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Right-wing populist affective governing: a frame analysis of Austrian parliamentary debates on migration

DANIEL THIELE ⓘ, BIRGIT SAUER ⓘ AND OTTO PENZ ⓘ

ABSTRACT   In the aftermath of the 'summer of migration' of 2015, right-wing populist discourses became increasingly commonplace. This article by Thiele, Sauer and Penz investigates the resurgence of nativist and anti-migration attitudes in Austria by focusing on parliamentary debates between 2015 and 2019 concerned with migration, asylum policies and integration measures. Their theoretical approach builds first on Cas Mudde's conception of right-wing populism—which proceeds from the premise of corrupt 'elites' and threatening Others—and then combines it with theories on the politics of emotion and affects. By employing a critical affective frame analysis, the study examines how right-wing populist arguments by political actors are always intertwined with affects, like anger, fear and hope, in order to mobilize followers and voters. They regard these connections as governing strategy aiming at right-wing exclusion, a mode of governing through affects, which tends to change the affective atmosphere in Austria, that is, what is conceivable, speakable and feelable with regard to migration and refugees. As it turns out, not only the notorious Freedom Party (FPÖ) (with a longstanding far-right tradition) but also the refurbished People's Party (ÖVP) under their new leader Sebastian Kurz, draw on discourses that are exclusionary as well as affective, encouraging the Austrian population rather to fear migrants and to feel anger, in order to mobilize them against threatening 'migration waves' and 'illegal immigration'.

KEYWORDS   affective governing, anti-elitism, Austria, frame analysis, migration, nativism, Othering, populism, right-wing

The arrival of millions of refugees at the borders of the European Union in 2015 has been followed by a dramatic resurgence in right-wing populist discourses.[1] Affects and emotions are vital to understanding the mobilizing potential of these discourses, as an increasing number of scholars argue. Early on, Margaret Canovan theorized populism's 'extra emotional

1   Michał Krzyżanowski, Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruth Wodak, 'The mediatization and the politicization of the "refugee crisis" in Europe', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, vol. 16, nos 1–2, 2018, 1–14.

ingredient',[2] while Hans-Georg Betz noted that right-wing populist rhetoric is 'designed to tap feelings of *ressentiment* and exploit them politically'.[3] Ruth Wodak more recently coined the term 'politics of fear' to characterize these strategies.[4] Emotions also increasingly catch the attention of quantitative empirical research on populism.[5] Yet, we still lack an in-depth analysis of how right-wing populist discourses are interlocked with affects in the aftermath of the so-called 'refugee crisis'. We aim to fill this gap by putting forward a theoretically oriented interpretation—based on a critical affective frame analysis—of right-wing populist discourses as a specific way of governing through affects.[6]

Right-wing populist rhetoric and antagonisms, which presume 'the people' to be illegitimately ruled by a corrupt 'elite',[7] and threatened by foreign Others,[8] have flourished against the background of the restructuring of European welfare states,[9] and dealignment processes in the party landscape over the past decades. Affects are an important facet of these disparate phenomena: neoliberal politics that support self-regulating economic markets and a market society depend on the activating power of affects.

2   Margaret Canovan, 'Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of cemocracy', *Political Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1999, 2–16 (6).

3   Hans-Georg Betz, 'Conditions favouring the success and failure of radical right-wing populist parties in contemporary democracies', in Yves Mény and Yves Surel (eds), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave 2002), 197–213 (198).

4   Ruth Wodak, *Politics of Fear: What Right-wing Populist Discourses Mean* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2015).

5   See, for example, Michael Hameleers, Linda Bos and Claes H. de Vreese, '"*They* did it": the effects of emotionalized blame attribution in populist communication', *Communication Research*, vol. 44, no. 6, 2017, 870–900; Gabriele Magni, 'It's the emotions, stupid! Anger about the economic crisis, low political efficacy, and support for populist parties', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 50, December 2017, 91–102; Guillem Rico, Marc Guinjoan and Eva Anduiza, 'The emotional underpinnings of populism: how anger and fear affect populist attitudes', *Swiss Political Science Review*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2017, 444–61; and Dominique S. Wirz, 'Persuasion through emotion? An experimental test of the emotion-eliciting nature of populist communication', *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 12, 2018, 1114–38.

6   Otto Penz and Birgit Sauer, *Governing Affects: Neoliberalism, Neo-Bureaucracies, and Service Work* (London and New York: Routledge 2020).

7   Cas Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2004, 541–63.

8   Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2007); Hans-Georg Betz, 'Facets of nativism: a heuristic exploration', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2019, 111–35.

9   Karina Becker and Klaus Dörre, '*Völkisch* populism: a Polanyian-type movement?', in Roland Atzmüller, Brigitte Aulenbacher, Ulrich Brand, Fabienne Décieux, Karin Fischer and Birgit Sauer (eds), *Capitalism in Transformation: Movements and Countermovements in the 21st Century* (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing 2019), 152–68; Dani Rodrik, 'Populism and the economics of globalization', *Journal of International Business Policy*, vol. 1, nos 1–2, 2018, 12–33.

Activation policies in European countries, for example, aim to turn citizens into competitive market participants by appealing to their whole person, including their affects.[10]

Catch-all parties, in turn, have lost their ability to provide dominant interpretations of social processes, as they neglected rising social inequalities and citizens' 'feelings of dispossession'.[11] This resulted in a post-democratic 'political vacuum'.[12] Right-wing populists managed to fill this vacuum with a highly affective discourse that relates to fears of deprivation,[13] frustration and anger.[14] Moreover, the instrumental mobilization of feelings for regimes of insecurity and fear—be it fear of terrorists, migrants or viruses— paved the way for right-wing populist exclusionary politics.[15] In other words: affective politics of the market economy, the activating state and claims for law and order were turned into right-wing 'politics of fear'. We theorize this nexus as right-wing populist governing through affects that aim at a permanent transformation of the 'structures of feeling', to use Raymond Williams's term,[16] in the field of migration, that is, what people should and should not feel.

In Austria, this governing strategy accelerated in the aftermath of the 'summer of migration' of 2015. Not only specifically right-wing populist parties, such as the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ, Freedom Party of Austria) and the short-lived Team Stronach (TS), but the conservative Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP, Austrian People's Party) also mobilized against refugees.[17] In 2016, Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP), who would later be chancellor, claimed to have closed the so-called 'Balkan route' of migration.[18] Austria

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10 Penz and Sauer, *Governing Affects*; see also, for example, Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Proximity by design? Affective citizenship and the management of unease', *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2010, 17–30 (on 'community cohesion' in Britain).

