AUSTRIAN POPULIST RIGHT AND TÜRKİYE: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS FOR FPÖ

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Abstract

Populism appears as one of the main elements at European policy. The rise of populist radical right and left parties in the last decades is one of the most significant political developments in Europe. The Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs / FPÖ) which was founded in 1956 is considered as a remarkable example in terms of using anti-immigrant and xenophobic discourses and affecting Austrian politics for more than half a century. In this article the FPÖ's anti-Türkiye rhetoric is investigated by using discourse analysis. The Turkish community in Austria growing since the 1960s, the cultural differences and Türkiye's European Union (EU) membership discussions are the main topics used by the FPÖ to influence the public opinion. Therefore, it is aimed to reveal how and why FPÖ relates its nationalist, anti-immigrant, anti-Islam, and xenophobic discourse to Türkiye and Turks. The FPÖ's anti-Türkiye discourse is a noteworthy example of how a radical populist right-wing party targets another country, part of its own population and its cultural identity for its political pursuits.

Keywords: Austria, Populist Radical Right Parties, Türkiye, FPÖ, Populist Discourse.

AVUSTURYA POPÜLİST SAĞI VE TÜRKİYE: FPÖ ÜZERİNE SÖYLEM ANALİZİ

Öz

Popülizm, Avrupa siyasetinin öne çıkan unsurlarından biri olarak dikkat çekmekte; popülist radikal sağ ve sol partiler de oy oranlarını daha da artırmakta ve ana akım siyasi partilerin gündemlerini etkilemektedir. 1956 yılında kurulan Avusturya Özgürlük Partisi (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs / FPÖ), göçmen karşıtı ve yabancı düşmanı söylemleri kullanması ve yarım asrı aşkın bir süredir Avusturya siyasetini etkilemesi açısından dikkate değer bir örnek olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu makalede FPÖ'nün Türkiye karşıtı pozisyonu söylem analizi kullanılarak

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incelenmiştir. 1960'lı yıllardan itibaren Avusturya'da artan Türk nüfusu, iki toplum arasındaki kültürel farklılıklar ve Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği (AB) üyelik tartışmaları FPÖ'nün kamuoyunu etkilemek için kullandığı ana başlıklardır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmada FPÖ'nün milliyetçi, göçmen karşıtı, İslam karşıtı ve yabancı düşmanı söylemlerini Türkiye ve Türkler ile nasıl ve neden ilişkilendirdiğini ortaya koymak amaçlanmaktadır. FPÖ'nün Türkiye karşıtı söylemi; radikal popülist bir sağcı partinin siyasi çıkarları için başka bir ülkeyi, kendi nüfusunun bir bölümünü ve kültürel kimliğini hedef almasının dikkate değer bir örneğidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avusturya, Popülist Radikal Sağ Partiler, Türkiye, FPÖ, Popülist Söylem.*

Introduction

The rise of populist radical right parties in European politics caused concerns in societies as well as in international politics. Since most of these parties are against immigration, globalization, and European integration, they have been securitizing immigrants and immigration policies by emphasizing the problems such as increasing crime rates, demographic changes in societies, and budget allocations. In Austrian society, where the rise of populist right is an important political issue, the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs; FPÖ) represents the main features of right-wing populism. The FPÖ is one of the strongest anti-immigrationist and successful populist radical right parties in Europe (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2020). As the Nazi history of Austria is controversial, the political liaison of FPÖ to these arguments creates new discussions. Moreover, the anti-immigrant and xenophobic discourses of the party and its leaders have an impact on security concerns of the society and cause new social divisions.

The three main characteristics of populist radical right parties are populism, nativism, and authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007: 22-3). Populism is generally regarded as the relationship between the elite and the people. Cas Mudde identifies populism as an ideology that "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004: 543). David Art (2011: 12) explains that populist radical right parties define "the people" as wise, authentic, and honest; "the elite" as intellectual degenerate, and corrupt. Populists claim that they seek all the people's interests, while the elites represent the benefits and interests of specific groups (Mudde, 2017: 34). Hence, due to this homogenous and non-pluralistic tenets of populism, political parties are criticized for representing the particular interests of different groups instead of the common good (Caramani and Manucci, 2019: 1160).

Nativism, on the other hand, prioritizes sensibilities and needs of the "native-born" citizens of the countries over newcomers such as immigrants

(Biard and Bernhard, 2019: 1). Thus, nativism is considered as native-born citizens' attempt of defending, maintaining, and reviving the "cherished heritage of their culture" (Betz and Bernhard, 2019: 274) by excluding, for instance, the beliefs and cultural elements of immigrants and ethnic minorities from the social structure of the country. Anbinder (1992: xiv) explains that anthropologists have defined nativism as a "complex web of nationalism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism and racism". In the nineteenth century, the concept was further developed by American historians in their attempt to explain anti-immigration and anti-Catholic sentiments in the United States, embodied by the American Party -the Know Nothings- as "nativism" (Betz, 2017: 374). Hans-Georg Betz (2017: 374) explains that nativism could appear in two different versions; in the lighter version the native-born citizens should have preference and priority over immigrants, while according to the hard version some immigrant groups that cannot be integrated into the host society should be excluded from enjoying full citizen rights or even be prevented from entering the country.

