Facing the Radical-right

The Social Democrats' and the Moderates' strategic responses to the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats between 2014-2022

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Abstract

Once dominated by mainstream parties, party systems across Western Europe are being challenged by the rise and success of radical right-wing parties. Similar political developments have been observed in Sweden, where the Sweden Democrats have grown from a once marginal political force into a crucial supporting party for the formation of the center-right governing coalition. Studying how the Swedish mainstream parties have strategically responded to their emphasized issues is of particular interest to comprehend the mechanism of party competition between mainstream and radical right-wing parties. Looking at the issue of immigration, this thesis aims to uncover how the Social Democrats' and the Moderates' immigration stances have evolved, in response to the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats between 2014 to 2022. To answer the posed research question, a descriptive qualitative content analysis of each party's election manifestos has been conducted. While the study has not been able to strictly establish a causal relationship between the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats and the mainstream parties' shifting immigration stances, the findings suggest that party competition with radical right-wing parties, has incited the Social Democrats and the Moderates to reconsider their strategic responses, affecting their stances regarding the concerned issues.

Key words: party competition; multiparty systems; mainstream parties; radical right-wing parties; immigration; Sweden

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1. Introduction

The following section provides a general overview of the chosen subject. A background will first be presented, describing the resurgence of radical right-wing parties in Western European multiparty systems, the rise of the Sweden Democrats, and developments relating to the issue of immigration in Sweden. This will be followed by the objectives of the thesis and its research question.

1.1 Background

Since the 1980s, Western European multiparty systems have experienced the resurgence of radical right-wing parties. Consequently, it has resulted in their entry into national parliaments, the European Parliament, and in their participation in government formations (Akkerman, et.al., 2016, p. 1ff). Sweden was long considered a deviant case within the European context, with the absence of a radical right-wing party in parliament (Rydgren - van der Meiden, 2019, p. 440; Jungar, 2022, p. 1). While neighboring countries such as Denmark and Norway experienced the rise of radical right-wing parties in the 1970s, in Sweden their success remained marginal, apart from the short-lived New Democracy in the 1990s (Rydgren, 2002, p. 33). However, similar to other Western European party systems, Sweden's political landscape has undergone significant transformations during the past decades. The decline of economic left-right dimensions during the 2000s and onwards paved the way for new sociocultural issues to enter the political sphere (Rydgren, 2019, p. 452).

In 2010 the radical right-wing party the Sweden Democrats entered parliament with 5,7 percent of the votes, putting an end to Swedish exceptionalism (Jylhä et.al., 2019, p. 11). Founded in 1988 with roots in the extreme-right milieu (Backlund, 2022, p. 22), the Sweden Democrats describe itself as a "social conservative with a nationalistic core" (Sverigedemokraterna, 2019). With a strong emphasis on authoritarianism and ethno-nationalism, the party conforms to a radical right-wing profile (Rydgren, 2017, p. 2). Framing immigration as a threat to ethno-nationalistic identity, one of the Sweden Democrats' keys defining features is their invokement of restrictive immigration policies and opposition to multiculturalism, which permeates most of their policies (Martinsson, 2018; Elgenius-Rydgren, 2017, p. 353).

In response to their entry into parliament, the Swedish mainstream parties maintained a so-called *cordon sanitaire.* The party was thus excluded from participating in any form of parliamentary collaboration or negotiations (Heinze, 2018, p. 287; Jungar, 2022, p. 3). Following the national election of 2014, in which the Sweden Democrats used its balance of power to vote against the budget proposal of the red-green minority government, the parties in parliament decided on the

December Agreement. As the Sweden Democrats were opposed to any budget proposal increasing the costs of immigration, the agreement guaranteed the passing of the biggest party bloc's budget proposal (Bjereld, et.al., 2016, p.5).

However, following the migration influx to Europe in 2015, the issue of immigration became increasingly prominent within Swedish party competition and salient among voters (Lindvall, et.al., 2019, p. 483). In November 2015 the government introduced restrictive immigration policies, including the tightening of border controls, shifting permanent residency to temporary, and stricter requirements for family reunification (Hagelund, 2020, p. 8). The Sweden Democrats were able to draw gains from this development and assume ownership (Öhberg, 2020, p. 414; Loxbo, 2014, p. 241). Thus, the question regarding how the Swedish mainstream parties have strategically responded to the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats, arises.

1.2 Defining the Sweden Democrats

Before I proceed, it is important to establish how I define the Sweden Democrats. While scholars agree on which parties are to be included in the "radical right" family, its categorization is subject for contestation (Mudde, 2007, p. 20). To mention some examples, their label ranges from radical right-wing parties (e.g., Rydgren, 2017; Krause, Cohen, Abou-Chadi, 2020), anti-immigration parties (e.g., Dahlström, Easaisson, 2009; van Spanje, 2010), populist radical right parties (e.g., Mudde, 2007; Hobolt, de Vries, 2020), far-right parties (e.g., Bale, 2003; Spanje, Klüever, 2020), to right-wing extremist parties (e.g., Arzheimer, Carter, 2006).

According to Mudde (2007), the radical right constitutes one of the two subgroups defining the far-right movement - the other being right-wing extremism. While the radical right does not renounce the core principles of democracy, they oppose some of its fundamental beliefs. Described as a thin ideology, populism if often invoked – manifested through the perception of society as divided between a homogenous and antagonistic group. Furthermore, nativism is one of their main ideological characteristics, implying particular emphasis is put on exclusionary values, such as nationalism and xenophobia (p. 21-24).

In contrast to Mudde, Rydgren (2017) renounces using the term *populism* to describe radical right-wing parties, as it is not considered the most prominent feature of their agenda. Rather, what characterizes radical right-wing parties is their emphasis on ethnic nationalism. Consequently, such values translate into policy goals seeking to protect the nation from becoming ethnically heterogeneous (p. 486ff). In proceeding, I will rely on Rydgren's definition and classification to conceptualize the Sweden Democrats.

Yet another conceptualization important to establish is what *type* of party the Sweden Democrats constitute in the context of party competition. The thesis departs from Meguid's (2008) conceptualization as her theory constitutes an important pillar of the following study. According to Meguid, three defining features characterize niche parties, thus setting them apart from their mainstream

competitors. Firstly, niche parties renounce a traditional class-based orientation of politics. Rather, they bring novel issues to the forefront, previously overlooked by the established parties. Secondly, niche parties' promoted issues do not align with existing political divisions along the left-right spectrum. Thirdly, niche parties tend to focus on a restricted set of issues. Although the addressed issues may increase over time, they are still perceived as "single-issue parties" (p. 3-5).

1.3 Objective and Research Question

This thesis aims to gain a deeper understanding of the evolution of Swedish mainstream parties' immigration stances, facing the electoral success of the radical right-wing party the Sweden Democrats. Focusing primarily on the supply side of politics, I am especially interested in assessing how the Social Democrats and the Moderates have strategically responded to the issues emphasized by the Sweden Democrats, following their entry into parliament. Immigration is an illustration of such an issue.

By conducting a descriptive qualitative content analysis of the election manifestos from two of the biggest mainstream parties from the center-left and center-right, the Social Democrats and the Moderates, I aim to uncover how their immigration stances have evolved and what strategies they have adopted towards the Sweden Democrats from 2014 to 2022. To highlight the adopted strategies, I will also include the Sweden Democrats in my study. It should be stressed that my aim is not to prove that the radical right has caused a shift in mainstream parties' position regarding immigration, but rather to shed light on their strategic responses. Thus, this thesis aims to answer the following question:

How have the Social Democrats' and the Moderates' immigration stances evolved, in response to the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats, between 2014 and 2022?

I argue that the research question has both relevance from an interdisciplinary standpoint and outside the field of research (Teorell - Svensson, 2007, p. 18). Firstly, the research question contributes to a broader discussion, beyond the selected case, regarding party competition between mainstream and niche parties - particularly radical right-wing parties. Applying previous research and theories to the Swedish context contributes to new insights on party competition dynamics in Western European systems. Regarding its relevance outside the field of research, the question relates to recent political developments observed across Western European party systems, namely the emergence of new political dimensions and the rise of radical right-wing parties.

2. Previous Research

In the following section, the existing literature concerning the studied phenomenon will be outlined. Party competition is a subject that has long received particular interest in the scholarly field. To gain a greater understanding of the evolution of the Social Democrats' and the Moderates' immigration stances, facing the Sweden Democrats, the thesis draws upon research studies concerning the changing nature of party competition in Western European systems and the rise of radical right-wing parties.

2.1 The Changing Nature of Party Competition

There is a consensus amongst scholars regarding the shifting nature of party competition in Western European multiparty systems (i.e. Green-Pedersen, 2007; Rovny, Whitefield, 2019; De Vries, Hobolt, 2020). Traditionally the notion of party competition according to Downs (1957) spatial theory (also known as positional competition) has long dominated the field of research. In his influential contribution, Downs argued that party competition occurs as parties adopt different positions along a unidimensional space - defined as a left-right scale, dominated by economic policy issues.

However, as important electoral changes have been identified since the 1970s and onwards, parties increasingly compete over issues relating to new policy dimensions (i.e., Green-Pedersen, 2007; Rovny, 2019). Mair et.al (2004) claim that the disruption of socio-economic cleavages has contributed to a decline in class voting, traditional party loyalty, and party identification. Consequently, parties no longer rely on their "natural support base" to win elections but must rather develop innovative strategies to compete on new political issues, which are no longer defined by their economic nature (Polk - Rovny, 2013).