11 Jan-Werner Müller, *Was ist Populismus? Ein Essay* (Berlin: Suhrkamp 2016), 21. Translations from the German, unless otherwise stated, are by the authors.

12 Colin Crouch, *Post-Democracy* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity 2004), 29.

13 Michael Hameleers, 'Putting our own people first: the content and effects of online right-wing populist discourse surrounding the European refugee crisis', *Mass Communication and Society*, vol. 22, no. 6, 2019, 804–26.

14 Mikko Salmela and Christian von Scheve, 'Emotional roots of right-wing political populism', *Social Science Information*, vol. 56, no. 4, 2017, 567–95.

15 Brian Massumi, 'The future birth of the affective fact: the political ontology of threat', in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press 2010), 52–70.

16 Raymond Williams, 'Structures of feeling', in Raymond Williams (ed.), *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1977), 128–35.

17 Oliver Gruber, '"Refugees (no longer) welcome": asylum discourse and policy in Austria in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis', in Melani Barlai, Birte Fähnrich, Christina Griessler and Markus Rhomberg (eds), *The Migrant Crisis: European Perspectives and National Discourses* (Zurich: Lit 2017), 39–57; Markus Rheindorf and Ruth Wodak, 'Borders, fences, and limits—protecting Austria from refugees: metadiscursive negotiation of meaning in the current refugee crisis', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, vol. 16, nos 1–2, 2018, 15–38.

18 In 2017 Kurz took over the leadership of the ÖVP and rebranded the party as 'New ÖVP'.

is therefore an excellent case for studying affective right-wing populist discourses. What's more, Austria is characterized by both a long history of right-wing populist mobilization against (various groups of) migrants,[19] and by the use of an emotionalized rhetoric,[20] thus playing a pioneering role for right-wing populist discourses in other countries.

For our argumentation, we trace right-wing populist affective discourses in seven debates on legislation concerning migration in the Austrian parliament (Nationalrat) between 2015 and 2019, using a critical affective frame analysis.[21] Right-wing populist communication strategies in parliament, we assume, contribute to specific ways of governing though affects, that is, of distributing specific affects and getting people to feel in specific ways. Our study revolves around the following research questions. How and by which affects were right-wing populist speeches and raised antagonisms modulated in Austrian parliamentary debates on migration? How are the framings of migration, right-wing populist arguments and affective appeals intertwined in parliamentary debates? And, most importantly, which 'structures of feeling' do these debates aim to establish?

The article proceeds as follows. First, we briefly set the historical context of our study. Second, we introduce the concepts right-wing populism and affective governing against the background of a literature review on right-wing populism and affects. We then describe the methodology, material and methods of the article before presenting and discussing our findings on right-wing framings, antagonisms and affects. The article concludes with a reflection on affective governing in migration debates and our contribution to the existing literature.

Setting the context: right-wing populism, governments and migration policies in Austria

In Austria's history of the Second Republic, the far-right FPÖ, founded immediately after the Second World War, turned rather late from a small, antisemitic and revisionist party into a major right-wing populist force.

19 Reinhard Heinisch, 'Demokratiekritik und (Rechts-)Populismus: Modellfall Österreich?', in Ludger Helms and David M. Wineroither (eds), *Die österreichische Demokratie im Vergleich*, 2nd edn (Baden-Baden: Nomos 2012), 449–78; Anton Pelinka, 'Rechtspopulismus in Österreich', in Heinz Ulrich Brinkmann and Isabelle-Christine Panreck (eds), *Rechtspopulismus in Einwanderungsgesellschaften: Die politische Auseinandersetzung um Migration und Integration* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2019), 133–58.
20 Fritz Plasser and Peter A. Ulram, 'Striking a responsive chord: mass media and right-wing populism in Austria', in Gianpietro Mazzoleni, Julianne Stewart and Bruce Horsfield (eds), *The Media and Neo-Populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis* (Westport: Praeger 2003), 21–43.
21 Ruth Wodak and Teun Adrianus van Dijk also analysed parliamentary debates: Ruth Wodak and Teun A. van Dijk (eds), *Racism at the Top: Parliamentary Discourses on Ethnic Issues in Six European States* (Klagenfurt: Drava 2000).

Under the leadership of Jörg Haider in the late 1980s, the party took up the issue of migration and significantly increased its electoral success through an anti-establishment, nationalist and, most notably, xenophobic political discourse.[22] Eventually, in 2000, the party entered a coalition government, headed by the ÖVP, advocating tighter migration, asylum and integration laws. FPÖ's government participation, however, resulted in a split in the party in 2005—when Haider and his followers left the party and founded the Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ, Alliance for the Future of Austria), forcing the rest of the old FPÖ into opposition—and the withdrawal of the BZÖ from government after the federal elections of 2006.

During the next decade, including the 'summer of migration' in 2015, Austria was governed by a grand coalition of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ, Social Democratic Party of Austria) and the ÖVP, led by the SPÖ chancellors Alfred Gusenbauer (2007–8), Werner Faymann (2008–16) and Christian Kern. In 2017 the former minister of foreign affairs, Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP), became chancellor of a renewed ÖVP–FPÖ coalition after significant gains by both parties in the national elections. FPÖ's success, now under the leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache, can be attributed to a shift towards new discursive frames, especially anti-Muslim racism,[23] whereas the election campaign of the ÖVP was characterized by an overall rebranding of the party that included a pronounced anti-immigration positioning.[24] In 2019, the 'Ibiza scandal' terminated the ÖVP–FPÖ coalition government.[25]

In the analysed time frame, the ÖVP was continuously part of the government, while the SPÖ and FPÖ were temporary government coalition partners. As a general tendency, under all these governments the legislation—the outcome of the parliamentary debates that we analyse—on migration, integration, refugees and asylum became more restrictive and dismissive,[26] as the selection of laws, or rather legislative packages, of our study shows.

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22 Pelinka, 'Rechtspopulismus in Österreich', 138.

23 Michał Krzyżanowski, 'From anti-immigration and nationalist revisionism to Islamo-phobia: continuities and shifts in recent discourses and patterns of political communication of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)', in Ruth Wodak, Majid KhosraviNik and Brigitte Mral (eds), *Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2013), 135–48.

24 Markus Rheindorf and Ruth Wodak, '"Austria First" revisited: a diachronic cross-sectional analysis of the gender and body politics of the extreme right', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 53, no. 3, 2019, 302–20.

