the dominance of the immigration explanation in studies on the ascent of far-right parties.[49] The general argument is that the anti-immigration stance of populist radical right parties makes them attractive to the electorate, when the latter becomes sensitive to immigration.

One strand of research on the immigration topic has focused on documenting anti-immigration sentiment in European countries. The aim is to determine voter attitude in relation to immigration and its political effect on the far-right. One such study concludes that there exists a positive interaction between far-right vote and immigration.[50] Emphasizing the positive effect of immigration on the growth of far-right parties, one study concludes that an increase in asylum applicants in a country increase the country's prospect of having a radical right party.[51] Lori Lynn Eller, argues that immigration explains the rise of the Golden Dawn in Greece, the Front National in France, the Sweden Democrats in Sweden, the United Kingdom Independence Party in the United Kingdom, and Jobbik in Hungary.[52] Similarly, another study documents that since Europe started experiencing massive "influx of refugees ... right-wing nationalist parties" have recorded increased electoral success.[53] Ratkovic alike endorses the immigration and far-right political success hypothesis. She documents that in Switzerland, immigration concerns have caused an increase in popularity of radical right-wing populist parties.[54] Immigration is among the reasons for the electoral demand for populist parties in Britain and the Netherlands.[55] One literature documents that the Sweden Democrats attracted its initial support in the 1980s, owing to its opposition to the influx of refugees into Sweden,[56] and

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[49] Daniel J. Della Posta, "Competitive Threat, Intergroup Contact, or Both? Immigration and the Dynamics of Front National Voting in France," *Social Forces* 92, no. 1 (2013).

[50] Lori Lynn Eller, "Explaining the Rise of Far-Right Political Parties in Europe," (Master thesis, University of Tennessee, 2017), https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/2124.

[51] Frida Stokland, "The Success of the Radical Right in Western Europe - The effect of mainstream parties' policy positions?" (Master Thesis, University of Gothenburg, 2016), 26, https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/50721/1/gupea_2077_50721_1.pdf.

[52] Eller, "Explaining the Rise of Far-Right Political Parties in Europe," 15.

[53] Marinella Taoushiani, "Effects of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on the EU: Nationalism on the Rise," (Master Thesis, Brandeis University, 2017), 25, http://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/33912/TaoushianiThesis2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

[54] Milijana Ratkovic, "Migrant Crisis and Strengthening of the Right Wing in the European Union," *Megatrend Review* 14, no. 3 (2017): 55.

[55] Casey Plach, "Radical Right Populist Parties in Britain and the Netherlands: Explaining Electoral Success*," Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research* 19, no. 1 (2015): 3.

[56] Bin Nansae and Yi Okyeon, "The Internal Supply-side Causes for the Belated Rise of the Sweden Democrats," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 1 (2015): 266.

that the Sweden Democrats was the third most influential political party in the Swedish parliament in 2014, predominantly because of the electoral appeal of the party's "immigration-skepticism platform."[57] Analogously, Hans-George Betz associates the success of populist radical right parties in the 1980s elections, specifically the success of the French Front National in the 1984 European elections, to increased unease with growing numbers of non-European immigrants.[58] Betz, documents explicitly that, "the radical populist right has been particularly smart in translating these sentiments [unease with non-European immigrants] into political gains."[59] In consonance with the immigration and far-right political success hypothesis, Jason Matthew Smith, maintains that immigration, among other factors, triggered the rise of the Party for Freedom to political prominence in Austria,[60] and that increased immigration aided in the success of the Front National in the 2002 presidential elections.[61] He concludes that immigration has the most robust correlation with, and the most significant influence on support for far-right parties.[62]

A separate sect of scholarship argues the same immigration and far-right political success hypothesis. However, the argument in these studies is limited to specific contexts and does not adopt the generalization. One of the hypotheses in these studies is far-right vote is either negatively or positively affected based on whether immigrants are in direct contact with natives or not.[63] This argument is founded on the *intergroup contact theory and the competitive threat theory*. The intergroup contact theory holds that far-right vote is nominal in townships where large numbers of immigrants are in direct contact with natives. Because, there is reduced prejudice and more understanding of immigrants by the natives. On the other hand, the competitive threat theory holds that far-right vote appreciates in a constituency with a small immigrant population, who are mostly concentrated in specific areas. The concentration of immigrants in separate areas form natives causes reduced interaction between immigrants and natives in the wider province.

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[57] Nansae and Okyeon, "The Internal Supply-side," 243.
[58] Hans-George Betz, "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe," *Comparative Politics* 25, no. 4 (1993): 416.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Jason Matthew Smith, "Extreme Politics: An Analysis of the State Level Conditions Favoring Far Right Parties in the European Union," (Master Thesis, University of North Texas, 2003), 11, https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/MEDIA279/Democracy,%20media,%20farright/EUROPE_extreme%20politcs_%20far%20right%20in%20eu%20(smith).pdf.
[61] Ibid., 17.
[62] Ibid., 73.
[63] Posta, "Competitive Threat, Intergroup Contact, or Both?"

It is argued that the reduced contact increases misunderstanding and prejudice of immigrants that translates into an increased far-right electoral support. Substantiating this argument, Posta documented that a 1 percent increase in the immigrant population of a state or province attracts a 3 percent possibility of natives voting for the Front National in France.[64] Another hypothesis in this group of studies is that the economic status, religion, education, and geographic location of natives impact on their decision to vote for the far-right. This argument futures in the work of Lewis Davis and Sumit S. Deole, who maintain that there are variations in populist radical right vote among the "poorly educated" and the educated, the unemployed and the employed, the rural dwellers and the urban dwellers, and the religious and the non-religious.[65] This argument is premised on the notion that the less educated, who competes with immigrants for low skilled jobs, the unemployed, who understands immigration as the reason for his or her unemployment, the rural dwellers, who are mostly low skilled and far removed from the larger immigrant population, and religious individuals, who fear fusion of their religious and cultural values with imported ones are more likely to vote for far-right parties when immigration increases. The claim on the correlation between the level of education and employment status of voters and far-right support finds currency in another study, which argues that there exists a connection between the level of education and occupational status of an individual and his or her anti-immigration attitude, as is evident among the primary and tertiary educated in Austria.[66] Against this backdrop, right-wing support comes from persons who fear for their living standards, jobs, and social status.[67] One study concludes explicitly that the electorate is drawn to radical right parties, because of their "opposition to immigration" and their aspiration to protect national identity from perceived threats.[68]

Another strand of scholarship has emphasized the crucial role of immigration in the success of far-right parties. These studies argue that other factors which have informed the various explanations on the rise of the far-right only have currency when they interact with increased immigration. For instance, Matt Golder, claims that unemployment has a positive correlation with far-right support only when immigration is high, but that

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[64] Posta, "Competitive Threat, Intergroup Contact, or Both?," 265.
[65] Lewis Davis and Sumit S. Deole, "Immigration and the Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe," *DICE Report* 15. (2017).
[66] Betz, "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe," 422.
[67] Ratkovic, "Migrant Crisis and Strengthening of the Right Wing," 52.
[68] David Art, "Rise of Radical Right: Implications for European Politics," *Brow Journal of World Affairs* 19, no. 2 (2013): 134.

regardless of the level of unemployment, immigration continues to be profitable for the far-right.[69] A comparative study on 16 European countries concludes that the support for populist radical right parties emanates primarily from their discourse on immigration upon which rhetoric on the economy and culture are dependent.[70] Similarly, another study documents that the Front National's vote tends to appreciate in a situation where economic constraints interact with the presence of a large immigrant population, who compete for manual labour with natives.[71]

The common ground in these studies is that the protectionist agenda of the populist radical right attracts natives, who feel a sense of sociocultural, religious, and economic insecurities from increased immigration. The protectionist political program of the far-right that seeks to defend national identity from contending sociocultural and religious values of immigrants is said to attract natives, who fear that they could lose their identity through a fusion of their values and the values of immigrants. Also, the agenda of the far-right on immigration has economic implications for the electorate. Scholars claim that the anti-immigration political program of the far-right attracts support from people, who feel economically threatened by increased immigration. On these grounds, scholars have argued that increased immigration in Europe explains the voter gravitation toward far-right parties and their ensuing political success.

It is evident that the nexus between immigration and the political success of the far-right has been studied extensively. The claims in these studies cannot be discarded as false. However, they fail to explain the use of immigration as a political tool by the far-right to influence power relations with other political parties. Put differently, these studies have not accounted for the strategic manipulation of immigration by the far-right to create political subjects, undermine the legitimacy of their political rivals, and propel their ascendance to political prominence. Studies on the nexus between immigration and the political triumph of the far-right predominantly conclude on the claim that increased immigration automatically translates into voter gravitation towards the far-right. The standard argument is that mounting immigration triggers insecurities in the electorate, which translates into far-right vote. In other words, far-right political parties gain support

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[69] Matt Golder, "Explaining Variations in the Success of Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 4 (2003): 432.
[70] Jason E. Kehrberg, "The Demand Side of Support for Radical Right Parties," *Comparative European Politics* 13, no. 5 (2014), doi:10.1057/cep.2014.6
[71] Posta, "Competitive Threat, Intergroup Contact, or Both?" 266.

when immigration inflates. These studies have failed to recognize the political strategies employed by the far-right to translate immigration into political success. Contrary to the general conclusions on the topic, this research argues that the far-right utilizes immigration as a political tool for its political success. Instead of rendering the far-right innocent of its success, this study claims that far-right parties use immigration as a strategic political instrument to regulate power relations with mainstream political parties. This research asks the following research question in order to investigate this claim:

*How did populist radical right parties in France, the Netherlands, and Austria, construct immigration for power relations?*

Put differently, the research question of this study is: how did populist radical right parties in France, the Netherlands, and Austria, construct immigration to alter power relations with their political rivals? To coin this question differently, this study asks: how did the far-right in France, the Netherlands, and Austria, construct immigration to facilitate their emergence as new centres of power in French, Dutch, and Austrian politics? In other words, this study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:  How did the far-right construct immigration to challenge the dominance of mainstream parties. How did the far-right in France, the Netherlands, and Austria, construct immigration to attract electoral support?

**Hypothesis**

With regards to the research questions, this study hypothesizes that populist radical right parties in France, the Netherlands, and Austria, constructed immigration with dramatic rhetoric to impose and normalize a contending meaning upon immigration. Through imposing and normalizing a contending meaning upon immigration, their political programs were mainstreamed, the legitimacy and hegemony of mainstream parties were undermined, and they simultaneously ensured their popularity with the electorate. The Front National in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, and the Freedom Party in Austria achieved these results through the following:

**By constructing immigration as a threat to the people and the State**

Mainstream political parties legitimize immigration by promoting a narrative about the multicultural nature of European, the obligation of Europe towards refugees, and the benefits of immigration to Europe and its people. On the other hand, the far-right parties

here studied construct immigration differently. They claim that immigration causes insecurities that threaten the safety and stability of Europe and its people in general, and their countries and its people in particular. The far-right claims that the insecurities which emanate from immigration range from economic, to identity, to national and physical insecurities. The contending far-right discourse on immigration is produced to challenge the mainstream narrative about immigration that has maintained the marginalization of far-right immigration discourse and far-right parties from mainstream politics. The imposed contending meaning upon immigration also allows for far-right political programs to be mainstreamed and a new political subject created, through which the far-right parties here studied could exercise power. In a nutshell, the far-right constructed immigration as a threat to delegitimize mainstream discourse, impose a new meaning upon immigration through which their political programs could be mainstreamed and a new political subject created, through which they could access political hegemony.

**By constructing immigration and its related insecurities as products of the failure of mainstream political parties**

The far-right parties here studied accuse mainstream parties of failing to control immigration and the threats it poses to the people and the state. They generally claim that mainstream parties have promoted globalization, encouraged immigration, and supported multiculturalism at the detriment of the nation-state. They claim that mainstream parties' policies on immigration disregard the will and security of the people. They further allege that mainstream parties are unwilling, and more so unable to curb immigration. Through these accusations, the FN, the PVV, and the FPÖ have sought to undermine the credibility and popularity of mainstream parties with the electorate. They have sought to undercut the electoral support of mainstream parties in order that mainstream parties can be deposed from their hegemonic positions and a political vacuum created.

**By representing the populist radical right as the credible source of redemption from the immigration crisis and its related ills**

The contest for hegemonic dominance would be incomplete without the far-right representing itself to the electorate as the only viable political option to effectively regulate immigration and replace mainstream parties in government. Therefore, the FN, the PVV, and the FPÖ represented themselves as the defenders of the people against immigration and its accompanied insecurities. Unlike mainstream parties that are said to

be unwilling and unfit to protect the people from immigration, the Front National, the Party for Freedom, and the Freedom Party claim to be competent and equipped with the appropriate political programs to salvage their countries and their people from immigration and its related economic, security, and identity threats. These parties represented themselves as the embodiments and representatives of the solution to a problem created by mainstream parties. Through this discourse, these far-right parties sought to increase their electoral support, through which they could become the new hegemons of their respective countries.

This study employs post-structuralism in order that the above hypotheses can be tested within a guided academic framework.

**Theoretical Approach**

This research employs poststructuralism as a theoretical framework so as to ensure an academically guided investigation of the above hypotheses. This choice is informed by an understanding that poststructuralism allows for an investigation of the processes through which dissident ethnic or political groups construct and solidify their identities, and also represent difference with the aim of either challenging a hegemonic entity or consolidating a hegemonic status. "Post-structuralism focuses on the relation between *identity construction* and *power relations*."[72] Thus, post-structuralism provides the platform to study the processes through which the battle for hegemony is conducted.

Poststructuralists use varied approaches in their studies. Analyses are focused on historical, interpretative, and discursive methodologies.[73] The fundamentals of poststructuralism regulate these methodologies. One such fundamental of post-structuralism is its critical view of an independent truth. Post-structural theory does not primarily seek to undermine truth or render it invalid. However, it questions the purity of truth claims devoid of external influences or constructs. The theory holds that any given truth is better understood from its historical and contextual foundations. The core of the argument is that no truth exists in a vacuum. Every understanding of our world has historical and context-dependent attributes. The proponent of this critical view of truth is

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[72] Ali Balci, *The PKK-Kurdistan Workers' Party's Regional Politics: During and After the Cold War* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 2.

[73] Philipp W. Rosemann, "Post-Structuralism," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2012−13: Ethics and Philosophy*, ed. Robert L. Fastiggi, Joseph W. Koterski, Trevor Lipscombe, Victor Salas, and Brendan Sweetman (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2013), 3:1245.

Martin Heidegger. Although linked with writings of the 1960s and 1970s, poststructuralism has a historical connection with the work of Heidegger.[74] For Heidegger, there is a misunderstanding of truth claims when they are regarded to have an infinite meaning untampered with by time.[75] In his work, '*Being and Time*,' Heidegger recommends a revisit of the past to understand the historical constriction of truth and knowledge. The revisit of the past is supposed to enable individuals to better understand from where their thinking and their categories emerge.[76] Therefore, Heidegger initiated the historical approach in poststructuralism. His concept of *destruction* enables researchers to probe truth claims and investigate their evolution and historical constructs. Even though Heidegger introduced a founding concept in poststructuralism which influenced prominent post-structural theorists, he was not a post-structuralist. He is regarded as a phenomenologist.

Another fundamental concept in poststructuralism is *difference* and *meaning*. Poststructuralism builds on some hypotheses of structuralism.[77] The difference and meaning concept is derived from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, who is considered a structuralist. His work on structural linguistics holds that *meaning* exists only in *difference*. For Saussure, "language is a system of differences, without positive terms; it is a set of relations of difference and similarity, rather than a set of terms that are differentiated."[78] Put differently, the meaning imposed in language is entrenched in difference and similarity. The meaning of an item is not in itself, but in its differences and similarities with others. The meaning of success is understood only through the meaning of failure and the differences which exist therein. Therefore, an understanding of either is not independent of the other. The concept of meaning and difference is critical in poststructuralist inquiries. It helps explain the purpose of the *us* versus *them* juxtaposition which dissident groups use to establish meanings for themselves and construct their identities. Without difference, through which meaning is established, the core, individual or group, cannot be different from the external. Consequently, identity cannot be constructed. Identities are unstable and are dependent upon "differences and the

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[74] James Williams, *Understanding poststructuralism* (Chesham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2005), 7.
[75] Ibid., 1245
[76] Ibid., 1246.
[77] Bernard E. Harcourt, "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Poststructuralism?'" (University of Chicago, Public Law & Legal Theory, Working Paper No. 156, 2007). 3
[78] Harcourt, 2007, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Poststructuralism?" 4.

relationship of othering."[79] Therefore, the difference and meaning concept helps pilot studies which are premised on investigating identity construction. As noted by Ali Balci, "meaning of the world, (social or political) is constructed through interpretation."[80] Since meaning that is established through difference is not devoid of interpretation, it is appropriate to say that Saussure's work laid the foundation for interpretative studies in poststructuralism.

One of the most prominent poststructuralist theorists is Michel Foucault. "Michel Foucault's conceptualization of limits, ethos, and critique denote the critical approach of poststructuralism"[81] His analysis of the concept of *limit* expands on the theory of meaning and difference by Ferdinand de Saussure. While Saussure holds that meaning exists in difference, Foucault argues that difference is made possible by limit. Therefore, limit is instrumental in the construction of meaning. Put simply, meaning exists in difference and difference is made possible by limit. One is considered polite because one is not arrogant. Without an understanding of arrogance, politeness can neither be understood nor identified. More importantly, the limit, or the specific point, at which politeness fades and arrogance emerges makes for difference. Without limit, a fine line between good and evil and right and wrong cannot be established. Consequently, difference does not exist without limit, nor does meaning. It is in limit that *exclusion* is orchestrated.[82] Therefore, Foucault's conception of *limit* is significant for poststructuralist inquires. It assists with an understanding and analysis of exclusionary practices of dissident political or ethnic groups in their struggle for hegemony and identity construction. Poststructuralism concerns itself with the "conceptual and political practices" through which some are included and others excluded, and also the processes through which the inside and outside divides are constructed.[83] The exclusion concept is relevant for understanding the processes and strategies employed by power blocs to either maintain dominance or undermine dominant rival power blocs. Exclusionary practices like foreign policy are used by both hegemonic and dissident blocs to silence each other's political narrative and

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[79] Ali Balci, "The Kurdish Movement's EU Policy in Turkey: An Analysis of a Dissident Ethnic Bloc's Foreign Policy," *Ethnicities* 15, no. 1 (2015): 74.