Accordingly, parties are assumed to compete increasingly by strategically emphasizing certain issues over others, rather than by positioning themselves along a one-dimensional spectrum. By highlighting a particular issue, parties aim to make it salient to the political agenda - forcing opponents to pay attention to an issue they may otherwise choose to avoid (Green-Pedersen, 2007). Scholars have focused on competition between parties in light of *selective emphasis* and *issue ownership*. Budge and Farlie (1983) developed the concept of selective emphasis, according to which parties compete by emphasizing strategic issues, salient amongst the electorate. Petrocik's (1996) issue ownership theory stipulates that parties rather emphasize issues they "own" - i.e., in which they enjoy an advantage, and their opponents are regarded as less competent. Thus, parties are assumed to avoid, rather than engage with, issues they are not considered to own.

Nevertheless, Green-Pedersen and Mortensen (2014) argue that the existing literature cannot explain why parties in multiparty systems sometimes engage in

each other's own issues. Competition forces parties to position themselves concerning issues currently dominating the political agenda. Ignoring a particular issue is a hazardous strategy as the party will be regarded as incompetent or lose influence on how the issue is framed in public opinion. Hence, to fully comprehend the complexity of party competition, one must acknowledge that strategies available to parties are both constrained and influenced by other political parties.

In recent decades, party competition in Western Europe has been characterized by the fracturing of stable party systems. Party systems across Western Europe are being challenged by the rise of new political parties. They are not to be perceived as a new phenomenon - political newcomers have been witnessed in the past. However, something has shifted. Hobolt and de Vries (2020) claim that the electoral decline of mainstream parties has created an opportunity for challenger parties, as they define them, to assert themselves in the political arena. Acting as issue entrepreneurs, challenger parties mobilize the electorate by politicizing new issues. Similarly, Spoon and Kluever (2019) suggest that mainstream parties' political convergence on left-right dimensions, incites the electorate to vote for non-mainstream parties.

2.2 Radical Right-Wing Parties on the Rise

The resurgence of radical right-wing parties and their impact on mainstream parties has attracted significant scholarly attention, during the past decades. Particular attention has been devoted to mainstream parties' adopted responses to the success of radical right-wing parties and their issue ownership. Scholars vary in their categorization of the strategies available and how they impact mainstream parties' stances. However, they are generally classified into engagement and disengagement or inclusion and exclusion (Heinze, 2018, p. 288). Downs (2001) suggests that mainstream parties can engage with radical right-wing parties either by *co-opting policies* or *by collaborating* and disengaging by *ignoring legal restrictions* or *blocking coalitions* (p. 34-39). Conversely, Bale et.al (2010) distinguish between *hold, defuse,* and *adopt* strategies (p. 412-414).

Concerning the issue of immigration, scholars have sought to examine the causality between radical right-wing parties' electoral success and their anti-immigration stances with the stance of mainstream parties. Commonly referred to as the contagion effect, the hypothesis posits that their increased success results in mainstream parties adopting tougher immigration stances. Studies suggest that radical right-wing parties' electoral success incites mainstream parties to "jump on the bandwagon" as their raised issues represent considerable political opportunities (Han, 2015). For some mainstream parties, mainly right-wing, the electoral success of radical right-wing parties creates an opportunity to expand the right-wing bloc (Bale, 2003). Mainstream parties may also adopt part of their popular policy positions, as they feel threatened by their electoral success and wish to prevent vote losses (Spoon - Kluever, 2020, p. 277-287; Bale, et.al., 2010). Criticized for its inability to exclude whether a shift in position is caused by other developments resulting in changes in public opinion, the hypothesis is subject to discussion

amongst scholars. However, Abou-Chadi and Werner (2018) suggest that there exists a causal relationship between the increased parliamentary representation of radical right-wing parties and other parties' adoption of anti-immigration stance (p. 843).

Regarding the Swedish context, several societal and political changes have been identified, contributing to the success of the Sweden Democrats. Rydgren and van der Maiden (2018) point towards the following factors: 1) the decline in class-voting, 2) the increased salience of sociocultural issues, particularly immigration, 3) the increased political convergence of mainstream parties, and 4) the Sweden Democrats distancing from their extremist past (p. 452). In light of their electoral success and entry into parliament, Jungar (2022) argues that the Sweden Democrats' policy positions have become normalized amongst the mainstream parties, particularly in framing the immigration issue.

This research review is only a sample of all the contributions that have been made within the field. However, I have noticed that most studies addressing party competition between mainstream and niche parties have tended to do so by adopting a multiple case research design. Thus, I aim to contribute to the existing research through a case study design, examining in detail how the Social Democrats' and the Moderates' immigration stances have evolved, facing the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats.

3. Theory and Concepts

In the following section, I will introduce the conceptual and theoretical framework. Starting by clarifying the concepts, I argue they are indispensable to adequately comprehend the theories utilized in the analysis. Drawing upon Meguid's and Van Spanje's theories, a comprehensive framework for analyzing the strategic responses of the Social Democrats and the Moderates facing the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats, is provided.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1.1 Issue ownership

Petrocik (1996) developed the notion of *issue ownership* seeking to explain the dynamics of party competition. Accordingly, parties are not only regarded in terms of their promoted policy preferences during election campaigns. Rather, the theory stipulates that the voters associate parties based on their issue reputation, i.e., parties' perceived competence and ability to handle specific policy areas. Parties are expected to promote different issues, each emphasizing ones they are considered to "own". Consequently, maintaining an emphasis on perceived owned issues is assumed to benefit parties electorally. Parties' ownership of an issue originates from a combination of factors, such as their historical stances towards certain issues and ideological standpoints (Petrocik, 1996, p. 827; Walgrave et al., 2009, p. 155). Hence, while the salience of a specific issue is considered volatile between elections, ownership is relatively stable over time.

However, recent research literature suggests that issue ownership can evolve. This is especially the case in multiparty systems, characterized by various parties and several issues on the agenda. Importantly, this affects party competition as parties can seek to alter and acquire ownership over new issues or steal issues owned by their opponents (Klingemann et.al., 1994; Bélanger - Meguid, 2008, p. 478).

3.1.2 Issue Salience

A fundamental component in party competition, the concept of issue salience relates to the perceived importance of certain issues. In their renowned *salience theory*, Budge and Farlie (1983) stipulate that parties compete by selectively emphasizing issues that advantage them while downplaying those favoring their opponents. Drawing from voters' behavior, making certain issues salient within

party competition can prove to be electorally beneficial. However, parties must carefully consider rendering an issue salient, as it might risk favoring their opponent (p. 22-26).

Similar to issue ownership, parties are assumed tied to a central set of issues that distinguish them from their competitors. Conversely, to the assumptions of the spatial model, parties are constrained by their previous actions and can therefore not compete by freely positioning themselves on the policy spectrum. However, as suggested by Klingemann et.al (1994) movement along the spatial continuum is enabled by either emphasizing or de-emphasizing certain issues. Furthermore, parties are responsive to the developments of certain issues' salience in the electorate (p. 23-29). Issues that are subject to discussion in the broader societal context shape political debate, and electoral outcome (Paul, Fitzgerald, 2021).

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Meguid's Position, Salience, and Ownership Theory

In her modified spatial theory, Meguid (2008) argues that previous institutional and sociological explanations have been insufficient in accounting for the variation of niche parties' success and failures across Western European party systems. By combining positional and issue competition, Meguid offers a theoretical conceptualization of party competition between mainstream parties and niche parties. Accordingly, Meguid's theory emphasizes the crucial role of mainstream parties and their adopted strategies in altering the electoral outcome of niche parties. Mainstream parties are described as "the most powerful set of actors", possessing a wide range of strategies, through which they can manipulate the following factors: position, salience, and ownership. Consequently, competition in such a context is understood as being unequal (p. 2-4).

Acknowledging the issue introduced by a niche party is a result of mainstream parties' active strategic considerations. In contrast to previously established theories concerning party competition, such as salience and ownership theory, Meguid recognizes the dynamic nature of issue ownership (p. 27). In line with her theory, mainstream parties can alter the competitiveness of niche parties by adopting one of the following three strategies. Parties may adopt a *dismissive strategy,* i.e., ignoring the issue raised by the niche party, if it is considered irrelevant or too complicated to address. By doing so the party aims to exclude the niche party from political debate and reduce the salience of its issue, hoping to render it illegitimate amongst voters (p. 28). Both an *accommodative* and *adversarial strategy* implies adopting a position on the niche party's issue dimension, thereby increasing its salience. However, a certain difference exists between these strategies. An *accommodative strategy* is executed by taking a similar position as the niche party, to limit their uniqueness and take over ownership. Conversely, an *adversarial strategy* involves adopting a divergent position on the issue dimension of the niche party. Hence, mainstream parties

thereby affirm their hostility, resulting in a reinforcement of the niche party's ownership (Ibid).

3.2.2 Van Spanje's Contagious Effect

In his theory, Van Spanje (2010) theorizes the impact of radical right-wing parties, which he defines as *anti-immigration parties,* on mainstream parties. This mechanism is known as the *contagion effect*. Conversely to Meguid (2008), van Spanje directs his focus towards the effect such parties have on mainstream parties' policy positions concerning the issue of immigration. Inspired by Down's (1957) spatial theory, the electoral success of anti-immigration parties is assumed to result in other parties' adoption of more restrictive immigration policies. Political parties are seen as rational actors, seeking to maximize their votes in the electorate. Seen as a threat to their electoral base, parties are thus expected to strategically adjust their policy position to align closer to their competitors. Furthermore, Van Spanje's theory stipulates that a party's office-seeking incentives will determine the change of position regarding the issue of immigration. As parties in government face increased legal and practical constraints, repositioning is presumed unlikely in their case. Parties in opposition, however, enjoy greater discretion in trying different strategies (p. 565). Van Spanje's findings suggest that the mechanism of contagion will occur regardless of a party's ideological profile. Hence, both parties from the center-right and center-left are expected to compete for votes with anti-immigration parties and adjust their policy position accordingly (Ibid).