As the third characteristic of populist radical right parties, authoritarianism refers to the idea of a tightly regulated society in which disrespect for the established order will result in severe penalties. Mudde (2007: 23) cites Smith (1967: vi) that authoritarianism encompasses "punitive conventional moralism" and the maintenance of the law. Authoritarianism is simply defined as the tendency of voluntary obedience to stronger people, even when this power is not legitimized, as well as the inclination to rule over others who are less powerful (Liang, 2007: 4). Altemeyer (1981:148) explains that the *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* consists of three components: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. Accordingly, authoritarian submission is a high degree of obedience to the established and legitimate authorities in the society; authoritarian aggression is directed against various people who are sanctioned by authorities; and conventionalism is a high degree of loyalty to the social conventions endorsed by society and established authorities.

Especially taking advantage of historical narrative of nativism, populist radical right parties use anti-immigrant and xenophobic discourses as one of their fundamental methods. Therefore, Mudde (2007) explains the argument of some authors claiming populist radical right parties are single-issue parties by using the term "anti-immigration parties". Additionally, populist radical right parties justify their ideologies with ethnopluralism which means that "different cultures should not coexist in as much as each of them has a unique character that should be preserved and respected" (Rueda, 2021: 214). According to Betz (1993: 413), populist radical right parties reject individual and social equality, oppose the social integration of marginalized groups, and have xenophobic discourse, while nativism forms their cultural component.

In 1964, due to the need for a labor force to rebuild Europe after the havoc of the war, the bilateral agreement between Turkish and Austrian

governments ensured Turkish workers' migration to Austria (Fassmann and İçduygu, 2013: 350). During the 1970s and 1980s, the Turkish population in Austria began to increase because of new labor immigration, political asylum seekers and family reunifications, and the majority of these people preferred to settle in Austria instead of returning to Türkiye. However, the rural background of first-generation immigrants, integration problems (in terms of language, social status, or emotional distance to host society) and fear of assimilation (Fassmann and İçduygu, 2013: 352-359) have created some fault-lines within the receiving societies. Turks, along with other immigrant groups in European countries, have usually been regarded as "others" of the society by conservative and far-right groups, therefore the cultural differences and identity problems are constantly underlined by these groups to increase their political impact.

This study aims to analyze the discourses of the FPÖ regarding Türkiye. Thus, it is argued that by labeling Türkiye and Turks as the "others", the FPÖ consolidates its ultra-nationalist and extremist votes, and also affects the politics of the center parties. Through qualitative content and discourse analysis, this study intends to reveal how and why FPÖ relates its nationalist, anti-immigrant, anti-Islam rhetoric to Türkiye and Turks. In this regard, we also focus on how FPÖ reacts to Türkiye's EU candidacy. In this context, first the short political history of Austria is examined, then the FPÖ's political discourses and its anti-Türkiye approach are analyzed. The main contribution of this study is to demonstrate how a radical populist right-wing party targets another country and its cultural identity for its political interests. Therefore, this study solely focuses on the FPÖ's political position, while excluding the topics of historical developments and current situation of the EU-Türkiye relations, and Türkiye's domestic and foreign policy discussions.

1. AUSTRIAN POLITICAL LIFE AT A GLANCE

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the decline of the Habsburg monarchy, the Republic of Austria was founded in 1919. During the first republic which survived only 19 years, the political turmoil did not cease, and the seeds of antisemitism started to grow within all components of the Austrian political spectrum. In 1938, before the beginning of the Second World War, Austria was annexed by Germany as a result of a referendum/plebiscite supported by the Hitler regime which called this process *Anschluss* (Beller, 2007: 228-231). Throughout the Nazi era in Austria, antisemitic program was strictly applied; properties and businesses of thousands of Austrian Jews were confiscated, some Jews emigrated different countries, and the Jews remained in Austria were deported first to ghettos, then to the concentration camps when the war started (Jelavich, 1987: 232-233). Moreover, David Art (2006: 43) claims that "although Austrians comprised only 8 percent of the Third Reich's population, over 13 percent of the SS were Austrian", and many of them worked in concentration camps. At

the end of the Second World War, Austria, ruined by the war and had been under the occupation of the Allies, was finally liberated from the Nazi occupation (Beller, 2007: 252), and the first elections after the Anschluss were held on 25 November 1945 (Jelavich, 1987: 251). The parties regarded as anti-fascists by the Allies took part in the elections; hence, amongst the conservative Austrian People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei*-ÖVP), the center-left Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*-SPÖ), and the Communist Party (*Kommunistische Partei Österreichs*-KPÖ), ÖVP won 50% of votes, and formed a coalition government with other parties (Jelavich, 1987: 251-252; Art, 2011: 116). In the post-war period, the foreign aid, especially in the framework of the Marshall Plan, contributed to the reconstruction of the Austrian state, society, and economy. From 1945 to 1955, Austria received $1.585 million total foreign assistance, 87% of which was provided by the United States (Jelavich, 1987: 255).

