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The Far Right in Europe: the Effects of the Migrant Crisis on European Enlargement

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Abstract

The migrant crisis continues to affect member states of the European Union (EU) and the EU itself as attempts to expand the membership of the EU have been repeatedly delayed. Scholars have previously examined other crises related to the EU and European integration, but scholars have not as of yet used these European integration theories to explain how the European migrant crisis affects the EU or the enlargement policy. This paper addresses that deficit of scholarship by applying European integration theory to the migrant crisis in order to explain how the migrant crisis affects EU enlargement. I argue that the migrant crisis increased the popularity of far right parties in the EU, which puts more pressure on the centrist governments to adopt more right wing policies including in terms of EU enlargement. The research will use three different countries as case studies: Austria, France, and Germany. This concept that domestic politics, through the portrayal of the migrant crisis, are delaying or preventing EU enlargement raises the question of if the EU enlargement process must be reformed so that it is not used to score political points in domestic politics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The European Union (EU) stands as a beacon of hope for the world that nations can set aside their differences and work towards a common, peaceful future where everyone prospers. As it currently stands, the EU has the capacity to become a super power in the world because member states created shared institutions, including a common foreign and security policy. The most powerful tool of foreign policy for the EU is the enlargement process wherein the EU admits a member state in the organization. The enlargement process requires candidate countries to conform to a list of conditions laid out by the EU, which include conditions on democracy, civil society, economy, corruption, and others.

The Western Balkans, while not the only region that the EU is involved in, is a unique region for the foreign policy of the EU. The Western Balkans include the countries of: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. Not only is the region another market for European goods and services, but EU foreign policy for the region also reflects a desire to prevent a repeat of the Yugoslav wars. The EU attempts to prevent armed conflict in the region by both maintaining peacekeeping forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and by offering all six countries the possibility of accession into the EU (Nadibaidze 2019, "EU Enlargement: The next Seven" 2014). On the part of the six Western Balkan countries, EU accession offers numerous economic benefits, the most prominent being tariff free access to the European market. Beyond the economic benefits, the EU also offers countries the possibility to become a part of a larger voice in the world, and a possible future without regional conflict.

Despite the promise of accession into the EU as a tool to promote peace in the Western Balkans and the current geopolitics of the region wherein other powers are attempting to exert influence in the region, the process itself has slowed in recent years. Some countries in the Western Balkans have been waiting for over a decade to join the EU. Countries such as Albania and North Macedonia continue to wait for even the chance of starting the accession process despite applying for membership in 2009 and 2004 respectively ("EU Enlargement: The next Seven" 2014). Other countries in the Western Balkans have started the process, such as Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro, but even optimistic hopes do not see those countries fully joining the EU until 2025. There is little hope for the accession process to proceed without delay in the future because accession into the EU requires a unanimous decision

from every current member state of the EU to allow a country to begin the process, to continue the process after certain milestones, and at the end of the process.

The enlargement process occurs within eight official stages, the first step of accession is for the applicant country to submit an application to the member state that holds the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. The second step occurs in the European Commission wherein the commission makes an internal evaluation of the country, which is submitted to the Council of the European Union. After receiving the evaluation, the Council makes a decision of whether or not to accept the applicant and any additional conditions that the country may need to meet before accession negotiations. The fourth step represents the opening of the accession negotiations which allows the Commission to identify any further shortcomings that would need to be addressed by the country in order to be in line with the *acquis*, the rights and obligations binding all member states. The fifth step is the division of 35 chapters that make up the *acquis* and what the applicant country would need to conform to for accession into the EU. During this step, a single member state would be able to stop the accession process as each chapter needs to be opened and closed by a unanimous vote of the EU member states. The sixth step occurs after all 35 chapters have been addressed by the applicant country and closed by the Council of the European Union. The sixth step is when all of the member states sign the accession treaty and the EU institutions give their support to the treaty, which allows the applicant country to become an acceding country. The seventh step requires each member state to ratify the accession treaty following their national laws on treaty ratification. The last step is the acceding country becoming a member state on the date specified on the treaty (“EU Enlargement Factsheet 2014”).

The delay of the accession process occurred even as a crisis transpired in which over one million people fled to Europe, some through the Western Balkans, in an attempt to find a better life in the EU and flee political or economic conditions in their home countries. The migrant crisis began in 2011 as political upheaval in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia caused people to flee to Europe. Different peoples joined the journey to the EU as the Arab Spring continued, with many Tunisians and Sub-Saharan Africans migrating during the unrest in Libya after the fall of Qaddafi. In 2015 a surge occurred that was composed of more than 464,000 Syrian migrants fleeing from the civil war in their home country. In addition to the Syrian migrants, migrants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan also

made the journey to Europe in large numbers during 2015 (Park 2015). In total, the migrant crisis has seen approximately 1.8 million migrants come to Europe by the end of 2016. This paper defines a migrant as a person fleeing over international borders to escape political violence, oppression, or civil war. In the face of the migrant crisis, one might expect that the EU would fast track the accession process for the countries in the Western Balkans, which would allow the implementation of common policies that might be able to slow the movement of migrants, but this did not happen. Instead member states delayed and prevented North Macedonia and Albania from even starting the accession process.

Given the timing of the migrant crisis and the slow down, and even the potential halt of the accession process in the Western Balkans, I wanted to explore whether there were any links between the migrant crisis and the delays in the accession process in the Western Balkans. Specifically, how has the migrant crisis affected EU enlargement?

I argue that the migrant crisis has increased the popularity of the far right parties in the EU, which puts more pressure on the centrist governments to respond to the perceived rise in popularity of the far right by adopting more right wing policies, including those policies focused on EU enlargement. This approach to understanding the migrant crisis and its effects on EU enlargement is unique in the sense that other scholars have not explored the issue of the migrant crisis in conjunction with far right parties using EU integration theory.

In this paper, I introduce a comparative case study of the domestic politics of three EU member states: Germany, France, and Austria. In this comparative case analysis, I examine if and how the migrant crisis has affected the rise of the far right parties in the three case studies. I then explore the policy positions of the Austrian *Österreichische Volkspartei*, the German *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, or the French *La République En Marche* to investigate how the parties have adjusted their platforms to entice voters from the far right parties examined in the three case studies. Within the three case studies, I specifically investigate any possible shifts or changes in national policy or rhetoric related to EU enlargement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

By asking the question, how has the migrant crisis affected EU enlargement, this paper combines two different literatures. The first body of scholarly literature discusses the question of what factors cause EU integration. The second body of scholarly literature discusses the question of how the European Union deals with the policy issue of migration.

European Union Integration

European Union integration scholarship examines EU enlargement within different schools of thought that attempt to explain the motivations of European integration and those who hold the power during the integration process. Scholars have attempted to answer the question that arises from the integration that the EU experienced since its formation, namely, what factors have caused EU integration? In addressing the question, scholars have defined two over-arching schools of thought on EU integration and within these two, there are a further three schools of thought that explain the different motivations of integration within the EU.

The first over-arching school of thought is supranationalism. This approach to the study of the EU emphasizes the autonomy of the European institutions from member states, especially in the decision-making process. Within the idea of supranationalism, member states give their sovereignty to the institutions that make up the supranational organization, an organization that has power or influence above the national level of member states, in this case the EU. When speaking in terms of integration, supranationalism argues that the motivations for integration begin within the supranational organization, directly opposing the idea that the member states have the impetus for causing integration (Jensen 2016). Supranationalism also advocates for the supranational organization to be regarded for its transformative potential from an international organization into a new polity (Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig 2013).

The supranationalist school of thought encompasses several more defined and specific integration schools of thought that base their theory on the motivation and impetus of the integration stemming from the supranational organization. Supranationalism encompasses many different schools of thought because of the broad range of objects studied within the theory, not limiting itself to one specific aspect (Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig 2013).

Senem Aydın Düzgit and Semin Suvarierol, in their work, “Turkish Accession and Defining the Boundaries of Nationalism and Supranationalism: Discourses in the European Commission,” argue that the EU governs, integrates, and expands because of supranationalism

especially because for many of the supranational institutions it is their *raison d'être*. The authors assert that since member states pool their sovereignty into the supranational organization, the worldview of the EU follows the belief that each state will work with each other for mutual benefit. One of the most pronounced supranational institutions within the EU is the European Commission, which is supposed to represent the interests of the EU in its entirety. The European Commission is a politically independent body from any of the member states and it functions as the executive body for the EU. The authors further claim that since enlargement is one policy interest that falls under the purview of the Commission, the Commission is able to use the enlargement policy to expand and “promote supranational norms through the conditionality of membership and intensive contact with the candidate countries” (Düzgit and Suvarierol 2011 p. 1). Thus according to the authors, the enlargement policy is a self-enhancing tool of the Commission as a supranational institution because enlargement both embodies and perpetuates supranationalism (Düzgit and Suvarierol 2011).

Intergovernmentalism, the second over-arching school of thought, is the second approach to regional integration that draws from classical theories of international relations, realism and neo-realism most notably because of the focus on inter-state bargaining. Intergovernmentalism is the perspective that regional integration occurs because of and through the member states, essentially viewing the states as the primary actors within the integration process. In addition to the member states being the primary actors of the integration process, intergovernmentalism also sees member states maintain their sovereignty through a legal capacity that does not constrain national interests to external organizations (Cini 2016). The influence of realism and neo-realism occurs in intergovernmentalism's focus on interstate bargaining and the establishment of interstate institutions to reduce the level of anarchy within the states system. In the context of the EU, the intergovernmentalist school of thought also refers to the decision-making processes and mechanisms within the EU. The processes and mechanisms specifically denote that decisions are made by the member states, without involvement of the supranational organization. (Cini 2016).

In practice, the intergovernmental school of thought is visible in institutions such as the European Council. The Council provides an opportunity for member states to exert national power in the EU without seceding sovereignty to the EU and its supranational officials. The Council represents a space where heads of state and government ministers represent their

countries in order to develop policy that has not or could not be developed within the EU Parliament. While the Council did not originally meet as often as it does today, or have the purview it currently does, the Council transformed to meet more often and at a moment's notice when needed, while also creating a similar space for the different cabinet ministers of the member states in the form of the Council of the European Union. This intergovernmental integration occurred because of the trust and work that was put into the Council as an institution (Uwe 2014).

Within the intergovernmental school of thought, there are branches of thought that focus on issues such as economic ones that hope to further explain European integration. These branches are present in the intergovernmentalist school of thought because intergovernmentalism does not attribute a specific reason to explain why states pursue integration beyond the desire to reduce the level of anarchy. The different branches in turn address the specific reasons to pursue integration (Cini 2016).

The first two schools of thought are further delineated within three related schools of thought: liberal intergovernmentalism, neofunctionalism, and postfunctionalism. Andrew Moravcsik pioneered the idea of liberal intergovernmentalism (LI), which is the belief that European integration was motivated by economic interests, instead of being driven by ideologies or geopolitical interests. The other notable part of LI theory is that the member states are the actors that hold the power within the integration process, and that the process begins within the member states, not the supranational organization. Moravcsik explores these ideas in his article, "Preferences and Power in the European Union," published in the *Journal of Common Market Studies* (Moravcsik 1993).

Moravcsik contends that LI best explains the process of European integration by outlining the three stages by which LI theorizes integration occurs. In the first stage, LI contends that states form underlying preferences that shape the opinion and policies of the government in power. These underlying preferences are specifically formed by the subset of the social group that the state most directly relies upon to remain in power. LI further contends, within the first stage that the preferences form around specific issues, most notably economic issues. However, the issues that influence state decision-making do not need to be directly connected to an economic benefit. Instead, the issues could indirectly influence the state through benefits to government spending, as an example (Moravcsik 2018).

The second stage of LI explains that states can influence other states to make concrete agreements based upon the idea that all countries will gain from being a party to the agreement (Moravcsik 2018). The theory of LI ends in a third stage wherein, after making the agreement, states pool and delegate power to a supranational organization, such as the European Union, along issue specific concerns. Within the third stage of LI, there is a distinction in the manner in which the power is delegated to the EU by the member states. The distinction in the third stage of LI is based upon the amount of power that has already been allocated to a specific entity within the supranational organization. In some cases, where there has not been much coordination beyond the establishment of a set of common norms, LI claims that the member states will create institutions within the EU to deal with the specific issues. In the cases where there has already been substantial pooling of power, power continues to be pooled and distributed by the member states, but the states continue to treat the actors in the supranational institutions as agents working under the states (Moravcsik 2018).

