Breaking with Austrian Consociationalism: How the Rise of Rightwing Populism and Party Competition Have Changed Austria's Islam Politics*

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Abstract: This paper seeks to explain Austria's Islam-related politics by first suggesting that it can be best understood in terms of neo-institutionalist path-dependency and consociationalist policy-making. This is due to the fact that Austria gave Islam full legal recognition in 1912. Important institutional patterns and policies grew out of this law in the Second Republic, whose persistence we want to examine. The Islamic Religious Community constituted itself under public law as a neo-corporatist interest group for Muslims in Austria in 1979. More recently, the government's approach toward Islam has shifted. This change can be best accounted for by party competition in which the far-right Freedom Party of Austria has sought to monopolize this issue. Consequently, this paper explores the contradictions between, on the one hand, the long-established principle of state neutrality and evenhandedness when dealing with various legally recognized religious communities and, on the other hand, discriminatory Islam-related politics.

INTRODUCTION

How do we explain Austria's approach to regulating the organization and practice of Islam and to developing and maintaining a relationship between the state and the Islamic community in the Second Republic? We refer to this approach in this paper as "Islam-related politics." This question is not a trivial one, since Austria is one of the Western

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European countries with the longest and most progressive relationship with the Muslim faith dating back to the days of the monarchy before World War I. It was at this point that Islam was fully recognized as an equal religion, resulting in the creation of the Islam Act of 1912. Important institutional patterns and policies grew out of this Act in the Second Republic, whose persistence we wish to examine in the face of the growing presence of Islam in Austria and in the wake of the increased utilization of identity politics across Europe.

A crucial organizing principle within Austria's traditionally highly divided society and politics is consociationalism. In the area of socioeconomics, a social partnership has existed for decades with the purpose of internalizing conflict by transferring incompatible social and economic demands over to a set of institutions for resolution (Plasser and Ulram 1995). In this context, the Austrian approach to political problem-solving is often one of semi-formal institutional rulemaking.

We want to study, from an institutionalist perspective, the extent to which these principles have been applied to the organization of religion and whether this has changed in recent times, during which consociationalism and corporatist economic organization have declined (Talos 1993a; Bruckmüller 1994; Crepaz 1994). Specifically, we want to examine Austria's Islam-related politics by comparing Islam-oriented legislation over time and tracing the processes that account for these policies. Finally, we hope to explain the relevant policy outcomes and the changes they have made.

We argue that for most of Austria's Second Republic the approach to Islam can be explained in terms of historical and sociological institutionalism. Centered on the principal mechanism of path-dependent institutional development and the logic of appropriateness, the actions of political decision-makers have followed the consociational institutionalist pattern from the moment Islam was recognized as a divisive issue. However, propelled by far-right political operators, the rise of identity politics has increasingly shaped party competition of late. In this context, Islam and religion, along with their implications for culture and society, have been introduced as issues that can be successfully used for political mobilization. Thus, the old consociational institutionalist pattern has been disrupted, pushing Islam-related politics in a different direction and transferring the conflict from institutions back into society. This was most evident in the creation of the Islam Act of 2015, which constituted a shift towards populism. Accordingly, Islam and its religious expression are being reframed in the context of immigration as a growing problem

for Austrian security, political stability, and culture. This debate has prompted actors beyond the radical and populist right to adopt programs and rhetoric that are widely considered populist and are similar to those of the far right.

Our paper is organized as follows: The first section presents the main research question and introduces the theory and approach used to explain the pattern of Islam-related politics as it has emerged in Austria. The second section restates the main research question after highlighting the role of religious denominations in the context of Austrian consociationalism. The third section presents the empirical analysis in four sub-sections. The first of these gives an overview of changes in the party-political landscape, the second highlights changes in the public discourse, and the remaining two analyze the corresponding institutional changes that have occurred: one regarding the effects on the Islam Act and the other the effects on Muslim education. The final section of this paper summarizes all our findings and conclusions.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

In order to show the shift that has occurred in Austrian, Islam-related politics, especially the policy response by the government, we will present two strands of analysis: first, we will show that the institutionalist tradition, along with consociational political culture, contributed to the rather progressive treatment of Islamic organizations by allowing full participation in the legislative process. Then we identify a shift in this policy, which is associated with changes in Austrian party politics and has led to a change in elite discourse. Second, we also show that a similar shift has taken place in the core area of regulating autonomous religious instruction: here too a before-and-after effect can be identified.

In our theoretical approach, we draw on new institutionalism as our principal explanatory framework. Following Hall and Taylor's distinction of three new institutionalisms—the rational choice, historical, and sociological variants—the latter two seem especially relevant to the Austrian case given the long and consistent trajectory of Islam-related politics in Austria and the importance of sociological institutionalist explanations in accounting for other Austrian policy areas, such as in labor-market and welfare politics (for an overview see Lehmbruch 1984; Heinisch 1999; Obinger 2002; Paster 2013).

The great advantage of an institutionalist framework is that it allows us to understand how institutions emerge and change. It also explains the construction of the relationship between institutions, their behavior, and that of the actors therein (Hall and Taylor 1996; see also Peters 2001). Historical institutionalism suggests that there is a more structuralist rather than functionalist explanation for policy-making. Its conceptualization of the relationship between institutions and individuals is very broad while incorporating other factors like ideas into the analysis to make sense of political outcomes. It emphasizes path dependence, unintended consequences, and asymmetries of power (Hall and Taylor 1996). Sociological institutionalism draws on a more constructivist notion of culture and thus defines institutions in a broader sense and additionally incorporates symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that produce meaning for actors. Culture is redefined here as an institution in itself. Consequently, institutions viewed as cultural signifiers have an impact on the behavior of individuals, and the interactive and mutually constitutive character of this relationship is emphasized. For this approach, social legitimacy in a cultural environment is central to the possibility for institutions to emerge and change (Hall and Taylor 1996). Hall and Taylor (1996) do not call for synthesis, but rather for a better interaction between the three schools to appreciate the strengths of every approach.

In this context, it is important to understand that Austrian society has not only been divided politically and economically between the bourgeoisie and the working class but also has high degrees of cleavage along confessional and cultural lines (Catholic and pro-church versus anti-clerical). Thus, an institutionalist approach that follows the consociational model when dealing with Islam in a majority Catholic country is hardly remarkable. This is because the Austrian political system has typically responded to societal cleavages by seeking to internalize potential conflict areas in designated institutions governed by mutual give-and-take (Scharpf 1991; Traxler 1995; Paster 2013), but this applies to Austria's political development and policy-making more broadly (Katzenstein 1976; 1984; Lijphart 1977; Lehmbruch 1984; 1985; Crepaz 1994). According to the institutionalist logic that prevailed in the heyday of Austro-corporatism, it would have been out of character for consensus-seeking political actors at the time to engage in political mobilization based on religion. In our subsequent discussions, we will introduce evidence to show that this was indeed the case until recent shifts in party politics took place.

The disruption of the consociational approach to Islam may be broadly connected to its general decline (e.g., Lehmbruch, 1985; Tálos 1993b;

Crepaz 1994; Karlhofer and Tálos, 1999; Tálos and Kittel, 2001) and ideological shifts, including the prevailing populist zeitgeist (Mudde 2004). However, these trends date back in Austria to at least the 1980s and do not as such explain the recent about-face in Islam-related politics. This suggests that the reintroduction of Islam as an issue of political contestation originated in a specific party-political matrix. We argue that we may date this development fairly precisely since immediately after 9/11 an expected anti-Islamic mobilization did not occur.