In 1949 the Union of Independents (*Verband der Unabhängigen*-VdU), which gathered the former Nazi groups and Pan-Germanic nationalists, was founded, and won 11.7% of the votes in the national parliamentary elections that held in the same year (Art, 2011: 116). Many supporters of the VdU were going to be the members of the FPÖ (Art, 2011: 116). In 1955, after the signing of the "Austrian State Treaty", the Allies -including the Soviet Union- withdrew their troops, and Austria became a fully independent and sovereign state by guaranteeing its permanent neutrality (no accession to military alliances, no permission for foreign military bases), but in December 1955 it joined the United Nations (Jelavich, 1987: 267). According to Tichy (2015), Austria's UN membership can be interpreted as an active neutrality, and thanks to this position, Austria ensured a meeting place between East and West by hosting international organizations, the UN in particular, and played the role of mediator in international conflicts. Moreover, due to the "otherness from Germany" policy that aimed to prevent unificationist ideas, Austria remained skeptical of European Economic Community membership (Kořan, 2006: 27). However, after the Cold War, although Austria's neutrality has continued, this policy evolved into the policy of engaged neutrality, as Heinz Gärtner (2017) suggests. The European Union membership of Austria in 1995, its integration to the Common Foreign and Security Policy, entering the European economic and monetary union, relations with OSCE and NATO, participation in the Partnership for Peace, its support for crisis management, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations were assessed within the framework of cooperative security and evaluated as in accordance with the neutrality policy, because Austria decided to involve in these multilateral actions by considering universal values defended through the UN collective security system (Gärtner, 2017: 134-148).

As a federal republic, Austria comprises nine federal states (*Bundesländer*), the majority of which located in the fertile Danube valley. The estimated population of the country is 8,955,797 and with its strong

economy, the GDP of the country is estimated at \$480.37 billion (The World Bank, 2021). The two important minority groups in Austria are Bosnians (1.9%) and Turks (1.8%), therefore the 8.3% of the population are Muslim (The World Factbook, 2023). According to the results of a research conducted by Max Hoffman, Alan Makovsky, and Michael Werz in 2020, the Turkish diaspora living in Austria is strongly relied on their national identity, national traditions and religion compared to other Turks living in Germany, France, and Netherlands; the 77.7% of Turks in Austria identify themselves as Turks rather than Austrian. Furthermore, 49.8% of Turks in Austria claim that they feel discriminated against, and they are affected by racism, this proportion is the highest rank among other Turkish communities (Hoffman, Makovsky and Werz, 2020: 18). In this regard, the Austrian Turks' attitude is mostly based on the "integrate, but not assimilate" approach, however, the majority of them also prefers Austrian schools for their children (Hoffman et al., 2020: 20-21). This demographic structure makes Turks in Austria and Türkiye as one of the main political targets of Austrian populist right. The next section will focus on Austrian FPÖ in light of the main features of the populist radical right parties.

2. THE RISE OF FREEDOM PARTY OF AUSTRIA

Populist radical right parties have usually linked migrants with crime, unemployment, and cultural erosion. Most of them state that immigration and multiculturalism undermine local culture, and create social, economic, and security threats. Especially during the Syrian Civil War, the increasing flow of immigrants and refugees arriving in Europe have been securitized by many because of the overall image of these people portrayed as Muslims who are considered as outsiders. This is one of the most significant reasons why radical right-wing populist parties support and even encourage hostility towards refugees by defending the notion of "welfare state chauvinism" where "welfare services should be restricted to the native population" (Andersen and Bjorklund, 1990: 212, 214). Betz (1994: 173) claims that welfare state chauvinism becomes more popular amongst lower-class voters whose main concerns are maintaining their standard of living, thus they increase their support for populist radical right parties. Elçi (2022: 698) explains that one of the arguments which populists have been using against the establishment is blaming them for the declining economic, political and living standards. Claiming that the current challenges such as refugee and economic crises are created and/or exacerbated by the establishment parties, "populists aim to re-establish the present and future retrospectively by emphasizing the golden past of society" (Elçi, 2022: 699).

