Reconciling National and Supranational Identities: Civilizationism in European Far-Right Discourse

Joseph Cerrone

How do European far-right parties reconcile their long-standing nationalism with their allegiance to European "civilization"? Although they are certainly not contradictory, simultaneously adopting national and supranational identities requires considerable discursive maneuvering to articulate clearly. In this article, I argue that the European Far Right negotiates the boundaries between its national and supranational identities through two discursive mechanisms, abstraction and embedding, which present civilizationism as nonthreatening to and partially constituted by nationalism. Specifically, abstraction links European civilization to general features of a shared heritage, whereas embedding connects civilization to elements of the nationalist repertoire. I demonstrate the Far Right's monopolization of civilizational discourse and use of these twin mechanisms through quantitative and qualitative analyses of more than 1,000 party manifestos and more than 650,000 tweets. These findings contribute to the growing scholarly literature that treats civilizations as supranational "imagined communities" and has implications for the study of nationalism, civilizationism, and the Far Right.

Keywords: Far Right, nationalism, civilizationism, text analysis, Twitter

In their battle against globalization, immigration, and deeper integration of the European Union (EU), far-right parties across Europe often portray themselves as the defenders of Western or European "civilization." Invoking a civilizational identity facilitates the Far Right's efforts to stigmatize Muslims and immigrants, who are characterized as threats to Europe's Christian heritage, secular society, and liberal politics (Brubaker 2017). Nevertheless, this espousal of a supranational civilizational identity has the potential to create tension with these parties' steadfast nationalism and illiberalism. By praising the achievements of a transnational civilizational community and casting themselves as its loyal proponents, far-right parties run the risk of downplaying their exclusionary nationalist profiles. Likewise, their embrace of a European "civilization" often linked to liberal values—such as freedom, equality, and diversity—seems to contradict their commonly acknowledged illiberalism.

How the Far Right maintains its dual allegiance to both national and supranational identities remains underexplained. Brubaker (2017) suggests that its civilizationism is both a reformulation of nationalism and an alternative to it. Yet, the contemporary European Far Right's most salient characteristic is nativism—an amalgamation of nationalism and xenophobia focused on protecting the nation from foreign elements (Art 2020; Froio 2018; Ivarsflaten 2008; Mudde 2007; 2019). This party family's emphasis on exclusive nativism would seem to fit uncomfortably with a more inclusive civilizationism that exalts a supranational civilization and celebrates linkages to non-native beliefs, values, and identities.

This article further explores this shift toward civilizationism and explains how the Far Right reconciles its commitment to both national and supranational identities, which it accomplishes by employing two discursive mechanisms: *abstraction* and *embedding*. Abstraction generalizes the notion of civilization and ties it to elements of a shared heritage that appear nonthreatening to particular nationalisms. Embedding contextualizes civilization by

Joseph Cerrone ⓘ *is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the George Washington University (jcerrone@gwu.edu, United States). His research interests include far-right parties, populism, nationalism, and public opinion about immigration.*

linking it to familiar elements from the nationalist repertoire, which casts civilizationism as complementary to nationalism. These twin maneuvers reflect the expectations of the ingroup projection model, which suggests that groups project their own identities onto superordinate categories to which they belong (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004; Wimmer 2017). Therefore, by drawing on their preexisting values and identities, far-right parties construct a shared understanding of European civilization that is compatible with their nationalism and illiberalism.

I use both quantitative and qualitative text analysis techniques to investigate the Far Right's civilizational discourse and compare it to the discourses of other party families across the ideological spectrum. To maximize the argument's temporal and spatial scope, I analyze a corpus of 1,063 party manifestos, encompassing 372 parties across 151 national elections in European Union member states from 1990 to 2020 (Burst et al. 2020). For a more granular perspective of "everyday" civilizational discourse, I analyze more than 650,000 tweets issued by 65 parties and their leaders from April 2019 to June 2021 in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden.

Both in party manifestos and on Twitter, the Far Right is significantly more likely to employ civilizational discourse than other party families. Through abstraction, far-right parties link civilization to shared values, such as democracy and freedom. They also portray European civilization as a supranational community founded on a shared heritage originating in Greco-Roman antiquity, Christianity, and the legacy of the Enlightenment (Brubaker 2017; De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020). Furthermore, the Far Right uses embedding to highlight the link between nationalism and civilizationism. This is often accomplished by recasting national achievements as crucial contributions to the wider civilizational community, as when the Italian Far Right claims the Renaissance as both a hallmark of Italian exceptionalism and a key moment in the development of European civilization.

As argued by Brubaker (2017), the Far Right's civilizational discourse is also closely tied to its opposition to Islam. Although the Far Right acknowledges the plurality of nationalisms that constitute European civilization, it denies the existence of such pluralism elsewhere. Instead, far-right parties depict Islam as a homogeneous and threatening adversary and predict the coming of a Huntingtonian "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1993; 1996). This inconsistency in how the Far Right understands "civilization" is a linchpin of its discursive strategy: acknowledging pluralism in European civilization accommodates the demands of the Far Right's own nationalism, whereas denying pluralism elsewhere produces an essentialized caricature of Islam that fits the role of a civilizational enemy.

Given the importance of civilization as a point of reference for both domestic and global actors, a more extensive investigation of its place in far-right politics should interest an array of scholars (Chebankova and Dutkiewicz 2021; Hale and Laruelle 2021). By focusing on the role of elite discourse in creating civilizational identity, this article contributes to the growing scholarly literature that treats civilizations as socially constructed, supranational forms of identification (Hale and Laruelle 2021). Furthermore, this article enhances our understanding of how political elites discursively reconcile multiple identity categories. In addition to facilitating an examination of how national and supranational identities are reconciled in far-right discourse, the twin mechanisms of abstraction and embedding could also shed light on the relationship between other nested or overlapping identities, such as national, subnational, ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities. Additionally, this article's broad temporal and geographic scope provides the most thorough empirical investigation to date of when and how European political elites invoke civilization in their discourse—both the formal discourse contained in party manifestos and the everyday discourse found on Twitter.

This article proceeds as follows. The next section provides an overview of previous research on civilizationism and its role in far-right politics. The following section then elaborates the theory. The research design is then presented, followed by analysis of the data. The final section discusses the results and their implications for the scholarly study of nationalism, civilizationism, and the Far Right.

Reassessing the Study of Civilizational Politics

Although the study of civilizations is not new, recent scholarship has advanced a constructivist understanding that seeks to move beyond Huntington's (1993; 1996) "clash of civilizations" thesis. In contrast to his essentialist view of civilizations, scholars have converged around the proposition that civilizations in the modern world are pluralist (Hale and Laruelle 2021; Katzenstein 2010). Whereas the Huntingtonian perspective treats civilizations as objective realities in the world that can be empirically perceived and studied, civilizations are increasingly seen as nothing more than supranational "imagined communities" that rely on political actors—including elites and citizens—to imbue them with meaning and create them as intersubjective realities (Anderson 1983; Brubaker 2017; Hale and Laruelle 2021; Hall and Jackson 2008). Therefore, civilizations are best conceptualized as dynamic and porous categories of supranational belonging that are constructed by political actors to make sense of the social world (Hale 2008; Hale and Laruelle 2021). As such, there is little sense in searching for objective measures of civilizations or empirical demarcations between them (Hale and

Laruelle 2021; Hall and Jackson 2008; Jackson 2010). Instead, it is more fruitful to study how actors understand and employ the concept of "civilization," particularly in their discourse.

Civilizationism in European Far-Right Discourse

In European far-right discourse, civilizationism serves as a prominent frame of reference and boundary-making device (De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020; Ganesh and Froio 2020). Far-right invocations of civilizationism are not new: similar discourses emerged from the fascism of the interwar period and the neofascism of the postwar period (Mammone 2015). Emphasizing European civilization buttresses the Far Right's attempts to stigmatize Muslims by linking them to an essentialized and Orientalist depiction of Islam (Brown 2020; Brubaker 2017; De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020; Duina and Carson 2020; Said 2003). The Far Right thus portrays Islam as a monolithic civilizational adversary that threatens a European civilization they believe is founded on a shared Christian heritage, secularism, and liberalism (Brubaker 2017; Zúquete 2008).

