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GENDER EQUALITY UNDER ATTACK

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Unmasking Opposition to the Istanbul Convention in the European Parliament

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In recent years, RRP has been gaining influence in Europe.¹ Radical right populist parties (RRPPs) have been studied extensively, not least as a result of their controversial and contested ideas and policy programmes. RRPPs are well-known for their high-profile stance on immigration and further characterised by their authoritarian values and penchant for law and order.² Despite abundant literature on the aforementioned characteristics, research rarely seems to focus on the relationship between RRP and gender, and more specifically their opposition to gender equality.³ This is remarkable, as it is precisely this dimension that has traditionally been important for the ideological profile of these parties. In his influential study Herbert Kitschelt even argues that gender issues are a characteristic feature of the ideology and electoral appeal of RRPPs.⁴ In the scarce number of studies that does focus on their gender dimension they are generally depicted as being conservative, placing a strong emphasis on family values and traditional gender roles.⁵

In this regard, it is unsurprising that RRPPs embody the main opposition to progressive, gender-equal policies in different countries, at different levels of governance.⁶ Due to this opposition, gender equality initiatives are increasingly contested, posing a direct threat to gender equality progress. Furthermore, this evolution is not limited to the national level, as the European Parliament (EP) – which usually characterises itself as a strong supporter of gender equality – now hosts a significant number of RRP politicians. During the current ninth parliamentary term, the number of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) contesting gender equality has surged to over 30%, which is double that of the previous term.⁷

While RRP opposition to gender equality is not a recent phenomenon, the context in which it manifests has undergone significant changes. The Covid-19 crisis exacerbated existing gender inequalities and was furthermore accompanied by a substantial increase in gender-based violence.⁸ In light of these developments, the importance and necessity of the EU's fight against gender

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inequality have become more evident than ever. Additionally, research that scrutinizes opposition to gender equality has gained even greater importance.

The goal of this paper is to analyse RRP opposition to gender equality in the EP. Specifically, the focus lies on the opposition within the debates surrounding the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. The Istanbul Convention serves as a valuable case for our research, as strong opposition to it led to the politicisation of gender. On one hand it was hailed by feminist actors as a major tool in the fight against violence against women, but on the other hand it became the main target of RRP opposition to gender equality in Europe.⁹ Furthermore, in the post-Covid-19 pandemic, in the aftermath of an such an increase in gender-based violence, the Convention – and especially opposition to it – is highly relevant.

This paper specifically takes an interest in how RRP MEP's frame the Istanbul Convention in their opposition to gender equality. Therefore, the central question of this paper is as follows: "How do radical right populist MEP's frame the Istanbul Convention in the EP in their opposition to gender equality?". To be able to provide an answer to the central research question the methodology of a frame analysis will be employed.

The structure of this paper is as follows. First, the conceptualisation of "radical right populism" and "gender" within the context of this paper is clarified. Following that, insights into the Istanbul Convention and its politicisation are provided. Next, before conducting our analysis, we elucidate the methodology of a frame analysis. Finally, the conclusion sheds light on the outcomes derived from our frame analysis.

Radical right populism and gender

The aim of our research is to gain a better understanding of the relationship of RRP towards gender, as well as their opposition to gender equality. First of all, a clear conceptualisation of both

radical-right populism and gender in the context of this paper is required.

Radical right populism

An influential definition of populism is that of Cas Mudde, who defines populism as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups: "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite," and argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people".¹⁰ It is characterised by a strong opposition against both elitism and pluralism. Elitism is hereby depicted as the 'mirror-image' of populism, as it is said to share the same worldview, but unlike populism sees "the elite" as pure and "the people" as corrupt.¹¹ Consequently, it advocates for politics as the embodiment of the opinions and values of the elite. Pluralism sharply contrasts with this, as it believes that society consists of diverse heterogeneous groups and that politics should be based on compromises between these groups.¹²

One defining characteristic of RRPPs, in turn, is the central role played by authoritarianism and nativism. In this context, authoritarianism should not be understood as undemocratic, authoritarian regimes, but rather as "the belief in a strictly ordered society, where failure to comply with authority should be severely punished".¹³ Nativism on the other hand consists of a combination of nationalism and xenophobia, whereby a monocultural state hostile to foreign influences is advocated.¹⁴ It furthermore seeks to protect the indigenous population, seen as "pure" and "natural" from the threats that immigrants would pose.

