Populist Radical Right Parties into Parliament
Changes in mainstream parties’ political positions in parliamentary debates on immigration and refugees

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Abstract
Do Populist Radical Right Parties have an impact on the attitudes of other parties? Despite drawing much attention from the general public as well as academics, there is no clear answer to this conundrum. In this paper I examine how mainstream political parties change their positions in parliamentary debates on immigration and refugees after Populist Radical Right Parties enter parliament. In order to do this, I use theoretical concepts such as discourse coalitions and storylines in combination with network methodology to map out how parties in the Swedish parliament relate to one another through their attitudes towards key themes in the debate on immigration and refugees. This paper focuses on the relations between parties through language by applying Discourse Network Analysis on parliamentary debates. Thus, it contributes with a new relational aspect and methodological tool on a relatively underutilised material. The findings indicate that there is a change in other parties’ attitudes towards immigration and refugees, with two mainstream right parties moving closer to the Populist Radical Right Party. However, the datatype does not support causal language and the findings are limited due to small amounts of data.

Keywords: Discourse Network Analysis, Populist Radical Right Parties, Social Network Analysis, parliamentary debates, discourse coalitions, immigration, refugees.
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Introduction

Since a few decades back the radical right movement has become a focal issue in European as well as western politics, with Populist Radical Right Parties entering the parliaments of numerous nations (Akkerman et al. 2016: 2). They have attracted attention from the general public, news media as well as from academics, with numerous predictions being made as to how far they manage to impact the political situation towards their own goals. Despite much attention having been put on the topic, there seems to be no consensus as to the impact of the radical right. To some extent, this is a matter of definition and more specific points of interest. Distinguishing between the radical right as a social movement, taking a fairly broad approach, and Populist Radical Right Parties, a niche within that movement, yields somewhat different results (Mudde 2014: 218). Additionally, even when focusing on political parties within the movement, the empirical material used in the examination can affect the results as well (Mudde 2014: 223). Thus, one goal of this study is to provide additional empirical evidence of changes in connection to Populist Radical Right Parties. Specifically, I look at changes in political positions, how parties in the Swedish parliament relate to one another through their discussions on refugees and immigration.

The importance of language in politics and political science took a turn in the late 1900s, moving towards a more complex view of language as simultaneously affecting and being affected by its wielders. This paper continues in that school of thought, ascribing importance to the usage of language and discourses. From giants in the field such as Foucault and Habermas to more recent thinkers such as Davies, Harré and Hajer, the argumentative turn provides a firm theoretical ground which can be built upon and applied to specific cases. Although this is not an attempt to improve on the theoretical concepts developed throughout the argumentative turn, it does utilise them with new methodological tools. In this paper, two concepts in particular, discourse coalitions and story lines, are applied to parliamentary debates.

Discourse coalitions can be seen as the different sides in a debate which ascribe to the same thoughts and ideas, for instance whether immigration is positive or negative for the host country. These vary in how tight knitted they are, and sometimes individual actors can move from one coalition to another. In order to examine these discourse coalitions I apply a fairly new methodological tool within social network analysis. As computers have grown stronger and the internet has given access to new types of data, the usage of network analysis within political science has increased. Within this wave of network studies, a tool for specifically examining debates has been developed: Discourse Network Analysis. This is a useful tool for
mapping and analysing how different actors in a debate relate to one another through the statements that they make. This is done by looking at how they position themselves in relation to certain themes within the debate. In other words, the claims that are made in agreement or disagreement with broad themes within the debate are used as data.

Thus, in this paper I attempt to examine how populist radical right parties affect the positions of other parties in parliamentary debates on immigration and refugees. As will be further developed in the literature overview, the usage of different definitions of both the independent and dependent variables have resulted in varying findings, suggesting that populist radical right parties may or may not have an effect. Considering the growing role of these parties in the western world, additional empirical data on the issue is relevant to academics as well as policy makers.

**Purpose statement**
The purpose of this study is to answer the question: how are mainstream parties’ political positions changed after a Populist Radical Right Party enters parliament? In order to examine this, I use the case of Sweden and the entry of the Sweden democrats into parliament in 2010. Considering that Sweden has a history of immigration not being a heavily politicised topic and the strong reaction by the mainstream parties towards the Sweden democrats this case is expected to be a least likely case. Thus, the research question as it pertains to this specific case can be phrased as follows: how have the attitudes of the mainstream parties in the immigration and refugee debate changed after the Sweden democrats entered parliament? To answer this question, I make use of the theoretical concept of discourse coalitions and operationalise these through network methodology. Thus, four hypotheses can be formulated in terms of how the discourse coalitions are expected to change. Firstly, if the Sweden democrats have an impact, we can expect the mainstream discourse coalition to become either increasingly fragmented or move closer to their position altogether. Secondly, we can expect the challenging discourse coalition presented by the Sweden democrats to grow as parties move closer to their position. The hypotheses are fully presented in the theory section further below.

While there are studies thus far which either utilise networks when studying the populist radical right, examine the impact of it on parliamentary parties and party systems or apply network methodology to parliamentary debates, these are seldom combined. This study attempts to measure the impact of populist radical right parties by examining the relational and reactional nature of debates. While party manifestoes have been examined, looking at debates offers the advantage of having a debate in which party representatives can react to one another.
This can advantageously be analysed with fairly new method within network studies called discourse network analysis. This tool allows the user to examine relations between two variables, in this case parties and their attitudes towards central themes in parliamentary debates. By extension this also shows how parties relate to one another through the language that they use in the debates.

This thesis uses a standard structure with the first section situating it within the existing literature. This is then followed by sections on theory, research design, results as well as a discussion. It then ends with a concluding section. The previous literature focuses on primarily two areas, Populist Radical Right Parties and Discourse Network Analysis as well as the intersection between them. The theory draws heavily on the concept of discourse coalitions, coalitions formed around a shared set of views. These are operationalised by using discourse network analysis on the debates on immigration and refugees in the Swedish parliament. The findings indicate that there has been a change in the parliamentary debates, however, they are not causal and are burdened by low amounts of data as well as outside effects such as the 2015 refugee crisis.

**Previous literature**
The literature surrounding this paper comes chiefly from two domains. Since it unites the usage of Discourse Network Analysis (DNA) as a method with the study of Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) both areas need some introduction. In short, the usage of network analysis has been given newfound interest since the rise and proliferation of computers, online social networks and digitalised data (DiMaggio 2011). Discourse network analysis is a fairly new type of method which utilises network theory to map out discourses. Moreover, the rise of populist radical right parties in Europe has been studied for some time but still require more empirical data, with many questions still left unanswered (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2011). Although there is some overlap between the usage of network analysis and study of the far right, this is arguably an underutilised combination of method and subject1.

Despite having some to learn from the social movement literature (Williams 2006), the literature on populist radical right parties specifically has been covered by academics from various angles. Some have focused on how populist radical right parties affect other parties and party systems in general. In this strand of the literature, there is some disagreement as to the

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1 Studies of the far right as a social movement has utilised network methodology to some extent yet the same cannot be said for the study of populist radical right parties specifically.
actual impact these parties have on the politics of their respective societies. Some argue that they do not have a major impact on party systems (Mudde 2014) while others disagree (Shain 2006, Pellikaan et al. 2018) and yet others distinguish between different aspects having different effects. For instance, Rooduijn et al. (2014) does not find that populism as such is contagious, while van Spanje (2010) suggests that anti-immigration is. The latter is supported by Bolin et al. (2014) with the addition that impact is contingent on the newcomers assuming a balance of power role. Harmel and Svåsand (1997) make the observation that influence on other parties is contingent on the difference in electoral wins and losses. This is partially supported by Han (2015) which suggests that left-wing MPs will be impacted if their party lost more votes than their right-wing counterparts in the latest election.

Furthermore, there is a considerable strand of the literature that emphasises party strategies in the electoral success or failure of new parties (Meguid 2005, Dahlström and Esaiasson 2011). Heinze (2018) dives deeper into the different types of strategies available to mainstream parties and underlines that disengagement or engagement comes at different rates depending on the national context. It has also been found that western mainstream parties use a taming tactic by adopting harsher anti-immigration stances, effectively mainstreaming radical parties (Minkenberg 2013). On the contrary, Dahlström and Sundell (2012) finds a legitimising effect when all parties opt for stricter immigration policies.

The issue of populist radical right party success has also been tackled from a different angle by adding salience to issue ownership theory. Bélanger and Meguid (2008) as well as Rydgren (2010) emphasise the importance of issue salience for voters in party success. Additional topics such as who votes for PRRPs, what makes people vote for them and the effects of their own tactics on electoral success (Sannerstedt 2015, Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2016, Loxbo 2015) have also been examined.

The overlap between studies of populist radical right parties and network analysis seemingly lies more towards the far right in a broader perspective as a social movement and the usage of social media. For instance, Froio (2018) as well as Froio and Ganesh (2019) examine far right groups’ usage of social media and websites by combining frame analysis with social network analysis. Similar studies have been made which examine hate-speech (David and Matamoros-Fernández 2016), diasporas (Leidig 2019) and behaviour (Mittendorf and Schmale 2018) of the far right on social media platforms.

The difference between most of these papers and this one lies in that they utilise different types of network analysis. The majority of the papers presented here rely on Social Network Analysis (SNA) to create networks over who is in contact with whom. For instance,
categorising networks of far-right organisations in different countries (Caiani et al. 2012) or online political communication (Borondo et al. 2014). The difference between social- and discourse networks lies in what constitutes the networks. While social networks tend to focus on actors’ relationships to one another, discourse networks focus on actors’ attitudes to specific questions as well as the statements that they make in a debate. Still, some degree of overlap and mislabelling between the two may exist.

Discourse networks can be utilised to examine policy change and various characteristics of policy debates. One of its uses is that it allows the author to map out a debate, showing who takes part in it. This has been done in regard to democratic deficits and protests against megaprojects (Nagel and Satoh 2018) as well as for public debates on health-related regulation such as the Minimal Pricing Unit debate in Scotland (Fergie et al. 2018). Others have used similar debates on sugar taxes to go even further and have shown the centrality of certain types of actors in such debates (Buckton et al. 2019). Such findings have been made in debates connected more closely to parliament as well, with the finding that think-tanks can play a significant role in the shaping of policies (Pautz 2017).

In addition to mapping out policy debates, discourse network analysis has been used to examine what makes some discourse coalitions successful while others fail. More specifically, this has been examined in the context of the European parliament (Leifeld and Haunss 2012), the German parliament (Leifeld 2013) as well as regarding gun control (Hurka and Nebel 2013). Efforts have also been made to use this tool in combination with the concept of critical junctures by examining what conditions are required for policy change after critical junctures such as the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster (Rinscheid et al. 2019). More closely to how it is used in this paper, Steinfeld (2016) used it to examine themes used by party leaders online in Israeli election campaigns and concluded that those themes matched the respective parties’ stances in parliament. In this strand of the literature the common theme seems to be the focus on discourse coalitions, yet they can still be improved upon.