The FPÖ was founded in 1956 by Anton Reinthaller, a former Nazi Party member and the minister of agriculture in the Anschluss period; after his death in 1958, Friedrich Peter, another former SS officer, headed the party until 1978 (Jelavich, 1987: 272). Despite FPÖ's nationalist and Pan-Germanic

ideology, and its members' Nazi past, the party also developed a liberal political perspective from the 1970s (Art, 2011: 119). According to Reinhard Heinisch, Christina Holtz-Bacha, and Oscar Mazzoleni (2017), populism can have common ground with Eurosceptics, right-wing conservatives or far right radicals in terms of rejecting the EU or 'Washington politics,' Islamophobia, racist ideas, and appeals to traditionalism; but the main difference, as he argues, is its opportunism and aim to maximize its popular support and votes. In this regard, they accept the FPÖ as

one of the oldest and most successful populist parties in Europe", and claim that "it has transformed itself over the past 20 years from a pro-European, anti-clerical, anti-Semitic, German-nationalist, economically liberal, middle-class party into a Eurosceptic, Austro-patriotic, pro-Israeli but anti-Islamic, economically protectionist body that appeals especially to blue-collar voters and presents itself as the defender of European Christendom (Heinisch, Holtz-Bacha, Mazzoleni, 2017: 21).

Cas Mudde claims that various Western European populist radical right parties see ethnic minorities, including nonimmigrants, as a threat (Mudde, 2007: 69). As stated in the Party Program, the FPÖ declares that "Austria is not a country of immigration" and the party is committed to groups of people native to Austria (FPÖ, 2011). However, the FPÖ considers the indigenous ethnic groups of the Burgenland Croats, Slovenians, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, and the Roma as historical minorities in Austria (FPÖ, 2011). The FPÖ suggests that if legal and legitimate immigrants fully adopt Austrian values and laws, they should remain in the country and acquire citizenship but if they are found guilty by the court, they must be banished to their homeland (FPÖ, 2011). Furthermore, the FPÖ rejects any artificial synchronization of the different European languages and cultures through forced multiculturalism, globalization, and mass immigration (FPÖ, 2011). As mentioned above, another key feature of populist radical right parties is welfare chauvinism. Since 2005, the FPÖ has rebranded itself as the "social homeland party" and welfare chauvinism has become an important element in the party's agenda (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016: 416) and has mainly addressed toward non-Western migrants, refugees, and Eastern European migrants in the case of family policies (Landini, 2022: 166). The FPÖ affirms that they acknowledge cultural Christianity (based on the separation of the church and the state) which has created European values (FPÖ, 2011). They clearly state that their aim is to maintain and develop Austrian dominant culture (FPÖ, 2011). Evidently, the party has placed itself as "defender of tradition" in Austria (Deutsche Welle, 2017).

In 1986, Jörg Haider, who came from the most nationalist region of Austria and used to be the leader of the party's youth circle, became the chairman of the party (Art, 2011: 119). By the mid-1990s, "the FPÖ had become a major force in regional politics, emerging as the second biggest party in five (including the capital city of Vienna) of Austria's nine provinces"

(Hafez and Heinisch, 2019: 146). Haider used Euroscepticism that capitalized on anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim feelings and gave the party electoral success (Britannica, n.d.). The FPÖ emphasized this anti-immigrant utterance in its party program with "Austria First" rhetoric in 1992. They were especially against immigrants from the Balkans and Türkiye and associated this opposition with Austria's Christian heritage and values (Bergmann, 2020: 96).

In the Haider period, the party adopted anti-foreigner sentiment. The FPÖ mainly focused on anti-Semitism and revisionism of Austria's National Socialism past in this period (Wodak, 2002). The FPÖ has regularly increased its vote over the years. The party was part of the government for the first time in 1999, with a vote share of 26.91% (IPU, 1999). Haider blamed immigrants for taking Austrians' jobs away and bringing crime to Austria. During his 1999 election campaign, anti-immigrant slogans like "Stop the foreign infiltration" and "Stop the abuse of asylum" were used (The Congressional Record, 2000). Haider continued his racist statements: "The Africans who come here are drug dealers and they seduce our youth," "We've got the Poles who concentrate on car theft," "We've got the people from the former Yugoslavia who are burglary experts. We've got the Turks who are superbly organized in the heroin trade. And we've got the Russians who are experts in blackmail and mugging." (The Congressional Record, 2000). After this electoral success, however, the FPÖ had to face a loss of votes. In 2002, the FPÖ achieved only 10.01% of the votes (IPU, 2002). This situation continued until the 2008 elections.

Haider resigned from the FPÖ in 2005 and he founded a new political party, the Alliance Future Austria (*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*-BZÖ). After Haider's resignation, Heinz-Christian Strache was elected as the new leader of the FPÖ. Especially Vienna's provincial election in October 2005, the FPÖ conducted an aggressive populist campaign targeted at blue-collar voters by using the rhetoric of the liaison between crime and immigration. The slogan referring the bell of the St. Stefan Cathedral in Vienna, "Pummerin instead of muezzin", was used by the FPÖ to remind catholic identity of Austria and to create an antagonism between Christian and Muslim symbols and images (Andrzejewski, 2021: 132). Whilst this strategy increased the percentage of its votes, in March 2006, the FPÖ launched a new campaign focusing on the opposition to Türkiye's EU membership and the defense of neutrality, the main slogan of the campaign was "Stay free Austria" ("Österreich bleib frei") (Luther, 2008: 162). During the 2006 election campaign, the FPÖ prioritized Austrian and welfare chauvinism and anti-immigration; the most popular slogans of the party were "Austria first," "We for you," "Welfare instead of Immigration," "Secure pensions instead of asylum millions" and "Home not Islam" (Luther, 2008: 162). In accordance with this discourse, the FPÖ also maintained its position against Türkiye's EU membership, defending the argument that immigrants would cause long-term unemployment and negatively affect welfare benefits of Austrian citizens.