However, once Islam is reintroduced as a political issue, party competition comes into play. There are several well-established explanations for why and to what extent parties pay attention to certain issues while ignoring others altogether. Among the most important scholars on the topics of party behavior and the rise of the right, Bale (2003) has shown that center-right parties often engage in questions pertaining to immigration since they share common positions with right-wing parties. This is especially the case in Austria (Bale 2003). By comparison, Odmalm (2011) argues that parties only turn to issues pertaining to immigration if they are able to handle and negotiate a number of opposing ideological positions successfully: for the center-right, this opposition is market liberalism versus value conservatism, while for the center-left it is international solidarity versus welfare-state/labor-market protectionism. To bolster the party's core competencies and avoid unintentionally supporting competitors from the radical right, the party has to choose whether to engage in immigration-related issues and potentially risk, as mentioned earlier, creating a dilemma of reconciling opposite positions or to stay on the safer ground (Odmalm 2011, 1071). While most of the literature argues that adopting ambiguous issue positions is predominantly a costly strategy, Rovny (2012) has shown in his cross-sectional analyses of 132 political parties in 14 Western European party systems that the choice of party strategy—which parties emphasize and which blur the lines of certain issues—is determined by varying party involvement in political issue dimensions. Emphasizing core competencies may be the rule, but blurring one's position may also be a beneficial strategy if applied to the appropriate issue dimension in order to attract a broader section of the electorate (Rovny 2012). We argue that the center-right's engagement in the issue of Islam, where (Christian) Conservatives compete with the far right, came about after Islam had been successfully introduced as a divisive political issue.

To summarize our argument, we first claim that Islam was assigned by political actors to the consociationalist institutionalist framework

established in Austrian postwar politics, as this was the standard approach for dealing with societal cleavages. This would be evidenced by the establishment of representative institutional bodies, the recognition of such bodies as formerly equal negotiating partners, the granting to these bodies of some veto capacity over new rules that are binding to the members of their community, and finally the mutual adoption of rules designed to resolve cleavage-related conflicts. Secondly, we maintain that this pattern later shifted decisively when Islam was introduced as a wedge issue, which, in turn, allowed political actors to use it successfully in party competition. Here we would expect to find indirect evidence in the form of a change in the consociational practices described earlier and direct evidence from public statements, party manifestos, and legal changes.

Methodologically, we undertake a comparative case study through process tracing and, in the recent case, interviews with the actors involved in the legislative process underpinning the Islam Acts of 1912 and 2015, along with a comparative investigation (through process tracing, interviews, and document analysis) of changes in government policy toward religious education, that is the treatment of the Islamic community as opposed to other recognized religious communities in Austria. To provide a context for these political changes, we will also compare the discourses of Austria's political elites before and after 2005, when Islamophobia started becoming increasingly relevant in Austrian party politics (Hafez 2010a; 2010b).

THE STANDARD APPROACH: ISLAM-RELATED POLITICS IN THE CONTEXT OF CONSOCIATIONALISM

Austria, like many other smaller countries, such as Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway, is characterized in the literature on policy formation as a neo-corporatist system (Katzenstein 1976; Lijphart 1977; Lehmbruch 1984; 1985; Howard 1996). In fact, Austria is often considered to be the quintessential case. The key element in this kind of policy-making system is that non-state interests, unions, businesses associations, but also other societal groupings, are afforded a central role in legally binding rulemaking, specifically in the legislative process (Gerlich and Pfefferle 2006). This means that representatives of the political system and interest groups engage in bargaining "behind the scenes," before communicating the outcome to the electorate or the public. The

criticism of this approach is often that the desire for consensus and social peace trumps transparency and broad input. In short, there are insiders that enjoy an institutionally privileged position, in that they are recognized by the state as the authoritative representatives of the interest groups involved.

In dealing with Austrian religious interest groups, the government has pursued the same approach by seeking to interact with certain legally recognized churches and denominations (*Kirchen und Religionsgesellschaften*; short form: KuRs). By providing input when a bill is introduced and considered, these actors in civil society have the right to contribute to the legislative process as much as other recognized interest groups. However, when a law regulating religious practice is drafted, the government has to consult not just with the group primarily affected by the legislation but all other KuRs as well. In fact, the involvement of interest groups such as KuRs in the legislative process begins as early as the draft stage of a bill, which, in Austria, typically originates in the government bureaucracy and is crafted by senior ministerial officials. These officials will seek the advice of the interest groups who are affected, which is often done informally and through consultation (Biegelbauer and Grießler 2009). This was the case, for example, with the Animal Welfare Act, which affected Jewish and Muslim practices alike (Potz, Schinkele and Wieshaider 2001). At the time, when the Act governing Islamic KuRs was adopted in the 1970s, the corporatist consensus culture was still very strong.

The institutional basis of the standard approach to Islam-related politics embedded in consociationalism was the Islam Act of 1912, which the Second Republic inherited, and which would govern the relationship between the government and the Islamic community until 2015. The Islam Act of 1912 laid the foundation for Islamic life in Austria and stated that Muslims were free to "manifest their religion in public, administrate their internal affairs autonomously and establish foundations for religious, educational and charitable purposes" (Schmied and Wieshaider 2004). This Act was part of a series of special pieces of legislation for religion, which date back to the 1874 Recognition Act that for the first time legally recognized and thus protected the exercise of religion in the public arena (Potz and Schinkele 2016).

The Islam Act of 1912 comprised only eight very short articles. Formally, it regulated the "recognition of the adherents of Islam according to the Hanafite rite as a religious community," which was expanded in 1988 to the adherents of different Muslim groups including the Shi'a.[1] It gave Muslims the status of an officially recognized denomination,

hence the religion itself as well as its rituals, were protected by law, insofar as they did not violate the law of the then Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Hauptmann 1985). Along with other regulations in the realm of the law of religion, this became the legal basis for the accommodation of Islam. Following the influx of Muslim (labor) migrants after World War II, the Islam Act of 1912 was again revived to create a legal and institutional basis for accommodating issues pertaining to the Muslim religion in the Second Republic of Austria. Muslims received their own cemeteries as well as chaplaincies in hospitals and in the army. The arrival of *Gastarbeiter* (largely low-skilled and manual foreign laborers under a guest-worker program) from Turkey from the 1960s onward resulted in the emergence of sizeable Muslim communities in Austria's industrialized centers and bigger cities. In 1964 the Muslim Social Service was established and became—after a lengthy tug of war—legally recognized as a Muslim KuR by the Austrian government in 1979. Thus, the historically well-established church–state relationship also determined to a great extent the relationship between the state and Islam, which puts Austria in a rather unique institutional position when compared internationally. The Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IGGiÖ) is currently one of 17 legally recognized churches and denominations in the Austrian Republic.

When the Islamic Religious Community was recognized as a representative body for all Muslims in Austria in 1979, Muslims were given the same rights as other legally recognized churches and denominations. In 1981, religious education classes were introduced in public schools. Moreover, they have a special program in Austria's national public service television broadcaster: the ORF (Heine, Lohlker and Potz 2012). The IGGiÖ also has the right to be heard in legislative proceedings by providing input in the pre-draft and draft stages of bills. In fact, they were also consulted during a national litigative process aimed at reforming the Austrian constitution (*Österreich-Konvent*) alongside other churches and interest groups.[2] Although such privileges are not regulated in the law itself, they are part of the conventional practices of Austrian consociationalism and are also guaranteed on the basis of the "principle of parity" enshrined in the Austrian law on religion. It holds that all legally recognized churches and denominations should be treated equally and that if one church enjoys certain liberties the others must too (Potz 1996).