25 Secretly filmed video material of a conversation between, among others, Vice-Chancellor Strache and a supposedly Russian oligarch in a villa on Ibiza displayed a high degree of political corruption and led to Strache's resignation.

26 Ivan Josipovic and Ursula Reeger, 'Country Report—Austria: legal and policy framework of migration governance', Working Paper no. 2, May 2018, available on *Uppsala University* website at http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-360531 (viewed 12 April 2022); Sieglinde Rosenberger and Oliver Gruber, *Integration erwünscht?*

Four of the selected seven legislative packages contained a large number of amendments to the asylum law,[27] and to the aliens law,[28] but essentially tightened the asylum legislation, whether introduced by the SPÖ–ÖVP or the ÖVP–FPÖ government. Additionally, we selected one 'integration law' proposed by the SPÖ–ÖVP coalition that contained a ban on full face covering,[29] and another proposed by the ÖVP–FPÖ coalition that administered (and further restricted) the employment of foreign nationals.[30] Finally, the last law selected is one of the most controversial, passed just before the end of the ÖVP–FPÖ government in May 2019. This law installed a federal agency—under the responsibility of the interior ministry—to provide legal assistance to asylum-seekers,[31] ending the long tradition of independent legal advice by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Austria.

Right-wing populism and affect: state of the art and theoretical foundations

Cas Mudde's concept of populism and its radical-right version provided fertile ground for a wide range of empirical research and fostered a growing understanding of this phenomenon over the past fifteen years.[32] Populism, according to Mudde, is a 'thin-centred ideology' that asserts that 'the people' is illegitimately ruled by a 'corrupt elite' and thus demands popular sovereignty.[33]

Österreichs Integrationspolitik zwischen fördern, fordern und verhindern (Vienna: Czernin Verlag 2020).

27   Amendment to the Asylum Law 2005, BGBl. I, Nr. 24/2016, 20 May 2016, available on the *Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* website at www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2016_I_24/BGBLA_2016_I_24.html (viewed 12 April 2022).

28   Amendment to the Aliens Law 2017 (I) BGBl. I, Nr. 84/2017, 14 July 2017, and (II) BGBl. I, Nr. 145/2017, 18 October 2017, available on the *Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* website at www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_84/BGBLA_2017_I_84.html and www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_145/BGBLA_2017_I_145.html, respectively; Amendment to the Aliens Law 2018 BGBl. I, Nr. 56/2018, 14 August 2018, available on the *Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* website at www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2018_I_56/BGBLA_2018_I_56.html (all viewed 12 April 2022).

29   Integration Law, BGBl. I, No. 68/2017, 8 June 2017, available on the *Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* website at www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_68/BGBLA_2017_I_68.html (viewed 12 April 2022).

30   Amendment on the Law on the Employment of Foreign Nationals, BGBl. I Nr. 94/2018, 22 December 2018, available on the *Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* website at www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2018_I_94/BGBLA_2018_I_94.html (viewed 12 April 2022).

31   Establishing Act on the BBU, BGBl. I Nr. 53/2019, 19 June 2019, available on the *Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* website at www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2019_I_53/BGBLA_2019_I_53.html (viewed 12 April 2022).

32   Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist'; Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe.*

33   Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist', 543.

Following Matthijs Rooduijn,[34] we identify anti-elitism and people-centrism as the core aspects of this discourse. While there has been a debate about whether a narrow definition of populism should include a demarcation of 'the people' against Others,[35] scholars widely agree that this idea is at the heart of right-wing populism. 'Key ideological features' of the populist right are, according to Mudde, 'nativism', 'ethnopluralism' and 'authoritarianism'.[36] Hence, right-wing populism includes the antagonism between 'we' and 'them', especially migrants or Muslims.[37] We call this exclusionary discourse Othering. Foreigners that are imagined as threatening are the most prominent group to be constructed as Others, which creates at the same time a nativist vision of 'the people'.[38] Imagining 'the virtuous people' as disempowered by 'the elite' and threatened by Others constitutes a deeply antagonistic world-view, characteristic of right-wing populism.[39]

These ideas are conveyed in populist communications,[40] or discourses.[41] We follow a communication-centred approach to the study of right-wing populism that does not *a priori* define political actors as right-wing populist, but reconstructs their populism from the discourse, that is, from their use of the three antagonisms of anti-elitism, people-centrism and Othering.[42] Following Mikka Salmela and Christian von

34 Matthijs Rooduijn, 'State of the field: how to study populism and adjacent topics? A plea for both more and less focus', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 58, no. 1, 2019, 362–72.

35 Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave, 'Populism as political communication style: an empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2007, 319–45; Rooduijn, 'State of the field', 362–72.

36 Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge and Medford, MA: Polity Press 2019), 27.

37 Ibid., 46.

38 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*; Mudde, *The Far Right Today*; Carsten Reinemann, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Jesper Strömbäck and Claes H. de Vreese, 'Populist political communication: toward a model of its causes, forms and effects', in Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Carsten Reinemann, Jesper Strömbäck and Claes H. de Vreese (eds), *Populist Political Communication in Europe* (New York: Routledge 2017), 12–25 (20); Betz, 'Facets of nativism'; Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak, 'The nation under threat: secularist, racial and populist nativism in the Netherlands', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 53, no. 5, 2019, 441–63.

39 Paris Aslanidis, 'Is populism an ideology? A refutation and a new perspective', *Political Studies*, vol. 64, no. 1 Suppl., 2016, 88–104; Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist'.

40 Claes H. de Vreese, Frank Esser, Toril Aalberg, Carsten Reinemann and James Stanyer, 'Populism as an expression of political communication content and style: a new perspective', *International Journal of Press/Politics*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2018, 423–38.

41 Aslanidis, 'Is populism an ideology?'.

42 James Stanyer, Susana Salgado and Jesper Strömbäck, 'Populist actors as communicators or political actors as populist communicators: cross-national findings and perspectives', in Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Strömbäck and de Vreese (eds), *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, 353–64.

Scheve,[43] we suggest that the antagonistic structure of right-wing populism is intrinsically interlocked with affects.