Racism, ethnicism, and xenophobia are deeply rooted in the Austrian tradition (Wodak and Pelinka, 2002: xiv). Haider expressed in the early 1990s that Islam was conflicting with human rights and democracy, consequently the social order of Islam was antipode to Western values (Betz, 2003: 80). With Strache's leadership, the party's program has shifted to Islamophobia and strong Euroscepticism (Krzyżanowski, 2013: 136). Hafez and Heinisch (2019: 148) cited this transition as a return to the party's radical populist roots. Strache defined Islam as "misogynistic, anti-liberal, fascist" and called for an Islamization ban. He pointed out that Austrians and Europeans will face an abrupt end if they do not stop the Islamization process (*Austria's Strache*, 2017). Strache claimed that Islam is more than a religion, it is a totalitarian legal, social, and political system and the fascism of the 21st century (*Strache*, 2007). As mentioned in the FPÖ's party program, the importance of the German-language has been emphasized. With Strache, the party politics has shifted from anti-foreigner to anti-Islam. The FPÖ has regarded Islam as a threat to their traditions, cultures, laws, rules, and habits (Zuquete, 2008: 331).

The party has continued its Islamophobic policies in the 2008 national election posters. They used racist and exclusionary discourse: "At home instead of Islam" (*Daham statt Islam*, 2015). According to Forchtner, Krzyżanowski, and Wodak (2013: 217), FPÖ's rhetoric has gone beyond fighting against radical Islam as these racist and Islamophobic slogans have been used against Turks in Austria who are supposed to be Muslims. The FPÖ participated in a Europe-wide gathering in Cologne which focused on demonstrating that European identity is diametrically opposed to Islam (Betz, 2013: 75).

Due to the large-scale migration from the Middle East and Africa, especially the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis, the FPÖ accelerated its anti-immigrant campaigns and raised its votes to 26% in 2017 as can be seen in Table 1. In 2017, the FPÖ became the junior partner of the Austrian government once again. In May 2019, Strache had to resign from the party and the government after the release of a video showing that he bribed in exchange for a contract (Oltermann, 2019). Austrian Chancellor Kurz accepted the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Strache, while Norbert Hofer assumed the leadership of the party (*Austrian Vice Chancellor*, 2019). The support to the party has decreased from 26% to 16.2% because of the corruption scandal.

Table 1. National Council Election Results

Year of Election	Distribution of Votes (%)	Distribution of Seats
1949	11.7	16
1953	10.9	14
1956	6.5	6
1959	7.7	8

1962	7	8
1966	5.4	6
1970	5.5	6
1971	5.5	10
1975	5.4	10
1979	6.1	11
1983	5	12
1986	9.7	18
1990	16.6	33
1994	22.5	42
1995	21.9	41
1999	26.9	52
2002	10	18
2006	11.2	21
2008	17.5	34
2013	20.5	40
2017	26	51
2019	16.2	31

Source: PolitPro, 2019.

As the Table 1 shows, the FPÖ's anti-immigrant, xenophobic and anti-Islam campaign has an impact on Austrian society. From the 1990s, the party increased its votes, and undoubtedly its populist leader Haider played a crucial role in this process. In the 1990s, Austria's EU membership, integration into the economic and monetary union, and acceleration of globalization shaped the anti-EU and anti-globalization position of the party. In this regard, the economic challenges faced by Austrian society were manipulated by the FPÖ to emphasize its anti-immigrant discourse by using the unemployment risk. Although the FPÖ could not keep its popularity at the beginning of the 2000s, the migration flows due to the Arab Spring, and Syrian Civil War in particular, strengthened the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the party since the 2010s which resulted in a clear increase in the votes of the FPÖ. In this context, the FPÖ kept using immigration issue as part of its election rhetoric. As can be seen in Table 2, the most frequent subject in the 2017 election manifesto was immigration, and it also indicates that the FPÖ linked other topics with the fear from foreigners and immigrants.

Table 2. The Main Subjects From FPÖ's 2017 Election Manifesto

FPÖ claims and policy area by frequency	
Immigration	24%
Environment	14.6%
Social Policy/Welfare State	12.1%
Public Safety	12.1%
Sovereignty (reclaiming authority)	12.1%
Euro-Zone/Economy	9.7%
Education	9.7%

Source: Hafez and Heinisch, 2019: 154.

Undoubtedly, the main driver influencing Austrian voters' preferences is the immigration issue; 60% of FPÖ voters said that because of the immigration problem they voted for the FPÖ, and 24% voted for the FPÖ's opposition to Türkiye's EU membership (Hofinger, Ogris, Zeglovits, 2008: 134). For this reason, in the next section we will examine how the FPÖ spreads the anti-Türkiye message by gradually imposing its political discourse in Austrian politics.