From the perspective of historical institutionalism, we may summarize that all evidence concerning the institutionalization of Islam in Austria's postwar republic was organized along historically established church–state relations. This tradition, following on from the Islam Act of 1912

and its reincorporation into the modern Austrian legal framework, had a path-dependent impact on the regulation of Muslim religion in the public space, which is a prominent argument in the literature on church–state relations (cf. Fetzer and Soper 2005). The role of Austrian consociational institutional culture in bringing about this development was demonstrated by Hafez (2016), who presented evidence to show that giving full recognition to the IGGiÖ and treating it as an equal institutional partner alongside other denominations was never a politically popular objective. Yet, despite resistance, the Austrian "neo-institutionalist and corporatist DNA" prevailed, and the Austrian state eventually followed its own template for recognizing an institutional partner, incorporating it into the decision-making, and achieving a mutually acceptable consensus (Hafez 2016).

At the time the legislation was drafted, other churches and denominations were formally asked for input.[3] Laws recognizing a KuR define the rules of the game between the state and the corresponding religious group. This means that the internal and external arrangements of these institutions, including those with the other religious groups, are de facto renegotiated. According to the Protestant Bishop Michael Bünker, such an Act "is painstakingly consented [to] by every church."[4] According to the consociationalist institutional logic, laws can never be made *against* a KuR. As such, the Islam Act also followed the tradition of similar legislation that has been enacted since 1945, such as the Protestant Act of 1961, the Orthodox Act of 1967, the Oriental Orthodox Churches Act (which incorporated the Copts) of 2003, and the Israelite Act, which was amended in 2012. All these Acts were made with the express consent of every KuR affected by the new legislation

To sum up, there is clear evidence that the original approach to Islam-related politics was one based on consociationalism, as we see in the establishment of representative institutional bodies for the Islamic community in Austria. These were recognized as equal negotiating partners to the government and other such bodies and were granted some veto capacity over the rules that were binding to the members of their community, and they continued to be engaged in the resolution of cleavage-related conflicts. At the same time, we can find no evidence of Islam or Islam-related politics being an issue in party politics or political competition. Given the tradition of neo-corporatism and consensus-oriented politics that has prevailed in the Austrian political system, one would assume that the new Islam Act of 2015 would also have been adopted along the same lines. However, the process ended up being strikingly different, as

we will show subsequently. How may we therefore explain this deviation from both the consociationalist norm and Austria's own history of Islam-related politics (Rosenberger and Mourão Permoser 2012)? This question will be addressed in the next section.

CHANGING THE APPROACH: ISLAM-RELATED POLITICS IN THE CONTEXT OF PARTY COMPETITION AND ISSUE POLITICS

The Austrian political party most opposed to Islam in Austria is the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ). Descended from both liberal and nationalist currents of the 19th century that favored a politically and culturally unified Germany, the Freedom Party was founded in 1956 and attracted many former Nazi sympathizers. From the start, the FPÖ vehemently opposed the party-political hegemony of the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs; SPÖ) and the (Christian) conservative Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei; ÖVP). Nonetheless, the FPÖ remained a rather marginal opposition party shut out from the levers of power at the federal and state levels. In terms of religion, the FPÖ was historically rather anti-clerical and particularly anti-Catholic. It clearly never saw itself as a defender of Christian or Catholic traditions. This direction essentially remained consistent until 1986 when Jörg Haider took over the leadership of the party (Heinisch 2002). From 1986 to 1999, the "new" FPÖ under Haider increased its electoral share from 5% to 26.9%, and the party's share of seats in parliament grew from 5 to 52. By the end of the 1990s, the Freedom Party had also greatly expanded its power at the regional and local levels, emerging as the second biggest party in five (including the capital of Vienna) of Austria's nine provinces and the dominant party in one province. It had achieved this success by adopting a programmatic mix of Austrian cultural parochialism, welfare chauvinism, and anti-internationalism, and by expanding into areas where it had hitherto been weak, such as industrial centers and Catholic rural areas (Heinisch 2002; see also Luther 2008). The FPÖ gained international notoriety by engaging in xenophobic and identity-oriented rhetoric, launching an anti-foreigner referendum drive, and introducing racist terminology such as "*Überfremdung*" (the "over-foreignization" of the Austrian people) into public discourse in state, national, and European elections from the early 1990s onward (Heinisch 2002).

Subsequently, the Freedom Party moved closer to conservative groups in the Catholic Church, began defending Catholic traditionalism (Heinisch and Kristina 2016)—which was unusual for a previously anti-clerical party—and presented a family-oriented social policy agenda that clearly corresponded to ideas that were popular among religious conservatives in the ÖVP (Heinisch 2002). Increasingly, the FPÖ described itself as a defender of the Christian "Occident" and regarded Islam, by implication, as a cultural threat (terrorism was less of an issue at the time). In a clear departure from its long-standing anti-clerical tradition, the new Freedom Party Program[5] of 1997 devoted extensive attention to Christianity as the "foundation of Europe" and the traditions of the "*Abendland*" ("Christian civilization"),[6] which required a "Christianity that defends its values."[7]

Following the 1999 national elections, Conservatives and the Freedom Party were in the position to form a coalition (Heinisch 2002). The switch to the unfamiliar role of being a governing party proved to be a political fiasco for the FPÖ (Luther 2003). Following the hemorrhaging of political representatives at state and national elections (2002), the party renewed its coalition with the Conservatives only to fall apart in 2005 when Haider led a group of relative moderates out of the party to continue the coalition with the ÖVP under a new guise as the Alliance for the Future of Austria (Bündnis Zukunft Österreich; BZÖ). Meanwhile, the FPÖ reconstituted itself under the leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache as a radical, right-wing, populist opposition party. Fearing an existential threat and facing dramatic losses according to the polls, the FPÖ needed to rebuild its hard-core base by projecting polarizing messages and pushing identity politics in ways that had not been possible while they were serving in government (Heinisch and Kristina 2016).

The 2006 parliamentary elections were the first in which Haider's BZÖ and the "new" FPÖ led by Strache competed directly against each other. Therefore, the FPÖ and the BZÖ were trying hard to appeal to voters concerned about immigration and European integration (Hafez 2010a; 2010b). While the FPÖ was in government as the small coalition partner of the conservative ÖVP, the former had no reason to combine its anti-elitist discourse with Islamophobic ideology. This changed, however, as soon as the FPÖ was forced into opposition in 2005 and, in order to stave off collapse in the face of an existential political crisis, had to appeal to its radical political base. The splintering off by the BZÖ led by the Freedom Party's former leader and most important political figure, Haider, presented an unprecedented danger for the rump of the FPÖ, as both