RRPPs thus (at least) possess the characteristics of nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Individual parties may additionally exhibit separate characteristics, but the aforementioned characteristics will invariably be part of their ideological core.¹⁵

Gender

In everyday usage to this day, different meanings are attributed to the term gender. In doing so, gender and sex are often used interchangeably,

which is incorrect. The term gender was originally even created by feminists to distinguish the biological difference between the sexes from the social construction associated with it. Harriet Bradley's definition of gender provides us with a better understanding of the interpretation of the term within feminist circles. It reads as follows: "Gender refers to the varied and complex arrangements between men and women, encompassing the organization of reproduction, the sexual divisions of labour and cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity".¹⁶

The discrepancy between the original meaning of the contemporary interpretations can partly be explained by the fact that gender is what Glover describes as a "busy term", by which he means that it is used very often and widely, in a lot of different contexts.¹⁷ The widespread usage in diverse contexts has led to a constantly evolving meaning that is not fixed. In this context, the term is vulnerable to what Emily Henderson defines as "definitional politics".¹⁸ The objective hereby is not to obtain a 'correct', accurate or comprehensive definition of the term; instead, the focus lies on making the term more or less inclusive or feminist.¹⁹

In the context of this paper, gender will be approached as a contested concept that has no 'correct', fixed meaning and can be redefined. This allows us to explore the ways in which the term manifests in RRPPs. Furthermore, we pay attention to the fact that gender can be used in a strategic way, with the intention of promoting or opposing a particular way of thinking.

The Istanbul Convention: an unprecedented politicisation of gender

The Istanbul Convention has been described as the most comprehensive international and legally binding text of its kind.²⁰ The Convention came into being in 2011, within the context of the Council of Europe. In terms of content, it

embodies the most recent feminist findings in the fight against violence against women. However, simultaneously, these ground-breaking achievements in the field are confronted with - and possibly overshadowed by - a thorough contestation of the concept of gender itself.²¹ In this context, the Convention quickly became the subject of debate, being labelled as "gender ideology" and consequently a threat to the traditional gender roles in society.²²

As of 2016, all EU-member states had signed the Convention, in spite of clear signs of prior opposition.²³ Primarily social movements and churches across Europe voiced their concerns.²⁴ Initially, their actions appeared ineffective, as the signing of the Convention was not jeopardised. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the signing of an international treaty holds rather symbolic value, as a country merely signifies its intention to comply with the treaty. However, without ratification, it does not impose any binding obligations.²⁵

The ratification process – which makes the Convention binding – on the other hand, would quickly prove to be more challenging. As a result, at the time of writing, the Convention has only been ratified by 21 out of the 27 member states.^b The six member states that have not yet ratified it are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. This time, the same actors that embodied opposition against the signing of the Convention, were successful in obtaining their objective. Research on the national level identifies two prominent framings in opposition against the Convention. The Convention promoting gender ideology and acting as violation of sovereignty.

Framing of the Istanbul Convention as a promoter of gender ideology

In opposing the Convention, a substantial group of opponents substantiate their restraints by arguing that it would promote the destructive

^b At the time of writing the EU had not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention. However, on 28th June 2023 the EU ratified the Istanbul Convention, which then entered into force on 1st October 2023.