When applied to the migrant crisis as an example, LI gives a viable reasoning that explains why there has not been increased intergovernmental coordination or integration. Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse argue that LI explains the stalemate and non-compliance of member states who previously had adhered to the rules and agreements surrounding migration. The two specifically argue that asymmetrical positioning, in terms of which countries are more heavily affected, has weakened the power of some governments in the bargaining process. This one-sided bargaining has led to some agreements with regard to border security, but nothing that has been enforced that deals with refugee detention and dispersal among the different member states. The countries that have a large domestic opposition to migrants and refugees, which are also the ones not as heavily affected by the migrant crisis, thus have a stake in keeping negotiations at the intergovernmental level. This self-serving interest is formed in order to both appease local political parties and to prevent the creation of another institution in the EU that would be able to dictate the dispersal of migrants and refugees (Börzel and Risse 2018).

The second school of thought within the scholastic focus on European integration is the idea of neofunctionalism, first explained by Eans Haas. Neofunctionalism falls under the school of thought of supranationalism as it theorizes that integration in a supranational organization, such as the EU, is driven by path-dependency and spillover. The path-dependence aspect of the neofunctionalism school of thought is linked primarily to the continuing integration of the EU

because there has not been a devolution of power from the EU, only measures to stop or increase the integration. The spillover aspect of this school of thought concentrates on how initial integration steps are often deficient, incomplete, and unstable because the integration reflects “the lowest-common denominator of national preferences rather than functional requirements” (Schimmelfennig 2017 p 5). Despite the fact that initial integrations steps are not complete and stable, the initial steps require further steps to be taken that strengthen the institutions of the supranational organization (Schimmelfennig 2017).

In addition to the spillover and path-dependent aspects of the neofunctionalism, this school of thought also asserts that the integration process will begin with economic integration. The beginning stages of the integration will in turn allow political parties and interest groups to diversify and become loyal to the new supranational center because deeper economic integration will result in political integration to regulate the economic integration. The political groups will become more loyal to the political center as they perceive that the supranational organization will better serve their interests, instead of the nation-state (MacMillan 2009).

Neofunctionalism can also be placed into the context of the enlargement policy of the EU, which Catherine Macmillan does in her article, “The Application of Neofunctionalism to the Enlargement Process: The Case of Turkey.” Macmillan uses a neofunctionalist approach to explain the enlargement process by highlighting the similarities present between the neofunctionalist background conditions and the Copenhagen Criteria. The Copenhagen Criteria are a list of necessary reforms that prospective countries must conform to before they may even be considered for candidature. Both the neofunctionalist background conditions and the Copenhagen Criteria emphasize the necessity for political stability founded on institutions that protect liberties and rights such as human rights, the rule of law, and a functioning democracy. Macmillan is able to further argue that the idea of “spillover,” which is important to neofunctionalist theory, presents itself once a country joins the EU because then the neighbors of the newest member state will desire to join the EU. Macmillan finishes her article by giving an example of Turkey within the accession process in an attempt to show that the neofunctionalist argument can best explain the exhaustive process and what the future holds for Turkey. The author concludes that the neofunctionalist spillover has helped Turkey in the accession process, but that the future itself is uncertain whether Turkey will continue the process or back out (Macmillan 2009).

Furthermore, some scholars within the neofunctionalist school of thought, such as Frank Schimmelfennig, argue that integration under neofunctionalism relies on crises that arise from the integration process. These crises cause further integration within the supranational body because governments seek to remain in control of the integration process and are reluctant to give more power to the supranational organization. However, when a crisis occurs, the governments need to give more power to the supranational organization out of necessity (Schimmelfennig 2017).

Postfunctionalism, while also falling under the supranationalism umbrella, runs in direct contrast to the theory of neofunctionalism. Whereas neofunctionalism attempts to address why integration is occurring in the EU, postfunctionalism concentrates on the disintegration of the EU. Postfunctionalism, as defined by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks in “A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus,” functions on the basis that European integration has politicized the issue of European integration within party politics because the issue has become more visible and divisive between two different identities, the national and the supranational. The politicization of the issue has provided a space for Euro-sceptics within the party system to voice their opinions and gain a following. Since European integration has become a divisive issue in national party politics, further European integration has become an issue of national politics within the member states (Hooghe and Marks 2008). Since the issue becomes a national issue of both further European integration and national identity, national politics will undermine the efforts of those attempting to further European integration. While the postfunctionalist school of thought attributes national politics as the reasoning behind the possible disintegration of the EU, this school of thought still falls under the supranationalism umbrella as the disintegration is initially motivated by European integration in the supranational body.

Frank Schimmelfennig echoes the point that domestic politics may undermine European integration and argues that national opposition may be especially strong within the context of crises. In “European Integration (Theory) in Times of Crisis,” Schimmelfennig argues that during crises, postfunctionalism expects that politicization of European integration would constrain member states in the amount of bargaining that could be accomplished because of the domestic Euro-sceptic pressures. Schimmelfennig provides an example of his postfunctional argument in the migrant crisis, which the author explains does not prove to be sufficient to call

for enhanced integration. Instead, political parties in specific member states politicized the issue so that the member states were not able to find a common solution to the migrant crisis within the EU which resulted in a maintenance of the status quo in regards to the Dublin Regulations. The Dublin Regulations are EU law that requires asylum seekers to apply for asylum in the first member state they arrive in and they are not allowed to move onto another member state (Schimmelfennig 2017).

The different schools of thought pertaining to European integration offer contrasting views on the likelihood of European enlargement or disintegration, especially in light of the recent migrant crisis. In the next section, I propose a theoretical framework that draws on aspects of postfunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism, addressing how the migrant crisis has increased the popularity of the far right parties in the EU, which puts more pressure on the centrist governments to adopt more right wing policies, including opposition to EU enlargement.

The European Union Policy on Migration

Since the migrant crisis began, interest in both national and EU related migration policy has increased. Scholars have defined four schools of thought to explain how the EU addresses migration policy. The first school of thought focuses on the idea of security and highlights the danger posed by the migrants. In his book, *The Politics of Insecurity*, Jef Huysmans argues that EU migration policy has been formulated around the idea that the migrant is a danger. The author first posits that migrants and asylum seekers have come to be construed as people who endanger the pre-existing communal identity and autonomy within Europe. Huysmans finds that several of the policies, treaties, and conventions that make up European migration policy were created with the intent to prevent or reduce the number of migrants and asylum seekers. The Dublin Regulations, for example, intended to reduce the number of asylum seekers by preventing asylum seekers from moving onto another EU member state if their application was denied in the first EU member state. These EU policies indicate to the author that some of the European migration policy indirectly supports a need to protect European cultural identities from the “others,” embodied in migrants and asylum seekers, who would threaten the identity and internal stability of member states (Huysmans 2006).

A second school of thought argues that EU migration policy is based on a broad conception of economic citizenship rather than a narrow concern with threats to security. In

contrast to Jef Huysmans' argument that European migration policy was formed around the concept that the migrant is a danger, Andrew Geddes claims that EU migration policies were formed for economic reasons. In his book *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe*, Geddes finds that the migration policy of the EU was created to form an "economic citizenship" that would complement the national citizenship that each European citizen had. Geddes asserts that due to the EU's beginnings as a "market-making" organization, the EU migration policy creates an "economic citizenship" that is based within the boundaries of the free movement zone or Schengen zone. Geddes makes this claim by tying the idea of a European identity together with this "economic citizenship" since the EU is creating boundaries around its external borders. Thus, for Geddes, the European identity is essentially an "economic citizenship" indicative of the supranational aspects of the EU and its founding institutions, which focus on improving the economy of the member states and allowing economic goods to travel across borders (Geddes 2005).

The third school of thought that addresses the question of how the EU handles migration policy focuses on the externalization of EU migration policy. Natasja Reslow, in her article "‘Not Everything That Counts Can Be Counted’: Assessing ‘Success’ of EU External Migration Policy," finds that EU migration is shaped by external relationships that have been created through an active and formal dialogue between the EU and third countries in the form of a Mobility Partnerships. The Mobility Partnership is one aspect of the external migration policy that directly trades one type of migration for another, the irregular migrant for the legal migrant. Reslow finds that in terms of "success," the goals of the project are too vague in some circumstances to accurately understand how well they are fulfilled. However what is worth noting is that the EU has entered into nine Mobility Partnerships with countries such as Belarus or Tunisia over the span of eight years, indicating that the EU could conclude that the Mobility Partnership has some positive aspects (Reslow 2017).

The fourth school of thought is similar to the externalization school of thought; however, this school of thought focuses on how member states of the EU have pursued their own individual policies despite surrendering that power to the EU. Peter Slominski and Florian Trauner argue in their article, "How do Member States Return Unwanted Migrants? The Strategic (Non-)Use of ‘Europe’ during the Migration Crisis," that member states used the migrant crisis narrative to increase the resources they had available and to decrease the

constraints they were under in their efforts to return migrants. The two authors claim that member states use the resources of the EU to support their national return operations and policies, which contravenes EU migration policy. The authors then provide examples of how member states, such as Austria or Germany, have undermined the collective EU policy by making direct bilateral agreements on the issue of migration between the member state and a third country without the input of the EU. In the case of Austria, the authors also contend that some member states have publically gone against EU policy by invoking emergencies powers that allow the government to reject and return asylum seekers to the border without regard of EU protocols (Slominski with Trauner 2017).

The different schools of thought offer a diverse number of understandings on the subject and various arguments explaining how the EU handles migration policy. One school of thought, the security school, pertains to how the migrant crisis is affecting EU enlargement by emphasizing the idea that migrants are viewed as an “other” which results in European policies formulated on security against the migrants. Thus, I will be using aspects of this school in my theory. In the theory section, I will also address how national parties are dealing with the migrant crisis and policy while incorporating aspects of the security school of thought that deals with viewing migrants as a danger.

Chapter 3: Theory

The migrant crisis has been an ongoing problem that different EU member states have experienced and dealt with in different manners according to the number of migrants each has received. These different experiences have influenced domestic parties, especially the far right parties, to adopt policies in reaction to this migrant crisis that has led to more than 1.8 million people attempting to complete the journey to reach the safe shores of Europe (Kingsley 2018). While the migrant crisis might appear to only be a national issue given how the member states of the EU are affected by and pursue different policies on the migrant crisis, the issue has also become a supranational issue. The migrant crisis has become a problem at the EU-level because the EU had already established protocols, the Dublin Regulations, to deal with limited numbers of refugees and asylum claims, and the EU has power over migration policy through EU border control and the Common European Asylum System as well. In addition, once the enormous numbers of migrants traveling to Europe became apparent, the EU tried to establish a program wherein refugees that registered in the first EU member state they arrived in would be relocated to member states that had not been as heavily inundated with migrants (“Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts” 2016). Since the EU became more involved in the migrant crisis, the preferences of national leaders have changed within the European Council and the Council of the European Union on a number of issues. In trying to understand how the migrant crisis has affected EU enlargement and why national leaders’ preferences have changed, I argue that the migrant crisis increased the popularity of far right parties in the EU, which puts more pressure on the centrist governments to adopt more right wing policies, including in terms of EU enlargement.

