Right-Wing Populism and Islamophobism in Europe and their Impact on Turkey-EU Relations

Ayhan Kaya[a]

[a]Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey[1]

Abstract

This article aims to assess the correlation between populism and immigration in the European Union, and its impact on the EU – Turkey relations. Following the literature review on the current state of populist movements in the EU as well as on the findings of a comparative fieldwork conducted in Germany, France, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands, the article seeks to understand and explain how the debates on migration, refugees, mobility and Islam have an impact on the rise of extreme right-wing populism. Starting with the depiction of the main constituents of populist rhetoric in Europe vis-à-vis migrants and refugees, the article subsequently analyses social-economic, political and cultural drivers of populist extremism, and the resentment against diversity, multiculturalism, Islam, immigration and mobility among the supporters of populist parties in five selected European countries. In the last section of the article, the impact of right-wing populism and Islamophobism on the EU – Turkey relations will be analysed.

Keywords: Diversity, multiculturalism, migration, Islamophobism, mobility, social-economic constraints, populism.

Introduction

Turkey-EU relations have never been politically so blank in the last two decades. The path to full membership seems to be blocked for the time being in a process deliberately defined as open-ended. However, the picture becomes more nuanced and complicated when one looks at the fields of convergence between the two sides such as trade, financial flows, knowledge flows, migration, energy and security.[1] Beneath the political surface, structural economic and human indicators point towards an inescapable coming together between the EU and Turkey. The deepening cooperation in areas such as migration, energy, foreign policy and counter-terrorism suggests that the EU-Turkey relationship is actually so close and so important that it is unlikely to fall below a political threshold of no return.

Whether the future of the EU – Turkey relations will result in the full membership, or differentiated integration, not only the domestic political, societal, legal and cultural changes in Turkey but also the domestic issues within the European Union seem to have a great impact on the transformation of these relations. Accordingly, the main purpose of this article is to assess the relationship between populism and immigration in the European Union, and its impact on the EU- Turkey relations. Based

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CONTACT Ayhan Kaya, ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University, 34060 Eyüpsultan, Istanbul, Turkey.

on an literature review on the current state of populist movements in the EU as well as on the findings of a comparative fieldwork conducted in five European countries (Germany, France, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands) between mid-March and late-May 2017, the article seeks to understand and explain the relevance of the debates on migration, refugees, mobility and Islam on the rise of extreme right-wing populism.[2] Combining the findings of the fieldwork conducted within the framework of CoHERE project (2016-2019) together with the findings of another Horizon 2020 project, FEUTURE (2016-2019)[3], this article will analyse the current state of EU – Turkey relations in a particular context constrained by growing right-wing populism in Europe resulting from the earlier failures of mainstream political parties, global financial crisis, refugee crisis and Euroscepticism.

Based on an extensive field research conducted with the supporters of right-wing populist parties in Dresden (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD), Toulon and Paris (*Front National*, FN), Rome (*Movimento Cinque Stelle*, M5S), Athens (*Golden Dawn*, GD) and Rotterdam (*The Partij voor de Vrijheid,* PVV) between March and May 2017 within the CoHERE project, and on the major findings of the FEUTURE project, this article aims to trace the ways in which the supporters of these extreme right-wing parties oppose the "intrusion" of Muslims, migrants, refugees and culturally different others into their imagined homogenous communities of sentiments, and they jeopardise Turkey-EU relations. Methodologically speaking, the interviews have been analysed from a critical discourse analysis view in order to decipher the ways in which the interlocutors express their social-economic, political and psychological concerns.[4] With a specific focus on Turkey-EU relations, the article will also trace the footprints of this culturalist/civilizational political rhetoric disseminated by conservative mainstream European political parties since mid-2000s. The article starts with the depiction of the very substance of the populist rhetoric in Europe vis-à-vis migrants and refugees, which is based on the reiteration of a Manichean understanding of the world polarizing the public between "us" and "them". Then, the content of the right-wing populist rhetoric will be analysed further looking at the social-economic, political and cultural drivers of populist extremism, the resentment against diversity, multiculturalism, Islam, immigration and mobility among the supporters of populist parties in five selected European countries. In the last section of the article, the impact of right-wing populism and Islamophobism on the EU – Turkey relations will be analysed.

Populism as a Manichean Understanding: "Us" vs "Others"

Populist extremism feeds on the antagonism it portrays between the constituted 'pure people' and the enemies such as 'the Jews', 'the Muslims', 'ethnic minorities', or 'the corrupt elite'.[5] In Europe, this purity of the people is largely defined by far-right extreme populist groups in ethno-religious terms, which rejects the principle of equality and advocates policies of exclusion mainly toward migrant and minority groups. Despite national variations, these parties and movements can be characterised by their opposition to immigration, concern for the protection of national/European culture, adamant criticisms of globalization, the EU, representative democracy and mainstream political parties and by their exploitation of the 'culturally different' to the ethnic/religious/national self. Their appeal to the idea of having a strong leader is also very common across the populist movements in the world. Populists simply argue that established political parties corrupt the link between leaders and supporters, create artificial divisions within the homogenous people, and put their own interests above those of the people.[6]

Mabel Berezin makes a relevant analysis to explain the relevance of migration and mobility to right-wing populism prevalent in the EU. He claims that there are two analytical axes on which European populisms capture their nuances: *institutional axis*, and *cultural axis*.[7] In the institutional axis, their local organizational capacity, agenda setting capacity at national level, and their policy recommendation capacity, and at national level to come to terms with unemployment related issues are of primary subjects of inquiry. In the cultural axis, their intellectual repertoire to offer answers to

the detrimental effects of globalization, their readiness to accommodate xenophobic, racist, migrant-phobic, Islamophobic discourses, and the capacity of their inventory to utilise memory, myths, past, tradition, religion, colonialism and identity. Using these two axes in analysing the European populisms at present may provide the researchers with an adequate set of tools to understand the success and/or failure of local and national level. Using these two axes, one could try to understand why and how many populist parties in Europe become popular in particular cities, but not in the entire country, as well as the role of non-rational elements such as culture, ethnicity, past, religion and myths in the consolidation of the power of populist parties.

It seems that right-wing populism becomes victorious at national level when its leaders can blend the elements of both axes such as blending economic resentment and cultural resentment in order to create the perception of crisis. It is only when the socio-economic frustration (unemployment and poverty) is linked to cultural concerns, such as immigration and integration, that right-wing populists distinguish themselves from other critics of the economy. This is the reason why right-wing populists capitalize on migration, culture, civilization, religion and race while the left-wing populists prefer to invest in social-class related drivers. The immigration issue is central to the discourse and programmes of all radical parties in Europe. According to a survey made in the second half of the 2000s, for instance, voters of such populist parties are significantly more likely to say their country should accept only a few immigrants, or even none: in Austria 93 percent of these voters (versus 64 percent overall); in Denmark 89 percent (44 percent); in France, 82 percent (44 percent); in Belgium 76 percent (41 percent); in Norway 70 percent (63 percent); and in the Netherlands 63 percent (39 percent). In fact, fewer than 2.5 percent of voters of populist extremist parties across six countries want to see more immigration.[8] Regarding immigration in Europe, a more specific form of hostility towards settled Muslim communities can be observed particularly in the past decade. Many voters are anxious about increasing diversity and immigration which provides the electoral potential for these parties.