4. Methodology and material

In the following section, I will establish the chosen research design and methodology adopted throughout the thesis. These concerns the case study design and qualitative content analysis. To ensure transparency, I will also present methodological considerations and how I have chosen to proceed with them in mind. This will be followed by describing the reasons behind choosing Sweden as a case and its scope. Lastly, an overview of the material utilized will be presented.

4.1 Case Study Design

Given the nature of the posed research question, the following thesis is a descriptive case study looking at the evolution of Swedish mainstream parties' immigration stances in their election manifestos, facing the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats between 2014 to 2022. Characterized by the ambition to acquire in-depth knowledge about a particular phenomenon, case studies are bound by time and confined to a concerned unit of analysis - in my case parties' election manifestos (Creswell, 2014, p. 8; Jha, 2023, p. 178). Case studies often involve a longitudinal element, examining the same unit on different occasions to determine whether a change has occurred (Bryman, 2008, p. 695). In my case, this will involve studying each party's election manifestos from 2014 to 2022. Defining feature, descriptive case studies seek to intensively describe a phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 2003, p. 5; King, Keohane, Verba, 1994, p. 6).

　　　　Like any research design, certain scientific requirements are to be satisfied. Concerning descriptive studies, they must rely on a thoroughly defined theoretical framework and serve as a foundation for future research (Esaiasson, et.al., 2017, p. 37ff). Research must also strive towards a nomothetic ideal, which emphasizes the study's external validity, i.e., whether the study's findings can be applied to other cases (Ibid, p. 28 & 59). The case study is often subject to critique for its limited ability to draw generalizable conclusions. However, this might not be the primary aim of such a study but rather to select a case that shares similar characteristics as others observed (Teorell - Svensson, 2007, p. 151; Yin, 2003, p. 44ff). This will be further developed under 'Case'.

4.1.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

After establishing the implemented research design, the method used to collect and examine the material must be clarified. To answer the research question, I will apply the method of qualitative content analysis.

Qualitative content analysis is a text analytical approach that can be used to study different types of material. Relying on a constructive epistemology, the method seeks to describe and uncover communication content (Drisko-Maschi, 2015, p. 26). Schreier (2014) argues that qualitative content analysis aims to systematically process the complex meaning of qualitative material when interpretation is required. Accordingly, meaning is understood in constructive terms, i.e., it is not considered fixed, but socially constructed. By ascribing more significance to some aspects of the material and categorizing it with the help of a coding frame, both latent and manifest content can thus be studied (Esaiasson, 2017, p. 211; Boréus - Kohl, 2018, p. 50-52). Seeking to identify patterns within a larger set of empirical data (Drisko-Maschi, 2015, p. 26), the method is considered suitable to satisfy the thesis' descriptive ambition. In my case, this will involve focusing on each party's immigration stances in their election manifestos and observing whether these have evolved over the selected period.

As interpretation constitutes an important element of qualitative content analysis, it is essential to ensure intersubjectivity and reflexivity (Teorell - Svensson, 2007, p. 54ff; Schreier, 2014). This is indispensable to guarantee high reliability. By thoroughly presenting each step of the research process - from research design, choice of material and method, operationalization, to the defined limitations - transparency can be obtained. In Appendices 1 to 9, the interpretation of the election manifestos according to the Manifesto Project's coding of immigration is provided.

4.1.2 Case

An important requirement within scientific research is to consider the possibility of relating one's findings to other cases (Esaiasson, et.al., 2017, p. 155). As previously established, the descriptive case study offers limited ability to generalize one's conclusion to a larger population, focusing solely on a single case. While external validity might not be the primary aim of such studies, descriptive case studies place great value in selecting cases that are of relevance to the theoretical framework (Teorell - Svensson, 2007, p. 152). Sweden was chosen as a case study for its similarities to political developments identified in other Western European party systems. Firstly, Sweden is a multiparty system in which new issues have become increasingly prominent, such as the issue of immigration (Green-Pedersen - Mortensen, 2014; Lindvall, et.al., 2019). Secondly, while long considered a European exception, Sweden has in recent decades experienced the success of a radical right-wing party. Lastly, Sweden serves as an interesting case, as the mainstream parties for long maintained an isolationist strategy but have in recent

years moved closer to the Sweden Democrats' policy proposals (Jungar, 2022, p.1; Backlund, 2020, p. 30).

4.1.2 Scope

To clarify the scope of the study, various delimitations have been defined. Firstly, the period between 2014 to 2022 has been selected, as I expect the mainstream parties to have responded to the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats, following their entry into parliament in 2010. Secondly, I will only examine the mainstream parties' responses and evolution of their immigration stances, in accordance with the Manifesto Projects' coding of the issue, which is explained under 'Operationalization'. Integration, which is often intertwined with immigration, will not be examined. Thirdly, I will study two mainstream parties in relation to a niche party. The chosen mainstream parties are the Social Democrats and the Moderates, and the niche party is the radical right-wing party the Sweden Democrats. In line with the chosen theoretical framework and previous research, studying this relationship appears indispensable to understanding the changing party dynamics of contemporary Western European party systems.

Before proceeding, I should briefly acknowledge the limitations of my study. Although focusing solely on one case of study allows for an in-depth analysis, it may contribute to a limited possibility for generalization. Furthermore, while some aspects of the demand side of politics will be included, i.e., voter's issue salience, I will mainly be focusing on the supply side of politics and parties' interaction with each other. Additionally, the study will limit itself, solely examining election manifestos and not other types of materials.

4.1.3 Operationalization

An important element of scientific research is to operationalize abstract theoretical definition into something measurable. This way, both the study's reliability and validity can be strengthened. Reliability refers to the absence of unsystematic errors, which can be reduced as one motivates and presents each step of the research process in detail. It also implies understanding the collected material thoroughly (Esaiasson, et.al., 2017, p. 64). In my case, this will be ensured by reading the chosen material multiple times and relying on my coding scheme as I proceed with the analysis. Regarding validity, the requirement requires a strong relationship between theoretical definitions and empirical evidence. Since theoretical definitions are often subject to contestation, consensus on their defining characteristics may be hard to reach. Thus, by adequately specifying and defining what is referred to when theoretical definitions are invoked, systematic errors can be reduced (Teorell, Svensson, 2007, p. 40ff). Important to note is that in 2014, the Moderates participated in a cooperation, the Alliance (in Swedish: Alliansen), with the former People's Party (now the Liberals), the Christian Democrats, and the Centre Party. Consequently, in 2014 they released a joint election manifesto, which can affect discerning the Moderates' policy stances from other parties. However, as

they have agreed on its publication, I argue that the election manifesto indicates their political stances.

The previously established theories and concepts will be operationalized in the following way. Results from the Election Authority from each electoral outcome will serve as indicators for the parties' electoral success. Similarly, to indicate voters' issue salience and perceived issue ownership of the parties, surveys from Novus, SOM-institute, and Ipsos will be used. To operationalize the parties' immigration stances, I will borrow the Manifesto Project's coding of a positive and negative view of immigration. These will serve as guidelines to examine the evolution of the Social Democrats and the Moderates' emphasis on immigration, as well as their adopted strategies. Immigration is defined as the action of entering a country, with the prospects to permanently reside. The coding is as follows:

National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	- Statements favoring new immigrants. - Against restrictions and quotas. - Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument'. - Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.
National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	- Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country. - The boat is full' argument. - The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.

4.2 Material

The material utilized to answer the research question will consist of both primary and secondary sources (Esaiasson, 2017, p. 292). As primary material, I have chosen to study the parties' election manifestos from 2014, 2018, to 2022, collected from the Swedish National Data Service (in Swedish: Svensk Nationell Datatjänst, SND). Manifestos have been chosen as they are rich sources of information, conveying parties' intentions and objectives if they are to be elected. Further, manifestos provide important insights into parties' official priorities and strategies during election campaigns (Dolezal, et.al., 2012; 2016; Bara, 2005, p. 586). Surveys and data regarding each general election outcome will also be included. The surveys have been collected from the SOM-institute and Ipsos. These will be used to get an

overview of voters' perception of immigration and perceived issue ownership. Data concerning election outcome for the studied period, is provided by the Election Authority to indicate the outcome for each election year studied.

Regarding secondary sources, I have included scientific reports. These encompass selected articles from the SOM-institute and the Foundation for Political Innovation, concerning the issue of immigration in Sweden and the Sweden Democrats. Working with both primary and secondary sources, it is important to reflect upon source criticism (Esaiasson, et.al., 2017, p. 291). While it is clear that the election manifesto contains an ideological dependency, it is not considered problematic as I am interested in studying the evolution of the mainstream parties' immigration stances. Concerning the secondary sources, I have been careful when selecting to ensure they are collected from established and independent sources.

5. Result

The following section will provide the study's findings. Firstly, key information of each election year such as voters' most salient issues, election outcome, and perceived issue ownership, will be presented. Secondly, each party's election manifesto from 2014, 2018 and 2022 will be provided. As previously established, I will conduct a qualitative content analysis of the election manifestos, relying on the Manifesto Project's coding of a positive and negative view of the issue of immigration.