Far Right Political Parties (FRPs) oppose any form of expansion or enlargement of the EU because enlargement of the EU goes against everything that the FRPs stand for. Parties like the Danish *Dansk Folkeparti*, or Sweden’s *Sverigedemokraterna* epitomize the far right in European politics. These parties are characterized as nationalistic, anti-multiculturalist, and to some extent xenophobic, while they also campaign on slogans of law and order (Kopeček 2007). FRPs are nationalistic insofar as they attempt to promote their own concept of what is or is not part of the national identity in terms of religion and culture. The FRPs also promote nationalism through their promotion of the nation-state, at the expense of other nations and organizations, such as the EU. The nationalistic aspect of FRPs influence the EU enlargement process because

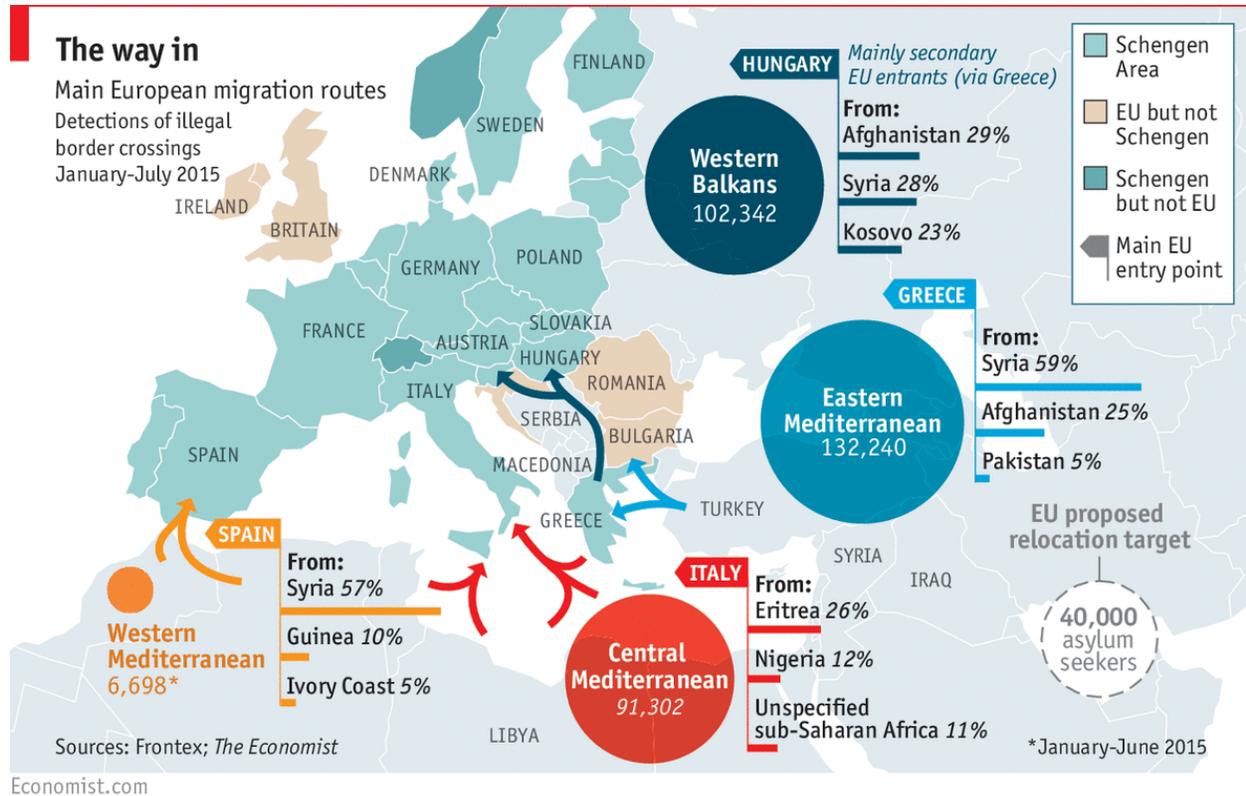
the FRPs campaign for the return of all sovereignty back to the individual nations. By advocating for a reversion of powers and sovereignty to the individual countries, the FRPs oppose any action which would give the EU more power at the expense of the member states or any enlargement of the EU that would lessen the voice and power of their own country within the organization. Enlargement is a particular problem for the FRPs because every member state that joins the EU is one more voice that dilutes the power of their own country in the EU framework that shares power equally among national leaders (Lubbers with Coenders 2017).

Euro-scepticism, for the use of this paper, is the term used to define the policy of opposition to the EU as a supranational organization and any actions that would strengthen it or its power in the world. The FRPs adopt Euro-sceptic policies because these policies are representative of the broader anti-EU views of the far right's base supporters. Thus solely based on the Euro-scepticism that characterizes the policies of European FRPs, the parties would not be willing to accept EU enlargement in another region of Europe since the very expansion would represent the widening of the EU and its institutions that would be needed to integrate more people into the supranational organization.

In addition to the Euro-sceptic policies of the European FRPs, many of the parties can also be characterized as xenophobic and anti-multiculturalist. The FRPs exhibit xenophobia, a dislike or fear of people from a different country, as used in this paper, by taking anti-immigration stances and rhetoric that emphasizes a viewpoint that describes negative traits associated with specific nationalities. By distinguishing between those who belong to a specific nationality and those who do not, xenophobia also engenders the creation of an "other" who can epitomize any person that does not belong. The xenophobia present in the FRPs is often based on differences in religion or culture because many of the recent migrants who attempted the journey to Europe came from majority Muslim countries. Figure 1 displays the different routes that the migrants took into the EU from January to July of 2015 as well as the numbers of migrants detected taking each route and the percentage of each nationality taking the different routes. The xenophobic tendencies are present in the far right rhetoric about a Christian country or a Christian Europe when put in contrast with another religion, like Islam. In the case of France, *Le Front National* has publically made the connection between immigration and militant Islam in the hopes of decreasing the government's acceptance of immigrants. Echoing these sentiments, other European FRPs made similar statements where some, like the leader of the

Dutch far right, Geert Wilders, desire to ban the Qur'an (Nowak with Branford 2017, Nossiter 2015).

Figure 1



Similar to xenophobia, anti-multiculturalism will be used in this paper to describe the desire to preserve the predominant culture within a country as opposed encouraging of different cultures to cohabitate in one country (Merriam-Webster 2019). The anti-immigration stances exemplify the anti-multiculturalist tendencies of the FRPs, but the tendencies could also be present in any far right policy about EU enlargement. Xenophobia, nationalism, and anti-multiculturalism would be factors in any FRP opposition to EU enlargement because many of the candidate countries do not follow the predominant religions of Central and Western Europe, Protestantism and Catholicism. Instead, these countries and regions either have a majority Orthodox Christian or Muslim population (Danforth with Allcock with Crampton 2019). The fear of a migration of “Others,” an identity that the Balkans have come to be associated with in comparison to member states of the EU induces FRPs to oppose the enlargement process and affects domestic politics within EU member states.

The xenophobic, nationalist and anti-multiculturalist policies of the FRPs have increased their political power, which is on the rise, with examples ranging from Sweden to France to the United Kingdom to regions of Germany. Sweden, as one example, now has an FRP that is the third largest political party in the legislature. Support for the party is still rising after the party was able to cross Sweden's electoral threshold after the most recent national elections (Brown 2018). France has seen a rise in support for the far right as the French FRP, *Front National*, was able to garner over 10 million votes in the run-off for the presidential elections in May 2017 between the *Front National* and a center-left party led by Emanuel Macron, *La République en Marche* (Aisch with Bloch, Lai, and Morenne 2017). In the United Kingdom, the far right United Kingdom Independence Party successfully campaigned for the UK to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum on Brexit (Parfitt 2016). Regional elections in Germany have even shown that the FRPs are gaining ground in traditionally center-right strongholds like Bavaria, where the CSU lost its super-majority by gaining only 37 percent of the vote ("Massive Losses for Merkel's Bavaria Ally" 2018).

The rise in popularity and power of the FRPs can be partly attributed to the migrant crisis that saw over one million people travel to Europe in 2015 alone. As the migrant crisis continues, the local populace is exposed to people who do not share a similar culture, religion, or even language in many instances. Citizens can see this divide as a threat to their cultural identity, especially when the migrants stay in the community. Once the native citizens view the migrants as a threat to their cultural identity, the locals begin to support or more heavily support the FRP of the individual country because of the FRP rhetoric that they are the only party that can protect the national culture from the invaders. One study surveyed Greek citizens during the migrant crisis and found that an increase by one percent of migrants led to five percent increase in support of the local FRP, *Golden Dawn* (Vasilakis 2017). The migrant crisis, which is still an ongoing problem, also affects the rightward shift in the local populace because natives could become less welcoming to poor migrants in areas in which large numbers of migrants have already arrived. However the arrival of large numbers of migrants is not necessary for the formulation of anti-migrant sentiments. Thus, the continuing problem of the migrant crisis compounds the initial surge of migrants as many migrants continue to express a desire to finish their journeys in similar countries, such as Germany (Karreth et al. 2015, Torelli 2017).

This paper characterizes centrist parties, such as the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, the Danish *Socialdemokraterne* (Social Democratic Party) or the *Partido Popular* (People's Party) in Spain, as centrist parties. Centrist parties in Europe are typically the larger and traditional political parties that have governed some European nations for decades, often alternating between center left and center right. One defining mark of a centrist party is its focus on capturing the vote of moderates, who traditionally constituted the bulk of the electorate, such center positions include a pro-EU integration position. However, by taking a more centrist position, the mainstream parties opened political space for the growth of the FRPs, especially on issues of race relations and immigration (Kitschelt 1995).

Centrist parties, such as Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, have governed many European nations largely uninterrupted since end of the Second World War. These parties have expanded their voter base so that they became the predominant parties on the left or the right of the political spectrum. Due to the longevity of these centrist parties and the lack of viable challenges by other parties from the same side of the political spectrum, the centrist parties were not prepared for the opposition presented by the FRPs. The FRPs have proven especially challenging for the centrist parties because they have challenged the centrist parties on socio-cultural issues instead of the traditional socio-economic issues of the centrist parties (Mudde 2010).

Traditional parties on both sides of the spectrum adopted pro-EU integration rhetoric and policies before the rise of the far right. Centrist parties from across the political spectrum adopted pro-EU policies despite the differences of opinion on the economy, military, and government spending because pro-EU positions cannot be categorized by a left/right political cleavage. Instead, the positions on EU integration transcend the cleavage, especially as citizens began to put more faith in international organizations, such as the EU or its predecessors (Dalton 2006). A pro-EU position transcends the traditional left/right cleavage because integration offers benefits, especially economic benefits, to the voting base of both parties.

While the FRPs may be opposed to EU enlargement, these parties are not in power within most EU member states even though some FRPs appear to be gaining power. Instead, the far right exerts pressure on the centrist political parties within the EU to adopt or use similar policy platforms to those of the far right. The centrist parties shift their policy platforms to the right in the hopes of gaining or remaining in power by enticing the supporters of the far right to vote for

the centrist parties. Public opinion data or previous electoral outcomes are two forms of pressure that the FRPs exert on the centrist parties that could cause centrist parties to fear that the parties would not maintain the same level of power or even lose power at the expense of the far right (Han 2015, Abou-Chadi with Krause 2018). The centrist parties adopt some of the policies of the far right both to exclude the far right party from becoming an influential part of the government and to have more votes comparatively than the competition (Abou-Chadi with Krause 2018, Han 2015). Specifically, the FRPs influence the centrist policies on immigration and EU integration because those are the core policy issues of the far right, and the policies that base supporters of the far right care most about (Downes with Loveless 2018). Between the two sides of the political spectrum, center right parties would be more likely to adapt their positions from the far right than center left parties in Europe because of a voter base that could identify more easily with the policies of the far right. Nevertheless, given enough incentive, in terms of loss of voters and potential loss of political power, all types of centrist parties could shift their policy platforms and rhetoric to parrot the FRPs (Han 2015).

In the case of European expansion in the face of the migrant crisis, the centrist parties may be more willing to oppose EU enlargement at the national level. While the centrist parties may contain some strong supporters of the EU and EU integration, regardless of political pressure from events like the migrant crisis, the parties as a whole will be forced to decide what is more politically expedient. The two options open to the parties are to either parrot the policy platforms of the far right and risk losing voters to the party whose policy is not shifted to the right, or to support EU enlargement and risk losing voters to the parties which campaign on policies of Euro-scepticism, which include FRPs. Given this choice, centrist parties could decide to adapt the platform of the far right if the centrist party is already adapting some of the other policies of the far right in regards to Euro-scepticism or multiculturalism.

Centrist parties in Europe adopt policies on multiculturalism and immigration that emulate FRP platforms in an effort to exclude the FRP from becoming a substantive political power within the national legislature. Centrist parties may follow an exclusionary strategy, not only for the overall goal of minimizing the power of the far right in government, but also for the centrist parties to maintain power at the expense of the FRP. The strategy is self-serving for the centrists because the FRPs gain votes and power at the expense of the centrist parties as the issues raised and addressed by the FRPs could persuade the supporters of the centrist parties to

support the FRP (Han 2015). The centrist parties can attempt to exclude the far right by preventing the far right from surpassing the electoral thresholds that some European nations, such as Germany, enforce for political parties. This strategy requires the centrists to both attract voters from the far right, as well as prevent defections from the voter base of their own party. To attract the supporters of the far right, the centrists could adopt the policies of the far right and use the centrists' credentials as an established party that the populace is familiar with and that has governing experience (van Spanje with de Graaf 2018). For the countries that do not have electoral thresholds, the centrists can still try to attract the votes of FRPs with similar strategies in order to prevent the FRP from gaining enough votes that their support becomes crucial for the ruling party. Through the exclusion strategy, the far right influences the centrist parties by necessitating that the centrists emulate certain far right policies in the hopes of preventing the far right from gaining power in elections due to those adapted policies, especially in the case of the migrant crisis.