One of the striking commonalities of the interviews we conducted during the field work, held between mid-March and late-May 2017 in Germany, France, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands among the supporters of the right-wing populist parties, was that a great majority of the interlocutors explicitly differentiated between immigrants and refugees. Though having a great sympathy for the refugees who seek refuge from war zones, they expressed their concerns about the impossibility of their countries to take care of them permanently. The refugees should be given shelter in their own neighbouring countries, and the European Union member states should help them out with economic support. Immigrants, on the other hand, are a different category as they are embedded in their countries for decades. They are not treated very sympathetically by the interlocutors as they are perceived to be seeking to take their jobs and to use resources without contributing to their society. There is a common belief that immigrants do not really integrate while taking advantage of public services, such as health care and unemployment benefits. As for the immigrants, mostly they are perceived by the supporters of the right-wing populist parties as an economic burden. A 24-year-old male student supporter of the Front National in Paris expressed his thoughts in a very similar way to most of the interlocutors when asked about his party's official line on refugees and migrants:

> "In my opinion, there are two different issues. Concerning immigration, I don't follow entirely the FN's position. Personally, I think that immigration is not necessarily an identity threat, but I consider it more as an economic risk. I think immigration brings about economic risks. Concerning refugees, in my opinion, refugees are people who flee their country because of a conflict. Personally, I consider that immigrants and refugees are two different issues. Concerning refugees, I fairly agree with the FN's proposition, which suggests creating safe zones to welcome them, nearby their countries. In my opinion, doing that is more coherent than welcoming them in Europe. However, by saying we'll welcome them, we make them cross the Mediterranean, which is so dangerous for them. Personally, I see refugees issue as

a temporary phenomenon. But immigration is a different thing: it's more related to work, to family. In my opinion, immigration is a more lasting phenomenon" (interview with 24-year-old male student in Paris, 28 April 2017).

It was often implied by the interlocutors that immigration is an inevitable outcome of the processes of globalization, about which they are very critical. The experience of immigration is clearly differentiated from the experience of refugees in the sense that the former is a permanent act, and the latter is temporary. The experience of immigration is resented by the interlocutors in terms of its economic and cultural consequences. Economically speaking, immigrants are believed to be exploiting the welfare state regime. Culturally speaking, they are mostly associated with Islam, which is believed to be in opposition with their national values. A 49-year-old male supporter of the AfD in Dresden refers to the relevance of immigration to globalization as follows:

> "The AfD is standing for strengthening our national interests. Therefore, that we are ending this craze for globalization. Immigration to Germany and in general to Europe needs to be limited. The AfD argues that more German interests should be at the centre of politics, not the interests of the other nation-states. Exactly, it should be the way it is in the United States nowadays. There they are focusing on their own national interests and that is legitimate" (interview with 49-year-old-male printer in Dresden, 10 April 2017).

Europe's far-right parties have rejoiced at Donald Trump's win at the American elections held on 8 November 2016 and the UK's vote to leave the EU, hailing both as a victory for their own anti-immigration, anti-EU and anti-Islam stances and vowing to push for similar results in countries such as France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Hungary, Germany and Sweden. European public is not different from the rest of the world in the sense that it is also becoming more and more polarized between various Manichean understandings of the world as in the antagonist dichotomies of "us/them", "pure people/corrupt elite", "privileged/underprivileged", which are interpellated and hailed by populist discourse.

Populism as a backlash against multiculturalism: Lost in Diversity

Right-wing populist parties and movements often exploit the issue of migration and portray it as a threat against the welfare and the social, cultural and even ethnic features of a nation. Populist leaders also tend to blame a soft approach to migration for some of the major problems in society such as unemployment, violence, crime, insecurity, drug trafficking and human trafficking. This tendency is reinforced by the use of racist, xenophobic and demeaning rhetoric. The use of words like 'influx', 'invasion', 'flood' and 'intrusion' are just a few examples. Public figures like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria and others have spoken of a "foreign infiltration" of immigrants, especially Muslims, in their countries. Geert Wilders even predicted the coming of *Eurabia*, a mythological future continent that will replace modern Europe,[9] where children from Norway to Naples will have to learn to recite the Quran at school, while their mothers stay at home wearing *burqas*.

Initially, the idea of multiculturalism involved conciliation, tolerance, respect, interdependence, universalism, and it was expected to bring about an "inter-cultural community". Over time, it began to be perceived as a way of institutionalising difference through autonomous cultural discourses. The debate on the end of multiculturalism has existed in Europe for a long time. It seems that the declaration of the 'failure of multiculturalism' has become a catchphrase of not only extreme-right wing parties but also of centrist political parties across the continent.[10] In 2010 and 2011, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UK Prime Minister David Cameron and the French President Nicolas Sarkozy heavily bashed multiculturalism for the wrong reasons.[11] Geert Wilders, leader of the Freedom Party in the Netherlands, made no apologies for arguing that "[we, Christians] should be proud that our culture is better than Islamic culture" (Der Spiegel, 11 September 2011). Populism

blames multiculturalism for denationalizing one's own nation, and to decode one's own people. Anton Pelinka explains very well how populism simplifies the complex realities of a globalized world by looking for a scapegoat:

> "As the enemy – the foreigner, the foreign culture- has already succeeded in breaking into the fortress of the nation state, someone must be responsible. The elites are the secondary 'defining others', responsible for the liberal democratic policies of accepting cultural diversity. The populist answer to the complexities of a more and more pluralistic society is not multiculturalism… Right-wing populism sees multiculturalism as a recipe to denationalize one's nation, to deconstruct one's people."[12]

For the right-wing populist crowds, the answer must be easy. They need to have some scapegoats to blame in the first place. The scapegoat should be the Others, foreigners, Jews, Roma, Muslims, sometimes the Eurocrats, sometimes the non-governmental organizations. Populist rhetoric certainly pays off for those politicians who engage in it. For instance, Thilo Sarrazin was perceived in Germany as a folk hero (*Volksheld*) on several right-wing populist websites that strongly refer to his ideas and statements after his polemical book *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* (German Does Away with Itself: How We Gambled with Our Country, 2010), which was published in 2010.[13] The newly founded political party *Die Freiheit* even tried to involve Sarrazin in their election campaign in Berlin and stated *Wählen gehen für Thilos Thesen* (Go and vote for Thilo's statements) using a crossed-out mosque as a logo.[14] Neo-fascist groups like the right-wing extremist party National Democratic Party (NPD) have also celebrated the author. They stated that Sarrazin's ideas about immigration were in line with the NPD's programme and that he made their ideas even more popular and strong, as he belonged to an established social democratic party.

The NPD is no longer popular in Germany, but the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) has replaced it with its right-wing populist agenda. One of the interlocutors we interviewed among the supporters of the AfD in Dresden within the framework of the Horizon 2020 Project on Critical Heritages, CoHERE, explicitly repeated Sarrazin's line when asked about his perspective on migration in general:

> "There is nothing bad in general about globalisation and immigration. But one should differentiate between *good* and *bad* immigration. It is scientifically proven: What we have in Germany now, is possibly the worst kind of immigration. If you want immigration to help the country and its economy, you need a kind of immigration, where the average IQ of immigrants is higher than the average IQ of natives. Unfortunately, we have that kind of immigration, where the average IQ of the asylum seekers is much lower than the average IQ of Germans. Besides, the gender gap has devastating effects. This is something we must discuss in public! Unfortunately, our society is too politically correct, and the AfD is the only power to change that. The direct expenses of the federal government are estimated to be around 23 billion Euros, the indirect expenses are around 50 billion Euros. And we also must talk about the costs of the federal states! How does it relate to 17 billion Euros spent on research and education?" (a 40-year-old male lawyer interviewed in Dresden, 2 April 2017).

