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ABSTRACT The 2015 migration crisis represented yet another challenge for European democratic party systems. This thesis compares the evolution of the political discourse about migration in Austria and Germany over the course of 2015. It traces patterns of contagion from populist radical right (PRR) to mainstream discourse in terms of arguments, framings, and rhetorical techniques used to talk about the migration challenge. The thesis starts by setting the historical background, theoretical framework before developing hypotheses and testing these through a qualitative analysis of parliamentary and press conference speeches. The main findings of this research are that PRR parties can cause much more contagion when represented in parliament, that they exert influence on the style rather than substance of mainstream party communication, and that the more restrictive asylum policy positions of the centre-right were the strongest substantial convergence of the mainstream with more radical anti-immigrant views.

Keywords: migration, populism, radical right, discourse, contagion, mainstream parties, refugee crisis

ABSTRAKT Die Migrationskrise 2015 war eine weitere Herausforderung für die demokratischen Parteiensysteme in Europa. Diese Arbeit vergleicht die Entwicklung des politischen Diskurses über Migration in Österreich und Deutschland im Laufe des Jahres 2015. Sie zeichnet die Muster der Ansteckung von der populistischen radikalen Rechten (PRR) bis zum Mainstream-Diskurs in Bezug auf Argumente, Rahmungen und rhetorische Techniken nach, die verwendet werden, um über die Herausforderung der Migration zu sprechen. Die Arbeit beginnt mit der Darstellung des historischen Hintergrunds und des theoretischen Rahmens, bevor Hypothesen entwickelt und diese durch eine qualitative Analyse von Parlaments- und Pressekonferenzreden überprüft werden. Die Hauptide Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchung sind, dass PRR Parteien, wenn sie im Parlament vertreten sind, eine viel größere Ansteckungsgefahr darstellen, dass sie eher den Stil als den Inhalt der Kommunikation der etablierten Parteien beeinflussen und dass die restriktiveren asylpolitischen Positionen der Mitte-Rechts-Parteien die stärkste substantielle Annäherung der etablierten Parteien an radikalere einwanderungsfeindliche Ansichten darstellen.

Schlagworte: Migration, Populismus, Rechtsradikalismus, Diskurs, Ansteckung, etablierte Parteien, Flüchtlingskrise

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Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
1. <i>Introduction</i>	5
2. <i>Historical Background</i>	7
2.1 History of Migration in Austria and Germany since the 1970s.....	7
2.2 The 2015 Refugee Crisis	8
2.3 The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ).....	9
2.4 The Alternative for Germany (AfD)	10
3. <i>Literature Review</i>	13
3.1 Defining Populism.....	13
3.2 Measuring Populism	14
3.3 Populism and Migration in Europe.....	16
3.4 Populism and Euroscepticism.....	19
3.5 Populism and Normative Principles	21
3.6 The Source of Populist Positions: Between Party Systems and Ideological Affiliation	24
3.7 Populism and Leaders: Why Should We Look at Parliamentary Debates?	26
3.8 What Populists Have in Common: Populism and the Power of Emotions	29
3.9 Responding to Populism: Is Populism Good for Democracy?	30
3.10 Towards A Discursive Approach to Xenophobic Contagion	32
4. <i>Theoretical Framework</i>	36
4.1 Concepts.....	36
4.2 Hypotheses.....	40
5. <i>Research Methods</i>	42
6. <i>Analysis</i>	44
6.1 Austria.....	44
6.2 Germany	59
6.3 Comparative Analysis	75
7. <i>Conclusion</i>	77
8. <i>Bibliography</i>	79
8.1 Primary Sources	79
Austria	79
Germany.....	79
8.2 Secondary Literature	80

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

1. Introduction

The emergence of populist radical right parties (PRRPs) in Austria (FPÖ) and Germany (AfD) has raised concerns about their power to foster increased xenophobia and racism, as well as bolster the Eurosceptic discourse around the drawbacks of mass immigration and free movement. PRRPs used the so-called 2015 refugee crisis to forward their domestic agendas and gain political ground. They made the issue into a lever of national political ascension by playing on people's fears and exclusionary nationalist feelings. The question underlining this thesis is whether, after years of neoliberal migration management, the populist discourse on migration in the 2010s changed the wider political discourse on migration in Austria and Germany, and particularly whether it had an effect on how mainstream parties speak about the topic.

Analysing the 2015 refugee crisis in Austria and Germany individually and comparatively, the paper will analyse parliament speeches and press conferences of populist and mainstream party leaders before, at the height of, and after the peak of the 2015 refugee crisis. Based on this case study and mobilising contagion and framing theory, the paper seeks to identify both changes in framing across time for parties identified as populist and mainstream, differences and similarities between populist discourses, and their effects on mainstream party communication in Austria and Germany.

The research question is whether the populist discourse on migration changed the mainstream discourse, if so, in what ways, and are there differences between the contagion effect of the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) and Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Austria and Germany respectively.

The study is of both theoretical-methodological and empirical relevance. Firstly, the thesis explores political change by analysing communication, discourse, framing, and language. It will look more closely at the effect of the populist radical right discourse on the mainstream parties' communication in parliament debates, thus reaching beyond immediately measurable political results and aiming to uncover less obvious forms of political influence. The research follows an abductive research design. It starts from a broader theoretical background on populist radical

right contagion but looks at research related to the migration debate in Austria and Germany in order to reach more intensive definitions of frame categories which are better applicable to this type of debates.

The thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on German and Austrian history to set the basis for the empirical analysis, as well as to understand the wider context in which various framings of the refugee crisis have emerged. The historical part will look at background ideas prevalent in each country, as well as the broader political and historical context in which the discourse around migration unfolded in 2015. The historical background will complement the qualitative content analysis of party content that constitutes the empirical research component of the thesis.

Secondly, it contributes to a better understanding of the role of political discourse and framing effects on the response to the 2015 mass immigration phenomenon (henceforth “the refugee crisis”) in German-speaking Europe. As arguably one of the biggest crises that the EU has faced to date, understanding the way it was exploited in political communication to obtain political leverage is an important endeavour in view of managing future crises that European democracies might face.

The argument will be structured in six main parts. First, the historical migration policy and party development background will be presented. The second part will consist of a literature review of past articles on populism, xenophobia, migration discourse, and contagion. The third part will define the theoretical framework of the paper, establishing the framing categories that will be used deductively to analyse the migration debate. The fourth part will present the research design of the empirical study. The fifth part will contain the analysis of the texts and comparison of PRRP effects in Austria and Germany. Sixth, a conclusion will summarise the findings and provide suggestions for further research.

2. Historical Background

2.1 History of Migration in Austria and Germany since the 1970s

Between 1955 and 1961, Germany's migration policy established an era of organised immigration and recruitment of foreign workers through migration agreements with several Southern countries, such as Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey. This type of immigration lasted until 1973. One study looking at official documents has argued that these agreements were supported by Mediterranean countries in order to organise outward migration to suit their labour market requirements, and that the topic of migration, migration policies, and length of employment of immigrant workers was not discussed in the German public sphere openly and thoroughly (Steinert 2014). This lack of debate is likely to have created a sense of danger among the less privileged social classes in Germany, who perceived immigrants as a threat to their socio-economic situation, especially considering their low information and participation in migration policy decisions.

In Austria, the situation was very similar. Until 1974, immigration was mainly a result of guest worker recruitment, and its end in 1974 increased the immigration of family members of those already recruited. For a long time, migration policy remained a topic discussed mainly by expert groups in the administration and trade unions. Since the 1980s and especially 1990s, however, migration policy was increasingly brought up in the open political debate. This resulted from the diversification of migration patterns, types, and origin countries. Other factors affecting migration policy in Austria were the collapse of Communist regimes after 1989, the Yugoslav crises, as well as the EU enlargement policy. In 2009, the overall foreign population was 870,704 people, or 10.4% of the population, while foreign-born people made up 1,277,098 people, or 15.3% of the population. Over 85% of the international population was born in another European country. Nearly 40% came from another EU country, with nearly half having been born in a new member state. Persons born in the former Yugoslavia and Turkey made up 12.4 percent and 29.4 percent of the foreign-born population, respectively, reflecting the long-term effects of guest worker recruitment. 17.5% of the population in 2008 had a migration background – both parents born abroad (Statistics Austria 2009).

2.2 The 2015 Refugee Crisis

Arguably one of the biggest crises marring the ideological and political unity of the European Union in the 21st Century has emerged out of the question over how to deal with the effects of mass migration, both towards and within Europe (Theodorou 2016). This crisis has resulted from the, perhaps overdue, movement of the migration policy topic to the centre of political debate in Europe. This was brought about by what has been referred to as the 2015 “refugee crisis”.

In 2015, 890,000 asylum seekers entered Germany, a fivefold increase over the previous year. This flood of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, and Kosovo put a strain on Germany’s health and welfare systems, as well as creating a moral dilemma. While Merkel’s opening of the borders was supported by the mainstream parties and a large section of the populace, a growing number of individuals perceived mass immigration as a threat to the German economy and society. The Pegida movement in Dresden embodied this mindset, while the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) political party represented it at the national level.

On August 31st, 2015, migrants who had been camped up for weeks outside Budapest’s Keleti station were allowed to board trains bound for Austria and Germany. Faced with this crisis, Merkel decided on her own to open the doors to refugees without any border controls. The borders remained open until March 2016, encouraging more immigrants to come to Germany and prompting Merkel’s detractors to claim that her actions had resulted in chaos and uncontrolled mass immigration.

On the foundation of such crises, populist parties and their leaders have brought about a change in the methods and styles of political communication (Wodak 2015). In Germany, by shifting their discourse from one based on economics to one invoking the dangers to the core German culture, the previously unrepresented AfD managed to capitalise on the refugee crisis, mobilise people politically based on these issues through speeches in 2015 and 2016, and enter parliament with 12.6% of the votes in 2017, amounting to 94 seats. The FPÖ also made significant political gains after adopting an Islamophobic discourse since 2005.

2.3 The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)

The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) has its roots in 1955 in the Association of the Independents (Verband der Unabhängigen), founded in 1949 and hosting numerous Austrian ex-Nazis (Fuchs 2018). The FPÖ initially had, until 1986, two wings: one liberal and one nationalist. In 1983, the FPÖ and the Social Democrats formed a coalition government led by the liberal Norbert Steger. Jörg Haider took over as the FPÖ's new leader in 1986. The Social Democrats abandoned the coalition government in 1986 because they perceived Haider's ascension as a move of the FPÖ to the far-right. The FPÖ's radical redirection became very clear in 1991, when Haider mentioned the Nazi employment policy as a model to be followed, totally ignoring that he was thus preparing the country for a war of extermination. The FPÖ was described in 1997 as a successful new extremist right-wing adaptation (Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer 1997).

The FPÖ consistently increased its voting percentage in national elections with Haider as its populist right-wing leader, with slogans such as "Stop der Überfremdung!". In 1993, Haider organized a referendum against immigration, called "Österreich zuerst!", calling for blocking immigration completely and adding to the constitution that Austria was not an immigration country. 7,35% of voters signed the referendum. In 1999, the FPÖ became the second strongest party in Austria with 26,91% of votes in the federal elections, forming a coalition government with the ÖVP (Austria's conservative centre-right party).

After Haider's death in 2008, Heinz-Christian Strache took over the FPÖ's leadership, with slogans like "Daham statt Islam. WIR für EUCH!", „Wien darf nicht Istanbul werden“, "Mehr Mut für unser Wiener Blut: Zu viel Fremdes tut niemandem gut". In the 2013 federal elections, the party gained 20,51%, but in polls it has stayed on top with up to 35% potential votes. It has been argued that the FPÖ has gradually changed its ideology from a general anti-immigration stance between 1986 and 2005 towards straight-forward Islamophobia since 2005 (Krzyżanowski 2013).

The 2011 FPÖ's party programme defined Austria as culturally German:

We are committed to our homeland of Austria as part of the German-speaking linguistic and cultural community, to the groups of people native to our country and to a Europe of free peoples and fatherlands. [...] The language, history and culture of Austria are German. The vast majority of Austrians are part of the German peoples' linguistic and cultural community. [...] Austria is not a country of immigration. (FPÖ 2011)

The FPÖ uses language, history, and culture to define a country. It contends that Austrians are culturally a member of the German nation and that, in principle, nations must be maintained distinct, thereby opposing multiculturalism. It overlooks the fact that Austria has long been a heterogeneous society, dating back to the time of the Austrian empire. During Hitler's rule, the Nazi party also attempted to identify Austria as solely German.

Voters of the FPÖ thus tend to take foreigners and minorities as scapegoats for their fears about future living conditions despite Austria having withstood the 2008 economic crisis better than other countries (Fuchs 2018). These voters cannot, therefore, be assumed to be those who have most to lose from modernization and globalization.

2.4 The Alternative for Germany (AfD)

The refugee crisis turned the Alternative for Germany into an anti-migration party and brought the issue of migration to the fore of political discussion in Germany (Franzmann 2019). However, this was not always the case. For a long period, German migration policy was characterised by a "quiet agreement" of the mainstream parties (Kortmann and Stecker 2019; Dancygier and Margalit 2020). Because neither party anticipated to gain a political advantage by emphasising migration, the unstated consensus was to avoid putting migration high on the agenda. It was addressed as a problem of valence rather than position in party rivalry (Odmalm and Bale 2015). However, since the politicisation of migration in the aftermath of the refugee crisis, mainstream parties have found it difficult to avoid rivalry on the topic. The contentious arguments surrounding the "immigration crisis" aided in the definition of the AfD, Germany's first powerful RRP at the

national level. Since 2014, the AfD has gained representation in all German state legislatures, as well as in the Bundestag. (Heinze 2020).

Kortmann and Stecker (2017) argued in their comparative analysis that the problem of competition on immigration and integration policies has substantially grown as a result of the “refugee crisis” and the emergence of the AfD at the state and federal levels. This dynamic begs the question of how much the AfD – as an RRP and the purported ownership of the migrant problem (Franzmann 2019) – impacts the mainstream attitude to migration issues.

The distinction between RRP and their opponents is useful because the exact definition of radical right parties is still being questioned and requires further definition. On the one hand, mainstream parties tend to value the conventional economic left-right dimension and adopt a moderate stance on it (Meguid 2005; Adams et al. 2006). They also tend to be loyal to the political system (Abedi 2009).

On the other hand, according to the most used definition of radical right parties, the main tenets of RRP are nativism, authoritarianism, and for PRRPs an element of populism (Mudde 2017a). PRRPs are thus a type of radical right parties, following the competitive logic of the latter in terms of party competition. But it does not always help to classify the AfD as a PRRP rather than an RRP, as this does not necessarily offer a more complex picture of how other parties enter in competition with them (Berbair, Lewandowsky, and Siri 2015; Arzheimer 2019). It was initially considered difficult to classify the AfD (Arzheimer 2015).

The party was and continues to be susceptible to continual modification, particularly in its early stages. It started out in 2013 as a Eurosceptic party made by liberals who intended to sever Germany’s mainstream parties’ pro-European consensus (Lewandowsky 2015). The AfD then swung to the extreme right, with Bernd Lucke, a prominent early member, quitting the party in 2015. Second, due to its brief history, there has been insufficient data accessible to assist scientific examination. Due to a paucity of data, it was difficult to properly categorise the party into a family or to quantify policy stances. The data base has since grown as the AfD became an important element of German politics. Third, there are definitional and conceptual difficulties in the words “radical right party”, “populism”,

and “populist RRP” (Mudde 2017a), which will be further discussed in the literature review.