As a concluding note on discourse network analysis it should be said that it is a new enough tool that there does not seem to be any major dividing lines between styles of practice, or which theoretical background should be used. However, such divides may evolve over time as an increasing number of academics apply it in various fields. As an example of a possible future dividing line between theoretical approaches one can compare the concepts of Discourse Coalitions with the Advocacy Coalition Framework. In this paper I rely on discourse coalitions rather than advocacy coalitions as a theoretical foundation. This does not mean that the advocacy coalition framework does not have its uses for discourse network analysis. Rather,
discourse coalitions are a better fit for the purpose of this study due to its good fit for debates with few coalitions and focus on shared story lines. These will be further developed below but can shortly be summarised as shared understandings of an issue from multiple angles.

To the best of my knowledge, there seems to be a lack of intersection between the theoretical concept of discourse coalitions, relations through debate, discourse network analysis and the study of populist radical right parties. This, together with the overall need for more empirical evidence, suggest that the present paper starts to fill a gap in the existing literature. Thus, the biggest contribution of the paper lies in the usage of underutilised theoretical conceptualisations and more importantly their operationalisation through recent methodological tools.

**Theory**

In this section I will develop the theoretical base of the paper and expand on the relevant concepts. First, the argumentative turn and the concepts of discourse coalitions and story lines will be explained. Afterwards, populist radical right parties will be defined and their possible effects will be discussed. Lastly, the hypotheses are presented and summarised in terms of network theoretical concepts which are explained through an example network. Since this is an attempt to examine the changes in the immigration and refugee debate in parliament using discourse network analysis, the theoretical background is mainly built on theories of discourse coalitions. More specifically, I rely heavily on the theories developed by Maartin Hajer. They are not the only theories on discourses and coalition formation, but they provide a good basis for this paper. This will then be related and applied to populist radical right parties and network analysis. In short, I hope to examine how parliamentary debates change after the entry of populist radical right parties. This is an attempt to provide empirical evidence to the broader literature on what effects such parties might have on other parties by answering the question of how mainstream parties’ political positions change after a populist radical right party enters parliament.

**The argumentative turn and discourse coalitions**

In short, the move in political- and social science that is called the argumentative turn can be seen as a move from viewing language as a passive tool to seeing it as something which simultaneously sets the boundaries for what can be said (Fisher and Forester 1993: 2-3). It finds its roots in thinkers such as Foucault and Habermas (Nagel and Satoh 2019: 1686) yet has since
been developed in different directions. Although this paper could have been fruitful even without ascribing language such influence it becomes much more so when thinking of language as both tools and limitations. As a part of the argumentative turn, Hajer built on previous writers such as Billig and Harré as well as Foucault (Hajer 1997: 4). The perhaps biggest addition made by Harré and Billig to the work of Foucault is the move in focus to the agency of the individual and the interaction between individuals.

According to the argumentative turn in general, and Hajer in particular, language is what allows individuals to consider certain possibilities and make sense of reality in different ways (Hajer 2005: 343). If no one mentions immigration as connected to crime rates in the public debate, we are less likely to think of it or even associate the two. However, once we have been told that it is immigration that causes an increase in crime, we will be able to make sense of various situations with this explanation. Hajer uses the example of dead trees in the debate on acid rain. Where people first thought of dead trees as being caused by disease and bad luck, and rain as something life-giving, they changed their minds after hearing of acid rain. This meant that the dead trees became symbols of pollution and the rain became understood as something unhealthy (Hajer 1993: 44). The point here is that only after being introduced to a certain way of talking and talking about an issue could they formulate a criticism against it. Whether these explanations are factually correct or not does not have to affect how they are used. As long they are perceived as true enough to be believable, they can be adopted.

Moreover, Hajer takes the combination of social interaction and discourse further by developing or improving on a number of concepts. Firstly, it should be noted that discourse here is not used as in everyday language. In order to clarify I will use the example examined in this paper. Discourse, in Hajer’s eyes is narrower than the way it is commonly used. For instance, within the discussion on immigration, there are multiple aspects, each being covered by its separate discourse. There is an economic discourse (what are the costs of immigration), a moral discourse (do they have a right to shelter) as well as a political discourse (what measures should be taken). Together these separate discourses constitute the discussion on immigration, meaning that it is interdiscursive (Hajer 1997: 4). In everyday terms the word discourse as it is used here could be seen as different aspects of a debate.

According to Hajer’s theory of discourse analysis, the different sides in a discussion form separate discourse coalitions. These coalitions consist of people that ascribe themselves to the same storylines. These two concepts, storylines and discourse coalitions, are central to the theory and are highly applicable to the usage of discourse network analysis. Although being
introduced by Davies and Harré, they have since been improved by others (Hajer 1997: 11). In order to explain the coalitions, we first need to understand storylines.

Storylines are simplifications of arguments used in discussions in order to make the world more understandable (Ibid). According to Hajer they are “a generative sort of narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena” (Hajer 1997: 11). In other words, storylines can span multiple discourses and are used to make sense of the world. The contrasts between two storylines can for instance be seen in the different arguments put forward regarding immigration and its consequences. One might argue that immigration is good for a country’s economy as well as its culture, while the other claims that it hollows out the nation and ruins the economy. Both storylines here invoke arguments regarding the economy as well as culture, thus creating an interdiscursive explanation.

Painting with broad strokes one could say that one side argues that immigration is a matter of human rights and that there is a responsibility to be taken by the host nation, that immigration enriches the host countries and that it is beneficial to the economy. The other side would argue more or less the opposite, that most immigrants are not in dire need, that immigration is a threat to the culture of the host society if not constrained to some extent and that the costs of immigration leave others wanting. The point of these examples is to show that storylines are to some extent the package deal of the argumentative world, you get a bundle of simplifications to help you understand certain phenomena.

What then, marks a truly successful storyline? In short, storylines are successful once they become institutionalised. This happens only after they become dominant enough to persuade or force themselves upon the central actors in the discussion. Additionally, this must then be practically implemented in the practice of the specific policy area (Hajer 1993: 47-48). In this paper we will get an indication of the success of the different storylines driven in the Swedish parliament. Moreover, storylines allow people to position themselves and form an understanding of complex phenomena together with others that carry similar perceptions of those phenomena. These clusters of people that reproduce and agree with the same storylines constitute discourse coalitions.

The two storyline examples can be said to represent two separate discourse coalitions that disagree with one another. In public debates, coalitions can be represented by individual politicians, political parties, journalists and newspapers as well as think-tanks and other types of organisations. Discourse coalitions are not necessarily in complete agreement on every detail but have to agree in broader issues by definition. For instance, the members of a discourse
coalition might agree on what needs to be done, even if they have different reasons for why. Weaker coalitions in terms of agreement seem to have a reduced chance of success, however, even when they contain powerful actors in the debate (Leifeld and Haunss 2012: 398).

Discourse coalition theory as presented by Hajer is not the only suitable theoretical framework for theorising coalitions in policy debates. The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) put forward by Sabatier is sometimes used in combination with discourse network analysis (Leifeld 2013: 169). The difference between these frameworks lies in what they emphasise, with the advocacy coalition framework focusing on change in belief within coalitions while discourse coalition theories tend to look at storylines and persuasion across coalitions. In short, the former focuses on change within coalitions and actors’ stances on multiple issues, while the latter uses change between coalitions and single issues with several justifications (Leifeld 2016: 3). For the sake of this paper, it is more appropriate to rely on discourse coalition theory since the focus here is change between coalitions and a single issue with clear storylines competing for control. Still, applying the advocacy coalition framework to examine why parties change their attitudes could prove a fruitful addition to the literature.

Discourse coalitions are operationalised using network theory and will be explained with their connection to specific network measurements further below. On a less specific level we can expect discourse coalitions to take different shapes depending on the impact of the populist radical right party, the Sweden democrats. Firstly, if they manage to impact all or most parties to a position where they agree or at the least no longer disagree with them, they will to some extent become part of a majority discourse coalition. Adversely, if they have no impact, they will remain isolated or loosely connected to the main discourse coalition, with most parties disagreeing with them and none to few sharing their attitudes. However, if they have an impact on only a few parties, the main discourse coalition will be at least partially fragmented while the challenging discourse coalition, that of the Sweden democrats, may grow. Still, it should be pointed out that there is a caveat here. That a party leaves their existing discourse coalition does not mean per definition that they join another one. Additionally, even if they move closer to another discourse coalition, they do not have to share all of its convictions. For instance, two parties can view immigration as something positive for different reasons. This will be further discussed in the section on research design and data selection as the issue is directly affected by how statements were coded.
**Populist Radical Right Parties**
In this section populist radical right parties will be defined, and their prospective success or failure will be expanded upon. In short, the existing literature suggests that the strategies employed by the other parties has an effect on populist radical right parties’ success but that their own capacity and strategy has a role to play as well. As was mentioned earlier, the findings on populist radical right parties differ significantly between articles based on what method is used and how the components are measured. Differences in what counts as populist or anti-immigrant etc have effects on which cases are included or excluded, as do the effects which are examined (Mudde 2014: 223). In general, however, the effects of these parties seem to be conditioned on a number of factors such as the strategies adopted by the other parties in dealing with them, electoral success and organisational capacity of the party itself (Heinze 2018, Harmel and Svåsand 1997, Loxbo 2015).

The definition of Populist Radical Right Parties used in this paper relies heavily on what is laid out by Mudde (2007: chapters 1 and 2, 2014: 217-218). Additionally, the lists of parties provided by Mudde (2007: Appendix A) and Akkerman et al. (2016: 2) provide guidance, although they vary slightly as to which parties are included. The core definition of populist radical right parties surrounds three concepts: authoritarianism, nativism and populism (Mudde 2014: 218). Naturally, as the definition must be broad enough to include multiple parties, these concepts must be conceptualised as existing on a spectrum. The common denominator between the parties defined as belonging to the party group is found in that they to some extent are authoritarian, nativist and populist.

Authoritarian is here used in the strict sense of a focus on law and order within society through discipline. It does not necessarily mean that the parties are anti-democratic. On the contrary, the populism aspect here implies the conception of society as being divided between the corrupt elite and the people. The goal from this point of view is for politics to follow the will of the people rather than the interests of the establishment. Lastly, nativist is defined as the identification of a homogenous native people being under threat by non-natives. In other words, this is “a xenophobic form of nationalism” (Mudde 2014: 218). In contrast to some forms of nationalism, this is by definition anti-immigration.

The fact that parties which follow this definition can stand more or less towards the extreme end means that a number of parties of varying extremity fall under the same categorisation. Still, while this should be kept in mind, the similarities seem to outweigh the differences. In the lists created by Mudde (2007) and Akkerman et al. (2016), there are some discrepancies which stem from the years in which they were created and the timespan that they
cover, 1980-2005 and 1990-2015 respectively. Additionally, the latter focus on western Europe specifically while the former includes all of Europe. Still, both lists largely overlap, including staple cases such as the French FN, Austrian FPÖ and Swiss SVP (Mudde 2007: Appendix A, Akkerman et al. 2016: 2). Thus, they act as guiding lights for what constitutes populist radical right parties. Lastly, it should also be mentioned that while these parties exist in many countries, the populist radical right as a social movement can exist without being represented by political parties and also act in conjunction with or independently of such parties. However, this study strictly focuses on the populist radical right in political parties, and as such does not take into consideration the existence of non-party actors.