Christianity is presented as a foundational element of a shared European heritage (Brubaker 2017; Roy 2020; Zúquete 2008). Brubaker (2017) claims that this cultural or identitarian religiosity, labeled "Christianism," empties Christianity of its religious content and appropriates its symbols to distinguish between Christian Europe and Islam, each of which is conceived of as a static and monolithic entity (Strømmen and Schmiedel 2020). Yet, assuming that the Far Right's invocations of Christianity are an inauthentic "Christianism" is questionable. Schmiedel (2021) suggests there is necessarily ambiguity in what can be regarded as a "pure" expression of religious belief and that assuming otherwise can be problematic. Regardless of its religious sincerity, laying claim to a shared Christian heritage provides the Far Right with a repertoire of historical reference points—including the crusades, the expulsion of Muslims from Spain under the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, and the Christian Holy League's defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto—to legitimize its belief in an inevitable clash of civilizations (Strømmen and Schmiedel 2020).

Claiming Christianity as a cultural, rather than a religious, cornerstone of European civilization allows the Far Right to simultaneously criticize Islam as a threat to secularism (Brubaker 2017). Viewing the secular state as a hallmark of modern Europe, far-right parties allege that Muslim religious practice threatens the separation of church and state and the legacy of the Enlightenment. Secularism is most notably pitted against Islam in France, where the country's long tradition of *laïcité* is invoked to animate opposition to the presence of Islam in public life (Froio 2018; Scott 2007). Yet concerns about secularism

have been used in more than a dozen European countries to justify bans on the burqa and other religious attire (Abdelgadir and Fouka 2020; Scott 2007; Zúquete 2008).

Alongside secularism, the Far Right portrays liberalism as an essential characteristic of European civilization originating in the Enlightenment (Brubaker 2017). Depicting Islam as hostile to individual rights and freedoms, such as gender equality and LGBTQ rights, enables far-right parties to animate anti-Islam sentiments among the public and increase their electoral support among particular constituencies, such as women (Akkerman 2015; Allen and Goodman 2021; Brubaker 2017; De Lange and Mügge 2015; Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2013; Harteveld et al. 2015; Jennings and Ralph-Morrow 2020; Scott 2007; Spierings and Zaslove 2015; Wodak 2015; Zúquete 2008). Likewise, the Far Right increasingly portrays itself as a defender of Judaism, both to distance itself from its history of antisemitism and to accuse Muslims of posing a threat to Europe's Jewish communities (Brubaker 2017; Zúquete 2008). A similar motivation underlies the Far Right's embrace of "sovereignty" and "liberty" in its critiques of the EU, because references to such generally accepted liberal ideals serve to legitimize the party family in the eyes of voters (Lorimer 2020).

Yet, the Far Right's embrace of liberalism fits uneasily with its otherwise exclusionary, nativist character (Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2013; Moffitt 2017). Voicing support for principles of freedom, equality, and diversity seems inconsistent with the party family's traditional association with conservative authoritarian values. The Far Right reconciles these tensions by presenting a civic or liberal conception of the nation that is endangered by illiberal threats (Berntzen 2019; Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2013; Moffitt 2017). This "liberal illiberalism" thus justifies intolerance and exclusion of some groups, such as Muslims and immigrants, as a necessary means to preserve the tolerance and inclusivity of the nation. Such discourse not only serves to legitimize the Far Right but also leads to greater electoral success (Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2013; Moffitt 2017).

By employing civilizationism to express their opposition to Islam, far-right parties construct a European "us" in contrast to a Muslim "them" (Brubaker 2017; De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020; Ganesh and Froio 2020; Zúquete 2008). This discourse is inherently racialized, because it presents an essentialized caricature of a civilizational "other," reducing Islam to a set of negative and seemingly monolithic attributes (Strømmen and Schmiedel 2020). Focused on marking the boundary between Europe and Islam, the Far Right's civilizationism is representative of the "neo-racism" or "cultural racism" emerging since the late twentieth century (Balibar 1991; Froio 2018; Strømmen and Schmiedel 2020; Taguieff 1993). Racialization not only produces a demonized civilizational

foe but also justifies aggression against this adversary, particularly by relying on historical examples of violence between Christians and Muslims. Through this discourse, the Far Right disavows any responsibility toward the civilizational other, either based on shared citizenship or common humanity.

Problematizing Far-Right Civilizationism

Although civilizationism appears to serve a strategic purpose in the Far Right's battle against Islam, questions remain as to how it relates to nationalism and to what extent the Far Right's simultaneous invocation of both is paradoxical (De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020; Hale and Laruelle 2021). Regarding the relationship between nationalism and civilizationism, Brubaker (2017, 1211) writes, "Civilizationism does not supersede nationalism; it combines with nationalism. But it is not simply reducible to a form of nationalism." Yet, it is unclear how such a discursive approach is sustainable if nationalism and civilizationism work at cross-purposes. Embracing a shared supranational identity could undercut the Far Right's claims of national exceptionalism and superiority. This is particularly the case because the Far Right often adopts an exclusionary, nativist understanding of the nation. Likewise, exalting one nation above others could expose as hollow the far-right claims regarding European civilization's shared history, values, and accomplishments.

Furthermore, existing theories of civilizationism do not offer compelling explanations of the symbiosis between nationalism and civilizationism on the Far Right. Instead, such approaches typically seek to define "civilization" and explain processes of civilizational growth, decline, and interaction. For example, Eisenstadt's (2000, 17–18) theory of "multiple modernities" highlights the pluralist nature of modern civilizations, in contrast to prevailing beliefs that modernization results in a single global civilization. He acknowledges that tension between various "antinomies"—such as the universalistic and particularistic tendencies of globalism and nationalism, respectively—animate the development of modern civilizations. Nevertheless, this potential for friction provides little in the way of an explanation for how far-right parties appropriate civilizationism and reconcile it with the particularist demands of nationalism. Likewise, Collins' (2004) practice-oriented view treats civilizations as "zones of prestige" grounded in networks of attraction that reach across political, economic, and social boundaries. This understanding provides space for nationalism to serve as both a force of resistance to civilizationism and a source of civilizational innovation. This potential is made clear by the example of Japan, where seventeenth-century intellectuals began to assert the exceptionalism of Japanese cultural innovations as opposed to Chinese imports, leading

to a shift in the constellation of "zones of prestige" in the region (Collins 2004, 138–39). However, this view sidesteps the question of how national and supranational identities may be reconciled, emphasizing instead the creative potential of conflict between national and civilizational identities.

The Far Right's civilizationism is also intertwined with its Euroskepticism. Broadly speaking, Euroskepticism entails opposition to European integration, either in whole or in part (Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004). The most prominent approach to it distinguishes between its "hard" and "soft" varieties: whereas "hard Euroskeptics" reject the very idea of European integration, "soft Euroskeptics" offer more qualified opposition to particular aspects of integration as embodied in the EU. These qualifications are often grounded in criticisms of specific EU policies and institutions, such as the euro, or on the need to defend the "national interest" against EU overreach (Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004).

Yet, this division of Euroskepticism into hard and soft varieties has not gone unchallenged. Kopecký and Mudde (2002) instead propose a fourfold division, which separately categorizes parties along two dimensions: their "diffuse" support for the general principles of integration and their "specific" support for the institutional development of the EU. From this perspective, Euroskeptic parties are those that support European integration in principle but oppose the model of the EU, whereas Eurorejects are those that oppose both the diffuse concept of integration and the specific course set out by the EU. Heinisch, McDonnell, and Werner (2021) challenge the notion that parties may fall into only one category at any given time. Instead, they propose that some parties adopt "equivocal Euroskepticism" to simultaneously invoke themes associated with both hard and soft Euroskepticism. A primary advantage of this approach is the flexibility it affords parties, enabling them to speak to different audiences and form seemingly incompatible coalitions at the national and European levels.

Regardless of the terminology used, the Far Right's European civilizationism can be understood as part of its effort to express soft Euroskepticism or diffuse support for European integration while honing its critiques of the EU. By developing a positive understanding of "Europe" as a community of sovereign nations with a shared civilizational heritage, the Far Right presents an alternative vision to be contrasted with its negative evaluations of the EU. Thus, civilizationism reinforces the Far Right's claim that it is against the EU but in favor of Europe.