3. ANTI-TÜRKİYE DICOURSE AND POLICIES OF FPÖ

Anti-Türkiye discourse and opposition to Türkiye's EU membership are widely shared by European populist radical right parties even during the period when the EU-Türkiye relations were relatively positive with steps such as the beginning of the accession negotiations. Mudde (2007: 170-1) provides several examples of the right-wing parties' common sentiment against Türkiye, such as Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) in Greece stating that Türkiye contains extreme Islamic elements, or National Republican Movement (MNR) in France campaigning with the theme of "Europe oui, Turquie non!" (Europe, Yes - Türkiye, No!)[1], while Flemish Block/Flemish Interest (VB) in Belgium created the Committee "Nee Tegen Turkije" (No to Türkiye) only for this purpose. Obviously FPÖ has also been using the same discourse during its election campaigns and in other policy areas.[2] As Mudde (2004: 544) argues, populism offers a Manichaean perspective, where only friends and enemies exist. In the case of the FPÖ, Türkiye is clearly depicted as an enemy.

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[1] Bruno Mégret, the leader of MNR in 2003, declared that letting Türkiye enter the European Union would destroy Europe. He claimed that the civilized community cannot organize the integration of a nation that was not part of this civilization, and he added that even though Türkiye is a beautiful country, deserving their respect and friendship, it is not European in terms of geography, history, or religion (Vie Publique, 2003).

[2] Later on, Türkiye's slow pace regarding the democratization reforms caused concerns amongst the mainstream parties in Europe, thus, with the fear of losing the support of voters most of the political parties began to oppose Türkiye's EU membership.

At the beginning of the 2000s, Haider began to state the name of Turk in its racist discourses. For instance, in one of his speeches in 2000, he called Turks "heroin traders" (The Congressional Record, 2000). During the 2005 Viennese elections, the FPÖ used anti-Türkiye slogans like "Vienna must not become İstanbul" (Sievers, Ataç, Schnell, 2014: 264)[3]. In addition to anti-immigration and Islamophobic discourse, the FPÖ started to use anti-Türkiye discourse systematically under Strache's leadership. Anti-Turkish or anti-Muslim slogans were 14% of all the anti-foreigner slogans (Ochsner and Roesel, 2017). During and after the Strache period, anti-Turkish campaigns have become the main element of the party's strategy. The FPÖ developed its anti-Türkiye campaign in two directions, one was based on cultural differences and Islam, the other, connected with the first perspective, was the strong opposition to the EU accession of Türkiye. In November 2005, several patriotic and nationalist party leaders established a "Contact Forum" in Vienna. They agreed on the Vienna Declaration of Patriotic and National Movements and Parties in Europe. The importance of this declaration was that all the parties agreed on the rejection of Türkiye's membership (OTS, 2005). Anti-Türkiye rhetoric of the party also reverberated in the society. Net support for Türkiye's membership has decreased systematically. According to the Eurobarometer survey, 80% of Austrians were against Türkiye's membership in 2005 (Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca, 2007), 87% in 2006, and these rates were above the EU average (Strasser, 2008: 179-180). As mentioned in the previous section, during the 2006 elections, the FPÖ built its campaign on the opposition to Türkiye's EU membership.

For emphasizing the cultural differences discourse, the FPÖ utilized a symbolic instrument against Türkiye and started to run its anti-Turk campaign by reminding Austrians the Sieges of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire. As some marks and images of Turkish attacks from the 17th century are still visible in stained-glass church windows, walls and monuments, the antagonistic recollections remain in the collective memory of Austrian society. The campaign increased the voting shares of the FPÖ from 1.1% to 1.7% points in plundered municipalities as Ochsner and Roesel (2017) stated. During the local Viennese election campaign in 2010, the FPÖ used a comic book which was known as the Mustafa Comic making sure that Austrians never forget the centuries old sieges (Wodak and Forchtner, 2014: 232). Strache said that more than 320 years after Siege II, Vienna was under Turkish threat again. He stated that if the Turkish minority in Vienna continued to grow, the tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral would be converted into a minaret. Furthermore, Strache used the slogan "home instead of Islam" in the national election campaign in 2006 and launched a petition against the veiling of women. Strache also used prejudice against Türkiye in his campaigns after the

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[3] This slogan refers to the one used in 1993, "Vienna must not become Chicago", because of mafia related and criminal affairs in Chicago, and according to Andrzejewski (2021: 131), this discourse aims to spread a subliminal message connecting immigrants with crime.