Crudely described, as a reaction to populist radical right parties, other parties tend to take on one of the two following strategies: engagement, disengagement. Engagement here means that the mainstream parties see the newcomer as a viable coalition partner and someone that can be bargained with like any other party. Disengagement on the other hand is the avoidance or discontinuation of cooperation once such relations have been established (Heinze 2018: 288). Avoiding a party can be done in multiple ways. For instance, the other parties may simply choose not to deal with the issues that the populist radical right party brings up. Additionally, they can ignore the party altogether which is often called the cordon sanitaire in the literature. This is simply trying to ostracise the radical party by not dealing with them, viewing them as unfit for collaboration (Heinze 2018: 289).

Which of these strategies is implemented varies depending on the specific national context as well as the party in question. For instance, the Nordic countries have had different experiences in dealing with populist radical right parties since the history of the different parties varies, as does the degree to which immigration has been a central political topic. This means that Sweden, where the newcomers Sverigedemokraterna, the Sweden democrats, have their origins in racist and neo-Nazi movements has seen a different strategy among mainstream parties than their neighbouring counterparts. This has been further strengthened by the fact that immigration has not been the focus of political debate prior to the electoral success of the Sweden democrats (Heinze 2018: 305, Rydgren 2010: 61-62). To further clarify, the mainstream parties in Denmark engaged fairly quickly with the Danish Peoples Party, Danske Flockhart, since immigration was a more salient topic in general and the origins of the DPP were neo-liberal (Heinze 2018: 305).

Naturally, the rate of success among these strategies varies depending on how they are measured and what data is being used. In order to increase comparability, some have used municipal elections and found that the impact of populist radical right parties on immigration
policy is contingent on them gaining a balance of power position where they can leverage their position to gain influence (Bolin et al. 2014: 336-337). Additionally, this impact does not seem to be differing between left- and right-leaning parties although the mainstream right tends to be slightly stricter on immigration policy (Ibid, Dahlström and Sundell 2012: 361).

When mainstream parties do attempt to deal with the pressure from these anti-immigration parties by adopting tougher stances on immigration, a legitimising effect can be seen when all mainstream parties take part (Dahlström and Sundell 2012: 361). This effect is not seen when single parties change their stance, a majority of parties must change their policies. However, it should be mentioned that these studies, although using comparable elections, are limited to a single country. For the purposes of this study this is not a detriment as they use Swedish municipal elections, but it should be noted that the legitimising effect might not be as strong in other countries where immigration traditionally has been more on the agenda.

Moreover, populist radical right parties are not left entirely to the elements of the political system. Their own actions and organisational capabilities affect their influence and success as well (Loxbo 2015: 184-185). This is demonstrated when comparing the existence of anti-immigration sentiments in the Swedish population, the use of a cordon sanitaire tactic by the mainstream parties and the growth of the Sweden Democrats. Despite the ignore tactic seemingly having worked in the earlier days of the Sweden Democrats and the short-lived Ny Demokrati, New Democracy, during the 1990’s and early 2000’s it has later been used by the Sweden Democrats to galvanise voters to their cause (Ibid).

Lastly, the findings regarding the impact of populist radical right parties on party systems vary depending on what effects are examined. This is to some extent explained by the differences in definition of the parties included which has an impact on what cases are included and excluded (Mudde 2014: 223). While they have been found to have no impact on the larger level of party interaction and party system, for instance moving from bipolar to multiparty system (Ibid), there are those that argue that they have made an impact simply by their presence and bringing immigration on the agenda (Van Spanje 2010, Shain 2006). This effect seems to be relying on their electoral success and has a greater impact on parties in opposition since parties in government are less flexible in adapting their policies (Van Spanje 2010: 568). Interestingly, it should be noted that the direction of influence is not unidirectional. According to Rooduijn et al. (2014: 569), populist parties, both left and right, tend to tone down their populist rhetoric as they enter parliament.
Network theory
Below I explain the basics of some network concepts through a fictional example network and then state the hypotheses and how they relate to the different network concepts. As is mentioned above, the theory behind this paper is rooted in two different theoretical spheres: discourse coalition theory and theories on the impacts of populist radical right parties. These are then complemented by network measurements such as degree- and betweenness centrality as well as network density. While these measurements are helpful in operationalising the expected outcome, the expectations can be formulated in terms of discourse coalitions as well. Roughly, the dominant discourse coalition can be expected to become increasingly fragmented if there is a change in party positions. Meanwhile, the challenging discourse coalition is expected to grow.

Firstly, a brief introduction to networks in general as well as some of their central concepts is in order. Although there are different types of networks, all networks consist of nodes and edges. These can be thought of as islands and bridges in an archipelago where some islands are connected to one another and some are not. Each node in this case is an island and the edges correspond to bridges connecting two nodes (Robins 2015: 5). In the case studied in this paper, statements by the parties are represented by nodes. Edges are connections between the parties’ statements based on their relation to themes. In congruence networks, if two parties talk about the same theme in the same way, they are connected through an edge. In other words, edges symbolise agreement between parties (Leifeld et al. 2018: 3). In conflict networks, edges represent disagreement between parties, meaning that parties will be connected if they disagree on one or more themes (Ibid). Still, there are additional types of networks where edges can have multiple meanings, thus being able to show ambiguity within the network. In short, these are called two-mode networks and allow for more complexity than congruence or conflict networks by showing both agreement and disagreement between specific nodes and themes in the same network. These will be elaborated on in the research design section.

In the simplified example network below we see that there are four nodes and four edges connecting the nodes. This is a congruence network; each edge symbolises agreement on a theme by the nodes which are statements by the party representatives in this case. We can see that there are three parties, Socialdemokraterna, Vänsterpartiet and Moderaterna, that relate positively to the same theme. Additionally, Moderaterna and Sverigedemokraterna also relate positively to another theme. We know that this is a different theme since Sverigedemokraterna is only connected to Moderaterna and not to any of the others.
What then, are the measurements that we can get from the network in order to say something about the debate? There are a number of useful measurements in a network which can be used to indicate how nodes relate to one another and what positions they take in the debate. Firstly, how much activity there is in the network is called density (Robins 2015: 23). This is represented by a number between 0 and 1, indicating how many connections there are out of all possible connections. The density of the network in figure 1 is 0.67, meaning that most but not all connections are made. SD could connect to S and V as well, meaning that 4 out of 6 possible connections are present.

Similar to density, degree centrality indicates how much of the network density is connected to a specific node. In the case above, M has the highest degree since it has the most connections, SD has the lowest and S and V lie in between with the same degree. Once we know the degree of the nodes, we can use this to calculate degree centrality for each of them. That means that we can calculate who is the most connected in the network (Ibid). Another measurement of centrality examines which node has the most paths of shortest distance, called geodesics, running through them. This is called betweenness centrality and is useful for showing who is connected to the most parties that are not connected to other parties (Robins 2015: 26). In the case above, the only node that connects nodes which are otherwise not connected is Moderaterna since it connects Vänsterpartiet and Socialdemokraterna with Sverigedemokraterna.

Another useful set of concepts are cliques and cohesive subsets. In short, a clique is a subset of nodes, all of which are connected to one another. In the case above S, V and M constitute a clique since they are all connected. Cohesive subsets are groups of nodes that have
significantly higher density than the rest of the network but where all nodes are not necessarily connected (Ibid). In this case we can expect each storyline to be represented by a cohesive subset or a clique. Consequently, if the other parties move towards the storyline of SD it can be expected that all other parties are connected in a single clique or cohesive subset with SD as a relative outcast. As time goes on, parties more to the right are expected to move closer to SD, resulting in either two subsets with more left-leaning parties in one and the more right-leaning in the other.

In order to know how parties have changed their political positions and discourse coalitions have changed their constellations we must measure said change. For this purpose, four hypotheses have been developed, all of which utilise slightly different ways of measuring change in how the parties relate to one another through the bigger themes in the debate. In short, the four hypotheses which are summarised in table 1 below are different ways of measuring the level of unity and fragmentation within the discourse coalitions.

As the cordon sanitaire, exclusion tactic, together with the issue being non-politicised suggest that the Sweden democrats will be alone in their discourse coalition at least in the earlier years we can expect them to initially be isolated from the rest of the parties. However, if there is a change in the positions of the other parties the Sweden democrats could become less isolated, with two more distinct discourse coalitions forming. Even if the challenging discourse coalition does not grow, there could still be change in terms of fragmentation within the ruling one. For instance, if right-leaning parties are more likely to change in the direction of a populist radical right party, as has been suggested (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2011: 345), we could expect the Conservatives and or the Christian democrats to move away from the main coalition, making it increasingly fragmented. Simultaneously, they could move closer to the discourse coalition upheld by the Sweden democrats. From a theoretical standpoint it is worth mentioning that two parties can make arguments of the same type based on different ideas. This applies to both discourse coalitions.

Taking the theoretical background into consideration, we can expect these measurements to follow certain patterns. Most of the measurements can be expected to be reversed when moving from a congruence to a conflict network. The logic here is that parties that agree on one theme are less likely to disagree on another. Still, there can be exceptions. In order to keep the hypotheses more consistent, they will be formulated based on how the measurements are expected to change, should there be a change after the Sweden democrats enter the parliament. However, since adding a new node to the networks can affect the measurements regardless if the previously existing nodes change their attitudes or not, the null
hypotheses will have to be briefly elaborated as well. Even though the Sweden democrats are included as an isolate in the 2008 and 2009 networks, once they start forming connections these will affect some of the measurements even if the other parties do not change their positions. Lastly, due to the low level of politization in the topic, a low level of disagreement and a high level of agreement can be expected at least before the 2010 election when the Sweden democrats entered the parliament.

While the network terms are effective for operationalisation and measurements, they still rely on the theoretical concepts developed above. For discourse coalitions, hypothesis 1 would mean that the ruling coalition becomes less united and has an increasing number of disagreements. Following what was said above, the parties that are most likely to move closer to the Sweden democrats are the Conservatives and the Christian democrats. This could result in a more even balance between the two discourse coalitions which might manifest itself as two distinct subgroups in the network as discussed further below in hypothesis 2.

Density in congruence networks is expected to decrease as the debate becomes increasingly polarised, meaning that fewer connections between nodes are made. An example of this would be if another party agrees less with the remaining parties, reducing the percentage of possible connections. For instance, if the Conservatives no longer agree with any of the other original parties in parliament, the number of edges is reduced. This applies even if they start agreeing with the Sweden democrats. For conflict networks the level of density is expected to increase since an increased polarisation would lead to an increase in disagreement, meaning that there would be more connections in this network type. These changes in density in both congruence and conflict networks are labelled hypothesis 1 and is summarised in table 1 below. The null hypothesis for this situation is a slight to no increase in density for congruence networks as little agreement is expected to be found between the two discourse coalitions. For conflict networks the null hypothesis is a sharp increase in density in 2010 which then remains stable. This is due to an expectation of little disagreement before 2010 when the Sweden democrats enter parliament and no longer have an isolate position per definition.