Haider's BZÖ and the Strache-led FPÖ were claiming to be the "real deal." However, being out of power and having greater flexibility to move further to the right, it was the rump of the FPÖ that could appeal to, and thus lock in, the traditional far-right grassroots support of the "old" FPÖ. Strache wanted to position his party as the most right-wing and anti-establishment in the Austrian political landscape. By comparison, the BZÖ was less effective in this respect. Firstly, it was made up of office-seeking moderates, and, secondly, Haider himself was a provincial governor and in a coalition in his home state. This imposed natural limits on the competition with the FPÖ through making appeals to the far right. Thus, as the BZÖ began focusing more on market liberalism, the Freedom Party could emerge as the principal advocate of cultural identity politics. This, in turn, forced the ÖVP to respond, as it no longer had an exclusive lock on conservative and religious voters concerned about multicultural-ism and Islam. FPÖ was in the best position to take ownership of the immigration issue and, by extension, opposition to Turkish accession to the EU. This meant that the FPÖ focused nearly exclusively on patriotism, defending Austrian culture and tradition, security, and welfare (namely that immigrants should be denied social benefits). Seeing its strategy val-idated after gaining votes and momentum in the 2008 national elections, the FPÖ continued its radical sociocultural message to boost its support in two state elections (Luther 2008). In the state of Styria, the party demanded a ban on the construction of mosques and minarets. In Vienna, the FPÖ ran on an anti-immigration and anti-Muslim platform, reminding voters of the Ottoman siege of Vienna, and more than doubled its vote share from 10.9% to 25.8% (Jenny 2011).

Viewed in terms of the logic of competition, the center-right faced the challenge of distinguishing itself from its social-democratic senior coali-tion partner after 2006. Not only was it harder as the minor partner to com-municate their political success to the voting public, since their coalition partner held the chancellorship, but the Conservatives shared equally in the blame for unpopular policies. Its role in a coalition government con-strained the ÖVP from moving further to the right on most issues, pre-cisely when it was facing a persistent challenge from the far right. As a result, taking up the Islam issue fairly publicly allowed the Conservatives to raise their profile vis-à-vis their unloved coalition partner in an area that was not of core interest for the Social Democrats while appealing to a wider cross section of voters on the right.

In 2006, the ÖVP-dominated Ministry of the Interior published a study on whose basis the conservative Interior Minister Liese Prokop argued that

45% of all Austrian Muslims were "opposed to integration." Later in 2008, the ÖVP, which was in coalition with the FPÖ at the provincial level in Vorarlberg, implemented a local ban on the construction of mosques and minarets. In 2009 the state of Carinthia followed suit. At the time it was governed by the BZÖ in coalition with the ÖVP (Hafez 2010a; 2010b). These developments were preceded by a shift in the public debate on Islam and represent the first occasion in which concrete policy changes toward the Muslim minority population manifested themselves. Taking advantage of the political space that had opened up, the Conservatives were in a position to take up leadership in this area by appropriating and co-opting issues and items for the agenda that the far right had introduced.

In response, the Social Democrats maintained an ambivalent position, struggling to reconcile their tradition of secularism and distance from any kind of religion, especially "foreign" ones, with their stance on multiculturalism and sociocultural tolerance. Unable to successfully handle and negotiate opposing ideological positions and recognizing the potentially divisive nature of the Islam issue—which pitted secularists against multiculturalists and the Vienna branch against the more conservative party organizations in the provinces—the SPÖ blurred its position. Moreover, the party had been hemorrhaging blue-collar voters to the FPÖ. As a result, defending the Islamic community or an all-too-open advocacy of the acceptance of Islam in Austria was not seen as a winning issue in the Austrian political marketplace by the Social Democrats. This meant that the center-left no longer decisively countered populist messages. Nonetheless, within the government coalition, the Conservatives took control of this issue. As a co-governing party, they were able to implement several of their policy demands and thus had an advantage over the FPÖ in opposition, which could do little more than "talk" about issues. As such, the ÖVP became the primary driving force behind the creation and implementation of the Islam Act of 2015.

EVIDENCE OF CHANGE IN ISLAM POLITICS I: THE ISLAM ACT OF 2015

While the Austrian constitution calls for the equal treatment of all legally recognized churches and denominations (*Gleichheitssatz* according to article VII of the Austrian Federal Constitutional Act; Prainsack 2006), the Islam Act became controversial for its discriminatory treatment of

the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IGGiÖ). This was high-
lighted by leading legal scholars—especially in the field of the law of reli-
gion by figures such as Richard Potz, Brigitte Schinkele, and Stefan
Schima[8]—social scientists (Dautović and Hafez 2015), and Islamic
Studies scholars (Skowron-Nalborczyk 2015), as well as the IGGiÖ
itself[9] in addition to (Muslim) civil society (Hafez 2017b). This was a
remarkable turn of events because consociationalist rulemaking does not
usually occur against but in consensus with the community and the interest
groups representing it.

In June 2011 Sebastian Kurz was appointed state secretary (and later
minister) for integration, previously a marginal portfolio but one which
cuts across policy domains and thus allowed him to take ownership of
the issue, at least among the mainstream parties, and stake out a position
between the center and the far right. This course of action was clearly
designed to appeal to voters who, like many in the People's Party, were
dedicated Catholics and apprehensive about the growth of Islam. Kurz's
approach was designed to appeal to an electorate concerned about immi-
gration but for whom the FPÖ was too radical and controversial. Lastly,
taking a tougher stance on integration, as well as on the monitoring of
Muslim community centers and Islamic instruction in schools, also
allowed the ÖVP to shore up its reputation as the law-and-order party
in uncertain times.

For the emerging leader of the ÖVP, Kurz, the centerpiece for bringing
attention to his approach and making his mark was the Islam Act of 2015,
which was to be a cornerstone of his integration policy. During the discus-
sion of the new Islam Act, Kurz as integration minister met with FPÖ
leader's Strache for a public debate:

> STRACHE: Concerning the Islam Act … [t]here are positive elements like
> the ban on foreign funding that prevents foreign states from having an influ-
> ence on our politics. But this also needs to allow for the possibility of
> control and sanctions. Until now, I have lacked the possibility to revoke
> the status of a corporatist public body [from an Islamic organization] and
> remove their legal status.
>
> KURZ: Mr. Strache, it seems you haven't read the bill.
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> …
>
> KURZ: The Act contains fines and the possibility for the chancellor to dis-
> solve a religious denomination.
>
> …

> STRACHE: That's not enough. Another problem with the Act is that it has to specify that sermons and lectures have to be given in German. Also, the Qur'an must be translated into German.
>
> KURZ: The translation of the Qur'an is in the Act too. I want to point out four aspects: First of all, the Act stipulates the priority of the Austrian legal system over faith. Second, the declaration of faith, which means of the Qur'an, is part of the Act. Third, that German is language of education is self-evident. And fourth, I was the first politician who urged that mosques should preach in German.
>
> STRACHE: Mr. Kurz, I called for this even before you went into politics.[10]

This passage shows that the right-wing populist policy claims, which the Freedom Party had been demanding for a long time, were in part implemented by a Conservative minister through the new Islam Act. The pressure from the FPÖ on the policy formulations of the Conservatives was also evidenced by the head of the ÖVP's parliamentary faction, Reinhold Lopatka, who said during a parliamentary debate on Islamic State that the Islam Act was an "appropriate response to Islamism."[11] It should be noted that the Conservatives were able to play this dominant role because the Social Democrats had largely ceded this issue domain to the ÖVP. Hence the ÖVP was now able to emphasize the issue of Islam as a core competency, while the FPÖ, first, has an even more radical stance toward these issues and, second, was not able to demonstrate competence since it has been in opposition since 2005.