European Union announced that it would open accession negotiations with Türkiye in late 2005. However, Türkiye had already been approved as a candidate country for the EU in 1999, six years before the FPÖ started its anti-Turkish campaigns. During the campaigns, Strache proclaimed the "Third Turkish Siege of Vienna", a term that had never been used in any political campaign since the Second World War. From 2006 onwards, Strache cultivated anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim sentiments and referred even more drastically to the Turkish sieges of Vienna. In 2016, the FPÖ generously celebrated the 333-year anniversary of the end of Siege II in 1683 (Ochsner and Roesel, 2017).

The FPÖ continued its anti-Türkiye campaign during the European Parliament elections in 2009. For instance, the party used slogans such as "no EU accession for Türkiye and Israel", "prayers in German only". The FPÖ equates Turkish people with Islam and therefore the party's Islamophobic slogans have been used also against the Turkish community in Austria (Krzyżanowski, 2013: 142). Moreover, because of the conflict in Syria, other mainstream parties have joined anti-Türkiye rhetoric (Uçar, 2018: 20), thus strengthening the FPÖ's position in Austrian politics. In 2016, foreign minister Sebastian Kurz emphasized that the policies implemented in Türkiye did not correspond to the fundamental values of the EU.[4] Therefore, Kurz tried to block Türkiye's EU membership talks (Eder, 2016). In 2017, the coalition partners (ÖVP and FPÖ) agreed on main policies like opposition to Türkiye's EU membership, fighting against political Islam, and restricting immigrants' advantages. The government decided to give benefits in kind instead of cash, to limit the payments to refugees, to restrict newcomers' access to social services during their first five years in Austria, and to cut social benefits for parents whose children cannot speak German well enough (*Factbox: Key Policies*, 2017). Another discussion triggered by the FPÖ and supported also by the ÖVP is about the headscarves in the classrooms. Even though the crucifixes are mandatory in the classrooms, the FPÖ initiated a legal process to ban headscarves in the classrooms. This action created the risk of increasing the polarization in the society and radicalizing the young Muslims (Mappes-Niediek, 2019).

The continuous anti-Türkiye discourse of the FPÖ proved to be effective on the Austrian electorate. According to the survey made by Austrian Society for European Politics in 2020, the answer to the question about the official and potential EU candidate states and their membership prospects, 79% of the participants answered that they are against Türkiye's membership,

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[4] In this regard, the 2016 EU Progress Report also expressed criticisms about rule of law and fundamental rights in Türkiye. Aftermath of the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, it was claimed that the legislation "adopted regarding the rule of law and fundamental rights were not in line with European standards" (European Commission, 2016: 10), and freedom of expression, rights of the most vulnerable groups, minorities and the LGBTI groups were still among the problematic issues (European Commission, 2016: 25).

and only 5% of Austrians support Türkiye. As it can be seen in Graphic 1, Türkiye is the least favored state among the candidates.

Graphic 1. Survey on the EU Membership in Austria
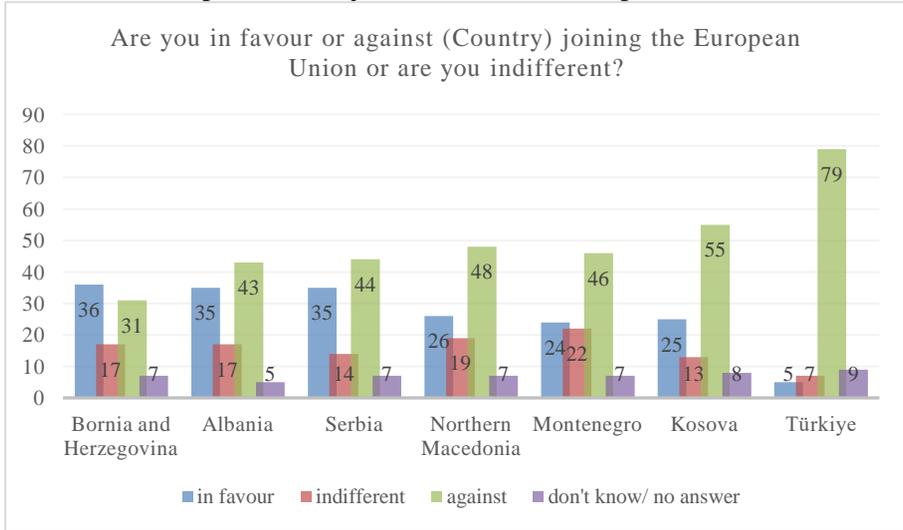
Source: ÖGfE Survey, 2020.

Moreover, the support of Austrians to the EU enlargement process has decreased in recent years. In Graphic 2, the shift of Austrians' support and opposition regarding Türkiye can be seen. Accordingly, the opposition to Türkiye's membership was very high between 2010-2020, and in 2014 it reached its peak point. This period also overlaps with the increasing popularity of the FPÖ. As it is shown in above mentioned Table 1, between 2013-2017 the vote of the FPÖ was at its highest level.