With the changes in density expected in hypothesis 1 we can expect two more distinct groups forming. These are likely either cohesive subgroups or cliques\(^2\) and are network manifestations of the discourse coalitions. Considering the disengagement tactic employed by the other parties the subgroups are expected to remain unequal in size. Even if the Sweden

\(^2\) Clique being subgroups in a network where all nodes are connected and cohesive subgroups having the same function but having slightly fewer connections.
democrats are joined by the Conservatives and the Christian democrats that discourse coalition would have a smaller manifestation.

Thus, Hypothesis 2, in terms of cliques and cohesive subgroups in congruence networks, suggests that a move from a single cohesive group towards at least two subgroups should be expected. If, as was mentioned before, right-leaning parties tend to be stricter on immigration we should expect them to be more likely to form a new cohesive subgroup together with the Sweden democrats as the issue becomes increasingly politicised. For conflict networks we are unlikely to see cohesive subgroups since the themes used in the coding are broad, and thus does not allow for much nuance such as disagreement between smaller groups on more specific topics. The null opposite of the congruence network would result in one cohesive subgroup with most parties in it and the Sweden democrats as loosely connected or an isolate. For conflict networks this would be the reverse, with the Sweden democrats being central while other parties have few connections among one another.

While previous hypotheses have focused more on the general structure of the networks, hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4 focus on specific measurements of individual nodes. Since the existing literature suggests that the Conservatives and the Christian democrats are more likely to move closer to the Sweden democrats (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2011: 345), these are the parties that are mentioned here. However, the same principle for changes in the measurements apply to other parties as well, should they move closer to the challenging discourse coalitions. While this is expected to be reflected by the density in the networks as well as the cliques and subgroups, the individual measurements help substantiate these and provide data on how the relationships have changed for individual nodes. Individual members of the majority discourse coalition are expected to change their attitudes to different extents, with most of them not changing much. However, this means that the relationships between nodes through their attitudes to themes are expected to change with an emphasis on right-leaning parties.

Degree centrality in congruence networks is expected to increase for the Sweden democrats and decrease for any party that moves closer to their position. Thus, SD is expected to become more connected, while parties that increasingly agree with them are expected to agree less with the other parties, thus reducing the total number of connections that they make. For conflict networks, the reverse can be expected, with reduced levels of degree centrality for the Sweden democrats and increased ones for parties moving closer to them. If there is no change, the degree centrality for each node should not change significantly in either network.

As for betweenness centrality in congruence networks, it is expected to increase for any party that moves closer to the same type of rhetoric provided by the newcomer storyline. If it
is true that parties to the right have a higher tendency to move towards anti-immigration rhetoric, we would expect the Conservatives and the Christian democrats to increase in betweenness centrality, connecting the Sweden democrats to the other parties.

While these hypotheses are operationalised through networks, they still pertain to populist radical right parties as well as discourse coalitions. In general, if there is a change in political positions by the parties of the dominant discourse coalition, we can expect it to become less tightly knit, increasingly fragmented. This means that parties which once held the same positions agree on fewer points and might even start to disagree on some. This could also result in some of these parties having an increased level of agreement and a decreased level of disagreement with the Sweden democrats. In the example in figure 1 above this could be illustrated as the Social democrats no longer agreeing with the Leftists while simultaneously agreeing with the Sweden democrats.

Table 1: Summary of hypotheses and corresponding null hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Null hypotheses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 1</strong></td>
<td>Density decreases in congruence networks, increases in conflict networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 2</strong></td>
<td>Network moves from one cohesive subgroup to two distinct subgroups in congruence networks. No subgroups are expected in conflict networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 3</strong></td>
<td>Degree centrality in congruence networks increases for the Sweden democrats, parties moving closer to them decrease in degree centrality. The opposite is expected for conflict networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 4</strong></td>
<td>Betweenness centrality increases for parties that move closer to the Sweden democrats in congruence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
networks. It decreases for the Sweden democrats in conflict networks and increases for parties moving towards them.

Lastly, it should be reiterated that this study does not use experimental data. Despite the ability to operationalise discourse coalitions fairly well with the tools at hand, this study cannot make causal statements. Thus, even if there is an observable change in discourse coalitions as shown by both congruence and conflict networks this cannot be attributed directly to the entry into parliament by the Sweden democrats. Still, as there are theoretical grounds for such change to take place, it should not be discarded lightly.

**Research design**
In this section I motivate the case selection and explain how the data was collected and coded. Lastly, I explain the mathematical notations used to create the different types of networks. In order to examine whether parliamentary debates have changed in the last decade the case of the Sweden democrats’ entry into parliament was used. In short, a fairly recent addition to social science methodology was applied, namely discourse network analysis. It combines qualitative close readings of texts with network algorithms in order to map out debates. By applying network measurements to a close reading of a debate, valuable information on the relations between actors’ statements can be obtained. Thus, in this case the relationship between two parties can be gleaned through their statements on the same themes. Additionally, these measurements help visualise and to some extent quantify qualitative data that can otherwise be hard to demonstrate outside of verbal description.

**Case selection**
The reason for investigating parliamentary debates in the first place, stems from an interest in populist radical right parties and how they might wield their influence. While others have studied changes in party systems (Shain 2006, Mudde 2014) or party manifestoes (Roodujin et al. 2014) there seem to be less attention on parliamentary debates (Dahlstedt 2000). These are, however, no less important as they are essential parts of democracy at work.

The population from which this case was selected can be described as mainly western democracies with a populist radical right party in parliament. Although the author cannot speak
to how well results might transfer from a western to an eastern context, the differences in historical and political contexts should provide some caution when generalising. Even if focus is narrowed down to solely examining western democracies, quite the number of cases is available. The reasoning behind choosing Sweden over countries such as Austria, Norway or Switzerland who have seen more successful populist radical right parties (Akkerman et al. 2016: 2) comes chiefly from theoretical assumptions. In short, Sweden can to some extent be seen as a least-likely case due to its history of immigration as a non-politicised issue and heavy use of the disengage tactic by the other parties in parliament. In other words, there has not been a major challenger to the dominating storyline before the Sweden Democrats, outside of the temporary rise and fall of New Democracy in the 1990s.

One of the challenges facing populist radical right parties in Sweden is the cordon sanitaire. The active cordon sanitaire, quarantine tactic, employed by the rest of the parties suggests that Swedish parties are set to resist influence by the contending storyline. An example of this dynamic can be seen in how virtually all political parties thus far have openly refused to cooperate with the Sweden democrats (Heinze 2018: 299), limiting their opportunities to deal and bargain for influence. This has also been referenced in some of the debates, with the Sweden democrats referring to the rest of the parties in parliament as the seven-leaf clover (author’s translation). Another instance is the 2010 debate used in this paper where multiple members of parliament expressly distanced themselves from the Sweden democrats (Prot. 2010/11 96: 45).

Moreover, one of the conditions for the united front displayed by the other parties is arguably the non-politicised nature of immigration and migration until more recent years. Despite differences of opinion on the matter being present, the issue was overshadowed by classical left-right issues (Rydgren 2010: 67). Thus, no two distinct discourse coalitions were competing. This further suggests that a challenging coalition would have a harder time establishing itself. An example of this can be taken from the rise and fall of New democracy 1991-1994. The existence of this failed attempt by a populist radical right party further suggests that Sweden is a case with a fairly resilient discourse coalition and thus a least-likely case for influence by PRRPs. This means that if the debate changes significantly in Sweden, there might be reason to expect similar results in other countries. That being said, the generalisability of this study carries significant limitations.

Lastly, since it may be helpful for interpreting the results, a few words should be said about party cultures in this specific case. Different parties have different levels of hierarchical strictness, meaning that some parties require its members to stick closer to the party line than
others. In short, the Left (Vänsterpartiet) and the Liberals (Liberalerna) together with the Greens (Miljöpartiet) distinguish themselves as parties where the individual has more room to diverge from the official party line. On the other hand, the Social democrats (Socialdemokraterna) and the Conservatives (Moderaterna) have stricter hierarchies and higher expectations of obedience from their members. The Sweden democrats (Sverigedemokraterna) lie in the same camp as the last two but are new enough that it is difficult to categorise them with certainty. The Christian democrats (Kristdemokraterna) and the Centrists (Centerpartiet) lean towards a hierarchical culture as well but not to the same extent as the Social democrats and the Conservatives (Barrling 2015: 66-74).

This all becomes relevant since it suggests that more dissention could be found in parties with less hierarchical structures. Although this paper does not seek to examine party culture as such, it is relevant to the theory insofar as it could help explain ambiguous results from certain parties. Thus, it is more likely that parties with less hierarchical cultures show signs of ambiguity, with statements both agreeing and disagreeing with the same theme.

Data collection
All data used in this paper comes from the Swedish parliament. Although it would have been possible to use newspaper articles, social media feeds or other sources, the debates in the chamber offer two distinct advantages. Firstly, the data is easily available for free and spans the entire period of interest. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, debates in parliament are interesting in themselves as they are a cornerstone of democracy. As such, there is an intrinsic value in understanding changes in such debates.

The data from the parliament website was collected by using a combination of search phrase, built-in filter functions and sorting on relevance. The website in question offers the opportunity to add ready-made filters for document type and year. This was used to narrow down the search to include only transcripts of debates in the chamber for each respective year between 2008 and 2019. For each year the search term `invandr* flykting` was used. This was concluded to be the best search term by comparing the results of a number of different yet similar search terms. The point of using search terms rather than focusing on specific recurring debates comes from the fact that this study focuses on how different parties relate to one another in the debate. Thus, that debates are as similar as possible is not as interesting as them being the focal points of debates surrounding immigration and refugees. For each year the top three

3 The English equivalent would roughly be `immigr* refugee`. 
documents ranked by relevance were downloaded since the author could not find information on exactly how the relevance function sorts the results. From these three transcriptions, the most suitable was chosen based on topic as well as the number of times they contained the search terms. The underlying idea behind this type of data collection is to provide an efficient way of reaching the relevant documents while not relying solely on search terms and filters. Since each debate takes a significant amount of time to code due to the close reading nature of discourse network analysis, it was important to supplement search terms and filters with common sense and background knowledge.