5.1 Voters' Issue Salience

In Table 1 below, voters' five most salient issues from 2014, 2018, and 2022 are presented. As can be observed, the issue of immigration and integration was ranked as the third most important issue in 2014. In 2018, the issue climbed the rankings, making it the second most salient issue. However, in 2022, voters' importance of the issue declined, placing it in fifth place.

Table 1. Voters' five most salient issues 2014, 2018, 2022[1]

	2014	2018	2022
1	School and education (40%)	Healthcare (45%)	Law and order (37%)
2	Healthcare (33%)	**Immigration/integration (38%)**	Health care (36%)
3	**Immigration/integration (27%)**	School and education (34%)	Environment/energy (30%)
4	Employment (24%)	Law and order (16%)	School and education (24%)
5	Elderly care (18%)	Environment/energy (26%)	**Immigration/integration (22%)**

Source: SOM-institutet

Following the migration influx to Sweden in 2015, the immigration issue gained increased importance amongst the electorate. While the general perception had previously favored less restrictive migration policies, a shift in public opinion occurred in 2016 (Demker, 2021, p. 318). A survey from Ipsos 2018 demonstrates that positive attitudes toward immigration decreased by 19% in 2015 (Ahlin - Fritz,

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[1] Author's own translation

2018, p. 3). Similarly, according to the SOM-institute, 52% of the public favored decreasing the asylum reception in 2016. In 2022, this figure reached 55% (Martinsson - Andersson, 2023, p. 56).

5.2 General Election Outcome

In Table 2. the general election outcome for each studied election year is presented. The Sweden Democrats, as can be seen, have experienced a stable increase in their vote share from 2014 to 2022. The Social Democrats saw a decline from 2014 to 2018 but managed to reverse the trend by experiencing an increase from 2018 to 2022. The Moderates have experienced a stable decline from 2014 to 2022.

Table 2: Election Outcome 2014, 2018, and 2022

Year	The Moderates	The Social Democrats	The Sweden Democrats
2014	23,3%	31,0%	12,9%
2018	19,8%	28,3%	17,5%
2022	19,1%	30,3%	20,5%

Source: The Swedish Election Authority

5.3 Parties' Perceived Issue Ownership

As can be observed in Table 3. the Sweden Democrats were perceived as the owners of the immigration and integration issue, in each examined election year. At the time the party entered parliament, the issue of immigration was considered a so-called non-issue, i.e., it was not subject to politicization nor was it salient amongst the parties in parliament. As the established parties avoided politicizing the issue, the Sweden Democrats were thus able to draw significant gains and establish themselves as the owner of the immigration issue (Öhberg, 2020, p. 414).

Table 3. Issue ownership 2014, 2018, 2022

Year	Immigration/Integration
2014	The Sweden Democrats
2018	The Sweden Democrats
2022	The Sweden Democrats

Source: Novus, 2014, 2018, 2022

5.4 Election Manifestos 2014

5.4.1 The Sweden Democrats

The Sweden Democrats' election manifesto "We choose welfare" (in Swedish: "Vi väljer välfärd") from 2014, amounts to 24 pages and is divided into nineteen chapters, including an introduction chapter. The third chapter "An immigration policy that promotes cohesion and welfare" (in Swedish: "En invandringspolitik som befrämjar sammanhållning och välfärd") amounts to one page and concerns immigration. Immigration is included in other chapters.

     The party states that while working to ensure Sweden's openness to its surrounding world, it is important to protect the country's commonality and "our own culture and identity" (p. 7). Further, it is elaborated that the party wants to use the limited resources wisely to help people in need, while not forgetting or undermining the needs of Sweden. Thus, a responsible migration policy is invoked, ensuring that immigration does not become a "burden to society" (Ibid). The party proposes measures to supersede the grant of resident permits from permanent to temporary, and severely limit the reception of asylum seekers and family reunification to levels that Sweden can manage and not exceed its neighboring countries Denmark and Finland (Ibid).

     Additionally, measures are proposed to abolish labor migration. The party suggests introducing a "blue card model" that targets highly skilled labor requiring certain competencies missing in the Swedish labor market (p. 7). The party also suggests increasing the support to refugees in need and lacking the ability to leave conflict zones. Further, increasing the share of quota refugees among the asylum seekers to whom Sweden grants resident permits, is proposed (Ibid). The party also proposes to introduce health controls, to protect the Swedish society from infectious diseases (Ibid).

     In the last chapter "Infrastructure for more homes, better growth, and a united Sweden" (in Swedish: "Infrastruktur för fler hem, bättre tillväxt och ett sammanhållet Sverige"), immigration is mentioned. The party suggests that a more responsible immigration policy would decrease the pressure on the housing market (p. 21).

5.4.2 The Moderates

In 2014, the Moderates wrote a joint election manifesto "We are building Sweden" (in Swedish: "Vi bygger Sverige"), together with the former Alliance parties. The manifesto consists of 128 pages, divided into fifteen chapters. The sixth chapter "An open Sweden" (in Swedish: "Ett öppet Sverige"), consists of six pages and addresses immigration. However, it is included in other chapters.

     In the introduction chapter "Party leaders' foreword: the Alliance's promises to the voters" (in Swedish: "Partiledarnas förord: Alliansens löfte till väljarna", it is stated that great responsibility has been taken by the past government for welcoming refugees. The benefits of immigration are also emphasized,

describing it as both culturally and economically enriching. Further elaborating that the current world situation is characterized by conflicts, Sweden's responsibility is emphasized (p. 6-8). Similarly, in the chapter "The Basis of the Alliance's politics" (in Swedish: "Utgångspunkter för Alliansens politik"), Sweden is described as a country that should strive towards humanitarian responsibility (p.10). This is further elaborated in the chapter "An open Sweden", in which it is stated that Sweden has a moral obligation, regardless of prevailing domestic conditions, to offer a sanctuary to those fleeing. Sweden's historical legacy of sheltering those in need is also highlighted (p. 50-51). The longstanding impact of immigration is also emphasized, explaining that it contributes to the country's workforce and entrepreneurship. Further, proposals are suggested to introduce an equal distribution of newly arrived immigrants across the country's municipalities and improve their capacity to receive asylum seekers (p. 52).

Several measures are proposed in the chapter "An open Sweden" to increase resources for the reception of immigrants. This concerns increased resources to the Swedish Migration Agency, the Swedish Employment Agency, and municipalities (p. 53). It is further suggested that the compensation for the municipalities' costs and reception of newly arrived immigrants, should be facilitated (p. 52). Emphasizing the need to attract foreign labor, measures are also proposed to shorten the processing time to employ (p. 53). Furthermore, proposals to effectivize the path from resident permits to employment within the labor market are mentioned (p. 52).

5.4.3 The Social Democrats

The Social Democrats' election manifesto "Dear Future" (in Swedish: "Kära framtid") released in 2014, consists of 52 pages and is divided into four chapters. The manifesto does not include a specific chapter devoted to immigration. However, it is addressed in the fourth and closing chapter "A fair world is possible" (in Swedish: "En rättvis värld är möjlig").

In the fourth chapter "A Fair World is Possible", the party states that Sweden should be a sanctuary, offering shelter to individuals in need. While specific proposals are not suggested, it is mentioned that all of Sweden's municipalities are to take shared responsibility for the reception of refugees. Additionally, the shared responsibility of the European Union's member states is emphasized (p. 44).

5.5 Election Manifestos 2018

5.5.1 The Sweden Democrats

In 2018, the Sweden Democrats released their election manifesto together with their election platform. The manifesto amounts to 28 pages, divided into twenty-three chapters. The third chapter "Migration policy" (in Swedish: "Migrationspolitik"),

consists of two pages and highlights immigration. Immigration is highlighted in other chapters as well.

In the chapter "Migration policy", the party argues that the migration policy has been handled irresponsibly and ignorantly, during the past decades. The large-scale reception of asylum seekers and family reunification is stated to have contributed to "a fragmented society, cultivated alienation, and eroded welfare" (p. 6). It is mentioned that it has jeopardized security, as strong requirements and controls have not been maintained. Further, it is mentioned that while the migration policy has tightened, it is not sufficient. Sweden must reconfigure its migration policy from scratch, with fixed regulations and respect for the country. This is also suggested as a measure to face the parallel society (Ibid).

The party highlights wanting to modify the asylum legislation, to only accept asylum seekers from neighboring countries (p. 7). It also suggested that Sweden should stop the asylum reception, as long as its immediate area is safe. Further, the party proposes measures to pause all reception of quota refugees until the asylum stop has taken effect and for as long as the return migration is still in the build-up phase and modify the regulations for labor migration according to the needs of the Swedish labor market (Ibid).

Additionally, measures are suggested to provide the police with tools and resources to search for people residing in the country illegally, increase the number of detention centers, and allow for longer periods in detention, if deportation cannot be carried out immediately. The party also aims to negotiate agreements with other countries, facilitating the deportation of more individuals, either back to their home countries or to countries that can offer adequate shelter more efficiently than Sweden, and strive towards Sweden's diplomatic weight including trade and aid policy to persuade countries to accept their citizens (Ibid).

In the fourth chapter "Criminal policy" (in Swedish: "Kriminalpolitik", the party highlights that following uncontrolled immigration, terrorists roam freely in the streets, exploiting our welfare and asylum system (p. 8). Similarly, immigration is invoked in the twelfth chapter "Housing policy" (in Swedish: "Bostadspolitik"), stating that a failed immigration policy has contributed to the housing shortage (p. 12).