The AfD’s populist rhetoric has progressed beyond exploiting the economic insecurity of society’s poorest strata. According to one study, support for far right populist parties is mostly driven by a mix of economic insecurity and a feeling of cultural danger (Barón 2018). The AfD and its followers have a tendency to personalise and “culturize” difficulties arising from global interdependence, blaming immigrants, religious minority (Muslims), and the existing ruling classes (Rommel 2017). In their 2017 party programme, the AfD emphasised subjects such as ‘core culture,’ ‘German virtues,’ and the alleged threat of multiculturalism to the core German culture that they are developing. For example, the same manifesto explicitly states that “Islam does not belong to Germany” (‘Manifesto for Germany’ 2017). This attitude has been demonstrated to be a commonly utilised demagogic and rhetorical method for establishing a coherent group and presenting it in contrast to other groups, with an emphasis on the insurmountable differences between them (Elias and Scotson 1993). Because of the broad sense of cultural danger that the refugee crisis elicited, the refugee crisis proved to be a fertile ground for such nationalist and xenophobic speech. The challenges that arose as a result of the refugee crisis have proven to be chronic, and they are not anticipated to go away quickly or easily. The new issues caused by the pandemic present an additional chance for populist parties to exploit societal anxieties for electoral gain by turning to nationalist language.

In 2017, the AfD became Germany’s largest opposition party, after the SPD had long converged with the CDU towards the centre and lost its ideological distinctiveness. The AfD’s reaction to the pandemic has harmed the party’s poll ratings marginally.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Defining Populism

There is still a debate in the literature regarding the definition of the concept of populism. While historically it had been regarded as merely a pathology damaging democratic regimes (Ionescu and Gellner 1969), populism is now regarded as a “Zeitgeist”, a phenomenon that is here to stay (Mudde 2004). Cas Mudde has put together a definition that unites the main tenets of populism as a coherent ideology:

Populism is a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonte general* (general will) of the people.

The “thin-centred” quality of the ideology means that populism can be paired at will with a second-order ideology, which leads to an institutional and ideological fragmentation of populist parties. This warrants a comparison of populist party discourses across countries, which may show both similarities and differences.

Nonetheless, defining populism as an ideology, albeit a “thin-centred” one, is problematic and has been refuted by those who view it as a set of ideas comprising five core principles (the ideational approach): a commitment to the people, the people seen as a homogenous entity, the party seen as representing the general will of the people, a betrayal of the people by the self-serving elite, and a Manichean view of morality (Norris 2020). When analysing PRRPs themselves, this ideational definition of populism has proven to be the most widely accepted and useful conceptualisation of populism (Kaltwasser 2017).

Yet another approach has been the one viewing populism as rhetoric, as a type of discourse used to convince the public by employing strategies and creating associations meant to persuade and win arguments (Hawkins 2010; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Laclau 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2019). This is similar to the conceptualisation of populism as a communication style. Hariman defined political communication style as a set of rhetorical conventions that construct identities and power by employing certain practices and media in order to persuade (Hariman

1995). Thus, the populist communication style can be understood as a way of communicating meaning and sentiments regarding conventional moderate politics in power relations so as to construct identity (Block and Negrine 2017). Power relations are portrayed in populist communication to be less concerned with material issues than with values, feelings, words, meaning, and perceptions that construct political identities. This style is also suited to the present era, in which politics is “mediatised” and the media is increasingly complex and fluid (Chadwick 2013). From this perspective, the term “populism” loses its negative connotations and becomes merely a “colourless” communication strategy designed to appeal to the common people by being simple, straightforward, and clear (Taggart 2000; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Bracciale and Martella 2017). This type of conceptualisation will also be useful in order to compare some aspects of PRRP and mainstream party communication in the present empirical study.

As populist rhetoric is evasive and multi-faceted, it can be instrumentalised in the purpose of other values and ideologies (Norris 2020). Right-wing populism is the type of populism that is superimposed over a nationalist xenophobic right-wing second-order ideology. The populist parties analysed in this study, the AfD in Germany and the FPÖ in Austria, have both been characterised in literature as PRRPs (Barón 2018; Betz 1993; 2001).

3.2 Measuring Populism

To quantify populism, several approaches for party content analysis have been offered previously. Rooduijn and Pauwels examined two ways for assessing populism: traditional content analysis and computer-assisted content analysis (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011). They took into account populism’s contextual sensitivity and lack of conceptual clarity, implying the necessity for more systematic techniques of gauging populism across different situations and historical periods. They based their findings on Mudde’s characterization of Populism as a people-centered, anti-elitist worldview. Party manifestos are used as content sources in both of their research methods. They found that anti-elitism alone appears to be a good indication of populism, based on the positive face validity and concurrent validity of the two study techniques.

Meijers and Zaslove emphasized the necessity to examine populism as a collection of ideas in a manner that is multi-dimensional and continuous (Meijers and Zaslove 2020). For the conceptualisation that they employed in their measure of populism, which seeks to be exact and in complete line with academic understandings of populism, they concentrated on the ideational approach to populism. Their operationalization is congruent with populism's theoretical conceptualization (Hawkins et al. 2018; Mudde 2004; 2017b). Their research also improves on past studies by eschewing a binary view of populism and examining its degree. They utilized expert surveys to operationalize five aspects of populism, including "people-centrism," "indivisible people," "universal will," "anti-elitism," and "Manichean worldview."

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While these considerations refer mainly to measuring the populist content of PRRPs and mainstream parties, they will prove useful when analysing the degree of contagion between the two types of parties. A study of the relevant literature reveals that a continuous measure based on exact operationalization of the latent notion of populism using the ideational method is the most effective in determining the amount of populism as a collection of ideas in a political party. However, in order to get a full picture of a PRRP, as well as analyse the effects of populist rhetoric on mainstream parties, this should be supplemented with a look at populism as rhetoric. There may be instances when the party's fundamental set of views is genuinely populist and is reflected in its language, but there may also be instances where the party's basic ideas depart from their rhetoric to a lesser or greater extent.

Norris developed the Global Party Survey after researching how to quantify party values in order to get more accurate, consistent, and valid findings while taking into

consideration the many types of populism (Norris 2020). Norris defined populism as rhetoric, rather than doctrine or a set of principles, in this expert study. He contrasted populist and pluralist language on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 indicating rhetoric that favours pluralism and 10 indicating rhetoric that favours populism (10). In his expert poll, he used the following elements as scales from 0 to 10 to operationalize populist rhetoric: the significance of populist rhetoric for political parties, whether regular people or elites should make crucial choices, if politicians should follow the people's wishes, whether politicians are honest or dishonest, whether political parties undermine or defend liberal democratic norms, and whether executive authority control is preferred or opposed. He also considered concerns concerning the proper allocation of authority and influence, as well as allegations against the mainstream parties' representatives' honesty and integrity. He took into account the conceptual challenges surrounding populism and added a number of metrics for assessing populist discourse. Norris' study enables for the identification of populist vocabulary employed by parties throughout the political spectrum, not simply radical populist parties, by viewing populism as speech.

The approach to populism as rhetoric is particularly interesting for the present study, because it implies that populist rhetoric can be borrowed across the political spectrum, by political parties and leaders who do not necessarily support the core populist ideas or adopt them as their ideology. This understanding of populism allows for the analysis of populist features in discourse beyond the boundaries of PRRPs.

3.3 Populism and Migration in Europe

The recent surge in immigration to Europe and within Europe has had two effects on European politics: firstly, it has provided a platform for populist parties to grow, secondly, it has brought identity to the fore of the political discourse. Kaltwasser (2017) has emphasised that the populist rhetoric tends to adopt a "monolithic" view of "the people" based on "nationalist markers and symbols" which is incompatible with free movement, migration, and the view of popular sovereignty as a process that is dynamic and open-ended. Two studies looking at populism and migration provided important insights into this issue (Yılmaz 2012; Rivera Escartin 2020).

Yilmaz argued that Islam has become a major issue associated with terrorism and security due to PRR involvement in the immigration debate since the 1980s, presenting it as a cultural threat to Europe. Escartin looked at how PRR parties affect the European Neighbourhood Policy in relation with third countries, specifically Tunisia and Egypt. He argues that there is an informal and illiberal Europeanisation under way, under the influence of such parties as Lega and Fidesz. The two articles highlight how the issue of migration has been employed by PRR parties to emphasize the identity discourse in Europe and eventually imagine a new kind of Europe.

Yilmaz's analysis is centred around the creation of a new narrative of cultural belonging in Europe by PRR parties. He defined hegemony as a resetting of the social and political landscape across a different fault line, that of political and social identities based on culture. He emphasised that hegemony is not about pushing certain categories that are already existent in the political discourse but changing the way the political landscape is constructed altogether.

He explained that in the 1980s, PRR parties identified the people with the nation and capitalized on people's fears of lost identity to push their own xenophobic and particularly anti-Islamic agendas. These parties defined the nation negatively, in contrast with immigrant workers (then assimilated with Muslims) who became the other. Since then, the polemic surrounding Islam has been constantly reproduced, resulting in further emphasis on the division between the immigrant/the Muslim and the nation.

Yilmaz argued against scholars who describe the immigration debate as a new form of racism with the pretext of culture put forward. He argued that the category of immigrant itself has been culturized in the process, and that culture and religion have become the main organizing factor of social and political life in Europe and beyond. The hegemonic shift happens when values which are traditionally progressive and linked with a left-wing political discourse (anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia) become linked with the populist right because these values come to define a 'we' that is portrayed by PRR parties as radically opposed and ontologically incompatible with Muslim culture.

Yilmaz also contended that the relation between people and culture is constructed discursively: immigrants are thought of in terms of certain categories not because of a dictated reality from outside, but because of the way discourses are constructed around them. The culturized narrative should thus be seen as a discursive construction, and not as a reflection of intangible reality. If a society is bound to be defined through a divide, the way that divide is constructed is based on a hermeneutic process that is most often determined by hegemonic discourse.

On the other hand, Escartin proposed a new conceptualisation of Europeanisation as informal and illiberal. To do so, he traces the effect of governing PRRPs in Italy and Hungary in affecting human rights standards and the ENP. Escartin's definition of PRRPs is based on that formulated by Cas Mudde. Because leaving the EU is not an option, PRRPs may try to align the EU with their own illiberal rhetoric. If this is the case, there can still be talk of Europeanisation in the context of foreign policies even when PRRPs are in government. The informal aspect of this kind of Europeanisation is defined as a horizontal form of interaction between states that bypasses vertical, formal modes of Europeanisation – coalitions that are formed between like-minded member states that team up to bolster their position within the EU and Europeanise their agendas.

The case studies that he used are that of Italy-Tunisia and Hungary-Egypt relations. In 2018, the Italian government led by Salvini made control of migration stricter and opposed NGOs that were trying to search and rescue people from the Mediterranean by closing Italian ports. This worsened relations with Tunisia, which had different expectations from the ENP. Orbán's Hungary also contributed to the EU's retreat from pursuing the improvement of the human rights situation in Egypt. Escartin argues, however, that this process of illiberal Europeanisation may continue only as long as PRRPs are in government. Once they are no longer in power, other types of informal Europeanisation, or a reinforcement of vertical Europeanisation processes may ensue.

The articles thus complement each other in showing how populist responses to migration have changed both the hegemonic discourse in Europe, and the ways in which Europeanisation is being carried out. It is thus crucial to observe how migration as a main point of political contention, picked up and used by PRRPs,

has brought about structural changes both in terms of discursive nation-definition, and the Europeanisation process. Populism and migration have thus changed the way national societies view themselves and the world, as well as how the states representing these societies relate to each other within the EU. The articles open plenty new avenues of research, especially in terms of further studying and defining the processes of informal Europeanisation and those of the hermeneutic processes through which various social categories are being reimagined.

Moreover, this phenomenon was not limited to Europe. Much of Trump's rhetoric and policies can be traced to today's European PRRPs. Zoellick saw in Trump's politics precisely the tenets of populism identified by Mudde: he pretended to represent the dissatisfied people's will, he constructed internal and external enemies to blame, and presented himself as the only leader capable of embodying the will of the people and saving them from peril (Zoellick 2017). Trump's xenophobic rhetoric and policies regarding the wall with Mexico and the immigration of Muslims, as well as his protectionist politics and the claims against the US' own allies made him look like a president who was taking action, but his actions were in fact breaking a US-led international system that was working. While, in Zoellick's view, the previous system helped expand human rights, liberty, and democracy, it was seen by Trump as outdated, expensive, and restrictive for his bilateral endeavours. The same position is taken by many European PRRPs today.

3.4 Populism and Euroscepticism

The populist RRP discourse on migration is tightly linked with Euroscepticism and concerns about cultural and economic loss due to free movement and labour competition from immigrants. One article dealt with the use of Euroscepticism by third parties to shape EU foreign policy, based on the case of Israel and Greece (Pardo and Gordon 2018). Another analysed populism as an ideology based on the case of Brexit (Freedon 2017). Both articles reveal the intricate ways in which Euroscepticism is connected with populism.

Pardo and Gordon defined Euroscepticism as a lack of trust in and opposition to European integration, as well as EU's purported values. Informed by Taggart and

Szczerbiak, they distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism. The authors' original addition to the concept of Euroscepticism is the idea that a Eurosceptic MS paradoxically reasserts its place as part of the EU precisely by positioning itself as Eurosceptic.

Israeli involvement with Euroscepticism is shown to be quite a new phenomenon. They revealed how the relationship goes both ways: while PRRPs in Europe increasingly look to Israel as a model, Israel itself also actively fosters its relationship with parties such as the Dutch Party for Freedom, the Hungarian Fidesz, and the Italian Lega. As a reason for this they identify Israel's intention to influence Europe's formulation of how it sees the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Further, the Greek party Syriza's relationship with Israel is analysed. The party portrayed Greece as a 'debt colony' and Germany as a powerful country characterized by economic and cultural nationalism and racism. Against the background of viewing the EU as a potential enemy after the 2008 financial crisis, the Syriza government improved its relationship with Israel, a relationship which had been distant ever since 1949 when Greece recognized Israel. The authors' analysis of the January 2016 FAC conclusions shows that the challenge of proactive Eurosceptic foreign policy employed by third parties is not sufficiently understood and recognized by the EU.

The article identified three simultaneous and interrelated processes. The first one is that alliances between right-wing Eurosceptic political actors is made based on similar ideologies that aim to alter the liberal norms that inform the identity of the EU. The risk is that if these contestations keep gaining ground, EU's normative power status in foreign policy may decrease. The second one considers the way in which Euroscepticism is used to shape foreign policy and particularly used by third parties to achieve certain political goals. The third process is related to how a Eurosceptic MS such as Greece reconstructs itself as an internal actor within the EU system when it allows itself to be used by third parties such as Israel to further their foreign policy goals.

The focus of Freedon's article is to further the understanding of populism as an ideology, using the example of Brexit. The author considers Brexit as a particular type of Euroscepticism that is both populist and more radical. In Taggart and

Szczerbiak's terms, it might be considered an example of 'hard' Euroscepticism. The author recognizes the need to reassess the concept of populism after Brexit and comes to grips with the difficulty of defining the populism. While a precise definition is difficult to formulate, the author holds that there are certain patterns of thought that characterize populism in general. He also argues that a clear-cut definition of populism is a simple but undesirable short-cut. Instead, one must consider populisms in the plural, which share some fundamental elements but are not a single homogenous ideology.

The author showed that populist ideologies overlap with other ideologies, but is not thin-centred, like feminism, ecologism, or nationalism, because it does not have the possibility to be the centre for something more. As the populist core is all there is to it, it is rather "thin", than "thin-centred". He identified the populist core to consist of an undifferentiated understanding of society, the commitment to ownership over the temporal and special starting point of a society, and a fear of change hidden under the impression of an uprising of the people. Populist ideologies are found to be transmitted through emotions of anxiety and fear rather than through their comprehensiveness, or dogmatic strength. Populism exhibits some cohesion, however, particularly when it comes to portraying 'the people' as a homogenous unit and, more specifically, portraying a part of the people as being 'the people', and pitting that part against other segments of society, such as migrants or the ruling elites. The article finds that the label 'populism' is used to serve as a catch-all term for the legitimation of radical popular demands, and to denote right-wing xenophobia. Moreover, it is used to hide and simplify complicated socio-political issues. It is not a stand-alone ideology, but an inconsistent and vague one, which, under certain circumstances, gains an undeniably recognizable footprint.