The coding itself was done through the programme Discourse Network Analysis (DNA) which is a software for qualitative content analysis that allows networks to be exported and used by other software such as Visone or Ucinet, as .csv files or directly through the rDNA package in R-studio (Leifeld et al. 2018: 1). DNA allows the coder to code the debate with a number of variables. In this case, four variables were used: person, organisation, theme and agreement. Person and organisation are here used to identify which individual, belonging to which party, made the statement. These are the nodes shown in the example network shown earlier. The themes are represented as edges, i.e. connections, if two nodes agree in the example congruence network. In short, the debates were coded by picking out statements by individual MPs which were then labelled by their name, party, the theme that it referred to and whether or not it agreed with the theme. Themes here mean categories that the statements fall into. An example can be seen in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Qualifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josefin Brink</td>
<td>Vänsterpartiet</td>
<td>Domestic Generosity</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Ekeroth</td>
<td>Sverigedemokraterna</td>
<td>Domestic Generosity</td>
<td>Disagreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to decide which themes to include, party manifestoes from the three most recent elections before 2010 as well as existing literature were consulted (SND 2019, Dahlstedt 2000, Dahlström 2004). This resulted in three themes: generosity, responsibility and threat. After test-coding with this coding scheme on the 2008 and 2010 debates it was decided to split generosity into domestic and international generosity. The themes are designed to capture and represent the broad strokes that exist within the debate on immigration and refugees. Thus, their purpose is to show what attitudes the different parties have towards immigration and refugees on a fundamental level. The perhaps most significant divide here is whether they argue
that Sweden should be a generous host country or not and if immigrants and refugees are thought of as a threat. In essence, they separate whether parties have a positive or negative disposition towards immigration, immigrants and refugees.

*Threat* was coded with agreement if the person making the statement stated that immigrants, refugees or other cultures were a threat to Sweden, the Swedish people or the Swedish culture. This resulted in a spectrum of statements, some which are clearer than others. In order to provide further transparency a number of examples of the different themes are included below, all of which are translated by the author. For instance, the following quote by William Petzäll (SD) from 2010 falls into the threat category quite distinctly.

“Swedish youths are exposed to anti-Swedishness in the shapes of racism, harassment, threats and assault. [...] Jews and Swedes are forces to flee within their own country because of the all too extensive Islamisation” (Prot. 2010/11 96:44)

Moreover, a statement was coded as disagreeing with the threat category if someone stated that they did not agree with someone that had just agreed with the threat category, if someone said that immigrants and refugees are needed or beneficial for Sweden or if they simply said that they do not pose a threat. For instance, Tobias Billström (M) stated that:

“Openness towards the rest of the world is important for Sweden. It is also a point of departure within Swedish migration policy that migration is something positive and good for our society” (Prot. 2012/13 65: 2)

The two concepts representing generosity of different types are intended to symbolise whether or not the person in question wants to see a more generous and humane policy. This could either be expressed by claiming that Sweden should adapt a humane policy towards immigrants, that Sweden should welcome more refugees or that more money should be spent on foreign aid. The reason why this was split into *domestic* and *international generosity* is largely driven by the fact that primarily the Sweden democrats champion spending more resources and energy on helping others abroad, rather than within Sweden. In short, they use a different definition of what a humane and generous immigration and refugee policy entails. As with all categories, these included some differences of opinion as well. For instance, Liselotte Olsson (V) expresses agreement with the domestic generosity category in her statement below while Erik Almqvist’s (SD) represent the international generosity category.
“The left wants to have a humane migration policy. An expanded opportunity to come to Sweden to work is a part of this” (Prot. 2008/09 47: 76)

“The Sweden democrats’ point of departure for the refugee policy is that Sweden ought to help as many refugees as possible with the resources that we have available. A clear example of efficient refugee help is the action taken by the UN refugee agency” (Prot. 2010/11 96: 52)

Alternatively, a statement was coded with disagreement if the speaker expressly said that there should be fewer immigrants coming to Sweden, that Sweden should not have a humane immigration policy or cut foreign aid. An example can be found in the following statement by Richard Jomshof (SD).

“We do not solve any issues by the swing door politics that you represent. We need to reduce the inflow [of refugees] to Sweden” (Prot. 2010/11 96: 37)

Lastly, responsibility was coded to include a different aspect of immigration, namely integration. Responsibility here indicates that individuals, i.e. immigrants, should take responsibility. In short, it is somewhat of a third direction and a step between generosity and threat. Statements were coded as agreeing with responsibility if they suggested that immigrants as individuals should take more responsibility, or that the state should demand more responsibility from immigrants. It was coded as disagreement if a statement explicitly claimed that less responsibility should be put on the individual or if it disagreed with measures that put more responsibility on the individual such as language requirements. Michael Svensson (M) demonstrates the responsibility theme when discussing integration.

“Requirements shall be set, and crime shall be fought – just as for everyone else in Sweden” (Prot. 2010/11 10: 28)

Most of the examples used above are clear-cut in which theme they relate to and whether they agree or disagree. However, there were some cases that required an even closer reading and the text surrounding the statement had to be taken into consideration. Even though the part that was coded may have covered only a few rows of text, the entierity of that speech
and sometimes even the previous and following speeches. An example of this type of ambiguous statement can be seen below by David Lång (SD) 2012.

“We cannot continue being the country that allows its population to be burdened by a laxer legislation than our neighbouring countries. To receive a residence permit a minimum age of 24 years should be imposed in order for spouses, and by extension equals, to be reunited […] They should also take full responsibility for supporting the person seeking to immigrate and additionally pay a base value as a contribution for the state’s expenses for the husband’s or wife’s Swedish education and for other adaptation fees.” (Prot. 2011/12 120: 84)

The difficulty with this quote and the text surrounding it lies in that it combines disagreement with *domestic generosity* and agreement with *responsibility*. It becomes difficult to see where one ends and the other begins. In this specific case the decision was made to code it as agreement with *responsibility* due to the fact that the same person had made a previous statement disagreeing with *domestic generosity* already. In other words, coding statements of multiple different themes was prioritised. If there had not been a previous statement made in the other category the quote above could have been split into two or simply coded with an overlap in order to demonstrate that the same statement fell into more than one theme.

Although it would have been possible to reduce the number of years included in the study and instead focus on a more detailed description of each debate by including more themes, that was deemed less fruitful. As the goal of the study is to examine relationships between parties rather than what type of rhetoric is used, or which specific arguments are favoured, it was decided that larger themes would be more useful. With smaller, more specific themes, the risk of an intelligible level of detail increases as the shared storylines become blurred. For a more dramatic visualisation, think of the difference between standing very close to a painting and standing at a comfortable distance. In other words, to best capture the competing storylines, it was deemed necessary to use a coarser description of the debate. Another aspect to this is the time it takes to manually code a debate. With additional themes the time required for each debate would have increased significantly, reducing the number of debates and thus introducing other issues.

**Mathematical notations**
The networks used in this paper rely on similar yet different underlying algorithms. In this section the mathematical formulas are explained in order to show how networks are created. In
short, the equation for each network consists of two parts, one of which determines normalisation while the other determines which nodes are connected by which themes based on what qualifier. The qualifier is whether or not two nodes agree on the same theme and to what extent (Leifeld et al. 2018: 3-5). Since this paper only uses a binary qualifier, agreement and disagreement, only equations for binary qualifiers will be explained here. In order to reduce complexity, we will explore networks with no normalisation at first.

The first network is the congruence network. This is the type of network that was used as an example in the theory section. In a congruence network, two nodes are connected if they agree on the same theme. For instance, the Liberals and the Left parties might both disagree with the idea that immigrants pose a threat to Swedish society. Their representative nodes would then be connected in the network. The same goes for if they agree with a theme, such as being generous domestically. This takes the form of the following equation:

\[ Y_{i'i}^{\text{Congruence Binary}} = \Phi_{i'i} \left( \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{ijk}X_{i'jk} \right) \]

In this equation, \( Y \) is the output matrix that we want to produce by changing \( X \) which is a “three-dimensional array representing statement counts” (Leifeld et al. 2018: 5). Three-dimensional here means that it uses three axels with two variables as well as a qualifier. The first variable used in this paper are the political parties in the Swedish parliament\(^4\). The second variable consists of the four themes used to code the debate e.g. domestic generosity or threat. The qualifier in this case a binary coded as either agreement or disagreement. Thus, these are the three dimensions on which each statement is coded with a value depending on which party is represented, which theme is invoked and whether the statement is in agreement or disagreement with said theme.

\( Y \) is here followed by text in order to clarify what type of network is being produced. The \( i \) in this equation is a specific value of the first variable, in other words the node to which others might have a relationship. These others are represented by \( i' \), meaning all nodes that are not \( i \). The normalisation is represented by \( \Phi_{i'i} \) and consists of varying equations depending on the type of normalisation, which will be further developed below. The second variable is

\(^4\) The statements made by individual members of parliament taken together to represent parties to be precise.
denominated by \( j \), which in this paper are themes. As such, \( X_{ijk} \) indicates how the specific node relates to a certain theme by agreement or disagreement. Due to the binary nature of \( k \) in this case, it can only take values of 0 and 1, indicating disagreement or agreement. If two nodes have the same value of \( k \) for the same value of \( j \) they will be connected by an edge. The equation as a whole calculates the value of \( k \) for both \( i \) and \( i' \) for all values of \( j \), resulting in a connection when the value of \( k \) is identical (Leifeld et al. 2018: 5-7).

Conflict networks use the same notations as above and a similar equation. The major difference is the fact that \( k \) is separated in order to provide connections only where two nodes have different \( k \) values (Leifeld et al. 2018: 7). Conflict networks can be useful in order to show relationships that are not shown in congruence networks. For instance, in a congruence network, two parties may be connected due to agreement on one or two issues while having far stronger disagreements in others. Which issues are more important is up to theory and common sense to discern, however, painting the complete picture is a matter of proper network usage. The conflict network equation looks as follows:

\[
\gamma_{iit}'^{Conflict Binary} = \Phi_{ii'} \left( \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{ijk} X_{i'j',(1-k)} \right)
\]

Since the \((1 - k)\) is added, the end result will be that \( i \) and \( i' \) will not be connected unless they have different values of \( k \).