“gender ideology”. Kuhar and Paternotte clarify that the term gender ideology was initially coined to oppose women’s rights and LGBT activism, as well as to challenge essentialist and naturalistic assumptions about gender.²⁶ It is used to criticise gender by depicting it as an ideology that rejects the reality of sexual differences. The term is particularly prevalent within the context of the anti-gender movement, which in recent years has been gaining support in Europe.²⁷

In this context, the Convention was demonised by the anti-gender movement as being the Trojan horse of gender ideology, ultimately aiming to enshrine these ideas into law.²⁸ Particularly the Convention’s definition of gender as a social construct is argued to threaten the strict divide between the biological sexes and furthermore compromise familiar social gender roles.²⁹ It should be noted that the anti-gender movement’s opposition is not aimed at violence against women – the core issue of the Convention – but rather sees the Convention’s ratification as a gateway for the decay of traditional values.³⁰

Framing of the Istanbul Convention as a violation of sovereignty

In the literature on national opposition against the Convention, another prominent framing emerges – one that essentially accuses the Convention of being a violation of sovereignty. Based on this framing, the banning of its ratification is portrayed as necessary to protect national sovereignty. It is hereby emphasised that sovereignty rejects interference and strengthens the positions of states as being autonomous entities within the transnational system.³¹ By associating the Convention with this norm, even going so far as to label it a violation against it, opponents make it virtually impossible for defenders of the Convention to counter these arguments without the risk of undermining the foundations of the transnational system.³²

Concretely, the Convention is framed as something “foreign”, imposed from “above”.³³ To this point, references are also made to the EU as a foreign power that imposes its will on to member-states with the intention of weakening them as

nations and destroying their traditions.³⁴ In other words, reluctance to ratify the Convention is further fuelled by a Eurosceptic attitude towards the EU.

Methodology and data selection

Framing

As mentioned earlier, the research question of this paper is addressed by conducting a frame analysis. Robert Entman defines framing as “the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation”.³⁵ In short, framing entails the deliberative selection of elements and the influence over their interpretation. Actors construct frames as part of an agenda that aims to change problematic situations. The process of framing involves constructing a diagnosis, identifying the problem in addition to its cause. It is followed by a prognosis, which highlights the solution to the problem – or at least a plan or strategy.³⁶

The analysis of actors advocating for or against a specific social goal relies on various conceptual tools, one of which is the frames they use to give meaning to reality, allocate blame and propose courses of action.³⁷ By mapping these frames, we gain the ability to scrutinize opposition strategies of RRP MEPs. Our objective is to comprehend how they construct a discourse to oppose the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, they construct this with the intent of mobilizing their supporters and countering their opponents, defining the boundaries between the elite and the people, and establishing the boundaries for what is feasible in terms of policy.³⁸

Data selection

The data that is analysed, consists out of interventions of RRP MEPs in the debates on the Convention in the EP, during the 8th (2014-2019) and 9th parliamentary term (2019-2024). Respectively, interventions from MEPs from the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF)-, and Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD)-fraction as well as interventions from MEPs from the Identity

and Democracy (ID)-fraction were analysed. These fractions all exhibit the defining characteristics of nativism, authoritarianism and populism, which are central to RRP.³⁹

A total of nine debates was analysed: four took place during the 8th parliamentary term, and five during the 9th parliamentary term. Given the in-depth nature of our frame analysis, this is a sufficient and desirable number of debates.

RRP framings of the Istanbul Convention in the EP

The analysis is divided into two parts: a deductive and an inductive part. The former considers the two already existing frames of the Convention on the national level that were discussed above. Here, the aim is to explore the extent to which these perspectives are mirrored in debates within the EP. The inductive analysis on the other hand, examines which new RRP framings of the Convention are expressed within the context of the EP.

Deductive frame analysis

Research at the national level identifies two framings of the Istanbul Convention. These are the framings "The Istanbul Convention as promoter of gender ideology" and "The Istanbul Convention as a violation of sovereignty". Employing a deductive framing analysis allows for a comparison between these framings in the EP and the national level.

The Istanbul Convention as promotor of gender ideology

In analysing the debates departing from the framing of the Convention as a promotor of gender ideology, we specifically sought for references to "gender ideology." In doing so, it quickly became clear that this gender ideology was portrayed both as a particularly harmful ideology, as well as a part of the elitist agenda.

