1. Introduction

In recent decades, migration and ethnic relations have emerged as contentious political issues in most European democracies. Despite the differing histories of ethnic diversity and traditions of immigration across Europe, intense public debates about these issues and about the political regulation of rights, duties and restrictions have become a common theme, with dominant frames of interpretation travelling across national borders (Mahnig/Wimmer 2000; Joppke 2007). This marked increase in public attention is both reflected and intensified by a lively political debate involving political authorities, (inter)national courts, non-governmental organizations, affected groups, and, not least, political parties. It has given rise to public debates that intermingle topics such as cross-border migration, asylum and refugees, ethnic diversity, and the many facets of migrant and minority integration, and often all of these different aspects are lumped together by means of references to "others", "aliens" or "foreigners" (Roggeband/Verloo 2007). Though these discursive strands obviously developed at different rates in different historical periods, they have accumulated into a complex political field that, nowadays, is increasingly important in structuring political preferences.

Among the arenas for this public debate on migration and ethnic relations, one forum has been instrumental in raising and spreading the salience of these issues and distributing interpretive schemes across national contexts: the realm of party competition (Schain et al. 2002: 3-4). Political parties have become key voices in the increasingly contentious debate, forwarding all manner of stances on questions of migration and ethnic relations. Most prominently, anti-immigrant perspectives and claims for cultural hegemony have been catalyzed by the rise of radical right parties (Betz 1993/1994), but pro-immigrant and multicultural stances have also been voiced, mostly by left-libertarian and liberal parties (Lahav 2004). On the other hand, the behavior of mainstream parties both left and right of the political center has long been characterized by ambivalence, both in their engagement as well as in their policy stances. Hence party competition has grown to serve as a microcosm mirroring competing perspectives within a society, with political parties increasingly attaching the issues of migration and ethnic relations to their agendas. But parties do not only reflect already existing preferences among electorates. In fact they vitally stimulate these discussions and preferences themselves, turning from mouthpieces into generators of political sentiments.

Interestingly, for a long time scholarly research on immigration underrated the significance of political parties (Triadafilopoulos/Zaslove 2006: 171; Bale 2008: 316; Duncan/van Hecke 2008: 432). This longstanding reluctance is particularly baffling in light of the fact that today, political parties play a crucial role all across Europe as much in framing migration and ethnic relations as in placing them on the political agenda (Schain 2008: 465). The reasons for this reluctance stemmed partly from the early assumption that mainstream parties would avoid

politicization of the issue because the boundaries for a legitimate debate were narrow and because detailed information on patterns and consequences of immigration was scarce (Freeman 1995: 884-887). In part it was also owed to the perception that the actual leeway for policies to be promoted by political parties was limited by liberal and human rights principles (Soysal 1994: 7-8). Thus, with traditional mainstream politics emphasizing other policy fields, the systematic inclusion of party politics in research on migration and ethnic relations was neglected long into the 1990s.

In recent years, however, a growing number of authors have called for closer scrutiny of the role of political parties, especially that of anti-immigrant radical right parties, "as critical nodes" in the realm of migration and ethnic relations (e.g. Perlmutter 1996; Minkenberg 2001; Schain 2006/2008). The crucial influence that political parties exert on both the discussion and the regulation of migration and ethnic relations in Western democracies has since become a lively strand of research acknowledging that migration phenomena do not exist independently of their political discussion but rather are controlled, framed and perceived through politics (Messina 2007: 55). Thus bringing parties back into the study of migration and ethnic relations "helps us to understand the importance of changing preferences, their relation to strategic interests, and the means by which they are activated in policy-making processes" related to these issues (Triadafilopoulos/Zaslove 2006: 189).