Normalisation is used to avoid having some very active nodes taking positions that are artefacts of a high level of activity rather than reflecting their true stances in the debate (Leifeld et al. 2018: 8). For instance, a debate where one node becomes connected to a large number of other nodes due to sheer levels of activity, i.e. making many statements, might look less polarised than it is. If that node is connected to most other nodes the network might take a shape that does not represents reality as well. Thus, normalisation is a way to reduce the influence of such nodes.

\[
\Phi_{ii'}^{Avg}(\omega) = \frac{\omega}{\frac{1}{2} \left( \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{ijk} + \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{i'jk} \right)}
\]
This average normalisation, seen above, works by dividing “each weight by the mean of the number of second-variable referrals of nodes $i$ and $i'$” (Leifeld et al. 2018: 8). This means that each $\omega$, weight, is divided by the average number of connections between first and second variables. In our particular case, this could be the average number of connections between parties and themes. In other words, this type of normalisation focuses on how much activity there is between each node and theme. In contrast, Jaccard normalisation takes into consideration not only cases where $i$ and $i'$ agree, but also activity in which they do not (Ibid). In other words, Jaccard normalisation is a wider type of normalisation which is more suitable for this case since we might expect parties being highly active without having high levels of agreement.\footnote{A final type of normalisation, cosine normalisation, is also possible but less suitable for arrays which do not allow duplication, i.e. are binary.}

The Jaccard normalisation is written out accordingly:

\[ J_{\text{Jaccard}}(\omega) = \frac{\omega}{(\sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{ijk} [X_{i'jk} = 0] + \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{i'jk} [X_{ijk} = 0] + \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{k} X_{ijk} X_{i'jk})} \]

Moreover, a third network type requires some attention here. Affiliation networks, also known as two-mode networks, are networks that are capable of showing relationships between the first and second variable simultaneously, which by extension shows how some variable-one nodes relate to one another through which variable-two nodes. In such a network, both variable one and two are represented by nodes, typically with different colours. Instead of two nodes from the same variable, such as parties, being connected directly as they are in the one-mode example network, they here go through another node representing the second variable, i.e. themes (Leifeld et al. 2018: 9). This could visualise that the Left, the Liberals and the Sweden democrats all agree with the international generosity theme, that the Left and the Liberals agree with the domestic generosity theme while the Sweden democrats disagree with it. In other words, it can show both agreement and disagreement simultaneously while also informing on which themes draw controversy and which do not. Although this type of network
where agreement, disagreement and ambiguity (simultaneous agreement and disagreement) are shown is not the only type of affiliation network, it is the most suitable when using a binary qualifier. The added information in terms of relationship detail is what makes it superior to its counterparts which either subtract the qualifier (agreement – disagreement) or ignore it. In this case, neither of these alternatives offer an edge over the more complex one which is based on the following equation:

\[
Y_{ij}^{affiliation \ combine \ binary} = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{if } \sum_{k} X_{ijk} = 0 \\
1 & \text{if } X_{i,j,k=0} = 0 \land X_{i,j,k=1} > 0 \\
2 & \text{if } X_{i,j,k=1} = 0 \land X_{i,j,k=0} > 0 \\
3 & \text{if } X_{i,j,k=0} > 0 \land X_{i,j,k=1} > 0
\end{cases}
\]

In the two-mode equation above there are four possible outcomes. If a node from the first variable is not connected to the second variable, i.e. \( i \) has no \( k \) value for \( j \), the result is 0 and no edge is present. If there is agreement between the two, i.e. \( X = 0 \) when \( k = 0 \) while \( X > 0 \) when \( k = 1 \), the result is 1. In reverse, if \( X = 0 \) when \( k = 1 \) while \( X > 0 \) and \( k = 0 \), there is disagreement as indicated by the number 2. Remembering that this is a three-dimensional array we can describe this as agreement only if the qualifier \( k \) has a value of 1 and there being a value larger than 0 for both \( i \) and \( j \). Likewise for disagreement, if \( k \) has a value of 0 and \( i \) and \( j \) both are greater than 0 there will be a statement disagreeing with a theme. Lastly, the equation results in 3 if there is both agreement and disagreement. While there are ways of applying normalisation to two-mode networks, their application resulted in networks that could not be used and are as such neither described nor applied in this paper.

**Results**

In this section the results will be presented in addition to some background statistics regarding participation in the debates. The purpose of this study is to examine changes in political positions in the immigration and refugee debate after a populist radical right party enters parliament. In order to do this, I have examined the case of Sweden and how the debate has changed there between 2008 and 2019. While some parties changed their positions, others did not. The discourse coalitions did change as was hypothesised, with the main coalition growing increasingly fragmented and the challenging coalition growing in numbers yet there are a number of issues which must be considered before any substantial claims are made. The rest
of this section presents the results with some general statistics to start with followed by congruence, conflict and two-mode networks. The congruence and conflict networks with their respective graphs show the results in detail while the two-mode networks add some nuance which is then further delved into in the discussion section.

Overall, the results indicate that there has been a change in the discourse coalitions in accordance with the hypotheses, in congruence as well as conflict networks. Agreement was reduced in the pre-existing discourse coalition which by 2019 had lost the Conservatives completely and the Christian democrats were positioned ambiguously with statements both agreeing and disagreeing with some themes. This means that the Christian democrats agreed and disagreed with both coalitions, thus acting as a bridge between the two. Whether they took a bridging role in the debate cannot be said, being a bridger here is network terminology for a node being the sole connection between a number of other nodes (Robins 2015: 28). Although the results below show a change between 2008 and 2019, they are not conclusive evidence and cannot be used to make causal statements.

As a general comment, it is important to note that although each debate seems to reflect the parties’ stances quite well, each party is not fully represented in each debate. This is the result of how the debates are structured and how themes are coded. Since much of the debates are centred around one member of parliament holding a short speech followed by a number of replies, a party can end up having made multiple comments in the debate without them being coded. The replies often contain questions but may also include statements of agreement, disagreement or general comments regarding the topic. Thus, sometimes a party will receive multiple questions and be forced to reiterate their points, resulting in a higher number of statements. In reverse, some parties receive fewer questions, or ask questions without making longer statements themselves due to time restrictions and efficiency. Taken together, this results in some debates taking on fairly skewed networks. Although this is not optimal, it should not severely limit the conclusions that can be drawn as long as they are backed up by theory and sound logic. Additional data for each year would have strengthened the results yet it is unlikely that it would have made a substantive change in the outcome.

Before presenting the different networks and the changes in centrality of specific party statements there are some general statistics on the underlying data that should be presented. First off, in total 260 statements related to the four themes were coded. These were divided among the eight parties, although the Sweden democrats were not present in the 2008 and 2009 debates. Figure 2 below shows how many statements each party made in total throughout the twelve-year period. The parties are organised by the number of statements made in total and
tend to lean towards more statements expressing agreement. This may be somewhat skewed by the responsibility and international generosity themes which have almost no disagreement, as can be seen further below in figure 3. Although this paper does not concern itself with the number of statements made by individual parties, it focuses on how parties relate to one another through their statements, it is still good to know how the statements are distributed when interpreting the results.

Figure 2 Statements per party 2008-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sverigedemokraterna</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderaterna</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialdemokraterna</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberalerna</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristdemokraterna</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centerpartiet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miljöpartiet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vänsterpartiet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In figure 3 the number of statements per theme split by agreement and disagreement is shown. There is a clear difference in how polarised the themes are. There is no disagreement on the international generosity theme and close to none as far as responsibility goes.

Figure 3 Statements per theme 2008-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Generosity</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Generosity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
greatest difference can be found in the *domestic generosity*\(^6\) theme, which also contains the most statements. Still, *threat* also contains a relatively large degree of disagreement.

It is also worth reiterating, that although parties make statements that are similar enough to fall into the same category, i.e. agree or disagree with a specific theme, there is still room for variation. Parties can agree on the same theme but do so from different angles. This is not detrimental to the results but should be kept in mind when drawing conclusions from them. That two parties state that Sweden should have a more open migration policy does not mean that they agree on the details of that policy, or even why it is important. Such relatively minor differences are not of interest here but should nevertheless be kept in mind to avoid erroneous conclusions.

**Congruence networks**

In this section I will present the results of the congruence networks, how density, degree centrality and betweenness centrality have changed and exemplify this with two networks. For a full list of the networks, please see *appendix I*. In short, the congruence networks confirm the hypotheses albeit to varying degrees. The general trend indicated by the congruence networks is of a reduction of agreement within the main coalition as the Conservatives and the Christian democrats alter their positions towards the Sweden democrats. This is also reflected by the trends within the conflict networks. We start by examining the trends over time in the specific measurements and then dive into the specific networks from 2010 and 2019.

First off, network density in congruence networks has decreased between 2008 and 2019. This means that the total level of agreement within the debate has declined. There is a fairly stable trend with a high level of density until 2012, after which it decreases. The density measure ranges from 0 to 1. The closer to 1 the denser the network is, i.e. the more connections are present. For each year *international generosity* was removed, with the exception of 2010, 2012 and 2018 in which *responsibility* was removed while the former was kept. This was done in order to avoid networks that provided a false image of unity. Since the level of disagreement on those themes was nigh on non-existent, they were removed in order to avoid inflated levels of agreement. However, in some cases this resulted in networks with minimal levels of density which is most likely an artefact of the topics of the specific debates in combination with a relatively small dataset. This explanation carries more credibility than a sudden change of heart.

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\(^6\) Due to a typo in the coding process, there is a spelling error in the *domestic generosity* theme in *figures 3, 14 and 15*. 
and focus by virtually every party. Thus, the graph below carries some disproportionate dips and peaks but does indeed indicate a decreasing trend in density. In other words, fewer parties are connected by agreement in 2019 than in 2010, which will be further investigated below. This is line with what was expected according to hypothesis 1.

Figure 4 Network density over time in congruence networks using Jaccard normalisation

As for measurements of centrality for individual nodes, Figure 5 below illustrates how degree centrality varied by party over time. It shows that the Conservatives agree less with the dominant discourse coalition, mirroring the network position of the Sweden democrats while the Christian democrats agree with both coalitions. What can be seen here mirrors the graph above in that the first five years carries a stable level of degree centrality for most parties. Like with the density measurements, the years between 2012 and 2019 paint a fairly unstable picture due to a number of nodes being isolates, i.e. not connected to any other node. As the Liberals stand as an isolate in 2019, they will have a 0 value for all measurements that year and have no connections in any network type based on 2019. Still, when comparing the initial period to the years 2016 and 2019 there is a trend in which the Sweden democrats seem to increase in degree centrality while the Conservatives are decreasing. This suggests that hypothesis 3 has some level of support as well.
The last measurement, betweenness centrality, gives less to work with. The graph demonstrates a flat trend for almost every party with few nodes above 0. This comes from the fact that there were few nodes that were the single connection to other nodes. The peaks of the Liberals in 2010 and the Christian democrats in 2019 are visualised in the networks below, making clear what kind of position is needed to receive a higher level of betweenness centrality. The results shown in the graph do, to some extent, confirm hypothesis 4 although they do not show the full picture. The reason as to why the Christian democrats receive a higher betweenness centrality in 2019 is their bridging position between the Sweden democrats and the Conservatives on the one hand, and the other parties on the other.
In the congruence networks below, Figure 7 and 8 respectively, we see that there has been a change in how central the Sweden democrats are. Although their degree centrality has not increased by an incredible amount\(^\text{7}\) we can see that they are more central in 2019 than in 2010. Likewise, while most other parties have decreased in degree centrality, the Christian democrats have remained central by agreeing with both discourse coalitions. The Conservatives on the other hand have decreased the most, down to the same level as the Sweden democrats, indicating that both the Conservatives and Christian democrats to some extent have changed their positions.