The affective aspect of right-wing populism has recently become the object of interest of a number of quantitative studies.[44] Drawing on survey data, Guillem Rico, Marc Guinjoan and Eva Anduiza, as well as Gabriele Magni, stressed the importance of anger for populist attitudes and voting.[45] Large-scale content analyses identified emotionality as a key style element of populist communication.[46] Experimental research demonstrated that the persuasiveness of populist messages stems from their intrinsically emotional appeal,[47] and explored interacting effects of emotional frames.[48] Ruth Breeze, in a study employing a mixed methodology, points to 'different repertoires of affective-discursive practices' in political debates in the United Kingdom.[49]

While we build on these findings, we believe that these predominantly quantitative studies have limitations for understanding the appeal of right-wing populism in the context of migration. First, they are unable to analyse the narrations and discourses in which affects and emotions of right-wing populist mobilization are embedded. Second, the majority of these studies focus on negative affects alone, such as anger and fear, neglecting the mobilizing potential of positive collective emotions, such as

43 Salmela and von Scheve, 'Emotional roots of right-wing political populism'; Mikko Salmela and Christian von Scheve, 'Emotional dynamics of right- and left-wing political populism', *Humanity & Society*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2018, 434–54.

44 For example, Markus Wagner, 'Fear and anger in Great Britain: blame assignment and emotional reactions in the financial crisis', *Political Behavior*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2014, 683–703; and Sofia Vasilopoulou and Markus Wagner, 'Fear, anger and enthusiasm about the European Union: effects of emotional reactions on public preferences towards European integration', *European Union Politics*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2017, 382–405.

45 Rico, Guinjoan and Anduiza, 'The emotional underpinnings of populism'; Magni, 'It's the emotions, stupid!'.

46 Alessandro Nai, 'Fear and loathing in populist campaigns? Comparing the communication style of populists and non-populists in elections worldwide', *Journal of Political Marketing*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2021, 219–50; Martin Wettstein, Frank Esser, Florin Büchel, Christian Schemer, Dominique S. Wirz, Anne Schulz, Nicole Ernst, Sven Engesser, Philipp Müller and Werner Wirth, 'What drives populist styles? Analyzing immigration and labor market news in eleven countries', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, vol. 96, no. 2, 2019, 516–36; Nicole Ernst, Sina Blassnig, Sven Engesser, Florin Büchel and Frank Esser, 'Populists prefer social media over talk shows: an analysis of populist messages and stylistic elements across six countries', *Social Media + Society*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2019, 1–14.

47 Dominique S. Wirz, Martin Wettstein, Anne Schulz, Philipp Müller, Christian Schemer, Nicole Ernst, Frank Esser and Werner Wirth, 'The effects of right-wing populist communication on emotions and cognitions toward immigrants', *International Journal of Press/Politics*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2018, 496–516.

48 Hameleers, Bos and de Vreese, '"*They* did it"'.

49 Ruth Breeze, 'Emotions in politics: affective-discursive practices in UKIP and Labour', *Discourse & Society*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2019, 24–43 (38).

pride or hope.[50] Finally, these studies conceptualize emotions as individual experiences, thereby missing the embeddedness of affects in social and affective structures.

We suggest that in order to fully understand the role of affects in right-wing populism, we need a critical, social-theoretical approach that takes into account the entanglement of affects and power structures, and the role of affect in governing people and societies. Our concept claims that affects are not the opposite of rationality, cognition or discourse. Rather, we follow Margaret Wetherell *et al.* by focusing on 'affective-discursive practices' in order to identify 'patterned forms of human activity articulating, mobilizing and organizing affect and discourse as a central part of the practice'.[51] Furthermore, affects are to be understood not only as individual reaction or 'personal' experience and preference, but as social 'structures of feeling'.[52] 'We are talking about . . . specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships', Raymond Williams explains: 'not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought . . . We are then defining these elements as a "structure": as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension.'[53]

We suggest conceptualizing affects as embedded in a set of societal rules and power relations, which Peter and Carol Stearns define as 'emotionology'. These are 'the collective emotional standards of a society', which have to be distinguished 'from the emotional experiences of the individual and groups'.[54] 'Emotionology' stipulates what people should feel. We regard the establishment and transformation of 'emotionologies' or 'structures of feeling' as modes of the affective governing of people.[55]

For the study of right-wing populist communication, we conclude that affectivity creates a structure that not only captures individuals and their preferences and conduct, but also the public sphere as an affective and contested arena. This resonates with Salmela and von Scheve's focus on the particular affective dynamic that characterizes right-wing populism, as an attempt to transform, for instance, insecurities and repressed shame into anger,[56] thereby establishing a link between social power structures and affects.

50 Salmela and von Scheve, 'Emotional roots of right-wing political populism'; an exception, for example, is Wirz, Wettstein, Schulz, Müller, Schemer, Ernst, Esser and Wirth, 'The effects of right-wing populist communication on emotions and cognitions toward immigrants'.
51 Margaret Wetherell, Tim McCreanor, Alex McConville, Helen Moewaka Barnes and Jade le Grice, 'Setting space and covering the nation: some conceptual considerations in analyzing affect and discourse', *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 16, August 2015, 56–64 (57).
52 Williams, 'Structures of feeling'.
53 Ibid., 132.
54 Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Clarifying the history of emotions and emotional standards', *American Historical Review*, vol. 90, no. 4, 1985, 813–36 (813).
55 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2004); Penz and Sauer, *Governing Affects.*
56 Salmela and von Scheve, 'Emotional roots of right-wing political populism'; Salmela and von Scheve, 'Emotional dynamics of right- and left-wing political populism'.

Studies in this methodological paradigm thus aim at disclosing the affective structure, which is established and reinforced (or deconstructed) by right-wing populist mobilization. Drawing on this concept of affect, right-wing populist communication strategies can be perceived as a governing strategy, a tacit strategy to lead and guide people, to mobilize them in favour of the political aims of right-wing exclusion, to persuade them affectively, as well as a power strategy that relates contested topics like migration to strong affects like fear and feeling threatened.[57]

Based on this concept, we expect, for example, discourses of Othering that instil a fear of migrants and turn it into distrust and anger. Blaming 'the elite' for accepting or producing this alleged threat, in turn, could be associated with discursive appeals to anger. We also assume that right-wing populist actors present themselves as a source of hope and as a solution-provider for the 'migration crisis'.[58] Right-wing populist discourses may strengthen positive affects directed at the in-group, highlighting that populists share the fears about migration and anger of 'the people'. Overall, we assume that the right-wing populist affective discourse can yield political capital from spreading fears, anger and distrust, but also through antagonistic distinctions between the people, 'us down here', and the hardening and coldness of the political elite, 'those up above', and the not trustworthy or threatening Others, migrants and refugees, beyond the 'We'.

In a word, we aim at locating right-wing populist affective communication strategies as a mode of governing that changes the speakable and expressible in the political arena as well as the affective atmosphere of Austrian society. Parliamentary debates on migration target the 'affective citizen' for legislative reforms,[59] and they simultaneously shape people's collective affective standards in the public domain.[60] Affective governing is thus a concept that focuses not only on the right-wing instrumentalization of affects, but also on the general affectivity of democratic politics.