5.5.2 The Moderates

In 2018 the Moderates released their own election manifesto "Now we catch hold of Sweden" (in Swedish: "Nu tar vi tag i Sverige"). Consisting of ten chapters, the manifesto amounts to 44 pages. The third chapter "Migration and integration" (in Swedish: "Migration och integration"), addresses immigration. It is four pages long and divided into six sections (p. 14-17). However, it is mentioned in other chapters. In the preface-chapter, it is stated that Sweden for a long period must adopt a strict migration policy. (p. 5).

In the chapter "Migration and integration", immigration is described as a trade-off between "what we can contribute to - and what we can manage" (p. 14). Stating that while the Moderates value openness towards its surrounding world and that Sweden has a responsibility towards individuals in need, Sweden must

carefully consider its national interests. To do so, Sweden needs regulated immigration. It also expressed that as newcomers end up in life long exclusion "the costs for the state and municipalities becomes high" (Ibid). Further, under the heading "A strict migration policy", it is argued that Sweden, conversely to other EU-member states, has welcomed the most refugees. Thus, it is stated that Sweden's migration policy must take this into account and adapt its policy to those of neighboring countries (p. 15). Further, several measures are proposed to regulate immigration to Sweden. This concerns decreasing the reception of asylum seekers, introducing temporary resident permits as a general rule, tightening the requirements for family reunification, and establishing a common refugee quota system in the EU (Ibid). The section "Stop the parallel society" (in Swedish: "Stoppa skuggsamhället"), concerns efforts to impede a growing parallel society. Measures are introduced to increase enforced deportations and internal immigration controls, allow controls whenever the police are given the opportunity to increase the detention capacity, deny asylum claims to be upheld firmly and the statutes of asylum claims should be extended from four to ten years (p. 17).

In the "Qualification to welfare" (in Swedish: "Kvalificering till välfärden"), it is argued that new immigrants are immediately granted access to the right of the welfare state without having worked or paid taxes. Consequently, the party proposes to introduce language-skills and employment as prerequisites for allowances and welfare (Ibid).

Under the heading "Attract more talents to Sweden" the third aspect is introduced. To counter skills shortages within the labor market measures to attract a highly qualified workforce, proposals to introduce talent visas for individuals with special training or expertise, put an end to the deportations of skilled workers, and shorten the processing time (Ibid).

5.5.3 The Social Democrats

In 2018, the Social Democrats released their election manifesto "The Largest Safety Program in Modern Times" (in Swedish: "Det största trygghetsprogrammet i modern tid"). The election manifesto contains a preface and four chapters, amounting to 36 pages. There is no specific chapter dedicated to immigration, however, the issue is addressed in the first and fourth chapters "A society strong enough to achieve full employment" (in Swedish: "Ett samhälle stark nog att nå full sysselsättning").

In the chapter "A society strong enough to achieve full employment", under the section "Sweden shall break the segregation" (in Swedish: "Sverige ska bryta segregationen"), the party suggests restricting labor migration, to favor unemployed individuals in Sweden (p. 15). Further, under the section "A common and proportional responsibility for refugee reception", Sweden is argued to have taken a disproportionate share of asylum seekers. While stating that the party values the right to asylum in Sweden, Europe, and worldwide, it is argued that responsibility must be shared. To ensure a fair and proportionate distribution across countries, measures to expand the work of the UN's international refugee quota system and introduce a common asylum system in the EU, are suggested (p. 17). It is further

proposed that the new asylum legislation should prevail until common rules are established on the EU level, which is described to imply "fewer asylum seekers applying to Sweden, and more to other countries" (p. 17). Additionally, measures to guarantee the deportation of individuals denied asylum-status, are proposed (Ibid).

5.6 Election Manifestos 2022

5.6.1 The Sweden Democrats

The Sweden Democrats' election manifesto from 2022 contains five chapters, amounting to 12 pages. The fifth chapter "A strict migration policy is crucial to turn around bad to good" (in Swedish: "En stram migrationspolitik är avgörande för att vända dåligt till bra") consists of two pages and addresses immigration. However, immigration is included in other chapters.

In the first chapter "Vote for something new for Sweden " (in Swedish: "Rösta på något nytt för Sverige "), immigration is invoked, as it is mentioned that while other parties promise significant increases in spending, the Sweden Democrats will prioritize Sweden's domestic needs in a way that does not contribute to inflation (p. 3).

Similarly, immigration is highlighted in the third chapter "Welfare shall be rebuilt in Sweden" (in Swedish: "Välfärd skall åter byggas i Sverige"). The party argues that increased tax revenues generated by economic growth have funded other things, primarily immigration, and not the Swedish welfare society (p. 6). Thus, limiting the access to welfare and allowance for those who are not citizens or have qualified through work, is suggested (p. 7).

Immigration is also invoked in the seventh chapter "Security must be given a special position in politics" (in Swedish: "Trygghet måste få en särställning inom politiken"). The large-scale immigration is argued to have strengthened the shadow society, in which "Islamist and gang criminals work together to displace Swedish society" (Ibid). Concerning non-citizens, measures to reinvoke resident permits of families where lack of parenthood has contributed to a serious crime, are proposed (p. 8).

In the fifth chapter "A strict migration policy is crucial to turn around bad to good", the party emphasizes the non-European asylum immigration and related family reunification, as a cause for the "conflicts, alienation, as well as escalating criminality and violent crime." (p. 9). It is stated that Sweden has accepted more immigrants than the country has the capacity for and that it has negatively impacted the integration. Further, it argued that this has cost Sweden both in economic terms and regarding the country's cohesion (Ibid). The party thus emphasizes the need to stop all asylum-related immigration for the foreseeable future.

Measures are proposed to adapt the asylum legislation to the minimum legal level required by EU law, abolish permanent residence and strengthen deportation, limit the right to family reunification and financial support requirements, decrease attracting factors to the receiving countries such as services offered, and initiate

efforts for large-scale return migration (p. 10). The party also suggests giving a special mandate to the Police Authority to prioritize return efforts and interventions to identify and apprehend individuals who are in Sweden illegally and invest in tools to identify individuals residing in Sweden illegally (p. 11). Further, it is proposed to reconsider the grounds for revoking residence permits of individuals demonstrating an antisocial lifestyle and deficiencies in their obligations to the Swedish society, limit and strengthen the regulations of labor migration, upgrade the citizenship with stricter requirements, reinstate border controls by giving concerned authorities to maintain internal border control and stop the EU's proposal of the migration pact (Ibid).

5.6.2 The Moderates

In 2022, the Moderates released their election manifesto "That's how we bring order to Sweden!" (in Swedish: "Så får vi ordning på Sverige!"). The manifesto contains 10 chapters, amounting to 42 pages. The fifth chapter "That's how we bring order to immigration and integration" (in Swedish: "Så får vi ordning på invandringen och integrationen"), highlights the parties' proposals relating to immigration. The chapter consists of three pages and is divided into four sections.

In the fifth chapter "That's how we bring order to immigration and integration", the party states that Sweden's integration has failed. For it to work more efficiently, immigration must adapt to the country's integration capacity and thus decrease. The first paragraph argues that Sweden has received an unproportionate large number of immigrants, compared to its neighboring countries. This is elaborated, by stating that Sweden has granted 95 000 resident permits during the past year and 400 000 asylum statuses in the past ten (p. 24). The party proposes to decrease immigration, by implementing "a goal-directed, strict and sustainable policy" (Ibid). Measures are thus proposed to introduce a volume target for asylum reception - corresponding to Nordic levels, adapt the asylum legislation according to EU law on a legal minimum level, and abolish the possibility for individuals with denied asylum status to get a work permit instead (p. 25).

5.6.3 The Social Democrats

In 2022, the Social Democrats released their election manifesto "Our Sweden can do better" (in Swedish: "Vårt Sverige kan bättre"). The manifesto consists of 32 pages and six chapters. While no specific chapter is included addressing immigration, it is mentioned under the second chapter "Turn over every stone to crack down on crime and break segregation" (in Swedish: Vända på varje sten för att bryta segregationen".

In the chapter "Turn over every stone to crack down on crime and break segregation", under section "Break the segregation to keep Sweden united" (in Swedish: "Bryt segregationen för att hålla ihop Sverige"), the party starts by stating that Sweden for a long time had a large-scale migration, while integration has not

worked efficiently. It is further stated that the growing economic gaps have contributed to segregation and normlessness (p. 9).

Proposing to get to the roots of residential segregation, the party mentions that they have tightened their migration policy and that "this line is fixed" (p. 11). It is further argued that all municipalities are to take their share of responsibility for the reception of asylum seekers and that asylum seekers are not to be allowed to choose where to settle (Ibid). Further, the party proposes to limit labor migration, to prioritize the unemployed in Sweden, and impede the exploitation of the labor force that often follows (Ibid). The party also suggests introducing language requirements to obtain a permanent resident permit (p. 12).

In the chapter "A safe and compassionate world" (in Swedish: "En säker och solidarisk värld", under the section "A strong global voice" (in Swedish: "En stark global röst"), it mentioned that the cooperation within the EU must intensify to solve "our times most difficult problems", in which migration is included (p. 29).

6. Analysis

In the following section the study's empirical findings will be analyzed according to the chosen conceptual and theoretical framework. The evolution of the mainstream parties' immigration stances reveals that different strategies have been adopted to counter the Sweden Democrats' electoral success and to meet voters' preferences.