[80] Balci, *The PKK-Kurdistan Workers' Party's Regional Politics,* 73.

[81] Tim Dune, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 232.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 226.

undercut each other's political clout.[84] For clarity sake, exclusion is that which is constituted in the *inside* and *outside*, *us* versus *them*, and *good* and *evil* dichotomies which are prominent in politics.

Michel Foucault's *critique* concept adopts a critical approach towards knowledge and that which is understood as natural, fixed or given. This approach seeks to unveil the assumptions and limits which have rendered things natural.[85] Foucault's critical approach holds that everything accepted as natural, including identity, ethnicity, and class are constructed and can be evaluated for emancipatory purposes. This concept is similar to Derrida's *deconstruction* which is also a critical approach towards text. "Deconstruction is his name for the art of reading by which one finds the cracks and fractures in one's thinking and self-understanding."[86] As implied, deconstruction's purpose, like that of Foucault's *critique* concept, is to reveal the exclusions and limits which structure our knowledge. In order that things that are understood as given and natural are reconsidered as constructed through a succession of limits and exclusions.

At this juncture, it is important to note that limit and exclusion, and also difference and meaning are initiated and sustained through *discourse*. The discourse concept is arguably the principal concept in post-structuralism. Discourse is defined as practices and representations through which meaning is produced, identity constructed, social relations established, and political outcome rendered possible.[87] Discourse produces our socio-political, ethical, and cultural realities. A crucial word in the above definition which requires further clarification is *practice.* One of the discursive practices to be considered is *rhetoric.* Rhetoric occurs in the form of dramatic verbal and textual representations of issues or events that produce their meanings. As discourse is not always equivalent to language,[88] pictorial representations that produce meaning could also be considered as discursive practices. Post-structuralism holds that nothing exists external to discourse.[89] To put the role of discourse in the production of knowledge into context, a quotation to some extent is essential. "A post-structural approach maintains that because

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[84] Ali Balci, "When Foreign Policy Matters: The Gulen Movement's Fight with the AK Party over Iran," *Insight Turkey* 17, no. 1 (2015): 15.
[85] Dune, Kurki and Smith, *International Relations Theories*, 232-233.
[86] Rosemann, "Post-Structuralism," 1246.
[87] Dune, Kurki and Smith, *International Relations Theories*, 234-235.
[88] Jan Wright, "Poststructural Methodologies – The Body, Schooling and Health," in *Body Knowledge and Control*, ed. John Evans, Brian Davis and Jan Wright, (London: Routledge, 2003), 36.
[89] Dune, Kurki and Smith, *International Relations Theories*, 238.

understanding involves rendering the unfamiliar in the terms of the familiar, interpretation is unavoidable and such that there is nothing outside discourse."[90] To put differently and in a rather simple wordings, to understand what I am not requires an interpretation of what I am. Since this understanding of the self occurs through interpretation, discourse is understood as a knowledge producing tool. Our world and the many identities and meanings it holds are constructed through discourse. A significant attribute of discourse is that it makes constructed knowledge and the exclusions it embodies seem natural and given. This argument is supported by Ali Balcı who documents that, "exclusion is normalised through the constant production of ... discourse."[91] A noticeable attribute of discourse in the above quotation is that discourse has to be continuously reproduced. Because, in any given space or time there are competing discourses that strive to impose meaning upon our world. Discourse is a powerful tool in political and hegemonic scuffles. The political subject is created through discourse.[92] Moreover, human choices are guided by meaning-making tools as language.[93] Therefore, when people choose to vote for a particular political party or vow to ensure the dominance of a particular identity group, their choices are regulated by rhetoric through which discourse is produced.

Poststructuralism, through discourse analysis, allows for interpretative studies which analyse political statements or rhetoric to understand how our social realities are constructed, the battle for hegemony conducted, and political outcome engineered. Poststructuralism proves to be a suitable theoretical framework for this study. Because, this study examines the series of discourses and exclusions which allowed for the immigration phenomenon to be transformed into political capital by the far-right parties studied in this research.

**Statement of Problem**

Western Europe is facing a political, human rights and security crisis. The region has recorded the resurgence of populist radical right parties that threaten to unseat mainstream parties from government and undermine the general human rights and humanitarian

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[90] Dune, Kurki and Smith, *International Relations Theories*, 238.
[91] Balci, *The PKK-Kurdistan Workers' Party's Regional Politics,* 37-38.
[92] Dune, Kurki and Smith, *International Relations Theories*, 238.
[93] Wright, "Poststructural Methodologies – The Body, Schooling and Health," in *Body Knowledge and Control*, ed. John Evans, Brian Davis and Jan Wright, 41.

principles in Western Europe. The resurgence of far-right parties poses a threat to the socio-economic and physical security of not just immigrants and minority groups residing in the region, but also to people fleeing from harm of various kinds to seek refuge in Western Europe. The political agenda of these parties promote segregation of minorities and also demands a halt to immigration from countries outside Europe, from which people flee mostly for fear for their safety. The rise of the far-right in France poses a threat to the citizenship status of both first-generation and some second-generation immigrants. Statements from the leader of the Front National, Marine Le Pen, suggests a redefinition of citizenship along the line of having at least one French parent.[94] Altering the citizenship of immigrants would violate their fundamental human rights and trigger varied insecurities. The rise of the far-right also threatens specific religious groups in Western Europe. A possible ascendance to power by the Front National threatens discrimination and large-scale deportation of the four to five million Muslims who reside in France.[95] It is feared that the far-right could trigger conflict in Europe. Because, their political agenda encourages discrimination along nationality and ethnicity. According to Davis and Deole, the rise of the far-right raises questions about the possibility of ethnic conflict in Europe.[96]

The rise of the far-right in Western Europe also threatens the stability of the European Union. Far-right parties are generally critical of the European Union and its involvement with the immigration and economic policies of its member states. Therefore, far-right parties have often threatened to hold a referendum to exit the European Union. In various ways the rise of the far-right threatens peace in Europe and the European project.[97] For instance, Geert Wilders, leader of the Party for Freedom promised to withdraw the membership of the Netherlands from the European Union, criminalize the use of the Quran and close all mosques.[98]

The political landscape in Western Europe is fundamentally changing. The growing political prominence of far-right parties has forced mainstream parties to adopt far-right programs which undermine human rights, refugee laws, and other related international

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[94] Richard Wolin, "France's National Front Draws Strength From Brexit," *The Nation*, August 5, 2016, accessed September 13, 2018, https://www.thenation.com/article/frances-national-front-draws-strength-from-brexit/.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Davis and Deole, "Immigration and the Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe," 10.
[97] Öner, "Different Manifestations of the Rise of Far-Right in European Politics: The case of Germany and Austria," 103.
[98] "Dutch election: European relief as mainstream triumphs." BBC News, accessed May 16, 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39297355.

standards. For instance, The Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) where forced to adopt far-right positions when they started losing votes to the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ).[99] The said mainstream parties adopted the rhetoric and tough stance of the far-right on immigration. The rise of the far-right has questioned the resilience of human rights, security for immigrants, and humanitarian principles in Western Europe. It has also tainted the reputation of Western Europe as a defender of human rights, refugee laws, and other related international principles. This situation is capable of weakening Western Europe's influence over other nations in the area of promoting and enforcing international laws and standards. The immigration crisis and the rise of the populist radical right present challenges which go beyond the political consequences for mainstream parties, and the threats to minority groups and immigrants at the national level. International laws and standards, human right laws and the international reputation of Western Europe are all under attack.

**Significance of Research**

This research contributes to the various inquiries and knowledge compilation on the immigration crisis and the changing political sphere in Europe. It complements other studies on the nexus between immigration and far-right political success. Because, it provides a further understanding of conclusions in studies on the subject. It also provides a clear insight into the significance of immigration in European politics. Therefore, this research could prove significant to individuals and academics who would be interested in acquiring more knowledge on the topic. Also, this study takes a significant deviation from other literatures on the topic and puts into context the use of immigration by far-right parties to delegitimize mainstream parties. It also puts into context the nexus created by the far-right between immigration and general security issues which are of concern to voters. Therefore, this study provides policymakers and politicians with information on the immigration topic and also on other socio-economic, security, and political issues which give added value to the immigration question. For these reasons, this study could prove significant to mainstream political parties and other policymakers, who are interested in preserving their political dominance, (and) or address the issues which fuel the rise of the far-right. As a result, this study could significantly contribute to the strive

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[99] Emmanuel Sigalas, "Austria's presidential election is set to be another vote dominated by the issue of immigration," *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, March 1, 2016, accessed September 13, 2018, http://bit.ly/1QjVs1h.

to sustain peace, human rights and other international humanitarian standards in Europe that the rise of the far-right threats.

**Aims and Objectives**

This study aims to investigate the impact of the immigration crisis on politics in Europe. It is specifically aimed at unearthing the strategic use of immigration by populist radical right parties to popularizing and solidifying their political ideology. The primary objective for analysing the discourse of the populist radical right about immigration is to investigate the specific contexts in which immigration is used to delegitimize mainstream parties and appeal to the sentiment of voters. This research further aims at uncovering the different meanings and threat factors attached to immigration, and how these discursively constructed meanings have enhanced the politics of fear and contributed to the success of far-right parties. Also, this study aims at illuminating the growing interconnection among states that has caused political, social, and economic conditions in some countries and continents to affect the political landscape in other countries, (and) or continent. The objective is to trigger a genuine involvement by the European Union, its member states and other international organizations that are interested in maintaining peace and stability in Europe and the immigrant producing countries to address the root causes of the immigration crisis.

**Research Methodology**

This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology. It predominantly focuses on content analysis. Relevant academic studies which are related to the topic under lens are utilized for analyses. The purpose is to reflect the varied arguments on the topic under investigation by different scholars that will allow for balanced analyses and an informed conclusion in this work. Also, statements made by relevant populist radical right politicians that are related to immigration are collected and analysed. The purpose is to obtain statements that would allow for a proper analysis of the immigration discourse of the far-right. It would also facilitate the accomplishment of the aims and objectives of this study.

**Case Study**

This study covers the period between 2013 and 2017 in France, the Netherlands, and Austria. This time frame is significant for this study. Because, it covers essential electoral

events both at the national and European levels in which the triumph of the far-right in France, the Netherlands, and Austria was evident. The period covered in this study is essential for understanding the immigration discourse of the parties here studied in the 2014 European parliamentary elections, the 2017 general elections in the Netherlands and France, and the 2016 Austrian general elections. Moreover, the choice of countries for this study is significant. France and Austria are said to be home to two of the most successful populist radical right parties in Western Europe. Therefore, it is essential to study the discourse about immigration which has contributed to the enduring political success of these parties. Also, the Netherlands that was once considered among the most liberal countries in Europe is becoming overtly resistant to immigration. Thus, it is vital to study the immigration discourse of the far-right that has contributed to this unprecedented change.

**Limitations**

There was a significant limitation on the volume of primary data I could collect and analysed. The languages used to communicate in the countries studied served as a barrier to the volume of data I could analyse. I had to depend on translated materials, especially in the case of France and Austria. Limited time also weighed in as a significant limitation. The scope and complexity of this research required more time than was allowed. Therefore, an extensive analysis of the discourse of the far-right on all relevant fronts was not possible. For this reason, only three hypotheses were tested in this study.

**Research Structure**

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter which covers important topics like the political success of the Front National, The Freedom Party, and the Party for Freedom in France, Austria, and the Netherlands respectively. The second chapter entails a brief history of the far-right in France. Also, in this chapter the hypotheses of the study are tested in France. The third chapter similarly entails a brief history of the far-right in the Netherlands and also tests the hypotheses of the study in the Netherlands. The fourth and final chapter also documents a brief background on the evolution of the far-right in Austria and also tests the hypothesis of this study in the Austrian context. The final component of this research concludes.

# CHAPTER 1: IMMIGRATION AND FAR-RIGHT HEGEMONY IN FRANCE

## 1.1. A Brief History of the Far Right in France

The far-right political movement has existed in France for decades. Scholars generally agree that the far-right in France lost its political clout in the post-World War Two era. According to Michelle Hale Williams**,** the far-right started attracting political success in the early 1980s after being relegated to the fringe of French politics for almost four decades.[100] The resurgence of far-right organizations in France is dated three decades before their initial political success. Daniel Stockemer documents that the far-right resurfaced in the 1950s, due to the Algerian war of independence and the Indochina war, which catered for the revamp of nationalist movements and far-right sentiment in France.[101] One such far-right movement established in 1969 was Ordre Nouveau (ON) which later became known as Front National (FN) when it was transformed into a far-right political party in 1972.[102] Jean-Marie Le Pen, a founding member of the FN, was the party's first leader. He represented the party in post-1972 presidential elections until his final contest in 2007. In 2011, Jean-Marie Le Pen was succeeded by his daughter. Marine Le Pen.[103] At the time that she assumed office, there was concern about unemployment, insecurity, immigration and the Islamisation of France; by 2014 she expanded the FN's electoral base to 25 percent, beyond its usual 10-12 percent.[104] Though Marine Le Pen is regarded as a reformist and accredited for the historic electoral success and appeal of the party to a more diverse electoral base, it is argued that her political program is not significantly dissimilar from her predecessor. "Her platform mixed her fathers' signature issues of immigration, security, and national identity with a strong populist leftist message..."[105] Given its political track record, the FN is considered as "...

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[100] Michelle Hale Williams, "A new era for French far right politics? Comparing the FN under two Le Pens," *Análise Social* 46, no. 201 (2011): 680.

[101] Daniel Stockemer, *The Front National in France: Continuity and Change Under Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen*, (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 7. 10.1007/978-3-319-49640-5

[102] Ibid., 9-10.

[103] Marcus Stadelmann, "The Marinisation of France Marine Le Pen and the French National Front," 1.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Stockemer, *The Front National in France: Continuity and Change Under Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen,* 24.

the most successful far-right party in the history of France."[106]

## 1.2. Immigration as a Threat to the People and the State

Mainstream parties in France justify their policies on immigration based on a discourse which argues for the economic and social benefits of immigration,[107] the humanitarian obligation of France towards refugees and immigration being a phenomenon which could be tolerated given the multicultural nature of France,[108] the Front National argues differently. The leadership of the FN has imposed a different meaning on immigration by consistently constructing immigration as a threat to the French people and the French state. The FN's threat discourse on immigration is constructed in relation to varied issues of concern to the people.

Firstly, the Front National constructs immigration as a threat to the economic security of the people. The leadership of the FN argues that immigration compounds the economic difficulties of the French people. Marine Le Pen, leader of the FN stated that, "mass immigration is a major problem ... We have 7 million unemployed [and] 9 million poor. One in three French people don't have proper healthcare because they can't afford it, and you want to import unemployment?"[109] In this statement, Marine Le Pen constructs immigration as a source of unemployment for the French people and a phenomenon which further intensifies their economic difficulties. This discourse on immigration as an economic threat to the people is consistent in Marine Le Pen's representation of the phenomenon. She repeated a similar claim in which she said, "... 200,000 legal immigrants come to France every year, that's one million every five years, plus at least as many illegal immigrants. ... That we cannot manage, all the more since we have seven million people unemployed."[110] This statement is consistent with the FN's discourse on

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[106] James Shields, "The Far Right Vote in France: From Consolidation to Collapse?" *French Politics, Culture & Society* 28, no. 1 (2010): 26.
[107] "French presidential election: Where do the candidates stand on immigration?" YouTube video, 11:08, posted by "France 24 English," April 6, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbb1x5DyGFU. (Official translation on YouTube)
[108] "Europe migrants crisis: France to welcome 24.000 refugees, Hollande says," YouTube video, 3:10, posted by "France 24 English," September 7, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuRA8-c0SmU. (Official translation on YouTube)
[109] "Brexit makes far-right stronger, says Marine Le Pen," YouTube video, 6:57, posted by "BBC Newsnight," June 29, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MexfSD94OA.
(Official translation on YouTube)
[110] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter," YouTube Video, 23:26, posted by "RobinHoodUKIP," October 11, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Sfhc_e5P88.
(Official translation on YouTube)

immigration as an economic threat to the people. In rationalizing the party's resistance to immigration, Marine Le Pen uses the same rhetoric on immigration as an economic threat and also a phenomenon motivated by economic needs. In a press conference in Paris, she said, "... the great mass of migrants have nothing to do with the civil war in Syria. They are economic migrants ... However, we have seven million unemployed people in France, and nine million poor workers. ... so, we can't receive them."[111]

The Front National also constructs immigration as a financial burden on the state and a further constraint on France's ability to cater for the economic needs of its citizenry. This rhetoric is evident in the following statement by Marine Le Pen. "Put humanitarian centers where we can look after the population who are genuinely in danger, ... instead of bringing them here, to do what? To house them where? To give them what jobs? Whereas we are currently suffering from huge unemployment, we are having problems looking after our own people."[112] In this statement, Marine Le Pen hints on the difficulty faced by the French state to meet the housing and employment needs of the French people. She also covertly indicated that immigration could further limit the state's ability to provide for the people. Thereby worsening their economic and housing conditions. The Communication Director of the Front National, Laurent Jocobelli, explicitly equates immigration with general insecurity in France. He also specifically constructs immigration as a financial burden on the state. He said, "[there is] now a big wave of immigration [immigrants] arriving in France with insecurity, with welfare benefits."[113] In this statement, Jocobelli underscores the financial burden discourse on immigration propagated by the Front National. He constructs immigration as a liability on the welfare system, which denotes the financial implication of immigration on the state.