These networks were made using Jaccard normalisation in order to make sure that no nodes were positioned as an artefact of being highly active. Each node represents individual parliamentary members who have made statements regarding at least one of the four themes. In other words, they represent the parties although the statements are not official party statements. Two nodes are connected by a green edge if they have the same stance towards a theme. This means that in the first network, from 2010, the only party that agrees with the Sweden democrats is the Liberals. However, in this specific case they agree on the theme

\(^7\) From 0 in 2008 to 0.28 in 2019, highest possible being 1.
international generosity, which is an essentially uncontested theme. The same can be said about the theme responsibility, as we saw above. For this network, responsibility was excluded since it carries very little disagreement and would otherwise give a false impression of agreement between many parties. In this year, the Conservatives, Christian democrats, Liberals and the Centrists as well as the Sweden democrats showed agreement with the responsibility theme. This will be shown in the two-mode network below. It is here removed in order to better illustrate the difference in the concepts threat and domestic generosity which are arguably more relevant in this case. The size of the nodes in all networks is relative to the number of statements that they made in all years, i.e. as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 7 Congruence network 2010 Jaccard normalisation, responsibility left out

In the 2019 network we see that the main difference is that the Conservatives have taken up a position next to the Sweden democrats while the Christian democrats agree with them as well as the other parties. This structure suggests the existence of two distinct yet slightly connected subgroups. Thus, hypothesis 2 is confirmed as well albeit with a catch. The fact that two nodes have the same attitude towards a theme does not mean that they use the same type of words or have the same ideological reasoning behind their attitudes. Still, in broad strokes their positions indicate similar attitudes such as wanting to reduce immigration in general or finding other cultures to some extent problematic.

In this network international generosity was removed in order to show more clearly the points of contention which would otherwise be blurred. Since there was no party in any given
year that disagreed with the international generosity theme it would falsely portray the network with a higher level of agreement than there is. The two-mode network for 2019 shows how the Social democrats would be connected to the Sweden democrats as well. It should be quickly noted that the Liberals in this network stand as an isolate. They are not connected to any other nodes since they did not make any statements related to the themes. This does not mean that they were missing from the debate. It simply means that their representatives did not make statements that could be coded according to the coding scheme. Again, this means that they will have the same position in conflict and two-mode networks as well.

Comparing the results of the congruence networks with the hypotheses as well as the research question it can be concluded that there has indeed been a change in political positions within the debate on immigration and refugees. This is marked by the Conservatives and the Christian democrats moving closer to the attitudes of the Sweden democrats, making two discourse coalitions with multiple members where before there was only one. This type of study does not provide a causal explanation and the discussion section below highlights some possible alternative explanations that need to be considered. Furthermore, congruence networks do not paint the whole picture, before drawing any conclusions we must examine the results of the conflict and two-mode networks as well.
Conflict networks
For the conflict networks we apply the same format for investigating the results. In general, the same trend can be seen as in the congruence network with an increase in polarisation. The Christian democrats take a central role in these networks as well due to their position on the fence between the two discourse coalitions. While the positions of the parties to a large extent are reversed in the conflict networks, e.g. density increasing over time and the Sweden democrats becoming less central, these are indications of the same movements with different measurements.

As can be seen in the graph over network density below, there has been an increase over time in density in the conflict networks. Just as with the congruence networks, the values range from 0 to 1, with 1 being the highest level of density. In these networks, higher scores indicate higher levels of disagreement. In contrast to the congruence networks, these networks are not affected by themes where there is an overwhelming agreement and there are no themes with which all parties disagreed. Thus, all themes are included and Jaccard normalisation is applied. For the measurement of density, an increasing trend indicates an increase in polarisation. Thus, the expectations laid out in hypothesis 1 are confirmed for conflict networks as well. As can be expected, the level of disagreement rose sharply as the Sweden democrats entered the debate. It then remained constant until 2013, reflecting the results from the congruence networks with isolates and low numbers of statements affecting the results. However, 2016 and 2019 stand out as years where disagreement spiked. This is explained in the following graphs and networks.
Concerning individual nodes in the conflict networks, there is a clear trend towards increasing degree centrality for most nodes, reflecting the overall rise in disagreement shown above. There are a few nodes which stand out. Firstly, the Sweden democrats had a score of 1 between 2010 and 2012, meaning that they were connected to all other nodes. This later sank, while disagreement among the other nodes increased, in particularly the Conservatives who stand out in both 2016 and 2019. In addition, the highest score in 2019 is received by the Christian democrats due to their ambiguous stance towards *domestic generosity*, meaning that they disagreed with both the Sweden democrats and the Conservatives as well as the other parties. This also explains why degree centrality fell slightly for the other two between 2016 and 2019. The increase in degree centrality for the other nodes is a reflection of the sharper increase by the Conservatives and the Christian democrats respectively, meaning that there is little disagreement among the other parties. *Hypothesis 3* for conflict networks seems to be confirmed as well, as is further displayed in the networks below.
Similar to the congruence networks, betweenness centrality in conflict networks remains low for most nodes in most years. The high level of betweenness centrality for the Sweden democrats between 2010 and 2012 is reflected in their position as the only node with connections to multiple nodes. This is later decreased due to overall fewer connections in the networks which to some extent is a matter of some nodes being isolates. The spike by the Greens in 2017 is due to disagreement on the responsibility theme combined with few connections in total that year, making it seem more central than expected. In 2016 there is an increase in betweenness centrality for the Conservatives, taking the same level as the Sweden democrats. This is replicated in 2019 with the addition that the Christian democrats are slightly more central than the other two, due to their disagreement with both sides. Thus, despite the low numbers shown by the graph, hypothesis 4 is supported for conflict networks.
In the conflict networks we see a distinct difference between 2010 and 2019 in how the Sweden democrats are related to other parties, as well as a change in how the conservatives and the Christian democrats relate to others. Since the liberals did not make any statements in 2019, they stand alone as an isolate in all networks for that year. Jaccard normalisation was used just as in the congruence networks, although it did not significantly change the structure of the networks. No themes were excluded in this network since there were no themes which all parties disagreed with and complete agreement on a theme does not affect conflict networks. In 2010 there is a clear structure of the Sweden democrats being the only party connected to another, meaning that all other parties had no disagreement amongst each other in terms of the themes used in this paper. As such, all edges are between the Sweden democrats and other parties.
In 2019, however, the network takes a different shape. In figure 13 below, the network has changed its shape from a star-like shape to a denser cluster with all nodes being connected to the Christian democrats in the middle. The reason why they take the central spot with disagreement to all other parties stems from them having an ambivalent attitude to domestic generosity, as can be seen in the two-mode network. This results in them being connected to parties that both agree and disagree with that theme. The Sweden democrats and the conservatives, on the other hand, have a clearer attitude towards it and are thus in disagreement with all parties except each other. Despite figure 13 not showing two distinct subgroups, the fact that there are two groups of nodes which disagree with each other but not among themselves adds to the indication that there in fact are two separate subgroups within the debate.
As such, there is support for hypothesis 2 for conflict networks as well, although it is not as intuitive as for congruence networks.

We can now see that the change in the congruence networks was reflected in the conflict networks as well. The Conservatives and the Christian democrats have made a similar move in conflict networks, the latter retaining their ambiguous position in both network types. The results thus far indicate a change in political positions for the Conservatives and the Christian democrats. The debate seems to be more polarised with higher levels of disagreement in 2019 than in the years between 2008 and 2012. While both congruence and conflict networks paint a relatively clear picture, it is important to remember that the underlying data might not be as clear cut as we have seen so far. Thus, we now turn to two-mode networks to compare party attitudes to all themes in 2010 and 2019.

Two-mode networks
Although the two mode networks were not included in the hypotheses, they provide a good insight into the relationships between the parties and the themes. In short, they indicate that while the themes seem to capture the positions of the parties, additional data could have been helpful in providing a more complete set of attitudes for each party. The two mode networks show the underlying relations between party statements and themes that constitute the congruence and conflict networks. Although they are more complex and more difficult to read, they offer valuable insight as to which parties made statements about which themes and whether they agree or disagree. In these networks, adding normalisation resulted in networks that could not be interpreted, since showing agreement, disagreement and ambiguity could not be combined with normalisation.

In the 2010 network it becomes clear that threat is disagreed with by all parties except for the Sweden democrats, which is why we see them taking a lone centre position in the conflict network from the same year. Since all other parties disagree with that theme, they become connected in the 2010 congruence network. It is worth noting here that the only requirement for two parties to be connected in the congruence network is that they have the same attitude towards the same concept, which is why the Social democrats are connected to the other parties despite having only made statements relating to a single theme. Additionally, we see here that four parties are connected to the responsibility theme, all of which agree. In
order to avoid an artificial sense of congruence less relevant to the theory this was removed in the 2010 congruence network.

*Figure 14 Two-mode network 2010 using no normalisation*

In the 2019 two-mode network shown below in *figure 15* it is clear how the threat theme is less central, with two disagreeing parties and one agreeing party, the Conservatives. Similarly, domestic generosity has become increasingly polarised with four agreeing statements from parties, two disagreeing and one ambivalent. The last one, the Christian democrats, is connected via a teal edge, symbolising at least one statement of agreement and disagreement each. Since statements are made by multiple people and members of parliament have some room to diverge from the official party stance, this should not be seen as exceptional. Additionally, some members of parliament have pointed to a difference between what they conceive as pragmatically feasible and what is morally desirable. For instance, some members of the Green party expressed this type of concern when justifying their role in reducing the inflow of migrants (Prot. 2016/17 41: 78). Thus, this type of ambivalence is not inexplicable.

Lastly, the role of international generosity is worth noting, as it was excluded from the 2019 congruence network. By examining the two-mode network it stands clear that the Social democrats would have been connected to the Sweden democrats as well, had international generosity been included in the congruence network. Although it is an important theme for the context of the debate, it was excluded in order to show the dividing lines more clearly. These can be seen in the difference in statements regarding domestic generosity and threat. Despite
not being connected to the threat theme in this network, it is unlikely that the Sweden democrats would have changed their stance towards it, considering the results in previous networks and the nature of their party. As was mentioned above, an absence of statements does not necessarily mean a loss of interest or change of heart. Depending on what is said previously in the debate and who is present, parties may differ slightly in their positions. The clearest example here is perhaps the fact that the Liberals stand as an isolate in this debate.

Thus, the two mode networks help demonstrate that some of the themes, responsibility and international generosity, would have created a false indication of general agreement. However, they also provide a supporting role in problematising the results by exposing which party made statements relating to which theme. While the congruence and conflict networks showed two fairly distinct discourse coalitions and a change in political positions, the two mode networks show that the results may not be all that clear cut as there are multiple limitations to this study. This will be further discussed in the section below.

While there is a visible change, it does not per definition mean that the new storyline is successful. Although some central actors have changed their attitudes and policies have changed towards a more restricted immigration policy, the level of success of the new storyline is not yet clear cut. Most likely, the changes made in terms of policies are a welcome sight for the populist radical right party even if they would have implemented even harsher policies, had
they had the chance. Thus, the changes that have been seen should be considered a partial victory for the challenging discourse coalition.