Most of the RRP MEPs begin their intervention by expressing their support for the fight against violence against women. However, they do so before immediately afterwards expressing their opposition to the Convention. For example, MEP

Annika Bruna first states that "*violence against women is a scourge that we must all fight against.*" She then continues:

*However, this just cause is being abused to impose the Istanbul Convention, which certainly deals with violence against women, but also intends to impose a harmful ideology. The convention aims to include gender theory in curricula at all levels of education, thereby imposing frivolous theories that have nothing to do with women's rights.*⁴⁰

There is a clear recognition of the need to combat violence against women, which is the precise issue that the Convention aims to address. Nevertheless, strong opposition against the Convention is expressed. It is obvious that the focus here is not on the objective of the Convention, but rather on the fact that it would seek to impose a harmful ideology - or gender ideology. This ideology would have a different goal, which has nothing to do with women's rights.

While it is true that the Convention clearly establishes a link between gender and violence against women, its definition of gender is often attacked without proper citation. Consequently, the definition is labelled, among other things, as "*gender nonsense*"⁴¹, "*gender madness*"⁴² and "*feminist propaganda*"⁴³, without any substantive reading supporting this claim.

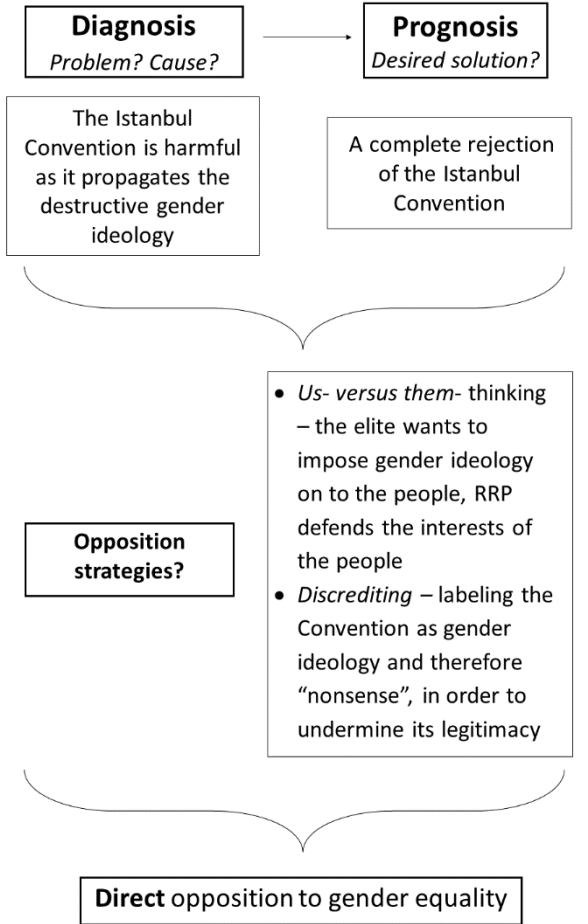
Furthermore, RRP MEPs eagerly refer to gender ideology in relation to the supposedly elitist agenda of which it is allegedly part. MEP Jörg Meuthen says the following about this:

*Therefore, the Istanbul Convention is completely superfluous. It is a politically correct pretext to deepen the absurd gender ideology and nothing else. The Istanbul Convention is rightly met with rejection and mistrust. That's why the Council of Europe is even thinking about using taxpayers' money to print lots of colorful brochures to gloss over the gender nonsense. The Istanbul Convention is the wrong instrument in the hands of the wrong people.*⁴⁴

It is hereby implied that the Council of Europe is an elitist project that seeks to push through a

particular agenda and does so with taxpayer money, paid by the pure people. The Convention is not only said to be a wrongful instrument, it would also be in the hands of the wrong people, namely the elite. RRP MEP's here present themselves as the true defenders of the interests of the people.