Secondly, immigration is constructed by the Front National as a threat to the physical security of the people and the national security of the state. The FN argues that terrorists would infiltrate France undetected and destabilize the security of the state and the people through mass immigration. This claim is evident in Marine Le Pen's statement in which

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[111] "Marine Le Pen Vows to Tackle Terrorism," YouTube video, 1:40, posted by "CCTV Video News Agency," April 10, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaxV1x3O_HA.
(Official translation on YouTube)
[112] "France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen speaks with CNN's Hala Gorani about Europe's immigration challenges after the Paris attacks," YouTube Video, 4:02, posted by "CNN," November 19, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWysQ4v0-Jo. (Official translation on YouTube)
[113] "Europe's Far-right on immigration: The major countries of the world are defending their nation," YouTube video, 1:56, posted by "France 24 English," March 12, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAVikeaC06U.

she said, "... there will be in these immigrants terrorists."[114] In this statement, Marine Le Pen overtly constructs immigration as an outlet for the influx of terrorists into France. Thus, a source of insecurity. Commenting on the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, Marine Le Pen reiterated the claim that immigration is a source of insecurity in France. She said, "for many years we have predicted that mass immigration and the development of Islamic fundamentalism on our territory was going to generate attacks"[115] This statement constructs the increasing immigration into France as a source of terrorism in the country. It also associates Muslim immigrants in France with terrorism and insecurity. In another statement, Marine Le Pen unambiguously blames insecurity and terrorism in France on immigration. She said, "just think of the horrible attack on Bataclan, three of the terrorists had come here using migrant routes, ... we do not want to add terrorists coming in alongside migrants to this serious problem."[116] The rhetoric in this statement advances the discourse on immigrants who are already in France and those seeking entry into the country as threats to national security. Commenting on the Nice terrorist attack, Marion Maréchal Le Pen, a Front National parliamentarian and the niece of Marine Le Pen, said,

> … your children get shot down, slaughtered, run over. The fault goes to your Islamophobia, to your intolerance. I say that the French people have already accepted enough and that the conditions to obtain the French citizenship should be henceforth revised to prevent the creation of French people only on papers, by removing the family reunification and the jus soli. Immigration should also be stopped urgently. For the last decades, a deep fracture has been created. Fundamental Muslims refuse to assimilate. … we can accept this fracture with resignation, or we can fight it. Fight it through a total change of policy in term of immigration ...[117]

In this statement, Maréchal Le Pen constructs the Nice vehicle incident and other events like the shooting in Bataclan, described as terrorist attacks, as products of the family reunification provision of the French state, which provides for legal immigration into France. Also, by recommending a halt to immigration as a solution to insecurity in France,

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[114] "France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen speaks with CNN's Hala Gorani".
[115] "The Power of Le Pen," YouTube video, 23: 15, posted by "BBC," March 3, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzn5CoEWW1I. (Official translation on YouTube)
[116] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter".
[117] "Marion Maréchal Le Pen reacts to the atrocities that stroke Nice ENG subtitles," YouTube video, 4:55, posted by "Suspicous Alpaca," July 18, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0NhyNOxGAo. (Official translation on YouTube)

she further constructs immigration as a source of the wave of insecurity in the country. In the statement, she also links the attacks to fundamental Muslim immigrants in France. In a nutshell, Maréchal Le Pen associates the attacks to immigration. Consequently, she constructs immigration as a threat to the physical security of the people and the national security of the state. The Front National also constructs immigration as a reason for the heightening crime rate in France, which inevitably has security implications on the people and the state. In a speech given during a party conference in Marseilles, Marine Le Pen said, "so where does this rising crime come from? From the state being too lenient, but also, let us not deny it, from immigration. From a massive uncontrolled immigration."[118] Evidently, apart from constructing immigration as a source of terrorism in France, the FN also constructs immigration as a reason for the increasing crime rate in the country.

Thirdly, the leadership of the Front National constructs immigration as a threat to national unity and the ability of the French people to coexist. This discourse is evident in the following rhetoric by Marine Le Pen. "We are subject to absolutely massive levels of immigration which is utterly destructive, [for] national cohesion and our ability to live side by side."[119] In another statement, she repeated the same claim that immigration threatens national cohesion. She said, "immigration has … caused problems not only for our finance, for our social situation, but is a problem now for national unity as well."[120] The claim is that immigrants form parallel communities, a phenomenon known as communitarianism, through which the unified French society is divided. The Front National constructs communitarianism in France as a derivative of immigration. In one of Marine Le Pen's statements, she said, "I would like you to understand that mass immigration is actually the breeding ground for communitarianism."[121] In another statement, she explicitly constructed communitarianism as a threat to national unity. She said, "I could also talk about immigration, about communitarianism, of the collapse of the French identity. In short, of all these words that ruin our collective capacity towards

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[118] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles) - 2013 Party Summer Conference in Marseilles," YouTube video, 1:15:52, posted by "Gurufabbes1," December 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBRgR0cIQj0. (Official translation on YouTube)

[119] "Marine Le Pen: France plagued by bankruptcy & mass immigration," YouTube video, 24:56, posted by "RT," July 1, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nm9rbDCz3vc. (Official translation on YouTube)

[120] "Marine Le Pen sur l'immigration l'islam les frontières et l'Europe," YouTube video, 23:00, posted by "Patriote," April 24, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdThELWt4k8. (Official translation on YouTube)

[121]Ibid.

fraternity and unity."[122] In this statement, Marine Le Pen identifies immigration and communitarianism as threats to national unity. She further speaks of the demise of the French identity as a threat to the national cohesion of the French people.

Finally, the alleged collapse of the French identity is further constructed by the Front National as a consequence of immigration. The claim is that assimilation of immigrants has not been effective. Therefore, immigrants have preserved their alien cultures and traditions. It is argued that the preserved cultures threaten the survival of the French way of life and identity. The FN represents the French identity as synonymous with Christianity and its related values. This representation is apparent in the following statement by Marine Le Pen. "I believe that France is France, it's a country with a Christian culture, with Christian roots, this culture and these roots make France what it is, it shapes our way of life, our morals, our customs, [and] our traditions ...."[123] In constructing immigration as a threat to the French identity, the Front National uses the religious and cultural practices of Muslims to represent the otherness in the way of life of Muslim immigrants. The FN's rhetoric on the contrast between the secular and Christian based culture of France, which constitutes the French identity, and the religious and cultural practices of Muslims is evident in Marine Le Pen's below-documented speech.

> I think we have to believe in what we are, we come from a civilization that has its roots in Christian teachings, this is why we believe in free will and therefore in the right to change religion. Islamic fundamentalists do not believe in the right to change [religion]. Because we believe in free will, we oppose forced marriage. They do not believe in individual free will. Here in France, because of our Christian heritage we have opted for secularism, ... it is a very French notion that we are very attached to .... I am very French when defending and standing up for this.[124]

In this statement, Marine Le Pen draws a sharp contrast between the tradition and religious practices of Muslims and those of the French people. This statement implicates Muslim immigrants in France as culturally and religiously different from the rest of the French nation. It also enforces the resistance to immigration from Muslim dominated

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[122] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles) - 2013 Party Summer Conference".
[123] "French presidential hopeful Marine Le Pen speaks to AJE," YouTube video, 3:10, posted by "Aljazeera English," July 10, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YwmnHNS6yg.
(Official translation on YouTube)
[124] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter".

countries. Marine Le Pen specifically identifies Christianity and secularism as the defining elements of the French culture, which she claims are incompatible with the cultural and religious practices of Muslims. In another statement, Marine Le Pen constructs the religious and cultural practices of Muslim immigrants in France as a strategy to reconstitute the culture and identity of the French people. When she was asked to comment on Muslim women who wear burkini to the beach she said, "... it is a violation of all that we believe in. The burkini is not a swimming costume. The burkini is a uniform, an Islamic fundamentalist uniform. It goes against everything we believe in about a woman's place ... the reality is that these women are being used by Islamic fundamentalists, who are trying to implement a restrictive dress code."[125] In this statement, it is evident that the Front National constructs the Islamic tradition of Muslim immigrants as a contradictory way of life to the French culture, and also a contradiction to the secular identity of French women. The above statement also constructs the cultural practices of Muslim immigrants as a strategy to impose an alien culture in France, which further constructs Muslim immigrants as threats to the survival of the French culture and identity.

### 1.2.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The concepts of *limit*, *difference* and *meaning*, and *exclusion* in poststructuralism are evident in the above documented findings. The Front National uses the religious and cultural practices of Muslim immigrants as a limit, through which cultural and religious differences between the French and immigrants are established. It would be impossible to establish identity difference between the core (the French nation) and the external (Immigrants), without the use of the religion and tradition of Muslim immigrants as a limit.

Post-structuralism also holds that meaning is produced through difference. Through the established cultural and religious differences of Muslim immigrants a meaning of a civilized, liberal, peaceful, and Christian oriented French nation is constructed. This meaning further produces a French identity which exists only in its differences with other external identities like that of Muslims, and it similarities with other European nations.

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[125] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter".

Another central claim in post-structuralism is that *exclusion* is executed through *limit*. The Front National excludes immigrants, notably Muslim immigrants, from the French society by referencing their culture and religion to depicts their alien characteristics. As a result, the acceptance of immigrants into the French nation was undermined and they were consequently alienated from the French nation.

Finally, post-structuralist theory maintains that knowledge, meaning, and reality of our world are produced through *discourse*. The discourse of the Front National on immigration produces knowledge on immigration as a threat. This knowledge eventually became a reality of the French people, which was manifested in their attempt to give a political mandate to the FN to protect the French nation-state from the threats of immigration.

The Front National's threat discourse is also a political tool. Through constructing immigrants as external threats, the FN justifies the acquisition of power to protect the French nation-state. It also creates a platform for the popularization of its anti-immigration political program, which is aimed at creating a political subject through which it could exercise power. Evidently, the primary claims in poststructuralism are vindicated in these findings.

### 1.3. Immigration as a Consequence of the Ineptitude of Mainstream Parties

The Front National constructs the increasing immigration into France as the fault of mainstream parties. The leadership of the party claims that the policies of mainstream political parties on immigration and their failure to discourage immigration have stimulated the influx of immigrants into France. The party also constructs the alleged internal economic, identity, and security threats posed by immigrants as a product of the failure of mainstream parties to neutralize the threats of immigration. The FN further claims that the negligence of mainstream parties to control immigration is as a result of the need to protect the interest of the elites at the disadvantage of the people. Evidently, the FN constructs the alleged insecurities of immigration as the fault of mainstream parties on varied levels.

Firstly, the Front National constructs the increasing immigration into France as a consequence of the negligence of mainstream parties to control immigration. It also argues that the existence of specific state policies attracts immigrants. In a speech given

in Marseilles, Marine Le Pen accused mainstream parties of failing to enforce laws which could discourage immigration into France. She also constructed the increasing migration into France as a phenomenon caused by policies of political parties which have been governing France. In this statement she said,

> enough of this spreading crime by organized gangs of burglars and vagabonds! Enough of mere saber rattling of ministers, who are no longer even able to conceal the laxity of the state .... I will say this and thus only state a legal fact: every illegal immigrant is an offender because in a country's laws, having no legal right to be there is an offense. For how else are illegal immigrants to understand my dear friends? Because today it is an offense without punishment. And even one may say, an offense that pays and one that is almost being rewarded. Emergency state benefits, emergency social housing, free schooling, and free special health care are all equally magnets by which finally the situation spins out of control and makes the situations of delinquents better than those of honest people. We consider those responsible for the situation to be the politicians that have followed, one after the other, in power for the las 40 years![126]

This statement embodies a series of accusations. Firstly, Marine Le Pen accuses mainstream politicians of not implementing legal sanctions on illegal immigrants, which renders illegal immigration into France less threatening. Thus, a condition which motivates immigrants to penetrate the borders of France illegally. Secondly, she claims that mainstream parties created a welfare system which attracts migration into France. Finally, this statement carries a discourse which constructs internal insecurity relative to crime as a signifier of the inability of mainstream political elites to deal with the security threats of immigration. Constructing increasing migration into France as a product of an attractive welfare system created by the state is consistent in Marine Le Pen's rhetoric on immigration. In another statement she said,

> I think that France is one of the only countries which takes full responsibility for the care of the illegal immigrants in its country … it is a country that has become much too attractive for illegal immigrants. Free schooling for children with a whole load of associations helping out, free health care, freely given aid, the hope to become a legal migrant even when one has entered illegally are what illegal

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[126] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles)." - 2013 Party Summer Conference".

immigration has led to and has meant that the country has become too attractive for it.[127]

In this statement, Marine Le Pen accuses mainstream parties of making France attractive to immigrants, due to the welfare policies towards immigrants which they initiated and promote. She also adds a second layer to the accusation. She further blames immigration on state policies which allow for illegal immigrants to be granted legal status in France.

Secondly, the Front National constructs communitarianism and its related identity and culture threats as the fault of mainstream parties. Communitarianism which is constructed by the FN as a product of mass immigration is further constructed as a condition caused by flawed policies on immigration initiated and executed by mainstream parties. This claim is exemplified in the following statement by Marine Le Pen.

> When too many people arrived at the same time, what did the French government do? What did several French Governments do? They put these people where they could on the outskirts of cities, cities which became cities of immigrants. And people lived according to their own rules, their own way of life. This is what I mean by communitarianism .... And it is not necessarily their entire fault. It is also the French government's fault, having not been reasonable in terms of the levels of immigration, which created these ghettos.[128]

In this statement, the political establishment is accused of consistently implementing settlement policies which have allowed for the grouping of immigrants. Thus, resulting in the formation of parallel communities. Another claim which is evident in this statement is that French governments have encouraged uncontrolled immigration, which has made assimilation impossible and resulted in communitarianism. This statement further alleges that communitarianism has allowed immigrants to maintain their alien cultures, which covertly renders mainstream parties partially responsible for the alleged identity threat posed by immigration. In another statement, Marine Le Pen overtly held mainstream parties culpable for the constructed culture and identity threat of immigration. She blames mainstream parties for the absence of state policies to deter the identity threat posed by immigration. She said, "they come with their culture, their religion, their traditions and customs, and instead of telling them, when in Rome do as the Romans do, meaning when

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[127] "Marine Le Pen sur l'immigration l'islam les frontières et l'Europe".
[128] Ibid.

in France live like the French, our governments, one after another has told them stay just as you are, it's your right, it's your human rights, instead of imposing our culture onto them."[129] In this statement, Marine Le Pen accuses mainstream political parties of failing to assimilate immigrants into the French way of life. She claims that successive French governments have encouraged immigrants to maintain their imported cultures. A situation she often claims threatens the French culture and identity. Concerning the accusation that mass immigration has made assimilation impossible, Maréchal Le Pen stated that, "it is possible to assimilate individuals, it is not possible to assimilate complete folks who import with them their foreign culture and their religion."[130] It should be noted that the FN blames mass immigration on mainstream parties. Therefore, Maréchal Le Pen's statement is a continuation of the discourse which constructs communitarianism in France as the fault of mainstream parties. Marine Le Pen accuses French governments of undertaking integration instead of assimilation, which she says is responsible for communitarianism in France. This claim is evident in the subsequent statement.

> Assimilation imposes the idea of letting go of one part of oneself. Integration is a radically different concept, … come as you are, keep your habits, cultures, ways of life, codes of conduct, values, principles, and we shall live alongside each other. ... I don't think it works because it separates communities and isolates them and encourages communities to actually regroup according to race.[131]

In relation to the alleged absence of appropriate assimilation policy for immigrants, the Front National further constructs the ensuing culture and identity threats as the repercussions of inappropriate immigration policies of mainstream parties. This rhetoric is evident in the following statement.

> It is all well and good to post a "charter of secularism" in French state schools, but this simple gesture is already admitting a terrible failure ... Also, you will notice that no concrete problem is addressed in this charter. Neither the issue of halal meat in school cafeterias, nor the wearing of the veil at university, nor of gender segregation in swimming pools and the list continues. ... This worthless charter can do nothing against the multiculturalism that is fragmenting the French populace according to religion and ethnicity. The UMP and the centrists have hurried to give

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[129] "Marine Le Pen: France plagued by bankruptcy & mass immigration".
[130] "Marion Maréchal Le Pen reacts to the atrocities that stroke Nice".
[131] "Marine Le Pen sur l'immigration l'islam les frontières et l'Europe".

their support to the socialists, benignly hoping that a scrap of paper tacked on in a court might solve the problems that they themselves created.[132]

In the above statement, Marine Le Pen lucidly accuses mainstream parties of undertaking cosmetic reforms which do not address the actual culture and identity threats faced by the French people from immigrants. She also claims that the policy on secularism does not adequately address multiculturalism, which she claims fragments the French society on religious and ethnic lines.

Thirdly, the Front National constructs internal insecurity relative to terrorism as the fault of mainstream parties. This accusation is levied on two levels. The first claim is that mainstream parties allowed terrorists to enter France through their failure to control immigration. The second accusation is that the mainstream Republican Party has implemented policies which have enhanced immigrant extremist elements in France to undermine national security. These accusations are apparent in Marion Maréchal Le Pen's comment on the Nice attack. She said,

> Dear compatriots Islamism stroke again. Once again our folk has to face a horrible event … Who is then guilty? These terrorists firstly of course …. Children of the hate against themselves that the French Establishment has been distilling for decades in our mind. But the culprits are also the ones who put great efforts at making the boarders to vanish. Making possible for the terrorists to come into [France with] the flux of hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens .... The culprits are also the ones who let legally enter each year as many immigrants as the city of Bordeaux. Through this crazy policy, the socialist government of Manuel Valls and his predecessors have made impossible any possibility of assimilation. The culprits are the ones who still make the apology of a multicultural society. The culprits are the ones, as Nicolas Sarkozy who removed 12,500 police forces and 54,000 military forces. Dreadful choices that have disarmed our country against the terrorist attacks.[133]

In this statement, Marion Maréchal Le Pen constructs insecurity in France as an outcome of failed state policies both on immigration and security. She accuses mainstream parties of allowing terrorists to enter France with the mass inflow of immigrants through their

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[132] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles) - 2013 Party Summer Conference".
[133] "Marion Maréchal Le Pen reacts to the atrocities that stroke Nice".

open border policy. She further constructs insecurity in France as an aftermath of government policies, which allow legal immigrants to enter France in huge numbers. She claims that the security sector was crippled by Nicolas Sarkozy, who rendered it incapable of handling the threat of terrorism in the country. This latter claim implicates the Republican Party for terrorism in France. She also directly delegitimizes the mainstream multicultural discourse on immigration by establishing a nexus between multiculturalism and insecurity in France. Islamic fundamentalism which is constructed by Marine Le Pen as a source of insecurity in France is also constructed by her as a phenomenon which emanates from the failure of mainstream parties and their political representatives. In one of her statements, Marine Le Pen said, "... here in France we have a problem of Islamic fundamentalism to deal with. It is the consequence of 30 years of blindness and laxness by our politicians."[134] This statement constructs Islamic fundamentalism in France as signifiers of the failure of mainstream political elites, which also places responsibility on mainstream parties for the alleged security threat the Islamisation of France poses.