Methodology, material and method

We traced affective appeals in right-wing populist discourses in parliamentary debates with a critical affective frame analysis. This qualitative method is a content-analytical, discursive and feeling-sensitive approach to the study of beliefs, perceptions and affective structures that are embedded

57 Krzyżanowski, 'From anti-immigration and nationalist revisionism to Islamophobia', 135–48 (143).
58 Nicole Curato, 'Politics of anxiety, politics of hope: penal populism and Duterte's rise to power', *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2016, 91–109.
59 Fortier, 'Proximity by design?', 20.
60 Michał Krzyżanowski *et al.* argue that 'politics [became] the key locus to effectively dictate the public views on immigration': Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou and Wodak, 'The mediatization and the politicization of the "refugee crisis" in Europe', 5.

in texts, political documents and (parliamentary) speeches. Our method enhances the critical frame analysis as developed, for example, by Mieke Verloo, with a focus on antagonisms and affects.[61] The basic element of the analysis is an affective frame. Affects are embedded in and interlocked with meaning and values, as perception and cognition always include affects attached to right-wing populist antagonisms. Affects are expressed through affective words (that is, words that express an affect or emotion, such as fear and anger) and through the syntax of a sentence, as in incomplete sentences or repetitions that aim to exaggerate the meaning.[62]

According to the concept of a frame analysis,[63] each text can be analysed by determining what problem it addresses (diagnosis) and what is offered as a solution to the problem (prognosis). Matching problem–solution pairs can be identified by answering the following 'sensitizing questions'.[64] What is the problem to be solved? Who/what causes the problem to appear or reproduce? Who is affected by it? What is the solution? Who should solve the problem? Who benefits from the solution? Additionally, we aimed to identify right-wing populist antagonisms (anti-elitism, people-centrism or Othering) and distinct affects (such as anger, fear, trust and hope) for each problem and each solution.[65]

We analysed a sample of sixty-six parliamentary speeches held in the Austrian Nationalrat between 2015 and 2019 during debates on seven legislative changes on integration, migration and asylum laws. Four of the selected bills were proposed by a SPÖ–ÖVP coalition government, while three bills were drafted by a coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ (2017–19). This selection allowed us to study the discourse of the right-wing populist FPÖ as opposition (until 2017) and then as government party.[66] We selected speeches from the third reading of the bills from all seven political parties—ÖVP, SPÖ, FPÖ, NEOS, Grüne (Greens), Liste Pilz/Jetzt and Team Stronach (TS)—that were represented in parliament during the investigated period. From each party, we selected the first two speeches per debate. If not covered by this selection, we added speeches from the proposer of the bill, the chairman of the committee concerned with the bill and each floor leader.

61 Mieke Verloo, 'Mainstreaming gender equality in Europe: a critical frame analysis', *Greek Review of Social Research*, vol. 117 B, 2005, 11–34.

62 Jochen Kleres, 'Emotions and narrative analysis: a methodological approach', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2011, 182–202.

63 Martin Rein and Donald A. Schön, 'Frame-critical policy analysis and frame-reflective policy practice', *Knowledge, Technology and Policy,* vol. 9, no. 1, 1996, 85–104; Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Framing processes and social movements: an overview and assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 26, 2000, 611–39.

64 Verloo, 'Mainstreaming gender equality in Europe', 25–8.

65 The collected material was coded by three researchers. Inter-coder reliability was ensured by continuous group discussions during and revisions after the coding process.

66 For an overview and brief characterization of the selected laws, see the second section of this article, 'Setting the context'.

To operationalize the diagnosis–prognosis scheme of critical frame analysis, we defined problem–solution pairs as the unit of analysis and found 140 such pairs. We assigned sub-frames for each problem and solution, drawing on the openly coded descriptions. Aiming at substantial abstraction, we clustered these sub-frames into four groups of super-frames: *anti-migration* frames; frames that blamed *elites* for problems or called for their action; frames that depicted migration as an *administrative* problem or called for administrative solutions; and frames—non-populist and not right-wing, as it turned out—that highlighted *fundamental rights* issues or called for their protection.

For each problem and solution, we tried to identify the predominant right-wing populist antagonism, affect(s) and (active and passive) actors involved. Our analysis eventually focused on 70 problem–solution pairs that contained at least one of the right-wing populist antagonisms in either the prognosis or diagnosis. The distribution of pairs that contained right-wing populist antagonisms across parties reflects their political position, with 36 of such pairs voiced by the FPÖ, 15 voiced by the TS, and 12 voiced by the ÖVP.[67]

The method of critical affective frame analysis thus allowed us, first, to identify right-wing populist actors through their use of antagonisms; second, to specify right-wing populist communication through disentangling the embeddedness of antagonisms and affects, that is, by analysing which antagonisms are combined with what affects; and, third, to scrutinize how right-wing populist communication aims at affective governing by impinging on the 'emotionology' of migration debates in Austria.

Right-wing modes of governing: framings, antagonisms and affectivity

Results

We first introduce the most prominent frames used in combination with right-wing populist antagonisms in Austrian parliamentary debates on migration policies since 2015, and highlight different party strategies. We then analyse how the right-wing populist antagonisms anti-elitism, people-centrism and Othering, which are embedded in the framings, were modulated by different affects.

Right-wing populist framing of the parliamentary debates on migration

In the following we present the super-frames of parliamentary debates on migration as well as how they interlock with the right-wing populist

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67   We excluded those parties from our qualitative analysis with very low numbers of right-wing antagonisms: only four right-wing antagonisms were voiced by the SPÖ, and one each by the Greens, NEOS and Liste Pilz/Jetzt. However, unless otherwise specified, percentages reported in our following analysis always refer to the overall number of coded problem–solution pairs (n=140).

antagonisms mentioned earlier. Our subset of 70 problem–solution pairs that contained right-wing populist antagonisms (at least on one side) was clearly dominated by a framing that we called *anti-migration*. Regarding the problem definition, these frames constructed migration as a threat, in particular for the security of the Austrian population, but also for economic and social well-being or for Austria's culture.