In addition to the influence exerted on the centrists by the far right through the exclusion strategy, if they are applied, the far right also influences the centrist parties through electoral competitions when the largest rival for the centrist party is adamantly pro-EU. This other option for the centrist parties takes the form of the party shifting its policies to the right, not to attract the votes of the far right, but so that a coalition government could be formed with the far right after the electoral competition (Downes with Loveless 2018). The coalition option is contingent upon the centrist party under-achieving in terms of the necessary representation in the national legislature, which would mean that it could not govern as a single party. Once the coalition option is available, it becomes more likely that the center party would form a coalition government with the FRP if it has the necessary representation because it is politically expedient to enter coalition with one party rather than a number of smaller parties. The coalition option shows how the far right is able to influence the centrist parties in Europe. While the coalition option is a possibility for all types of centrist parties, the center-right would more likely form a coalition with an FRP than a center-left party because the center-right and the FRP would have policies that are more similar. The centrist parties could only take the coalition option or the exclusion strategy before or during electoral competitions with the goal of the centrists gaining or keeping power.

Given the rise in power and popularity of the FRPs, partly because of the migrant crisis, centrist parties have an incentive to pursue or even emulate policies of the far right in order to gain or remain in power; I therefore expect centrist parties to oppose or delay EU enlargement, either through rhetoric or through direct action. Centrist European governments could halt EU enlargement by preventing nations from beginning the process, or by halting the accession process if it has already begun by using the veto power that each member state holds within the enlargement decision-making process. Centrist European governments could also delay the process by promoting alternative options to enlargement such as the EU-Eastern partnership.

Chapter 4: Research Design

As stated above, I argue that the migrant crisis has increased the popularity of the far right parties in the EU, which puts more pressure on the centrist governments to adopt more right wing policies including in terms of EU enlargement. In order to establish the links between the migrant crisis, FRP politics, centrist party politics, and opposition or delay to EU enlargement, I used qualitative methods. The data I collected includes secondary scholarship as well as primary documents, including party manifestos, newspaper articles, and other recorded statements from party leaders and members. I also used existing data from surveys in the form of Eurobarometers to explore public opinion in Europe during specific times. I then used the data to complete a comparative case study using different EU member states and their individual domestic politics within the case studies to ascertain the influence that FRPs exert on centrist parties regarding the policy issue of EU enlargement.

The EU enlargement process partially occurs at the supranational level where only heads of state or government make the important decisions, instead of a national government as a whole, but the of national leaders decisions are reflective of domestic issues and politics in the individual member states. The migrant crisis must also be taken into account to better understand the politics that are occurring at the national and supranational levels. How is the migrant crisis affecting EU enlargement?

While this paper argues that the migrant crisis caused the FRPs to gain support and popularity, prompting centrist parties to parrot the FRPs' oppositions to EU enlargement, there are other possible perspectives on the effect of the migrant crisis on support for EU enlargement. One alternative perspective agrees that the migrant crisis still caused the FRPs to gain support and popularity, but argues that this increase in support does not reduce support for EU enlargement because the enlargement promises to strengthen national economies. A second alternative perspective posits that the migrant crisis simply does not affect EU enlargement. Instead, the rhetoric and decisions against EU enlargement, especially in places such as the Western Balkans, have been the results of other events and public opinion shifts.

The three case studies that I have examined to answer this question and test the theory of this paper are Austria, France, and Germany. These three countries have each had a centrist government in power during the migrant crisis and the governments have taken well-defined stances on further EU enlargement. Austria is an important case in my paper because it is the

only case in which the centrist government in power, the *Österreichische Volkspartei* (Austrian People's Party or ÖVP), is in a coalition with the Austrian FRP, the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (Freedom Party of Austria or FPÖ). In addition, Austria has been a transit country during the migrant crisis with most of the migrants going to Germany passing through Austria. In the run-up to the 2017 legislative elections, the leader of the ÖVP, Sebastian Kurz, spoke out against the migrant crisis and the need to take a tougher stance on the migrant issue from a national and supranational perspective (Traill 2017).

France is an important case to contrast with both Austria and Germany as France, which currently has a centrist government in power, has not been as heavily affected by the migrant crisis as the other two case studies in this paper. The centrist *La République En Marche!* Party (The Republic in Motion or LREM), led by President Emmanuel Macron, is pro-EU and a center-left party. As a center-left party leads France, the French case offers a different perspective of party politics as center-right parties lead the other two countries. France also offers a different perspective from the other two cases because the LREM is a relatively new party, unlike the centrist parties of the other two cases. In addition to the uniqueness of the case, some of the policy positions of LREM have changed since the party first gained power, to the point that France has prevented some countries in the Western Balkans from proceeding in the enlargement process.

Germany is an important case from which to observe the effects of the migrant crisis on EU enlargement because Germany accepted over one million migrants in 2015 alone and Germany continues to be one of the desired destinations for migrants. In addition to being heavily affected by the migrant crisis, a German case is also important because of the recent rise in support of the far right, particularly, the German FRP, the *Alternative für Deutschland*. This rise in support of the *Alternative für Deutschland* enhances the importance of the German case because the German ruling centrist party publicly admits the need to change the party policies to retake voters that defected to the far right ("German election: Merkel vows to win back right-wing voters" 2017). This case adds to the argument of the paper since, after the electoral victories of the German FRP, the ruling centrist party changed direction on numerous policies, even become less outwardly supportive of EU enlargement.

Chapter 5: Germany as a Case Study

Germany has been the host for large numbers of migrants long before the most recent migrant crisis, most notably the labor migrants and the asylum seekers from the Cold War and after. The labor workers are important to note for the German case study because Germany recruited foreign workers from a number of countries, which not all European countries elected to do. Germany recruited labor workers from countries such as: Turkey, Italy, Greece, Spain, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia until 1973 for the purpose of rebuilding the country after the Second World War. Since labor workers were recruited for temporary work, it was not expected that the workers would remain in the country but this changed with family reunification and the nature of path dependent occurrences. By 1973, Germany hosted 2.6 million foreign workers, 23 percent being Turkish. In 1973, Germany stopped recruiting foreign workers, but because the already present workers were employed in unattractive sectors, employers were interested in keeping the foreign workers in Germany (Borkert with Bosswick 2011). As the number of foreign workers in Germany began to rise, the native citizens increasingly portrayed the foreign workers in stereotypical and controversial manners. The foreigners were often portrayed as competing with native citizens for the same jobs in the domestic market, putting downward pressure on wages and standards, relying on welfare policies of the state, and causing the economic downturns (Kaczmarczyk et al 2015). Despite the large number of foreign workers living in Germany, most migrant crises that Germany became involved in, were made up of Europeans from either the Balkans or Eastern Europe (Borkert with Bosswick 2011).

During the civil war in Yugoslavia, Germany, along with Austria, hosted large numbers of the refugees fleeing the war. In response to the large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in the 1990s, the issue of asylum became politicized with the German government attempting to tighten the asylum laws in order to decrease the number of asylum seekers coming to Germany. The migrant issue only became politicized in Germany with increasingly restrictive immigration laws in response to large numbers of people fleeing to Germany from the Western Balkans (Borkert with Bosswick 2011).

Although this current migrant crisis is not the first migrant crisis that Germany has endured, Germany has been heavily affected by the current migrant crisis, especially after the surge in 2015. Due to Germany being a destination country for many of the migrants for different reasons, Germany has more than 1.6 million people who are seeking asylum that have

arrived in the country since 2014 (John 2018). By having over 1.6 million people of different background entering the country since 2014, the native German populace will have seen and felt this change in demographics with different non-German cultural buildings being raised to accommodate the new migrant populace. In particular, the largely Christian populace would have seen the changes in demographics by seeing churches being changed into mosques for the predominantly Muslim migrants (“Germany and Immigration” 2018).

Similar to Austria and France, in recent years support for the far right, especially the German FRP, *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany or AfD) has increased in Germany. The growth in popularity of the AfD has been relatively recent since the party was only founded in 2012 as an anti-Euro party. The party started as a number of supporters of the *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (Christian Democratic Union or CDU) broke off from the party to protest the CDU’s political shift to the center, especially with Chancellor Angela Merkel’s decision to bailout Greece during the Eurozone crisis with German taxpayer money. The founders of the party range from moderate to extreme in terms of the politics of a FRP. Frauke Petry was one of the party’s leaders since its founding and she represented a moderate force in the party as a counterbalance to her co-leader of the party, Alexander Gauland (Eddy 2017).

In 2013, the first federal elections the AfD participated in, the AfD received only 4.7 percent of the national vote (“Merkel Triumphs in German Elections” 2013). After the migrant crisis surged in 2015, the AfD changed its core issues to benefit from the reactions to the migrant crisis. The AfD gained power relative to, and at the expense of other political parties in Germany in the September 2017 federal elections, where the party won 12.6 percent of the national vote. With the 2017 election results, the AfD surpassed the electoral thresholds of 5 percent of the national vote in Germany for the first time to gain more than 90 seats in the national German legislature. After the elections, the AfD leadership experienced upheaval as one of the previous leaders, Frauke Petry, declared herself an independent in the German legislature after winning her seat. Due to the change in party leadership, Alexander Gauland became AfD’s new co-leader along with Jorg Meuthen who continued as the party’s other co-leader (“German election: How right-wing is nationalist AfD?” 2017). The latest electoral results; however, do not demonstrate support for the AfD from a majority of people in Germany that would equate to a large amount of political power. However, by becoming the third largest

party in their first federal elections, the party does demonstrate that it has the capacity for widespread support. In addition, given the AfD's relatively young age as a political party, it could be expected to grow in support as it gains experience and recognition. Even by receiving 12 percent of the national vote, the AfD demonstrated that it would be able to challenge traditional parties like the German CDU/Christian Social Union (CSU) as the AfD gained power at the expense of the other German political parties.

Since the 2017 federal elections, the AfD also successfully challenged the Bavarian state elections in 2018 where the CSU, the CDU's sister party in the state, lost its absolute majority in the state. The AfD gained 10 percent of the vote in the state, which gave the AfD seats in 15 of the 16 German state legislatures ("Massive Losses for Merkel's Bavaria Ally" 2018). The results of the Bavarian election demonstrate the rise in popularity of the AfD, especially with the ongoing migrant crisis.

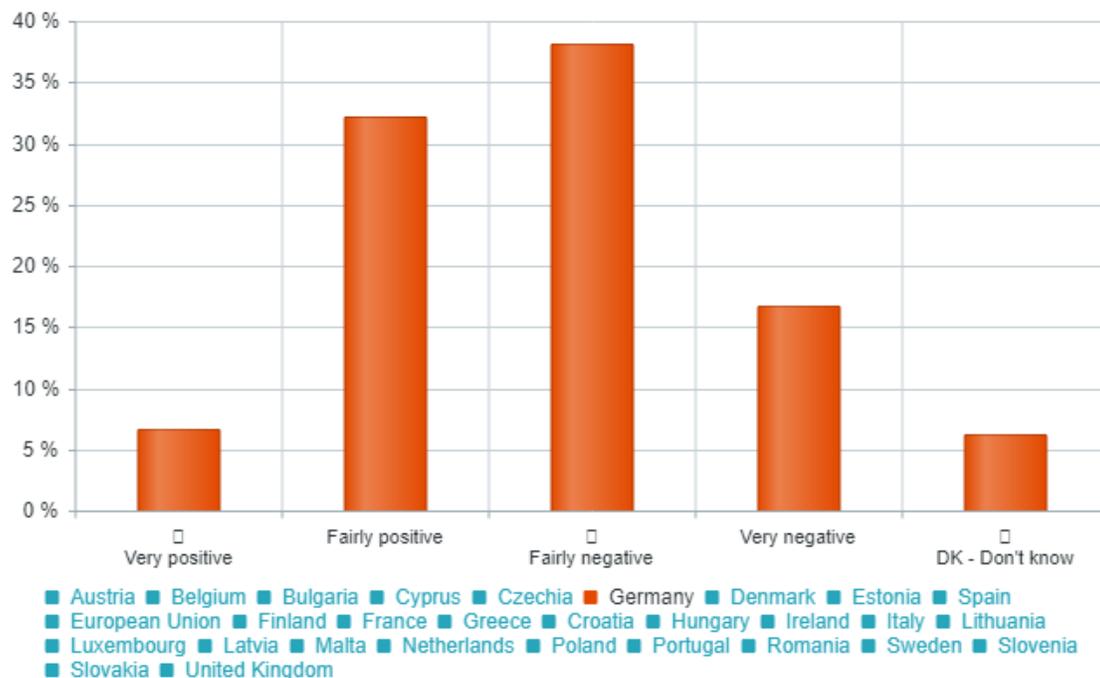
The results of the federal German elections in 2017 and the subsequent state elections clearly demonstrate that the rhetoric of the AfD entices voters who previously voted for parties such as the CDU. The AfD attracts voters because of their anti-multiculturalism, anti-euro, and anti-immigration rhetoric and policy platforms. The 2017 AfD manifesto explicitly states the AfD's anti-Euro stance, which calls for the revocation of the Euro through a vote in the German parliament and a national referendum should a parliamentary measure be defeated. Within the manifesto, the party calls for additional reforms in the EU. If the reforms do not occur or are not sufficient the AfD would have Germany exit the EU (Petry with Meuthen PROGRAMM für Deutschland 2017).