Finally, immigration into France is constructed by the Front National as a phenomenon encouraged by mainstream parties due to their vested economic interest. The leadership of the FN claims that mainstream political parties have endorsed unchecked globalization and encouraged immigration, for the benefit of the elites and at the disadvantage of the people. This claim renders mainstream parties responsible for immigration into France, and also directly delegitimizes the mainstream discourse on globalization and immigration. During a speech to Front National supporters in Lyon, Marine Le Pen said, "our leaders have chosen deregulated globalization, they dreamed of a happy and fortunate globalization, but their dreams turned into a nightmare. Globalization is driven by the sole purpose of huge profits for the happy few and operates on two levels. Globalization from the bottom results in a massive immigration …."[135] In this statement, Marine Le Pen claims that the political program of mainstream parties on globalization and immigration is being motivated by the need to protect the financial interest of the elites. In another speech, Marine Le Pen repeated the same claim. She alleged that mainstream parties encourage mass immigration for the benefit of entrepreneurs. She said, "there you have it, 40 years, from Valery Giscard d'Estaing and his family

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[134] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter".
[135] "Marine Le Pen's speech in Lyon Marie Le Pen 2017," YouTube video, 11:09, posted by "Ugly Snow," May 2, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AawneGK_lTg
(Official translation on YouTube)

reunification policy to François Hollande with his "legalization for all" (amnesty for illegals). Right and left encouraged this massive immigration at the great pleasure of the MEDEF (Employers Federation) and of various chief executives."[136] In another statement, Marine Le Pen similarly accused mainstream parties of having vested interest in immigration. She said,

> we are forced to conclude that all our elected politicians for the last 30 years were elected on lies. I am of course thinking about François Hollande and his promises about unemployment. I am thinking of Nicolas Sarkozy and his promises on immigration, security … promises that were never kept. Ever! The first problem in this, of course, are the men in power. It's this political class, and this absence of sovereignty that makes them prefer communication above action … the defense of private interest has overridden that of public interest.[137]

In the above statement, Marine Le Pen alleges that successive French governments have failed to deliver on their promises to regulate immigration, provide job opportunities, and security for the people. She argues two reasons for the failure of various French governments to deliver on their promises. Firstly, she argues that the absence of sovereignty, which hints on France's European Union membership, restrains mainstream political elites from independently implementing policies on immigration, employment and security. Secondly, she claims that mainstream political elites have failed to deliver on their promise to regulate immigration, because they are protecting private interest, which means the protection of the interest of the political elites and the interest of employers at the expense of the people.

### 1.3.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The above findings also exhibit the use of *limit*, *difference* and *meaning*, and also *exclusion* which are prominent concepts in poststructuralism. The Front National uses the pro-immigration political program of mainstream parties as a *limit* to establish their political and ideological *difference*. Through the established difference of mainstream parties, a certain *meaning* is produced. Pro-immigration mainstream parties are understood as betrayers of the people, and also accomplices in the crimes committed by

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[136] "Marine Le Pen: France plagued by bankruptcy & mass immigration".
[137] "Stirring 5 minute speech by Marine Le Pen after qualifying for round 2 of election," YouTube video, 7:13, posted by "Cassius," April 24, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxQadB0S0v0.
(Official translation on YouTube)

immigrants. The established difference also has a second function. It produces the patriot identity of the FN. Without this established difference, a traitor identity of mainstream parties would not exist, nor would the patriot identity of the FN be identifiable.

The pro-immigration political agenda of mainstream parties is also used by the Front National as an instrument for *exclusion*. The traitor identity which is constructed through this limit is meant to undermine the popularity of mainstream parties with the electorate. Thereby, deliberately engineering the exclusion of mainstream parties from mainstream politics and also their overthrow from the hegemonic position they hold. Consequently, creating a hegemonic vacuum to be filled by the Front National.

The *discourse* of the Front National on mainstream parties concerning immigration produces a specific knowledge and reality. Through the FN's discourse, pro-immigration mainstream parties are understood by the people as the traitors and the threats within the state. This knowledge provides a platform for the FN to exclude mainstream parties from mainstream French politics through the electorate.

## 1.4. Representing the Populist Radical Right as the Credible Source of Redemption from the Immigration Crisis and its Related Ills

In its quest to gain the support of the electorate and replace mainstream parties in government, the Front National represents itself as a party, which strives for the protection of the interest of the people. The leadership of the party represents itself as a political movement with the appropriate political program and political will to stop immigration and deal with its related threats. The FN renders itself responsible for the defense of the security, identity, and welfare of the people. This representation of the FN as the people's defender and the remedy from the unpleasant conditions allegedly created by mainstream parties through their policies or lack of policy on immigration is constructed on varied stages.

Firstly, the leadership of the Front National represents itself as the political party with a different political agenda, which is founded on the defense of the interest of the people, and the protection of the French nation-state from immigration and its related insecurities. During a speech to a multitude of FN supporters, Marine Le Pen said, "you understand that the path that I offer and that we offer France is not the one of the UMP or the Socialist

Party on which we have gone astray for decades."[138] In this statement, Marine Le Pen represents herself and her party as the representatives of difference and the symbols of redemption from the alleged misleading and detrimental policies of mainstream parties. In the same statement, Marine Le Pen represented the Front National as the only party which seeks to understand the difficulties of the French people. She said, "you know that we are the party of the real world, we are the only movement that is concerned with understanding the reality lived by the French people."[139] In relation to these claims, the leadership of the party renders itself responsible for the people. This is apparent in a statement in which Marine Le Pen said, "we work for the nation at a time when the left and right have abandoned the idea of nation."[140] Commenting on the Nice Vehicle incident, which was described as a terrorist attack perpetrated by a French man with an immigrant background, Marion Maréchal Le Pen similarly stated that, "the good feelings have never bred the right policies. If they have given up, we haven't! And we have to fix their mistakes, we'll do it!"[141] In this statement, Marion Le Pen renders the protection of the people and the rectification of failed state policies on immigration, the responsibility of the Front National. Before the second round of the 2017 French presidential elections, Marine Le Pen gave a speech in which she continued the delegitimization of mainstream parties, and the representation of herself as both the defender of the people and the credible sources of recovery from the increasing immigration problem in France. In this speech she said,

> I now take on the immense responsibility of defending the French nation, its unity, its security, its culture, its prosperity and its independence. … The people of France must seize the historic opportunity that now presents itself. Because what this election is about is the savage globalization that endangers our civilization. The people of France have a simple choice. Either we continue on the path of total deregulation, no borders, no protection, and everything that entails jobs being shipped overseas, unfair competition, mass immigration, the free movements of terrorists, a world where money is king. Or you choose France, borders that protect our workers, our purchasing power, our security, our national identity.[142]

[138] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles) - 2013 Party Summer Conference".
[139] Ibid.
[140] "The Power of Le Pen".
[141] "Marion Maréchal Le Pen reacts to the atrocities that stroke Nice".
[142] "Stirring 5 minute speech by Marine Le Pen".

In the above-documented statement, Marine Le Pen speaks about existing state policies on border deregulation, which she claims are responsible for the lack of border control and the resultant mass immigration, economic decay, and insecurity in France. She contrasts the said policies with the FN's policy on strict border regulation, which she argues could enhance the security, economic prosperity, and protection of the national identity of the French. In the statement, she also explicitly renders herself responsible for the defense of the culture, security, unity, and prosperity of the French people.

Secondly, as an extension to the discourse on the Front National being the protector of the people from general insecurities, the FN specifically represents itself as the defender of the physical security of the people in relation to terrorism. This discourse is even evident in the previous documented statement. Commenting on the 2015 Paris bombing, Marine Le Pen said, "I am here to fight for the safety of the French."[143] The 'defender of the physical security of the people' discourse of the Front National is prominent in Marine Le Pen's statements. In a speech given to her supporters in Paris, she said,

> the security of the French is a priority [and] because our country is at war, I will be a Head of State and the Chief of the Armies who will lead the war against the Islamist terrorism. Not with the ease and irresponsible intention to make the French get used to this horror, but with the determination to eradicate this bloody ideology .... I repeat that I will show no weakness in the face of Islamist fundamentalism. ... For us there is no shadow of a doubt: Everything must be done to eradicate terrorist groups here. … the laws exist, they just need to be applied. And with I [as] President, these laws will be applied without weakening.[144]

Marine Le Pen represents herself as the protector of the people from terrorism in this statement. She also establishes a difference in the alleged casual manner in which mainstream parties deal with the security of the people, and how she intends to prioritize the safety of France and its people. She also claims to be a politician with the will to implement laws which protect the people from security threats posed by Islamic fundamentalism, a condition constructed as the product of mass immigration and failed state policies to assimilate immigrants.

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[143] "France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen speaks with CNN's Hala Gorani".
[144] "Marine le Pen to close mosques," YouTube video, 6:34, posted by "Vlad Tepesblog," April 28, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOHtv3GT0MI. (Official translation on YouTube)

Thirdly, the leadership of the Front National propagates a discourse which portrays it as the guardian of the unity, culture, and identity of the French people. Marine Le Pen portrays her party as the political movement which strives for a unified French nation, which she claims is being threatened by communitarianism. This discourse is evident in the following statement in which she said. "The principles we fight for are engraved in our national Moto: liberty, egarite and fraternity which stem from the principles of secularization resulting from our Christian heritage."[145] In another related statement, Marine Le Pen similarly portrays the Front National as the defender of the culture, identity, and unity of the French people. She said,

> this is the France that I love. The France that we all love. The France where we are all equal in the public space, and free in the private sphere, where fraternal harmony can reign, it is this France that I am defending. This France which puts an end to hatred and division, this France which will pass over with its steamroller of Republican values and banish communitarianism. This assembled France that will recognize only one community: that of the nation. This France of fraternity between countrymen, where everyman and everywoman is only French and nothing else. My perspective for France is a France that is secured and united.[146]

In the above statement, Marine Le Pen represents herself as a politician who fights for a return to a unified French nation, and an end to communitarianism. She also claims to be the defender of the liberty and equality of the French people, which are integral components of the French culture and identity, against alien laws which disadvantage certain people and sexes. With regards to the defense of the right of the French people, the threatened group, as is constructed by the FN, is women who are said to be regulated by discriminatory Islamic laws. The leadership of the Front National represents itself as the defender of this marginalized group. This claim is made in a statement in which Marine Le Pen said, "with me, be assured that the rights of women, today challenged by Islamist obscurantism will be granted to all the women of France"[147] Clearly, she claims to be the guardian of the rights of women, which is an important constituent of the French culture, and a significant component of the French identity. In another statement, Marine Le Pen reiterates the same claim that she strives for the defense of the French culture

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[145] "Marine Le Pen's speech in Lyon Marie Le Pen 2017".
[146] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles) - 2013 Party Summer Conference".
[147] "France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen speaks with CNN's Hala Gorani".

against alien cultures of immigrants, with specific reference to Muslim immigrants. In this statement, she said,

> I believe that when you come to a country, you have to adapt to its laws, its values, its rules, its codes and its customs, that's all I ask. But unfortunately, the French government's policies do not reflect this. I don't want Halal meals to be imposed in secular French schools. I do not want there to be separate hours for separate sexes in French swimming pools. I do not want the French civil code to be adapted to suit religious laws.[148]

In the above statement, Marine Le Pen portrays an image of herself as the defender of the culture of the French people and the laws of the state. She represents herself as a politician who strives for the defense of the neglected culture and identity of the people against imported cultures of immigrants. In a similar vein, Marine Le Pen said, "we fight against multiculturalism because we believe that it brings multi-conflicts, we fight for a secular, democratic and social republic which objectively speaking, we no longer have in France."[149] In this statement, she portrays the Front National as a political movement which fights for the restoration of the French secular culture which is allegedly being replaced by Islamic cultural practices imposed by Muslim immigrants and accommodated by the state.

Fourthly, the leadership of the FN represents itself as the defender of the economic security of the people against the unhealthy competition posed by immigrants in the employment sector. It also claims the same responsibility in the area of the welfare of the French people. This discourse is evident in one of Marine Le Pen's statements in which she said, "we demand that priority in employment, in this time of unemployment be given to French people, and my idea is the same when it comes to social housing, ..."[150] In another statement, she reaffirmed the same claim that she strives for the prioritization and defense of the welfare of the people. She said, "... we have thousands of homeless people in the streets, and we tell them we can't give them any housing; however, we do find tens of thousands of homes for migrants. My responsibility, as a French leader, should be first and foremost to think about the wellbeing of my own people, about their security, about

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[148] "French presidential hopeful Marine Le Pen speaks to AJE".
[149] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter".
[150] "Marine Le Pen Speech (with English subtitles) - 2013 Party Summer Conference".

their prosperity."[151] In this statement, Marine Le Pen claims to have a sense of duty towards the economic security and welfare of the people. A responsibility she claims has been abandoned by mainstream parties in the interest of immigrants.

Finally, in connection to the discourse on the Front National being the protector of the people, the FN is represented by its leadership as the party with the suitable political program to rectify the flawed policies of mainstream parties and curb immigration. This discourse is evident in one of Marine Le Pen's statements in which she said, "this is my principle, I want to radically change the immigration policy in France … I would implement a small immigration deterrent because France grants a series of social aids that are detrimental to its own citizens."[152] In this statement, Marine Le Pen presents an alternative policy to replace the alleged flawed policies of the state, which supposedly make France attractive to immigrants. Consequently, she represents herself as the politician with the appropriate political program and the right initiative to solve the immigration problem in France. In a statement given in the European Parliament, Marine Le Pen said, "I represent another model that unites Europe's people. One of independence, of a Europe of nations in a multipolar world. Of intelligent protectionism. Of individual liberties. Of the defense of our safety and our identity by a total stop of mass immigration."[153] In this statement, Marine Le Pen portrays herself as the politician who stands with the people of Europe, not just France, in the defense of their liberty, which is said to be threatened by Islamic fundamentalism, their unity which is said to be threatened by communitarianism, as is constructed in France, and their identity claimed to be under attack by immigrants who import alien cultures which dilute the European identity. She also portrays an image of a politician with a solution to the identity threat faced by Europe. With regards to the defense of the unity of the French people, Marine Le Pen represents herself as the politician with the appropriate program to end communitarianism in France. She said, "I don't want integration. I want a return to a Republican assimilation. ... if you encourage communitarianism and the inwardness of communities, you create the failure of assimilation of the individual, and that's why I want immigration to stop, because I want individual assimilation and integration."[154] In

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[151] "Marine Le Pen will not put up with any nonsense from BBC reporter".
[152] "Marine Le Pen: France plagued by bankruptcy & mass immigration".
[153] "Marine Le Pen Destroys Angela Merkel & Hollande," YouTube video, 4:40, posted by "News Heist," February 24, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9IhI78Zpxo.
(Official translation on YouTube)
[154] "Marine Le Pen sur l'immigration l'islam les frontières et l'Europe".

this statement, Marine Le Pen proposes the anti-immigration program of her party as the solution to communitarianism in France. Also claimed is that she can solve the communitarian problem in France through a revamp of the assimilation policy, which is said to have been abandoned by mainstream politicians. In connection to the discourse on the FN being the defender of the people from immigration and its ensuing insecurities, Marine Le Pen represented herself as the politician with the appropriate strategy and political agenda which protects the French people from terrorism. This discourse is evident in the following statement. "I will end Schengen and restore our national borders. We open the door of France to mafias, to terrorists who quickly understood the advantages that they could get from our incredible powerlessness, who sent their soldiers of hate among the flow of migrants to hit our country in the heart."[155] In this statement, Marine L Pen justifies the FN's opposition to a borderless Europe. She also proposes her strategy out of the insecurity caused by immigration. Moreover, she places herself in a position of responsibility for the security of the people and creates an image of the protector of the French nation against harm.

### 1.4.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The findings in this section also suggest the use of the concepts of *limit*, and also *difference* and *meaning*. The Front National utilizes its anti-immigration political program (*limit*), to delimit itself from pro-immigration mainstream parties and construct a different meaning and identity for itself (*difference*). In other to realize its identity as the protector of the people, the FN constructed an opposite identity with an outstanding difference from other political parties. In the absence of this political difference, the Front National would not have stood out as a unique political party. Instead, its identity would not have existed. At best, the FN would have had the same meaning and identity as other political parties. Enforced through these findings, are the poststructuralist hypotheses that difference can only be established through limit, and that meaning exists in differences and similarities.

The *'defender of the people'* meaning and identity of the Front National, produced through its anti-immigration agenda, further emphasizes the traitor meaning and identity of other political parties. Given that mainstream parties are excluded through this

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[155] "France Presidential Race: is National Front leader Marine Le Pen's popularity waning?" YouTube video, 1:50, posted by "France 24 English," April 18, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i82ifFn3KXU. (Official translation on YouTube)

meaning, it is appropriate to state that the limit used by the FN to establish its political difference and construct its identity, also serves as a tool for the exclusion of the FN's political contenders. Therefore, the claim in poststructuralism that exclusion is carried out through limit, is justified through these findings.

Through the constructed identity as the defender of the neglected interest of the people, the FN seeks to legitimize its bid for political power, with a pretext to protect the people from the constructed internal and external threats. Also, the knowledge produced through its *discourse* as the defender of the people from the insecurities of immigration, is a deliberate attempt to guide the choice of the electorate towards its political success. The primary aim is to acquire the political mandate to occupy the hegemonic void created through the exclusion of mainstream political parties.