Surveys also reveal that European citizens have similar concerns about ethno-cultural, linguistic and religious diversity prevalent in the EU. A recent survey conducted by the PEW Research Centre displays that many Europeans are uncomfortable with the growing diversity of society. When asked whether having an increasing number of people of many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities makes their country a better or worse place to live, relatively few said it makes their country better. In Greece and Italy, at least more than half said increasing diversity harms their country, while in the Netherlands, Germany and France, less than half complained about ethno-cultural diversity.[15]

Populism as Islamophobia: Islamophobism

These populist outbreaks contribute to the securitisation and stigmatisation of migration in general, and Islam in particular. In the meantime, they deflect attention from constructive solutions and policies widely thought to promote integration, including language learning and increased labour market access, which are already suffering due to austerity measures across Council of Europe member states. Islamophobic discourse has recently become the mainstream in the west.[16] It seems that social groups belonging to the majority nation in each territory are more inclined to express their distress resulting from insecurity and social-economic deprivation, through the language of Islamophobia; even in those cases which are not related to the actual threat of Islam. Islamophobia has also been legalized and thus further normalized through the laws against the *hijab* (in France, 2004) and the *burqa* (in France, 2011) and the recent debates around the state of emergency in France in the wake of the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks. In the meantime, Pegida and other groups have attempted to exploit the New Year's Eve 2016 assaults in Cologne which were blamed on Muslim refugees.[17] Islamophobia was previously more prevalent among male populations.[18] However, in the last few years, the use of gender rights has also been particularly prevalent in the stigmatization of Islamophobia. Some features and manifestations of mainstream Islamophobia relate to what has been defined as "homonationalism"[19] and "femonationalism"[20]. Geert Wilder's Party, PVV, in the Netherlands and the AfD in Germany, whose current co-leader (Alice Weidel) is openly gay, have recently attracted many women as well as the members of LGBTI groups who are becoming more and more vocal in their attacks against Islam on the basis of its supposed inherent illiberalism against the position of women and gays in everyday life.[21]

Several decades earlier it was Seymour Martin Lipset who stated that social-political discontent of people is likely to lead them to anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism, regionalism, supernationalism, fascism and anti-cosmopolitanism.[22] If Lipset's timely intervention in the 1950s is now translated to the contemporary age, then one could argue that Islamophobia has also become one of the paths taken by those who are in social-economic and political dismay. Islamophobic discourse has certainly resonated very much in the last decade. It has enabled the users of this discourse to be heard by both local and international community, although their distress did not really result from anything related to the Muslims in general. In other words, Muslims have become the most popular scapegoats in many parts of the world to put the blame on for any troubled situation. For almost more than a decade, Muslim-origin migrants and their descendants are primarily seen by the European societies as a financial burden, and virtually never as an opportunity for the country. They tend to be associated with illegality, crime, violence, drug, radicalism, fundamentalism, conflict, and in many other respects are represented in negative ways.[23]

There is a growing fear in the European space alleviated by the right-wing populist parties such as PVV in the Netherlands, FN in France, Golden Dawn in Greece and AfD in Germany. This fear is based on the jihadist attacks in different European cities such as Paris (7 January and 13 November 2015), Nice (14 July 2016), Istanbul (1 January 2017), Berlin (28 February 2017), and London (2017) as well as on the atrocities of the Al Qaida, the Islamic State (ISIS), and Boko Haram in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere. This fear against Islam, which has material sources, is also mitigated by far-right political parties. One of the interlocutors we interviewed in Rome among the supporters of the 5 Star Movement very explicitly vocalize such fears:

> "In a few years European culture will cease to exist, once the Caliph will have taken control of Europe. Then we will build a long memory of what we lost, something that was perhaps too weak. The takeover of the Caliphate was previewed by a clairvoyant, who said the Caliph will control even the Vatican. Beyond the clairvoyant, there are signs that our culture is changing with every little cross being taken away from the schools" (interview with a 39-year-old doorman in Rome, 16 May 2017)

Such fears were also reiterated by many other interlocutors in Germany, France, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands. A 70-year-old former saleswoman in Dresden expressed her feelings in a similar way when she was asked about the European heritage:

> "When we have an Islamic caliphate in Germany one day, the European heritage will be gone. Maybe it sounds exaggerating, but I think we should be very careful. Many of the Muslim refugees have dangerous thoughts in their minds. Otherwise you would not think of driving a bus into a crowd [referring to the attack on the Breitscheid-Platz in Berlin in December 2016]" (interview with 70-year-old-female, pensioner in Dresden, 18 April 2017).

The construction of a contemporary European identity is built in part on anti-Muslim racism, just as other forms of racist ideology played a role in constructing European identity during the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Use of the term 'Islamophobia' assumes that fear of Islam is natural and can be taken for granted, whereas use of the term 'Islamophobism' presumes that this fear has been fabricated by those with a vested interest in producing and reproducing such a state of fear, or phobia. By describing Islamophobia as a form of *ideology*, I argue that Islamophobia operates as a form of *cultural racism* in Europe which has become apparent along with the process of *securitizing* and *stigmatizing* migration and migrants in the age of neoliberalism.[24] One could thus argue that Islamophobism as an ideology is being constructed by ruling political groups to foster a kind of false consciousness, or delusion, within the majority society as a way of covering up their own failure to manage social, political, economic, and legal forces and consequently the rise of inequality, injustice, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and alienation. In other words, Islamophobism turns out to be a practical instrument of social control used by the conservative political elite to ensure compliance and subordination in this age of neoliberalism, essentializing ethnocultural and religious boundaries. Muslims have become global 'scapegoats', blamed for all negative social phenomena such as illegality, crime, violence, drug abuse, radicalism, fundamentalism, conflict, and financial burdens. One could also argue that Muslims are now being perceived by some individuals and communities in the West as having greater social power. There is a growing fear in the United States, Europe, and even in Russia and the post-Soviet countries that Muslims will demographically take over sooner or later.

Populism as resentment against mobility in the EU: Lost in Unity

In addition to the growing popular resentment against multiculturalism and diversity, there is also a growing resentment among populist segments of the European public against the discourse of unity and mobility, which is also promoted by European institutions as well as by scholars, politicians, local administrators and NGOs. Right-wing populist leaders have always tried to capitalise on anti-EU sentiment. Most recently, the perception that European leaders are failing to tackle a developing economic crisis is fuelling further hostility towards the European Union, both right and left. Populist parties in many member states of the EU are known with their Eurosceptic positions. Their Euroscepticism has become even stronger after the global financial crisis which continuously hit the EU since 2008.

Global financial crisis has brought about various demographic changes in the EU leading to the migration of skilled or unskilled young populations from the South to the North, and from the East to the West. Germany, the UK, Sweden are certainly the net winners of the current demographic change. However, the changes in the demographic structure of the EU do not only create problems for the migrant sending EU countries, but also for the receiving countries. For instance, high skilled German citizens cannot compete with the cheap skilled labour recruited from Spain, Italy, or Greece. Hence, they also find the solution in migrating to another country of destination such as Switzerland, Austria, the USA and Great Britain.[25] On the other hand, relatively poorer countries of the East and South such as Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland cannot compete with the rich West to retain their skills and young generations, the loss of which apparently causes societal

discomfort. The increase in migration flows in the EU has been accompanied by an increase in the migrants' education level.[26]

Material deprivation and pessimism about the future among the European youngsters is also another source of the quest for a better life elsewhere. Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Greek, Lithuanian, Latvian, Cypriot and Italian youngsters are materially the most deprived youngsters in the EU. Internal mobility of the young EU citizens who must migrate to another EU country was also raised by many interlocutors during the field research we conducted in five EU countries. Most of the interlocutors stated that they are not mobile people themselves, and they hardly left their countries. In the first place, many interlocutors we interviewed among the supporters of the right-wing populist parties expressed their resentment against the freedom of mobility of EU citizens within the EU. The freedom of mobility does not seem to mean a lot to those who are rather immobile due to their social-economic constraints. One of the 60-year-old female Italian interlocutors stated her concerns about the migration of young generations abroad when asked about the European heritage:

> "I don't really know a lot about the European heritage. We do not really take the past into account as much as we should in Italy. You also must consider that I do not know Europe that much, I have not travelled a lot. Now that I think about it maybe Arabs, like my co-worker, are much more attached than we are to their roots and that is great. We, in Italy, are used to criticize ourselves all the time. *The young people with some brains go abroad, and in the end, we are not able to value and protect what our culture. It is like the big firms, now they are all abroad*" (interview with 60-year-old-female baker in Rome, 2 May 2017, italics mine).