Looking at the mainstream parties' election manifesto from 2014, both the Social Democrats and the Moderates had a strong emphasis on the positive aspects of immigration. Conversely, the Sweden Democrats invoked the shortcomings of the Swedish migration policy, arguing that the country needs a responsible immigration - one that Sweden can manage. In line with Meguid's PSO theory, the mainstream parties' responses demonstrate that an adversarial strategy was adopted. As previously mentioned, the acknowledgment of a niche party's raised issue is a result of mainstream parties' strategic considerations. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the Social Democrats and the Moderates had an incentive to recognize the issue raised by the Sweden Democrats, following their electoral success and four years in parliament. Furthermore, as the issue was ranked the third most important issue amongst the electorate, it could hardly be ignored by two of the biggest established parties in parliament. Adopting an adversarial strategy, the mainstream parties' took a divergent position on the issue of immigration, affirming their hostility. While it may not prove beneficial for parties to increase the salience of an issue, risking favoring their opponents, the Social Democrats and the Moderates competed by emphasizing immigration's positive aspects.

In 2018, it can be stated that the Social Democrats and the Moderates election manifesto showed an increase in space devoted to the issue of immigration. This is especially the case with the Social Democrats, which previously had a limited amount of space and proposals dedicated to immigration, compared to 2018. Further, both mainstream parties' demonstrate an increased emphasis on the immigration issue's negative aspects. For instance, the Moderate, which in 2014 invoked the country's moral obligation towards individuals fleeing and emphasized the benefits of immigration, later stated the need to protect Sweden's national interest and adopt a stricter migration policy. Similarly, the Social Democrats, which in 2014 had a limited, yet, positive view of immigration, argued in 2018 that Sweden had taken a disproportionate share of responsibility for asylum seekers and favored a tightened migration policy. According to the PSO theory, this evolution indicates that an accommodative strategy was employed by the mainstream parties in 2018.

Looking at the salience of the issue, in 2018, the immigration issue climbed the rankings and was considered the second most prominent issue amongst the electorate. Multiple indicators point towards a shift in public opinion, following the migration influx to Sweden in 2015 - the negative attitudes towards immigration increased. As previously mentioned, the Sweden Democrats were able to capitalize

on voters' growing concerns and establish ownership over the issue. Consequently, adopting a similar rhetoric and proposals as the Sweden Democrats, the mainstream parties increased the issue's saliency. This suggests that the mainstream parties sought to alter the Sweden Democrats' ownership, competing by emphasizing the issue. In line with Van Spanje's theory, the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats in 2014, in which they increased their parliamentary representation by 12,9%, can be assumed to have posed a threat to the mainstream parties' electoral base. Thus, as rational actors, the Social Democrats and the Moderates strategically adapted their policy stances to align closer to the Sweden Democrats.

The election manifesto of 2022 shows that the mainstream parties have proceeded to adopt an accommodative strategy. While the salience of the immigration issue experienced a decrease amongst the electorate, ranking it the fifth most important issue, the Sweden Democrats remained its perceived owner. Thus, the mainstream parties' emphasis on restrictive migration policies indicates their continued efforts to acquire ownership over the issue. Further, the Sweden Democrats increased their vote share in 2018, receiving 17,5% of the votes. Following Van Spanje's theory, the mainstream parties' increased emphasis on the negative aspects of immigration is a result of their adopted strategy - facing the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats.

7. Conclusion

The thesis aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the evolution of the Swedish mainstream parties' immigration stances, facing the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats, between 2014 to 2022. By examining the political and societal developments concerning the issue of immigration and each party's election manifestos, the study's findings suggest that the Social Democrats and the Moderates have strategically shifted their immigration stances, to face the Sweden Democrats' electoral success. As previously established, mainstream parties enjoy a greater range of strategies to alter the position, salience, and ownership of an issue raised by niche parties. In accordance with the theoretical framework, the strategy adopted by the mainstream parties can be seen as an attempt to alter the Sweden Democrats' issue ownership and prevent vote losses.

The study's findings have important implications, confirming the above outlined previous research. As argued by Green-Pedersen and Mortensen (2014), the Social Democrats and the Moderates demonstrate that parties, in multiparty systems, are constrained to acknowledge and engage with each other's perceived owned issues. This is especially the case when issues become salient both amongst the electorate and on the political agenda. Further, while the study may not be able to strictly confirm a causal relationship between the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats and the mainstream parties' shifting immigration stances, one can state, as affirmed by Han (2015), that emphasizing the issue of immigration represents considerable political opportunities for mainstream parties. Particularly, when one takes the electoral success of the Sweden Democrats and the general perception of the electorate concerning the issue of immigration, in mind.

The Western European political landscape is undergoing significant transformations, with the rise and success of radical right-wing parties. The case of Sweden is an illustration of such, where new issues, such as immigration, have become particularly prominent within party competition. Directing one's attention to the relationship between mainstream and radical right-wing parties is particularly important, as it sheds light on the shifting nature of contemporary party competition and contributes to a deeper understanding for mainstream parties' shifting stances and strategic responses, when faced with a niche party, such as the Sweden Democrats.

8. Discussion

The aim of this thesis has not been to isolate the Sweden Democrats as an explanatory factor for the shift in the mainstream parties' immigration stances. As have been observed, parties are also responsive to societal developments. Consequently, the question as to what causes parties to shift in their policy proposals arises. While I argue, in line with the study's theoretical framework, that party competition with radical right-wing parties, incite mainstream parties to reconsider their strategic responses, exploring other explanations for this phenomenon could be interesting. This could concern studying the impact of media and public opinion or whether the fact that other EU-member states' adopted more restrictive migration policies, following the migration influx to Europe in 2015, affected the Swedish mainstream parties' strategic responses.

When working with the election manifesto, I relied on the Manifesto Project's coding of the issue of immigration. While it ensured intersubjectivity and a valid operationalization which can easily be reproduced, it may have limited the ability for the content to speak for itself. For instance, in 2018 and 2022, the issue of integration became increasingly present and sometimes intertwined with the issue of immigration. In future studies, it could thus be interesting to incorporate a wider range of immigration-related dimensions. It would provide a more nuanced understanding of the parties' political stances and offer more comprehensive insights into how mainstream parties respond to the multifaceted issue of immigration. Studying the discourse and framing of the mainstream parties' regarding the immigration issue could also be interesting.

If time and space would have allowed it, I would have included more material, such as parties' public statements, motions, debates, etc. While election manifestos provide important insights into parties' political stances, including more material could contribute to a richer contextual understanding for the mainstream parties' strategic responses. Further, comparing the case of Sweden to other Western European cases could offer insights into the generalizability of the findings. For instance, it could be interesting to compare the Swedish mainstream parties' adopted strategies, facing the radical right-wing parties with similar cases or cases such as Denmark, where their radical right-wing party experienced a rise and downfall.

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Appendix

Appendix 1.

The Sweden Democrats' election manifesto 2014

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	"Ett kraftigt utökat stöd till FN:s flyktingorgan, UNHCR, och de miljontals mest nödlidande flyktingarna i världen som saknar möjligheter och resurser att ta sig ifrån konfliktområdenas närhet samt ett utökande av andelen kvotflyktingar bland de asylanter som vi beviljar uppehållstillstånd"
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	Non found
Against rejections quotas	Non found
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	"Ett slopande av den generella arbetskraftsinvandringen till förmån för en så kallad "blåkorts-modell" som uteslutande riktar sig till kvalificerad arbetskraft med en kompetens som saknas på den svenska arbetsmarknaden."
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	"Sverigedemokraterna arbetar för ett Sverige som är öppet mot omvärlden samtidigt som vi slår vakt om vår gemenskap och vår egen unika kultur och identitet." "Ett Sverige som genom en klok användning av de begränsade resurserna hjälper så många nödställda människor i världen som möjligt samtidigt som vi inte glömmer bort eller förringar behoven i vårt eget land." "Ett införande av obligatoriska hälsokontroller för nyanlända invandrare i syfte att snabbt kunna ge behandling till sjuka personer och att effektivt kunna skydda det svenska samhället från spridningen av allvarliga smittsamma sjukdomar som exempelvis TBC, HIV och Ebola."
The boat is full' argument	"Ett Sverige där invandringspolitiken är utformad på ett så ansvarsfullt sätt att invandringen blir en tillgång och inte en belastning för samhället."

	"Ett skifte från det regelmässiga beviljandet av permanenta uppehållstillstånd till temporära samt en kraftig begränsning av asyl- och anhöriginvandringens omfattning till en nivå som vårt samhälle klarar av att hantera och som inte är högre än den i våra grannländer Danmark och Finland." "Minskade samhällskostnader och stärkta incitament för ansvarstagande och integration genom att begränsa nyanlända, icke-skyddsbehövande invandrares tillgång till bidragssystemen under de första åren i landet." "Bortsett från att en mer ansvarsfull invandringspolitik skulle bidra till att minska trycket på bostadsmarknaden"
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc.	"Ett skifte från det regelmässiga beviljandet av permanenta uppehållstillstånd till temporära samt en kraftig begränsning av asyl- och anhöriginvandringens omfattning till en nivå som vårt samhälle klarar av att hantera och som inte är högre än den i våra grannländer Danmark och Finland." "Ett slopande av den generella arbetskraftsinvandringen till förmån för en så kallad "blåkorts-modell" som uteslutande riktar sig till kvalificerad arbetskraft med en kompetens som saknas på den svenska arbetsmarknaden."