Security threats were constructed most notably by the FPÖ and TS, frequently by claiming that migrants or asylum-seekers would 'import' criminal behaviour, as in Walter Rosenkranz's (FPÖ) accusation on 28 June 2017: 'These are the real problems that our continent will have to deal with . . . . We do not want sexual harassment and raping women to become part of daily life in Austria.'[68] Another popular narrative on uncontrollable, potentially threatening situations consisted of depicting asylum-seekers as fraudulent, as Hans-Jörg Jenewein (FPÖ) stated on 5 July 2018: 'It is necessary to check the geo-location data on the mobile phones of asylum-demanders (*Asylforderer*) in order to know where they are really coming from.' The ÖVP tended to frame such threats in more general terms as an overburdening of the country, as Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP) claimed in his position as minister of foreign affairs on 16 May 2017: 'We will not be spared to stop the influx since anything else will overburden our country.' Another ÖVP representative, Werner Amon (on 4 October 2017), similarly perceived 'refugee movements' as a serious threat.

August Wöginger (ÖVP) emphasized the socio-economic downside of migration in particular in his speech (on 16 May 2017): 'Ninety per cent of the accepted refugees can be found in the unemployment statistics.' For similar welfare-chauvinist reasons, Herbert Kickl (FPÖ), then minister of the interior, criticized the national asylum system on 16 May 2019: 'To provide a service that results in a negative balance, causes high costs for everybody and produces tedious circumstances is not my understanding of an efficient asylum policy.' Migration as a threat to the national or western culture was expressed mainly in the debate on the public ban of full face covering, for example by Walter Rosenkranz (FPÖ) on 16 May 2017: 'We Austrians cannot rely on the hope that what we have accomplished since the Enlightenment a few hundred years ago . . . will be accomplished in other cultures or other religions in one or two years.'

Almost all anti-migration problem definitions resulted in anti-migration solution frames. Anti-migration solutions, however, were also strongly related to a framing that blamed the political elite for creating the problem. Most of the anti-migration solution frames called for the reduction of migration or the number of asylum-seekers. The FPÖ clearly dominated such framing. Herbert Kickl's (FPÖ) statement on 16 May 2019 can be considered as exemplary: 'We want to implement a stable asylum system that clearly distinguishes between those who actually deserve our protection,

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68 All translations of parliamentary speeches are by the research team.

and those who make their way to Austria for completely different reasons and whom we have to remove from our country as quickly as possible.' Other anti-migration solutions called for protection of the border, of 'our culture' or 'our people'. An example of the latter is Dagmar Belakowitsch's (FPÖ) criticism of migration laws on 4 October 2017: 'This is a policy directed against our own population. . . . There will be no such thing with us [the FPÖ]!'

The overwhelming majority of anti-migration frames were related to antagonism Othering. This happened regularly by constructing a 'we vs. them' dichotomy and putting migrants or refugees under general suspicion of being criminals, fraudsters or unwilling to integrate. Other antagonisms, such as people-centrism or anti-elitism, played only a comparatively minor role in the definition of the problem.

Anti-migration solutions, however, were also frequently built around people-centrism, for instance, through the claim to fulfil the wishes of the majority of Austrians and to improve their situations. In particular, the FPÖ turned out to be the party whose arguments relied most heavily on the antagonism of 'the Austrian people' versus outsiders, calling for measures to protect 'the people' against migration. 'The people' were addressed by the FPÖ in a way that oscillated between national pathos —'for the sake of our homeland Austria' (Gernot Darmann, FPÖ, on 27 April 2016)—and chumming up to the common people, also Darmann, such as 'Mister and Misses Austrian'.

In only three cases were anti-migration problems or solutions accompanied by anti-elitist statements that attacked the European asylum system or social democratic ministers. Anti-elitist antagonisms were much more frequently present in a second super-frame that we labelled *blaming elites* or, on the solution side, *action needed by elites*. By and large, two groups of elites were attacked by these framings: current or past government(s) and NGOs. Governments were blamed for being either inactive and ineffective in managing migration or for consciously harming the interests of the Austrian people, as in David Lasar's (FPÖ) accusation on 4 October 2017: 'But no, you [Minister Sobotka, ÖVP] have done nothing at all. The whole summer you did nothing . . . in this matter.'

Being continuously in government, the ÖVP almost completely refrained from voicing anti-elitist statements in the debates on migration policies between 2015 and 2019. In fact, the FPÖ monopolized the anti-elitist discourse (accompanied from time to time by similar resentments of the TS). However, FPÖ's anti-elitist discourse took a new turn with the party's changing role from opposition to government in 2017. As an opposition party, the FPÖ attacked the governmental elite, whereas in government, members of the party started to accuse humanitarian NGOs of profiteering from the crisis, by labelling NGOs' humanitarian approach an 'asylum industry' and denouncing the opposition parties as 'welcome clappers (*Willkommensklatscher*).' Günther Kumpitsch (FPÖ), for example, remarked (on 16 May

2019): 'NGOs advise asylum-seekers and raise false hopes—on the back of the taxpayer and in many cases also at the expense of the security of the Austrian population. . . . The asylum industry is also profiting from that.'

Our third right-wing populist super-frame—*migration as an administrative problem*, to be solved by *administrative adjustments*—contained the fewest antagonisms. The super-frame consisted mostly of complaints about integration failures and requests for the improvement of integration measures or a comprehensive reform of Austria's asylum legislation. However, complaints about the lack of integration also included Othering in a few cases, picturing migration as a cultural threat. Waltraud Dietrich (TS) lamented, for example, about 'parallel societies' in Austria (on 16 May 2017).

To sum up: the debates on migration policies in the Austrian parliament between 2015 and 2019 were dominated by an anti-migration framing that included the construction of right-wing populist antagonisms by three parties: FPÖ, TS and ÖVP. We regard this antagonistic framing as the quintessential basis of a mode of governing that divides society into a deserving, but endangered, 'we', and inefficient and untrustworthy elites as well as undeserving Others who should be kept out of the country.

Affective construction of right-wing populist antagonisms

We now take a closer look at the question of how right-wing populist antagonisms are constructed through affective expressions and appeals. This is based on our earlier established findings that right-wing populist communication in migration debates rests on the major antagonisms anti-elitism, people-centrism and Othering.

Othering is by far the most frequently voiced antagonism in our sample. In one quarter of all coded problem definitions and in more than 20 per cent of all solutions proposed to solve the problem, migrants and refugees are constructed pejoratively as threatening Others. Considering the discursive elements in the speeches of each party, Othering turned out to be most important for communication by the short-lived, oppositional far-right party TS. Surprisingly, the governing ÖVP were second in being most reliant on Othering, followed by the FPÖ. In absolute numbers, however, the FPÖ most often employed the strategy of Othering, followed by the TS and ÖVP. Turning migrants and refugees into threatening aliens clearly constitutes the most important building block for the right-wing political discourse and framing of migration in Austria.