In addition to the Euro-sceptic stance, the party's message of anti-multiculturalism presents itself in the manifesto with an entire section titled "German as a Predominant Culture instead of Multiculturalism" (Petry with Meuthen PROGRAMM für Deutschland 2017). The section details how German culture should be the predominant culture in Germany. The premise is that without the maintenance of a predominant German culture, the national value system would degrade and the survival of social peace would be under threat. In order to prevent this degradation and threat, the AfD calls for the government to focus on preserving German culture and identity instead of giving in to multiculturalism (Petry with Meuthen PROGRAMM für Deutschland 2017).

The party gained traction and name recognition in Germany because of the party's stance on the immigration issue as Germany opened itself to migrants during the European migrant crisis. Since its founding, the party has evolved from the single issue of being anti-euro, to also focus on immigration and Islam, and the party has officially adopted policies against both immigration and Islam. The anti-immigration policies in the AfD manifesto focus on the need to decrease overall immigration and the need to change demographics. The AfD opposes immigration because it fears that the immigrants will create "parallel communities." The party fears these "parallel communities" because of its belief that these communities would not integrate into German culture and would clash with German communities (Petry with Meuthen PROGRAMM für Deutschland 2017).

Figure 2

Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you.
Immigration of people from outside the EU (05/2017)



Beyond the general anti-immigrant stance that the party has taken in its manifesto, the AfD's members and former members have also spoken out against migrants and refugees. The AfD's former leader and moderate in the party, Frauke Petry, said, "German border police should shoot at refugees entering the country illegally" (Beale 2016 para. 1). The AfD has

gained popularity over these stances, rhetoric surrounding immigration, and the migrant crisis because of the negative views German citizens have about immigration from states outside of the EU. Figure 2 displays the percentage of German citizens expressed positive or negative feelings toward immigration of people from outside the EU in 2017. According to Figure 2, around 58 percent of the interviewees had some form of negative view of immigrants from countries outside of the EU (Eurobarometer 2015). Even by May of 2017, four months before the federal elections that saw the AfD gain seats in the national German legislature, around 55 percent of interviewees had a negative feeling towards immigration from outside of the EU, which would include feelings towards the migrants involved in the migrant crisis (Eurobarometer 2017).

Although the AfD is a Euro-sceptic party, which started purely as an anti-Euro party, its stance on EU enlargement is couched in ambivalent language. While the AfD supports a referendum on the issue of enlargement, when the party called for the referendum on the Western Balkan expansion, the AfD made its position on the topic clear. One MP of the AfD stated the belief that allowing the Western Balkans to join the EU would lead “in the direction of the Balkanisation of the EU, which we absolutely do not want to go through without asking our people whether they are in favour” (“AfD Demands a Referendum before Further EU Enlargement” 2018 para. 2). The MP’s reference to the “Balkanisation of the EU” is important to note as it reflects that this MP, and the party in general, do not view the Balkans as European, instead they see them as an “Other.” By calling for a referendum on the topic, the AfD is also trying to prevent the EU enlargement in the Western Balkans since the AfD would not be able to stop the process in the national legislature alone, which is currently the only method available. By allowing the people to decide, the AfD has a higher chance of preventing the accession of the Western Balkans because, according to a standard Eurobarometer in the autumn of 2018, 64 percent of German interviewees are against further enlargement of the EU (Eurobarometer 2018).

The rise of the AfD continues to affect German politics as the parties continue to readjust their stances on several issues, but the party that has the most to lose with the rise of the AfD is the ruling party, the CDU. The CDU has been the ruling party of Germany, with Angela Merkel as the party leader, from 2005 until 2018, while participating in different coalitions with other parties. Different political groups that participated in the Weimar Republic founded the CDU in 1945. These groups included the Protestants who were both liberals and conservative, the

Catholic Centre Party, and segments of the middle class, among others. After German reunification, the CDU in West Germany merged with the newly created CDU in East Germany. The CDU supports policies of a free-market economy, social welfare programs, European integration, and conservative social issues. After a scandal that involved former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and several of his deputies, including his chosen successor, Angela Merkel became the leader of the CDU party, since she was not touched by the scandal. Since Angela Merkel became party leader, the CDU/CSU voting block has been the ruling party in the national German legislature (Conradt 2018). After worse than expected results in the 2017 federal elections and further defeats in several state elections, Angela Merkel stepped down as party leader of the CDU in 2018 but continues to perform her role as the Chancellor of Germany. The CDU elected Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Angela Merkel's chosen successor, as the new party leader at a party conference in December 2018 ("Merkel's Choice Elected Ruling Party Leader" 2018).

The motivation for the CDU to shift policies to the right is based on a desire to regain supporters who defected to the far right following the federal and state elections in 2017 and 2018. In addition, the CDU could be attempting to retain the current supporters of the CDU from being enticed by the views of the AfD. Chancellor Merkel, after the 2017 elections stated, "We have started to analyse the voters we lost, especially with regards to those who went on to vote for the AfD, we want to get them back by good politics and addressing some of the issues" ("Merkel Vows to Win Back Right-Wing Voters" 2017 para. 23). In addition to concentrating the CDU's efforts on winning the voters back, the CDU could also be targeting the voters who supported the AfD in order to eliminate the AfD from the national German legislature, as political parties need to pass an electoral threshold in order to keep their seats in the national legislature.

One policy shift that has occurred since the migrant crisis started is on the topic of supporting EU enlargement in the Western Balkans. In 2014, Merkel openly supported the Western Balkans in their attempts to join the EU. Merkel even started the process by hosting a conference on the topic in Berlin where representatives from the EU, several member states, and the Western Balkans attended in the hopes of beginning or speeding up the accession process (Says 2014). Four years after pushing for the inclusion of the Western Balkans in the EU, and three years into the migrant crisis however, Chancellor Merkel appeared to have distanced

herself from the topic without outright rejecting the notion of the Western Balkans joining the EU. Before an EU conference in Sofia on the topic in 2018, the Albanian Prime Minister tried to win support for his country to start the accession process in Germany, but Chancellor Merkel did not commit herself to supporting or rejecting Albanian accession (Erebara 2018). Although a non-commitment may not appear to be a shift to the right in terms of policy towards EU enlargement, the lack of support for Western Balkan accession, four years after openly supporting the process, suggests that domestic politics may have played a factor in Chancellor Merkel's decision not to commit German support. Furthermore, at the conference in Sofia, EU leaders pledged support for the region in terms of infrastructure and "connectivity" without referencing EU enlargement for the region. Chancellor Merkel specifically stated, "No progress was made on enlargement," at a summit that was expected to detail the official European plan for the region for the year, on a topic that Chancellor Merkel was a champion of before the migrant crisis and the rise of the AfD in German politics (Dimitrov 2018 para. 3).

The German case study reveals that after the migrant crisis, the AfD gained power in German national politics. Before the migrant crisis, the AfD was only an anti-Euro party. However as the migrant crisis became a more prominent issue in Germany, the AfD changed its rhetoric to become a vocal critic of Chancellor Merkel's decision to welcome over one million migrants into Germany. With this change in rhetoric, the AfD became the third largest political party in the national legislature during the party's first national election, which is an indication that the AfD has tapped into an issue that is important to many of the German citizens. After the elections, the AfD gained enough popularity and support in national politics for the center right party, the CDU, to admit the need to shift their policies to the right to regain the voters lost to the AfD in the latest federal elections. Before the elections, the CDU was a public advocate for EU enlargement in the Western Balkans, but after the admission that the party needed to change its policies to regain voters, the CDU has stopped being as vocal about the German support for EU enlargement in the Western Balkans.

Chapter 6: France as a Case Study

Unlike the other two case studies in this paper, France has a history of migration that is partly tied to its colonial and overseas history as an empire. From the end of the Second World War until 1973, Algerians were allowed to immigrate to continental France in unregulated numbers. This unregulated migration is still visible today with the large minority population of Algerians in France. The politicization of the immigration topic started earlier in France than the other two case studies, especially when Jean-Marie Le Pen began to gain national prominence. Due to the politicization of the immigration topic, policies and laws on immigration and migration changed with each successive governmental shift between the left and the right. These legal and political shifts meant that successive governments made small changes intended to convey to the public that the sitting government was doing something to change the immigration trends. While the shifts were small in nature, France started to criminalize illegal residence in the 1990s in an effort to decrease the levels of immigration, which demonstrates that France was becoming more strict in terms of immigration policy (de Wenden, 2011).

During the recent migrant crisis, France has not been as heavily affected as some of the other case studies in this paper. France is not a transit country for many migrants to travel through, nor is France a destination country that migrants try to reach. In 2015, the migrant surge saw roughly 71,000 people apply for asylum in France, as opposed to countries like Germany which had 442,000 people apply for asylum (“Record 1.3 Million Sought Asylum in Europe in 2015” 2016). This trend of not having many migrants seek entry continued with around 91,070 people applying for asylum in France in 2017, as opposed to Germany’s roughly 200,000 applications. In addition to fewer people applying for asylum in France than in other countries, France also has one of the lowest rates of migrant retentions when measured in the form of acceptance of asylum claims within the EU. France currently accepts one in three asylum applications, while on average the European Union accepts one in two applications (Robert 2018). Due to the large population of France, combined with the small numbers of migrants accepted in France in terms of both applying for asylum and the granting of asylum, French people would not have seen as many migrants or shifts of demographics in local areas. Thus, the French case study offers a different perspective of how influential the migrant crisis may be because France has not been as heavily affected by the crisis as the other two case studies.

Francois Duprat and Francois Brigneau founded the French FRP, the *Front National* (FN), in 1972. After the party was founded, Jean-Marie Le Pen became its leader until his daughter Marine Le Pen succeeded him in 2011. Originally, the party was associated with the fringe far right through comments made by Jean-Marie Le Pen, which were construed as neo-fascist. After Marine Le Pen succeeded her father, the party tried to expand and legitimize itself as a contender in French national politics outside of being a protest party. The FN gained popularity by distancing itself from previous extreme views, such as denying that the holocaust happened, and recasting the issue of immigration as being a threat to France and French culture (Ray 2017).

In the 2012 presidential election, Marine Le Pen came in third during the first round of elections by winning 18 percent of the vote, which was largest percentage the party had ever received in a first round of presidential election up to that point. Subsequent local, national, and EU elections after 2012 reflected the continued growing support for the FN (Ray 2017). The 2017 presidential elections further demonstrated that support for the FN and their platforms grew since Le Pen won 21.4 percent of the first round of voting while contending with five opponents (Jones with Clarke 2017). By winning 21.4 percent of the vote in the first round, Le Pen moved on to the run-offs with Emmanuel Macron, only the second time that the FN has moved on to the run-off stage of the elections. In the run-offs, Le Pen gained 33.9 percent share of the vote, the highest ever for the FN (Aisch with Bloch, Lai, and Morenne 2017). After the parliamentary elections in 2017, Marine Le Pen rebranded the party as the *Rassemblement National* (National Rally or RN) in an effort to further distance the FRP from the anti-Semitic history of the FN (“France’s National Front Leader Marine Le Pen Proposes Rebranding as ‘Rassemblement National’” 2018). In polls for the upcoming European parliamentary elections, it appears that the RN could tie in first place for the support that the party receives from the French population (Gotev 2018).