# CHAPTER 2: IMMIGRATION AND FAR-RIGHT HEGEMONY IN THE NETHERLANDS

## 2.1. A Brief History of the Far Right in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has been home to far-right political parties for several decades. The far-right in the Netherlands was a peripheral political force after the Second World War, which was the trend in Western Europe. Alex De Jong documents that far-right movements in the Netherlands were even outlawed by the state.[156] However, after years of institutionalized marginalization far-right parties managed to re-establish themselves in Dutch politics. Though far-right parties existed in the seventies,[157] their political triumph started in the early 1980s, when a far-right party known as the Centre Party obtained a seat in the Dutch parliament.[158] While other far-right parties like the Centre Democrats and the Centre Party 86 existed, their political success was limited.[159] Among the far-right parties that were established in the turn of the millennium, the first party to have countrywide success was the Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF).[160] The LPF founded in 2002, paved the way for the rise of the Party for Freedom (PVV) established in 2006.[161] Geert Wilders, the leader and sole official member of the PVV has been serving as the party's presidential candidate since its establishment. His political ideology is said to have transmuted from conservative liberalism, to neoconservatism, and to a populist far-right political program.[162] The far-right in the Netherlands is considered among the most successful far-right parties in Europe, due to their electoral success and influence on national politics.[163] Considering its electoral record since its inception, the Party for Freedom is not only one of the most successful far-right parties in the history of the Netherlands, but also the most dominant far-right party in the country presently.

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[156] Alex De Jong, *The New Right in the Netherlands*, (Amsterdam: Grenzeloos, 2015) 6, https://www.grenzeloos.org/sites/default/files/Borderless%20paper%20The%20New%20Right%20in%20the%20Netherlands_1.pdf.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Niek Pas, *The State of the Right: the Netherlands*, (Paris: Fondapol, 2011): 22, http://www.fondapol.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/State-of-the-right-Netherlands.pdf.
[159] Smith, "Extreme Politics: An Analysis of the State Level Conditions Favoring Far Right Parties in the European Union," 24.
[160] Pas, "The State of the Right: the Netherlands," 15.
[161] Plach, "Radical Right Populist Parties in Britain and the Netherlands: Explaining Electoral Success," 2.
[162] De Jong, "The New Right in the Netherlands," 24.
[163] Ibid., 1.

**2.2. Immigration as a Threat to the People and the State**

Mainstream parties in the Netherlands defend their pro-immigration policies by propagating a discourse that is centred on humanitarianism. For instance, Sharon Gersthuizen, a representative of the Socialist Party in the Dutch parliament argues that Europe is responding to a humanitarian crisis and is upholding its duty to render aid to people in dire need of help, while Jesse Klaver, a representative of the Green Party argues that Europe is one of the few places where refugees can find safety.[164] On the contrary, the Party for Freedom has sought to delegitimize mainstream discourse about immigration by constructing immigration as a threat to the Dutch people. The Party for Freedom (PVV) constructs immigration as a threat on three levels.

Firstly, the leadership of the party argues that immigration exerts a considerable strain on the Dutch economy and places an unfair burden on taxpayers. In a speech given in the Dutch parliament, Geert Wilders, the leader of the PVV stated that, "every asylum seeker costs the taxpayer €36,000 per person annually. Last year alone asylum seekers cost the taxpayers €876 million."[165] In this statement, Wilders underscores the financial burden of immigration upon the Dutch people and the state. In his discourse about the economic threats of immigration, Wilders also constructs the phenomenon as a direct threat to the economic security of the people. In one of his statements, he said, "… with 700,000 unemployed people in the Netherlands, we don't want more immigrants from other countries to come here. We want Jobs to be there for our own people."[166] Wilders constructs immigration as a threat to the job security of the Dutch people as it is evident in this statement. The discourse entailed in the above quoted statement is that immigrants compound the unemployment condition of the Dutch people by creating an unhealthy competition in the job market. In consonance with this claim, Wilders constructs immigration as a phenomenon motivated by the quest for economic stability. This discourse is evident in a statement in which he mentioned that, "... mass immigration goes on and on. By the end of this century, the population of Africa will quadruple from 1 to

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[164] "Wilders Accuses EU of Inundating Europe with third world immigrants," YouTube video, 25:24, posted by "Vlad Tepes," May 1, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naW2PhYkBRY. (Official translation on YouTube)

[165] "Greet Wilders on EU Immigration Demands," YouTube video, 4:44, posted by "Vlad Tepes," June 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUSBY_7zH_g. (Official YouTube translation)

[166] "EU will burst at seams after European Parliament elections - Geert Wilders," YouTube video, 24:3, posted by "RT," May 2, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqMpZMJjlCc&t=81s&index=22&list=WL.

4 billion. We will be flooded with even more fortune seekers."[167] During a debate on immigration in the Dutch parliament, Wilders similarly constructed immigration as an employment-driven phenomenon, and not necessarily one motivated by the need for safety as is argued by mainstream parties. He said,

> the so-called refugees ... have passed from Syria through about eight safe countries to reach The Netherlands. In that case, one isn't a political refugee. Then, one is an economic refugee. Then, one wants to exploit our welfare system, or whatever. ... We shelter 3,100 refugees every week. If this continues, that'll be 150,000 annually. We can't handle that. That costs billions.[168]

In this statement, Wilders reiterates his argument that immigrants are on a fortune quest in the Netherlands. Thus, they pose a direct economic threat to Netherlanders through competition for limited jobs. He further states another component of his economic threat discourse about immigration. He argues that immigration is an unsustainable financial burden on the state. Wilders claims that immigrants manipulate the welfare system and financially exploit the Netherlands. The discourse about the financial liability of immigration is consistent in Geert Wilders' rhetoric on the subject. In another statement, he said, "… one million people are coming this way. We can [sic] handle that neither numerically nor financially."[169]

Secondly, the Party for Freedom constructs immigration as a threat to the physical safety of the people and the security of the state. At the core of the security threat discourse of the PVV about immigration is the claim that the influx of immigrants into the Netherlands provides a decoy for terrorists to infiltrate the country undetected by posing as immigrants. In constructing immigration as a security threat in this context, Wilders focuses mainly on Muslim immigrants. He generally equates the influx of immigrants from Muslim countries to the flow of terrorists into Europe in general, and the Netherlands in particular. Another claim in his security threat discourse on immigration is that immigrants who are already in the Netherlands are causing insecurity through their

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[167] "Geert Wilders message for Europe," YouTube video, 5:29, posted by "RobinHoodUKIP," April 22, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfpAnvirw1M&list=WL&index=31.
[168] "The Refugee Crisis in Europe Debate | Geert Wilders speaks of an Islamic invasion," YouTube video, 1:06:23, posted by "OneBibleOneGod," September 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8lpXzRqGRw. (Official translation on YouTube)
[169] "Geert Wilders full immigration debate full 25 minutes," YouTube video, 25:24, posted by "Vlad Tepes." May 1, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naW2PhYkBRY.
(Official translation on YouTube)

involvement in crime. During a parliamentary debate on immigration, Geert Wilders said,

> the Netherlands is confronted with mass Islamic migration. Hundreds of thousands of refugees flee to Europe. This is just the beginning. Every day more arrives. … In the meantime, ISIS is smuggling thousands of terrorists into Europe. That's what they say themselves. That's what the chief of Eurojust said. That's what a Lebanese minister said this week. Two out of every 100 Syrian refugees who flee to Europe, according to the minister, are fighters for ISIS, are terrorists. And that, Chairman, is what we are debating today. The ticking time bomb threatening us here in the Netherlands. 3,100 refugees last week. Assume this Lebanese minister to be right. Chairman, then we not only reeled in 3,100 refugees, but also 60 terrorists. In just one week.[170]

In the above statement, Geert Wilders made his discourse about immigration and security explicit. He equates the influx of immigrants into the Netherlands with the flow of terrorists into the country. Through the above-documented rhetoric, he discursively constructs immigration as a source of insecurity in the Netherlands. The correlation between the influx of Muslim immigrants and insecurity in the Netherlands is prominent in Wilders' rhetoric on the subject. In another statement, Wilders said, "… not all Muslims are terrorists, but indeed all terrorists lately are Muslims. There is a connection between Islam and terrorism. We should stop first the immigration from Islamic countries."[171] The striking claim in this statement is not only the furtherance of the discourse on the nexus between immigration from Muslim countries and insecurity in the Netherlands, but also the claim that Islam is a religion which accommodates violence. This statement gives an insight into the rationale behind Wilders' choice of Muslim immigrants as the *other* in his discourse on immigration and insecurity in the Netherlands. In another statement, Wilders repeated a similar accusation. He said,

> the University of Amsterdam did a study about the 1 million Muslims in my country. It found that 11% is prepared to use violence for the sake of Islam. This is a staggering 100,000 people in a small country such as the Netherlands! … For the sake of our own safety, for the sake of our own children's future, we must stop all

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[170] Wilders, "The Refugee Crisis in Europe Debate".
[171] "Press Conference Geert Wilders Vienna Austria March 27, 2015," YouTube video, 7:58, posted by "Vlad Tepes," March 27, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yWm2DJRXyQ.

immigration from Islamic countries.[172]

Again, in the above statement, Wilders constructs immigration from Muslim dominated countries as a form of importation of insecurity to the Netherlands. He also constructs Muslim immigrants, who already reside in the Netherlands, as the embodiments of insecurity. He makes a specific reference to Islam as their motivation. The PVV's discourse about immigration as a security threat is not only confined to the context of the influx of Muslim immigrants into the Netherlands. The leadership of the Party for Freedom also constructs immigrants, who are already residing in the Netherlands, as the basis for insecurity in the country. This discourse is also evident in the subsequent statement by the leader of the PVV. "Dutch women and girls feel unsafe because of those testosterone-bombs, [immigrants] imported by Prime Minister Rutte. Two out of three, two out of three people housed in refugees' centers are males. The largest group, Chairman, those are the facts, are young adults, between 18 and 29 years of age."[173] In this statement, Geert Wilders collectively constructs male immigrants within the ages of 18 and 29 as a security threat to Dutch women. He suggests that male youths and adults of the Dutch immigrant population are rapists, who undermine the security of Dutch women. In another statement, he similarly constructs immigrants as the driving forces behind crime in the Netherlands, saying, "… unfortunately, non-Western immigrants, often Muslims, are over-represented in statistics of crime."[174] By making this claim, Wilders constructs immigrants as significant contributors to crime in the Netherlands, which implies that immigration is predominantly responsibly for insecurity in the country. He also makes reference to Muslim immigrants as the largest participant group in crime in the Netherlands.

Finally, the leadership of the Party for Freedom constructs immigration as a threat to the identity and culture of the Dutch people. The leader of the party, Geert Wilders, argues that immigrants, notably those from Muslim dominated countries, import an alien Islamic culture to the Netherlands that threatens to destroy Dutch culture and reconstitute Dutch identity. In constructing the identity of Netherlanders, Wilders uses the values and

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[172] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015," YouTube video, 42:27, posted by "Vlad Tepes," March 31, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wa0XFeN-SY.
(Official translation on YouTube)
[173] "The Refugee Crisis in Europe Debate".
[174] "Lateline: Geert Wilders interview (Dutch anti-Islamic migration politician) (ABC TV Australia)," YouTube video, 21:28, posted by "Kurvapicsa," February 13, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l_AzeFnyw4.

cultural practices in Judaism, humanism, and Christianity as the defining features of the identity of Netherlanders. He argues that these values and traditions are irreconcilable with those of Islam. For instance, in one of his interviews, he said, "I believe that with the mass immigration to our free societies, our societies will change, and it [sic] will change for the worst. I am proud to say … that the Netherlands as Australia is [sic] a culture based on Christianity, on Judaism, humanism and are certainly not, nor should it ever become a society based on Islamic values."[175] As is apparent in this statement, Wilders constructs increasing immigration as a phenomenon which would bring about drastic and undesirable cultural changes in the Netherlands. He further argues that the values and culture which define the Dutch society are in contrast with Islamic values. Therefore, in this statement, he constructs immigration from Islamic countries as a threat to the values and culture that define the Dutch identity. In another statement, Wilders unequivocally underscores the culture and identity threat of Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands. He said,

> the Islamic culture is eating away our own culture and traditions, in order to replace it with intolerance, hatred and violence. … We are confronted with Halal food, headscarves, burqas, "honour" killings, Female Genital Mutilation, polygamy, mega-mosques. ... We see women being treated like inferior beings. Because, according to the Koran a woman is only worth half a man. We see homosexuals and Jews being attacked. Because, Islam says they deserve to be killed. We see the total lack of freedom for who wants to leave Islam. They are treated as renegades.[176]

Wilders' rhetoric in this statement constructs an otherness in the culture of Muslims that implicates Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands. He constructs their culture as irreconcilable with the free, tolerant, secular, peaceful, and Christian oriented Dutch society. He also constructs the imported culture of Muslim immigrants as an existential threat to the Dutch culture and identity. This latter claim is further made unambiguous in another statement in which Wilders said, "… Brussels wants to alienate us with third world immigrants mostly from Islamic countries. It wants to distribute these immigrants all over the European Union, and that my friends will be a disaster. It will dilute our

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[175] "Lateline: Geert Wilders interview (Dutch anti-Islamic migration politician)".
[176] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015".

Judeo-Christian and humanist identity of our nations."[177] As is consistent in Wilders' discourse about immigration and identity threat, the rhetoric in this statement similarly constructs immigration, with a specific mention of immigration from Muslim countries, as an identity threat to the Netherlands, and also the identity and culture of member states of the European Union. Wilders' discourse about the identity threat of immigration is not exclusively focused on immigration from Muslim countries. He also constructs immigration from Africa as a culture and an identity threat, saying,

> the political elite has first transformed the Netherlands from an independent country into a province of the European Union, and now it does nothing at all to prevent us from becoming a province of Africa at the end of this century. People in the Netherlands, please wake up. ... It is time to cry out loud that we no longer accept it. That the Netherlands is our country. ... That we want to remain a free people. That we want to preserve our own culture and identity, and do not want mass immigration anymore.[178]

The rhetoric in this statement constructs mass immigration from Africa as a culture and an identity threat to the Netherlands. Wilders also accuses mainstream political elites of not protecting the Netherlands from immigration. This latter claim is another prominent component of the PVV's discourse about immigration that will be expounded on in the following section.

### 2.2.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

In these findings also, the poststructuralist concepts of *limit*, *difference* and *meaning*, *exclusion,* and the role of *discourse* in producing meaning are justified. Through referencing the cultural and religious codes of conduct of Muslim immigrants (*limit*). The Dutch people are culturally and religiously rendered distinct. Without the use of the said limit, the distinctiveness of the Dutch people would not have been identifiable, nor would it have existed. Thus, a separate Dutch identity would not have been a reality. The established difference between the Dutch people and immigrants indicates the otherness of immigrants, through which separate meanings are allocated to both the *in-group* and the *out-group* (*difference* and *meaning*).

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[177] "Wilders accuses EU of inundating Europe with third world immigrants," YouTube video, 2:19, posted by "AP Archive," December 26, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSBiTI9PoA8.
[178] "Geert Wilders message for Europe".

The culture and religion of immigrants were not only used as a limit to establish a difference and reflect a unique Dutch identity. They were also used to enable the *exclusion* of immigrants from the Dutch nation. The argued cultural and religious differences of Muslim immigrants created a platform for their exclusion from Dutch society on cultural and religious grounds.

The *discourse* of the Party for Freedom defines immigration as a threat. Through consistent replication of this discourse, the PVV produced a specific knowledge and reality of some Dutch people, who eventually exhibited resentment towards immigration through their attempt to vote the PVV into government. Moreover, through the discursively constructed external threat meaning and alien identity of immigrants, the PVV perpetrated the *exclusion* of immigrants from the Dutch society.

Through its dramatic rhetoric and discourse on immigration, the Party for Freedom sought to delegitimize mainstream immigration discourse and justify its anti-immigration political agenda. The PVV's threat discourse about immigration creates a platform for the mainstreaming of its political program that is needed to solidify its bid for political dominance.

## 2.3. Immigration as a Consequence of the Ineptitude of Mainstream Parties

The Party for Freedom constructs the increasing immigration from non-Western countries to the Netherlands as a sign of the ineptitude of mainstream political parties to appropriately manage immigration. The leadership of the party claims that immigration has been encouraged and left unchecked by successive Dutch governments. Based on this allegation, the PVV further constructs the alleged insecurities and economic burden of immigration as the fault of mainstream parties.

Firstly, in most of Geert Wilders' statements on immigration and the political elites, he constructs the upsurge in immigration as a consequence of the tolerance of mainstream parties towards immigration. He also accuses mainstream parties of mismanaging immigration into the Netherlands. For instance, in one of his statements, Wilders said,

> I don't blame Muslims for coming to our free Western countries. I don't blame them, I blame the politicians in charge, the so-called leaders that allowed them to come. I blame the political leaders of so many Western European countries that ...

fooled the people that all cultures are equal. That there is no difference between Islam and Christianity. That Islam is just another religion.[179]

In the above statement, Wilders constructs immigration, particularly from Muslim dominated countries, as a phenomenon tolerated by political elites in Western European, which also includes those in the Netherlands. He also alleges that the political elites propagated a deceptive discourse about Islam that normalized migration of Muslim immigrants to Western Europe and allowed for the importation of an alien culture that is contrary to the Christian and liberal values of the Netherlands and other countries in Western Europe. Wilders levied Aa related accusation against mainstream parties in the Netherlands during a debate on immigration in the Dutch parliament. He said, "one thing is already clear: the management of our country stands on the wrong side of history. By not stopping the tsunami of refugees, by not closing the borders, our interests are being squandered. Our freedom, our security, [and] our identity are in danger. The survival of our beautiful country is being jeopardized."[180] In this statement, Geert Wilders alleges that mainstream parties in the Netherlands have mismanaged immigration into the country. He claims that the political elites have failed to regulate immigration effectively. Therefore, they have compromised the security, identity, freedom, and wellbeing of Netherlanders. He even alleges that mainstream parties have caused an existential threat to the Netherlands.