Figure 1: "The Istanbul Convention as promotor of the destructive gender ideology"



The Istanbul Convention as a violation of sovereignty

On the national level, opponents of the Convention additionally frame it to be in violation with national sovereignty. They portray the EU as a foreign power imposing its agenda on member states, aiming to weaken them as nations. As the debates that were analysed are situated within the context of the EP, it is interesting to examine whether such a hostile attitude towards the EU is equally expressed here.

When analysing the debates for this framing, we specifically searched for the mentioning of "sovereignty" and "national laws".

Violation of sovereignty based on the principle of subsidiarity

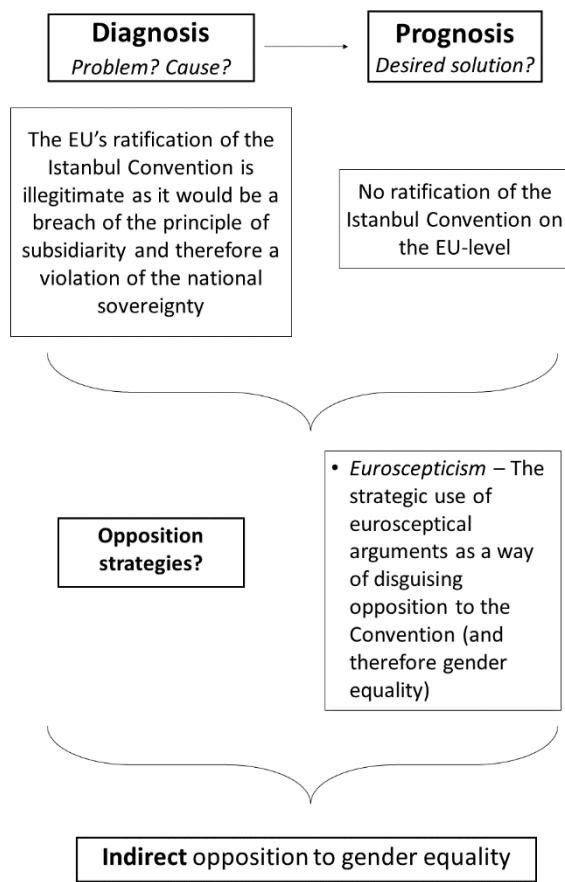
During the debates, several RRP MEPs implicitly refer to the principle of subsidiarity in their opposition to the Convention. This principle rules out EU intervention when an issue can be dealt with effectively by the member states themselves, at central, regional or local level. According to RRP MEPs the EU's ratification of the Convention would be illegitimate, as it would be a breach of this principle. MEP Nicolas Bay says the following regarding this matter:

*Although the aim of this resolution is laudable, I believe that the European Union has no diplomatic legitimacy to ratify such a convention, which it would impose on the Member States, who should be the ones to decide. The European Union would once again be overstepping its rights and undermining the sovereignty of States, which is why I voted against the resolution.*⁴⁵

Here, the EU's ratification of the Convention is not considered problematic based on its content. Instead, the Convention's aim is described as "laudable", again implying that the issue of violence against women requires attention and support. The problem is located elsewhere: in a lack of power and therefore legitimacy for the EU to ratify the Convention.

As stated above, the EU's ratification is not only depicted as illegitimate, but furthermore as a violation of the member states' sovereignty. MEP Steve Briois goes as far as to describe it as "a new attack on the sovereignty of the member states"⁴⁶ and MEP Jean-François Jalkh as "a treaty that, as usual, undermines the sovereignty of the member states"⁴⁷. This discourse clearly conveys the idea that the EU is constantly violating the member states' sovereignty.

Figure 2: “the Istanbul Convention as violation of



Inductive frame analysis

The following part of the analysis will be conducted inductively. Based on the data it will be examined which new RRP framings of the Convention, that have not yet previously been explored in the existing literature. First and foremost, the debates will be reviewed with the following question in mind: “In what way is the Istanbul Convention presented as a problem?”. Once an answer to this question is formulated, the follow-up question “What is the cause of this problem?” is posed. Based on these questions, the diagnostic framing of the Convention is then deconstructed. Subsequently, the prognostic framing – that addresses the solutions being put forward – is dissected.