Such a demographic change within the EU is feeding into the fears of the local populations in different ways. Sometimes, the citizens of the receiving countries such as Germany may resent the growing mobility of EU citizens by holding onto their nativist aspirations as they may not appreciate the fact that their habitats are becoming more and more diversified, or somehow, they may find it difficult to compete with the recruited cheap labour in the labour market. In the case of migrant sending countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece or Portugal, their inhabitants may find it very challenging to cope with the fact that the rich North, or West, is impossible to compete with regards to the free mobility of skills. In both cases, it seems that what is more likely to be blamed is either globalization or Europeanization, or super diversity.

Right-Wing Populist Party Supporters and their perspectives on Turkey's Membership to the EU

Growing populism, anti-Muslim sentiments, refugee crisis, Islamization, de-secularization and de-Europeanization of Turkey have all contributed to the deterioration of Turkey-EU relations. The rise of the culturalist and civilizational political rhetoric disseminated by conservative mainstream European political parties since the mid-2000s has ultimately authenticated the popularity Turkey-scepticism among the European citizens who strongly oppose the ideas of multiculturalism, diversity, mobility, migration and ethno-cultural and religious heterogeneity. The idea of Turkish membership to the EU is completely out of question for the supporters of right-wing populist parties in Europe. This was a shared stance and *trope*[27] among the interlocutors interviewed during the field research. When asked her opinion about the EU, a 46-year-old female AfD supporter in Dresden stated her strong commitment to the official stance of her party on the EU:

> "The AfD states that the European Union is not a good thing, and it is not in a good shape as well. I am a bit ambivalent. On the one hand, the EU might be a good thing. But on the other hand, all countries are on different levels. The wage-level in Bulgaria and Romania is very low for example. That is why they come here to Germany, or Belgium to earn more money. From their perspective it is understandable, but for us it is a big problem. In Germany we lose jobs to those who work for less money and the EU helps them do this by opening the borders and making the regulations. *And now imagine Turkey being in the EU. There is a huge gap*

> *and I cannot imagine Turkey would stick to the EU regulations when producing things.* Let alone the economic interests, I cannot image Turkey being part of the EU (AfD Supporter, 46-year-old female, call centre employee, Dresden, interview date 21.04.2017, italics mine)."

There is a growing mistrust in Turkey among the supporters of right-wing populist parties in the EU. The mistrust mainly results from the ongoing migration of the citizens of the new member states such as Bulgaria and Romania, augmenting the fear of mass migration from Turkey, which is a potential full member of the EU. However, the source of the fear resulting from Turkey's potential membership also comes from the European experience of Turkish guest-workers, who are believed to contradict with the European values. When asked his opinion about the multicultural state of Germany, a 40-year-old male lawyer in Dresden addressed at the failure of the Turkish migrants in integrating to the German society:

> "I studied abroad myself in London*,* my wife is from abroad and I have a lot of international friends. Therefore, I think immigration is something normal. Nevertheless, I think we have to look carefully at who we take in. I do not think that everyone is able and willing to integrate. *Just look at the migrant workers from Turkey, we took in. Most of them were not able to integrate themselves.* Nevertheless, when I was still active in the CDU a few years ago, I always told my allies, that I have more Muslim friends than they all have together *(smiles).* I made contact with nice Christians from Syria and Iran. The problem is, that they - who really need our help - are the minority of refugees, that entered our country. Who we have in Germany are the mobs. Young men, with a different understanding of equality, and democracy with have an IQ of 90 and full of testosterone. There is no way to integrate them. Actually, these asylum seekers are like a ticking bomb. We already record a huge number of rapes lately, like in Cologne, and believe me: we will have to encounter more (AfD Supporter, 40-year-old male, lawyer, Dresden, interview date 02.04.2017)."

The trope on the failure of the Turkish migrant workers in integrating to the European way of life is repeatedly expressed by other interlocutors as well. When asked his opinion about the migration issues in the Netherlands, a 72-year-old retired man in Rotterdam addressed at the rural origin of Turkish migrants, which made their integration to the western civilization impossible:

> "Immigration has been one huge mistake. Immigrants in the Netherlands get bloody everything; a house, equipment, furniture, money, unemployment benefits, etc. its scandalous. But I am not allowed to say so, nobody here in the Netherlands is allowed to say something about it, but we need to. They just come here and do nothing, from everywhere, Moroccans, Turks, or from Africa. I have been to Turkey, a beautiful country, really is, a beautiful country. But the guys working in the hotel there where asking me if I could take them to the Netherlands with me. Why? Because if they were here they wouldn't have to work at all, but still make money. But you know what is also the problem, it is not that these guys are coming here, no. *The Turkish people coming to the Netherlands are from outside of the big cities, from the rural areas. They have never lived in a big city, and are not aware of the western civilization. They do not want to integrate, they just come to live and make money, by doing nothing. Its scandalous* (PVV Supporter, Rotterdam, 72-year-old male, retired, interview date 17.03.2017, italics mine)."

The issues related to integration of Turkish migrants and their descendants popped up everywhere during the field research. The shared trope of the lack of integration of Turkish migrants was also addressed by a 56-year-old male worker supporting the PVV in Rotterdam. His rhetoric is very interesting in the sense that he implicitly underlined the benevolent character of the Dutch multiculturalism with regards to the recruitment of poor and disadvantaged first generation Turkish migrants who were believed to be indebted to the benevolence of their hosts:

"Well, I guess the economic migrants are just here to try their luck, they shouldn't be here at all. As I said integration of economic migrants has totally failed. When you look here in Rotterdam, the Turkish people sit in their Turkish bars, where only Turkish people come, no integration whatsoever. They stay close to each other, and no outsider is allowed to enter. They don't feel the need to integrate, they got their own bars, cafes, restaurants, etc. They think that what we are doing here is crazy, and that image they have will never change. We allow men to marry each other, what is good, but to them it's crazy and they will always think so… *The young Turkish are even worse. While their parents or grandparents were grateful that they could come and live here in the Netherlands, they had some respect for us, the young generation doesn't have this anymore, they don't integrate.* It's not only failed, migrants are even fighting against us. There is no assimilation, but segregation, or polarization. It's unbelievable (PVV Supporter, Rotterdam, 56-year-old male worker, interview date 12.03.2017, italics mine)."

The presumed failure of the Turkish guest-workers in the processes of integration for more than five decades is also supplemented by the supporters of the right-wing populist parties with civilizational and religious differences. When asked his opinion about the religious differences in Germany, a 49-year-old male worker stated that Islam is not compatible with Germany:

"Christianity does certainly connect the European states quite strongly. This was a point of thought during the accession negotiations with Turkey for sure. This Islamic rooted state *[Turkey]* does not fit into Europe because of its religion. If one would like to go back even further, we certainly do have a connection of the European royal families. At that time of the royal families, the borders were changing all the time as for example with Germany and France, or Germany and Denmark. At some territories, this is still happening, for example with Alsace-Lorraine. There are such obvious historical connections between Germany and France. These kinds of connections do not exist in other regions of the world. These connections do not exist with the new countries of Europe like Romania as well (AfD Supporter, 49-year-old male, printer, Dresden, interview date 10.04.2017)."