Secondly, the leadership of the PVV claims that mainstream parties failed to assimilate Muslim immigrants, but instead embraced an alien culture in the country. This claim implicates mainstream parties for the alleged culture and identity threats posed by immigration. Thus, renders them responsible for the claimed culture and identity decay in the Netherlands. This discourse is evident in a statement in which Geert Wilders said,

> … In the Netherlands, as in other European countries, we have made a terrible mistake. Our politicians have allowed millions of Islamic immigrants to settle within our borders. Everywhere the Islamic culture was welcomed as an enrichment. Nowhere the demand was made that the immigrants assimilate. Not a single European leader had the guts to state the obvious and tell the truth: The truth

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[179] "Press Conference Geert Wilders Vienna Austria".
[180] "The Refugee Crisis in Europe Debate".

is that our Western culture [is] based on Christianity, Judaism and Humanism.[181]

The furtherance of Wilders' discourse about the culpability of mainstream political elites for the growing immigration into the Netherlands and other Western European countries is evident in this statement. He also claims that the importation and sustenance of a foreign culture in the Netherlands emanated from the failure of mainstream parties to control immigration from Muslim countries, and also assimilate Muslim immigrants into the Christian and liberal culture of the Netherlands. This discourse renders the political elites in the Netherlands responsible for the identity threat posed by Muslim immigrants in the country. The discourse about the responsibility of mainstream parties for the culture and identity threat of immigration is prominent in Wilders' rhetoric on the subject. This is obvious in his following statement: "We must reject the cosmopolitan elites. Because these elites do not represent the people. [They] are selling out our nation state. … our civilization is not Islamic. It is rooted in the legacy of Jerusalem, of Athens and Rome, and not, and never in Mecca. No more violence, no more hate, no more terror, no more Islam."[182] In this statement, Wilders accuses mainstream parties of compromising the culture, identity, and security of the people through acceptance of the Islamization of the Netherlands. The embedded discourse in this statement is that the political elites have promoted multiculturalism in the Netherlands and encouraged the spread of an alien culture. Thereby, compromising the identity, culture, and physical security of the Dutch nation.

Thirdly, Geert Wilders constructs terrorism in Europe as the fault of mainstream parties in the Netherlands and their political counterparts in Europe. This discourse is evident in a statement in which he said,

> if we in the Netherlands, in Europe, had done what Mr. Trump does - namely, close the borders to people from places such as Syria, then these people, including terrorists, would not have come our way and then a lot of innocent people, innocent victims of terrorism in Europe, would still be alive today. What this minister, [Foreign Minister Bert Koenders], Mrs. Merkel and Prime Minister Rutte have done - what is written large on their foreheads - is open borders. Come on in everyone, do come in. Even when you have a fake passport or no identity card, come on in

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[181] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015".
[182] "Wilders accuses EU of inundating Europe".

everyone. And we've seen what happens then. We have seen that with the asylum influx, the tsunami of asylum seekers, which was already disruptive in itself. Terrorists have come along from countries such as Syria. Because you agree with it, because you refused to check them, who all over Europe, from Paris to Berlin, have murdered innocent people. You'd better stop talking about security! … Because of the open borders and bringing people from Islamic countries here, attacks were committed in Europe.[183]

Wilders alleges in this statement that mainstream political elites in the Netherlands failed to institutionalize border regulations to prevent the influx of immigrants into Europe, and the Netherlands specifically. He constructs this flaw as the reason for the infiltration of Europe by terrorists. In relation to this accusation, Wilders further constructs terrorism and the death of victims of terrorism in Europe as a tragedy caused by Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands, and other mainstream politicians in Europe. He also claims that the Dutch political elites and their mainstream political associates in Brussels failed in their duty to screen immigrants for the protection of the people. Wilders constructs this inaction as the reason for the death of innocent victims of terrorism in Western Europe. In another statement, he similarly stated, "... We see the threat of violence and terrorism rising, while authorities refuse to tell people that the cause of all this misery is Islam. We see thousands of homegrown European jihadis waging war in the Middle East. We see them returning [.] Because [,] our borders are open and unprotected. We see them plotting attacks on European soil."[184]  In this statement, Wilders constructs terrorism in Western Europe as a predicament that has befallen the region, due to the open border policy of mainstream political elites in Western Europe, including those in the Netherlands. He also accuses mainstream parties of failing to acknowledge that the root cause of the mounting terrorism in Europe is Islam, a religion that is predominantly imported through immigration from Muslim countries. The discourse in this claim is the political elites in the Netherlands and other Western European countries have failed to take responsibility for their role in the insecurity created for the Dutch people and other Europeans, through their liberal policies on immigration that allows mass migration of Muslims to Western Europe. Wilders' discourse on immigration and terrorism mostly constructs insecurity in

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[183] "PPV: Geert Wilders Defends President Donald Trump's Immigration BAN," YouTube video, 4:37, posted by "Patriotic Populist," February 1, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xs5Y-1eUG0M. (Official translation on YouTube)
[184] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015".

Western Europe as a sheared responsibility of both mainstream parties in the Netherlands and other EU member states. This is due to the open border policy which they collectively endorse and uphold.

Finally, the leadership of the Party for Freedom constructs the financial burden of immigration on the state and the Dutch people as the fault of mainstream parties. It also accuses mainstream parties of sabotaging the welfare of the people at the advantage of immigrants. This discourse is embodied in the subsequent statements by Geert Wilders.

> Last year an asylum record, with 24,000 asylum seekers. But this wasn't enough. This cabinet and Mr. Rutte want to top it with a couple thousand more. Every asylum seeker costs the taxpayer €36,000 per person annually. Last year alone asylum seekers cost the taxpayers €876 million. That … shows the choice made by Mr. Rutte. Spend hundreds of millions on asylum seekers and demolish the care for our elderly. Free care for asylum refugees, … and priority for housing. This prime minister wants the Dutch to wait a bit longer for housing. … Prime Minister Rutte calls himself the prime minister of all the Dutch. He is rather the king of the asylum seekers, … and the destroyer of care in the Netherlands.[185]

In the preceding statement, Geert Wilders alleges that Prime Minister Rutte of the Conservative Party, together with other mainstream parties in the Netherlands, has encouraged mass immigration at the expense of taxpayers. The embedded discourse in this statement is mainstream parties in the Netherlands have brought a financial burden on the people and the state. Wilders also accuses Prime Minister Rutte of prioritizing the welfare of immigrants, while the native Dutch on welfare are not adequately catered for. He specifically claims that housing priority is given to immigrants while Netherlanders struggle for accommodation. In this statement, Wilders discursively constructs mainstream parties as betrayers of the welfare interest of the people. He repeated a related accusation in another statement, saying,

> … our government has spent billions of euros to [sic] them, and the Dutch people know. They have had in the last few years enormous tough austerity measures. pensions were cut, the public health services for elderly people were cut, enormous though social aid measures. And at the same time people saw while the government

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[185] "Greet Wilders on EU Immigration Demands".

had these enormous austerity measures, that the government spent billions of euros to [sic] asylum seekers [,] who really were not asylum seekers [,] but migrants looking for a better life. And once again I don't even blame the people for trying to have a better life here, I blame our government for allowing it to happen.[186]

In this statement, Wilders accuses the Dutch government of ensuring the wellbeing of immigrants, while it fails to protect the welfare and economic interest of the Dutch people. Also alleged is the Dutch government created a welfare system that caters for immigrants at the expense of natives, and also serves as a pull factor for economic migrants. In a nutshell, Wilders alleges the government spends monies meant to ease the financial constraint of the Dutch people on economic immigrants. This discourse constructs mainstream parties as betrayers of the welfare and economic interest of the people.

## 2.3.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The findings in this section suggest a strategic use of the pro-immigration political program of mainstream parties (as a *limit*) by the Party for Freedom to establish the ideological and political *difference* of mainstream parties. A tainted identity of mainstream parties as betrayers of the cultural, economic, and physical security of the people is produced through their identified difference and the meaning it produces. Also, through the traitor identity of mainstream parties, the PVV is reflected as a patriotic party. The different political identities of both the PVV and mainstream pro-immigration parties exist in the differences in their political identities. Therefore, these findings substantiate the poststructuralist claim that difference is made possible through a limit, and that meaning is produced through difference.

These findings further validate the poststructuralist hypothesis that limit enables *exclusion*. The pro-immigration political ideology (*limit*) of mainstream parties establishes their difference that also produces their traitor meaning and identity. Thus, this limit is the primary platform through which the political credibility of mainstream pro-immigration parties is rendered questionable by the PVV. Through undercutting the credibility and popularity of mainstream parties with the electorate, the PVV engineered the *exclusion* of dominant political parties from mainstream politics through the ballot.

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[186] "Best of Geert Wilders," YouTube video, 19:37, posted by "Fakeengineer," February 23, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0UHbSmZFjk.

Finally, the *discourse* of the Party for Freedom produced knowledge about other parties as internal threats and traitors to the people and the state. This knowledge and constructed reality provided an incentive for the electorate to vote for the PVV in an attempt to replace mainstream parties in government. Thus, the discourse of the PVV about immigration and the Dutch political establishment is geared toward facilitating the removal of mainstream parties from their hegemonic position and the creation of a political vacancy for it to occupy.

## 2.4. Representing the Populist Radical Right as the Credible Source of Redemption from the Immigration Crisis and its Related Ills

The leadership of the Party for Freedom represents itself to the electorate as the only available political option to solve the immigration problem allegedly caused by mainstream parties. It also portrays itself as the sole political entity that genuinely represents the interest of the nation-state. These representations are strategic in the battle for hegemonic dominance. Through these representations, the leadership of the PVV seeks to garner support from the electorate and replace mainstream parties in their hegemonic position in Dutch politics. Wilders' discourse about immigration constructs a positive political image for himself and his party, and also renders himself responsible for the defence of the interest of the people.

Firstly, Geert Wilders represents himself and his party as the defenders of the Netherlands against immigration and its related general insecurities. In one of Geert Wilders' statements, he stated that the Party for Freedom was established to defend the Netherlands against Immigration and its ensuing cultural and identity threats. He said,

> I have founded the Party for Freedom because I am sick and tired of politicians who bury their heads in the sand like ostriches and hope for a reformed moderate Islam. … I am sick and tired of their shameless irresponsibility and their despicable cowardice. I have founded the Party for Freedom to say the things which other parties due to fear are not saying, due to political correctness may not say. And I say here, tonight: 1: no more mosques! 2: close all Islamic schools. And do it today! 3: no more immigration from Islamic countries! And for those people who already live here, from Islamic countries: if you live here and respect our laws, you are

welcome, just like everyone else. But those who commit crimes in the name of Sharia, or is a Jihadist, we will send them away![187]

Through the rhetoric in the above statement, Wilders represents himself as a leader of a political party that strives to end immigration from Islamic countries and deal with its security, cultural, and identity hazards. While he accuses mainstream parties of negligence in the fight against the Islamisation of the Netherlands, he simultaneously represents himself and his party as the defenders of the Netherlands against immigration and Islamisation. During the same speech, Wilders said,

> As you can see, Islam is on the move again. It is also marching on Europe again. Most of our politicians look away. But we will not look on motionless. We will speak out. We will not be silent. Because we love our country. Because we love our freedom. Because we refuse to live in slavery. Because we believe that without liberty, life is not worth living. Liberty and human dignity, that is what we stand for. We are the torchbearers for freedom. We are the torchbearers for democracy. We are the torchbearers for a civilization that is far superior to any other civilization on earth. We, the defenders of freedom and security, have an historic duty. Our generation has been entrusted with a huge task: to keep the flame of liberty burning and oppose the Islamization of our societies.[188]

Wilders' rhetoric in this statement constructs the immigration crisis as an Islamic invasion of Western Europe. While he argues that mainstream parties in the region are negligent and unconcerned about the situation, he instantaneously represents far-right parties across Western Europe, including the PVV, as the protectors of the security, culture, and identity of Western Europeans. This statement also carries a discourse that represents Geert Wilders as a Dutch politician who is in a resistance with the people against the decay of the security of the Netherlands, the Islamisation of the Dutch society, and the consequent intolerance and cultural shift that he argues would be the reality of the Netherlands, should immigration from Islamic countries continue, and the Islamisation of the Dutch society sustained. With a similar rhetoric, Wilders continues his discourse about the leadership of the Party for Freedom as the solution to the mass immigration and the defender of the culture, identity, and security of Netherlanders, saying,

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[187] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015".
[188] Ibid.

I believe that we should stop the immigration, the mass immigration from Islamic countries. I believe that Muslims that are in our society today are of course equal as anybody else. As long as they adhere to our laws, to our constitution, [and] to our values. [But] as long as they cross this red-line, if they commit crime, if they start beating up women, if they start the genital mutilation, if they start to commit honour crimes and honour killings as they unfortunately do in Western Europe many times. If they do that, I believe we should expel them the same day if possible, from our country.[189]

In this statement, Wilders depicts himself as a politician with the determination to end immigration from Islamic countries and protect the culture and values of the Netherlands. He also represents himself as the Dutch politician with the appropriate strategy to defend the culture, identity, and security of the Netherlands from Muslim immigrants who allegedly threaten to reform the Dutch identity and destabilize the security of Netherlanders.

Secondly, in consonance with the discourse about the PVV as the protector of the interest and security of the people, Wilders propagates a discourse about him as a politician with the appropriate political program to solve the immigration problem. Thereby, protecting the Dutch society from its insecurities. This discourse is apparent in a statement in which he said, "I believe, in order to get control over our own immigration, we should leave Schengen and we should reinstate national border controls."[190] In this statement, Wilders proffers a solution to the immigration crisis facing the Netherlands. He discursively represents himself as a politician with a bold and suitable political program to quell the intensification in immigration to the Netherlands. In another statement that embodies an identical discourse, Wilders said,

… the European Union, together with Turkey and other countries is making a big mess of stopping the tsunami of migrants from the middle East and Africa. So, the only thing that we should do today is to close our national borders. Because when it comes to our own culture, when it comes to the cost, when it comes to terror or security issues, we should take the lead. When it comes to controlling our own

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[189] "Lateline: Geert Wilders interview (Dutch anti-Islamic migration politician)".
[190] "Press Conference Geert Wilders Vienna Austria".

borders [,] and in order to do that, I think we should leave Bothe the Schengen treaty as well as the European Union as a whole.[191]

In this statement as in the previous one, Geert Wilders continues to portray himself as the Dutch politician with a solution to the immigration problem faced by the Netherlands. By offering a solution to the immigration problem, he represents himself as a politician with the appropriate political agenda to rescue the Netherlands from the flow of more immigrants. A rigid border control or an exit from the European Union is not the only solution to the immigration problem proposed by Wilders as is evident in the following statement. "Our political leaders may fail us. But we my friends, will not fail. … We want to stop all immigration from Islamic countries. We want to stimulate voluntary re-emigration to Islamic countries."[192] While the political elites of Western Europe are said to have failed in their duty to prevent mass immigration from Islamic countries to the region, Wilders represents the anti-immigration policy of his party and other far-right parties across Western Europe as an instrument for the people's redemption. Another proposed political solution to immigration that could be identified in Wilders' statement is the plan to engineer the return of Muslim immigrants to their countries. The representation in this statement is that Wilders is a politician, who endeavours to curb both the inflow of immigrants and the internal insecurities posed by those already residing in the Netherlands.

Thirdly, Geert Wilders represents himself as the protector of the Dutch people from physical insecurity in relation to immigration and terrorism. In one of his statements he said, "we must make the Netherlands safe again. This is our responsibility. We must safeguard our country from an attack. We must ensure that people can travel safely, travel by train and go to work tomorrow. That people can safely send their daughters to school on our streets."[193] Through the rhetoric in this statement, Wilders renders himself responsible for the safeguard of the people from terrorist attacks, and also portrays an image of himself as their protector from physical harm. The rhetoric in this statement sustains Wilders' discourse about him as the defender of the safety of the people relative to crimes like rape that he constructs as a crime committed by male immigrants. This

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[191] "Best of Geert Wilders".
[192] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015".
[193] "The Refugee Crisis in Europe Debate".

discourse about the PVV being responsible for the security of the people in relation to terrorism is prominent in statements by Geert Wilders. In another statement, he said,

> Almost two thirds of these asylum seekers came from Islamic countries. Earlier this month, Frontex, the EU's external border agency warned that at this very moment between half a million and one million migrants are ready to leave Libya and cross into Europe. ISIS threatens that it will send terrorists among them. We are facing a catastrophe. Hence, our conclusion is crystal clear:  Our borders are what defines us. Our borders are what protect us. But the EU and Schengen has abolished all our internal borders, while the EU's external borders are as leaky as a sieve. This is why I say: We want to leave Schengen and re-establish our own national border controls.[194]

In the above statement, Wilders advances his portrayal of himself and his party as the protectors of the people against terrorism. He takes responsibility for the security of the people and also proffers a solution to the terrorism threat that he claims is imminent, due to immigration from Islamic countries. Consequently, Wilders discursively constructs the PVV together with its leadership as a political movement with a suitable political agenda to protect the Dutch people against terrorist attacks.

Finally, Geert Wilders discursively constructs himself and his party as the protectors of the economic interest of the Dutch people. This discourse is apparent in a statement in which he said, "we want to make the Netherlands ours again, to close the borders and keep all the money we give to foreigner, its billions. ... to asylum seekers in the Netherlands. We will stop it and give all that money to the Dutch people living in the Netherlands."[195] In this statement, Geert Wilders renders himself responsible for the protection of the economic interest of the Dutch people within the state. He propagates the anti-immigration agenda of his party as the solution to the economic constraints of the people. In a related statement, he represented himself as the guardian of the welfare of the people. He said,

> I will say to the leader of the Socialist Party, whose name I forget, the only solution is to send the people safely back. But if we do what the Socialist Party wants, then,

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[194] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015".

[195] "Far-right Wilders leads polls vowing to close Dutch borders," YouTube video, 1:13, posted by "Euronews," February 14, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gIjaouwH5s.
(Official translation on YouTube)

for every immigrant who comes to the Netherlands, we will have to pay 26,000 euros a year. Every immigrant! Meanwhile the Dutch guy on welfare is only getting 13,000 euros a year. That money might better be used on the elderly of Netherlanders. And it's a shame, and you should be ashamed that the Socialist Party is not choosing that solution.[196]

As with the previous rhetoric, this statement contains an identical discourse about the Party for Freedom as the defender of the economic and welfare interest of the people. This statement advances the delegitimization of mainstream parties, specifically the ruling Socialist Party, while it simultaneously represents the PVV as the people's redeemer from the economic and welfare threat they face from immigration.