On one level, this approach to Islam-related politics and the ambivalence in the debate on the new Islam Act demonstrated the shift in the national debate on Islam. In the past, the Islamic community had been regarded as one of several Austrian communities that had unique interests and concerns, which the state and politics customarily handled through consensualism and organized interest representation. Now the tradition of pluralist inclusion of different religions had given way to viewing Islam through the prism of securitization and its cultural compatibility with Austrian values. The use of a state-sanctioned and exclusive translation of the Qur'an for use in religious instruction had been a demand from the right-wing populist camp, which was also legislated in the new Act. There is no comparable regulation that forces other KuRs to have a state-sanctioned version of their holy texts. In fact, this demand dates back to the FPÖ's 2008 15-point program that calls for the "disclosure

of the foundations of Islamic faith" and "a certified translation of the Qur'an to be deposited."[12] The desire for transparency in the 2008 declaration was added to force Muslims to "display verses of the Qur'an, which violate constitutional principles."[13] For Kurz, as a minister, it was the desire to demonstrate that extremists and Jihadists cannot refer to the Qur'an to legitimate their actions[14] that appears at first glance to be a reasonable approach, but which nonetheless remained a unique provision for Muslim denominations.

The Islam Act of 2015 starkly contrasted with the aforementioned consociationalist pattern and was widely regarded as a violation of the "principle of parity," which is in itself derived from the broader constitutional principle of equality. The bill had already been criticized at the draft stage (Hafez 2017b). A number of scholars observed manifestations of unequal treatment in the new law.[15] This was especially evidenced by the fact that the Islam Act of 2015 was in many respects a copy of the Act on the recognition of the Jewish community, but differed substantially in certain crucial ways (Dautović and Hafez 2015). The new Islam Act set out more criteria for becoming recognized as a Muslim denomination, named constraints—like the ban on foreign funds for Muslim religious activities—and introduced "national security" as a possible reason to prohibit religious meetings (Skowron-Nalborczyk 2015). A policy frame analysis strongly suggests that many of the regulations in the new Act reflected claims made by far-right political actors in the decade leading up to the legislation, such as the implied general skepticism toward Muslims" law abidance, as reflected in § 2 of the Islam Act (Hafez 2015a; 2015b). This also included the rather symbolic clause stating the obvious that state law takes precedence over internal religious law, which can only be found in the Islam Act and no other comparable legislation in Austria. This corresponds strikingly to the FPÖ's discourse that depicts Muslims as only being loyal to Sharia law and not the national constitution (Hafez 2015a; 2015b). While the new Islam Act was eventually passed with centrist party support, this policy shift reflects a larger move to the right in the public's discourse and politics on Islam (cf. the analysis of the parliamentary debate on the Act in Hafez 2017a).

In contrast to the ÖVP, the minister responsible for cultural affairs, the Social Democrat Josef Ostermayer, blurred his position by defending the Islam Act, suggesting it had little to do with security issues but rather aimed to protect Muslims from foreign interference (Hafez 2017a, 12, 15). This eventually also culminated in the 2017 Integration Act, which banned the wearing of the full-face veil in public.[16] When Kurz became

ÖVP leader in 2017, he claimed that this ban reflected his strategy of "zero tolerance for Islamism and extremism."[17] In line with the ambivalence of the SPÖ's approach to Islam-related politics, the Social Democratic Chancellor Christian Kern had initially argued that a ban such as this was not his priority since this would not have an impact on integration.[18] A few months later the Act banning the full-face veil was passed and implemented. This course of action again demonstrates the willingness of the SPÖ to leave this issue to the ÖVP and their inability to reconcile internal ideological divisions. In connection with the new Islam Act and the 2017 Integration Act, the Social Democrats, and even some members of the Green party took up anti-Muslim populist messages but sought to distinguish between Islam and "political" Islam (a concept that is never clearly defined). The latter allowed centrist and even leftist political actors to raise the issues of "foreign" influences and immigrants without appearing racist, as ostensibly the debate did not hinge on skin color or country of origin but on "alien" cultural practices and the potential threats that emanated from clandestine immigrant circles.

EVIDENCE OF CHANGE IN ISLAM POLITICS II: NEW RESTRICTIONS ON MUSLIM EDUCATION

Along with changes to the Islam Act and Islamic institutions, another fundamental change has occurred that affects Muslim religious education. Islamic religious education within the public-school system is one of the privileges enjoyed by legally recognized churches and religious denominations. The Islamic Religious Community introduced Islamic religious schooling shortly after its establishment in 1981–82.

In 2010, 57,000 students were taught by 430 teachers. This system is fully funded by the Austrian Ministry of Education and administrated by the Islamic Religious Community. Due to the fact that the Islamic Religious Community initially had no trained teachers, many were brought in from Turkey. In 1998, the Islamic Religious Community established its own institution of higher learning and founded the Muslim Teachers Training College (IRPA), which now trains students to become teachers with a bachelor's degree. According to the second president of the Islamic Religious Community, setting up these new institutions was a straightforward affair as far as the government was concerned, which originally supported the entire process. Within only 2 weeks, the legal formalities were completed. Also, in later years, the Islamic Religious

Community received funding for more supervisors for religious schooling. This happened on the basis of an existing framework of church–state relations in which every legally recognized church and denomination receives state funding to organize religious instruction in public schools. Analogous to the church-related teacher training colleges, which are run by the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox communities, other faith groups, such as the Jewish and Muslim communities, were free to draw on the same resources and support mechanisms. Again, we can observe the neo-institutionalist path dependency of an already established principle being carried over—Islam as a fully recognized and equal religion since 1912—and we also note the corporatist principle of working through and with autonomous and equal interest groups, which are free to regulate their own affairs within a generally agreed upon institutional framework.

In 2008, the FPÖ demanded in a manifesto on Islam that "Islamic schools and religious classes should be surveilled" (Hafez 2009). According to the FPÖ, textbooks needed to be evaluated in relation to their potential anti-democratic content. The FPÖ's policy claims were directed uniquely at Muslims and did not affect KuRs. What supported the FPÖ's claim was a sociologist, who was himself a teacher at the Muslim Teachers Training College, who published his dissertation in 2009, in which he had investigated the beliefs of Muslim teachers at public schools, provoking a debate in the media (Khorchide 2009). A comparative analysis of this debate and public discussions of the Austrian Values Study, which was published 2 months later, revealed significant prejudice in public discourse on issues connected to Islam (Hafez 2015a; 2015b), reflecting talking points that were consistent with long-established FPÖ rhetoric. Although the Austrian Values Study revealed other problematic attitudes among the Austrian public,[19] the media particularly focused on the Islam issue.