In doing so we were able to find and deconstruct the following two framings: “The Istanbul Convention as ineffective” and “The EU’s ratification of the Istanbul Convention as incompatible with European migration policy”. The deconstruction process allows us to identify the opposition

strategies and furthermore allows us to categorize the opposition as direct or indirect opposition to gender equality.

The Istanbul Convention as ineffective

On multiple occasions during the debates, RRP MEP’s openly question the Convention’s effectiveness. To this end, MEP Christine Anderson cites studies that would deny its effectiveness:

In Sweden, the National Council on Crime Prevention reported that the number of people killed in domestic violence doubled between 2017 and 2018. Belgian Interior Minister Pieter De Crem also denounced an increase in domestic violence during the same period, in other words before victims were locked in with their abusive partners because of confinement measures. Sweden and Belgium have ratified the Istanbul Convention, as well as Turkey, the country where it was adopted and where the rate of femicide is skyrocketing! This makes me want to ask you the following question: is there really an added value to this instrument?⁴⁸

In emphasizing the Convention’s alleged ineffectiveness, RRP MEPs on the other hand fail – or do not bother – to formulate an alternative that would, unlike the Convention, guarantee the protection of women. Instead, the solution that they offer is simply the non-ratification of the Convention. The fact that the Convention’s ultimate objective, namely fighting violence against women, would no longer be pursued, does not seem to be taken into consideration. MEP Silvia Sardone, however, criticizes the Convention’s perceived lack of effectiveness precisely due to the importance of this goal. She articulates this as follows:

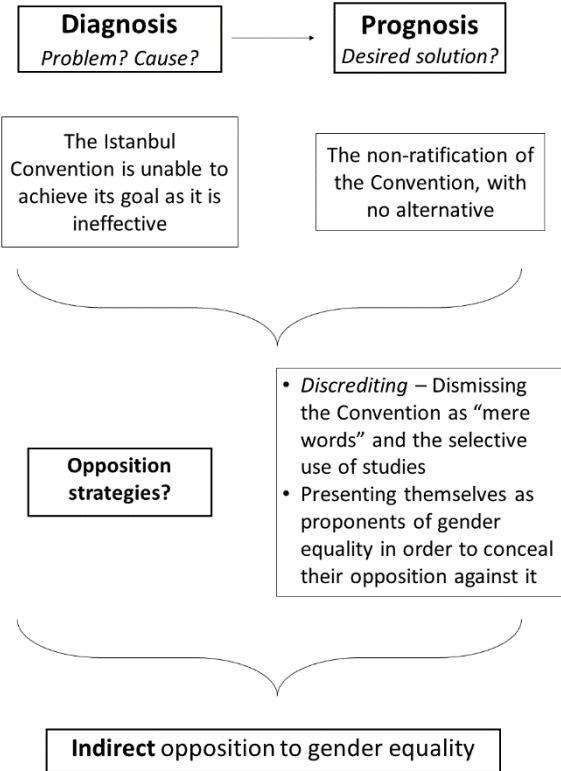
This is not the way to fight violence and abuse. Words are no longer enough to combat the subjugation of women. We need more resources to denounce it, we need more certainty about punishment. In short, I would say less pro-sexist feminist propaganda and more facts.⁴⁹

This statement implies that "mere words" are not enough to achieve the goal of the Istanbul Convention. Referring to a legally binding as the

Convention as if it were nothing more than "mere words" not only questions its legitimacy, but seeks to undermine it entirely.

Then follows a call for additional resources to address the issue of violence against women. The Convention – dismissed as mere feminist propaganda – is depicted as inadequate and therefore unable to achieve its objective. However, both the specific resources required and the facts that are deemed necessary are not specified. RRP here merely *presents* itself as an ally in the fight against violence against women, while notably remaining very vague about the actions needed to tackle this.