### 2.4.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The findings in this section similarly suggest the presence of the poststructuralist concepts of limit, and also difference and meaning in the discourse of the Party for Freedom about immigration. Apparent in the PVV's discourse about immigration is the use of its anti-immigration political program (*limit*) as a point of departure from pro-immigration political parties. Through this limit, a difference was established between the pro-immigration political bloc and the PVV. The established difference allowed for separate meanings to be apportioned to both the PVV and mainstream political parties. Through the established difference, the PVV is identified as the protector of the people, which further enforces the traitor identity of its political rivals. Both identities allow for each other's existence. Without the constructed collective traitor and enemy within the nation-state identity of mainstream parties, the PVV would not have a referent object to reflect its unique anti-immigration, far-right, and protector of the people identity.

The claim in poststructuralism that *exclusion* is made possible through limit is also vindicated in these findings. The anti-immigration agenda (*limit*) of the PVV produces a meaning that describes it as the defender of the culture, identity, and security of the people. This meaning produces an identity of the PVV that reflects the otherness and the traitor characteristics of other Dutch political parties. Through the enforced traitor identity, the popularity of the PVV's political contenders is destabilized, and their exclusion is engineered by the PVV through the electorate. Therefore, the limit used by

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[196] "Geert Wilders full immigration debate".

the PVV to establish its political difference is also a political weapon for the exclusion of other parties from mainstream Dutch politics.

The *discourse* of the Party for Freedom about immigration produced *knowledge* about the PVV as the defender of the people from the constructed internal and external threats. This knowledge became the reality of many Netherlanders and influence their political choice. This was demonstrated in their attempt to mandate the PVV to occupy the hegemonic position in Dutch politics and execute its protective political agenda. Through its discourse, the PVV created a political subject through which it could exercise power.

# CHAPTER 3: IMMIGRATION AND FAR-RIGHT HEGEMONY IN AUSTRIA

## 3.1. A Brief History of the Far Right in Austria

The far-right in Austria shares a similar history with those in France and the Netherlands. As was the case in France and the Netherlands, the far-right in Austria encountered ostracism and condemnation. As Goran Adamson accurately documented, right-wing ideas were discredited against in Austria by the end of the Second World War.[197] Notwithstanding the initial limitations, far-right parties succeeded in establishing and becoming part of the Austrian political system. The rise of the far-right in Austria was due to xenophobia, general discontent, fear of unemployment and other economic-related uncertainties.[198] The history of the far-right in post-1945 Austria started with the establishment of the Federation of Independents (VdU) in 1949. The VdU was a pro-Nazi political party.[199] According to Jason Matthew Smith, the VdU "was eventually disbanded, only to form again as the FPÖ."[200] Some scholars document that 1955 was the year of the inception of the Freedom Party (FPÖ),[201] while others maintain that it was established in 1956.[202] Though liberal politicians found the FPÖ, its initial political ideology was centred on right-wing extremism that was replaced with a more liberal agenda between the 1960s and 1970s.[203] Jorg Haider became leader of the party in 1986,[204] and he transformed the FPÖ into a radical right party.[205]

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[197] Goran Adamson, "The spectre of Austria - Reappraising the rise of the Freedom Party from 1986 to 2000," (Ph.D., thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2009), 105, http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/2383/1/U615332.pdf.

[198] Patrick Moreau, *The State of the right: Austria,* (Paris: Fondapol, 2011), 19.

[199] Bernhard Forchtner, Michał Krzyzanowski and Ruth Wodak, "Mediatization, Right-Wing Populism and Political Campaigning: The Case of the Austrian Freedom Party," in *Media Talk and Political Elections in Europe and America*, ed. Mats Ekström and Andrew Tolson (Lnacaster: EBSCO Publishing, 2013), 212. DOI: 10.1057/9781137273321_10

[200] Smith, "Extreme Politics: An Analysis of the State Level Conditions Favoring Far Right Parties in the European Union," 9.
https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/MEDIA279/Democracy,%20media,%20far-right/EUROPE_extreme%20politcs_%20far%20right%20in%20eu%20(smith).pdf

[201] Hans-Georg Betz, "The Two Faces of Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe," *The Review of Politics* 55, no. 4 (1993): 666.

[202] Öner, "Different Manifestations of the Rise of Far-Right in European Politics: The case of Germany and Austria*,"* 99.

[203] Adamson, "The spectre of Austria - Reappraising the rise of the Freedom Party from 1986 to 2000," 115-116.

[204] Ibid, 117.

[205] Terry E Givens, "The Freedom Party in Comparison: Radical Right Parties in Western Europe," (Paper submitted to the panel "Austracized? The Austrian Elections of 1999 and the EU: Outcomes and Repercussions," European Community Studies Association Seventh Biennial International Conference, Madison, May 31-June 2, 2001), http://aei.pitt.edu/2088/1/002104.PDF.

The FPÖ realized its political breakthrough in 1986.[206] It is argued that the rise of the FPÖ in 1986 was as a result of dissatisfaction with the political elites and immigration.[207] Though other far-right parties exist in Austria, like the Association for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) that is a splinter party from the FPÖ founded in 2005 by Jorg Haider,[208] the FPÖ is considered the most dominant far-right party in Austria.[209] The FPÖ is among the few far-right parties in Western Europe to have participated in coalition governments. Thus, the Freedom Party is not just the most successful far-right party in Austria, but also among the most prominent far-right parties in Western Europe.

## 3.2. Immigration as a Threat to the People and the State

Immigration is highly politicized in Austria. The political party that is predominantly responsible for mainstreaming immigration in Austrian politics is the Freedom Party (FPÖ). The dramatic rhetoric of the party's leadership describes immigration as a threat. The entailed discourse in the FPÖ's rhetoric further produces a contending meaning on immigration that disputes and delegitimizes mainstream immigration discourse. Pro-immigration political parties rationalize their immigration policy through a discourse about asylum as a fundamental human right, and also Austria's obligation to adhere to international law and the Geneva regulations on refugees.[210] Contrary to the mainstream immigration discourse, the Freedom Party disseminates a discourse that constructs immigration as a threat to the people and the state. The Freedom Party mainly constructs immigration as an economic, identity, and a security threat to the Austrian state and its native inhabitants. These constructed threats are expounded on in the subsequent paragraphs.

Firstly, the Freedom Party claims that the influx of immigrants into Austria threatens the general safety of Austria and its citizenry. It claims that criminals from immigrant producing countries enter Austria and get involved in illicit activities that causes insecurity for the people. This discourse about immigration is evident in the subsequent

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[206] Antonis A. Ellinas, "Chaotic but Popular? Extreme-Right Organisation and Performance in the Age of Media Communication," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 17, no. 2, (2009): 216.
[207] Adamson, "The spectre of Austria - Reappraising the rise of the Freedom Party from 1986 to 2000," 106.
[208] Forchtner, Krzyzanowski and Wodak, "Mediatization, Right-Wing Populism and Political Campaigning," 213.
[209] Moreau, "The State of the right: Austria." *Fondapol*, 6.
[210] "Uncut: Austrian president on Europe's refugee crisis," YouTube Video, 11:16, posted by "Fox News," September 30, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6PYRYZL1os.

statements of some renowned Freedom Party officials. For instance, Heinz-Christian Strache, the Chairman and leader of the Freedom Party said, "we don't need an upper limit or the upper limit to be reduced by half, we need zero immigration, actually minus immigration, because all illegal individuals and criminals belong outside of the country."[211] Immigrants are constructed in this statement as criminals, who should be prevented from entering Austria. This discourse about immigrants as criminals produces a meaning that defines immigration as a security threat to the people and the state. The Spokesman for the Freedom Party, Johann Überbacher, also propagated a similar discourse about immigration. This is evident in a statement in which he said, "these persons in Austria do drugs, sexual abuse and so on."[212] Überbacher claims that immigrants are sex offenders and drug abusers. Therefore, he discursively constructs immigration as a threat to the physical security of Austrian woman in particular, and the general populace who could get affected by drug-related crimes. The Freedom Party's presidential candidate in the 2016 presidential elections, Norbert Hofer, further illuminated the Freedom Party's 'security threat discourse' on immigrants in one of his statements. He said, "… those people who don't appreciate our country, who go to war for [the] Islamic State or rape women, I say to those people, this is not your home."[213] While in the previous statement immigrants are collectively constructed as a security threat, Norbert Hoffer makes reference to Muslim immigrants. His statement constructs Muslim immigrants as terrorists who fight for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). His claim further constructs immigration from Muslim dominated countries as a threat to the national security of Austria. Hoffer's statement also constructs immigrants as rapists. Thus, he reproduces the FPÖ's discourse about immigration as a security threat to Austrian women. The Deputy Mayor of Vienna and a member of the Freedom Party, Johann Gudenus, also constructs immigration in accordance with the FPÖ's security threat discourse. During an interview, he said, "… Austrian governments like Kurz's party ÖVP and the Socialist Party did it wrongly. We [have] accepted more and more illegal migrants like economic and social migrants, and this is the wrong way because now the criminal rate [has] increased, [and] raping [of] women [has] increased

[211] "Austrian Freedom Party Leader Strache calls for 'Islamization ban," *DW*, January 14, 2017, accessed November 27, 2018, https://www.dw.com/en/austrian-freedom-party-leader-strache-calls-for-islamization-ban/a-37135625.
[212] "FPÖ - Johann Überbacher talks to PutinTV RT International," YouTube video, 5:05, posted by "Walter Klingenbeck," January 8, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqWusybGCAM.
[213] Ibid.

unfortunately.[214] In this statement, Gudenus claims that unlawful activities increased with the flow of immigrants into Austria. This claim implies that immigrants amplified insecurity in the country, which implicates them as internal threats to security. He also specifically constructs immigration as a source of insecurity for Austrian women. Therefore, in Gudenus' rhetoric, immigration is constructed as a generator of insecurity for women in particular and the nation-state as a whole. The FPÖ's security discourse about immigration is not limited to dramatic rhetoric of officials of the party. A campaign poster displayed by the FPÖ red, "security for our citizens instead of open borders for criminals."[215] In these wordings, immigrants are unambiguously constructed as criminals, who should be kept out of the borders of Austria. The entailed discourse is that immigration is a security threat.

Secondly, the Freedom Party constructs immigration as an economic threat to the Austrian people. Officials of the party claim that immigration causes unemployment for Austrians. They also argue that immigration is a financial liability on the state. Geza Molnar, a Freedom Party parliamentarian said, "what happened last year was immigration is [sic] beyond comprehension. We see the changes that this causes. The country is turning into something else. Insecurity is growing. It's becoming harder to finance social services, and unemployment has never been so high. It's time to say stop and bring order back to the country for the Austrians."[216] The consistence of the security threat narrative about immigration in the rhetoric of Freedom Party officials is apparent in this statement. It is also apparent that immigration is constructed in the above statement as a financial burden on the state. The general claim is that the state spends an alarming amount of money on the welfare of immigrants. Geza Molnar further constructs immigration as a reason for the heightening unemployment in Austria. The usual argument is that immigrants offer cheap labor that makes them preferable for employment. It is alleged that this situation leaves Austrians unemployed and financially challenged. Hence, immigration is constructed in this statement as an economic threat to the people, and an unacceptable financial liability on the state. A parallel discourse on the economic

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[214] "Rape, criminal activity increase because of so-called refugees - Vienna Deputy Mayor," YouTube video, 8:49, posted by "RT," June 22, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SonksKVZXlY.
[215] "Refugee crisis is a boon to Vienna's far-right party," *DW*, accessed November 27, 2018, https://www.dw.com/en/refugee-crisis-is-a-boon-to-viennas-far-right-party/a-18772019.
[216] "Far right at the gates of power in Austria," YouTube video, 5:09, posted by "France 24 English," December 2, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrzp3N1f0Ec.
(Official translation on YouTube)

constraints immigration places on the state is noticeable in the following statement by Norbert Hofer. "We had 90,000 people last year, in a country with 9 million citizens. Then [,] there will be the husbands [,] the wives [,] the children coming over, [and] the parents. The people that came last year, we have to pay for them in the upcoming years 20 billion Euros. It's too hard for us, it's too much for us."[217] Hofer's dramatic rhetoric stresses the magnitude of financial burden exerted on the state by immigration. He further depicts the monetary responsibility of the state towards immigrants as unsustainable. In accordance with the discourse about immigration as an economic threat to the people, Johann Überbacher said, "they are not refugees, they are economic migrants."[218] The discourse in this statement is that immigrants from non-Western countries do not seek access to Austria for fear for their safety, but to compete with Austrians for job opportunities. Therefore, Überbacher's statement constructs immigration as an economic threat to the people.

Finally, the Freedom Party constructs immigration as a cultural and an identity threat to the Austrian people. The usual claim is that immigration allows for foreign and contrary cultures to be brought into Austria. According to the FPÖ, this poses an existential threat to the Austrian culture and identity. In constructing an Austrian identity and culture, the leadership of the Freedom Party references Christian principles as the foundation upon which the Austrian culture and identity are built. This claim is obvious in the following statement by Heinz-Christian Strache. "We have a Christian culture; and we want to keep a Christian culture for our children."[219] The Christian oriented culture of Austria is juxtaposed with the Islamic culture of Muslim immigrants to represent the otherness in the culture and identity of immigrants. The FPÖ argues that Islamic cultures and traditions are irreconcilable with Christian principles. Therefore, the Islamic value system threatens to dilute the culture of Austrians and modify the identity of the nation. Heinz-Christian Strache, describes the culture of Muslim immigrants as an existential threat to European countries that includes Austria. In a remark on immigration, he said, "quickly put an end to this policy of Islamization ... otherwise we Austrians, we Europeans will come to an abrupt end."[220] Islamization which denotes the spread of the Islamic religion and cultural

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[217] "Either Europe changes the rules, or we lose the EU – Norbert Hofer," YouTube video, 25:53, posted by "RT," December 16, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18WDDpw4L9E
[218] "FPÖ - Johann Überbacher talks to PutinTV".
[219] "Refugee crisis is a boon to Vienna's far-right party".
[220] "Austrian Freedom Party Leader Strache calls for 'Islamization ban".

in Austria and other European countries is constructed in this statement as an existential threat to Austrians and other nationals of Europe. The discourse in Strache's claim is that the concept of a European or an Austrian, who are generally defined by secularism and a Christian culture, will cease to exist, and with it the identity of the people, once an Islamic culture dominates Europe.

### 3.2.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The findings in this section are consistent with the fundamental claims in post-structuralism. One such hypothesis is that a separate meaning of an object or a people can only be realized through the differences and similarities they share with others. This concept of *difference* and *meaning* is dominant in the rhetoric of the FPÖ about immigration. The party established a distinct meaning for the Austrian nation, by referencing its similarities with other European nations, and its striking dissimilarities with the cultural and religious practices of Muslim immigrants. Without its differences and similarities established, the Austrian people would not be different, nor would they have a unique identity from immigrants.

Another hypothesis in poststructuralism is that *exclusion* is perpetrated through *limit*. The FPÖ effectively excluded Muslim immigrants from the Austrian society through the use of their culture and religion (*limit*) as a point of departure from the Christian, liberal, and secular Austrian society. Through this *limit*, cultural and religious *difference*s between immigrants and Austrians were established, and separate *meaning*s of *'the threat and the threatened'* were constructed. Consequently, creating a platform for the *exclusion* of immigrants from the Austrian society.

A final claim in poststructuralism is *discourse* produces our socio-political knowledge or realities. The FPÖ's economic, security, and identity discourse about immigration produces knowledge about immigration as a threat. This narrative directly delegitimizes mainstream immigration discourse and also creates a platform for the FPÖ's political agenda to be popularized.

### 3.3. Immigration as a Consequence of the Ineptitude of Mainstream Parties

The Freedom Party constructs the mass influx of immigrants into Austria, both at the state and national levels, as a phenomenon allowed by pro-immigration mainstream parties and their political representatives. The FPÖ also constructs the alleged internal insecurity

caused by immigrants as the repercussion of state policies on immigration. These allegations are further expounded in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, the Freedom Party constructed the mounting flow of immigrants into Vienna, the capital of Austria, as a tragedy allowed by the political representative of the Social Democratic Party. Speaking to Freedom Party supporters in Vienna, Heinz-Christian Strache claimed that immigrants were granted access to the city by Michael Häupl, who was the mayor of Vienna and a member of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ). Strache said, "highest tax burden, highest unemployment and now the refugees. That is the result of 20 years of Häupl." [221] In this statement, Strache constructs the alleged bad economic condition of Vienna as an effect of the maladministration of Michael Häupl. He further constructs the increasing arrival of immigrants into the city as another consequence of the ineffective administration of Häupl. While Strache's rhetoric directly targets Mayor Häupl, with whom he competed for the mayoral office of Vienna, he also indirectly implicated the Social Democrats and their policy on immigration. Commenting on immigration in another statement, Strache describes Christian Kern, an official of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, as "one of the co-perpetrators of those human trafficking organizations."[222] In this statement, Strache describes immigration from non-Western countries to Austria as a phenomenon engineered by a syndicate of human traffickers in which the SPÖ participated. The discourse Strache propagates in this statement is the Social Democrats imports immigrants into Austria. Thus, is responsible for the immigration crisis in the country. In a related statement, Strache said, "on the one hand we have the left running amok, which is proudly opposed to our fundamental values, and who [sic] advocate mass immigration …"[223] Left-wing political parties in Austria are constructed in this statement as enemies within the nation and the state that support mass immigration and frustrate the effort of the supposed patriots, who attempt to protect the people from immigration and its insecurities.