Reconciling Nationalism and Civilizationism

As "imagined communities," both the nation and European civilization are malleable social constructions that can be reconciled with each other through discourse.

Political discourse is inherently performative, not only describing social reality but also actively contributing to its ongoing creation (Bourdieu 1991). Thus, far-right discourse does not simply point toward an independently existing civilizational community: it performs civilizationism and summons a civilizational identity into being.

Specifically, far-right parties employ two discursive mechanisms—abstraction and embedding—to construct European civilization as a supranational community of belonging that complements but does not threaten specific nationalisms. Abstraction links European civilization to general reference points that appear nonthreatening to nationalism, whereas embedding draws on selected content from the nationalist repertoire to make civilizationism seem like an extension of nationalism. These discursive mechanisms are similar to "deracination" and "localization," which McNamara (2015) argues are used by the EU to legitimize itself as a political authority. Nevertheless, a critical difference between these mechanisms—which justifies the adoption of new labels for them—is their purpose. Whereas deracination and localization are meant to build a "banal political authority," abstraction and embedding are employed to evoke an "actively engaged legitimacy" (17).

Abstraction presents European civilization as both thin and universalist. The thinness of the Far Right's civilizationism supports its transnational character, because references to specific beliefs, values, and practices are general enough to have multiple legitimate interpretations. For example, references to European civilization's democratic foundations do not specify institutional arrangements, allowing "democracy" to encompass the variety of political systems found on the continent. Likewise, claims of European civilization's Christian roots do not acknowledge the denominational differences that historically fueled considerable conflict between and within European nations, enabling "Christian" to function as a generalized label free of doctrinal connotations.

Furthermore, abstraction's tendency to present European civilization in universalist terms serves a legitimizing role. Linking European civilization to principles that are widely shared and deeply embedded in political culture—such as equality, freedom, and democracy—justifies the Far Right's concern with civilizational preservation. It also suggests that European civilization is inherently inclusive, accepting all those who abide by its norms and values. This pattern aligns with the Far Right's noted "liberal illiberalism" (Moffitt 2017) and its attempts to conform with the "civic zeitgeist" (Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2013). As Lorimer (2020) argues, using Europe as an "ideological resource" also legitimizes far-right parties themselves, enabling them to demonstrate their commitment to widely accepted values and viewpoints.

A cornerstone of abstraction is the Far Right's belief in a shared heritage allegedly common to all European nations and rooted in transnational historical moments, such as Greco-Roman antiquity, the rise of Christianity, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment (De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020; Vasilopoulou 2017). This shared heritage is presented as a set of common roots from which modern European nations arose. In line with abstraction's thinness, the nature of this shared heritage is typically left vague enough to encompass the pluralism present in European societies. Likewise, this heritage is presented in universalist terms—as the origin of modern human civilization—thus marking the boundary between Europe and allegedly "uncivilized" outsiders, such as Islam.

Whereas abstraction suggests that civilization is thin and universalist, embedding presents it as thick and particularist. The thickness of civilizationism is accomplished by recasting familiar nationalist myths and symbols as constitutive features of a supranational identity. Thus, rather than viewing the nation as a *product* of civilization as abstraction does, embedding suggests that the nation is the *origin* of civilization. For example, far-right parties often present elements of national history as integral to the development of European civilization, as when the Far Right in Spain portrays the *Reconquista*—the expulsion of Muslim rulers from the Iberian peninsula—as a uniquely Spanish contribution to the growth of European civilization. Similarly, embedding frequently involves the reification of historical figures as icons of both national and European history, as the Italian Far Right does in its treatment of Christopher Columbus.

Linking civilization to specific elements of nationalism also makes embedding particularist. This particularism serves both to exclude unfamiliar symbols as representative of the civilization and enhance the complementarity between nationalism and civilizationism. By presenting features of nationalism as constitutive of civilizationism, the Far Right enhances the "fit" between civilizational identity and citizens' long-standing national identities (Brubaker 2017; Hale 2008; Hale and Laruelle 2021). In other words, citizens are more likely to relate to a civilizational identity when they discover it is closely related to the national identity they already cherish.

At the heart of the Far Right's civilizational discourse is a recognition of the pluralist nature of European civilization, which is conceived of as a "Europe of nations." From this perspective, each nation is a distinct but legitimate expression of a shared civilizational identity that is threatened by a shared cultural crisis (Ganesh and Froio 2020). Nevertheless, this acknowledgment of pluralism does not extend to other civilizational communities, such as Islam, which are instead treated as homogeneous and monolithic entities. Invariably, this inconsistency leads to nuanced treatments of "us" and essentialist characterizations of "them."

Together, abstraction and embedding lend coherence to far-right discourse by portraying civilizationism as complementary to and partially constituted by nationalism. These

mechanisms operate in a dialectical fashion: abstraction links civilization to universalist ideas, whereas embedding emphasizes civilization's particularist features. While seeming to pull in opposite directions, together these mechanisms "make sense" of civilization. Without embedding, civilization would be rendered an overly abstract and generalized notion; without abstraction, civilizationism would be reduced to nationalism under another name.

The twin mechanisms of abstraction and embedding are rooted in the social psychology of intergroup relations. According to the ingroup projection model (IPM), groups tend to view themselves as prototypical of superordinate categories to which they belong, leading them to project their own identities and values onto such categories (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004; Waldzus et al. 2003; Wenzel, Mummendey, and Waldzus 2007; Wimmer 2017). Therefore, far-right parties rely on the identities and values already present in their discourse when constructing their version of European civilization. For example, the Far Right often portrays itself as a defender of democracy and freedom, leading such values to be projected onto European civilization through abstraction. Likewise, the Far Right's ardent nationalism underlies the attribution of civilizational importance to national myths and symbols through embedding.

The expectations of IPM also explain how the Far Right's civilizationism simultaneously embraces some outgroups (i.e., other European nations) while demonizing others (i.e., Muslims). A core tenet of IPM is that intergroup relations are influenced by the extent to which groups view each other as members of the same superordinate category and thus are bound by the same values and standards (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004; Wenzel, Mummendey, and Waldzus 2007). Belonging to the same superordinate category provides a background against which groups may be evaluated. Furthermore, compliance with shared norms reinforces the superordinate identity and leads to positive intergroup relations, whereas deviance is viewed as a threat to the shared identity and results in discrimination. In the case of civilizationism on the Far Right, the beliefs and values attributed to European civilization through abstraction—such as democracy, freedom, and equality—are perceived to be widely shared by European nations. This allows the Far Right to exhibit tolerance and respect toward other Europeans. Conversely, Islam is presented as the antithesis of these values, producing hostility and prejudice against Muslims. Although Islam is portrayed as Europe's civilizational enemy, Muslim communities are judged according to European civilizational standards because of their presence in European societies. For the Far Right, the presence of Muslims in Europe and efforts to afford them equal rights as non-Muslims justify treating them as both within European civilization but separate from it.

The presence of civilizationism in far-right discourse shapes the boundaries between "us" and "them." While still nationalist, civilizationism pushes the Far Right toward positive evaluations of other European nations. While still illiberal, civilizationism enables the Far Right to portray itself as the defender of liberalism. While still opposed to the EU, civilizationism leads the Far Right to construct a positive vision of the Europe it supports. Above all, civilizationism serves a strategic role in the Far Right's campaign against Islam—enabling it to present itself as the only force capable of forestalling a "clash of civilizations."

Research Design

To explore the Far Right's civilizational discourse, I examined multiple sources of party communication and employed both quantitative and qualitative text analysis techniques. I began by examining 1,063 party manifestos from the Manifesto Project database, covering 372 parties competing in 151 national elections in EU member states between 1990 and 2020.[1] The post-1990 period coincides with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis, which was echoed by the media and political elites during the 1990s and 2000s. This period also witnessed the eastward expansion of the EU and the rise of the Far Right throughout much of the bloc. Investigating how far-right parties invoke civilizationism in their official discourse and comparing them to members of other party families allowed me to ascertain whether this discourse is unique to the Far Right and to what extent abstraction and embedding are used in actual party discourse.