Figure 3: "the Istanbul Convention as ineffective"



The Istanbul Convention as incompatible with European migration policy

Throughout the debates concerning the Istanbul Convention, immigration seems to be a recurrent theme. RRP MEPs are quick to establish a connection between violence against women in Europe, and immigration into the continent. MEP Jörg Meuthen specifically addresses Commissioner Frans Timmermans on this matter:

*Commissioner Timmermans, please do not complain about violence against women in the EU. You are one of the key players who, with your policies, even massively promote violence against women. With your absurd migration policy, you are actively bringing droves of young men from foreign cultures into the EU, men who despise women and are often prepared to commit massive violence against women. More hypocrisy was rare, Commissioner.*⁵⁰

Being labelled “absurd”, a clear dissatisfaction with the EU’s migration policy is expressed. Moreover, this policy is accused of being responsible for the (increasing) violence towards women in the European context. This is the case, as it would encourage the arrival of young men from foreign cultures, men that are attributed the characteristic of “despising women”.

The EU - embodied by Commissioner Frans Timmermans – in this regard, is accused of being hypocritical. It is implied that Commissioner Timmermans - or the EU - would have no right to "complain" about violence against women within the EU. As a result, insisting on the EU's ratification of the Convention is put forward as inappropriate: after all, without the EU and its migration policy there would be no issue of violence against women in Europe. Therefore, the solution that is implied is not to ratify the Convention, but rather to adjust the EU’s migration policy.

It quickly becomes clear that when referring to migrants and "foreign cultures," the primary focus is on male migrants of Muslim background. MEP Janice Atkinson is particularly direct in this regard:

*The truth is that by letting millions of young migrant men with Muslim backgrounds into our countries, we have submitted our women to these attacks. It is a form of terrorism. No more cover-ups, no more mitigating circumstances, no more political correctness. Like President Trump, I would like more scrutiny of those you are letting in.*⁵¹

Without any doubt our nuance, the perpetrators of violence against women are hereby identified

as “young migrant men of Muslim background”. By using an us versus them rhetoric polarization is deliberately being encouraged. Migrant men are constructed as the “other”, characterised by a hostile attitude towards gender equality and consequently a threat to “our” women. In reality, RRP MEPs try to conceal their own opposition against gender equality with anti-immigration arguments.

However, further analysis reveals that the attitude of RRP MEPs towards gender equality in relation to immigration is ambiguous. This, as they employ gender equality arguments to accentuate what they perceive as an incompatibility of Islam in the West. Regarding Turkey’s withdrawal of the Convention, MEP Susanna Ceccardi states the following:

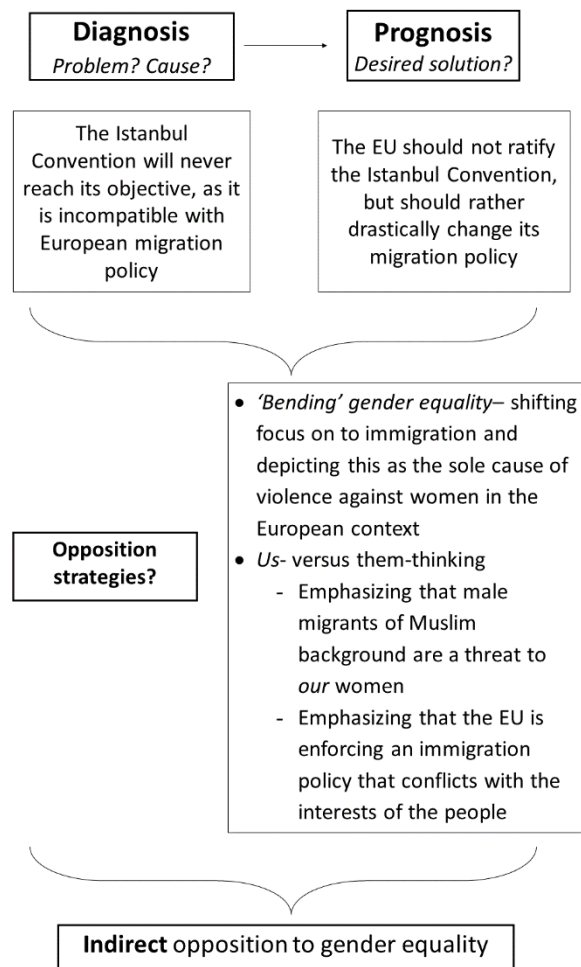
*For women, for European values, for freedom, we say it again: Turkey is not Europe.*⁵²