Secondly, the Freedom Party constructed internal insecurity that allegedly arises from immigration as the fault of immigration-friendly political parties in Austria. The FPÖ maintains that mainstream parties that support immigration have caused the entry of

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[221] "Refugee crisis is a boon to Vienna's far-right party".
[222] "Austrian Freedom Party Leader Strache calls for 'Islamization ban'".
[223] "Heinz-Christian Strache:15th Congress of the National Front in Lyon," YouTube video, 6:21, posted by "Rembrandt Clancy," December 6, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTyP-u2f0EU. (Official translation on YouTube)

terrorists into Austria that allegedly destabilized the security of the people. During a campaign speech delivered to supporters of the Freedom Party in Vienna, Heinze-Christian Strache said, "not just since the migration crisis in 2015, but for decades they pushed for a totally irresponsible, undifferentiated policy of immigration from outside Europe, and with that naturally Islamist terror entered the heart of Europe."[224] Strache's rhetoric in this statement constructs terrorism in Austria as an aftermath of immigration policies supported by mainstream parties. He claims that the failure of mainstream parties to recognize the danger of allowing immigration from all countries and regions outside Europe caused the entry of terrorists into Austria. Therefore, incidents like the attempted terror attack in Vienna, plotted by an 18-year-old with a migration background,[225] are constructed in this statement as the insecurity brought upon Austrians through the immigration policies of pro-immigration mainstream parties.

Finally, the Freedom Party constructed the alleged cultural threat incurred from immigration as an outcome of the blunder of pro-immigration parties in Austria. The leadership of the FPÖ argues that through open border policies and other related policies that tolerate immigration, mainstream pro-immigration parties allowed alien cultures that threaten the survival of the Austrian culture and identity to be imported into Austria. The Freedom Party further accuses its political rivals of funding organizations that nurture parallel cultures in Austria. When Johann Gudenus was asked for his opinion on Sebastian Kurz's criticism on Islamic schools that orientate children to the Islamic culture and isolate them culturally, he responded by saying,

> of course, I agree but I am quite surprised why now the Foreign Minister and the Minister for Integration changed his mind. Because, it was his party which always voted for every request for subsidies for those kindergarten schools. And it was his party and also his political action which tried to cater for all these radical Muslim movements in Austria, and now you know we have election campaign, in the middle of October there will be federal elections. He tries to change his mind and copy all our program points of my Freedom Party. I am very irritated for [sic] the politics of

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[224] "Austria's far-right party attacks Islam, refugees," YouTube video, 2:30, posted by "Press TV," October 15, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PQ11mrGsFI.
(Official translation on YouTube)
[225] "Austrian police arrest 'terror' suspect planning attack," Aljazeera, accessed December 7, 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/austrian-police-arrest-terror-suspect-planning-attack-170120205517953.html.

Austria which has been done also by the party of Minister Kurz. He was Minister for the last several years, four years, and he voted for every opening of the borders, he voted for welcome [sic] more refugees, and also for welcome [sic] more Islam in Austria.[226]

The first accusation in this statement is that Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian chancellor, and his political party, the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), supported Islamic schools that taught and preserved a foreign Islamic culture in Austria. The second accusation is Sebastian Kurz and his party voted for immigration policies that allowed for a foreign Islamic culture to be brought into Austria. The entrenched discourse in these accusations is the leadership of the ÖVP is accountable for the culture and identity threats of immigration that it now opposes. In another statement with a similar discourse, Heinz-Christian Strache said, "in Vienna and other cities, there are already more Muslim than Catholic children at primary schools and high schools. This is due to the irresponsible policies of the government which attempted to replace our own population. I say, lets exchange these politicians before they manage to completely replace us."[227] Strache accuses the Austrian government of implementing immigration policies that threaten a demographic shift along religious lines in Austria. He claims that mainstream pro-immigration parties want to replace the Christian population of Austria with Muslims. Obviously, such a shift would have culture and identity implications for Austria. Therefore, the underlying discourse in this statement is the Austrian government encourages threats to the Austrian culture and identity.

### 3.3.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The findings in this section further reflect the fundamental claims in poststructuralism. A discrete *meaning* of the Freedom Party as the defender of the people was made possible through an established ideological *difference* with mainstream pro-immigration parties. Without this established difference, the Freedom Party would not have a separate political identity from other mainstream pro-immigration parties. To establish this difference, the

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[226] "'Rape, criminal activity increases because of so-called refugees".
[227] "Shockwaves in Europe: Austria Elects Conservative, Anti-Immigration Chancellor," YouTube video, 3:10, posted by "Oppressed Media," October 19, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h0WRvgGIE0&index=2&t=2s&list=PLZm_oBZ7QjpMAtYlByEU s6qATrtyuTJkl. (Official translation on YouTube)

FPÖ used the immigration policies of other parties as a *limit*, through which different identities of patriots and traitors were produced.

Through the said limit and the eventual difference and soiled identity that stems from it, the *exclusion* of dominant pro-immigration parties from mainstream politics was facilitated. These parties were made unpopular and their political program unappealing to the electorate. Thus, they were eventually isolated from mainstream Austrian politics. This is evident in the fact that all of the dominant mainstream pro-immigration parties were excluded from the Austrian government in the 2016 Austrian presidential elections.

The *discourse* of the FPÖ about immigration constructs a negative identity and produces a similar *knowledge* about its political rivals. It also produces a certain political *reality*. The knowledge that other political parties connived to import threats into Austria produced the socio-political, economic, and security realities of the Austrian populace. This knowledge and perceived reality guided the political choice of voters at the ballot. Therefore, the discourse of the FPÖ did not only produce a negative knowledge about mainstream parties, but also served as an instrument for their exclusion. It served as a political weapon for the Freedom Party to topple dominant parties and create a political vacuum for it to occupy.

## 3.4. Representing the Populist Radical Right as the Credible Source of Redemption from the Immigration Crisis and its Related Ills

To complete its battle for dominance in Austrian politics, the leadership of the Freedom Party represented itself as the most suitable replacement for its mainstream political contenders in government. Officials of the party discursively constructed a meaning that categorized the party as the protector of the people and the state, from immigration and its associated insecurities. The FPÖ was also portrayed as a political party with the appropriate political agenda to control immigration. In the rhetoric of Freedom Party officials on immigration, the '*defender of the people and the state*' discourse is prominent.

Firstly, the leadership of the Freedom Party represented itself to Austrian voters as the protector of the Austrian nation-state from immigration. In connection with this claim, the FPÖ was further represented as a party with a leadership that was determined to safeguard Austria by restricting immigration from non-Western countries. In a campaign speech delivered to FPÖ supporters, Nobert Hofer said,

I am standing so that together with you, we can win this election and for the first time have a president from the Freedom Party, dear friends. And this president will be a guardian, a guardian for Austria. He will ensure that this land and its people will not be hurt anymore, and that bad government policies will come to an end. This raging stagnation must be brought to an end. We must stop this invasion of Muslims, which is currently bursting into our home, my friends.[228]

In this statement, Norbert Hofer portrays himself as the protector of the Austrian people from the flow of migrants from Islamic countries that he dramatically describes as an invasion of Austria by Muslims. By expressing his determination to end immigration from Islamic countries, he also discursively portrays himself as a politician, who is determined to protect the Austrian culture and identity, form the constructed culture and identity threat posed by Muslim immigrants. Norbert Hofer's rhetoric in this statement also discursively portrays him as a politician, who is determined to rectify failed state policies, amongst which are immigration policies. In relation to the discourse about the Freedom Party being the guardian of the people against immigration, the FPÖ is also portrayed as a political party with the appropriate policy to control immigration from non-Western countries. In one of Norbert Hofer's statements, he said, "regarding immigration, the right way would be a change in the social welfare system, migrants shouldn't get access on the very first day of their stay. Work first before taking advantage of social welfare benefits, thereby wrong incentives would be abolished.[229] In this statement, Hofer represents himself as the Austrian politician with a suitable policy to discourage immigration into Austria. He proposes a different political agenda on the welfare system that he claims functions as a pull factor for immigrants. Therefore, Hofer discursively represents the Freedom Party, together with its leadership, as a political entity with the needed policies and strategies to discourage immigration and protect the people from its insecurities.

Secondly, the Freedom Party is represented by its leadership as the protector of the physical security of the people. This discourse is evident in the following statement by Johann Gudenus. "Women for example in my city Vienna, now are afraid [of] going alone

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[228] "Anti-Immigrant Candidate Favorite as Austria Elects President," YouTube video, 3:35, posted by "Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty," May 20, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJijsT9UpRY&feature=youtu.be. (Official translation on YouTube)
[229] "Austria's rise of the right," YouTube video, 8:00, posted by "Euro News," September 23, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxM7iJH07tA. (Official translation on YouTube)

on the street when it's dark. This hasn't been before the last years, and [has] changed now because we accepted so many refugees, so-called refugees. … people have, on the 15 of October, the chance to vote for the best way which is my party.[230] Johann Gudenus' rhetoric in this statement represents the Freedom Party as the solution to the insecurity suffered by Austrian women due to immigration. This statement additionally validates the anti-immigration agenda of the party as the protective instrument from physical harm perpetrated by immigrants. In another statement by Heinz-Christain Strache, the Freedom Party was represented as the protector of the Austrian nation-state from terrorism. In this statement, Strache said,

> and let me add this at the end of my statement: we, who favour freedom, are not intolerant. We merely defend ourselves against misunderstood tolerance: Honour killings, forced marriages and forced genital mutilation, repression of women. We would lose nothing without that, and this is not the tolerance we stand for. I tell you: We are against a so-called "Tolerance" that permits it, and that one mosque and minaret after another are built all over Austria. We are against a "Tolerance" that does not demand that preaching in mosque is in German, so that we can understand it. Against a "Tolerance" that doesn't mind crushing women's rights by forced marriages and headscarves. Against a "Tolerance" where violent Jihadis are considered misguided victims. Against a "Tolerance" that tolerate Islamic hate preachers, who ignore or even fight our constitution, and declare Sharia as the only valid law. This is what we don't want. And we will not let ourselves be shut up. … I say this: our battle for a free and Christian Western Europe is a battle we will lead out of responsibility for our children and their children. In order that we do not do away with ourselves.[231]

In this statement, Strache propagates two separate, but interconnected discourses. Firstly, he represents the FPÖ as a political party that is opposed to cultural change and the acceptance of such trend in Austria. He represents the FPÖ as a patriotic political party that champions a resistance to the imposition of Islamic laws and culture, and also their normalization in Austria. Strache portrays all far-right parties, including the FPÖ, as the

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[230] "Rape, criminal activity increases because of so-called refugees".
[231] "Geert Wilders Vienna March 27-2015," YouTube video, 42:27, posted by "Vlad Tepes," March 31, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wa0XFeN-SY.
(Official translation on YouTube)

defenders of the Christian and liberal culture of Western Europe. Secondly, Strache depicts the Freedom Party as a political party that is opposed to the rationalization of terrorism in Austria. The discourse that he propagates through this claim is the FPÖ, unlike other political parties in Austria, prioritizes the security of the people and does not compromise with terrorists.

Finally, the leadership of the Freedom Party is represented as the defender of the Austrian culture and identity. Unlike mainstream pro-immigration political elites, who are accused of letting into Austria foreign cultures, and also sponsoring Islamic organizations that preserve alien cultures in the country, the leadership of the Freedom Party is portrayed as the guardian of the threatened culture and identity of the Austrian people. The Chairman of the FPÖ vigorously propagates this discourse. In a speech delivered to a gathering of FPÖ supporters, Heinz-Christain Strache said, "Islam is not part of Austria my dear friends. We want to prevent the Islamization of Austria, and we will achieve that dear friends."[232] The identified threats to the Austrian way of life and identity in this statement are the religious and cultural practices of Muslim immigrants in Austria. The preservation and spread of an Islamic culture and religion in Austria are what Strache refers to as the Islamization of Austria. Thus, the discourse in the above statement is the FPÖ is a political party that is unwavering in its quest to defend Austria from Islamization and its ensuing culture and identity threat. In another statement, Strache repeated the same discourse, saying,

> we reject integrating other cultures, whether from a false understanding of tolerance or from cowardice. … And ultimately, it is we who are the only alternative to the political establishment; it is we who are fighting for a different policy aligned to the interest of the historically indigenous European people, for we are the only genuine Europeans. We stand for the values which have made our continent grand and significant ... All of us are pursuing a common objective; namely, the protection of the historically indigenous identity of the European people, who are in the pincer grip of an unbridled mass immigration from culturally foreign regions.[233]

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[232] "Europe's newest face: Kurz's election win indicates rightward shift for Austria," YouTube video, 36:57, posted by "France 24 English," October 17, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YcY_WYeq04&t=3s. (Official translation on YouTube)
[233] "Heinz-Christian Strache:15th Congress of the National Front in Lyon".

Heinz-Christian Strache's above-referenced statement portrays all far-right parties in Western Europe, including the FPÖ, as the sole political wing that pursues the protection and preservation of Western European's Christian and secular culture, and also the identity of its nations. Unlike other political parties on different positions on the political spectrum, Strache claims that only far-right parties resist the fusion of cultures in Western Europe that is said to be detrimental to the identity and culture of the region. Far-right political parties are further represented as the only political wing in Western Europe that champions a resistance to immigration, from regions with distinct cultures and identities. The principal discourse in this statement is the far-right in Western Europe, which includes the Freedom Party, is the sole protector of the native Western European culture and identity from an existential threat posed by immigration from non-European countries.

### 3.4.1. Correlation Between Findings and Theoretical Approach

The above-documented findings further substantiate the basic hypotheses in poststructuralism. In other to create a distinct political identity and meaning for itself, the Freedom Party used its anti-immigration political agenda (as a *limit),* through which it established its ideological *difference* with other political parties in Austria. The established difference further creates a *meaning* of the FPÖ as the patriotic party, which enforces the constructed meaning of pro-immigration parties as traitors. Thus, through the meaning that is derived from the *limit* used by the FPÖ, the *exclusion* of pro-immigration parties is further justified and enforced. Evidently, the limit used by the FPÖ to establish its ideological difference, also served as a tool for the exclusion of its political contenders.

Finally, the discourse of the leadership of the Freedom Party about immigration produced a specific knowledge about the FPÖ as the guardian of the Austrian nation-state. This knowledge became an established political reality of a host of Austrians, which served as an incentive for them to give a political mandate to the FPÖ to provide protection from the constructed internal traitors and the external threats. The FPÖ propagated a discourse about immigration that was needed to create a political subject through which it could exercise power.

# CONCLUSION

The immigration crisis that saw the migration of thousands of immigrants into Europe was utilized as a political instrument by populist radical right parties in France, the Netherlands, and Austria. The Front National in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, and the Freedom Party in Austria used the soaring immigration into Europe, as a political weapon in their quest to dominate national politics. These parties promulgated three main discourses about immigration. Firstly, they propagated a threat discourse that constructed immigration as an economic threat to the people and a financial liability on the state. The threat discourse further constructed immigration as a threat to national security and the personal safety of the people. Also, immigration was discursively constructed as a cultural and an identity threat. Secondly, these parties constructed the mounting immigration to Europe as an outcome of flawed policies of mainstream pro-immigration political parties on border control and the welfare system. The claimed security, identity, and cultural threats of immigration are equally blamed on immigration-related state policies, or the lack of certain policies to neutralize the hazards of immigration. In the case of France, mainstream parties were even accused of stimulating immigration for financial gains. Finally, the Freedom Party, the Front National, and the Party for Freedom propagated a discourse that portrayed them as the solutions to the immigration crisis in their countries, and also the defenders of the economic, identity, and security interests of their people. These discourses imposed a contending meaning upon immigration that delegitimized mainstream discourse about immigration in Europe. Through their narrative about immigration, the FN, the PVV, and the FPÖ defamed pro-immigration mainstream parties and weakened their electoral support. Also, the discourses portrayed the said far-right parties and their political programs as the solutions to the immigration crisis and its insecurities. Therefore, these parties and their political programs were popularized with the electorate, who felt threats from immigration and were convinced by the far-right that mainstream parties betrayed their interests. Consequently, the FN, the PVV, and the FPÖ were able to garner electoral support that caused their triumph in recent elections.

The upsurge in electoral support acquired by the FN, the PVV, and the FPÖ is obvious in recent elections. Between 2012 and 2017, the Front National virtually doubled its electoral gains at the national level, while in 2014 it quadrupled its voter percentage in the European election. The Freedom Party equally experienced electoral triumph.

Between 2013 and 2017, the party increased its representation in the Austrian parliament by 11 seats and more than doubled its electoral percentage in presidential elections between 2010 and 2016. Also, in 2014 the Freedom Party doubled its representation in the European parliament. Finally, between 2012 and 2017, the Party for Freedom increased its representation in the Dutch parliament by 5 seats. In 2017, the PVV was the second largest party in the Dutch parliament.

As proven in this study, the immigration crisis did not independently cause the rise of the far right in France, the Netherlands, and Austria to political prominence. Instead, it was used as a strategic campaign instrument by these three far right parties to engineer their political success. Though this study cannot be used as a conclusive evidence for other cases, it provides a platform for similar studies to probe dominant explanations on immigration and the rise of the far-right, and also to investigate the use of immigration as a political tool by far-right parties in countries like England, Greece, Hungary, and Germany. Also, the post-structuralist theory that is employed in this study, specifically its discourse analysis component, provides a different approach to investigate not just the political success of far-right parties, but also mainstream parties and the thriving democratic deficit in Europe.

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# RESUME

Sulaiman Gbondo was born in Sierra Leone in 1987. He started his primary education in Kono District where he attended the Roman Catholic Primary Schools in Motema and Yengema respectively. He also attended St. Francis Primary School in Makeni, Sierra Leone. Sulaiman Gbondo did his junior and senior high school education in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he attended St. Edward Secondary School and the Sierra Leone Grammar School respectively. He graduated from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, with a bachelor's degree in Peace and Conflict, in 2013. Furthermore, Suaiman Gbondo graduated with a certificate in Public Procurement Management from the Institute of Public Administration and Management, University of Sierra Leone, in 2013. In 2016, he graduated with a Certificate in Turkish Language form Sakarya University's Turkish Language Centre in Turkey. He started a M.Sc degree program in International Relations in 2016 at Sakarya University in Turkey. Sulaiman Gbondo is interested in conflict resolution, peace keeping, security, immigration, human rights, and development.