The two articles show that Euroscepticism can be used both as an instrument for foreign policy by third parties in order to achieve their political goals while damaging the EU's normative power, and as a key element constructing populist ideologies within Europe.

3.5 Populism and Normative Principles

Despite RRP contestations of this fact, Austria and Germany are immigration countries, and they seem to fare quite well economically because of it. In fact, the economic prosperity of the entire EU has been based on migrant labour, facilitated by free movement. The logical conclusion is that, if other regions would like to experience similar economic gains, they should take the same steps towards ensuring the free movement of people and goods. Populist RRP, however, seem to think otherwise, and oppose the freedom of movement on grounds of cultural loss and fears of economic decline. The succession of an economic crisis and a refugee crisis (2008 and 2015) made this argument even more compelling. It would thus appear that the PRRP foreign policy argument undermines the EU's normative power, which is ultimately based on the image of its Member States, like the highly prosperous and, until recently, immigrant-welcoming Austria and Germany. It is, however, useful to question whether populism always undermines normative principles.

Europe as a normative power and global constitutionalism seem at first glance to be under threat from populism. Manners defined Europe as having normative power rather than civilian or military power, arguing that its power is based on common ideas and principles which go beyond the Westphalian conception of state relations, and that are mainly derived from what the EU is and represents (Manners 2002). Global constitutionalisation is the process by which such normative principles are becoming valid globally. Koch questioned the widely accepted view that all kinds of populism undermine global constitutionalism, and thus all forms of liberal normative power, such as that of the EU (Koch 2021). Populist responses to global constitutionalisation are shown to vary greatly according to the position of the populist parties on the political spectrum, as normative principles are politicised in national public discourse.

Manners' seminal article from 2002 proposes the concept of EU as normative power in addition to previous interpretations of the EU as civilian or military power. To him, the terms civilian power and military power are deeply rooted in the Westphalian state system. He argues, however, that the EU, by its actions and mere existence, questions the very system that analysts are trying to place it in. For him, the EU proposes a new way of conducting international relations by

proposing ideas such as sovereignty pooling, transnational parliament, democratic constitutionality, and human rights. This ability of the EU to change how international relations are conceived of is praised by Manners as being the ultimate form of power. In this regard, Manners seems to overestimate the EU's power and to not take into account the possible challenges to the EU as normative power, such as internal divisions that might undermine this power, or domestic politicization and criticism of the EU's normative principles. But this criticism comes with the benefit of hindsight. The threat of populism was in 2002 only faintly and unconvincingly beginning to show itself, and normative power Europe had not yet reached the global scale that it is in currently.

What Europe as normative power has since become part of is the process of global constitutionalisation. Koch analysed the way in which populism contests this process. He argued that the nature of the challenge that populists pose is dependent on the type of populism – left or right-wing, cosmopolitan or communitarian. Some criticism is common to all populists, such as the idea that the people are no longer sovereign because of the external normative principles associated with the process of global constitutionalisation.

As for the other points of contestation, populist parties are shown to vary quite widely. Communitarian populists tend to oppose to global constitutionalism nationalist illiberal majoritarianism that ensures the sovereignty of the people. Cosmopolitan populists, however, tend to support the liberal and democratic principles of global constitutionalism. On a different spectrum, left-wing populists tend to take issue with its liberal principles, but some agree with the idea of supra-state politics while others do not. The process thus appears as one that is increasingly being politicised at the national level and criticized in terms of the democratic legitimacy of normative principles – whether the people remain sovereign. Koch further argued that global constitutionalism becomes differentiated based on the varying nature of such political contestations. Thus, because of this differentiation, Koch does not see populism as the nemesis of global constitutionalism. Because of populism, he argued, questions about the normative aspects of global politics are coming to the fore in public debates. This has the same chance of strengthening liberal and democratic principles as it has

that of destabilising them. He emphasises the importance of supporting international normative principles in this debate while at the same time taking into account the possible drawbacks of global constitutionalisation at the national level.

Thus, the articles defined the liberal normative principles represented by the EU and showed how the worldwide dissemination of these principles in the form of global constitutionalism has given rise to a host of national responses criticizing it entirely or partially. This is the result of the domestic politicization of the process of global constitutionalisation based on the principle of democratic legitimacy. While Manners' article laid the conceptual groundwork for understanding the current role of the EU in international relations, Koch paved the way towards a better understanding of the global dissemination of normative principles and the national responses to this process. Populism thus appears as a domestic reaction to a radical change in the way international relations are conceptualized. This new conceptualisation based on democratic and liberal principles is being contested in various ways depending on how the ruling populist parties shape their politicizing discourse. It remains to be seen whether global constitutionalism will become the new norm in international relations, and it is domestic politics where its most acute contestations come from. Populism is its latest and most vocal challenge.

3.6 The Source of Populist Positions: Between Party Systems and Ideological Affiliation

Researchers have referred to the counterintuitively diverse roots of populist foreign policy positions (Verbeek and Zaslove 2015; Varga and Buzogány 2021). The first one deals with the Northern League as coalition partner in the Berlusconi governments, while the second one analyses the effect on foreign policy of PRR parties in Poland and Hungary. As they both make clear, the articles are part of the newly emerging scholarship about the effects of PRR parties on foreign policy specifically.

Verbeek and Zaslove stressed the importance of political parties in foreign policy. They argued that foreign policy has become more linked to domestic politics recently due to Europeanisation and globalisation. Based on the example of the Italian Northern League, they theorised how governing PRR parties affect foreign

policy. They argued that coalition arguments tend to adopt more extreme foreign policy decisions than governments formed by a single party. The LN itself was the junior coalition partner and according to the authors, three conditions contribute to the junior coalition partner's capacity to influence foreign policy: (1) the ability of the party to secure positions in cabinet which are the authority when it comes to foreign policy issues (prime minister, minister of defence, minister of foreign affairs), (2) the internal unity of the PRR party while the large coalition party is fragmented, (3) their ability to play off of a credible threat to the stability of the government. The credible threat that the LN built was that of the party system change and the authors show how the current fragmented bipolar party system in Italy facilitates a more prominent role of smaller coalition partners.

Their main theoretical proposition was that the success of the junior coalition partner's success depends on access to decision-making, the ability to present a credible threat, and to exploit division in other coalition parties, but that beyond that, the influence of the LN was also affected by the fragmented bipolar structure of the Italian party system. These factors raised LN's importance in the coalition. They found that PRR parties are not necessarily against internationalism and the EU, but their position depends much more on whether the international status quo is working for or against what they deem to be 'the people'. They also found that the LN had a strong policy regarding immigration, but that the role played by junior coalition partners is also dependent on the wider party constellation, which requires further study in IR. Sometimes, they argue in line with systemic IR theories, party preferences are not above concerns of national interest. They conclude that it is limiting to seek to explain a country's foreign policy based on domestic politics, but one should also consider the wider international systemic constraints to those policy positions. For further research, they propose comparative studies of PRR parties in coalition governments either within the same party system or different party systems.

Varga and Buzogány argued that PRR parties' foreign policy orientation forms part of a wider conservative statecraft movement. They used a critical geopolitical perspective to analyse PRR forces and trace the broader right-wing networks that shape the foreign policy positions of PRR parties. They stressed that PRR foreign

policy decisions are not necessarily one-off positions, but that these conservative networks have contributed to the development of a right-wing ideological alternative to liberalism. The conservative ideological roots that populist right wing parties seem to be building upon are shown to be not only radical, unexpected, and unprofessional, but also well-established views of the world produced by intellectuals of statecraft. They highlighted the importance of the manufacturing of these ideas by knowledge producers. The topic that unites both countries has been that of 'threat perception', based in Poland around the issue of the Smolensk Air Crash and in Hungary on the refugee issue. They found that generally, right-wing intellectual ideas predate the formation of PRR parties. They thus warn against the dismissal of conservative discourses as attempts to ideologically justify opportunistic and self-interested politics, noting that some issues they raise are in fact legitimate and point toward a coherent ideology. They also argue that domestic policy ideas have an effect on foreign policy. They propose an ideational approach to the study of PRR foreign policy positions despite the changing style and foreign policy content of PRR parties and leaders.

Both articles look at how PRR parties influence foreign policy. While the article about the Italian party system is placing foreign policy positions of such parties within the wider domestic and international party-political context, the article about Poland and Hungary places PRR foreign policy positions within a wider right-wing intellectual and ideological context that proposes an alternative to liberalism. Both articles contribute a great deal to this emerging field of study and open up interesting new avenues of research. Perhaps their most significant achievement is that of putting PRR foreign policy positions into a wider perspective and surpassing the limitations of an analysis of such foreign policy positions as purely driven by the PRR parties' anti-internationalist and anti-establishment domestic stance.

3.7 Populism and Leaders: Why Should We Analyse Leader Speeches?

The empirical analysis of this study will be based on parliamentary and press speeches. One argument against this approach would be that it overlooks the grassroots origin of the populist sentiments, which are held by ordinary citizens and built based on interpretations of events and information from the media. However,

populism as a phenomenon, despite purporting to represent the interest of the people, is very much led by charismatic leaders skilled at manipulating people's emotions in order to serve their illiberal political goals.

Previous research has looked at the extent to which populist success is the product of charismatic leaders with illiberal tendencies. Questions raised have been to what extent does leader charisma push populist parties forward in elections (van der Brug and Mughan 2007), to what extent is leader charisma a defining feature of populism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2014), and how populist leaders define the nature of their populism and its quality as liberal or illiberal populism (Körösényi and Patkós 2017). The salient points of the articles are that the charismatic leadership hypothesis does not hold under the current conceptualisation of 'charisma', that charisma is rather a catalyst for the rise of populism rather than one of its defining characteristics, and that populist leaders have differing ideologies – liberal and illiberal – those holding the latter being more successful in creating a new polity in their states. What these articles do not attempt is a further and more detailed conceptualisation of charisma in politics, not going beyond Weber's definition. What they succeed in doing is proving wrong the assumption that populism is intrinsically charismatic and illiberal, hinting at an infinitely more complex situation.

The charismatic leader hypothesis was tested by Brug and Mughan, and their conclusion was that it is not tenable. They resort back to Weber's definition of charisma as 'an intimate and direct communion between leader and followers', which is missing in the case of more institutionalised parties. On the basis of this definition, they found that there was no sign of a more pronounced direct and positive electoral effect of any Dutch populist leader that they studied compared to their established opponents. Through their findings, Brug and Mughan dismiss the view that voters of populist parties are an unfocused mass of people whose dissatisfactions are channelled and used by a charismatic leader. They instead suggest the fact that charisma has the same effect on supporters of both populist and mainstream parties, meaning that these parties and their voters may not necessarily be radically different from those of established parties. They advocate the view that they are no different from other voters in terms of how they choose

who to vote for – i.e. they are not less rational than others in their electoral choices. A potential limitation of their study is, however, their exclusive focus on right-wing populism, not taking left-wing manifestations of populism into account.

The problem of defining populism was raised by Mudde and Kaltwasser. They pointed out four ways in which populism has been defined: as a discourse/set of ideas, as a pathology/a disease of democracy, as a political style, and as a strategic choice made by skilled politicians. When it comes to leadership, the last two definitions seem to contain a strong emphasis on a strong leader. The discourse approach is sometimes, but not always, linked to the presence of a charismatic leader. The alternative definition proposed by the authors refers to populism as a superficial ideology that pitches the pure people against the allegedly corrupt elite and holds that politics should represent the general will of the society. This definition, the authors argue, does justice to the variety of manifestations of populism.

One of the avenues of further research suggested is cross-regional research that might identify different subcategories of populism, including distinct styles of leadership. It is precisely this that Körösi and Patkós set out to do in their article. Considering the ends to which populist leaders use the power acquired by charisma or other means, the comparison of Berlusconi and Orbán in Italy and Hungary respectively shows that populist leaders may differ greatly in both practices and ideology. More specifically, they may bring about liberal or illiberal subtypes of populism.

Körösi and Patkós differentiated conceptually between polity, politics, and policy. While Berlusconi and Orbán achieve similar results in politics, their differences lie in the area of polity and policy. They both used populist discourse to rise to power, but the content of their ideological beliefs seems to be quite thin – and here the authors' findings are in keeping with Mudde and Kaltwasser's definition of populism. Berlusconi merely used populist discourse to achieve his political aims, while his views (informed by his background in business) are quite liberal. Orbán's economic policy showed his strong belief in etatism, with anti-capitalist elements. Despite their differences, the authors conclude that both leaders contributed greatly to the tendency towards presidentialisation in Europe.

The study of populism, charisma, and leadership seems to pose conceptual problems and to necessitate extensive empirical cross-regional research. Academic literature is still engaging in much myth-busting of popular beliefs and superficial perceptions of and preconceptions about populism. They go to great lengths to show that a strong and radical party line may exist without the simultaneous presence of a charismatic party leader. Because populist parties tend to come up with simple answers to complex problems, it may generally be thought that populism itself can be explained in simple terms, generally by reducing the explanation to the role of the leader. The articles at hand prove that there is more to populism than meets the eye, that the sources of its success and the types of its manifestation are complex, and that a full understanding of populism requires extensive empirical research and more thorough theoretical conceptualisation.

3.8 What Populists Have in Common: Populism and the Power of Emotions

It is widely accepted that populists tend to emotionalise the debate in order to use (often negative) emotions of the listeners for political leverage. In his article, Wirz tested the widely held opinion that populist discourse appeals to emotions more than reason and finds empirical support for the assumption that populist discourse is persuasive because it is inherently emotional (Wirz 2018).

Wirz asked in his study what it is that makes populist communication more successful than its mainstream counterparts in influencing public opinion. More specifically, he focused on the question whether the key ingredient of this success of populist communication is constituted by its emotional element. His thorough quantitative study revealed that populist communication indeed appealed to emotions more than the non-populist one, and also that the force of the emotions elicited by political assertions is stronger if coming from populist rather than non-populist communication. It also showed that positive and negative emotions are both crucial to the success of populist communications. The study also produced some unexpected results, namely that the assumption that supporters of populism would respond emotionally more to populist discourse than non-populist discourse only held for the emotion of anger. The study thus brought empirical and quantitative evidence for previously intuitively formed assumptions about emotions

in populist communication, confirmed them to some extent and nuanced these assumptions where the study reached unexpected results.

In the US context, Homolar and Scholz identified a tripartite strategy that Trump used in his speeches: he delineated what was wrong with the US, pointed at the ones culpable for the deplorable domestic status quo and proposed a way towards resolving the crisis (Homolar and Scholz 2019). They concluded that Trump's discourse emphasised people's cognitive biases through "crisis talk" to bolster dissatisfaction and a sense of loss. They showed that he stressed the potential of a negative future, thus creating a feeling of "ontological insecurity". This insight will be useful to use deductively when looking at the German and Austrian context and identifying whether this kind of feelings were exploited in PRRP parliament speeches, and how the mainstream responded.

3.9 Responding to Populism: Is Populism Good for Democracy?

At the core of the question how one does or ought to respond to the populist right-wing take on democracy is the question of whether populism in all its forms is dangerous to democracy or whether one should engage with it. In other words, what is it within populism that appeals to the public and how should one address those underlying issues.