Although manifestos are a common and cross-nationally comparable source of party communication, they typically fail to represent the "everyday" political discourse encountered by voters through the media and personal interactions. To address this limitation, I turned to a set of more than 650,000 tweets issued by 65 parties and their leaders across France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden from April 2019 to June 2021.[2] These tweets were gathered via Social Feed Manager (George Washington University Libraries 2016) and provide a granular view of parties' "everyday" civilizational discourse. I selected these six countries for several reasons. In terms of geography, history, and political culture, each is an EU member and an advanced industrial democracy in Western Europe. In terms of far-right politics, each country has at least one prominent far-right party that was competitive in national elections during the period under study. Regarding parties' communication strategies, parties across the political spectrum in all six countries used Twitter to communicate with the public. The less consistent use of Twitter by parties in prominent Eastern European cases, such as Hungary, led to the exclusion of cases from this region. Furthermore, the analysis was also limited by the time-specific nature of the Twitter data.

Nevertheless, tweets from these countries provided a broad selection in which to investigate the Far Right's civilizational discourse and should serve as a strong foundation for future study.

Although various characteristics have been attributed to the contemporary European Far Right, scholars largely agree that nativism is a defining characteristic of this party family (Art 2020; Froio 2018; Ivarsflaten 2008; Mudde 2007; 2019). Given the centrality of nativism to the Far Right, I classified all parties coded as "nationalist parties" by the Manifesto Project as Far Right (Burst et al. 2020). Yet, this measurement strategy left out several parties that are widely considered to be in the far-right family. For example, Poland's Law and Justice and Hungary's Fidesz are categorized as "conservative" parties by the Manifesto Project, but typically appear in scholarly discussion of the Far Right. To address this issue and demonstrate the robustness of the findings, I replicated all analyses using the "far right" coding from the PopuList developed by Rooduijn and colleagues (2019). The PopuList also identifies nativism as the defining feature of far-right parties, along with an authoritarian tendency that values order and deference to authority. Approximately 80% of parties are coded the same by the Manifesto Project and PopuList. As discussed later, the results are robust to either measurement strategy.

Examining the Far Right's civilizational discourse first required identifying relevant passages within the large text corpora compiled for this study. I initially composed a list of civilization-related words, such as "civilization" and "civilizational," in each of the 22 languages used in the party manifestos and tweets.[3] I then minimized each list by stemming the component words, producing a final list of just a few stems. For example, the English words "civilization" and "civilizational" were reduced to the common stem "civiliz*." Stemming is a common preprocessing technique in quantitative text analysis and is particularly useful for studying languages with complex word transformations, such as conjugation and declension. I used these lists to conduct a dictionary-based automated text analysis, which identified every instance in which a civilization-related word was used in a party manifesto or tweet.[4] I then read each of these passages from the party manifestos and tweets to identify multiword phrases in each language that exclusively referred to civilization as a supranational community. These phrases often involved labeling, such as references to "our civilization," "European civilization," and "Western civilization." Also relevant were phrases in which elements of a shared culture—including history, values, and identity—were attributed to civilization. I used these multiword phrases to construct a refined list of civilization-related terms; repeating a dictionary-based search with this list then allowed me to identify the relevant passages in the party manifestos and tweets.

This two-stage process was necessary because, in many languages, the word "civilization" takes on different meanings when used in distinct contexts. This polysemy suggests that not all uses of the word "civilization" are relevant to this study's understanding of civilization as a supranational category of belonging. In some cases, "civilization" may mean social or economic development, as when the Polish Civic Platform's 2007 manifesto claimed, "We want our rural areas to catch up with the cities in terms of civilization" (Platforma Obywatelska 2007, 59). This sentiment was echoed in Law and Justice's 2015 manifesto, which specifically referenced the concept of "civilization-development" (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2015, 147). In other instances, "civilization" implies a sense of common decency and propriety. For example, the Dutch party DENK (2017, 23) stated in its 2017 manifesto that "how a society treats its elderly is a measure of civilization." The Italian word "civiltà" frequently connotes such a meaning. Furthermore, in German and Greek, the words "Kultur" and "politismos" can be understood as either "culture" or "civilization." Using multiword phrases to identify relevant passages addresses the bias that might otherwise arise because of the multiplicity of meanings associated with "civilization" in various languages.

To explore whether far-right parties are significantly more likely than other parties to use civilizational discourse, I ran a series of logistic regressions on the coded manifestos (N = 1,063) and tweets (N = 666,000). The dependent variable was a dichotomous indicator of whether a manifesto or tweet mentioned civilization. The independent variable was an indicator of party family; I ran separate models using both the Manifesto Project's coding, which divides parties into 10 families, and the PopuList's dichotomous coding (models with country- and year-fixed effects are included in the supplemental material). These models descriptively clarify whether the Far Right's use of civilizational discourse is unique when compared to other party families, but they are not intended to fully explain the factors underlying that discourse.

After I identified civilization-related manifesto passages and tweets via the quantitative approach, I read and qualitatively analyzed the texts to identify instances of abstraction and embedding. I operationalized the mechanisms according to the thin–thick and universalist–particularist continuums discussed earlier. Texts that linked civilization to thin or universalist principles were coded as examples of abstraction. In line with Brubaker's (2017) work, I specifically sought out references to Christianism, liberalism, and secularism but also inductively identified themes that emerged during the coding. Likewise, I coded as "embedding" those texts that presented a thick or particularist understanding of civilization. As with abstraction, I began with the deductive prior that specific names,

places, and historical events would be evidence of embedding, but I was also open to inductive insights.

Given the large number of manifesto passages and tweets involved in the research, it was necessary to select a relatively small number of them to report. Because the qualitative analysis is meant to illustrate and elucidate what the mechanisms "look like" and how they operate in practice, I followed two principles when selecting examples. First, I chose texts that were representative of the various themes invoked in the corpus to illustrate the breadth of the topics linked to European civilization. Second, I gave priority to texts that addressed the ideas, beliefs, and values linked to civilization to uncover the substantive meaning of the Far Right's civilizationism, rather than simply its positive orientation toward this topic.

This empirical approach brought together both quantitative and qualitative analysis of several data sources to assess the role of civilizationism in far-right discourse.[5] The quantitative text analysis allowed me to cull through the large text corpora assembled and identify only the relevant passages. Furthermore, the regression analysis permitted a statistical assessment of how distinct the Far Right's civilizationism is in comparison with other party families. The qualitative text analysis enabled me to identify the most prominent themes and topics in the Far Right's civilizational discourse and elucidate how the mechanisms work in practice.
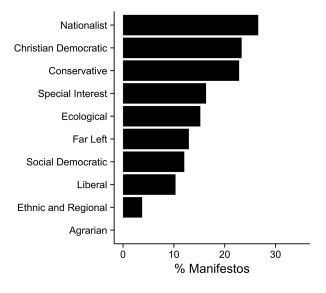
Investigating Civilizationism in Far-Right Discourse

Civilizationism is a prominent feature of European political discourse, particularly on the Right. As displayed in figure 1, from 1990 to 2020 approximately 29% of nationalist party manifestos featured civilizationism, along with 25% of Christian Democratic manifestos and 24% of conservative manifestos. Viewed dichotomously, far-right parties were more than twice as likely as other parties to feature civilizationism in their manifestos: 32% to 15%.

These differences between party families are statistically robust. Figure 2 presents the predicted probabilities and 95% confidence intervals from logistic regressions of civilizational discourse on party family. As displayed in the left-hand panel, nationalist party manifestos are significantly more likely to feature civilizationism than manifestos from most other party families. The use of civilizational discourse by nationalist and other right-wing parties is not statistically distinguishable, likely due to several far-right parties that are not coded as "nationalist" in the Manifesto Project database, including Hungary's Fidesz, Poland's Law and Justice, and the Brothers of Italy. The PopuList's dichotomous coding, displayed in the right-hand panel of figure 2, confirms that civilizational discourse is significantly more common in far-right manifestos.