The FN’s power and popularity noticeably increased under the leadership of Marine Le Pen, and improved to the point where the FN was one of two parties to move onto the presidential run-off elections. By continuing to the runoff election, the vote indicates that when the FN competed with all of the other political parties, either it received the most or the second most votes nation-wide. The FN motivated the French populace to vote for the party partly through their Euro-sceptic, anti-multiculturalism, and “law and order” platforms. Examples of

these policies are stated in the 2017 FN election manifesto which espouses multiple platforms for the FN, including the need to take back power and sovereignty from the EU, as well as the need to reduce legal immigration to an annual limit of 10,000 “legal” immigrants. In addition to expressing the anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiments characteristic of FRPs, the FN also portrays itself as the only true patriotic party that stands for French cohesion. Le Pen asserted that in contrast to the FN, none of the other parties stood for this national and cultural cohesion because the opposing parties wanted more immigration and less French cohesion. This supposed disregard for French cohesion could be construed as a disregard of French culture in favor of a more threatening global culture (Le Pen 144 Engagements Présidentiels 2017).

When speaking directly on the topic of the migrant crisis, Le Pen takes a hard stance against both migrants and the proposed EU-wide quota system. Le Pen echoes the beliefs of the 2017 FN manifesto that immigrants threaten national cohesion by asserting that an open door migration policy would destroy the core values of European nations. Le Pen specifically claims, “There are entire villages in France, which are dominated mostly by migrants that turn them into ghettos and are controlled by ghettos” (Dimitrov 2018 para. 13). These xenophobic comments demonstrate both the typical stance of an FRP as well as the continuing effects of the migrant crisis

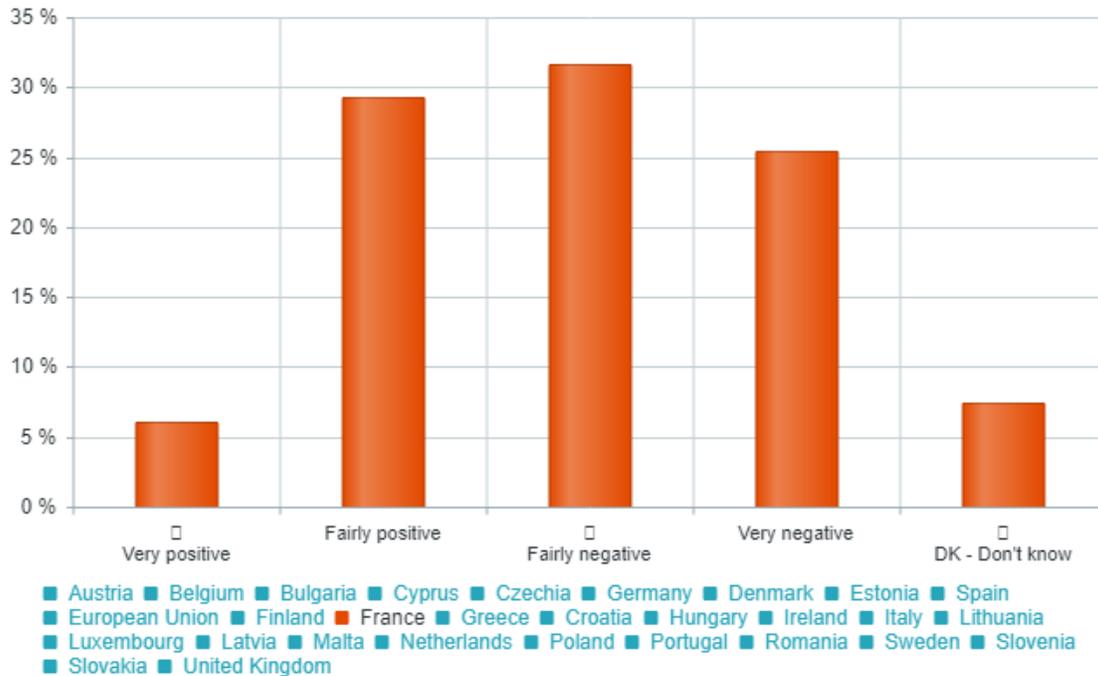
as these claims were made in 2018, after the numbers of migrants reduced significantly from the surge of 2015.

The rise in popularity of the FN before and after the 2017 presidential elections coincides with the increasingly negative sentiments that French people have with immigrants from outside of the EU. Figure 3 displays the percentage of French citizens who expressed positive or negative feelings toward the immigration people from outside the EU in 2014, that is before the surge of migrants associated with the migrant crisis. According to the data presented in Figure 3, French people already had a negative view of immigrants from outside of the EU with 57 percent of the people surveyed having a negative view of immigrants from outside the EU, ranging from fairly negative to very negative (Eurobarometer 2014).

While existing views of immigrants from outside the EU could be attributed to recent French immigration history, three years after the survey in Figure 3, views on immigrants from outside the EU changed in a negative fashion. Figure 4 displays the percentage of French citizens in 2017 who expressed positive or negative feelings toward the immigration of people

Figure 3

Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you.
Immigration of people from outside the EU
(11/2014)



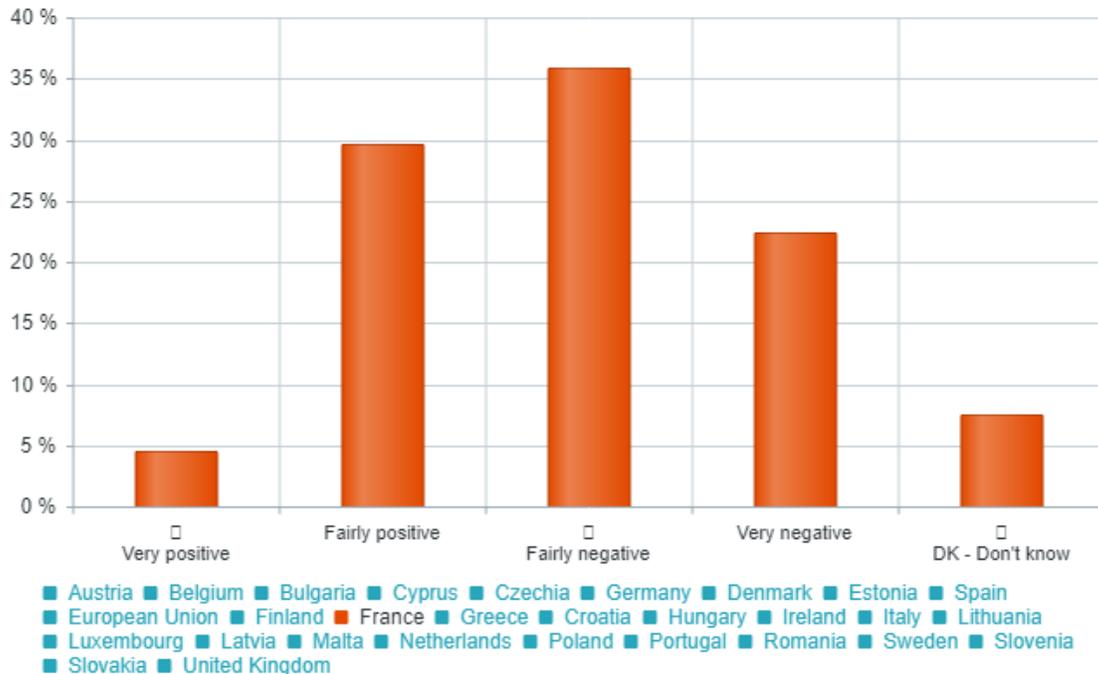
from outside the EU. Figure 4 illustrates that the negative perceptions of immigrants from outside of the EU increased by 1 percent from 2014 (Eurobarometer 2017). While the negative sentiments towards non-EU immigrants may not have grown much within the three years of the different surveys, the more important statistic is the decrease in the “very positive” sentiments towards non-EU immigrants. Figure 3 shows that in 2014, the French respondents included 6 percent with “very positive” sentiments (Eurobarometer 2014). In comparison, Figure 4 in 2017 shows that only 5 percent support a “very positive” sentiment (Eurobarometer 2017). While the shifts in public opinion are not substantial, it is still important to note that opinions have changed in a negative fashion over the course of the migrant crisis

Beyond exemplifying the xenophobia and anti-multiculturalism of an FRP, the FN also promotes a Euro-sceptic point of view that includes an opposition to further EU enlargement. At the same gathering where Le Pen spoke out against the migrant crisis, she also spoke out against EU enlargement in the Western Balkans by stating, “further expansion of the EU was not relevant, as her envisaged ‘European alliance of free nations’ would welcome any sovereign state

that shared its values” (Dimitrov 2018 para. 19). By rejecting calls for further enlargement in general,

Figure 4

Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you.
Immigration of people from outside the EU (05/2017)



and in the Western Balkans specifically, Le Pen appears to be attempting to gain the support of the French voters who are against further EU enlargement. The number of people in France who oppose further enlargement has slightly decreased since 2015, but the opposition continues to remain high. In 2015, 67 percent of people participating in the Eurobarometer were against further EU enlargement (Eurobarometer 2015). That number decreased slightly by 2018 to 62 percent of the survey participants being against further EU enlargement, but with such a large percentage of people against further EU enlargement, it is not surprising that a Euro-sceptic party would attempt to gain the support of people already against EU enlargement (Eurobarometer 2018).

While *Le Parti Républicain* (The Republican Party) has not controlled either the presidency or the national legislature in France during the migrant crisis, it is still important to note how this center right party has reacted to the migrant crisis and the rise in popularity of the

FRPs. In the run-up to the 2017 elections, *Les Républicains* (the Republicans) elected a new president of the party, Laurent Wauquiez, who based his campaign in the party on three themes: identity, immigration, and Islam. The rhetoric of Wauquiez mirrored, to a large extent, the rhetoric of Marine Le Pen. When discussing the topic of identity, Wauquiez spoke of how the French identity was under attack by Islam. Along with this statement and others on the topic of the dangers of multiculturalism, this rhetoric exemplifies how the Republican Party has shifted towards a far-right approach (“Les Républicains : immigration, Europe, impôts... L’inquiétant programme de Wauquiez” 2017).

On the specific policy issue of immigration and the migrant crisis, Wauquiez called for limits on legal immigration to tens of thousands per year as compared to the much larger numbers that France received both legally and illegally through the migrant crisis. In addition to limiting the numbers of legal immigrants, Wauquiez also wanted “France to take back her sovereignty” in terms of migration politics, which is an attack on the Schengen zone (“Les Républicains : immigration, Europe, impôts... L’inquiétant programme de Wauquiez” 2017 para. 7). Beyond the parroting of the FRP approach to immigration and identity, Wauquiez also adopted the language of the FN when speaking of the EU by calling for a union of nation-states, similar to the FN call for an alliance of free nations. In addition to the attack on the idea of federalism in the EU, Wauquiez also specifically stated that he wanted an end to EU enlargement in general (“Les Républicains : immigration, Europe, impôts... L’inquiétant programme de Wauquiez” 2017). The rhetoric of the new leader of the Republicans, along with the changed policy proposals in the Republican manifesto, demonstrates that this centrist party has shifted to the right in terms of policy and rhetoric after the beginning of the migrant crisis. This shift occurred despite this center right party’s history of previously being pro-EU integration under Nicolas Sarkozy (Buchan 2019).

The ruling party and sitting president of France both come from the same party in France, *La République En Marche*. The party was founded in 2016 by the current French president, Emmanuel Macron. President Macron founded the party to “rebuild from below” and embody not only a political party filling the political space for a center-left party, but also a citizen movement (La République En Marche 2017). One aspect of the party that fits with the call by Macron to “rebuild from below” is that LREM is an anti-establishment party that was opposed to the previous political elites (Chwalisz 2018). While the party fills the space for a center-left

party, LREM is also a catchall party that attempts to entice voters from across the political spectrum (La République En Marche 2017, Krouwel 2003). More specifically, the party adheres to pro-European, pro-EU, economically liberal policies while also committing itself to social protection and standing against the French FRP (Chwalisz 2018). Emmanuel Macron gained the presidency in France following the run-off elections in 2017 against Le Pen. Since gaining the presidency, Macron has changed his movement into an actual party that has gained a majority in the French National Assembly (“France election: Macron party set for big parliamentary win” 2017).

After ascending to power in 2017, Macron has put forth a bold program that calls for deeper and wider integration in the EU. During a speech at the Sorbonne where Macron laid out his aspirations for the EU, he specifically called for the creation of several EU institutions, such as the creation of a finance minister for the Eurozone, a Eurozone budget, and a European Intelligence Agency (Briançon 2017). This speech also included a reference to the Balkans in which the French President called on the EU to respect that when the countries of the Western Balkans meet the democratic requirements, the EU will open itself to the region:

“Cette Union, lorsqu’ils respecteront pleinement l’acquis et les exigences démocratiques, devra s’ouvrir aux pays des Balkans. Car notre Union reste attractive et son aura est un facteur essentiel de paix et de stabilité sur notre continent. Ils devront respecter les conditions prévues, mais les arrimer à l’Union européenne ainsi repensée, c’est une condition pour qu’ils ne tournent pas le dos à l’Europe pour aller ou vers la Russie, ou vers la Turquie, ou vers des puissances autoritaires qui ne défendent pas aujourd’hui nos valeurs” (Macron 2017).