The failure of integration of migrants has always been a convenient discourse to be exploited by extreme right-wing parties, and now by populist right-wing parties. For instance, French citizenship law includes two articles that solidify the "*jus soli"* principle: art. 23 grants citizenship as a birth-right to third-generation migrants, while art. 44 states that second-generation migrants born in France and residing in the country since the age of 13 will be entitled to citizenship at 18 unless they choose another citizenship or commit certain crimes. The law also allows double citizenship. However, it has been always criticised by nationalists claiming that it made foreigners who do not "feel French at heart" (*Français de coeur*) citizens on paper. Nationalist criticism toward the *jus soli* principle has been growing since the beginning of the 1990s, when alleged Islamic fundamentalism began to emerge in the West.[28] For an entire century, France defined second-generation immigrants as citizens. This was an undisputed practice until recently. However, the application of the "jus soli" principle met with severe attacks from the extreme right. The National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen would openly say, "You must deserve to be French" ("*Etre Français, cela se mérite"*).[29] It seems that the same racist rhetoric still continues today eventhough Marine Le Pen has successfully mainstreamed the Front National. Once asked about his opinion on the Frenchness, a 21-year-old male supporter of the FN made the following statements in a way that makes it impossible for the civic integration of ethnically non-French immigrants and their descendants residing in France for many decades:

"Frenchness is something you deserve it: either you inherit being a French, that your parents are French… You need the right genes. For example, some of your ancestors may come from another country. Then, they are no longer "*pure souche*" French-French. You have to deserve to be truly French… Maybe you need to wait for several generations before becoming French. The Turks, or the Arabs who come here cannot be truly French. As long as his great-

grandfather was not French, his great-grandchildren won't be French either. I think it should be like that: waiting for several generations, that they don't disturb, that they know they are in our house and not in their house… And maybe then we could speak about their French nationality. Then I think that, on this issue, the FN's ideas are close to mine (FN Supporter, 21-year-old male intern, Romorantin-Lanthenay in the Loir-et-Cher district, interview date, 18 April 2017)."

The same rhetoric on religious differences which separate Turkey and the EU was also used in various other interviews. When asked her opinion about the religious differences within the EU, a 50-year-old unemployed female person in Romorantin-Lanthenay, central France, blamed the processes of globalization highlighting the economic aspects of European integration and neglecting the importance of civilizational, cultural and religious homogeneity of the EU:

"We have a common history. We were invaded by the same people in the ancient past. I speak about the countries which are historically and culturally closer to each other. I don't speak about the other countries such as the Eastern countries in the EU. They don't have the same history with us. I don't know why they are in Europe. We spread Europe too much, and when you see that they want to integrate Turkey, it's the icing on the cake (*Laughs*). I think the EU is a big administrative machine, which costs a lot … And that's all. And I have a friend who lived two years in Czech Republic, because her husband was posted there. She said to me "My poor, if you saw it, you wouldn't believe in your eyes." Firstly, all the jobs are there. It's impossible not have a job there. All the firms that we had here in France are now there. Even Coca-Cola, big world companies… Because it's globalization… Furthermore, they received a lot of European subsidies. All is brand new, roads, houses, buildings… We are late in France… The poorest people who come from very low living conditions, will find a big advantage in Europe. So, EU is a lure, it is an attraction for the disadvantaged. I support Marine Le Pen, because she is more in favor of a reduced Europe (FN Supporter, 50-year-old, female, unemployed, Romorantin-Lanthenay, interview date 14.04.2017)."

The strong belief in the impossibility of integrating Turkey into the European Union among the supporters of the right-wing populist parties in Europe does not only originate from their negative perceived threats with regards to the Turkish migrants and their descendants, but also from demographic fear fostered by the Turkish President Erdoğan's statements addressed to the members of the Turkish diaspora in the EU. Once asked her opinions about migration and asylum-seekers in Germany, a 46-year-old female Call Centre worker in Dresden expressed her demographic concerns as follows:

"I really do not have anything against migrants that come from war zones with their kids. But, mainly it is all the young men who are coming here. It has become too much. Many of them throw away their papers, so no one can prove where they are from. This is also the reason why it is not so easy to deport them without a passport. It is sad that we Germans have to live with the consequences like the rising crime rate – I think of robberies and rape here. Last year I could not even enjoy our family trip to the beach in Coswig (a town which can be easily reached from Dresden). There were so many migrants there sitting around, spitting seeds and staring at my 15-year old daughter in her bikini. Of course, she felt uncomfortable and I was worried about her. For years we went to this particular beach, but last year this one day was so negative, that we stopped going there. I also do not know where we are going to go this summer, because the migrants are not gone yet. As I said, I do not hold a grudge against all foreigners in general, but in Germany and especially Saxony it became too much. I do not like the idea of a multicultural Germany. *When Erdoğan tells the Turkish citizen living in Germany to have at least five children, most of them listen to him. And we German women have one or sometimes two kids. So, I am wondering where we will be in the future. The sentence "Deutschland schafft sich ab"* ["Germany Is Doing Away with Itself" - the title of the book

by Thilo Sarrazin] *could become more real when there will be more Turks than Germans one day* (AfD Supporter, 46-year-old female, call centre employee, Dresden, interview date 21.04.2017, italics mine)"

Migration and integration related claims and fears have always been raised as far as Turkey's membership is concerned. These fears are now being very successfully exploited by right-wing populist parties. These concerns seem to be replicated by the followers of these parties, who are essentially opposed to the idea of Turkey's full membership. Furthermore, such political stance is now also being shared by almost all the member states in the EU. As Nathalie Tocci put it very well, it is hard to tell whether there is still a Member State which genuinely supports Turkey's membership today.[30] Southern member states –notably Italy, Spain and Portugal– are likely to remain concerned with their recovery from the economic crisis for a number of years. The fear of migration of Turks was recently exploited by the UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party) to attract voters for their BREXIT campaign in 2016. Germany, France, and the Netherlands recently experienced polemics with the Turkish political leadership in various fronts, a which will be visited shortly. Northern Member States, and in particular Sweden and Finland, have watched shocked Turkey's democratic backsliding, dropping their former support for Turkey's EU membership, while eastern Member States, all consumed by the anxieties of an assertive Russia, have read Turkey through the lens of the unpredictable retreats and flows of the Turkish-Russian relationship.

Home-state politics *vis-à-vis* Turkish emigrants: Instrumentalizing emigrants

The growth of right-wing populism and Islamophobia in Europe has also immediately found resonance in the political discourse of the leading Turkish political elite, who have recently shaped diaspora policies, or rather lobbying efforts of the Turkish state among Turkish emigrants and their descendants residing in the European Union countries. President Erdoğan said the following words on 24 June 2016:

"The European Union is reluctant to accept Turkey as a full member due to its Islamophobic motives… The EU bloc's bad humanitarian and immoral approach to immigrants has led to a serious debate about the trustworthiness of the European Union."[31]

The president's scepticism towards the European leadership has amplified over the last few years in parallel increasing Islamist and authoritarian ways of ruling the country. His political style is equally based on populism, which seeks to divide the nation between "pure people" and "corrupt elite", or between "good" and "evil", or "believers" and "infidels", or the "majority" and the minority", or "friends" and "foes".[32] Such a populist style is also visible in his approach towards Turkish emigrants and their descendants residing abroad. However, there has been continuity in the ways in which Turkish state actors have perceived the Turkish diaspora over time.