Amidst growing political pressure linked to the idea that the FPÖ's claims about the values of Muslims and Muslim educators were apparently supported by this survey, the Ministry of Education felt compelled to confront the issue publicly. After a high-profile meeting between the president of the Islamic Religious Community and the minister of education, they publicly announced a five-point program to tackle the issue. The centerpiece of this program was that no teacher of any religion or subject would be allowed to make any statements that could be construed as being critical of democracy. The five points stated specifically that teachers of the Muslim religion had to sign new contracts of employment in which "the values of democracy, human rights, and the constitution are

contractual."[20] Here it should be noted that the Islamic Religious Community already had a preamble in its constitution that pledged loyalty to the Austrian constitution and democracy. Teachers of classes on religion who lacked a proper command of German were threatened with dismissal by the ministry, and the teaching materials of each teacher would be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with the constitution.[21]

The results of the Austrian Values Study, which was strongly criticized by other scholars for severe methodological problems,[22] were taken by the FPÖ and critics of Islam as evidence of the need for greater control. As a consequence, the state introduced a system of surveillance measures based on the blanket assumption that the Islamic community was insufficiently trustworthy. In contrast to other legally recognized churches and denominations, the Islamic institutions were placed under a microscope though checks on their command of the German language, the loyalty of teachers to the constitution, and the political appropriateness of their teaching materials. Moreover, while the initial plan had been to subject all teachers of religion to this treatment, in the end only those of Muslim religion had to face these measures since other churches protested and refused to accept this treatment.[23] Here one should point out that, for example, Orthodox Christian instructors often face similar issues regarding language proficiency, but they are not subjected to the same legal burdens and suspicions.

Much of the controversy was centered in the capital city of Vienna where the FPÖ was the second largest political force and particularly radical and active. Although the Social Democratic local government, especially the Viennese education authority, declared it would not create special regulations for Muslims, the new tests were designed in such a way that they applied exclusively to Muslim teachers.[24] These changes clearly marked a shift in Islam-related politics by establishing a special political regime and institutionalizing a different pattern of interaction between the state and Muslim organizations in comparison with other churches and religious denominations.

By comparison, one of the very few controversies in connection with the Islamic Religious Community throughout the 1980s and 1990s would have provided the state with an ample pretext to adopt more restrictive policies toward Islam, but this did not happen; we can see yet again that at that time the government's entire approach to Islam-related politics was different. The controversy pivoted on the fact that the Islamic Religious Community made female students wear headscarves during

Muslim religious classes in public schools. While a female Social Democrat MP argued that this constituted a repression of Muslim women, the then Minister for Education Erhard Busek from the ÖVP pointed out that multiculturalism means the acceptance of others, along with all their differences (Hafez 2012), which basically confirmed the autonomy of the Islamic Religious Community in these matters. After 2005, this institutional pattern vis-à-vis KuRs changed, and far-reaching regulations were imposed on the Muslim community, its representative body, and the education system. In April 2017, the ruling Viennese SPÖ even accepted a proposal to create a blanket ban of the headscarf for pupils in elementary schools,[25] while in the past Austria had been seen as one of the most liberal regimes in terms of headscarf regulation in Europe (Sauer 2016).

THE ADDITIONAL FACTOR: THE NEW ANTI-ISLAM ELITE DISCOURSE

The changes in party competition and issue mobilization by themselves do not fully explain why there was: (a) relatively little resistance to these changes within the ÖVP, a party known for its traditional heterogeneity in sociocultural and political questions; and (b) less overall opposition to the emerging anti-Muslim populist discourse after 2006.

The first and most important contributing factor to the change in Islam-related politics, as evidenced by the new Islam Act and the treatment of KuRs, has been the mainstreaming of anti-Muslim populist discourse, which has been propagated by the Freedom Party in particular. It has not only affected the image of Islam as a religion but also the relationship with Islamic institutions, such as the Islamic Religious Community, a frequent target of FPÖ campaigns (Hafez 2010a; 2010b). It has been routinely depicted as a hotbed of fundamentalism and a meeting place for peddlers of extremism. FPÖ programs have stated that the Islamic Religious Community is closely connected to Islamist organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, implying that, as an anti-democratic entity, it could never be a trusted institutional partner to the state (Vilimksy 2016). Over time this helped discredit the organization, making it less acceptable as a partner to mainstream political actors in the legislative process.

This stands in sharp contrast to public discourse, especially among Austrian elites, prior to the FPÖ's anti-Muslim campaigns, which, as a

study by Hafez (2014a; 2014b) has shown, had long been one marked by inclusion and recognition. As early as 1921, the newspaper *Neues Wiener Journal* celebrated the construction of a mosque in Vienna "as a visible sign of Austria's friendship with Turkey [which would have] a mighty impact on the Muslim world far beyond Turkey."[26] Likewise, Muslim Bosnia and Herzegovina were routinely depicted as one of the territories in the Balkans that was most loyal to Austria, and Bosnian soldiers serving in the Austro-Hungarian army were considered especially brave. When the first prominent mosque was constructed in Vienna in 1979, the Austrian Press Agency wrote: "If Allah wills, we will soon also have a muezzin in Vienna, who calls the believers to prayer."[27] The *Arbeiter Zeitung* ran the following headline at the time: "Austria's First Mosque and Islamic Center Opened: A Symbol of Reconciliation and a New Landmark for Vienna."[28] This reflects the general political discourse of elites in those years, apparent also in the fact that the authorization of the Islamic Religious Community in 1979 was widely seen as a soft-power tool for Austrian foreign policy (Hafez 2016). At the time, Austria enjoyed markedly cordial relations with much of the Arab and Islamic world. Chancellor Bruno Kreisky had emerged as one of the West's foremost champions of the Palestinian cause, and his close contacts with internationally controversial Arab leaders from Yasser Arafat to Muammar Gadaffi were regarded within the public discourse as a sign of an independent foreign policy that was garnering global attention. Visits by Arab leaders and the transfer of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries's (OPEC) headquarters to Vienna were regarded with pride. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, with which Austria had very close relations, were seen as lucrative export markets for Austria's still largely nationalized and struggling heavy industry (Hafez 2016).

Although Austrians and even the Austrian elite may have lacked concrete personal contact with Islam, the religion and its community did not have negative connotations in public discourse. Even after a Palestinian commando raided OPEC's headquarters in Vienna in 1975, and following another attack by Arab terrorists at Vienna International Airport in 1985, there were no noticeable attempts in Austria to frame these developments in sociocultural terms or to link national security to a particular ethnic or religious community in Austria. Although these terrorist attacks were perpetrated by secular nationalist forces, the conflation of the Arab and the Muslim that happened in other places, as suggested in studies at that time (Said 1981; Hafez, 2002), did not appear in the Austrian political discourse.

The view that Austrian elites had a rather sympathetic outlook toward the presence of Islam in Austria was also widely shared by the leaders of the Muslim community themselves. Even after 9/11, representatives of the Islamic Religious Community, as well as those of the foreign ministry, praised the "Austrian model" of good relations between the state and Islam (Sticker 2008). During the first Austrian Imam Conference, the then president of the national parliament, Andreas Khol, stated that "Austria knows no clash of civilizations. … [O]ur Muslim citizens are an important part of our society. … Let's continue with the good Austrian tradition of different cultures and religions living together in peace. Austria is a model for many states in this regard and we can be proud of that."[29]

The elite discourse changed markedly after 2006 when the FPÖ began emphasizing anti-Muslim populist campaigns (Hödl 2010) in order to compete with the BZÖ and rebuild its grassroots support. Examples of major FPÖ campaign slogans at the time include: "Vienna will not become Istanbul" (Viennese elections in 2005); "No home for Islam" (national parliamentary elections in 2006); "No home for radical Islam" (Graz local elections in 2008); "The sound of church bells instead of muezzin song" (Tyrol regional elections in 2008; Hafez 2009). Despite the shrill overtones of this Freedom Party rhetoric, their underlying themes (security, identity, cultural compatibility) seeped into public discourse and all the other parties, eventually resulting in corresponding changes in their political approach to Islam.