(English translation) “When they fully respect the acquis and democratic requirements, this EU will have to open itself up to the Balkan countries, because our EU is still attractive and its aura is a key factor of peace and stability on our continent. They’ll have to respect the conditions stipulated, but securing them to a European Union reinvented in this way is a precondition for their not turning their backs on Europe and moving towards either Russia or Turkey, or towards authoritarian powers that don’t currently uphold our values” (Macron 2017).

Macron called for the EU to be willing to accept Balkan nations into the EU because of the risks of the region turning to other regional and global actors such as Turkey or Russia. The risks of the region turning to other national actors has not changed since 2017.

While the geopolitics surrounding the Western Balkans has not changed, President Macron has suffered domestic setbacks in the form of the *gilets jaunes* (yellow vest) protestors, which began in September 2018. The yellow vest protests started in response to a planned increase in the eco-taxes levied on gasoline and diesel. While the eco-taxes were not a key legislative policy for Macron, as they were a holdover from the previous presidency, the protests against the eco-taxes are emblematic of the growing opposition against the perceived “political class” in France and against Macron specifically. Since the start of the protests, the yellow vests have diversified in terms of what the movement wants from the government and who the movement encompasses. By December of 2018, the protests had been occurring nationally for months, disrupting businesses and causing significant damage to urban property. In response to these actions and the longevity of the movement, Macron made concessions to the yellow vests in terms of increasing the monthly pension bonus and decreasing certain taxes (Williamson 2018). More recently the movement’s aspiration have coalesced into four goals: “proportional representation in parliament, direct democracy through Swiss-style referendums, less European integration, and- above all- Macron’s resignation” (De Clercq 2019 para. 5). These goals demonstrate a clear opposition that has formed against Macron and his policies, including his policies on EU integration.

Although the yellow vest movement does not have any direct connections to the migrant crisis, the yellow vests demonstrate that Macron needs to exercise caution in terms of policy since there is now an existing movement that has become an opposition movement to Macron, his policies, and perhaps his party. Not only have the yellow vests become a movement in opposition to Macron, but political leaders such as Marine Le Pen are also trying to appeal to the movement for support for their political parties, such as the RN (De Clercq 2019). Thus with the yellow vests emerging as a movement and possible political party formed in opposition to Macron and his policies, Macron could find it necessary to shift policies, including European integration policies, to the right to both attract voters lost to the yellow vests and in order to prevent the RN from gaining the support of the yellow vests.

As the 2019 European Parliamentary elections draw closer, Macron has changed both his rhetoric and the French national policy on the Western Balkans. The most obvious change occurred at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia in May 2018. The meeting took place to determine if Albania and North Macedonia had met the criteria to begin accession talks. At the end of the meeting, both France and the Netherlands voiced opposition to the two Western Balkan nations beginning accession talks for entrance into the EU. The official reasoning that President Macron gave for preventing the two Western Balkan countries from starting the official enlargement process is that both countries needed more judicial reforms, to reduce corruption and combat organized crime (Baczynska 2018). By opposing the two countries from starting the process, the Netherlands and France demonstrated they could exercise their veto power halting any chance of Albania or North Macedonia starting the enlargement process for another six months. Due to the opposition of the French and the Dutch, the EU will allow North Macedonia and Albania to start the enlargement process, but only in June 2019, a month after the European parliamentary elections (Tregoures 2018). By delaying the start of the accession process for the two countries until after the parliamentary elections, Macron has shifted the French national policy to the right by delaying the process in the hope of gaining voters from the RN.

The French case exemplifies the theory of this paper through the rightward shift of Macron's center left party, LREM. The theory is exemplified in the French case specifically through Macron's change in policy towards EU enlargement for Albania and North Macedonia in the face of European elections that showed polls wherein the RN could beat the LREM in the European Parliament. Moreover, the French case reveals that the French FRP gained power and support in the presidential elections as the migrant crisis continued to affect France. By shifting rightward, Macron not only changed his rhetoric from his speech in the Sorbonne, a speech that set out many of Macron's proposed EU policies, but he also actively changed French policy towards EU enlargement in the cases of Albania and North Macedonia because of a fear of the opposition in France.

Chapter 7: Austria as a Case Study

The migrant crisis is not the first time that Austria has experienced an influx of migrants, even since the end of the Cold War. By the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the wars in Yugoslavia, Austria was becoming both a transit country and a place of refuge for refugees and asylum seekers. By 2009, the total foreign population in Austria amounted to 10.4 percent of the total population, a total of 870,704 people. By the mid-1980s, migration started to become a politicized issue with the Austrian FRP taking the anti-migrant stance in terms of policy (Kraler 2011). The migrant issue became politicized in Austria because the Austrian domestic labor market was oversaturated with workers who were both foreigners and native citizens at the same time as there was a global economic crisis, 1973 to 1974. This oversaturation of the labor market caused the already present stereotypical views of migrants, such as migrants reducing the number of jobs available to native citizens, to become a reality for some Austrian citizens (Feichtinger with Cohen 2014). Due to this increasing politicization of the issue of migration, especially around asylum seekers, the Austrian national government tightened its asylum, immigration, and migrant laws to reduce number of people traveling to or through Austria from 1991 to 1992. This trend in tightening the legislation around the three topics has continued throughout the early 2000's (Kraler 2011).

In addition to the foreign workers that were brought into Austria until 1973, Austria also saw an increase in foreigners living in Austria between 1989 and 1993 with the number of doubling in four years from 384,000 to 699,000 people living in Austria. This increase in foreigners came primarily from Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, Turkey, and others from the "Third World." Due to the diversity of people coming to Austria, Austrian politics did not begin to distinguish between the different groups of people in order to create an "other" instead unregistered immigrants, regardless of national origin, became referred to as "illegals" (Feichtinger with Cohen 2014).

During the surge of 2015, Austria became a transit country for migrants trying to reach Germany and Sweden, two countries which had both stated their intent to welcome the migrants traveling to Europe. By becoming a transit country, Austria saw over one million migrants pass through the country in the hopes of entering either Germany or Sweden. While Austria's main role in the migrant crisis was acting as a transit country for the migrants, because of the Dublin regulations, Austria also took in many migrants, receiving over 90,000 applications for asylum.

While this number may not appear to be significant compared to the one million migrants that travelled to Europe in 2015, 90,000 migrants equates to 1 percent of the Austrian population, which would be very noticeable for many Austrian citizens (Bell 2018).

Anton Reinthaller founded the Freedom Party of Austria in 1956 as a liberal, anti-clerical and pro-German party that was opposed to the domination of the political sphere by the two main parties, the ÖVP and *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* (the Social Democratic Party of Austria or SPÖ). Until 1986, the party was a liberal party that drew in some former Nazis because of its pro-German rhetoric (Solsten 1994). By 1986, Jörg Haider gained control of the party and changed the party to identify as a far-right party that has had scandals of being anti-Semitic and racist. The FPÖ first participated in a national government as a junior coalition partner with the ÖVP in 2000 and 2003, but the coalitions failed soon after formation, partly because the EU sanctioned Austria for allowing the “extremists” into the government (Isenon 2017). Many of the current FPÖ members of Parliament, ministers, and staff are members of right wing societies that have ties to neo-Nazis.

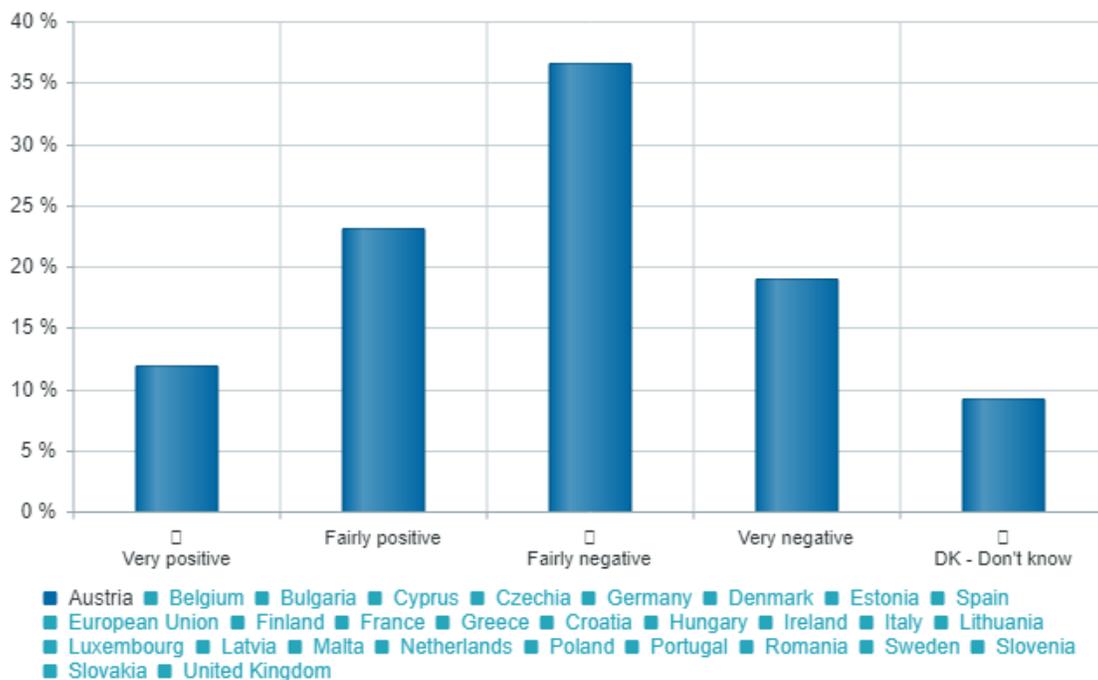
In the most recent special election in 2017, the FPÖ won 26.9 percent of the vote with a turnout of 80 percent of eligible voters, around 6.5 million people (Knolle 2018). In the 2017 elections, the party came in third behind both centrist parties, with the ÖVP taking 31.5 percent of the vote, but the SPÖ did not want to become a junior coalition partner with the ÖVP (Austria 2017). Despite the FPÖ being third in terms of support as compared to the two major parties, the increased support of the FPÖ from the previous general elections of 2013 demonstrates the increasing popularity of the party. In the 2013 elections, the FPÖ won 21.4 percent of the vote, which increased by more than five points in the 2017 elections (“Narrow Win for Austria Ruling Bloc” 2013). It is worth noting that the Austrian FRP experienced a five percent increase in support during a period that oversaw the migrant surge of 2015 and the ongoing migrant crisis.

The party gained some of those voters by taking a hard stance against immigration and illegal migrants from the migrant crisis. The FPÖ took a tough stance on immigration by placing an emphasis on an Austrian identity by stating, “Austria is not a country of immigration” (Strache 2011 section 2 para. 6). The FPÖ further insists that migrants seeking asylum should not journey to Austria if they pass through a third country that would be just as safe as Austria (Strache 2011). This essentially calls for migrants to not try to travel to Austria in the hopes of asylum when there are safe countries along the journey to Austria. By taking a stance against

immigration and placing the emphasis on identity, the FPÖ conforms to the strategies and rhetoric of other xenophobic FRPs. The head of the FPÖ, Heinz-Christian Strache went further in espousing the need to maintain an Austrian identity during the migrant crisis by calling for the creation of a fence along the border to prevent further migration. In addition, Strache advocated for allowing Christian and Jewish refugees into the countries rather than Muslims and he stated, “We don’t want an Islamisation of Europe. We don’t want our Christian culture to perish” (Shields with Nasralla 2015 para. 7).