Turkish migrants and their children in the West were officially defined in Turkey as either '*gurbetçi'*, or '*Yurtdışındaki vatandaslarimiz'* ("our citizens abroad"). It is not only the Turkish state perceiving emigrants though a paternalistic gaze, but also the Turkish citizens living in Turkey. Turkish emigrants are still stereotypically defined by the Turkish people in Turkey as either '*Almanyalı* or '*Almanci'* (German-like), no matter where they come from. Both terms carry rather negative connotations in Turkey. Turkish stereotypes about the Euro-Turks are those of being rich, eating pork, living a very comfortable life, losing their Turkishness, and becoming more and more German, or French, or Belgian, or Dutch.[33] The Turkish state's framing of these emigrants can be analysed in three distinctive epochs: a) 1960s-1980s: as economic agents providing Turkey with remittances; b) 1980s-2000s: as political agents acting as the extension of the Turkish state to defend its interests against centrifugal groups abroad; and c) 2000s-present day: utilisation of Turkish emigrants as lobbying agents.

Turkish state policies towards the management of emigrants have practically started in the 1980s; however, its gaining impetus in line with the global phenomenon has taken place in the early 2000s. Prior to the 1980s, emigrants were simply perceived and instrumentalized by the Turkish state as

economic agents who transferred their remittances to Turkey. Remittances – the earnings generated and sent back home by migrant workers – have been an important source of exchange revenue for developing countries. The case of Turkey is no exception to this trend in the trajectory of remittances since the 1960s. Especially in the 1960s, remittances were regarded as a major source of external financing that offset trade deficits in particular.[34] Subsequently, the period that followed the 1980 military coup in Turkey, which resulted in the emigration of thousands of asylum seekers such as Kurds, Alevis, radical left-wing individuals, and Assyrians, was mostly juxtaposed with the securitization of the Turkish state's relations with its citizens living abroad, Turkey's insertion into the global economy, and the consolidation of a state-led Kemalist republicanism that incorporated a stricter emphasis on Turkish-Islamist historical and moral values.[35]

In the 1980s, Turkish emigrants were politically instrumentalized by the Turkish state to ensure that centrifugal ethno-cultural and religious elements abroad such as Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, Alevis and Islamists, could be contained by these "decent Turkish citizens living abroad". These citizens were mostly perceived as the agents of the state acting on behalf of the Turkish state to control the other groups and individuals with oppositional ideological and political opinions challenging the survival of the Turkish state.

The last period, starting with the 2000s, has been marked by the governance of Turkey towards increased market liberalism and European integration in economic, legal, social and political terms. More importantly, this period has been shaped by the JDP's ascendance to power that has now lasted for three consecutive terms, creating incremental breaches with former governance models and official state ideology in Turkey.[36] In the current phase, the Turkish state tends to perceive of emigrants as active lobbying agents who are expected to contribute to the growing hegemony of the Turkish state in the European space. This kind of diaspora strategy also tends to see emigrants as electoral constituents to be incorporated into the national electoral body. In this period, the Turkish state has founded new institutions to help emigrants mobilize themselves as active lobbying agents. The Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB, *Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı,* 2010), and Yunus Emre Cultural Centres (YEKM, *Yunus Emre Kültür Merkezleri,* 2007) have been established in this period to mobilize emigrants living abroad.[37] YTB aims to establish a strong and successful diaspora with strong ties to Turkey in order to create a political lobby and close economic linkages with the countries of residence,[38] while YEKM aims at introducing the Turkish language and culture to the world by means of active involvement of Turkish emigrants.

More recently, in the context of mass demonstrations in Belgium and Germany, the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD, *Avrupalı Türk Demokratlar Birliği*) has gained some public attention. The UETD was founded Cologne in 2004 as a lobby group supporting the Turkish government to organize campaign events such as rallies and life broadcastings.[39] The UETD has recently been mobilized by the Turkish government to organize the public rallies of the President in Cologne, Brussels and Strasbourg where he gave public speeches in the framework of general elections held in 2015.[40] External voting abroad in 2015 has been enabled by an amendment of May 18, 2014 to the Law on the Fundamental Principles of Elections and Electoral Registries. It has improved the political rights of Turkish emigrants and enables them to vote from abroad in parliamentary elections, presidential elections and referenda in Turkey.[41] Prior to this change initiated by a constitutional court ruling in 2012, Turkish expatriates had to come to polling stations at the customs section of airports and borders to participate in domestic elections. The new rules were first applied during the direct presidential elections of August 10, 2014. The JDP's close ties with the UETD have always been visible. On 10 May 2015, President Erdoğan addressed the Euro-Turks in Karlsruhe in a public event organized by the UETD, where he recommended the Euro-Turks to protect their religion and culture:

> "You should first preserve your religion, faith and culture strongly and accept that you are a full citizen of the country you reside in. Then, you will make others accept it. If you do not

put up this struggle, nobody else will grant a right to you. You will strongly preserve your mother tongue, the Turkish language. Let me say this clearly, one who loses his mother tongue loses everything. Do not forget the language you speak."[42]

In the same speech, the President stressed the importance of the Turkish diaspora, even calling them the "most important source of Turkey's regional and global power"[43]. Then PM Ahmet Davutoğlu gave a similar public speech in Dortmund on 3 May 2015, in which he underlined Turkey's perspective on integration:

> "You should get involved in the social, political and economic life of the country you are living in… We do not need anyone telling us about integration. We are achieving integration. But as we have always said, we will never accept assimilation. . . You should preserve your culture, identity, language and religion."[44]

These recent statements by Turkish politicians appealing to the Turkish diaspora reveal that the ruling political elite foster a religious-cultural closeness to Turkey. This aspect, paired with the recurrent rejection of "assimilation", has become one of the main aspects that the JDP politicians have employed in their speeches. However, there are also anecdotal evidences indicating that official lobbying activities of the Turkish state among the Euro-Turks are likely to be more destructive than constructive in the way in which they make the Euro-Turks compete with each other on ideological grounds.[45]

Revitalizing the Ottoman heritage, past, myths, memories, and Islam, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has empowered many migrants of Turkish-origin to stand against earlier feelings of humiliation created by the migrant receiving states and native populations. Turkish-origin migrants and their descendants were also disappointed with the pace of European integration and the obstacles created by the EU member states, primarily by France and Germany. In the second half of the 2000s, following the emphasis on the 'open-ended' characteristic of the negotiations and the possibility of 'permanent derogations', Turkey's membership prospect became unclear in the eyes of the Turkish migrants residing in Europe.[46] Growing Islamophobia and Turkophobia within the EU as well as the deterioration of Turkey-EU relations have alienated many of them to their countries of settlement, and made them feel more affiliated with their homeland. The so-called 'privileged partnership' proposal made by Angela Merkel in 2004 during the electoral campaign process was also another alienating factor for the Turkish origin migrants.[47]

It was this changing political climate in the EU that has made most of the Turkish migrants and their descendants to become more Eurosceptic and more associated with the policies of the Turkish state actors. However, the acts of Turkish state actors resulted with the polarization of the communities of Turkish origin, and prompted them to generate their separate communities of faith, ethnicity and culture. Sunni Muslim communities, Alevi communities, Kemalist communities, Kurdish communities, Assyrian communities, Circassian communities and Armenian communities are just some examples to show different forms of *social ecosophy*[48] generated by Turkish origin migrants and their descendants. The destructive nature of the polarization initiated by the home-state actors became visible not only for polarized segments of the Turkish diaspora, but also for the native populations of the European countries prior to the constitutional referendum in Turkey held on 16 April 2017.[49] Campaigning activities of the JDP were mostly blocked by the German, Dutch, Austrian, Swedish, Belgian and Danish local and national state actors on the basis that the campaigns were disrupting public order in their countries. This tension was alleviated even further between the EU member states and the Turkish state after the statements of the Turkish President who used the analogy of "Nazis" to refer to the acts of the Dutch and German states banning the referendum campaigns of the JDP abroad.[50] These tensions also had repercussions in domestic politics. In the aftermath of the growing diplomatic tension especially between with the Netherlands, Turkish Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu, threatened to send Europe "15.000 refugees each month" just a couple of days prior to the first anniversary of the Turkey-EU Refugee Statement signed on 18