Striking is the strong connection between Othering and three negative affects: anger, fear and distrust. Hardly any problem definition that contained Othering was voiced without one of these affects, which underlines that the construction of out-groups relies heavily on mobilizing negative affects. For all three affects, we see a similar pattern: anger, fear or distrust are directed against migrants, asylum-seekers, Muslims or those who

allegedly support migration, while the Austrian population is regarded as the victim of the constructed problem. Herbert Kickl's (FPÖ, Minister of the Interior) statement on 16 May 2019 can be seen as exemplary for right-wing populist Othering that invokes anger by using a pejorative terminology: 'The Austrian population has no understanding of the fact that they are being taken for a ride [by asylum-seekers in asylum care and counselling]—I share this assessment one hundred percent!'

Fear of Others has been invoked by constructing migration and refugees as a threat, most importantly as a threat to security, as shown in the previous section. Dramatic expressions, such as 'asylum-catastrophe' and the 'import of violence' (by refugees), as Walter Rosenkranz (FPÖ) put it on 27 April 2016, are characteristic of this discourse. We noted that fear appeals were much more frequently present in problem constructions that contained Othering than any other right-wing populist antagonism. The same holds true for distrust, which was most often directed against either Muslim men (as per Rosenkranz on 16 May 2017) or generally against allegedly fraudulent asylum-seekers, as, for instance, in Hans-Jörg Jenewein's (FPÖ) sarcastic aside on 5 July 2018: 'if the sentimental story that you hear so often [from asylum-seekers] is in fact true'. In a similar vein, Martina Schenk (TS, on 27 April 2016) suggested distrusting refugees and collecting their DNA because 'persons, after they have been deported and want to come back, will burn their fingertips or scratch them with knives so that they cannot be identified'.

Othering in problem definitions was frequently echoed by Othering on the side of the proposed solution. The latter side of the right-wing discourse was also dominated by anger, fear and distrust. Calls for law and order and drastic measures against delinquent asylum-seekers were one prominent theme in solutions that tried to invoke anger, like in the statement of Christoph Hagen (TS, 28 June 2017):

> They [asylum-seekers accused of rape] are on the loose until the present day and can repeat their crimes, ladies and gentlemen, and this has to stop. One must proceed with rigour here. . . . You know the newspaper reports, the media reports: there are ongoing rape attempts, ongoing rapes.

Most right-wing populist solutions had in common that they claimed to be in the interests of the 'suffering Austrian population' (Günter Kumpitsch, FPÖ, on 28 June 2017). While in most cases the government or legislators were addressed to solve the problem, the FPÖ exhibited a strong tendency to present itself as the provider of solutions.

This tendency became particularly obvious in framings with *people-centric* antagonisms. Regarding the affective structure of the people-centric discourse, we recognized some peculiarities. First, while anger and fear were again the dominant affects on the problem side, the range of actors who are blamed for causing the problem at hand was much more diverse than

in other antagonistic discourses, ranging from the Austrian government to the EU, migrants, Muslims, proponents of migration or Social Democrats. The suffering group, however, always remained one and the same: the Austrian population. Martina Schenk (TS), for example, accused the government on 27 April 2016 of 'turn[ing] a blind eye to the fears of the population'.

Second, hope turned out to be the most important affect for people-centric solutions, and hope was in most cases exclusively present in such solutions. Strikingly, the FPÖ was the only party that referred to hope within the right-wing populist spectrum, as the party presented itself as the provider of solutions, and thus of hope for the Austrian population. Herbert Kickl's self-praise after the adoption of a restrictive law on 16 May 2019 provides a telling example: 'For me this law is the beginning of a positive era. . . . You can call me the driving force behind this project, since it was an important concern to me, to live up to the high expectations of the population.' People-centrism thus provides a source for positive feelings of the in-group, the 'we', the Austrian population, that cannot be easily achieved by negative affective constructions of out-groups such as migrants or elites.

Anti-elitism, in contrast, was regularly voiced in a highly negative emotional tone. Anger was by far the most dominant affect in anti-elitist problem definitions and solutions: anger directed against current or past governments, but also against the EU, the opposition or NGOs. Again, the Austrian population was seen as the main victim of the proclaimed problems. One example of such a communication is Walter Rosenkranz's (FPÖ) objection on 27 April 2016, in which he sarcastically accused parliamentarians on the left of betraying the interests of the Austrian people: 'Other states [Hungary, Slovakia and others] are laughing at us. They will say: We finally found somebody [Austrian left-wing parliamentarians] who can do it all for us [take in refugees], we don't need to do anything!'

Anti-elitist statements also, albeit to a lesser extent, drew on fears, as evident in the complaint of Dagmar Belakowitsch (FPÖ, 4 October 2017) that the government would knowingly endanger the security of Austrians:

> For example, what happened in 2015? . . . You, ladies and gentlemen of the government, . . . have waived through hundreds of thousands of people. We have no idea how many have drifted off into illegality in Austria. Nobody gets deported, nor does he [any asylum-seeker] have to leave the country, regardless of whether he becomes a criminal, a murderer, if he rapes, or if he commits other crimes.

The few solutions centred on anti-elitism either angrily demanded that the government 'finally make laws that have teeth' (Walter Rosenkranz, FPÖ, on 28 June 2017), or presented the FPÖ again as the hope for the future: as a force that liberates the country from the detrimental 'business-model' of humanitarian NGOs (Herbert Kickl, FPÖ, on 16 May 2019).

Summing up, the right-wing populist parliamentary discourse on migration was clearly dominated by the affect anger, which was present in one-third of the antagonistically constructed problems and solutions of the migration debate. Fear played an important role in one-third of the right-wing populist problem constructions, but was almost absent in the presented solutions. The third most important negative affect that we found was distrust. Positive emotions were altogether rather scarce. Only hope, as indicated, played a considerable role, mostly in relation to people-centrism.

We conclude that right-wing populist problem discourses construct out-groups, such as migrant Others and 'the elite', by appealing to 'the people's' anger, fear and distrust. These appeals maintain their affective charge and aggressiveness even when solutions are presented that will cope with the constructed threats. And they address and produce—in a people-centric way—the hopes of 'the Austrian people' in an attempt to transform these affects into support for right-wing populist actors who present themselves as 'tribune[s] of the people'. As Herbert Kickl (FPÖ), Minister of the Interior between 2017 and 2019, put it on 16 May 2019: 'The high expectations of the population regarding a restrictive asylum policy are definitely the absolute benchmark of my political mission.'