Some of the literature emphasises that populism gives voice to groups of people that otherwise feel unrepresented by mainstream political parties, and that by doing so, populism is a good force for democracy (Mouffe 2005). This argument is based on the idea that argument democracy is based on contestation, and that contestation is not only good, but necessary. The problem with "consensual politics" and the "post political vision" of mainstream parties and elites in the EU is considered to be that the democratic system offers no alternatives, that social democratic parties only address the middle class, that the voices of those on the fringes are not heard and their problems not addressed. PRR parties hence represent them and claim their frustrations.

PRRPs can thus be seen as possible corrective mechanisms for Western democracies based on "consensual politics" that only represent certain segments

of the population. They address issues that mainstream parties forgot about, so mainstream parties could be incentivized by PRRPs to look at alternatives and make corrections. It might be a good early warning system for parties in power and solve issues in their own way. Instead of using the weapon of morality, one should hence allow populists to put forward their arguments and compete in the democratic debate.

This is not possible, however, if the EU takes a “moral attitude” towards PRRPs, as in the case of Austria in the 2000s, when moral condemnation by France and Belgium replaced political analysis. There was a campaign of demonisation in the press and a typical case of ‘self-idealisation’ - that is, the condemnation of the ‘bad Austrians’ served to construct the ‘us’ of the good democrats, morally beyond reproach. It was not really scrutinised how the rise of the FPÖ came to be, it simply pointed to the history of Austria and said that the country did not properly denazify. They demonised the Austrians, despite other European PRRPs also being on the rise at the same time.

Thus, a moral attitude might be better replaced by a focus on engaging with and contesting “political alternatives”. In Mouffe’s opinion, the moralisation of politics is inefficient because the appeal of populists is often linked to anti-establishment rhetoric. Their exclusion by elites thus bolsters their arguments and supports their rise. Moralisation is only effective in international politics – creating the other – but creating an enemy within the country damages the domestic democratic system.

Another article also suggested that the populist challenge is one that should make us understand the weaknesses of the current system and lead to an improvement of the liberal order on a more sustainable basis (Mead 2017). He finally argues that globalisation and automation have thrust us into a new stage of capitalist development, which for the moment transform the global liberal order into a world disorder. We must thus come to terms with the fact that the push towards globalisation and cosmopolitanism brings with it resistance and social unrest. Based on this realisation, the governing elites must realise that the global liberal system must take into consideration the will of national communities as much as they care for the balance of power and consensus among the elites. In his view, communities need the feeling that they are protected from the outside world as

much as they benefit from interacting with it, and it is this feeling that a sustainable liberal order must create.

To summarise, liberalism and democracy should be recognized as separate values; there is no democracy without effective democratic participation in the decision making of common life (not just human rights). There is tension between individual liberty and pluralism versus popular sovereignty and equality – a struggle to assert one tradition over the other. PRRPs are able to point out underlying problems of society that are omitted by mainstream parties, because the latter often do not address the issues of what they consider to be “fringe groups” of society. Democratic political theory should also recognize the antagonistic, the opposition, and the importance of passion and emotion. Without a profound change in the workings of democratic politics, the problems which have led to the emergence of right-wing populism will not disappear. It is important for mainstream parties to remember that the legitimacy of liberal democracies also symbolically rests upon the idea of popular sovereignty. Finally, challenged by globalization, automation, and cosmopolitanism, national communities require a sense of protection which governing elites should be sensitive to in order to prevent the escalation of social unrest.

3.10 Towards A Discursive Approach to Xenophobic Contagion

This thesis bridges the literatures on political xenophobia and populist contagion by regarding PRRPs as exclusionary xenophobic actors and inquiring into their potential impact and contagion effects on mainstream actors in the field of migration.

The rising relevance of RRP in many European nations is shifting the dynamics of party rivalry away from the formerly prominent economic and cultural left-right components (Kriesi 2008; Franzmann 2019). According to research, the formation of RRP has a significant influence on competitive dynamics in migration policy, demonstrating that mainstream parties are compelled by electoral pressure to change their stances in order to be re-elected (Meguid 2005; Abou-Chadi 2016).

Post-1990 studies of xenophobia in Eastern Germany and in Europe more widely have shown that at the root of political xenophobia lies a combination of ideology and sense of cultural threat to the integrity of the nation (Watts 1996; De Master and Le Roy 2000). Considerable literature on nationalism has linked migration trends with a surge in exclusionary nationalism used by populist actors (Betz 2001; Wodak 2015; Rupnow 2017). Other studies have used surveys to identify the underlying reasons for anti-immigrant sentiments among the population (Banton 1996). However, as political positions and discourses have become more strategic and intentionally designed, these discourses no longer appear and develop organically, but are discursive techniques designed to achieve political success (Norris 1999). The wide accessibility of mass media thus makes political positions much less individualised (Cardenal et al. 2019; Schmuck et al. 2021). Thus, one must now systematically analyse the discourse of actors who constantly use this type of arguments to justify their political role, persuade audiences, and gain political ground. Most often, these actors are PRRPs.

Recently, research on the effect of RRP on mainstream party stances has focused on migration policy. This is primarily because the new adversaries in this policy area claim issue ownership. Furthermore, with nativism as its shared ideological core, the RRP advocates an exclusionist migration policy with restrictive regulations in the sectors of immigrant admission and integration (Akkerman 2015; Becker 2019).

According to Georgi (2019), racism played an important role in the responses to the European refugee crisis, and it is generally becoming more salient and aggressive, causing political polarization. According to him, the right-wing combines nationalism, chauvinism, and racism, and takes refugees and migrant workers of colour (mostly Muslims) as scapegoats. In 2015, the PEGIDA-movement and the AfD incited violence against these groups, causing over 1000 attacks on the homes of refugees (Georgi 2019). In December 2016, the far-right Norbert Hofer was also almost elected as president of Austria, gaining 46.2% of the vote. Furthermore, Georgi argues that racism shaped the border dynamics. Racism is defined as “*oppression of a multi-gender social collectivity on the basis of differences [...] that are treated as inherited and unchangeable*” (Camfield 2016),

and thus as a systemic rather than individual phenomenon. Georgi interprets this resurgence of racism as a reaction to “post-migrant societies”, in which chauvinist/xenophobic forces within society have been suppressed for a long time (Foroutan 2015). It is also a defensive mechanism since the tacit coalition between the conservative right and neoliberals on migration issues that started in the 1990 has broken down and the neoliberals have moved closer to centre-left positions on migration. This change came from the frustration of neoliberal designers of migration management at the “irrational” sentiment against foreigners and people of colour, which contradicted the market and economic principles that are guiding their border management strategies.

Previous literature on populist political communication has, with some exceptions (Macaulay 2018), stopped at an analysis of populist party content and voting behaviour, not engaging in an analysis of the effects of populist communication on the mainstream parties in more incremental ways, such as by influencing communication and discourse on different topics. Nonetheless, discourses have a more profound impact than generally recognised. Through direct personal communication between leaders, but also through the propagation of a certain kind of discourse and framing, a new concept of informal and illiberal Europe has emerged (Rivera Escartin 2020). Further research is required into how illiberal discourses are strengthened in Europe.

Different effects that the right-wing populist discourse on migration can have in the relationship between RRP and the mainstream have been identified: contagion, mainstreaming, polarisation, and no effect (Atzpodien 2020). Atzpodien conducted a comparative analysis of the AfD’s influence in the German Land parliaments on the topic of migration and used Wordscores to quantitatively analyse party positions in debates between 2011 and 2018 out of the MigParl corpus. The study concluded that in most federal states, the appearance of the AfD caused a polarisation of party positions. It also identified convergence between the positions of the mainstream parties and that of the AfD, which, however, tries to set itself apart from the mainstream parties and which extends the scope of the political debate towards the extreme right. It also showed that positions did not systematically change during the refugee crisis.

Empirical studies of populist contagion have yielded varying results. Some studies have shown that the impact of PRRPs has been expressed as a heightened emphasis on the drawbacks of immigration (Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020; van Spanje 2010) and criticism of multiculturalism (Han 2015). Other studies have argued that PRRP influence on mainstream parties has been more limited than previously suggested (Akkerman 2015). Several other studies have suggested that there are rather other factors that determine change in the mainstream parties and their approach to particular policy issues (Meyer and Rosenberger 2015; Mudde 2013).

On this foundation, the thesis builds a discourse-based analysis to explore if and to what extent PRRPs in Austria and Germany have adopted similar positions on migration and have been able to influence mainstream actors through contagion effects.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Concepts

In order to identify how populist actors frame their arguments on migration and how this framing is propagated towards mainstream parties, the thesis will draw methodologically on Bélanger and Wunsch, using frames identified by literature on populism and migration, and coding the party content deductively using preidentified categories: procedural, utilitarian, strategic, normative, and identity-related arguments (Bélanger and Wunsch 2021). In the particular context of Bélanger and Wunsch's article, procedural arguments include frames related to conditionality and efficiency; utilitarian arguments include frames related to bilateral issues, cost-benefit considerations, and minorities; strategic arguments include bilateral issues; normative arguments include human rights and reforms frames; and identity arguments include frames related to belonging and religion.

This thesis uses framing theory to analyse and categorise positions and arguments of populist and mainstream actors. Drawing from Entman, framing is understood here as underlining some aspects of events or issues and creating links between them which lead to particular interpretations thereof (Entman 1993).

With regard to their empirical case of EU enlargement in EU Parliament party content, Bélanger and Wunsch argued that PRRP discourse against European integration has become more coherent and has led to a more general bolstering of opposition to EU enlargement but contagion of its identity-based framing to other parties has been limited. They contended that mainstream parties rather made space for the essentialist discourse of PRRPs by moving from a technical reasoning and justifications based on procedural framings towards normative arguments about human rights and democracy to voice their own opposition to continued enlargement. The paper will trace whether this applies to the migration debate as well.

In the context of the migration debate, normative, procedural, utilitarian, and strategic arguments seem to be characteristic for the centre-right. Normative arguments are those that tend to adopt a humanitarian attitude to immigration, and tend to be the hallmark of Christian parties (Boswell and Hough 2008). In terms of

utilitarian and strategic arguments, the centre-right has also been shown to focus on security, the rule of law, and integration understood as assimilation, with a tendency to make a connection between immigration and the increase of crime and diminishing of law-and-order. Thus, these parties are concerned with controlling what has been called “illegal immigration” (Schmidtke and Zaslove 2014). In other instances, centre-right parties also see market conditions, including employment, recognition of education and skills, and language-learning, as a means of integrating immigrants.

An analysis of the centre-left in the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna shows that left-wing parties tend to frame the immigration debate in terms of entitlement and universal rights (Schmidtke and Zaslove 2014). Migration is thus seen as a challenge to social cohesion, fostering the need to increase cultural reciprocity, legality, and political participation within civil society at a structural level. Another frame is that accounting for the structural transformations that cause migration. A third left-wing frame is that advocating the need to integrate immigrants through cultural mediation, using the term interculturalism. Fourthly, increasing political representation is an aim of the left by legalising immigrants, for example through amended citizenship laws.

Identity arguments about belonging and religion are increasingly used by PRRPs in order to mobilise based on the issue of migration. These may include arguments such as the need to prioritise nationals over immigrants, or street demonstrations against the use of religious symbols and against schools teaching the language of the immigrants.

At times and in various contexts over the past two decades, parties from the entire political spectrum have expressed anti-immigrant views for political gain. An example of this practice is the CSU in Bavaria, who emphasize the regional and religious identity and criticize the left for its modernist multiculturalism agenda. In order to do so, Horst Seehofer, CSU chairman 2008-2019, invoked a procedural argument, calling Turkish and Arab immigrants “hard to integrate” and calling for restrictions on Muslim migrants (Schmidtke and Zaslove 2014). He also used the term “Leitkultur” to denote the dominant German culture, reject the multiculturalism of the left, and portray immigrants as a threat to the German regional and national

identity. The CSU has been known to use anti-immigrant sentiments for political benefit, which shows its staunch conservatism, helps the party differentiate itself from the CDU and other German parties, and prevents the more radical right-wing from gaining political territory. This method of political mobilisation carries various risks with it. For centre-right parties, the risks are twofold: increasing support for far-right parties by giving a platform to and priming the public to anti-immigrant views and thus making them more respectable and credible (Bale 2003); and undermining the value legitimacy, programmatic coherence, and practical credibility of its own position (Boswell and Hough 2008).

Considering the existing articulations of populist anti-immigrant views by mainstream parties, the thesis will assess contagion to mainstream parties by examining shifts in German and Austrian parties' arguments over time to identify possible convergence trends in which PRRP positions transcend the border of populist ideology.

Changes and convergence or divergence in communication style between parties and over time must also be considered in the present empirical study. When differentiating the populist and the mainstream communication styles, one must pay attention to the use of emotional versus more rational tone, arguments, and frames. The use of pronouns is another important aspect – populists tend to use personal pronouns to connect with the audience. Other populist speech patterns include frequent mentioning of the people, calling out the elites, giving alternate names to groups or issues they criticise, as well as a focus on victimisation (Mudde 2004).

The rhetorical techniques used by populist actors coincide with the features of the popularisation of politics in the hybrid media system: emotionalization (sharing emotions and insights), personalisation, anti-establishment approach, and simplification (of issues and solutions). Other communication strategies used may challenge the media logic: informality, instrumental actualisation (framing certain events so as to support political bias), intimisation (speaking about one's own life), negative affect (peddling on emotions of fear), storytelling (rich with allusions, exaggerations, puns, and empty rhetoric with the purpose of seducing the listeners), taboo breaking (fighting against political correctness and distinguishing

oneself from elite), vulgarism (using vulgar language to appeal to the “ordinary people”) (Bracciale and Martella 2017). Not all these techniques are a hallmark of populism and not all speakers that use these techniques are populists from an ideological standpoint. Some of these patterns may also be used by mainstream politicians in order to appeal to certain electoral groups and gain political ground. The study will thus inquire whether mainstream party leaders also use some of these rhetorical patterns in response to the populist challenge.

From the point of view of the register of various statements, the indicators can be the following: referential/neutral, aggressive/provocative, humorous/ironic, or conversational/participatory (Bentivegna and Marchetti 2015; 2018).

According to literature on populist online discourse, the topics of statements can be political issues, policy issues, campaign issues, personal issues, and current affairs (ibid.). The present study will assume that issues raised in parliament and press conferences will be political or policy issues, with some references to current affairs.

The functions of populist statements online and in public communication may include: campaign updating (informing voters of activities), self-promotion (promoting leader activities), setting the agenda (sharing information on political and current issues), position-taking (getting involved in political debates and taking a side in the argument), call to action (encouraging supporters’ commitment), opposition/violence (attack or provocation of other politicians, media, or citizens), endorsement (of own party and candidates), irony (using satire, irony, and asking rhetorical questions), request for interaction (direct or indirect mentioning of other politicians, media, or citizens and calling them into question), and pointless babble. Considering, again, the parliamentary setting, the present study will restrict this classification to the following indicators that will be tested for: position-taking, call to action, opposition/violence, irony, and request for interaction (Graham et al. 2013; Jungherr 2015).

The empirical study will inquire in what far PRRP actors use this style of communication, including register, topics, and function, and to what extent it spills over to the mainstream party discourse.

4.2 Hypotheses

A number of scholars have been studying the degree to which PRRPs lead to a transformation of the rhetoric and policies maintained by mainstream parties (Akkerman 2012; 2015; Alonso and Fonseca 2012; Bale et al. 2010; de Lange 2012). Possible responses from mainstream parties have been identified to be “ignore”, “isolate”, “co-opt”, “collaborate”, or “impose legal restrictions” (Downs 2001). Insights from previous literature allow us to derive different expectations in terms of populist contagion to mainstream parties in migration debates.