Graphic 2. Survey on Austrian Society's Support for Türkiye's EU Membership
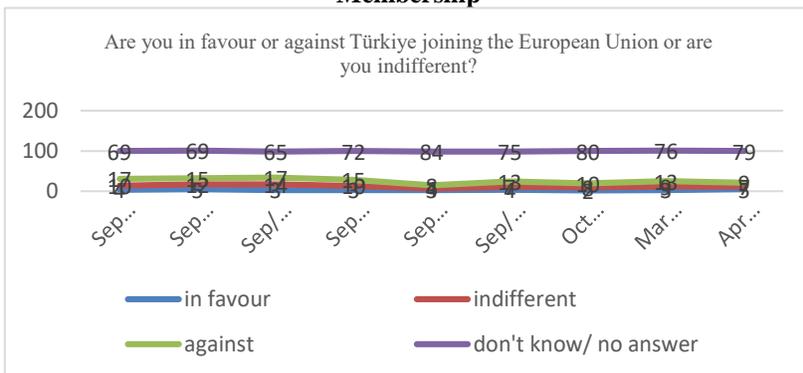
Source: ÖGfE Survey, 2020.

The FPÖ published a key document in 2019, the Handbook of Freedomite Politics, which includes programs on security, national defense, healthcare, economy (budget, finance, employment), democracy, environment, etc. There is a section titled Statement against Islam and Terrorism which is noteworthy as the party assumes that Islam equals terrorism. In this document, the FPÖ stated that Austria and Europe are under the radical Islam threat, the mosques are the capitals of finance and organization of radical Islam, asylum seekers from Muslim countries are not familiar with Austrian values, language, traditions and do not want to adopt these qualities. Moreover, the Muslim community in Austria is addressed as the potential source of violence (Handbook of Freedomite Politics, 2019). The FPÖ also presented a law on a new form of the electronic health insurance card (e-card) and released a video that violated the Austrian law against discrimination (Falkenbach and Heiss, 2021). The intention of the FPÖ is clearly seen in the video. The main character's name is Ali (a Muslim and/or Turkish name) and he tries to use his friend Mustafa's (another Muslim and/or Turkish name) e-card. The new e-card has a photo identification therefore Ali cannot benefit from the system (Arhivacazin, 2018). It is obvious that this campaign video targets Turks and Muslims and portraits them as criminals trying to cheat the legal system. As this example proves, the FPÖ has been using every possible means to increase the impact of its anti-Türkiye discourse.

Conclusion

The radical right-wing populism aims to benefit from the social divisions in the society by creating new distractions from crucial socioeconomic issues such as income inequality or ecological crisis. By deepening the social exclusion, these parties create an appropriate platform to increase their popular support and their share of votes. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, the main target of the radical right populism in Europe has been immigrants, and especially the Muslims who are seen as the others of the society. Austria, which was a destroyed country at the end of the Second World War, began to accept foreign workers to rebuild the country. The labor force migration assured the formation of a Turkish community in Austria. Therefore, Turks, the others of Austrian society, have become a crucial actor for the radical right populism's discourse.

Austria's Nazi past constitutes an important pillar to understand the political orientation of Austrian radical right populism. When the FPÖ was founded in 1956, this background was still alive. However, despite its historical ties with the Nazism, the FPÖ began to develop its political agenda in the context of anti-immigrant, xenophobia and cultural differences between Christianity and Islam. Especially in the Haider and Strache periods, this rhetoric was strengthened, and the focus of the discourse was reflected on Türkiye and Turks in Austria. In this regard, Türkiye's negotiations with the

EU and its candidacy to the membership have become another problematic issue which has been used as a threat by the FPÖ.

Although the FPÖ votes have been decreasing in recent years, it still draws significant support from the public opinion and has the capacity to manipulate political discussion. Muslim community in Austria which is mostly of Turkish origin as well as Jewish community are concerned because of the attacks triggered by the populist party's anti-Islam and anti-Semitic discourses.[5] Beyond the FPÖ's negative effect on the perception of Türkiye's EU candidacy, which has become a challenging process due to Türkiye's domestic and international problems, the aggressive discourse of this populist party deepens the cultural division in the society and increases the hatred among people, creating tension between so-called native Austrians and immigrant groups whom the FPÖ portrays as outsiders. Even though the populist discourse enables the right-wing parties to increase their votes, it creates new fault-lines in the society, which also affect the center parties' policies, and causes new challenges for integration programs. Therefore, it is important for center parties in Europe to withstand the racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic pressures of radical right parties in order to protect democracy, liberty, human rights, and freedoms of expression and religion which are the fundamental and universal values upon which modern civilization has flourished.

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[5] Muslim community in Austria is concerned about the attacks to mosques after publication of an "Islam map" by the Austrian government (Farzan, 2021). They have been experiencing several racist attacks to their religious places such as "go back home" written on the mosque walls (*Austria Mosque*, 2022). In addition, harassment, assault and propaganda to Jewish community have also risen in Austria, e.g. a Jewish flag was torn down (*Islamic Religious Community*, 2022; The Times of Israel, 2022). As these incidents show, the far-right populism in Austria jeopardizes security of all ethnic and religious minorities in the country.

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