Although civilizationism is a prominent feature of far-right party manifestos, to what extent does it arise in parties' day-to-day discourse? To address this issue, I turned to a corpus of more than 650,000 tweets posted by 65 parties and their leaders in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden between April 2019 and June 2021. Figure 3 presents predicted probabilities and 95% confidence intervals from logistic regressions of civilizational discourse on party family. Given the large number of tweets issued by each party and leader compared to the much smaller number of manifestos, the

Figure 1
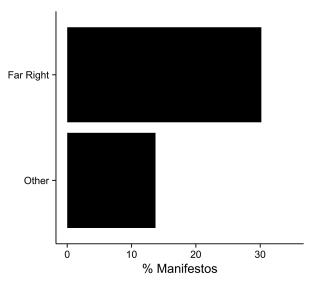## Percentage of Manifestos Featuring Civilizationism by Party Family

Figure 2
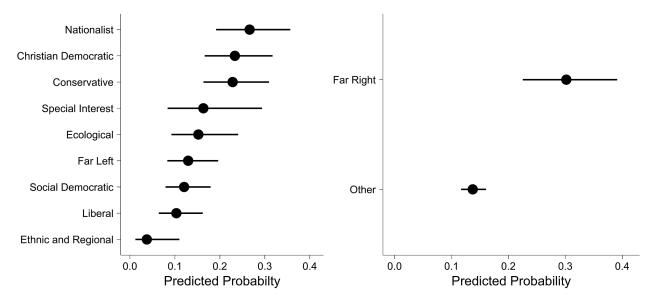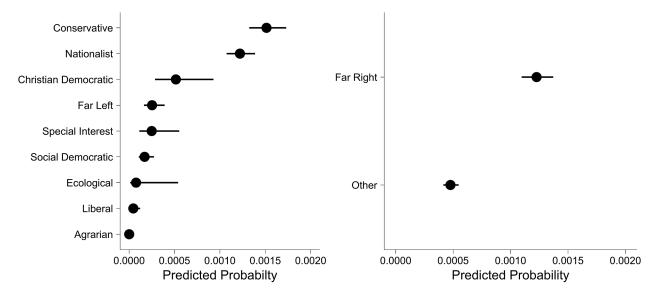**Civilizational Discourse Is Most Common in Far-Right Party Manifestos**

Figure 3
Civilizational Discourse Is Most Common in Far-Right Party Tweets

absolute probabilities are much lower than in the previous analysis. The left-hand panel illustrates that conservative and nationalist parties are significantly more likely to invoke civilizationism on Twitter than members of other party families, whereas the right-hand panel demonstrates the robustness of the finding when dichotomously distinguishing between far-right parties and all others.

Interestingly, conservative parties appear slightly more likely than nationalist parties to employ civilizational discourse on Twitter. This result is primarily driven by two conservative Italian parties: the Brothers of Italy, which the PopuList considers a far-right party, and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia, which the PopuList codes as a populist but not far-right party.

Abstraction
Although they share a common commitment to civilizationism, far-right parties use a wide variety of labels to describe their understanding of civilization and demarcate its boundaries. In many cases, these labels link civilization to general ideas, principles, and values through the process of abstraction. For example, geographic markers such as "European" and "Western" are often used to identify the wide scope of civilization from the Far Right's perspective. Less frequently used geographic labels include "Euro-American," "Euro-Atlantic," and "Mediterranean." Historical reference points from the classical era also feature as distinguishing markers in the Far Right's conception of civilization, as do thin sociocultural and political attributes, such as "Christian" or "Judeo-Christian," "democratic," and "humanistic." Yet, beyond such labeling, the Far Right often presents European civilization as a thin and universalist entity by linking it to three substantive topics: shared heritage, Christianism, and liberalism.

Shared Heritage. A key feature of abstraction is the presentation of European civilization as a shared heritage or a set of common roots that unite contemporary European nations. For example, in its 1995 manifesto, Belgium's Flemish Bloc claimed that the successful integration of southern and eastern Europeans into Flemish society occurred "without major problems and without government help … not because they were biologically related to us … but because they were part of the same overarching European civilization." The party went on to clarify that European civilization constituted a "common background: a mixture of pre-Christian, Germanic, Christian and classical Greco-Roman and humanistic civilizational elements" (Vlaams Blok 1995). Poland's Law and Justice echoed this sentiment two decades later in its 2015 manifesto, stating, "European civilization has wonderful Greco-Roman-Christian roots" (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2015, 159). Furthermore, National Rally vice president Jordan Bardella (2019) also emphasized a similar set of transnational historical reference points in his tweet: "Europe is a well-defined geographical space, a civilization proud of its Christian, Roman, and Greek roots."

Yet, references to this shared heritage are not always explicitly labeled; instead, parties occasionally simply relate civilization to a set of shared markers or cultural elements. This is evident in Flemish Interest's 2019 manifesto, in which the party defined Europe as "our way of life, that is, a certain territory, a set of insights, arts, tastes, values, and norms" (Vlaams Belang 2019, 18). Likewise, National Rally leader Marine Le Pen (2019a) also declared, "Our Europe is…a space defined by a geography, a history, a heritage, and CIVILIZATIONAL values."

Importantly, the reference points mentioned as constitutive of civilization are thin and universal enough to be largely inclusive of the various national identities present around the European continent. By abstracting the notion of civilization and linking it to political and sociocultural values, the Far Right constructs a conception of civilizationism that poses no immediate threat to the claims of specific nationalisms and is universalist in scope. The universalizing tendency of abstraction is on full display in a tweet from Brothers of Italy senator Adolfo Urso (2020), who framed the debate on statue removal as an attack on the whole of human history: "Tearing down the #statues of Western and European civilization means canceling the #history of humanity."

Christianism. Abstraction is also evident in the Far Right's treatment of Christianity as the source of a common set of identities and values that unite Europeans and distinguish them from "others." This is prominent in debates regarding the display of religious symbols in public, such as Brothers of Italy leader Giorgia Meloni's 2019 tweet regarding the appearance of religious symbols in schools: "Having the #crucifix in our classrooms does not mean imposing our beliefs on others, but being proud of the values that have founded our civilization!" This sentiment is echoed by other actors in Italy and Spain, who suggest an inherent link between Christianity and Europe's heritage. League leader Matteo Salvini (2020a) suggested that vandalism of a statue of the Virgin Mary in Tuscany represented a lack of "respect for our symbols, for our values, for our civilization." Likewise, Spain's Vox in 2020 responded to a fire in France's Nantes Cathedral in July of that year by suggesting a coordinated assault on Europe's Christian roots: "Another accidental fire? They want to destroy everything that symbolizes Western Christian civilization. We will raise back up everything that barbarism destroys." Even the accidental fire at Notre Dame in April 2019 served as the basis for similar discourse, with Vox leader Santiago Abascal (2019a) tweeting, "The Islamists who want to destroy Europe and Western civilization are celebrating the #NotreDame fire. Let's take note before it's too late."

Liberalism. The Far Right often casts itself as the defender of European civilization's shared liberal values, which are contrasted with the alleged illiberalism of Islam. This discourse frequently draws on widely accepted values from the "civic zeitgeist," allowing the Far Right to legitimize itself and justify its "liberal illiberalism" (Halikiopoulou, Mock, and Vasilopoulou 2013; Lorimer 2020; Moffitt 2017). For example, Flemish Interest's 2019 manifesto expounded on the civilizational import of "fundamental European values and achievements, such as sovereignty, subsidiarity, freedom, prosperity, democracy, and the rule of law" (Vlaams Belang 2019, 18). A similar theme was struck in the Netherlands, where the Forum for

Democracy declared that "the West is the most tolerant civilization in the world" (Forum voor Democratie 2020).

Despite the Far Right's historical association with antisemitism and conservative views of gender and family, far-right parties present themselves as the defenders of Europe's Jewish communities and proponents of gender equality. For example, after an assault on a prominent French Jewish writer in early 2021, Salvini tweeted, "Antisemitism and hatred of Jewish people are unacceptable in the world and civilization." Similarly, Salvini (2019) voiced support for gender equality in a Twitter thread condemning Islamic schools, writing, "No space for extremists, for those who preach hate, who hit and discriminate against women. We are proud of our civilization and we will defend it at all costs." A similar comment came from Abascal (2019b) in response to allegations regarding forced child marriage among Muslims in Spain: "In our civilization, women have the same rights as men. No foreign custom or law can impose pedophilia and the most barbarous form of slavery here."

Yet, perhaps the most frequent component of liberalism linked to European civilization is freedom itself. For example, Le Pen (2019b) tweeted, "Civilizational values! …what is at stake are our values…our freedoms." The Brothers of Italy echoed this claim, tweeting, "Our civilization is our freedom. Let's defend it from Islamist hatred" (Fratelli d'Italia 2020). Likewise, after terrorist attacks in Vienna, Austria, in November 2020, Meloni tweeted, "Europe is under attack from those who hate our civilization and our freedom. Wake up!"