The first hypothesis is that German and Austrian PRRPs and centre-right party positions converge (de Lange 2012). Centre-right parties tend to be willing to mobilise support by restricting immigration and multiculturalism as a response to the PRRP challenge, contradicting the original Christian or communitarian ethos of these parties and risking to alienate more moderate voters (Boswell and Hough 2008).

A second hypothesis is that, when responding to the PRRP take on immigration, social democrats would attempt to shift the political agenda to other issues and use a “hold and defuse” strategy (Bale et al. 2010), rather than take a tougher stance on immigration and integration.

A third hypothesis is that the emergence of PRRPs has changed the general communication style of politics in Austria and Germany. Populist political communication has determined mainstream parties to use stronger and more eloquent language in their communication through an increased use of social-media-first thinking, leading to less nuanced statements, designed to make good soundbites for media propagation. We may thus observe a normalisation of formerly tabooed racist, xenophobic and antisemitic rhetoric (Wodak 2015).

A fourth hypothesis is that despite slight changes in strategy, position on immigration, or communication style, the mainstream discourse on migration has not been fundamentally changed by the emergence of PRRP rhetoric (Akkerman 2012; 2015).

The empirical study will test these hypotheses by comparatively analysing German and Austrian PRRP and mainstream party parliament speeches from 2015 according to the following methods.

5. Research Methods

Empirically, this thesis analyses the refugee crisis as a case study to test the wider argument on the increasing capacity of PRRPs to influence mainstream political discourse. It does so by comparing the development of German and Austrian and PRRP and mainstream parties' communication about migration, refugees, and the freedom of movement in parallel and over time.

In order to generalise about contagion trends, it would be optimal to analyse the content of all European populist parties and the respective mainstream responses. However, due to the time and resource limitations of this master thesis, I have chosen to do a comparison of Austria and Germany. These countries have been chosen for comparison due to the similarities that mark their political systems. Both have similar political systems (federal republics) with similar electoral thresholds (5% in Germany and 4% in Austria). Both feature large social democratic parties with an ideological and historical commitment to the fair treatment of immigrants and ethnic minorities (SPD and SPÖ). Both feature prominent centre-right parties (CDU/CSU and ÖVP). Both countries' political systems harbour parties (AfD and FPÖ) that are traditionally considered to be populist radical right parties, despite them having emerged at different times, with the Austrian party being considerably older, and both have been taking a tough stance on immigration.

What differentiates the two case studies is that, in 2015, the German PRRP was not yet in parliament. Instead of parliament speeches, press conference and party congress appearances of the party leaders will be analysed. Therefore, the development of mainstream party discourse will only be interpreted as causally related to PRRP discourse when explicit references to it are made.

Methodologically, the empirical study will consist of a manual content analysis of the political communication of populist and mainstream parties in Austria and Germany before, during, and after the 2015 apogee of the refugee crisis.

A representative sample of speeches from each party (populist and mainstream) will be selected, analysed using qualitative content analysis, and compared with one another over time. The primary sources analysed will be the following: „Sitzung

des Nationalrates am 04. Mai 2015“, „Sitzung des Nationalrates am 17. Juni 2015“, „Sitzung des Nationalrates am 24. September 2015“, „Sitzung des Nationalrates am 11. November 2015“ (Austria); “Unterbringung von Flüchtlingen und Asylbewerbern“, 15.01.2015, „AfD-Neuausrichtung: Pressekonferenz mit Frauke Petry und Jörg Meuthen“ am 10.07.2015, „Maßnahmen zur Bewältigung der Flüchtlingskrise“, 01.10.2015, „Die AfD zur Asylpolitik - Komplette PK vom 9. Oktober 2015“, „Aktuelle Stunde zur Statusfrage syrischer Flüchtlinge und zum Familiennachzug“, 11.11.2015, „AfD-Parteitag in Hannover: Berichterstattung vom 28.11.2015“ (Germany). The Austrian sources represent protocols and official written summaries of the parliament sessions, while the German sources consist of official protocols and video recordings of the plenary sessions and video recordings of press conferences. The party statements will be analysed in the chronological order of their delivery in order to avoid unintended implications of false causal relations.

The sources have been chosen to be a representative yet manageable sample of the entire timeframe between the beginning of the debate surrounding refugees in Austria and Germany at the start of 2015 and the end of the year, after the height of the debate. The apogee of the refugee crisis is taken to be the 5th of September 2015, when refugees were allowed to travel from Hungary to Austria and Germany. This situation sparked the most heated debates in the two German-speaking countries. Gathering data across time is necessary to trace a process of change in discourse both in the case of PRRPs themselves and in their mainstream opponents. During 2015, as outlined in the background section, the refugee crisis was escalating, and it would be expected that party discourse also changed accordingly. The exact timeframe analysed will be from the 15th of January to the 12th of November in Germany and from the 4th of May to the 11th of November 2015 in Austria.

6. Analysis

The empirical analysis brings the theoretical framework and the data together. Firstly, party discourse in Austria and Germany will be analysed separately and across time, and then the findings will be compared in a separate section of the analysis.

6.1 Austria

In Austria, the evolution of party discourse over time was not spectacular. The parties mostly kept to their initial arguments and registers. The FPÖ's discourse became increasingly emotionalizing, being based on fear of rising crime through and through. The SPÖ kept to its pro-EU and normative humanitarian arguments but became increasingly critical of PRR rhetoric, moralizing of the FPÖ's position. The ÖVP also mostly kept to its procedural arguments mixed with a support for EU-wide policy but more restrictive attitude to migration, being in favour of quotas and sending back economic migrants. At times, however, it directly criticised the other parties with more emotional words and a normative stance towards PRR arguments. The debate became emotionalized on all sides in September, coinciding with the high-point of the refugee crisis on the ground.

The PRRP, FPÖ, initially took an anti-immigrant stance based on fears of rising crime, which they strongly linked with immigration. In May, however, they did not put forward any identity-based arguments. They concurred with the centre-left on the humanitarian nature of the crisis and need to help people on the ground in Syria, and with the centre-right on the quota policy. Nonetheless, they also advocated a policy of stopping the boats crossing the Mediterranean. They used emotionalizing rhetoric with expressions such as "mass asylum fraud" and references to human trafficking linked to the smuggling boats. In June they continued the emotional line, calling for the closing of borders to prevent a rise in crime. In the process they used false statistics to help their instrumental framing, stating that most immigrants are in fact economic migrants, not war refugees. In September, their rhetoric became even more agitating, warning against threats of "religious and gang wars" and "hordes of refugees", which were cared for with financial support while Austrians were left to poverty because of social spending

cuts. In November they merely blamed the EU for the crisis. Their register remained aggressive and provocative throughout, but identity-based arguments were not employed.

The centre-left SPÖ initially showed a focus on systemic causes for the mass migration wave, especially European exploitation of Africa, and on concerted EU action to deal with the crisis. They also openly criticised the PRRP in a moralising way, in order to then put forward the normative humanitarian argument in support of rescue missions in the Mediterranean. In June and September, they openly and heavily criticised the PRR instrumentalization of fear, but for the rest focused on the same points as before – EU and humanitarian duty. In November, they even called on the US to reassess their role in the crisis.

The centre-right ÖVP agreed on the need for EU-wide solidarity but showed a more restrictive attitude to asylum from the beginning. They expressed themselves in favour of a binding quota for refugee intake. While the centre-left's tone was mostly conversational and participatory, the centre-right also tended to be more neutral. They prioritised procedural arguments geared towards ensuring security, the rule of law, and integration understood as economic support for asylum-seekers. In June, they became slightly more provocative, calling the left “dreamers” and the right “agitators”, but returned to a neutral tone in September and November. The ÖVP had an ambivalent stance towards the PRR position, as it moralized its rhetoric to a certain extent, but reinforced their positions to a certain degree as well. In September, they supported a differentiation between war refugees and economic migrants, which echoed statements made by the radical right in June, and one might argue that this convergence contributed to the legitimization of PRR views.

While it is difficult to state that this is a sign of contagion, substantively there seemed to be a higher convergence between the centre-right and the PRR party in Austria, while the centre-left party was immune to this influence. However, at key moments in the debates, both the centre-left and the centre-right party adopted some of the rhetorical devices used by the PRRP, such as emotionalization, simplification, informality, and storytelling.

„Sitzung des Nationalrates am 04. Mai 2015“

The 04.05.2015 session of the Austrian National Council was based on the federal chancellor Werner Faymann's report on the special summit of the European Council on the recent refugee tragedies in the Mediterranean, where the EU heads of state and government decided, among other things, to increase the Triton border protection mission and to cooperate more closely with North African states in the fight against smugglers and illegal migration.

The SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, Greens, Team Stronach and NEOS agreed in the special session of the National Council on 04.05.2015 that Europe must not stand idly by and watch the refugee drama in the Mediterranean, where according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) more than 1,700 people died that year. The parliamentary groups had different approaches to counteracting the drownings off Europe's coasts, as they also showed in numerous motions for resolutions. The demands ranged from the fight against illegal and unsafe trafficking of refugees to the establishment of a European sea rescue programme and the immediate increase of funds for development cooperation. The majority of the National Council voted in favour of a motion by the SPÖ and ÖVP for sustainable EU measures to prevent new deaths in the Mediterranean, while the other initiatives – introduced by the Greens, Team Stronach and NEOS – remained in the minority during the vote.

For the social democrats it was above all important to ensure economic and political security in the African region in order to stop refugee movements from there. The Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) renewed its proposal to set up asylum centres in North Africa as a first precaution against illegal migration and smuggling. In addition, the ÖVP favoured a quota system for the fair distribution of refugees in the EU, which the FPÖ approved of, but only as part of a more restrictive immigration policy.

All in all, normative humanitarian arguments prevailed, which were espoused by both the centre-left and centre-right. The far right supported a more restrictive policy towards immigration, which was criticised by the SPÖ.

FPÖ

The PRRP used utilitarian and strategic arguments by drawing a connection between immigration and the increase of crime and spoke of immigration policy issues using the rhetorical technique of the negative affect, playing on the emotion of fear of rising crime. Heinz-Christian Strache, head of the FPÖ parliamentary group, stated in reference to the countless drowned boat refugees that “Terrible human tragedies” are currently taking place in the Mediterranean Sea. Like his party colleague Harald Kickl, he advised the EU to follow the example of Australia, which is preventing refugees from risking their lives in dangerous crossings with its “Stop the boats” initiative. In general, the EU’s goal must be to help persecuted people on the ground, initially together with the UN in local reception camps, and in the long term with a sustainable development plan for African regions, whereby Strache and Kickl also called upon the USA and rich Arab countries. With regard to the distribution of asylum seekers, Strache also urged the humanitarian responsibility of all EU Member States, saying that Austria had already exceeded its reception capacities.

Strache welcomed the efforts of the Austrian government members to distribute asylum seekers in the EU according to a quota system, with the reservation that this quota should not be open to an upper limit. Despite the consternation over the refugee tragedies in the Mediterranean, Kickl stressed that illegal immigration was just as intolerable as “mass asylum fraud”. There is agreement that this is a human tragedy that poses great challenges for Europe, said Mario Kunasek. However, the approaches to solving the problem were very different. A policy of open gates, as demanded by the Greens, would only encourage trafficking in human beings, he said. Kunasek criticised mistakes made by politicians in accommodating refugees. The people in the affected communities must be given a say, he said. The FPÖ also kept pointing out problems with crime in the vicinity of asylum and refugee homes. Nonetheless, no identity arguments were raised.

ÖVP

The centre-right mainly addressed procedural questions of efficiency, with a more restrictive view of immigration than that of the centre-left, but less so than the

extreme right. ÖVP MEP Werner Amon spoke in favour of a reorganisation of refugee policy in the European Union, arguing that Austria ranked third in the EU in terms of asylum applications in relation to its population. European states should do everything to rescue refugees in distress at sea, but this should not automatically allow immigration into the EU. A fair distribution of refugees among the EU member states and a reform of the Dublin Agreement, according to which the care of refugees would be the responsibility of the first host country, would be decisive. A 10-point programme of the EU interior and foreign ministers already offered a good basis for reform steps, which also included stronger action against traffickers and provided for reception capacities for refugees in their regions. "More Europe is needed, not less!" Amon appealed for a united refugee policy, which is currently blocked mainly by national political interests.

Elisabeth Pfurtscheller stressed that Interior Minister Johanna Mikl-Leitner was in favour of a binding quota system for the distribution of refugees. Austria was playing a pioneering role for a new resettlement programme. Ultimately, the flow of refugees can only be stopped if the livelihoods of the people in their home countries can be secured. In view of 50 million refugees worldwide, smuggling had become a lucrative industry, noted Franz-Joseph Huainigg. Europe's possibilities to counteract this are limited. One point was to increase development cooperation. This issue had to be solved jointly by the Federal Government, he stressed.

SPÖ

The centre-left raised normative arguments, using the humanitarian and economic and social injustice frame to talk about immigration. Andreas Schieder, SPÖ parliamentary party leader, said there were many reasons for the growing refugee movements worldwide. In addition to armed conflicts, environmental disasters, often in connection with climate change, were depriving many people of their livelihoods; the European Union must now show that it is more than just an economic community and that it has humanitarian solutions to offer, he concluded. The increase in funding for the EU border protection mission Triton to €9 million per month announced by the European Council is only a first measure to end the deaths in the Mediterranean, said Schieder, who considers a further increase in funding necessary.

Ultimately, the EU needs a comprehensive Africa strategy to solve economic and political problems in the countries of origin of African refugees, he said, and also strongly advocated an increase in Austrian development cooperation contributions by the Foreign Ministry in cooperation with the Finance Ministry. The “maldistribution of wealth” was often the reason for African citizens to flee, who had no economic prospects as a result, Josef Cap den Bogen continued. In his opinion, the West has the power to take action against the refugee catastrophes that are often triggered by dictatorial systems on the African continent through the theft of resources without any thought for the environment or human rights.

Christine Muttonen specifically criticised the FPÖ’s position on the refugee issue. Rescue at sea was an obligation that was beyond discussion, she said. However, the EU had to solve its tasks in a more solidary way and, if necessary, amend the Dublin Agreement. There were no short-term solutions to the refugee question, but long-term strategies for Africa and the Middle East had to be found. Petra Bayr spoke in favour of a coherent and sustainable policy towards Africa on many levels that goes beyond development cooperation. Unfair fishing agreements, land grabbing or agricultural subsidies are destroying African markets. Europe’s hunger for rare metals, which are needed for electronics, also contributes to exploitation and conflicts. The government programme contains many points on these issues, Bayr noted. She introduced a motion for a resolution calling on the government to support all EU measures to defuse the refugee problem.

„Sitzung des Nationalrates am 17. Juni 2015“, Starting Debate

Under the highly controversial title “400.000 Arbeitslose, Sozialsystem nicht finanzierbar – Schutz für Verfolgte, aber kein Platz für Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge” (“400,000 unemployed, social system not financially viable - protection for persecuted persons, but no place for economic refugees”), the National Council held a topical debate at the beginning of its session at the suggestion of Team Stronach. In an emotional debate, the problems caused by the strongly increasing flow of refugees from war and crisis areas in the Middle East and Africa in Austria and in Europe were discussed. There were discussions about the distinction between asylum seekers and economic refugees, about measures against smuggling and illegal immigration, about the accommodation of people, their

access to the labour market and about the repatriation of people who have no right to asylum in Austria.