Turkey’s withdrawal of the Convention – here presented as the embodiment of gender equality – would demonstrate a “lack of European values”. Based on this lacking, MEP Gilles Lebreton even calls for a halt of Turkey’s accession process to the EU:

*By withdrawing from this treaty, Turkey is turning away from gender equality, an essential value of European civilization. We must draw the consequences and permanently halt Turkey's accession process to the European Union.*⁵³

In relation to Turkey gender equality is recognized as an essential value of European civilization. Whereas RRP MEPs themselves express both direct and indirect opposition to the EU’s ratification, when Turkey does the exact same, they claim it to be a violation of the European values. It appears that RRP MEPs solely adopt a positive stance toward gender equality in relation to immigration or a non-Western context. Consequently, their advocacy for gender equality in this context should be viewed as merely instrumental, serving as part of their broader anti-immigration agenda.

Figure 4: “the Istanbul Convention as incompatible with European migration policy”



Conclusion

Ultimately, a total of four framings of RRP framings of the Istanbul Conventions in the EP emerged. According to the first framing, which depicts the Convention as a *promotor of gender ideology*, it imposes a harmful ideology that denies nature and furthermore is part of the elitist agenda. This can and should be framed within the authoritarian and populist dimensions of RRP. Authoritarianism is expressed here in the preference of the “natural” order which opposes the social construction that is gender. Portraying the Convention as part of the EU’s elitist agenda clearly corresponds to RRP’s populist dimension, as this gives them the opportunity to present themselves as the true defenders of the people. This framing was identified as direct opposition to gender equality, as it directly calls for the rejection of the Istanbul Convention. This finding

contradicts previous studies claiming that gender equality is so widely accepted within the EU that opposition to it is almost exclusively indirect.⁵⁴

The second framing sees the Convention as *a violation of sovereignty* and essentially embodies opposition to it with Eurosceptic arguments. It emphasizes that the EU's ratification of the Convention would be "yet another" example of the EU overstepping its legal boundaries. Opposition is primarily directed to further EU-integration, rather than gender equality. This finding is consistent with Mudde's observation, namely that the majority of RRPP's do not oppose the basic principles of the EU, but rather the direction the EU is headed.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the consequence of this resistance is that it reduces the support for gender equality debates at the European level, with negative implication for the EU's fight for gender equality.

The third and fourth framing were analysed inductively and are therefore unique for the context of the EP. The third framing portrays the Convention as *ineffective* and reveals that RRP MEPs also position themselves as outspoken advocates for gender equality, primarily to conceal their underlying opposition to it. The Convention is hereby rejected as it is deemed insufficient and unable to reach its objective. In reality, by failing

to propose a viable alternative, they deliberatively block an initiative that benefits gender equality.

The fourth and final framing claims that the Convention is *incompatible with European migration policy*. RRP MEP's leverage their opposition to immigration to reinforce their stance against gender equality. By attributing violence against women in Europe solely to male immigrants, especially Muslims, they position gender equality as a fundamental value of European civilization and state that it is incompatible with non-Western cultures.

The analysis establishes that RRP's attitude towards gender equality is rather ambiguous. Depending on the context, their stance on the matter can both be conservative and progressive. However, their progressive, pro-gender stance appears to be merely instrumental, serving as support to other positions such as anti-immigration, or as a disguise for opposition against gender equality. Furthermore, the analysis shows that RRP opposition to gender equality is delivered both direct and indirectly (and therefore more subtle). In this regard, this paper offers a deeper insight into the specific ways of expressing opposition, which is essential for the purpose of undermining it.

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