**Discussion and alternative explanations**

In this section I will discuss the strengths and drawbacks of the paper and provide some thoughts on what conclusions are actually supported by the results. Based on the data shown above, we can conclude that there has been a change, both in terms of agreement and disagreement. The Conservatives as well as the Christian democrats have changed their attitudes. The language used has moved from a focus on Sweden as an open and humanitarian country to demanding a stricter immigration policy with more order. This does not mean that their attitudes are identical to those of the Sweden democrats as the themes are broad and inclusive by design. Rather, it means that they have changed their attitudes compared to previous years. It is difficult to stress enough that this paper does not deal with experimental data and cannot, as such, draw conclusions about causality. However, it can still indicate that there may be a relationship that is worth exploring in future research as well as add an additional case to the existing stack of case studies. First, some theories from the previous literature are drawn upon to shed further light on why the results look like they do and provide insights into alternative explanations. Secondly, the issues of reliability, validity and replicability will be tackled.

First off, a specific trait of the Swedish immigration debate must be mentioned. As was mentioned earlier, immigration and migration were not highly politicised before the 2010 elections (SND 2019, Dahlström 2004: 114-117). This has implications for the results which require further research. Based on this paper, we cannot draw conclusions on whether the Sweden democrats have caused a change in the attitudes of the Conservatives and the Christian democrats or if it is a case of already existing attitudes resurfacing as the issue became increasingly politicised. If it is a matter of old politics resurfacing, they did not do so immediately, as can be seen in the stance by the Conservatives 2010-2015. However, this can be turned one step further when considering what caused said turn to previous attitudes. For instance, if the resurfacing of previously existing attitudes is a result of the issue becoming increasingly politicised, the role of the Sweden democrats must be considered. Thus, we will here have to settle with the fact that there has been a change and that the Sweden democrats may have been part in causing it, but the latter is up to future research to determine.
Closely connected to the issue becoming politicised and pre-existing attitudes resurfacing, party culture might play a significant role here since some parties have a fairly strict hierarchical culture, meaning that changes in party leadership can have an impact on, as well as reflect, changes in policy attitudes (Barrling 2015: 64-66). The results presented in the previous section showed seemingly sharp turns in the statements made by the Conservatives and a slightly smoother turn by the Christian democrats in the direction of the Sweden democrats. This could to some extent be an artefact of the coding of the underlying data, but another explanation could be found in the party culture literature. As was noted earlier, the Conservatives have a hierarchical party culture, even more so than the Christian democrats (Barrling 2015: 75). Thus, a change in the party line could manifest itself quite dramatically. This taken together with the change in party leaders amongst the Conservatives may partly explain their change of opinion. Whether the selection of the new party leaders was affected by the electoral success of the Sweden democrats is not answered by this paper. Still, parties facing electoral failure combined with a perception that the failure was connected to a new party can have an effect on the stance of the failing party (Harmel and Svåsand 1997: 317).

Moreover, the so called 2015 refugee crisis requires some space as well here. Considering the unusually high number of refugees reaching Europe and Sweden in the years leading up to the introduction of temporary border controls in 2015 (Migrationsverket 2019), attributing changes in political positions to the Sweden democrats becomes even more difficult. To some extent, the cordon sanitaire tactic was directly referenced when discussing refugees and which policies were appropriate. For instance, in the years following the Sweden democrats’ entry into parliament, many members of parliament distanced themselves explicitly from them. After closing the border in 2015, some also explicitly justified the move with the quarantine tactic, claiming that it was a way to avoid even harsher policies. The following statement by Maria Ferm of the Green party exemplifies this attitude “we saw great risks in that an even more restrictive policy otherwise would have become reality” (Prot. 2016/17 41: 78, author’s translation). This explains why statements could be made that seemingly went against some of the policies implemented by the government at the time. It also shows that the cordon sanitaire was not abandoned by all parties even as harsher policies were implemented, which might otherwise have been interpreted as a change in the direction of the Sweden democrats.

Whether statements such as the quote above should be treated as political rhetoric meant to save face rather than an honest description of reality is not for this paper to judge. However, since this study is built on statements being worth studying, there is an underlying assumption
that members of parliament speak truthfully while in parliament. Although members of parliament are human and thereby capable of intentionally or unintentionally lying or bending the truth, there seem to be little reason to expect them of intentional wrongdoing. Especially as they scrutinise each other in the debates and are under peer pressure from their co-party members the risk of intentional misbehaviour seems small and should have little effect on this study. Still, even if members of parliament were prolific liars in parliamentary debates, the statements would still be of interest as they would provide insight into the desired image being painted.

More importantly, it is possible that the refugee crisis had an effect on both parties and voters, and as such had an impact of its own, while also allowing the effect of the Populist Radical Right Party to have an even greater impact. Thus, without trivialising the results, we should be somewhat more cautious with attributing the change to a specific factor. If the refugee crisis has an impact on parties as well as voters, and parties in turn use the change in voter attitudes to further affect voters, determining how much of an effect each of them had becomes problematic. Still, the fact that some parties changed their attitudes while others did not, provides an interesting situation, lending credence to the idea that if there is an effect of populist radical right parties, it is not evenly distributed. Although it is important to keep in mind that parties, voters and crises are interlinked, future research could more fruitfully be focused on the causality and causal mechanism of the change.

In terms of generalisation, this paper should serve more as an indication than proof. There are significant contextual differences between countries. This limits how far these findings can be generalised since these debates may take place in altogether different coalitions depending on the country. However, considering that Sweden has a strong history of applying a quarantine tactic towards populist radical right parties, the results presented above should not be taken lightly.

The validity of this paper in terms of capturing changes in the discourse is arguably quite high. By applying broad themes, the major turns in the debate are captured. Narrower themes could have picked up more detailed nuances such as differences in how the parties formulated statements categorised under the same theme differently. Still, such a deep dive would not necessarily have provided clearer results. Another aspect pertaining to validity that should be clarified is the fact that the Social democrats and the Greens sharply restricted immigration while in government (Migrationsverket 2019). Despite this, they have not been coded as disagreeing with the domestic generosity theme. This is a result of only one debate being coded per year as well as the fact that only debates were coded. This means that such
statements could possibly have occurred outside of the debates used here and that policies could be implemented that seemingly disagreed with a theme even when members of parliament used arguments that agreed with that same theme. For instance, a member of parliament explained this contradiction by saying that it was a way of preventing even harsher restrictions on immigration (Prot. 2016/17 41: 78).

Generally, the replicability of the study should be fairly high since all programmes used\(^8\) are available without cost online. Additionally, the data is available from the Swedish parliament website, also for free. This means that the study should be replicable as far as material and infrastructure are concerned. More importantly, the ability to replicate the same coding pattern, irrespective of what type of software is used, should be reasonably high as well, considering the number of examples given. Still, there are some caveats which should be addressed.

Firstly, all coders carry a certain degree of bias, especially concerning politics. This is worth reiterating as it means that two coders following the same instructions, however clear, run the risk of obtaining somewhat different results. This is important to acknowledge, even if it is not expected to have a large impact on the replicability of this study, given the example statements shown earlier. Other limitations are more practical in nature, for instance, as the texts are exclusively available in Swedish and require close reading, replicability is limited to those proficient in the Swedish language.

Although the themes were developed in order to be clearly recognisable with as few ambiguities as possible, there is always an inherent bias when reading political texts. Still, by keeping such biases in mind and emphasising the content of the statements rather than their at times underlying meanings, most biases should be under control. In other words, coding was done somewhat conservatively by only coding statements that explicitly fell under each theme. In ambiguous situations a statement was not coded unless the context surrounding the statement suggested it should be coded. For instance, if the author was doubtful about a statement the entire entry would be taken into account in order to give context to it. Thus, coding biases were dealt with as well as possible with the resources available.

As far as reliability goes, the usage of content analysis carries with it some inherent issues. In this case, as the author was the single coder and coded all documents within a fairly short time span, any bias should be consistent across the whole dataset. This does not remove the issue of biases, yet it means that the 2008 year should be coded according to the same

\(^8\) The programmes used for this study are Discourse Network Analyzer, R-studio and Visone.
standards as the 2019 one. In other words, reliability remains intact even if validity might be affected by possible biases in the coding of statements. Since a new theme was introduced after coding the 2010 debate, the years 2008 and 2010 were recoded and compared to the original coding. No significant differences were detected, which is an additional indication that there should be no learning-effects.

**Conclusion**

In short, this paper has utilised a new addition to network methodology in order to examine changes in political positions in the parliamentary debates on immigration and refugees. There has been a change in the dominant discourse coalition through statements made by the Conservatives as well as the Christian democrats that are more in line, albeit not identical, with the storyline of the Sweden democrats. This indicates that the populist radical right party may have had an impact. Thus, considering the least likely case of Sweden, if the change were to be causal, populist radical right parties are likely to have an effect elsewhere as well. Still, as has been repeatedly mentioned, causation can only be inferred based on existing theories and should be approached with caution. To summarise this paper and its contribution to the literature on populist radical right parties we will start with the theoretical underpinnings.

In order to develop the hypotheses and apply a fitting theoretical framework, the previous findings on populist radical right parties as well as the discourse coalition framework were used. The discourse coalition framework with a focus on storylines were used to situate the competing views found in parliament, while the literature on populist radical right parties with support from findings on party culture and party policy change formed the expected changes. With additional support from the network literature these concepts and expectations could be operationalised using network methodology.

It was found that there has indeed been a change in attitudes for the Conservatives and the Christian democrats. However, the robustness of these findings is reduced by issues such as a lack of inter-coder reliability, low amounts of data and most importantly the inability to assert causation. While the literature on party culture together with findings on party policy change may offer some further insights as to how this change came about, they cannot fully confirm nor deny it.

Apart from the results, the introduction of discourse network analysis as a tool to be used when examining populist radical right parties is a contribution in itself. It was here used
to code statements by Swedish members of parliament according to overarching themes in the debate on immigration and refugees. This was then used to form networks based on agreement and disagreement with the broad themes in the debate, showing how the different parties related to one another through their attitudes towards the themes. This relational approach is also one of the contributions of the paper as the usage of network analysis moves content analysis from being attributional to becoming relational (Muller 2015: 383). It is hoped that future papers adopt and develop this relational approach to the analysis of populist radical right parties.

In conclusion, there does indeed seem to be a change in the immigration and refugee debates within the Swedish parliament. However, based on this study alone, the change cannot be attributed strictly to the Sweden democrats and their entry into parliament. The results of this paper further suggest that discourse network analysis is a fruitful tool for examining parliamentary debates as well as debates on immigration and refugees and could as such be used to study other such debates outside and inside parliament. Moreover, since this paper does not provide any insight as to why the changes were made, future research should focus on the internal processes that have followed this change. For instance, changes in party leadership as well as political strategy could provide useful information. For these purposes, the advocacy coalition framework, with its focus on internal coalition change could prove insightful as a theoretical framework.
Bibliography


Appendices

Appendix I – Congruence networks, *international generosity* removed in all years except 2010, 2012 and 2018 in which *responsibility* was removed instead, Jaccard normalisation used for all networks.
Appendix II – Conflict networks, all themes included, Jaccard normalisation used for all networks.