SPÖ

In this debate, the centre-left framed the issue as a challenge to social cohesion that Austrian and European society must respond to with solidarity, while accounting for the structural transformations that cause migration. In a conversational, participatory register, they focused on technical reasoning and procedural arguments, proposing practical solutions to the problem. Otto Pendl demanded a serious discussion about the refugee problem and rejected any mixing of political matters that have nothing to do with each other as unserious. Politics must guarantee security for the people. “But we are currently suffering from a misguided foreign and economic policy”, said Pendl and demanded that stability be ensured in the countries from which the refugees come. In addition, he called on Europe to act against mafia-like smuggling structures. National states were overburdened with this, Pendl said, and demanded an agreement at EU level. Pendl wants to distinguish between asylum seekers and economic refugees and called for solidarity-based help from the state as a whole, especially from Traiskirchen’s point of view. “We need a solution in the EU and in the federal states so that those who need help get help and everyone else stays at home,” Pendl concluded.

ÖVP

The centre-right agreed with the centre-left in terms of the call for European solidarity but displayed a more restrictive attitude to immigration by supporting the idea of a quota system, calling for the closing of the labour market to asylum seekers, and proposing to differentiate between war and economic refugees at the border and return economic refugees from safe countries. Their register of speech was rather neutral. August Wöginger recalled Austria’s long tradition of accepting war refugees. In analysing the current situation, he pointed out that the number of asylum applications had already reached 20,000 in May 2015. 39,000 people are in basic care, 15,000 places had to be newly created in the last 12 months, including – as an emergency measure – in tent cities. Austria will continue to take

in war refugees, said Wöginger. However, it was important to distinguish between war refugees and economic refugees and to return economic refugees from safe countries.

In concrete terms, Wöginger urged a quota solution for the accommodation of refugees in Europe and for contact points for refugees from North Africa. We need more solidarity in the EU and more solidarity in Austria, whereby he critically noted that it was incomprehensible not to open empty barracks for refugees. The labour market would not be opened any further for asylum seekers, he affirmed, and one should refrain from stirring up fears at this point, Wöginger concluded. This may be seen as an attempt to pre-empt PRRP arguments about stolen jobs.

FPÖ

The PRRP continued to emotionalise the debate by inducing fear through statistically unfounded claims that the intake of refugees raises criminality rates, and that most so-called refugees are in fact economic migrants that Germany does not have a moral and humanitarian responsibility to help and should thus deport. Dagmar Belakowitsch-Jenewein pointed out that 70% of the asylum seekers were economic refugees and only 30% actually had reasons for staying in Austria that were worthy of recognition. Due to the lack of usable statistics, the number of economic refugees living underground could only be estimated. The FPÖ's longstanding demand for border controls is now being confirmed by Bavaria, which recently closed its border with Austria to stop criminals and refugees from entering the country, the speaker said. "We should close the borders," is Belakowitsch-Jenewein's appeal, who also strongly advocated the deportation of economic migrants. In view of the practical problems with deportations, the MP suggested using the C-130 Hercules airlifter of the Austrian Armed Forces.

„Sitzung des Nationalrates am 17. Juni 2015“, Asylum Policy Debate

FPÖ

Fear was the strategy of the PRRP in this debate as well, using the storytelling rhetorical technique in order to paint the image of Austria as a boat that will go

under. They also accused the mainstream parties of not defending the interest of the Austrian people. Their tone was an aggressive, provocative one. The Freedom Party once again spoke out in favour of reintroducing controls at the domestic borders. “The boat is full in Austria”, said Josef A. Riemer, who also considered EU refugee quotas to make little sense. With “this mass migration”, with “1.2 billion Africans”, as Riemer said, there is a need for clear rules of conduct and guidelines in Austria. If the EU fails, the nation states should be able to intervene, is the view of the FPÖ MP. “Because we will go under”, was also one of the verbalised images of Philipp Schrangl in the refugee debate, who also pointed out that the EU sometimes rejects common asylum quotas. Austria could not stand by and continue to hope for common EU quotas while all other countries close their external borders.

Another liberal point of view, as he said, was made by Walter Rosenkranz. Asylum was a human right, but economic flight was not, said the freedom activist. Tent cities for asylum seekers were certainly not ideal, but if people barely escaped with their lives, they were at least reasonable for a time. If Austrian pupils were taught in containers, there would also be no great commotion, Rosenkranz added. Gernot Darmann criticised the lack of consideration of the Austrian population by the other parliamentary groups. “Nobody is talking about the concerns of the Austrians here,” he said. Dagmar Belakowitsch-Jenewein also partly criticised the positions of the other parties, saying that in her opinion they only wanted to “outdo each other with sympathy”. She also accused the Minister of the Interior of opening “one asylum camp after another” while closing police stations.

SPÖ

The centre-left once again peddled on procedural arguments, calling for practical solutions. They abandoned their participatory register for a more provocative one towards the PRRP, denouncing their agitation attempts and their use of fear as a political mobilisation technique. The SPÖ demanded a humanitarian common EU asylum policy, as in its motion with its coalition partner, but criticised polemical statements and “agitation” on the part of the FPÖ. The Social Democrats were concerned with real solutions, not with polemics, said Franz Kirchgatterer, who also called for a more sensitive choice of words. Tent cities were not a solution; what

was needed was the ability to engage in dialogue. Harry Buchmayr was of the opinion that the “problem in this dimension” cannot be solved nationally, especially since the flow of refugees will not stop for a long time. In Austria, however, instead of responsible politics, resentment and fear of foreigners are currently being played with, Buchmayr said in the direction of the FPÖ. His colleague, Kai Jan Krainer, also criticised the statements of the Freedom Party.

From a procedural standpoint, they further supported solidarity between the EU, federal, and local levels in order to counter the asylum issue. In view of yesterday’s EU Council of Interior Ministers, we are still far from a common European solution, but Austria’s signal for common EU asylum quotas is all the more important, said Nurten Yilmaz. She was particularly pleased that Chancellor Werner Faymann is now making the asylum issue a “top priority”. She hopes that the planned asylum summits with NGOs will lead to quick decisions. Ulrike Königsberger-Ludwig spoke of an overall political responsibility between the federal government, the provinces and the municipalities across party lines.

Furthermore, they continued with normative arguments about human rights and reforms. It was important to stand up against untruths and agitation in the social networks. “Asylum is a human right and not an act of mercy,” said Andrea Gessl-Ranftl, adding that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries. Therefore, the goal of asylum policy must also be to realise a uniform and humanitarian asylum and refugee policy within the EU.

She had been shocked that Mikl-Leitner had spoken publicly about stopping new asylum applications and family reunifications, said Petra Bayr. If she has her way, it is reprehensible to want to put pressure on other EU countries at the expense of refugees. Moreover, it is regrettable that the federal government, the Länder and the municipalities have so far shifted the responsibility to each other without anyone assuming any.

ÖVP

The centre-right assumed a more aggressive register in criticising the centre-left and the extreme right. Apart from their criticism of other parties, they focused on

procedural arguments. The actions of the Minister of the Interior in matters of asylum policy were unreservedly defended by the ÖVP MPs. Reinhold Lopatka accused the Greens of only wanting to make political change with the motion of no confidence. In Austria, there were clear responsibilities for asylum issues, but the federal provinces had not been able to fulfil their tasks according to the 15a agreement in the past months. Not even those in which Green provincial councillors were entrusted with this issue, said Lopatka and spoke out in favour of a joint solution. Elisabeth Pfurtscheller also spoke of a national responsibility, which the Greens are currently not fulfilling in the federal provinces. She said that the federal government, the provinces and the municipalities needed to join forces and that Mikl-Leitner was dependent on their mutual accommodation. In addition, people must be made aware that this is not a crisis, but a challenge that must be solved through national solidarity.

Friedrich Ofenauer and Franz-Joseph Huainigg also spoke in favour of this. “We have to find solutions between announcements by left-wing dreamers and right-wing agitators,” said Ofenauer. Like his parliamentary group colleagues Leonhard Eßl and Werner Amon, he also pointed out that the search was not easier in federal provinces where Green provincial councillors are responsible for accommodation. Eßl also supported the proposal to house refugees in empty barracks, but not in occupied ones.

„Sitzung des Nationalrates am 24. September 2015“, Special Session and Debate

The question “How should Austria react to the current wave of refugees?” was addressed by the National Council in a special session convened at the request of the FPÖ. The MPs unanimously adopted a motion for a resolution by the two coalition parties and the Greens calling on the Federal Government to immediately provide support to the UN World Food Programme to feed the refugees in the region around Syria and to lobby internationally for sufficient support for Syria refugees in the region. Whoever helps in the region helps with the same means a multiple number of victims and saves many of them from a dangerous flight,” it says. However, the motion of censure brought against the

federal government by the FPÖ in the course of the debate was rejected by a majority.

FPÖ

The PRRP once again assumed a provocative register, framed migration as a threat to the existence of the country, to the economic situation of the poor in Austria, and to the safety of the people by citing “gang wars” (negative affect rhetoric). They also leaned more towards identity arguments about religion, mentioning the threat of “religious wars”. “Austria in a state of emergency – secure borders instead of asylum chaos, Chancellor!” was the title of an urgent question addressed to Werner Faymann by Heinz Christian Strache, who accused the federal government of “offensive inaction”. The omission of controls and compensatory measures had led to the collapse of public order in the border region and to the fact that every third-country national can now enter Austria illegally, was the core accusation of the Freedom Party, who spoke of a migration of peoples threatening the existence of the country and demanded border security and the expansion of “Fortress Europe”.

The FPÖ motion of censure against the entire federal government was a “political necessity”, said Herbert Kickl, member of parliament, explaining his group’s initiative. The government completely disregards the interests of the population: it automatically grants foreigners the right of domicile and provides funds for the care of refugees, while numerous Austrians are at risk of poverty due to benefit cuts and a lack of valorisation. Kickl also criticised the media’s portrayal of the refugee situation. “There is a cover-up here that bends the beam,” said the Freedom Party chief, not least because of the government’s influence in reporting. The public opinion does not correspond to the published opinion, Elmar Podgorschek confirmed Kickl’s reproach, in order to subsequently address the geopolitical dimension of the Syria conflict. The resulting refugee problem in Europe could only be solved by ending the conflict between Russia and the USA over Syria, Podgorschek said.

Günther Kumpitsch doubted that the right of intervention would only be used as an “ultima ratio” as announced. Rather, it would be a carte blanche to curtail the rights

of the Länder and municipalities. Despite many reservations, the constitution was being massively interfered with. In a referendum, this constitutional law would not have passed, Kumpitsch was convinced, who also opposed whitewashing the migration crisis.

As the last speaker of his parliamentary group, Walter Rosenkranz rejected the criticism brought to the Freedom Party's positions. The Freedom Party was in favour of asylum for all those who really need help, he stated. However, the problems arising from the current migration movement should not be ignored. The outbreak of inter-religious conflicts and gang wars posed a real danger to Austria, Rosenkranz warned.

The non-attached MPs Rupert Doppler and Gerhard Schmid agreed with the FPÖ line in their assessment of the refugee crisis. Doppler said that mass immigration was upsetting the social and cultural fabric of Austria. The right of intervention was a disenfranchisement of the provinces and municipalities. The Hungarian Prime Minister Orban is criticised, although he only protects the EU's external border, said Doppler. Schmid saw a failure on the part of the federal government and the EU in dealing with the flow of refugees. He criticised that the border operation was pushing the Federal Army to the limits of its capacity.

The non-attached MEP Jessi Lintl cited reports of "marauding hordes of refugees" in southern Italy. Austria was not far from such conditions, she feared. A sovereign state must be able to protect its borders, otherwise it loses its legitimacy.

SPÖ

The centre-left raised normative arguments, framing helping refugees as a humanitarian obligation, while criticising the political instrumentalization of the crisis by the PRRP. The challenges posed by the refugee movements can only be met at the European level, "pragmatically, humanely and quickly", emphasised Andreas Schieder, chairman of the SPÖ parliamentary group. The results of yesterday's special EU summit provided a useful basis for action, both with regard to a fair distribution of refugees in the EU member states and the acceleration of asylum procedures by means of distribution centres at the external borders, as well

as for aid in the crisis regions and in the countries on the refugee routes. Asylum is a human right that can only be verified by procedures based on the rule of law, warned SPÖ mandatory Angela Lueger. “This is the basis of our democracy”. She called it “shabby” to use the refugee issue for the election campaign in the manner of the FPÖ, as it is a humanitarian obligation to help those seeking protection.

Walter Schopf thanked the many volunteers and aid organisations who had worked hard to help refugees in recent weeks. Schopf said that the Federal Government had worked for the right decisions at the European level. It was important that everyone pull together and not try to make political capital out of the refugee crisis.

Otto Pendl missed a serious discussion of the refugee crisis. The issue had to be tackled objectively and jointly at European level and solved in a humane way. New fences or even a firing order to ward off refugees are certainly not the right way, the MEP stressed.

ÖVP

The centre-right party continued their more restrictive attitude to immigration, stressing the differentiation between war and economic refugees. They openly criticised the Freedom Party for their use of fear for political leverage. They also cited humanitarian reasons to justify their border policy. The number of people seeking protection in Austria was therefore by no means dramatically high. However, he conceded, the European Union must ensure in a constitutional manner that only those who actually come from war zones or are politically persecuted are granted asylum status. The chairman of the ÖVP vehemently rejected the FPÖ’s accusation against the federal government: while the Freedom Party was constantly stirring up fear, the government was continuously working on solutions. As an example, he mentioned the right of the federal government to intervene in the housing of refugees, which was decided the day before, and in the same breath assured that thanks to the commitment of the provinces and municipalities, it would probably never have to be applied. Werner Amon referred specifically to the Freedom Party’s accusation that the government was letting foreigners into the country without controls. He said that the federal government was acting completely legally, because the Schengen border code allowed third-

country nationals to enter the country without identity papers for humanitarian reasons.

However, they also talked about procedural issues of capacity at the EU level and supported border controls at the EU borders. Reinhold Mitterlehner stated that the European Union must be clear about its capacity to receive refugees, the ÖVP mandatar pointed out, not least in order to ensure that the refugees are adequately cared for. There are currently 60 million refugees worldwide, Reinhold Lopatka clarified. Dorothea Schittenhelm clearly declared her support for all those in need of protection from war and terror in the spirit of human rights. At the same time, she stated that the right middle course must be found in dealing with the crisis. Temporary asylum and the establishment of distribution centres for refugees are the right solutions. The EU's external borders had to be secured, only in this way could there be a Union without internal borders, said the MEP. Nikolaus Prinz thanked the Minister of the Interior and her staff as well as those responsible in the municipalities who had done a lot to accommodate refugees in recent weeks. The demanded solidarity must be practised worldwide, he said. The USA and the rich Gulf states must also make their contribution. This year's influx of refugees could be handled by the EU in its current dimension, if the right measures were taken. Johann Rädler brought attention to the history of the Second Republic and concluded that one should be very careful with terms like "state of emergency". In 1945, there had been 1.8 million refugees in Austria, and there had been repeated waves of refugees. The eight points of the ÖVP's action plan provided the answers that the population was looking for, he claimed.

„Flüchtlinge: Nationale, europäische und weltweite Herausforderungen“ am 11.11.2015

FPÖ

The PRRP representative focused on Eurosceptic claims in this debate, not providing any comments on the effect of the migration crisis in Austria itself. Harald Vilimsky claimed that the EU is the cause of the refugee, asylum, and migration management problem, contrary to the other MPs support for more European solidarity and concerted action.

SPÖ

The centre-left party used this platform to call for a concerted action along the political spectrum as well as internationally in the EU. Moreover, they portrayed the migration problem as one of integration. They finally called for increased international accountability for the situation in Syria. Eugen Freund (like Othmar Karas from ÖVP as well) criticised the Council of the EU for delaying and failing to achieve solidarity on the refugee issue. He also appealed that Europe will not and must not fail because of this problem and said that the current problem would certainly not be solved by the left alone, but certainly not with right-wing slogans. He was convinced that integration was not an insurmountable obstacle and agreed with the Chancellor that Europe had to take a robust, diplomatic stance at the international level in order to get to the root of the problem. Above all, the USA must be more aware of its responsibility for Syria, he claimed.