This shift in elite discourse is also indicated by the fact that in the public debate on the ban of mosques and minarets in two regional Austrian parliaments the Conservatives picked up all but the most extreme arguments of FPÖ politicians, as can be observed in stenographic protocols from legislative sessions (Hafez 2010a; 2010b). Subsequently, centrist party politicians began framing the debate in terms of security and culture, invoking terms such as *"Parallelgesellschaft"* ("parallel society") or "hate preacher" that originated in FPÖ rhetoric on Islam and found their way into the election manifesto by 2008.[30]

Kurz, who was head of the Young Conservatives (JVP) at the time and would later become a central figure in creating the new 2015 Islam Act and who in 2017 became Conservative party leader, argued that the Islamic faith needed to be more transparent and open. He demanded that the Islamic Religious Community stop pushing for mosques with minarets and for imams to start speaking German for the sake of better integration into society.[31] By comparison, the leader of the Social Democratic faction in Parliament, Josef Cap, called for Muslims to conform to the

constitution, implying that there was widespread disloyalty among the Austrian Muslim population, something that had in the past been propagated by the FPÖ. Cap also spoke of "suppressed Muslim women," "hate preachers," "counter-societies" ("*Gegengesellschaften*"), and the threat of "sharia law as antithetical to the Austrian constitution"[32]—all typical FPÖ phraseology. In 2010, Laura Rudas, the then executive secretary of the SPÖ, stated publicly that the headscarf was a "symbol of oppression" and that, although it could not be outlawed, "it must be a goal to drop the headscarf."[33] Most of these claims had been FPÖ demands in previous years. We can thus conclude that following a period of incendiary anti-Islamic rhetoric delivered by the Freedom Party, discourse also shifted among the centrist parties, especially the Conservatives, in which leading politicians have repeated many of the claims that had been made earlier by the FPÖ. It is therefore little surprise that we find the same rhetoric in the discourse surrounding the creation of the Islam Act of 2015 and the new rules that governed Muslim teacher training and education, thus confirming a profound change in Austrian Islam-related politics. This clearly suggests that the FPÖ's sustained campaigning contributed to an increasingly populist discourse on the role of Islam in Austria, which put the government parties on the defensive and brought about a major shift in the cooperation between state bureaucracy and the Islamic Religious Community. In the words of the then president Anas Schakfeh, "This was an earthquake that shook the Islamic Religious Community to its foundations. After that everything we did and said was questioned. The media looked at us more distrustfully than ever" (cited from Hafez 2012, 183).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we tried to show that neo-institutionalist path dependency can be used to explain Austria's Islam-related politics until the early 2000s, including the creation of the Islamic Religious Community in 1979. Based on the Islam Act of 1912, the Austrian state followed the established institutional pattern of church–state relations, applying the principles of parity and autonomy to the Muslim community, its main representative body, and its education systems. This stands in marked contrast to recent Islam-related politics and has been pursued by the same government coalition of SPÖ and ÖVP that had previously followed consociational Islam-related politics. The shift in approach has culminated in the

Islam Act of 2015 and new onerous legal mandates that de facto apply exclusively and selectively to Muslim education and Muslim teacher training. Thus, we can further confirm research as conducted by Bale, who showed that center-right parties often engage in immigration and cultural issues as does the far right (Bale 2003).In doing so our paper builds on a growing literature devoted to explaining the impact of the rise of far-right parties and identity-oriented movements. It also allows us to develop empirical expectations if and when such parties enter public office.

We also demonstrated that this shift in Islam-related politics came about after a highly visible mobilization campaign initiated by the FPÖ in an effort to rebuild its strength following a near total collapse in 2005. The issues of Islam and Austrian identity were forcefully introduced into party competition to the extent that in the ensuing discourse the FPÖ achieved issue ownership, to which the other parties reacted by incorporating and appropriating the anti-Muslim populist claims of the FPÖ.

While Islam had long been a part of the Austrian narrative of pluralism and coexistence, dating back to the time of the Habsburg Monarchy, the political discourse after 2005 framed Islam as something alien that needed to be closely monitored and rendered compatible with Austrian customs. The public statements by then Integration Minister Kurz show the extent of rivalry between the FPÖ and the Conservatives for continued issue ownership by establishing who is more hawkish in their regulation of the Muslim community. This was something that was also highly visible in numerous televised debates between representatives of the two parties during the 2017 national election campaign. In the case of the ÖVP, party competition meant to fully coopt the Islam issue from the FPÖ. While the ÖVP blurred its position regarding Islam and Muslims at an early stage (implementing the Islam Act while arguing that Islam was a part of Austria), it attempted to fully appropriate the FPÖ's agenda during the election campaign (arguing for a general closure of Islamic kindergartens and a further amendment of the Islam Act in the new coalition program of the ÖVP and FPÖ as presented on December 16, 2017). Hence, the ÖVP presented its new anti-Muslim positions as a core competency.

We conclude from our observations that path dependency and consociationalism no longer shape Austria's Islam-related politics. Instead, electoral competition and the new politics of identity have introduced a new discourse on Islam in which the populist far right and the center-right seek to compete on sociocultural issues, including immigration, traditional culture, and Islam. The political left, the Social Democrats, and also the

Greens have strong secular streaks and view certain religious practices (such as the wearing of headscarves or traditional methods of slaughtering animals) as problematic. Consequently, they are ill-equipped to combat anti-Muslim populist rhetoric and policy initiatives. Moreover, in a fragmented and contested political marketplace, defending Islam is generally not considered a winning strategy. As long as Islam remained a cultural issue, consociationalism was well-equipped to handle state-community relations. Once Islam became politicized, that is introduced as an issue in the arena of party—political contests, state–community relations started to shift. The Islam Act of 2015 was the culmination of this shift and represents thus far the clearest evidence of this change. While the ÖVP was able to monopolize the issue of Islam within the coalition, and thus exhibit its competence in this regard, the SPÖ blurred its position due to divergence in approach, leaving space for a rivalry between an established Conservative party and the far right. In fact, the 2017 national elections campaign saw the Conservatives under Kurz and the FPÖ under Strache compete as to who would be tougher on immigrants and refugees. The Conservatives' positions aligned with those of the FPÖ, so much so that the latter felt compelled to launch a campaign titled "*Vordenker-Spätzünger*" (thought leader latecomer), reminding voters of who was actually the first to shape anti-Islam populist discourse in Austria.

Drawing on Rovny's work (2012), we conclude that concerning the issue of integrating religious minorities, the ÖVP has shifted from blurring to a strategy of emphasizing this issue as a core competence. Here, the Conservatives are following at the federal level a pattern already observed at regionally, where the ÖVP had for some time a clear position on banning mosques and minarets when compared with the SPÖ and the Greens (Hafez 2010a; 2010b). Lastly, given emerging majorities of voters with anti-Muslim sentiments in various European countries,[34] Austria could serve as an important point of departure and useful comparison case for identifying similar patterns in party competition.

NOTES

1. 164. Kundmachung des Bundeskanzlers vom 11. März 1988 über die Aufhebung einiger Worte im Axt. I sowie in den §§ 5 und 6 des Islamgesetzes durch den Verfassungsgerichtshof, https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1988_164_0/1988_164_0.pdf (Accessed on August 1, 2017)

2. Representatives of churches and religious communities gathered together at the Austrian Convention. Parliamentary correspondence Nr. 882 (November 21, 2003) can be found at: https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2003/PK0882/index.shtml (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

3. Interview with Christoph Konrath, June 1, 2015.

4. Interview with Michael Bünker, November 5, 2014.

5. The Freedom Party Program for 1997 and 1999 can be found at: http://www.fpoe.at/fileadmin/Contentpool/Portal/PDFs/Parteiprogramme/Parteiprogram_eng.pdf and https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/uploads/attach/file/5244/42420_1999 (both Accessed on May 12, 2015).