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	"Alliansen tycker att Sverige ska fortsätta vara ett land som tar ansvar för världens mest utsatta. Det har Sverige och övriga europeiska länder möjlighet till trots lågkonjukturer och andra inhemska utmaningar.
	"Alliansen ser det svenska flyktingmottagande som en moralisk skyldighet"
	"Vi anser att det behövs fler legala vägar in i EU."
	"Alliansen kommer att arbeta för att EU:s asylpolitik genomförs bättre och att fler europeiska länder ska ta ansvar"
	"Mer måste dock göras för att på olika sätt effektivisera asylprövningsprocessen ytterligare /…/"
	"Alliansen anser att Sverige blir bättre om fler flyttar hit för att bygga en bättre framtid och jobba. Vi har därför öppnat för arbetskraftsinvandring."
	"Vi vill utveckla arbetet med att attrahera utländsk kompetens genom att korta handläggningstiden för att anställa utländsk arbetskraft."
	"Under de kommande åren kommer det behövas resurstillskott med anledning av det ökade flyktingmottagandet. Resursbehovet uppstår först i själva mottagandet, dvs. huvudsakligen för Migrationsverket. Därefter behövs resurser för etableringen ute i kommunerna och till Arbetsförmedlingen"
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	"Alliansen tycker att Sverige ska fortsätta vara ett land som tar ansvar för världens mest utsatta. Det har Sverige och övriga europeiska länder möjlighet till trots lågkonjukturer och andra inhemska utmaningar.
	"Under de kommande åren kommer det behövas resurstillskott med anledning av det ökade flyktingmottagandet. Resursbehovet uppstår först i själva mottagandet, dvs. Huvudsakligen

	för Migrationsverket. Därefter behövs resurser för etableringen ute i kommunerna och till Arbetsförmedlingen"
	"Vi vill överväga hur planeringsförutsättningarna för kommunerna att ta emot asylsökande kan förbättras.
	"Vi vill se över och förenkla systemet för statlig ersättning till kommunerna för kostnader för asylsökande respektive mottagande av nyanlända för att öka systemets effektivitet.
Against rejections quotas	"Istället för att sluta oss mot omvärlden har vi sagt att Sverige ska föra en human asylpolitik och vara en fristad för dem som flyr undan förföljelser och förtryck"
	"Vi tar stort ansvar för att ge människor på flykt en ny och ljusare framtid"
	"Vi lever i en tid som präglas av oro och konflikter i vår omvärld. Allt fler människor i Europas närhet flyr undan krig, förtryck och förföljelse. En del av dem väljer att komma till vårt land med hopp om ett bättre liv. Alliansen står upp för ett välkomnande samhälle som präglas av respekt, tolerans och öppenhet."
	"Sverige är och ska vara ett öppet land som tar stort humanitärt ansvar."
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	"De människor som kommer till Sverige blir en del av vårt samhälle och bidrar i förlängningen till att göra Sverige till ett bättre land genom jobb, företagande, olika erfarenheter och kulturell mångfald.
	"Många människor söker skydd hos oss från krig och förföljelser. Det berikar vårt land både kulturellt och ekonomiskt"
	"Alliansen ser det svenska flyktingmottagande som en moralisk skyldighet, men också som en investering i framtiden"
	"Sverige har varit en fristad för människor som flytt, t.ex. under kriget på Balkan, och de är idag en del av samhället och arbetar och bidrar till vår gemensamma välfärd"
	"Alliansen anser att Sverige blir bättre om fler flyttar hit för att bygga en bättre framtid och jobba. Vi har därför öppnat för

	arbetskraftsinvandring."
	"Vi vill utveckla arbetet med att attrahera utländsk kompetens genom att korta handläggningstiden för att anställa utländsk arbetskraft."
	"Av dem som fått jobb sedan 2006 är 200 000 utrikes födda. Gemensamt för dem alla är att de är med och bidrar till vår gemensamma välfärd /.../"
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	Non found
The boat is full' argument	Non found
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc.	Non found

Appendix 3.
The Social Democrats' election manifesto 2014

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	"Den som är i behov av skydd ska få en fristad i vårt land." "Alla ska ha rätt till en individuell och rättssäker prövning av sina asylskäl.
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	"Alla Sveriges kommuner ska ta ett solidariskt ansvar för flyktingmottagandet"
Against rejections quotas	"Den som är i behov av skydd ska få en fristad i vårt land."
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	Non found
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	Non found
The boat is full' argument	Non found
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.	Non found

Appendix 4.

The Sweden Democrats' election manifesto 2018

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	Non found
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	Non found
Against rejections quotas	Non found
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	"Sveriges migrationspolitik har under decennier hanterats på ett ansvarslöst och ignorant sätt, med allvarliga konsekvenser för det svenska samhället." "Ett mycket högt asyl- och anhörigmottagande har splittrat samhället, odlat utanförskap och urholkat välfärden." "Idag vistas tiotusentals personer illegalt inom landets gränser och Sverige är internationellt känt för oroligheter och medborgare som är aktiva inom terrornätverk." "Sverige behöver bygga en migrationspolitik från grunden, med fasta regelverk och respekt för landets gränser, medborgare och lagbok. "Det är en politik som i första hand tar ansvar för det egna samhället." "Skärpa försörjningskraven vid anhörig invandring samt kontroller avs läktskap för att omöjliggöra utnyttjande av systemet samt ytterligare överbelastning av välfärdssystemet" Bekämpa skuggsamhället genom att ge polisen verktyg och resurser att eftersöka personer som vistas i landet illegalt, öka antalet förvarsplatser och möjliggöra för längre vistelse i förvar om utvisning inte kan verkställas omedelbart

	"Till följd av den okontrollerade invandringen går terrorister med krigserfarenhet fritt på gator och torg och utnyttjar vårt välfärds- och asylsystem."
	"Sveriges migrationspolitik har under decennier hanterats på ett ansvarslöst och ignorant sätt, med allvarliga konsekvenser för det svenska samhället. Ett mycket högt asyl- och anhörigmottagande har splittrat samhället, odlat utanförskap och urholkat välfärden"
The boat is full' argument	"Förändra regelverket för arbetskraftsinvandring så att den svenska arbetsmarknadens behov blir styrande."
	"Eftersträva avtal med andra länder för att kunna utvisa fler personer, antingen till deras hemländer eller till länder som kan erbjuda plats och grundläggande skydd mer effektivt än Sverige"
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc..	"Sverigedemokraterna ser ett stort behov av förstärkt lagstiftning för att dels göra det betydligt svårare att arbeta och bo i Sverige utan tillstånd."
	"Förändra asyllagstiftningen så att Sverige endast ska ta emot asylsökande från våra grannländer och stoppa allt asylmottagande så länge Sveriges närområde är säkert."
	"Eftersträva avtal med andra länder för att kunna utvisa fler personer, antingen till deras hemländer eller till länder som kan erbjuda plats och grundläggande skydd mer effektivt än Sverige
	Bekämpa skuggsamhället genomatt ge polisen verktyg och resurser att eftersöka personer som vistas i landet illegalt, öka antalet förvarsplatser och möjliggöra för längre vistelse i förvar om utvisning inte kan verkställas omedelbart"

Appendix 5.

The Moderates' election manifesto 2018

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	
Against rejections quotas	
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	"Inför talangvisum för personer med särskild utbildning eller expertis." "Stopp för kompetensutvisningar. Byråkratiska misstag ska inte tvinga den som arbetar och försörjer sig ut ur landet." "Korta handläggningstiderna"
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	"Och att Sverige under lång tid måste ha en stram invandringspolitik, så att vi kan ta tag i de stora integrationsproblemen" "För Moderaterna är det naturligt att bejaka öppenhet mot omvärlden – och samtidigt slå vakt om Sveriges nationella intressen genom en reglerad invandring" "Tillgång till svenska bidrag och välfärd ska ske genom arbete, eller permanent och laglig bosättning i Sverige."
The boat is full' argument	"Det innebär att vi måste göra den svåra avvägningen mellan vad vi kan bidra med – och vad vi klarar av." "När nyanlända hamnar i livslånga utanförskap blir kostnaderna stora för både individer och familjer. Löftet om en bättre framtid för barnen – social rörlighet – ersätts med hotet om social ärftlighet när utanförskap går i arv till barn som aldrig ser sina föräldrar gå till jobbet. Kostnaderna blir också stora för stat och kommun. Pengar som skulle kunna gå till välfärdens kärna, går i stället till olika former av

	bidrag."
	"Sverige har tagit och tar ett stort ansvar för människor på flykt. Vi har i många år varit det EU-land som har haft högst flyktingmottagande i EU i relation till folkmängd. Migrationspolitiken måste utformas med hänsyn till det stora flyktingmottagande vi haft och de omfattande integrationsproblem vi har. Därför behöver Sverige ta emot färre asylsökande, och ha en permanent skärpt asyllagstiftning. Lagar och regler ska vara utformade på ett sätt som ligger i linje med andra länder i vår närhet."
	"Antalet asylsökande som stannar kvar, trots att de fått avslag, väntas dessutom öka kraftigt under de kommande åren. Det rör sig om över 40 000 personer på fyra år. Om inte denna utveckling stoppas kommer den att leda till ett permanent skuggsamhälle, präglat av utsatthet, utnyttjande och kriminalitet. Det skadar trovärdigheten för svensk migrationspolitik och våra myndigheters förmåga att sköta sitt jobb."
	"Genom att bo i Sverige får man i stor utsträckning tillgång till välfärdsstatens rättigheter. Det innebär att nyanlända omedelbart ges tillgång till merparten av dessa, utan att ha arbetat och betalat skatt. riskerar att minska drivkrafterna att arbeta, samtidigt som legitimiteten i de svenska bidragssystemen ifrågasätts. Det leder också till onödigt höga kostnader."
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.	"Och att Sverige under lång tid måste ha en stram invandringspolitik, så att vi kan ta tag i de stora integrationsproblemen."
	"För Moderaterna är det naturligt att bejaka öppenhet mot omvärlden – och samtidigt slå vakt om Sveriges nationella intressen genom en reglerad invandring."
	"Sveriges migrationspolitik måste vara stram under lång tid framöver."
	"Ett nej innebär att man snabbt ska återvända. Ett framväxande skuggsamhälle, där människor stannar kvar utan tillstånd, är oacceptabelt och ohållbar."
	"Sverige har tagit och tar ett stort ansvar för människor på flykt. Vi har i många år varit det