ÖVP

The centre-right party focused in this debate on security, the rule of law, and integration understood as economic support for asylum-seekers. The problems do not begin at the external border, but where the people live, said Othmar Karas. He saw a “shameful game of party tactics” and warned against playing people off against each other, suggesting the tactics of the Freedom Party. It was a matter of law, justice, security and mercy, Karas said, emphasising that Europe could and must achieve this. What was required was to assume responsibility jointly and unitedly. Mlinar echoed the sentiment, saying that instead of finding sham solutions, one should invest one’s energy in joint solutions and take measures to offer refugees a dignified life.

6.2 Germany

In the case of Germany, parliamentary discourse evolved quite differently. Because the PRRP was not yet in parliament, the government-opposition constellation was very left-leaning. The Linke and the Greens represented the main opposition, making a very strong left, while the SPD and especially the CDU mainly defended their more moderate and thus more restrictive asylum policies. Both the centre-left

and the centre-right mainstream parties expressed their concern at the increase in extremism directed against refugees and recalled that Germany also received help when it needed it in the past. Apart from these explicit references to extremism, the mainstream German parties did not bring PRR arguments more thoroughly into discussion. The stance was thus rather moralising.

The centre-left SPD mostly agreed with the centre-right on policy but brought normative humanitarian arguments to the fore more often. They converged with the centre-right in making a difference between war refugees and economic migrants in order to somewhat limit immigrant numbers and create capacity for helping actual war victims, but, unlike the CDU/CSU, positioned themselves in favour of allowing family reunions. They used rhetorical techniques such as intimisation and personalisation to paint the picture of the suffering of individuals and frame the crisis as a humanitarian and human one.

The centre-right CDU/CSU initially had a fairly neutral discourse based on procedural arguments, but over time increasingly started invoking Germany's limited intake capacities. They used this argument to propose more restrictive policies such as sending back migrants from safe countries and restricting family reunions, framing it as a harsh measure taken in order to be able to help those who are really in need.

The PRR party, AfD, started out in July 2015 on a more balanced note, voicing lighter anti-Muslim arguments and refraining from using overly exaggerated and emotionalised rhetoric. In fact, their attempt was to seem rather reasonable and well-thought through, despite the tendency to simplify the discussion down to simple identity constructs. In time, however, their rhetoric became increasingly provocative and based on negative affect techniques, eliciting emotions of fear towards immigrants by using false statistical data. In October, they claimed that opening the borders to "tens of millions of refugees" is "state-warranted anarchy" and called for the closing of borders and reforming family reunion laws, which would increase the number of asylum seekers five times. At the end of November, Petry criticised the governing coalition for naivety, a lack of ideas, and a state of coma, while spreading fears of fundamental religious conflicts being "imported" into Germany by the sleeping elite.

„Unterbringung von Flüchtlingen und Asylbewerbern“, 15.01.2015

CDU

The centre-right party commented in response to the call by the Linke that local communities do not receive enough funds from the federal level in order to house refugees. Marian Wendt made a utilitarian argument that favoured a more restrictive policy towards immigration. He stressed in a direct response that the governing coalition has already started the community relief program, with €500 million invested in 2015. He stressed the question how one can house immigrants humanely, and their solutions are changing the building law and creating capacity by sending back economic migrants illegally residing in Germany. Thus, speaking for CDU/CSU in general, he added that they believe that “those in need must be helped” (from Iraq and Syria), while the others who are not legally residing in the region must be sent back, specifically referring to Serb immigrants, 25% of which should be sent back from North-Saxony, he claimed. He also said that CDU/CSU do not think stopping deportations over the winter is a good solution, as capacity was needed as soon as possible.

In the ordinary debate, Axel Fischer made strictly procedural statements about the amounts allocated by the governing coalition from the federal level to support local communities.

SPD

Swen Schulz agreed with the call of the Linke to help asylum seekers and relieve the local communities of the costs of doing that but stressed that the governing coalition is already doing that, providing investment numbers from previous years. To the question of refugees, he stressed that the challenge that Germany is facing is not as difficult as that faced by the immediate neighbours of Syria, but that nonetheless the increase of asylum seekers is putting stress on some communities. This conversational/participatory and appeasing rhetoric seems to be geared towards debunking the fear-inducing provocative rhetoric of the extreme right.

After listing more actions already undertaken by the coalition to help the communities, he conceded that this does not solve all problems. He stressed that vital services important for the community must not be lacking because of the need to accommodate refugees. These two must work together, he claimed. It is “a law of humanity, of Christian charity, and of the constitution to help those in need”, he stated.

He further acknowledged the need for a concerted EU asylum policy and the need to ensure that people do not even have to flee their country of origin in the first place. This is a characteristic call of the centre-left to recognize the systemic roots of the problem.

In a very concealed manner, he added that the coalition is allocating more capacity for this and, “partly with the help of the opposition in the *Bundesrat*, have redefined safe countries of origin”. This suggests a tacit convergence with the centre-right on the idea that sending back immigrants from safe countries is one of the solutions to relieving communities, as stressed by Marian Wendt.

He criticized all rhetoric following the motto “the boat is full” as “nonsensical and misanthropic”. He conceded that extending temporary refugee camps for the longer term is a burden for the neighbourhood but called for realistic expectations about what will happen in the future. The immigrants will not leave Germany, they will stay, and this is a good thing, he said. They are welcome and Germany needs immigration. He gave the example of the city Goslar, whose mayor said that the city is becoming unattractive for the economy because the region is losing residents and refugees thus represent an enrichment. He stated that immigrants must also be helped, starting with language courses.

He stressed that much has been done with regard to the facilitated access to the labour market, exception from the residence laws, the improvement of support measures and the quicker access to the BAföG, but more has to be done in the areas of education and healthcare. Nonetheless, Germany must present itself as “an open country which does not perceive people from other countries as a burden but recognises and welcomes them”, he declared.

CSU

Alois Karl supported the view that, in a situation of “explosive” increase of asylum seekers, sending back those with no asylum right in Germany is a good way of acting humanely for those that are really in need. He commended the work of charity organisations, churches, and monasteries for accommodating refugees.

SPD

Bernhard Daldrup commended the efforts of the German citizens for helping refugees too, but also warned that radical right views are still fructuous, referencing the PEGIDA movement. He thus stressed the importance of education against right-wing radicalism and for democracy.

“AfD-Neuausrichtung: Pressekonferenz mit Frauke Petry und Jörg Meuthen am 10.07.2015”

In this PRRP speech, Frauke Petry, leader of the AfD, assumed a purportedly level-headed position on the difficulties of integrating Muslims, boasting knowledge of the differences between religious and political Islam. This could not, however, conceal the identity-based arguments that make up the AfD rationale. Petry claimed that the understanding of the state espoused by political Islam is incompatible with the German constitution. This, she added, does not have anything to do with the fact that many integrated Muslims in Germany respect the constitution. What does not function, however, is that Sharia and constitution coexist in Germany simultaneously as basic rules of community life, she stated.

Her anti-Muslim position was concealed here under the veil of good will towards Muslims already integrated in Germany. She said that the AfD are happy about every integrated Muslim who is respecting the constitution but are also happy about each person who understands that “political Islam has a problem with democracy” (a simplifying expression designed to appeal to the simple folk). This can only be solved if Muslims in Germany participate in the discussion.

She stressed that the AfD has never been an extremist party and would not be one in the future either. When asked about the AfD’s relation to the PEGIDA movement

in general, she stressed that the AfD is committed to listening to the “people on the street”, and they keep doing that, but it was never an extended arm of the PEGIDA organisation.

When asked to comment on a recent demonstration of the PEGIDA movement, she answered that the demonstration should have taken place in a different location in her view (in front of the Town Hall or Ministry of Interior instead of the refugee centre) but did not criticize the demonstration itself. Instead, she maintained her support for people’s right to express themselves politically if they consider that the politicians do not fulfil their task of applying the asylum policy correctly.

Petry’s rhetoric in this speech remained conversational and participatory at all times, giving the impression of a moderate speech. However, what she tried to portray as a reasonable differentiation between good (integrated) Muslims and bad Muslims is a form of simplification and instrumental actualization designed to create fear of the potential threat that new Muslim immigrants could represent (compared to the already integrated Muslims who respect the constitution). The open discussion of compatibility and incompatibility between Islam and democracy acts as taboo breaking intended to distinguish the AfD discourse from that of the elite.

„Maßnahmen zur Bewältigung der Flüchtlingskrise“, 01.10.2015

SPD

Christine Lambrecht started her speech in defence of the new asylum law proposal with a personalizing rhetoric, telling the story of one 17-year-old boy and extrapolating it to the situation of the refugees in order to portray the gravity of the humanitarian crisis (normative argumentation):

Abstrakt wissen wir, was diese Menschen auf sich nehmen. Wenn man dann aber einem 17-jährigen jungen Mann gegenübersteht, der erzählt, wie er auf seiner Flucht aus Eritrea vor Gewalt und Verfolgung tagelang ohne Wasser durch die Wüste geirrt ist, wie er von betrunkenen Schleppern

verprügelt wurde und noch vieles andere mehr erlebt hat, dann wird deutlich, welche Dimension dieses Leid wirklich hat.

She then moved to procedural arguments and advocated the need for language and integration classes for those with prospects of staying long-term. She then reinforced the idea that economic migrants from safe countries must be returned. She presented this as “striking a balance” between helping people in need and making it clear to those without the right to stay that they cannot do so.

After thanking a number of people, she made the claim that the law is designed to both respond to the humanitarian obligation to help people in need and on the run and to create the conditions for the concrete application of the law on the ground.

CDU/CSU

Thomas Strobl portrayed the new asylum law proposal as a success – the biggest change to the asylum law since the 1990s brought in a very short period of time. Concurring with his SPD colleague, he reinforced the importance of differentiating between those who do and do not need help – especially directed towards Western Balkan countries, which the new law placed on the safe list:

Damit senden wir ein eindeutiges Signal: Wer keinen Anspruch auf Asyl hat und dennoch in Deutschland einen Asylantrag stellt, der muss in seine Heimat zurückgehen, und zwar rasch.

He added in a harsh tone that the same would happen to those who become violent in the initial reception facilities:

Diese Konsequenz muss im Übrigen auch für Flüchtlinge gelten, die sich in den Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen – ich werde immer häufiger darauf angesprochen – gewalttätig verhalten. Mir ist nicht begreiflich, wie Menschen, die vor Verfolgung aus Religionsgründen nach Deutschland fliehen, hier aus denselben Gründen mit Gewalt aufeinander losgehen können.

He then focused on the rule of law and used an allusion to political Islam to suggest the idea that immigrants must accept the constitution:

Diese Gesetze macht bei uns in Deutschland nicht der Prophet, die macht bei uns in Deutschland das Parlament, meine Damen und Herren.

While this is a staple centre-right argument, the ironic register Strobl used makes it seem more radical than how it had been expressed before. He argued that both compassion and hard measures must be accepted by the entire house, and that the hard measures are designed so that Germany can continue helping those in need further.

Weil wir den Schutzbedürftigen heute und auch in Zukunft helfen wollen, werden wir Tausende, vielleicht Hunderttausende abweisen und zurückschicken müssen, die nicht schutzbedürftig sind – nicht aus Hartherzigkeit, sondern aus der Einsicht in die Grenzen unserer Möglichkeiten. Nur wenn es bei uns funktioniert, dann können wir auch in Zukunft Schutzbedürftigen helfen.

He closed with an argument along the line of “if not us, then who can overcome this challenge?”, with a call for European solidarity, and with a humorous way of implying that passing this law and applying the hard measures is what they as politicians were elected for:

Wir sollten das tun, wofür wir gewählt worden sind: die Ärmel hochkrempeln und unsere Arbeit machen.

Stephan Mayer warned that every day 5 to 10 thousand refugees were coming to Germany, which is an administrative challenge that cannot be sustained over the long term. He then added that tens of thousands of refugees had entered Germany in September without being checked, which represented a security risk. He then appealed to the rule of law and stressed the importance of checking every asylum seeker in the interest of the local German population. This call for harsher checks was justified in terms of building a strong Germany that can keep helping refugees

and mitigating the causes of the crisis in the countries of origin. He voiced the restrictive aspect of the new asylum law very strongly:

Das Gesetz dient insgesamt drei primären Zielen. Es geht darum, die Asylverfahren zu beschleunigen, die Unterbringung zu erleichtern und gleichzeitig die Abschiebung abgelehnter Asylbewerber zu forcieren.

SPD

Rüdiger Veit called in very strong words for humanity:

Ich möchte auch nicht in einem Land leben, in dem kein Platz mehr für Mitgefühl gegenüber geschundenen, verfolgten und vom Tode bedrohten Menschen ist, egal woher sie kommen. Und ich möchte auch nicht in einem Land leben, in dem kein Platz mehr ist für Hilfsbereitschaft – Hilfsbereitschaft, egal ob letztendlich christlich motiviert, aus sozialistischer Ideologie heraus, einfach humanistisch motiviert oder weil man schlicht und ergreifend, so mein Empfinden, ein anständiger Mensch ist.

And called for helping the refugees in the name of upholding humanistic European values:

Europa ist keine Schönwetterveranstaltung, ist kein Verrechnungskonto, von dem man ab und zu Geld abzweigen kann, wenn es einem gerade gefällt, sondern wir haben auch gemeinsame Pflichten; wir haben gemeinsame Werte. Dazu müssen wir stehen.

CDU/CSU

Eckhardt Rehberg mainly brought procedural arguments about the need to improve the situation on the ground and facts in support of the governing coalition's actions to help the localities cope with the crisis.

Klaus-Dieter Gröhler cited statistics relating to the percentage of people who would actively undertake something against refugees, were these to be accommodated in their neighbourhood, in the various regions. He expressed worry relating to a

part of Berlin where the percentage was 15%. He justified Germany's duty of solidarity by saying that the Germans also once received solidarity.

SPD

Kerstin Griesse commended the work of volunteers to help refugees but called for functioning state structures to help integration, especially through language and work as key pillars of integration.

Johannes Kahrs expressed the need to care for the voters as much as for the immigrants in order not to create social tensions in the process of helping those in need:

Wenn man keinen gegen einen anderen ausspielen will, heißt das, dass wir, obwohl wir diese große Flüchtlingskrise gemeinsam meistern werden und wir viel Geld investieren, nicht vergessen dürfen, wofür wir auch gewählt worden sind, zum Beispiel zur Bewältigung von Fragen des Teilhabegesetzes, von Fragen der Ordnung auf dem Arbeitsmarkt; und auch andere Punkte müssen dringend angegangen werden.

This statement reads like the kind designed to pre-empt the type of populist criticism towards the elite that they forget about the local population and do not act in its interest.

“Die AfD zur Asylpolitik - Komplette PK vom 9. Oktober 2015”

Alarmist, provocative, and fear-inducing rhetoric was the staple of this press conference. Frauke Petry stated about the expected “1,5 million asylum applicants and poverty migrants that are generally simply referred to as refugees” that they believe that “not only short and medium, but also long-term measures must be taken in order to end the influx”. The criticism from abroad is massive because Germany “established this incentive system” which constitutes an “open invitation to millions, and not only 5 or 10 million, but millions in the double digits, of people waiting for the opportunity to leave their countries”. That is why the AfD calls for the reform of the asylum laws, including the establishment of a quota. Cities and communities must be able to plan how much intake capacity they have, and the

question of intake capacity in Germany this year (2015) is easy to answer, as it has already been reached and surpassed. Many asylum seekers are living in tent cities that are not sustainable over the winter. In the meantime, sports halls and schools are being used for this purpose. Therefore, one must finally discuss openly about the fact that we need to put a stop to the intake in Germany. This has already been requested from Germany. She also mentioned as interesting that on that day, a cabinet meeting of the Seehofer cabinet would be taking place, and they ask Mr. Seehofer to “show his colours instead of making cocky claims but then still follow Merkel’s dictate”.