Right-wing populist affective governing

We identified three overarching super-frames that constitute the right-wing populist argumentative structure in Austrian parliamentary debates on migration between 2015 and 2019. These super-frames represent the antagonistic communication strategies and affective–discursive practices of right-wing populist parties in Austria in a nutshell. Othering, a major constituent of anti-migration frames, was strongly intertwined with anger and fear. Blaming elites was also strongly charged with anger. People-centric statements, almost evenly distributed between the anti-migration- and blaming elites-frames, called up fear of migrants, anger against the political elite and NGOs, and hope placed on the FPÖ. Hence, we found a broad spectrum of what Markus Rheindorf and Ruth Wodak have called 'a politics of negative emotions' that supported the creation of an antagonistic world-view,[69] plus hope as the single positive force for the constitution of right-wing adherents.

Our study shows that only the FPÖ and TS made use of the full range of affective right-wing populist antagonisms and framings. The ÖVP, however, apparently used only specific aspects of the right-wing populist discourse in a selective, most probably strategic way. The party participated in particular in the construction of migrants and asylum-seekers as Others

69 See, for example, Rheindorf and Wodak, 'Borders fences, and limits—protecting Austria from refugees', 34.

that supposedly endanger the Austrian people economically and culturally, and threaten to destroy their security. Remaining loyal to its mainly conservative electorate, the ÖVP thereby used a more moderate vocabulary, while the FPÖ and TS relied on more drastic expressions—which were also more affectively charged—to demonstrate their proximity to the common people.

The findings in general point to a strong affectivity of right-wing populist messages, affectively charged both by exclusionary antagonisms and (partly) dramatic expressions. We label this combination of affectivity and argumentation 'governing through affects', as right-wing actors and specifically the FPÖ target and mobilize certain affects of the Austrian population and impinge on society's 'emotionology', the feelable and speakable in migration policies, thus turning the 'welcome culture' of 2015, based on empathy and solidarity,[70] into a political atmosphere of resentment, distrust, anger and fear.

Right-wing populist governing through affects is based on a double operation: the construction of Others and blaming of 'the establishment' as well as the creation of a 'we', 'the people' and superiority of the western and Austrian 'civilization'.[71] In this strategy the in-group is antagonistically positioned against out-groups of devalued Others and elites that are to be blamed.[72] Both sides of the argument, as shown, include affectivity, and both groups are charged with specific affects:[73] rejection of Others and the elite as well as compassion for the 'we'-group. In this communication an affective nativism takes shape that demonizes Others and creates positive bonds with the (homogenized) 'Austrian people', mediated and embodied by the bringer of hope: the populist politician. Our analysis attempts to give a nuanced picture of how right-wing populism aims at using debates on migration to provoke, generalize and normalize an ambivalent affective structure.

Right-wing populist affective governing is mainly based on anger—as a strong mobilizing force of collective action[74]—and to some extent on fear

70 Erich Fenninger, *Voices for Refugees: Für ein menschliches Europa* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag 2015).

71 Rogers Brubaker, 'Between nationalism and civilizationalism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 40, no. 8, 2017, 1191–226.

72 Mark Elchardus and Bram Spruyt, 'Populism, persistent republicanism and declinism: an empirical analysis of populism as a thin ideology', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2016, 111–33; Michael Hameleers *et al.*, 'Start spreading the news: a comparative experiment on the effects of populist communication on political engagement in sixteen European countries', *International Journal of Press/Politics*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2018, 517–38; Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, 'The social identity theory of intergroup behavior', in Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin (eds), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall 1986), 7–24.

73 See for example, Diane M. Mackie and Eliot R. Smith (eds), *From Prejudice to Intergroup Emotions: Differentiated Reactions to Social Groups* (New York: Psychology Press 2002).

74 Nicholas A. Valentino, Ted Brader, Eric W. Groenendyk, Krysha Gregorowicz and Vincent L. Hutchings, 'Election night's alright for fighting: the role of emotions in

and distrust, but it also includes the utopian aspect of hope and promises agency to lost voters.[75] The active transformation of the 'emotionology' is accompanied by a sort of gaming with affects: right-wing populist discourses transform fear and distrust of problem definitions into anger and hope. Governing through affects seems to give citizens the right to be passionate, angry and furious towards alleged Others and the elite. Blaming the elite can be seen as a relief, as a way of removing responsibility from the people and of making them sovereign again in post-democratic conditions by re-establishing dominance of 'the Austrian people', by casting their vote for right-wing populists.

Overall, defining problems around migration and suggesting solutions to these problems turns out to be an affectively charged political endeavour with an impact on the affective structures in the field of migration: people are encouraged to fear, to feel anger and to get suspicious. And the affective-antagonistic discourses pave the way for increasingly restrictive laws (as our empirical sample shows), the closing of borders and the 'Balkan route' altogether, as well as the tightening of integration requirements. Right-wing populist communication addresses the 'affective citizen' to establish anger and fear as basic affects of Austrian society: affects that mobilize and govern citizens to be wary of 'illegal immigration' and 'migration waves' that may 'overrun' the country, and migrants and refugees in general as alleged enemies of society. Right-wing populist parties can hope to be the winners of these changing collective standards, as they can present themselves as bearers of hope.

With these findings, we tried to contribute not only to a better understanding of the rise of right-wing populism in Austria—by focusing on the intertwining of political rhetoric and affect with regard to migration—but also more generally to a stronger emphasis on affective structures in the field of populism research: how collective affects constitute anti-migration views, how they are strategically produced and transformed, and how they are interwoven with political power structures, with attempts to gain votes and power, and to govern. Our study complements the field of right-wing populism research by showing that affects are not only an element of populist style and mobilization, but deeply engrained in right-wing populists' project of transforming societies through impacting on the affective structures, that is, on what people should fear and hope. Affective de-responsibilization and re-sovereignization are important facets of the right-wing

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political participation', *Journal of Politics*, vol. 73, no. 1, 2011, 156–70; Martijn van Zomeren, Tom Postmes and Russell Spears, 'Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: a quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives', *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 134, no. 4, 2008, 504–35.

75 Arlie R. Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: The New Press 2016); Katherine J. Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago: Chicago University Press 2016).

project. In short, we advocate for a stronger research focus on the question of how political forces and in particular right-wing parties and movements successfully create, employ and transform affective-discursive practices to govern people and how right-wing supporters are effectively mobilized and governed through affects.

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