Embedding

Whereas abstraction serves to neutralize the potential tension between nationalism and civilizationism, embedding goes a step further to build positive links between the two. The Flemish Bloc explicitly acknowledged this link when it declared, "Our nationalism … is strongly intertwined with the awareness of a common European civilization" (Vlaams Blok 1995). Although a variety of elements from the nationalist repertoire could feasibly be employed in embedding, the two most commonly invoked are national history and national art.

National History. Embedding frequently occurs through the presentation of episodes from national history as hallmarks of the wider civilizational community. Greek and Italian parties characterize ancient Greece and Rome as evidence of national exceptionalism, as well as the sources of modern Western and European civilization. This tie between nationalism and civilizationism was expressed by Greece's Popular Orthodox Rally, whose 2007 manifesto stated, "What do we need to change in our mentality to lead the race of world civilization again?" (Λαϊκός Ορθοδοξος Συναγερμος 2007, 87). This self-

referential question not only reminds readers of Greece's historical greatness but also presents the nation as a crucial contributor to the development of modern civilization. A similar sentiment was expressed by a Brothers of Italy supporter who claimed, "Without #Italy, #Europe would not exist. #Italy would exist without #Europe. History, culture, civilization, religion, economy, roots of the world" (Maullu 2020).

In many cases, national history is recast as representative of civilizational progress. For example, in Italy, the League's discourse presents Columbus's voyage as a pivotal movement in both Italian and European history. On Columbus Day 2020, the party responded to efforts to remove statues of Christopher Columbus by tweeting in all-caps, "WE DEFEND OUR CIVILIZATION AGAINST THE BLIND VIOLENCE OF IDEOLOGY. #ColumbusDay" (Lega–Salvini Premier 2020). Salvini has also been known to place civilizational importance on the Battle of Lepanto, the 1571 naval battle in which Catholic states, led by Italy and Spain, defeated the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Vox's Abascal has drawn similar lessons from the history of the Reconquista, the centuries-long effort by Christian kingdoms to expel Muslim rulers from the Iberian peninsula during the Middle Ages. Drawing on historical reference points enables far-right parties to embed civilizationism in their nationalism and provides examples of tensions between Christians and Muslims that can be used to justify their expectation of a coming clash of civilizations.

National Art. In addition to national history, national art is invoked to embed civilizationism into nationalism. In response to a proposal to cover nude statues in Italy, Salvini (2020b) stated, "We run the risk of having to censor statues and works of art from a heritage that belongs to Italy but represents the highest peaks of Western civilization. The reason? They could conflict with the 'sensitivity' of other cultures, such as the Islamic one. Does this seem normal to you?" Crucially, he presents Italian artwork as both evidence of national exceptionalism and the pinnacle of Western civilization—while also taking the opportunity to depict Islam as a threat to both. Controversy over statues also appeared in civilizational discourse in Spain; in response to the toppling of a statue of Spanish missionary Junípero Serra in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, Abascal (2020) tweeted, "The debased mobs … destroy the symbols of civilization. We will defeat barbarism." In other tweets, he linked civilizational decline to attempts to remove statues of Queen Isabella and Miguel de Cervantes.

Both abstraction and embedding assume a pluralist understanding of European civilization, in which distinct nationalisms are legitimate expressions of the civilizational community's shared heritage. This sentiment is most clearly expressed by the Flemish Bloc's declaration that

"the unity of Europe is … a unity of different peoples around common roots of civilization, but with the preservation of each individual's wealth, language, and culture" (Vlaams Blok 1995). Similarly, Law and Justice asserted, "The richness of our continent and its civilization lies in the enormous diversity of Europeans" (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2015, 12). This pluralism was further acknowledged by National Rally spokesperson Sébastien Chenu (2019), who tweeted, "Europe is a civilization: it was there before us and will be there after us. All countries do not have the same identifying features, but they can decide to understand each other." Pluralism and diversity are acknowledged as characteristics of European civilization, but do not define other groups. Particularly, European far-right parties depict Islam as a monolithic, homogeneous, and adversarial civilizational foe—failing to recognize the enormous diversity that also exists across the Islamic world.

Conclusion

The Far Right often portrays itself as the central protagonist in a "clash of civilizations" between Europe and Islam. Yet, professing both national and supranational identities requires considerable discursive maneuvering. This article examines civilizational discourse in practice by analyzing more than 1,000 party manifestos in 27 EU member states and approximately 650,000 tweets from political parties and leaders in six Western European countries. I find that the Far Right reconciles its national and supranational identities by abstracting European civilization as a commonly shared heritage and embedding it in familiar elements from the nationalist repertoire. Abstraction relies on thin and universalist features to emphasize the commonalities that unite diverse European nations. These attributes often relate to transnational historical experiences, liberal values, and a shared Christian heritage. By contrast, embedding highlights the thick and particularist aspects of civilization by drawing on specific elements from the nationalist repertoire. It often involves recasting national history as constitutive of the larger civilization's development and portraying national artistic achievements as representative of civilizational exceptionalism. By presenting European civilization as both thin–universalist and thick–particularist, abstraction and embedding allow the Far Right to make sense of this supranational identity and comfortably integrate it within its nationalist, Euroskeptic profile.

This article makes several theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of civilizationism, nationalism, and the Far Right. By analyzing how far-right parties discursively construct their understanding of European civilization, it extends recent studies that view civilizations as socially constructed or "imagined" supranational communities. Importantly, this study emphasizes the role of political discourse as a critical component of how the Far

Right constructs the notion of European "civilization" and imbues it with meaning. More than merely describing a preexisting reality, political discourse plays a creative role in actively constituting social reality—including the shared identities underpinning nationalism and civilizationism.

Likewise, this study provides a theoretical framework to unpack the nexus between nationalism and civilizationism, which has been problematized by other scholars but not sufficiently explained (Brubaker 2017; De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020; Hale and Laruelle 2021). Specifically, abstraction and embedding illustrate how the Far Right reconciles its national and supranational identities, presenting both as complementary rather than contradictory. Moving beyond the scope of this study, these mechanisms could prove fruitful for understanding the nexus among various types of identities, such as national, subnational, ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities.

Furthermore, focusing on civilizationism illuminates the complexity of the Far Right's identity profile. Not simply nationalist, the European Far Right embraces a multifaceted understanding of its identity and emphasizes transnational commonalities that link diverse European nations. Civilizationism also provides evidence of the Far Right's efforts to construct its own version of Europe: rather than simply criticizing the EU, the Far Right puts considerable effort into creating an alternative understanding of what "Europe" is and should be.

In addition to these theoretical contributions, this study provides the most extensive empirical investigation to date of civilizational discourse across Europe. Leveraging multiple data sources for hundreds of parties over approximately three decades, this article provides a thorough account of which political actors employ civilizational discourse and how they do so. Moreover, by complementing party manifestos with tweets, it also demonstrates the potential of social media data to explore questions of identity. Data from Twitter are relatively accessible for scholars and provide a previously unimaginable amount of information, both in size and scope. For studies of political communication, one advantage of social media is that it provides a better measure of elites' "everyday" discourse than party manifestos and is easier to compile when there are a large number of cases than speeches and media interviews. Likewise, Twitter data provide short units of text that are easily comparable and include a range of useful metadata.

Of course, there are limitations to this study that should be acknowledged. Although the manifestos provide three decades' worth of information on party discourse, the Twitter data cover a relatively short period of just more than two years (2019–21). Thus, the findings from the analyses of tweets are sensitive to events during this time frame, including the 2019 European Parliament elections and the coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, the cases

selected for in-depth Twitter analysis are from Western Europe. Given the considerably different historical, political, and social circumstances of Central and Eastern Europe, more research must be done to examine how the Far Right in this region discursively constructs its understanding of European "civilization." Even though the general mechanisms of abstraction and embedding should travel beyond Western Europe, the specific content invoked in civilizational discourse may differ.

Moving forward, scholars should continue to explore the role of civilizationism in far-right politics. Building on the findings of this study, three areas stand out as particularly fruitful avenues for future research: examining differences among far-right parties' civilizationism, exploring the nexus between civilizationism and other identities, and turning to the adoption of civilizationism by the public.