Regarding the reform of asylum laws, Petry stated that the problem of family reunions must be brought into the discussion. She claimed that “there is no other country, even those with a regulated asylum policy, where unregulated family reunion is possible”. The number of asylum seekers could thus easily quintuple, which means that the expected 1,5 million asylum seekers will increase accordingly. It is “not understandable why an intake of victims of persecution should be the same when clearly families, meaning women and children, the most vulnerable, are left at home. This shows even clearer that it is no longer the case of welcoming the politically persecuted, but the blatant authorization of uncontrolled immigration”. She stated that they believed that this “no longer has anything to do with the rule of law, but that a situation in which asylum laws cannot be applied properly any more is one of state-warranted anarchy, which we do not accept”. It is normal to have border controls, but there are not enough people to fill the border control posts, she added.

Alexander Gauland accused Mrs. Merkel of breaking the law (both in the case of asylum and the Eurozone question) under the guise of humanitarian action and the rule of law. He stated that the AfD filed a complaint against Mrs. Merkel for breaking asylum law under paragraph 96, paragraph 1, number 1b. She is “smuggling foreigners into Germany and we request a prosecution”, he stated, with reference to the decision made on the 3rd of September 2015 together with the Austrian chancellor to allow the “tens of thousands of refugees stranded in Budapest” to cross the border.

„Aktuelle Stunde zur Statusfrage syrischer Flüchtlinge und zum Familiennachzug“, 11.11.2015

SPD

Dr. Lars Castellucci argued that it is normal to feel uncertain when so many immigrants are coming in, but said that the two ingredients of success in overcoming this challenge are prudence and consistency. He quoted Helmut Schmidt, who had said that “Character is proven in a situation of crisis” and openly warned against giving agitators power: “Wir wollen und wir müssen die Brandstifter aus den Parlamenten heraushalten”.

CDU/CSU

Thomas Strobl spoke against unrestricted family reunions, and for assigning the refugees “beneficiaries of subsidiary protection” status. He nuanced this restrictive stance to asylum and protection rights by claiming that it is not true that this means offering refugees less support, as “subsidiary protection” implies the same benefits, but it simply means that the protection is prolonged as long as the war continues, but not after. He also stated that restricting family reunions does not mean leaving women and children behind in war areas, because many of the refugees are coming from refugee camps in neighbouring countries. The family members would thus have to apply for visa through the German embassies. He added that the German government is offering support to neighbouring countries to improve living conditions in the refugee camps.

SPD

Sönke Rix stated the SPD’s position in favour of allowing family reunions and warned against using dramatizing language to describe the refugee situation:

Umso wichtiger ist es, dass wir mit unserer Wortwahl vorsichtig sind und nicht von „Flüchtlingswellen“ und von „Dramatik“ reden, wenn es keine Dramatik gibt.

He then used intimidation to explain how one can deal with fear of mass immigration:

Ich hatte gerade eben eine Besuchergruppe und habe die Frage gestellt bekommen: Wie gehen Sie eigentlich damit um, dass viele Menschen so viel Angst haben? Was antworten Sie den Menschen eigentlich? – Die Besucherin sprach auch von diffusen Ängsten. Darauf sagte ich: Ich mache das so ähnlich wie mit meinen Kindern. Ich frage nach der konkreten Angst, ich frage, wo die konkrete Befürchtung ist. Wir müssen aufpassen, dass wir nicht Ängste schüren, obwohl die Menschen keine Ängste haben müssen. Die Situation ist beherrschbar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen.

Further, he connected his party's support for refugee family reunion to the constitutional commitment to protect families, and argued that instead of easing the border situation, restricting family reunions would only worsen the conditions as people will apply for asylum individually and take risks in order to achieve their goal. In closing, he voiced support for the then-soon-to-be-adopted EU guidelines for the protection of women and children.

CDU/CSU

Andrea Lindholz stressed that despite helping a great deal, Germany has limited capacity, in order to justify a stance against unrestricted family reunions. She used statistical data to show how big the effort of the administration is: 758 000 asylum applicants at the end of October, 180 000 new immigrants every month, 83 000 persons had already received asylum status and 330 000 were still pending. She therefore labelled a restrictive policy as "responsible":

Eine Vervielfachung der hohen Zugangszahlen innerhalb kurzer Zeit würden wir in diesem Land nicht verkraften. Das würde auch unsere Integrationskraft überfordern. Auch diese Erkenntnis gehört zu einer verantwortungsvollen Flüchtlingspolitik.

She then claimed that delaying family reunion for subsidiarily protected refugees by two years is also EU policy, not only that of the governing coalition.

SPD

Frank Schwabe used the storytelling rhetorical technique and encouraged an exercise of the imagination of how it would be after the crisis and how one would want to look back and not be ashamed of the decisions taken at the height of the crisis. He then used a negative affect strategy to show the importance of allowing family reunions:

Es ist leider die Konsequenz einer Politik, wie sie hier gelegentlich skizziert wurde, dass am Ende Kinder mit ihren Müttern auf eine todbringende Reise über das Meer gezwungen werden.

This is a rare situation in which the SPD is clearly positioning itself against the CDU/CSU, but Schwabe claims he is happy and proud about this clear positioning. He finally called for a mitigation of the causes of mass migration:

Ich finde, es ist die Aufgabe von uns allen, das endlich zu ändern und dafür zu sorgen, dass Fluchtursachen wirklich bekämpft werden. Das schaffen wir nicht durch Abschreckungsmaßnahmen, sondern nur durch Hilfe für die Menschen vor Ort.

CDU/CSU

Nina Warken presented the delay of family reunions for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection as a realistic policy according to the capacity of the authorities. In order to back her position, she stated that about 30% of those who claim to be Syrians are not Syrians at all, which was contested by the public (including SPD). She argued that it is not the time for indignation and ideological debates, but time to take action according to the real conditions present in the country.

Michael Frieser expressed surprise to the amount of indignation in the room, and ironically stated that the opposition criticizes without bearing the responsibility of making hard decisions. He then added a reference to the radical right: „Jene Art der Realitätsverdrängung, die im Augenblick hier betrieben wird, treibt die Menschen auf der Straße direkt in die Arme von AfD und Pegida.“

To this, a representative from the Linke shouted: "But they vote the original!", referring to the CDU/CSU itself. This, concomitant with the opposing stance that even the SPD took in this matter, reinforces the perception, in this debate, that the centre-right party is in fact much further right.

He further argued that the job does not end with a warm welcoming of the refugees, but when one has found answers to practical questions of housing and integration in the job market. He also stressed the need to reinstate the rule of law where exceptions had been made because of the high numbers of refugees.

He again employed irony to suggest that many Western Balkan people try to enter Germany as Syrians: „Wie wollen Sie eigentlich denjenigen begegnen, die „über Nacht“ Syrer wurden, deren Muttersprache aber Serbokroatisch ist?“

Finally, he claimed that Germany's neighbouring countries are expecting Germany to control the refugee influx and reinstate law and order and stressed that security cannot be ensured unless one recognizes the real situation.

Barbara Woltmann stressed the common humanitarian goals that the chancellor and all the parties share, and defined that goal as: „den Menschen helfen, die wirklich in Not sind, die einen Asylgrund haben oder die Flüchtlinge nach der Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention sind und unsere Hilfe benötigen“. To this there was no protest from the house.

However, she then claimed to have spoken to volunteers who said they were pushed "to the limit", stressing the limited capacity of the German people and administration to manage the 800 000 refugees. She thus argued in support of the law package that had come into force on October 24 and of the one that would be adopted next thanks to a compromise found with the SPD on November 5.

In closing, she changed the rhetoric to a personalized one by recounting the reasons that refugees themselves were mentioning as to why they were coming to Germany:

Die Flüchtlinge nennen als einen Grund die sichere Situation in Deutschland. Außerdem geben sie an: Weil die wirtschaftliche Lage in

Deutschland gut und stabil ist, glauben wir, dass wir dann auch einen Arbeitsplatz finden. Und zum Dritten sagen sie: Weil wir in den Lagern, in den Camps in den Anrainerstaaten nicht mehr genug zu essen haben. – Auch das war einer der Gründe. Deswegen müssen wir da helfen.

She thus underpinned the law package containing in part restrictive asylum laws with a humanitarian ideal.

“AfD-Parteitag in Hannover: Berichterstattung vom 28.11.2015”

While no mainstream speeches about migration have been analysed later than this PRRP speech, its analysis no longer has the purpose of identifying contagion from PRRP to mainstream parties, but rather the effect of the attitude of mainstream parties on PRRP discourse.

Frauke Petry’s strongest condemnation of the mainstream parties’ response to the refugee crisis came at the party congress in Hannover when the party had already partly overcome its internal divisions under Petry’s leadership. The debate about the party leadership structure that prevailed at the party congresses in Bremen (04.07.2015) and Essen (31.01.2015) was replaced in Hannover (28.11.2015) by an attack on the German mainstream parties.

One may argue that the lack of response from the mainstream parties, their moralisation and dismissal of radical right arguments, as well as the convergence of centre-left and centre-right mainstream parties towards the middle, fuelled the AfD’s provocative rhetoric and anti-establishment arguments. Petry claimed in her speech that the “self-induced migration crisis of 2015”, which has its roots in the European asylum rules established years ago and which should have been foreseen at least partially, shows the “powerlessness of the consensus parties” (“die Ohnmacht der Konsensparteien”). She accused the mainstream parties of “a lack of concepts. They do not have original ideas, and when ideas exist, they are taken up and sold as their own”. The accusation brought to the mainstream parties is a textbook example of the populist aggressive/provocative anti-elite discourse.

She then denounced a democratic deficit by stating that in the context of the migration crisis one must also speak about the “acceptance or non-acceptance of fundamental religious conflicts that are being imported into Germany without our involvement”. In the speech, she often also used the first-person plural personal pronoun to appeal to the audience more personally. She added that this is a social issue that must “concern us”.

Following these accusations, Petry employed the negative affect rhetorical strategy to play on the emotion of fear. Making reference to the terrorist attacks that had recently taken place in Paris, she claimed that “to negate the link between illegal immigration, uncontrolled migration, and an increase in terrorism is a sign of political naivety that we should not accept”. This is a simplification of the cause and effect relation between migration and terrorism and emotionalization of the issue, aimed at mobilising the electorate based on fear of increased crime.

6.3 Comparative Analysis

The evolution of party communication on the topic of migration over the course of the year 2015 thus shows differences and similarities. The PRRP in Austria had much more power to emotionalise the debate, despite not changing mainstream discourse substantially. In the German Bundestag, PRR tendencies and anti-immigrant extremism were only alluded to, and all parties from parliament warned against adopting such views. Appeasing extremism was often claimed to be the responsibility of local politicians who spent time “convincing” their constituencies of what is right, a work for which parliamentarians commended them.

Unlike in Austria, there was much less usage of typically populist rhetorical techniques in the German parliament. There was much less emotionalization, informality, instrumental actualisation, intimisation, or storytelling. This might be attributed to the absence of the PRR party from the Bundestag.

Moreover, the centre-left and centre-right parties in Germany were more inclined to support each other’s policies than in Austria, which is most likely a consequence of CDU/CSU and SPD being in a governing coalition together, unlike their Austrian counterparts. This put the SPD and CDU/CSU on the defensive against the left-

heavy opposition of the Linke and the Greens. The far right being absent from parliament, this made the CDU/CSU discourse appear as the most restrictive one. From this point of view, the discourse in the Austrian parliament seemed to be much more balanced, given the presence of strong views from the entire political spectrum.

One can also register from the discourse the difference in age between the two PRRPs. The AfD made leaps in their rhetorical force and provided much more varied arguments, showing the higher dynamism of the younger party. The FPÖ, on the other hand, kept to a well-established party line.

In terms of the similarities between the two countries, the emotionalizing language and provocative rhetoric of the PRRPs was very similar, and one can sense that the two parties are made of the same right-wing populist fabric. Mainstream parties adopted more rational arguments and frames in both countries, despite the tone fluctuating according to emotional calls from the far right or the far left.

Additionally, both centre-left parties adopted a mostly conversational/participatory register, while the centre-right ones preferred a more referential/neutral tone (with the CDU/CSU having more varied voices, some of which were more humorous/ironic or even provocative at times). The centre-left focused on normative arguments and tended to take a humanitarian stance to immigration, while the centre-right favoured procedural, utilitarian, and strategic arguments, with a focus on security and the rule of law.

7. Conclusion

The thesis has thus achieved two goals. On the one hand, it has tested the effectiveness of qualitative content analysis over time and in comparative perspective to analyse the influence of populist discourse on mainstream political communication. On the other hand, it has shed light on the empirical case, tracing changes in party discourse on migration in Austria and Germany and the effect that the populist discourse had on mainstream party communication. While aiming to highlighting through discourse the less evident influence that PRRPs may have, despite not being in government, the study's ability to prove the causality between changes in PRRP and changes in mainstream discourse remains limited. In the process however, much has been learned about the changes in the migration debate over time and the differences between Austria and Germany in this regard.

The coexistence between mainstream parties and a PRRP seemed to be at a more advanced stage in Austria, where the centre-left tried to isolate the PRRP and the centre-right at times isolated and at times collaborated with it, but neither could ignore it any longer. In Germany, the general attitude was one of ignorance to the rising AfD. Overall, one can argue that mainstream parties in both countries tended to be reluctant to engage constructively with PRR arguments apart from labelling them inaccurate or inhumane and thus taking a moralising stance. To what extent they therefore made space for PRRPs to grow in the ensuing representational vacuum lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

With reference to the first hypothesis formulated above, PRRPs and centre-right parties in Germany and Austria did not converge per se, but one can argue that the moderate restrictive policy advocated by the centre-right served as a primer for the PRR position, thus in part legitimising it.

In terms of the second hypothesis, the centre-left party in Austria did not shift the discussion to other issues as if ignoring the PRR view, but rather openly condemned it. In Germany, one had the sense that, being in a ruling coalition with the CDU/CSU, they were trying to conceal the more restrictive policies that they had conceded to, all while upholding humanitarian ideals. This undermined their credibility and made them seem to converge towards the right.

The third hypothesis holds in Austria, but not so much in Germany. The PRRP was much more able in emotionalising the entire debate in Austria, not least because of its immediate presence in the Austrian parliament. Rhetoric in the German Bundestag was not so much affected by emotionalization outside of it.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis holds true in both countries, namely that PRRPs did not seem to cause substantive changes in the positions and policy preferences of mainstream parties. Communication style was, however, affected to a significant degree, eliciting more emotionalization in Austria and causing both German mainstream parties to use personalising stories to portray the humanitarian nature of the situation and thus the duty of the Germans to help the asylum seekers despite the difficulties that local German society might face (and for which the *Bund* would provide financial relief). The fact that this was not enough to relief for the communities was arguably proven by the subsequent ascendancy of the AfD to parliament.

Given the limitations of the study, the potential for generalisation is small, yet the empirical findings mostly prove the validity of the theoretical framework. The replicability of the study on a larger scale invites the inclusion, in further research, of a larger set of countries and texts, perhaps on an EU-wide or global scale, as well as the use of quantitative methods of content analysis. In future research, the validity of the research would be greatly helped by the presence of all compared PRRPs in parliament. It is also important to explore more normative research questions and ask what communicative strategies pro-democratic parties might best use to counter the quite successful illiberal discourse employed by PRRPs.

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