Figure 5

Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you.
Immigration of people from outside the EU (11/2014)



The FPÖ used the anti-immigration and anti-migrant stance to entice voters after the migrant crisis, which correlates with a spike in anti-immigrant sentiments in Austria. Figure 5 displays the percentage of Austrian citizens in 2014, who expressed positive or negative feelings about immigration of people from outside the EU. In 2014, right before the migrant crisis surge in 2015, about 35 percent of the population had positive feelings about immigration from states outside of the EU and 56 percent had a negative view of immigration (Eurobarometer 2014). Figure 6 displays the percentage of Austrian citizen in 2017 who expressed positive or negative

feelings about immigration of people from outside the EU. In Figure 6, a survey taken before the 2017 elections, the Austrian people who participated showed that there are more people with strong negative feelings towards immigration and a similar amount of people who still view immigration from outside the EU in a “Fairly Negative” manner. The number of people who responded as “Don’t Know” and “Very Positive” also decreased in the second survey (Eurobarometer 2017). While there may not appear to be a large difference between the two surveys, the migrant crisis, which started in 2013, changed views to become stronger in their negativity or caused more people to rethink their strong positive opinions about immigration.

Figure 6



Along with exemplifying the xenophobia and anti-multiculturalism of the FRPs, the FPÖ also exemplifies the Euro-sceptic point of view in regards to the EU in general by advocating for “the basic constitutional principles of sovereign Member States must have absolute priority over Community law” (Strache 2011 section 10 para. 5). The FPÖ is also a member of the EU party, the Europe of Nations and Freedom, which is a group of Euro-sceptic parties from across Europe, including the FN and AfD.

The FPÖ position on EU enlargement is not specific, but the party is likely against EU enlargement as the party is a self-acclaimed Euro-sceptic party. While the party position is not clear, the rhetoric of the party leader after joining the Austrian government supports the belief that the FPÖ is against EU enlargement in the Western Balkans. The party leader, Strache, commented that the Serb portion of Bosnia-Herzegovina should have the right to become

independent. If the Serb portion of Bosnia-Herzegovina is allowed to become independent, as the comment showed a desire for, the EU enlargement process for the region could be put in danger as the current process does not foresee or allow for geopolitical changes in the Western Balkans that could destabilize the entire region (Mischke 2018).

The party is also presumptively against further EU enlargement in order to entice the substantial number of people who are anti-enlargement in Austria. In 2015, the Eurobarometer survey found that 75 percent of Austrians who participated were against further EU enlargement (Eurobarometer 2015). While the number of people who oppose future EU enlargement has decreased to 58 percent of the interviewees by 2018, the number is still larger than the European average and represents a sizeable number of people who would most likely support a Euro-sceptic party (Eurobarometer 2018).

The Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) was founded in 1945 by distinguishing itself from its predecessor the Christian Social Party by supporting the Austrian nation and parliamentary democracy. The party is a Christian Democratic Party that represents a wide variety of groups including business owners, working people, farmers, tradespeople, populists and seniors (Roider et al. 2019). The party is one of two parties that has controlled politics in Austria since the end of the Second World War. The ÖVP was also the party that pushed for Austrian accession into the EU in 1995. After the last coalition government with the SPÖ failed, the ÖVP began having problems uniting the different groups that the party historically has represented. Eventually the ÖVP chose Sebastian Kurz to lead the newly revamped party in the special elections of 2017 (Die neue Volkspartei 2019).

Under Sebastian Kurz, the new ÖVP has shifted to the right, especially in policies regarding immigration. In the 2017 party manifesto, the ÖVP parrots the FPÖ in its emphasis on an Austrian identity based on religious and linguistic boundaries. The ÖVP specifically emphasizes the German language in any integration process that could potentially lead to citizenship. In addition to the emphasis on the German language, the party also attacks Islamic schools by calling for stronger control and possible closure if they do not meet legal requirements. The ÖVP parrots the FPÖ anti-Islam stance by specifically targeting Islamic schools without naming other possible private schools. The ÖVP, in its manifesto, advocates for a new migration strategy that does not emphasize the need to help the migrants seeking asylum in Austria, instead it calls for the government to combat the reasons behind the migrant crisis. In

the same paragraph that calls for a new migration strategy, the ÖVP also promotes “a more effective return policy,” which demonstrates the desire to have the migrants eventually leave Austria for their home countries (Kurz 2017 p. 4). Kurz himself has also taken a stance against the migrants in the run-up to the 2017 election by saying, “Those who attempt to come to Europe illegally, should lose the right to claim asylum in Europe” (Traill 2017 section 4 para. 8). By saying this, Kurz effectively called for the deportation of any migrant who came to Europe during the crisis because the vast majority did not follow the legal process, especially as the legal process applied to the Dublin Regulations.

While the ÖVP appears to have parroted aspects of the FPÖ manifesto, especially in regards to immigration, the ÖVP did not parrot the FPÖ policy regarding EU enlargement. In contrast to the proposed immigration policy, the ÖVP endorsed EU enlargement, especially the Western Balkans, which are mentioned specifically (Kurz Regierungsprogramm 2017). Part of the reasoning for this lies in the ÖVP’s commitment to maintaining stability in the Western Balkans, which has been encouraged by the accession process. The ÖVP believes that stability will bring more security and improvement in economic conditions in the Western Balkans that Austria can profit from (Balfour with Stratulat 2015). Even with the continued support of the ÖVP for EU enlargement in the Western Balkans, the government has not commented on possible future enlargement either in the East or in the Southern Caucasus, of which both regions also have agreements with the EU that could lead to accession talks.

By winning 26.9 percent of the vote in 2017, the FPÖ demonstrated that it both represented a large proportion of eligible Austrian voters and that it was a viable candidate to join a government in a coalition. The ÖVP, after parroting the immigration platform of the FPÖ, agreed to join in a coalition government with the FPÖ. Within the coalition agreement, the ÖVP retains control over eight cabinet positions while giving the FPÖ seven positions. Of the seven positions given to the FPÖ, the positions include: interior minister, defense minister, health minister, and social security minister. In addition to these positions, the FPÖ also nominated a person for the foreign minister position. Even though the ÖVP gave the FPÖ the foreign minister position, Kurz moved the responsibilities for the EU to the chancellery so that he would retain control of Austria’s relations and policy towards the EU (Karnitschnig 2017).

The Austrian case study does not indicate any correlation or causation between the migrant crisis and national policies towards EU enlargement. Although this case study does not

help to support the argument of the paper, the case study does support the correlation between the migrant crisis and a rise in power of the FRPs. In addition, the Austrian case study demonstrates that centrist governments are willing to parrot certain policy platforms of the far right in the hopes of eventually forming a coalition government. One possibility that could explain why the Austrian case study does not support the theory is that the theory does not take into account the economic and historic ties that a country may have with prospective EU enlargement candidates, especially in the Western Balkans. This line of explanation fits with the first alternative theory proposed in the research design because the Austrian economy could benefit from the Western Balkans becoming member states of the EU, just as the Austrian economy did during the EU enlargements in Central and Eastern Europe (Balfour with Stratulat, 2015). Another alternative, which partially agrees with the theory of this paper, follows the logic that since the ÖVP is already in coalition with the FPÖ, the ÖVP does not need to parrot further policies of the FPÖ to steal voters. In addition, since the FPÖ placed so much emphasis on the issue of immigration and migration, it would be more likely that the FPÖ would focus its interests on the issue of migration and not on EU enlargement, which could be left to the nominally pro-EU ÖVP.

One can see from the different possible theories which explain how the migrant crisis has affected EU enlargement that there are limitations specific to the Austrian case study. The main limitation for the Austrian case study is that the national government does not have a specific policy towards EU enlargement, nor has the government come out in support of or against EU enlargement in general. Instead, the Austrian government has only shown support for the accession of the Western Balkan states, without commenting on the other enlargement candidates in Eastern Europe, such as Ukraine or Georgia. Due to this limitation, this paper cannot draw a conclusion on Austria's position on EU enlargement or any possibilities that its policy has changed.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The three case studies first demonstrate that the migrant crisis has increased the popularity and electoral support of the FRPs who stand against the migrants and immigration in general. By examining both the electoral success of the FRPs and public opinion toward immigrants from outside the EU, one can see that the migrant crisis has increased the support and power of the FRPs in the national setting. This increase in support and power of the FRPs has led to the ruling centrist parties in all three case studies to shift some of the country's national and EU policies to the right in the hopes of retaining or regaining voters from the FRPs.

Beyond the changes that occurred in the national settings, the migrant crisis also influenced the politics of the European Union. The French and German case studies show how the change in their national politics caused both member states to change either their rhetoric or policies towards EU enlargement. In the case of the Western Balkans, the German CDU has lessened its public support for EU enlargement to the Western Balkans and has not commented on possible further expansion outside of the Western Balkans. France has taken a more drastic step by preventing two of the Western Balkan states from beginning the accession process. Both actions have been carried out in the hopes of retaining or regaining voters in the national context.

The scholarly implications raised by this research are that it applies EU integration theory to the migrant crisis, a subject to which EU integration theory had previously not been applied. This research also adds nuance to the politics of EU enlargement by demonstrating that external crises and national politics can affect the process of EU enlargement, either as an ongoing process or the beginning of the process. The research also demonstrates that there is space for future research in several areas, including the effects that FRPs have on other EU policies, how FRPs affect national politics, and how external crises can influence the EU. This paper also provides one of the first postfunctionalist perspectives on the migrant crisis in Europe by demonstrating that EU enlargement politics have become politicized to such an extent that centrist parties are willing to shift to the right or even parrot the policies of the FRPs.

The policy implications for this paper are relatively simple as this paper demonstrates how the issue of EU enlargement, and other EU policies requiring unanimity, can be hijacked by the national politics of a single member state. While not all EU policies require unanimity, EU enlargement and the common foreign and security policy are two examples that do require unanimity from member states. Thus, this research demonstrates the need for the EU to be

reformed by instituting measures which would prevent a single member state from being able to stop the enlargement process for long periods of time or for domestic benefits. One option would be to remove the necessity for unanimity in EU enlargement, the EU decreases the chance that an FRP would be able to derail EU policies themselves or through centrist parties in power who parrot the policies of the FRPs. While this is not a perfect solution since there would be a possibility that member states already adopting anti-EU integration policies would attempt to leave the EU, which Brexit has already demonstrated is possible. The other policy implication that this research offers is by reinforcing the need for EU member states to work in concert with one another on issues such as the migrants or border control, especially in times of external crises. Member states need to work together on issues such as the migrant crisis because this research offers a perspective of how countries more heavily affected by the migrant crisis are more likely to see a rise in the support of an FRP.

While there are many implications from this research, both politically and scholarly, there are still several limitations to the research of this paper. The first limitation is that this paper was only able to use three case studies of the 28 member states, which does not sufficiently explain the effects of the migrant crisis on the national politics of every member state. A second limitation of this paper is that it focuses on EU enlargement in relation to the Western Balkans with only a brief mention of rhetoric against EU enlargement outside of the Western Balkans. Despite these limitations, this paper advances the discussion of how the migration has affected EU politics, specifically the national politics surrounding EU enlargement, which had not previously been touched upon in other research.

While this paper was able to examine three different member states in the EU, the EU comprises 28 countries which all have unique national politics. Thus, one avenue for further research would be to investigate the national politics and EU enlargement policies of each of the 28 member states. By investigating the national politics and policies towards EU enlargement, this further research will be able to understand if, and if so how, the migrant crisis has affected each country.

In addition to further research examining other EU member states, further research could also examine the entirety of party politics in EU member states including the differences within coalition governments. It would be important to note how politics, even in left or far left parties, have been affected by the migrant crisis and the rising popularity of the far right since Greece is

one example of a far left party being in power during the migrant crisis. This further research could investigate how different coalitional makeups affect how centrist parties respond to FRPs. Different coalitions would be important to investigate, even in the cases outlined in this paper because there could be a wide degree of variability between the different responses of centrist governments.

An alternative approach to further research on the topic of the effect of the migrant crisis on the EU would be to investigate other European policies. The more easily proven aspect of this further research would look at the other EU policies that require unanimity from the national leaders of the member states, such as enlargement. This research would not necessarily need to be limited to only analyzing the EU policies that require unanimity though, as it could still be possible to find correlations in the policies that do not require unanimity from the member states.

One final approach to further research could be taken in the context of the migrant crisis itself. Instead of focusing on the EU, further research could investigate the effects that migrant crises have had on national politics in other supranational or intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. By investigating migration in the context of other organizations, this further research could identify if the reaction to the migrant crisis within the EU is unique or a larger phenomenon that could affect other parts of the world beyond Europe.

If the EU is to survive as a viable singular political unit, the member states will need to act in concert to address the migrant crisis and its effects, or else a larger burden will be placed on specific member states such as Italy or Greece, which are the first EU member states that migrants arrive in. To quote United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, “As the world’s problems grow, multilateralism represents [the] best path to meet the challenges that lie ahead” (“Multilateralism: The only path to address the world’s troubles, signals Guterres” 2018 para. 1).

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