March 2016.[51] Soylu's statements came after the very polemical analogy of the Turkish President associating European politicians such as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte with "Nazis".[52]

The polemic between the Turkish state actors and the German government continued afterwards on different occasions. Turkey's official requested Germany to extradite the top Gülenist coup suspect, Adil Öksüz who was claimed to be the main figure in the field orchestrating the failed coup on 15 July 2017.[53] Prior to this demand, Turkey had formally asked Germany for extradition of other top-ranking generals who were also claimed to be in the ranks of the Gülenist putschists. However, all the requests of Turkey were declined by the German authorities on the basis that Gülenist individuals under detention in Turkey were not treated adequately, and mistreated in prison. Polemical statements became even harsher when the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated with the German authorities on the allegations that several German companies were involved in terrorist activities. Among these companies there were also large ones such as Daimler and BASF.[54] These claims of the Turkish side were not found credible at all by the German side. Following the escalation of the polemics, Germany asked the European Commission to lower the amount of the IPA (Instrument for pre-Accession Assistance) allocated to Turkey. German Foreign Ministry stated that pre-accession aid (IPA) should be targeted even more towards supporting democracy and the rule of law.[55] European Commission later announced that they would cut down the amount allocated for Turkey, except the funds reserved for the empowerment of the vibrant civil society. Germany's official response came from both Angela Merkel, the Chancellor, and from Sigmar Gabriel, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Other political figures such as Martin Schulz, the leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Cem Özdemir, the Turkish-origin co-leader of the Green Party, and also the Turkish/Kurdish origin MPs of *Die Linke* expressed their criticisms towards the Turkish side. The Turkish President went even further and in one of his public speeches delivered on 18 August 2017, he openly recommended the JDP supporters among the German-Turks not to support any of these three parties in the upcoming elections to be held in September 2017[56] at the expense of intervening the national sovereignty of the German state, to use Sigmar Gabriel's words.[57]

These are all different examples of politics of transnationalism, which is taken into consideration by both sides of migrant sending and receiving countries. Politics of transnational space between Turkey and the EU has become even more intricate in the last decade along with the European integration process in which the boundaries between homeland and diaspora have been significantly blurred. The JDP government has operationalized the Turkish diaspora more than other previous Turkish governments. As explained earlier, lobbying activities of the Presidency of the Turks Abroad and Related Communities, the foundation of Yunus Emre Cultural Centres in the capital cities of the EU, the establishment of the Union of European Turkish Democrats as a liaison body between the Turkish government and the diaspora communities, the empowerment of the DITIP in Europe, the instrumentalization of the Gülen movement networks in Europe for consolidating the JDP's power on the diaspora, the active engagement of consular bodies in Europe for the ideological activities of the JDP government, and the rallies of the JDP politicians in European cities have all been very significant for the consolidation of the JDP's regulatory power over the Turkish diaspora. The regulation of the Turkish diaspora by the JDP has been accomplished mainly through the use of an Islamist discourse.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to address the relevance of the right-wing populist resurgence in Europe on the future of Turkey – EU relations. It is often presumed that the affiliates of such populist parties are political protestors, single-issue voters, "losers of globalization", or ethno-nationalists. However, the picture seems to be more complex than this. Populist party voters are dissatisfied with, and distrustful of mainstream elites, and most importantly they are hostile to immigration and rising ethno-cultural and religious diversity. While these citizens are economically feeling themselves insecure, their hostility springs mainly from their belief that immigrants are threatening their national

culture, social security, community and way of life. They are perceived by the followers of the populist parties as a security challenge threatening social, political, cultural and economic unity and homogeneity of their nation. The main concern of these citizens is not only the ongoing immigration and the refugee crisis, they are also profoundly anxious about a minority group that is already settled: the Muslims. Anti-Muslim sentiments have become an important driver of support for populists. This means that appealing only to concerns over immigration such as calling for immigration numbers to be reduced or border controls to be tightened, is not enough. The sources of such fears have been explained in the article with reference to the recent field work interviews conducted with the supporters of right-wing populist parties in Germany, France, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands.

Populist parties seem to be investing in the worsening economic conditions, public attitudes to immigration, attitudes and prejudices towards Muslims and Islam, and public dissatisfaction with the response of mainstream elites to these issues. The views and ideas they espouse cannot be dismissed as those of a marginal minority. It seems that these parties are here to stay. Public concern over immigration and rising cultural and ethnic diversity, anxiety over the presence and compatibility of Muslims, and dissatisfaction with the performance of mainstream elites on these issues are unlikely to subside. It was also argued the relative success of the far-right populist parties lies in their ability to utilize ethnicity, culture, religion, colonial past, tradition and myths in politically mobilizing lower middle-class and working-class people who are alienated by the detrimental flows of globalization leading to the processes of de-industrialization, unemployment, poverty, social-economic-political deprivation and mobility. In Berezin's words, as the *institutional axis* of far right-wing populist parties is not developed enough to come to terms with unemployment related issues, they are more inclined to capitalize on the *cultural axis* to politically mobilize masses. The exploitation of cultural discourse by these political parties is likely to frame many of the social, political, and economic conflicts within the range of societies' cultural-religious differences. Many of the ills faced by migrants and their descendants, such as poverty, exclusion, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of political participation, and unwillingness to integrate, are attributed to their Islamic background, believed stereotypically to clash with Western secular norms and values. Accordingly, this article has just argued that "Islamophobism" is a key ideological form in which social and political contradictions of the neoliberal age are dealt with, and that this form of culturalisation is embedded in migration-related inequalities as well as geopolitical orders. Culturalisation of political, social, and economic conflicts has become a popular sport in a way that reduces all sorts of structural problems to cultural and religious factors – a simple way of knowing what is going on in the World for the individuals appealed to the populist rhetoric.

In the last section of the article, referring to the in-depth interviews conducted in five countries, the author displays the ways in which some of the supporters of right-wing populist parties address at the impossibility of Turkey's membership to the European Union. It is revealed that the interlocutors base their Turkey-sceptic thoughts on the presumed failure of the integration of Turkish migrant workers residing in those countries as well as on the presumed incompatibility of Islam to the European civilization. Furthermore, the interlocutors also addressed the hegemony of the economic integration model imposed on the European citizens by the European elite in a way that prioritizes economic interests of the Union and underestimates its cultural, civilizational and religious homogeneity.

Differentiated integration has always been a European reality that could be seen through the experiences of Eurozone, Schengen or the Permanent Structured Cooperation on defence (PESCO). Differentiated integration, though, has recently become a political vision for the relaunch of the European project, most explicitly promoted by Emmanuel Macron. Given the deterioration of political relations between Turkey and the EU circles, the political cost of global financial crisis and refugee crisis feeding into the rise of right-wing populist movements, and the continuation of the

areas of convergence such as energy, migration, financial markets, trade, and security, it seems that there is an emerging need to continue the cooperation between the two sides in the fields of convergence. The rise of populism and Islamophobia seems to exacerbate the debate on the differentiated integration and non-accession/enlargement as far as Turkey is concerned. It has already been a fact that populist right-wing political formations have exploited the 'risks of European enlargement towards Turkey' in the Brexit referendum campaign, political polemics between the Turkish President and his counterparts in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and France in 2016. It has become even more so for many mainstream political parties in the member states that have been disillusioned by the deterioration of the devotion of the Turkish state actors to the Copenhagen criteria.

Notes

[1] Tocci, "Turkey and the European Union: Scenarios for 2023".