	EU-land som har haft högst flyktingmottagande i EU i relation till folkmängd. Migrationspolitiken måste utformas med hänsyn till det stora flyktingmottagande vi haft och de omfattande integrationsproblem vi har. Därför behöver Sverige ta emot färre asylsökande, och ha en permanent skärpt asyllagstiftning. Lagar och regler ska vara utformade på ett sätt som ligger i linje med andra länder i vår närhet."
	"Sverige ska ta emot färre asylsökande än under de senaste åren."
	"Tillfälliga uppehållstillstånd ska vara huvudregel."
	"Skärp försörjningskravet vid anhörig-invandring."
	"Krav på egen försörjning och kunskaper i svenska för permanent uppehållstillstånd."
	"Ett gemensamt kvotflyktingsystem i EU".
	"Öka antalet verkställda utvisningar och inre utlänningskontroller."
	"Inre utlänningskontroll ska genomföras varje gång polisen har möjlighet till det."
	"Öka antalet förvarsplatser kraftigt."
	"Ett nej ska vara ett nej. Förläng preskriptions-tiden för asylärenden från fyra till tio år."

Appendix 6.

The Social Democrats' election manifesto 2018

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	"Vi värnar asylrätten i Sverige, i Europa och i världen, men ansvaret måste vara gemensamt."
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	Non found
Against rejections quotas	Non found
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	Non found
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	
The boat is full' argument	"Ska människor som beviljas asyl i Sverige direkt komma in i arbete och bli en del av samhället, så kan inte Sverige ta en oproportionerlig del av ansvaret för flyktingmottagandet. Vi värnar asyl- rätten i Sverige, i Europa och i världen, men ansvaret måste vara gemensamt." "Verka för att FN:s internationella kvotflyktingssystem utökas så att ansvaret fördelas på fler länder, samt arbeta för att EU upprättar ett gemensamt asylsystem som fördelar flyktingmottagandet rätt- vist och proportionerligt."
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.	"Begränsa arbetskraftsinvandringen så att jobb med låga utbildningskrav där det inte råder arbetskrafts- brist går till arbetslösa personer i Sverige." "Behålla den nya asyllagen tills gemensamma regler i EU är på plats, som innebär att färre asylsökande söker sig till Sverige och fler till andra länder."

	"Säkerställa att ett avslag på en asylansökan också innebär att den som saknar asylskäl lämnar landet."

Appendix 7.

The Sweden Democrats 2022

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	Non found
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	Non found
Against rejections quotas	Non found
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	"Ingen enskild faktor kan tillskrivas så stor betydelse för de snabba samhällsförändringar och stora utmaningar som kommit att prägla Sverige som migration. Den historiskt stora utomeuropeiska asylinvandringen under gångna decennier och den relaterade anhöriginvandringen har lagt grunden för motsättningar, utanförskap samt eskalerande kriminalitet och våldsbrottslighet."
The boat is full' argument	"När andra partier lovar hundratals miljarder mer till klimatpolitik, invandring och bistånd lovar vi att prioritera Sverige och att fullt ut finansiera våra reformer på ett sätt som inte spär på inflation och som är långsiktigt hållbart." "Långt fler har tagits emot av de regeringar som styrt Sverige än vad vi haft kapacitet för." "Kostnaderna för den bedrivna politiken i ekonomiska termer, såväl som vad det inneburit för Sveriges sammanhållning, är svåra att överskatta." "Att betala av kostnaden för den förda politiken kommer ta lång tid. Ett första steg är att bryta med en politik som spär på redan omfattande problem."

The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.	"Sverige behöver så långt det är möjligt stoppa den asylrelaterade invandringen under överskådlig" Det innebär att Sveriges lagstiftning inte ska vara mer generös än vad vi är bundna till. **Ett omfattande reformarbete ska genomföra sådana restriktiva åtgärder som tillåts enligt EU-rätten. Permanenta uppehållstillstånd ska avskaffas och uppehållstillstånd ska omprövas löpande, beviskraven för asylsökanden ska skärpas och fler som inte sökt skydd vid första säkra** tillfälle ska utvisas. Endast **svenska medborgare eller den som enligt internationell lagstiftning har rätt till familjeåterförening ska kunna vara anknytningsperson**. Kraven på bostad, inkomst och vandel ska **skärpas kraftigt för anhöriginvandring.** Ett särskilt uppdrag ska ges till Polismyndigheten att särskilt **prioritera återvändandearbete och insatser för att identifiera och omhänderta personer som befinner sig i Sverige illegalt**. Personer som kan antas sakna rätt att vara i Sverige **ska omhändertas och fler ska sättas i förvar eller övervakas i väntan på utvisning om sådan inte kan genomföras omedelbart.** **Förväntningar som ställs i mottagarlandet - vilken service som erbjuds och på vilka språk, vilken diaspora som redan finns från ursprungslandet, kulturella normer, frikostigheten med välfärd och ekonomiska villkor - är avgörande för Sveriges** attraktivitet som destinationsland för invandring **Arbetskraftsinvandring ska inte kunna komma ifråga för lågkvalificerad arbetskraft eller till yrken där det inte råder yrkesbrist**. Kontrollen av arbetskraftsinvandringen måste öka och reglerna behöver skärpas kraftigt genom t.ex. utökade lönekrav och arbetsmarknadsprövning för den som söker uppehållstillstånd för att

	arbetskraftsinvandra.
48	Kontrollen **över vilka som tar sig in i Sverige ska öka för att minska illegal migration till Sverige**. Berörda myndigheter ska få de möjligheter och de verktyg som de behöver för att upprätthålla inre gränskontroller.
	EU driver för närvarande ett förslag som skulle innebära att principen om att asyl ska sökas i första land ersätts med en omfördelning baserad på anknytning. **Det skulle riskera att straffa svenskarna dubbelt för den massinvandring som varit. Länder som inte önskar ta emot asylsökande skulle, om förslaget går igenom, kunna straffas ekonomiskt av EU**. Sverigedemokraterna kommer göra allt för att **Sverige ska stoppa EU-förslaget**

Appendix 8.
The Moderates' election manifestos 2022

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	Non found
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	Non found
Against rejections quotas	Non found
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	Non found
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	"Av största vikt är att den som fått ett nej på asylansökan så fort som möjligt lämnar landet. Vi riskerar annars ett växande skuggsamhälle, med social utsatthet, illegalt arbete och brottsighet – där särskilt barn drabbas hårt."
The boat is full' argument	"Invandringen till Sverige behöver minska för att integrationen ska fungera bättre." "Vår integrationsförmåga ska vara styrande för nivån på invandringen." "Förra året beviljades 95 000 uppehållstillstånd. Det motsvarar ett nytt Växjö på bara ett år. På tio år har nästan en halv miljon människor sökt asyl i Sverige och drygt 400 000 har fått asylrelaterade tillstånd." "Samtidigt har integrationen misslyckats. Arbetslösheten är idag fem gånger så hög bland utrikes födda som bland inrikes födda, och varannan invandrad person – runt 700 000 personer – är inte självförsörjande."

The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.	Av största vikt är att den som fått ett nej på asylansökan så fort som möjligt lämnar landet. Antalet asylsökande till Sverige behöver minskas betydligt. Införa ett volymmål för asylmottagandet på nordiska nivåer Anpassa asyllagstiftningen efter den rättsliga miniminivån enligt EU-rätten Avskaffa möjligheten till spårbyte, det vill säga möjligheten för en person som fått avslag på sin asylansökan att i stället få ett arbetstillstånd

Appendix 9.

National Way of Life: Immigration: Positive	
Statements favoring new immigrants	
Rejection of the 'boat is full' argument.	
Against rejections quotas	
Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the manifesto country's economy.	
National Way of Life: Immigration: Negative	
Immigration is a threat to the national character of the manifesto country;	Sverige hade under lång tid en stor migration, samtidigt som integrationen inte har fungerat tillräckligt bra. Parallellt med detta har de ekonomiska klyftorna vuxit. Resultatet är segregation och fattigdom som driver normlöshet och våld. Barn som växer upp i dessa områden har ett sämre utgångsläge redan från början – i vissa områden är det för få som pratar svenska och går till jobbet. De kriminella gängen utnyttjar hänsyns- löst situationen och drar in barn och unga i sin vålds- fyllda verklighet.
The boat is full' argument	Sverige hade under lång tid en stor migration, samtidigt som integrationen inte har fungerat tillräckligt bra.
The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc. Only concerned with the possibility of new immigrants.	"Arbetskraftsinvandringen ska begränsas. I första hand ska arbetslösa i Sverige komma i arbete." "Vi har stramat åt migrationspolitiken, och denna linje ligger fast."

The Social Democrats' election manifesto 2022