Although this study sought to identify the commonalities that unite far-right parties across Europe in their shared embrace of civilizationism, future research should unpack the differences within this party family. Which parties are the most consistent proponents of civilizationism? Do any far-right parties eschew the general trend and avoid civilizationism in their discourse? Is civilizationism a typical feature of far-right discourse, or does it appear only during certain periods, such as during election cycles? Additionally, this line of research should examine how the substantive content of abstraction and embedding varies between parties. For example, it is possible that in more religiously observant countries there is a greater prominence of Christianism in far-right civilizational discourse, whereas secular states lack such references.

Likewise, additional research should build on the findings presented here to examine the relationship between civilizationism and identities other than nationalism. In this regard, the intersection of civilizationism and religion may be particularly fascinating. Although religion is often cast as a core component of civilizationism—likely because of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis—future research should explore this relationship to determine when and how religion plays a role in constituting a civilizational identity on the Far Right.

Scholars should also turn their attention to the reception of civilizationism by the public. It remains unclear whether civilizational affiliation is an "identity" that resonates with far-right supporters. In other words, is "civilization" truly an imagined community for ordinary citizens or just for political elites? If civilizationism does resonate among the public, to what extent do individuals' understandings of civilization correspond with those constructed by leaders? Initial research in this area finds that multiple situational factors influence citizens' adoption of a civilizational identity and their understanding of it, suggesting this is a valuable direction for future research (Hale and Laruelle 2020). Data from social media,

surveys, and in-depth interviews promise to provide a wealth of information.

Considering the prominence and increasing political influence of far-right parties across Europe, understanding when and how they adopt civilizationism in their discourse is important. Turning our attention to this issue will deepen our understanding of how the Far Right constructs its own identity and how overlapping identities—such as nationalism and civilizationism—can be reconciled through political discourse.

Acknowledgments

Supplementary Materials

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592722002742.

Notes

1 States were included from the year of their accession to the European Union. All members of the EU-28 were included except Malta, which is absent from the Manifesto Project database for the period of its EU membership. The United Kingdom was included through its departure from the EU in January 2020.
2 See the supplemental material for a list of parties and leaders included in the analysis.
3 I used Google Translate and online dictionaries, such as WordReference.com, to develop each list of civilization-related words. Google Translate has been found largely acceptable for the dictionary-based quantitative text analysis conducted in this study. For other examples, see Heidenreich et al. (2020) and Proksch et al. (2019).
4 Full analysis code is available in the replication materials.
5 Cerrone, Joseph. 2022. "Replication Data for: Reconciling National and Supranational Identities: Civilizationism in European Far-Right Discourse." *Harvard Dataverse*, https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/BSHCCJ.

References

Abascal, Santiago (@Santi_ABASCAL). 2019a. "Los islamistas que quieren destruir." Twitter, April 15, 2019. https://twitter.com/Santi_ABASCAL/status/1117890168340586497.
Abascal, Santiago (@Santi_ABASCAL). 2019b. "No queremos una España así." Twitter, May 8, 2019.

https://twitter.com/Santi_ABASCAL/status/1126064195852734464.

Abascal, Santiago (@Santi_ABASCAL). 2020. "Las turbas envilecidas." Twitter, June 20, 2020. https://twitter.com/Santi_ABASCAL/status/1274446809440702465.

Abdelgadir, Aala, and Vasiliki Fouka. 2020. "Political Secularism and Muslim Integration in the West: Assessing the Effects of the French Headscarf Ban." *American Political Science Review* 114 (3): 707–23.

Akkerman, Tjitske. 2015. "Gender and the Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Policy Agendas." *Patterns of Prejudice* 49 (1–2): 37–60.

Allen, Trevor J., and Sara Wallace Goodman. 2021. "Individual- and Party-Level Determinants of Far-Right Support among Women in Western Europe." *European Political Science Review* 13 (2): 135–50.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso.

Art, David. 2020. "The Myth of Global Populism." *Perspectives on Politics* 20 (3): 999–1011.

Balibar, Étienne. 1991. "Is There a Neo-Racism?" In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, eds. Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, 17–28. London: Verso.

Bardella, Jordan (@J_Bardella). 2019. "Pour nous, l'Europe est." Twitter, May 21, 2019. https://twitter.com/J_Bardella/status/1130906098096115712.

Berntzen, Lars Erik. 2019. *Liberal Roots of Far Right Activism: The Anti-Islamic Movement in the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brown, Katy. 2020. "When Eurosceptics Become Europhiles: Far-Right Opposition to Turkish Involvement in the European Union." *Identities* 27 (6): 633–54.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2017. "Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40 (8): 1191–226.

Burst, Tobias, Werner Krause, Pola Lehmann, Jirka Lewandowski, Theres Matthieß, Nicolas Merz, Sven Regel, and Lisa Zehnter. 2020. *Manifesto Corpus: Version 2020-2*. Berlin: WZB Berlin Social Science Center.

Cerrone, Joseph. 2022. "Replication Data for: Reconciling National and Supranational Identities: Civilizationism in European Far-Right Discourse." *Harvard Dataverse*, https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/BSHCCJ.

Chebankova, Elena, and Piotr Dutkiewicz. 2021. "Introduction." *Polis: Political Studies* 12 (4): 8–13.

Chenu, Sébastien (@sebchenu). 2019. "L'Europe est une civilisation." Twitter, May 22, 2019. https://twitter.com/RNational_off/status/1131249371612360706.

Collins, Randall. 2004. "Civilizations as Zones of Prestige and Social Contact." In *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis*, eds. Saïd Amir Arjomand and Edward A. Tiryakian, 132–47. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

De Cesari, Chiara, Ivo Bosilkov, and Arianna Piacentini. 2020. "(Why) Do Eurosceptics Believe in a Common European Heritage?" In *European Memory in Populism: Representations of Self and Other*, eds. Chiara De Cesari and Ayhan Kaya, 26–46. New York: Routledge.

De Lange, Sarah L., and Liza M. Mügge. 2015. "Gender and Right-Wing Populism in the Low Countries: Ideological Variation across Parties and Time." *Patterns of Prejudice* 49 (1–2): 61–80.

DENK. 2017. *Denkend aan Nederland: Verkiezingsprogramma DENK, 2017–2021*. Amsterdam.

Duina, Francesco, and Dylan Carson. 2020. "Not So Right after All? Making Sense of the Progressive Rhetoric of Europe's Far-Right Parties." *International Sociology* 35 (1): 3–21.

Eisenstadt, Shmuel N. 2000. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus* 129 (1): 1–29.

Fratelli d'Italia (@FratellidItalia). 2020. "La nostra civiltà è la nostra libertà." Twitter, November 3, 2020. https://twitter.com/FratellidItalia/status/1323730962283401216.

Forum voor Democratie (@fvdemocratie). 2020. "Het Westen is de meest tolerante beschaving ter wereld." Twitter, June 13, 2020. https://mobile.twitter.com/fvdemocratie/status/1271761593014145024?lang=ar-x-fm.

Froio, Caterina. 2018. "Race, Religion, or Culture? Framing Islam between Racism and Neo-Racism in the Online Network of the French Far Right." *Perspectives on Politics* 16 (3): 696–709.

Ganesh, Bharath, and Caterina Froio. 2020. "A 'Europe des Nations': Far Right Imaginative Geographies and the Politicization of Cultural Crisis on Twitter in Western Europe." *Journal of European Integration* 42 (5): 715–32.

George Washington University Libraries. 2016. "Social Feed Manager." https://gwu-libraries.github.io/sfm-ui/.

Hale, Henry E. 2008. *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hale, Henry E., and Marlene Laruelle. 2020. "Rethinking Civilizational Identity from the Bottom Up: A Case Study of Russia and a Research Agenda." *Nationalities Papers* 48 (3): 585–602.

Hale, Henry E., and Marlene Laruelle. 2021. "A New Wave of Research on Civilizational Politics." *Nationalities Papers* 49 (4): 597–608.

Halikiopoulou, Daphne, Steven Mock, and Sofia Vasilopoulou. 2013. "The Civic Zeitgeist: Nationalism and Liberal Values in the European Radical Right." *Nations and Nationalism* 19 (1): 107–27.