[2] The fieldwork is composed of one hundred in-depth interviews conducted in five countries within the framework of a Horizon 2020 project entitled CoHERE: Critical Heritiages: performing and representing identities in Europe (https://research.ncl.ac.uk/cohere/). The semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the supporters of the populist parties in five countries between 15 March and 30 May 2017. 20 interviews were conducted in each country and in each specific city selected in accordance with the popularity of such populist movements: Dresden, Germany; Toulon, France; Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Rome, Italy; and Athens, Greece. Along with the findings of the literature review, the interviews were conducted with male and female interlocutors within the 20-60 age bracket, living in places where populist parties have been traditionally strong. The interviews were conducted in the native language of the interlocutors by local researchers who have access to the neighbourhoods and networks. The interviewers took notes during the interviews rather than using tape-recorders and any other electronic instrument to record, and they transcribed the interviews to English before transmitting the interviews to the PI, Ayhan Kaya.

[3] The project entitled "The Future of EU – Turkey Relations (FEUTURE) reveals the narratives and drivers of the EU-Turkey relationship, the likely scenario(s) for the future, and the implications these may have on the EU and Turkey, as well as the neighbourhood and the global scene (http://www.feuture.eu).

[4] Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*; and Wodak and van Dijk (eds.), *Racism at the Top.*

[5] Ionescu and Gellner (eds.), eds. *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*; Ghergina, Mişcoiu and Soare (eds.), eds. *Contemporary Populism*; Moffit, *The Global Rise of Communism.*

[6] Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist": 546.

[7] Berezin, *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times.*

[8] Rydgren, "Immigration Sceptics, Xenophobes or Racists?": 740.

[9] Vossen, "Classifying Wilders; and Ye'or, *Eurabia. The Euro-Arab Axis*.

[10] Kaya, "Migration debates in Europe: migrants as anti-citizens".

[11] Kaya, "Backlash of Multiculturalism and Republicanism in Europe".

[12] Pelinka, "Right-Wing Populism: Concept and typology": 8.

[13] Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab.*

[14] See http://www.morgenpost.de/politik/inland/article105070241/Pro-Deutschland-ueberklebt-Sarrazin-Plakate.html accessed on 5 June 2017.

[15] PEW, "Spring Global Attitudes Survey 2016".

[16] Kaya, "Islamophobism as an Ideology in the West".

[17] Ingulfsen, "Why aren't European feminists arguing against the anti-immigrant right?"

[18] Kaya and Kayaoğlu, "Individual Determinants of anti-Muslim prejudice in the EU-15".

[19] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages.*

[20] Farris, "Femonationalism and the 'Regular' Army of Labour Called Migrant Women".

[21] Mondon and Winter, "Articulations of Islamophobia".

[22] Lipset, *Political Man.*

[23] Kaya, "Islamophobism as an Ideology in the West".

[24] Kaya, "Islamophobism as an Ideology in the West".

[25] Verwiebe et al., "Skilled German Migrants and Their Motives for Migration within Europe".

[26] The average population with a tertiary education rose from 19.5 percent in 2004 to 24.7 percent in 2013. Among the peripheral countries, Portugal has seen the largest increase in the number of graduates, rising 59 percent in the last decade, followed by Ireland and Italy at 44 percent and 43 percent, respectively.

[27] The term "trope" refers to the recurring ideas, phrases, images, fears, concerns and gestures encountered during the fieldwork interviews.

[28] Hargreaves, *Migration, Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*: 26-7.

[29] Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany.*

[30] Tocci, "Turkey and the European Union: Scenarios for 2023".

[31] See *Daily Sabah*, https://www.dailysabah.com/eu-affairs/2016/06/24/erdogan-eus-reluctance-to-accept-turkey-has-islamophobic-motives, accessed on 11 December 2017.

[32] Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe*; Moffit, *The Global Rise of Communism*.

[33] Kaya and Kentel, *Belgian-Turks*.

[34] Aksel, "Home States and Homeland Politics"; Adaman and Kaya, "Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe: Turkey".

[35] Adaman and Kaya, "Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe: Turkey"; Türkmen, "A Transformed Kemalist Islam or a New Islamic Civic Morality?": 86.

[36] Aydın-Düzgit, "Encounters with Europe in an Era of Domestic and International Turmoil".

[37] Pusch and Splitt, "Binding the Almancı to the "Homeland"; Kaya and Tecmen, "The Role of Common Cultural Heritage in External Promotion of Modern Turkey".

[38] Pusch and Splitt, "Binding the Almancı to the "Homeland": 149.

[39] See Aksel, Home States and Homeland Politics". For a current discussion on the lobbying activities of the Turkish government see http://www.dw.com/en/the-lobby-behind-turkeys-prime-minister/a-17652516 accessed on 21 June 2017.

[40] For a detailed account of the UETD see http://www.uetd.org/cms/front_content.php accessed on 15 November 2017.

[41] Abadan-Unat et al., Yurtdışında Yaşayan Seçmenlerin Siyasal Davranışları; and Şahin-Mencütek and Erdoğan, "The Implementation of Voting from Abroad".

[42] TCCB, "President Erdoğan Attends "Karlsruhe Youth Meeting" in Germany".

[43] TCBB, "President Erdoğan Attends "Karlsruhe Youth Meeting" in Germany".

[44] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. "Preserve your culture, Davutoglu urges Turks in Germany".

[45] Aksel, "Home States and Homeland Politics"; Kaya and Kentel, *Belgian-Turks*.

[46] Paçacı-Elitok and Straubhaar (eds.), *Turkey, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities*.

[47] Hakura, "Partnership Is No Privilege".

[48] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies.*

[49] For a detailed account of the polemic between the Turkish President and the Dutch PM prior to the Dutch general elections (15 December 2017) and the Turkish constitutional referendum (16 April 2017), see *The Guardian* (11 March 2017), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/11/erdogan-brands-dutch-nazi-remnants-for-barring-turkish-mp accessed on 21 December 2017.

[50] For a detailed discussion on this issue see *The Guardian* (15 March 2017), available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/15/recep-tayyip-erdogan-rails-against-dutch-in-televised-speech-netherlands-srebrenica accessed on 17 December 2017.

[51] For further information on this see http://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/turkey-threatens-to-send-europe-15000-refugees-a-month/ accessed on 5 December 2017.

[52] For further information on President Erdoğan's Nazi analogy see http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-idUSKBN16D1FO accessed on 5 December 2017.

[53] See *Deutsche Welle*, http://m.dw.com/en/turkey-asks-germany-for-extradition-of-top-coup-suspect/a-40115499 accessed on 18 December 2017.

[54] For further information on Turkey's list of German companies supporting terrorism see http://www.dw.com/en/turkey-claims-daimler-basf-and-other-german-companies-support-terror/a-39763199 accessed on 29 December 2017.

[55] For more information on the German government's proposal to the European Commission see https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-eu-idUSKBN1AG1NM accessed on 30 December 2017.

[56] For Erdoğan's call on Turkish-origin German citizens to reject main parties (SPD, CDU and the Greens) in the General Elections of September 2017 see https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-18/erdogan-calls-on-turks-in-germany-to-vote-against-turkey-s-foes accessed on 30 December 2017.

[57] For further detail about the polemic between Recep T. Erdoğan and Sigmar Gabriel see https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/erdogan-launches-war-of-words-815072 accessed on 30 December 2017.

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Notes on contributors

Ayhan Kaya is Professor of Politics and Jean Monnet Chair of European Politics of Interculturalism at the Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University. Some of his latest books are *Islam, Migration and Integration: The Age of Securitization* (Palgrave, 2012) and *Europeanization and Tolerance in Turkey* (Palgrave, 2013).

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