6. Literally translated, the word "*Abendland*" means "Occident," marking a geographical and cultural contrast to the Muslim "Orient." The term is often translated to mean "Western," which, I believe, would be a mistake here because of its clear ideological, especially Catholic, connotations.

7. See footnote 4.

8. The statement (102/SN-69/ME XXV. GP) by the legal scholars Richard Potz and Brigitte Schinkele (November 5, 2014) can be found at. http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXV/SNME/SNME_02154/imfname_372284.pdf (Accessed on November 10, 2014).

9. The statement (68/SN-69/ME XXV) by the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (November 5, 2014) can be found at. https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXV/SNME/SNME_02076/fname_371638.pdf (Accessed on November 10, 2014).

10. This is an excerpt from Ida Metzger's interview with Minister for Integration Sebastian Kurz and President of the right-wing party FPÖ Heinz-Christian Strache: "Höhlenmenschen—Sager laut Kurz 'einfach dumm,'" *Kurier*, November 16, 2014, http://kurier.at/politik/inland/integrations-gipfeltreffen-strache-gegen-kurz-streitgespraech-ueber-asyl-und-islam/97.260.998 (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

11. The critical article ("We need Islam") on the Islam Act is Clemens Neuhold, "Wir brauchen den Islam," *Wiener Zeitung*, November 9, 2014, http://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/oesterreich/politik/700481_Wir-brauchen-den-Islam.html (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

12. The organization close to the Austrian People's Party, the Wiener Akademikerbund, made 15 claims on Muslims: "Wiener Akademikerbund stellt 15 Forderungen an österreichische Muslime," *Europe News*, November 22, 2008, http://europenews.dk/de/node/16427 (Accessed on March 24, 2015).

13. The quotation is taken from an article ('They have to declare themselves as cultural Christians!") on the common goals of the Wiener Akademikerbund and Amer Albayati's organisation ILMÖ: Güler Alkan, "Sie müssen sich Kulturchristen nennen!," *Der Standard*, March 7, 2011, http://derstandard.at/1297819743799/daStandardat-Reportage-Sie-muessen-sich-Kulturchristen-nennen (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

14. The Minister for Integration Sebastian Kurz demands a consistent translation of the Qur'an: "Kurz für einheitliche Koran-Übersetzung," *Kurier*, September 20, 2014, http://kurier.at/politik/inland/kurz-fuer-einheitliche-koran-uebersetzung/86.827.235 (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

15. See footnotes 1 and 2.

16. The Integration Law of 2017: Bundesgesetz, mit dem ein Integrationsgesetz und ein Anti-Gesichtsverhüllungsgesetz erlassen sowie das Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz, das Asylgesetz 2005, das Fremdenpolizeigesetz 2005, das Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz 1985 und die Straßenverkehrsordnung 1960 geändert werden. https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2006/PK0309/index.shtml (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

17. The quotation is from the Austrian Press Agency announcing that Sebastian Kurz was elected with 98.7% as the new leader of the ÖVP, July 1 2017, https://www.profil.at/oesterreich/wahl-oevp-parteitag-sebastian-kurz-8214197 (Accessed on 15 August, 2017).

18. "Kern against Burka-Ban," *Österreich*, August 27, 2016, www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/Kern-gegen-Burka-Verbot/249150507 (Accessed on October 5, 2017).

19. For instance, the Austrian Values Study showed that 21% of Austrian respondents long for a strong *Führer* and 6% want a military regime (Friesl, Polak and Hamachers-Zuba 2009).

20. This is a statement from the Islamic Community of Austria: "Stellungnahme der Islamischen Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich," *islam-tirol.at*, January 29, 2009, http://www.islam-tirol.at/aktuell.htm (Accessed on November 6, 2009).

21. Ibid.

22. Here we refer to an article on Aslan's Islam study: Erich Kocina, "Islam-Studie: Ist fünfmal beten Fanatismus?," *Die Presse*, January 20, 2009, http://diepresse.com/home/panorama/oesterreich/448623/IslamStudie_Ist-fuenfmal-beten-Fanatismus (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

23. On German-language proficiency, see the following article: "Protestant Church against Control of all Teachers of Religion," May 1, 2009, https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20090501_OTS0023/deutschkenntnisse-evangelischer-oberkirchenrat-gegen-ueberpruefung-aller-religionslehrer

24. The Viennese Education Authority (Wiener Stadtschulrat) refused to answer our questions regarding the implemented politics.

25. The Socialist Party of Vienna met to put requests to a vote. See "Es ging auch um Inhalte: Von Kopftuch bis Mindestsicherung," *Kronen Zeitung*, April 30, 2017.

26. The quotation is taken from an article on the first mosque project in Vienna: "Das Projekt einer Moschee in Wien," *Neues Wiener Journal*, February 1, 1921, quoted in: Ernst Fürlinger, *Moscheebaukonflikte in Österreich. Nationale Politik des religiösen Raums im globalen Zeitalter*, S. 170.

27. The quotation is taken from an article on debates about mosques in politics. See Otto Friedrich, "Muslime wollen in Sicht sein," *Die Furche*, March 11, 2008, http://www.furche.at/system/show thread.php?t=325 (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

28. "Erste Moschee Österreichs und islamisches Zentrum eröffnet" [First Mosque and Islamic Centre in Austria Opened], *Arbeiter Zeitung*, November 21, 1979.

29. The National Assembly Speaker Andreas Khols speaks at the opening of the Conference of European Imams and Ministers in Vienna. Parliamentary correspondence Nr. 309 (April 7, 2006) can be found at: https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2006/PK0309/index.shtml (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

30. ÖVP Governor Erwin Pröll called minarets "*artfremd*" [culturally alien] in language reminiscent of Nazi-style terminology that has strongly racist *völkisch* connotations. A former minister of the interior said that tolerance was "an absolute no-go in Islam."

31. See the press release from Sebastian Kurz on Islam: JVP-Kurz, "Nicht Konflikte schüren, sondern Integration ermöglichen," September 4, 2010, https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20100904_OTS0016/jvp-kurz-nicht-konflikte-schueren-sondern-integration-ermoeglichen (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

32. See the press release from Josef Cap on Islam: Cap: "Wer in Österreich leben will, hat sich nach Grundgesetzen des Landes zu richten," September 27, 2007, https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20070927_OTS0371/cap-wer-in-oesterreich-leben-will-hat-sich-nach-grundgesetzen-des-landes-zu-richten (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

33. Rainer Nowak, "Laura Rudas: Kopftuch-Gegnerin als Staatssekretärin?" *Die Presse*, October 13, 2010, http://diepresse.com/home/innenpolitik/kulisse/601936/Laura-Rudas_KopftuchGegnerin-als-Staatssekretaerin (Accessed on May 30, 2017).

34. Matthew Goodwin, Thomas Raines, David Cutts, What Do Europeans Think About Muslim Immigration?, Chatham House—The Royal Institute of International Affairs, February 7, 2017, https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/what-do-europeans-think-about-muslim-immigration (Accessed on December 27, 2017).

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