Hall, Martin, and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. 2008. "Civilizations and International Relations Theory." In *Civilizational Identity: The Production and Reproduction of "Civilizations" in International Relations*, eds. Martin Hall and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, 1–12. New York: Springer.

Harteveld, Eelco, Wouter Van der Brug, Stefan Dahlberg, and Andrej Kokkonen. 2015. "The Gender Gap in Populist Radical Right Voting: Examining the Demand Side in Western and Eastern Europe." *Patterns of Prejudice* 49 (1–2): 103–34.

Heidenreich, Tobias, Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Fabienne Lind, and Hajo G. Boomgaarden. 2020. "Political Migration Discourses on Social Media: A Comparative Perspective on Visibility and Sentiment across Political Facebook Accounts in Europe." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46 (7): 1261–80.

Heinisch, Reinhard, Duncan McDonnell, and Annika Werner. 2021. "Equivocal Euroscepticism: How Populist Radical Right Parties Can Have their EU Cake and Eat It." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 59 (2): 189–205.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3): 22–49.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ivarsflaten, Elisabeth. 2008. "What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe? Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (1): 3–23.

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2010. "How to Think about Civilizations." In *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, 176–200. New York: Routledge.

Jennings, Colin, and Elizabeth Ralph-Morrow. 2020. "Selective Tolerance and the Radical Right." *Rationality and Society* 32 (2): 144–67.

Katzenstein, Peter J. 2010. "A World of Plural and Pluralist Civilizations: Multiple Actors, Traditions, and Practices." In *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, 1–40. New York: Routledge.

Kopecký, Petr, and Cas Mudde. 2002. "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe." *European Union Politics* 3 (3): 297–326.

Λαϊκός Ορθοδοξος Συναγερμος. 2007. Πλαίσιο Θέσεων.

Lega–Salvini Premier (@LegaSalvini). 2020. "Difendiamo la nostra civiltà." Twitter, October 12, 2020. https://twitter.com/LegaSalvini/status/1315724169674469378.

Le Pen, Marine (@MLP_officiel). 2019a. "Notre Europe n'est pas." Twitter, May 11, 2019. https://twitter.com/MLP_officiel/status/1127237457395834880.

Le Pen, Marine (@MLP_officiel). 2019b. "Valeurs de civilisation." Twitter, May 11, 2019. https://twitter.com/RNational_off/status/1127239196048089088.

Lorimer, Marta. 2020. "Europe as Ideological Resource: The Case of the Rassemblement National." *Journal of European Public Policy* 27 (9): 1388–1405.

Mammone, Andrea. 2015. *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Maullu, Stefano (@stefanomaullu). 2020. "Senza #italia non esiste #europa." Twitter, April 6, 2020. https://twitter.com/FratellidItalia/status/1247065670422011904.

McNamara, Kathleen R. 2015. *The Politics of Everyday Europe: Constructing Authority in the European Union*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Meloni, Giorgia (@GiorgiaMeloni). 2019. "Avere il #crocifisso nelle nostre aule." Twitter, October 8, 2019. https://twitter.com/GiorgiaMeloni/status/1181502521652715520.

Meloni, Giorgia (@GiorgiaMeloni). 2020. "Sgomento e rabbia." Twitter, November 2, 2020. https://twitter.com/giorgiameloni/status/1323381625955274752.

Moffitt, Benjamin. 2017. "Liberal Illiberalism? The Reshaping of the Contemporary Populist Radical Right in Northern Europe." *Politics and Governance* 5 (4): 112–22.

Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Medford, MA: Polity.

Mummendey, Amélie, and Michael Wenzel. 1999. "Social Discrimination and Tolerance in Intergroup Relations: Reactions to Intergroup Difference." *Personality & Social Psychology Review* 3 (2): 158–74.

Platforma Obywatelska. 2007. *Program PO: Polska zasługuje na cud gospodarczy*. Warsaw.

Prawa i Sprawiedliwości. 2015. *Zdrowie, Praca, Rodzina: Program Prawa i Sprawiedliwości*. Warsaw.

Proksch, Sven-Oliver, Will Lowe, Jens Wäckerle, and Stuart N. Soroka. 2019. "Multilingual Sentiment Analysis: A New Approach to Measuring Conflict in Legislative Speeches." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 44 (1): 97–131.

Rooduijn, Matthijs, Stijn Van Kessel, Caterina Froio, Andrea L. P. Pirro, Sarah L. de Lange,

Daphne Halikiopoulou, Paul Lewis, Cas Mudde, and Paul Taggart. 2019. *The PopuList: An Overview of Populist, Far Right, Far Left, and Eurosceptic Parties.* https://popu-list.org/.

Roy, Olivier. 2020. *Is Europe Christian?* New York: Oxford University Press.

Salvini, Matteo (@matteosalvinimi). 2019. "Grazie a Forze dell'Ordine." Twitter, June 15, 2019. https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi/status/1139932305374490624.

Salvini, Matteo (@matteosalvinimi). 2020a. "Madonnina profanata da idioti." Twitter, July 17, 2020. https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi/status/1284067386933628930.

Salvini, Matteo (@matteosalvinimi). 2020b. "Corriamo il rischio." Twitter, September 27, 2020. https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi/status/1310288393339916288.

Salvini, Matteo (@matteosalvinimi). 2021. "Solidarietà allo scrittore ebreo." Twitter, February 14, 2021. https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi/status/1360986005092921346.

Said, Edward. 2003. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage Books.

Schmiedel, Ulrich. 2021. "The Cracks in the Category of Christianism: A Call for Ambiguity in the Conceptualization of Christianity." In *Contemporary Christian-Cultural Values: Migration Encounters in the Nordic Region*, eds. Cecilia Nahnfeldt and Kaia S. Rønsdal, 164–82. London: Routledge.

Scott, Joan Wallach. 2007. *The Politics of the Veil.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Spierings, Niels, and Andrej Zaslove. 2015. "Gendering the Vote for Populist Radical-Right Parties." *Patterns of Prejudice* 49 (1–2): 135–162.

Strømmen, Hannah, and Ulrich Schmiedel. 2020. *The Claim to Christianity: Responding to the Far Right.* London: SCM Press.

Taggart, Paul. 1998. "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems." *European Journal of Political Research* 33 (3): 363–88.

Taggart, Paul, and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2004. "Contemporary Euroscepticism in the Party Systems of the European Union Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 43 (1): 1–27.

Taguieff, Pierre-André. 1993. "Origines et métamorphoses de la Nouvelle Droite." *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire* 40 (1): 3–22.

Urso, Adolfo (@adolfo_urso). 2020. "Abbattere le #statue della civiltà." Twitter, June 22, 2020. https://twitter.com/FratellidItalia/status/1275037157640622081.

Vasilopoulou, Sofia. 2017. "European Integration and the Radical Right: Patterns of Opposition." In *The Populist Radical Right: A Reader*, ed. Cas Mudde, 124–38. London: Routledge.

Vlaams Belang. 2019. *Eerst onze mensen: Verkiezingsprogramma 2019.* Brussels.

Vlaams Blok. 1995. *Eigen volk eerst: Verkiezingsprogramma 1995.* Brussels.

Vox (@vox_es). 2020. "Otro fuego accidental." Twitter, July 18, 2020. https://twitter.com/vox_es/status/1284417361622310912.

Waldzus, Sven, and Amélie Mummendey. 2004. "Inclusion in a Superordinate Category, In-Group Prototypicality, and Attitudes towards Out-Groups." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 40 (4): 466–77.

Waldzus, Sven, Amélie Mummendey, Michael Wenzel, and Ulrike Weber. 2003. "Towards Tolerance: Representations of Superordinate Categories and Perceived Ingroup Prototypicality." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 39 (1): 31–47.

Wenzel, Michael, Amélie Mummendey, and Sven Waldsuz. 2007. "Superordinate Identities and Intergroup Conflict: The Ingroup Projection Model." *European Review of Social Psychology* 18 (1): 331–72.

Wimmer, Andreas. 2017. "Power and Pride: National Identity and Ethnopolitical Inequality Around the World." *World Politics* 69 (4): 605–39.

Wodak, Ruth. 2015. *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zúquete, José Pedro. 2008. "The European Extreme-Right and Islam: New Directions?" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13 (3): 321–44.