As part of this deepening scholarly interest, several authors have pointed out transformations of traditional cleavage patterns and new conflicts whose growing relevance has come to structure party competition, with migration and ethnic relations playing an important part in these developments (Inglehart 1990; Betz 1993; Kitschelt 2001; Kriesi et al. 2006). Of the party families, anti-immigrant radical right parties have received the most attention due to their role in pushing migration and ethnic relations onto the political agenda as well as to their ability to influence the policies of governing parties (Green-Pedersen/Odmalm 2008; van Spanje 2010) and occasionally even implement policies themselves by gaining office (McGann/Kitschelt 2005; de Lange 2007; van Spanje/van der Brug 2008).

The role of mainstream parties has come under systematic scrutiny only in the last few years as a result of the success of anti-immigrant parties that started in the late 1990s and eventuated in radical right government participation (such as in Italy, Austria, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands; see de Lange 2012). Since then, the role of center-right parties has been addressed in a number of studies (Eatwell 2000; Downs 2001; Bale 2003; 2005; Meguid 2005 and 2008), and recently the hitherto-neglected role of center-left parties has attracted some scholarly interest as well (Art 2007; Bale et al. 2010), while systematic evaluation of pro-immigrant parties has remained scarce. This recent strand of research has been oriented on a number of core questions that are the guiding questions for this book as well: When do political parties add migration and ethnic rela-

tions to their agendas? How can their politicization be analyzed systematically? Where do parties position themselves in a controversial policy field that cuts across several government portfolios? Which motives can be identified as driving forces of parties' behavior, and what are the rational strategies of politicization linked to these different motives? What roles do the different politicization channels available in electoral competition play in these considerations?

This book addresses these research questions on the basis of an in-depth country study and suggests a conceptual framework for the analysis of electoral party competition on the issues of migration and ethnic relations. Its central objective is to contribute to the understanding of existing concepts of party politicization of these issues. It focuses on the supply side of competition, thus on the inputs offered by parties' political communication efforts, while demand-side factors (dealing with the opportunities and constraints created by voter preferences) are considered only from an explanatory perspective. The book integrates literature from studies on party politics, political communication, and immigration in order to develop a conceptual framework based on the following three considerations.

Firstly, it conceptualizes an instrument that is suitable for the identification of party politicization patterns, i.e., the ways in which parties emphasize and frame the issues or subtopics of a debate. Approaching politicization as a process of "publicly addressing an issue in the light of its political regulation", the design will be based on three concepts joining different strands of literature, i.e. *issue salience, subtopics* and *positions* (Downs 1957; Budge/Farlie 1983; Carmines/Stimson 1993; Petrocik 1996; Benoit/Laver 2006; Meguid 2008; Jäger/Maier 2009), and the argument that parties strategically adapt these aspects of their politicization out of competitive considerations. That is, in order to tap into a particular political issue, parties may increase their issue emphasis in general, highlight the importance of certain specific subtopics over that of others, or change their stances on the issue in question.

Secondly, since these strategies of politicization are expected to vary among different party types and changing competitive conditions, this study develops an explanatory framework for party politicization of migration and ethnic relations. To this end, it integrates theoretical arguments from recent literature on party goals with work dedicated specifically to the issues of migration and ethnic relations (eg. Strøm 1990; Müller/Strøm 1999; Downs 2001; Bale 2003/2008; Meguid 2008; Green-Pedersen/Odmalm 2008; Bale et al. 2010). Suggesting a combined framework that considers party ideology and issue ownership as well as motives of vote maximization and coalition considerations, the study is able to explain individual party behavior from a longitudinal perspective. Additionally, since party competition does not take place in a vacuum but is rather vitally embedded in external socio-structural circumstances, consideration is also given to the impact of these circumstances on the overarching politicization patterns.

Thirdly, the book contends that the electoral arena is the crucial locus for identifying parties' core values and strategies in the debate on migration and ethnic relations, and that electoral competition incorporates a variety of campaign channels serving different communicational goals and needs in the campaigning process. This multi-dimensionality of the electoral arena raises questions about how different campaign channels correspond to different patterns of politicization, and whether certain types of parties are more capable of maintaining campaign consistency than others (Maarek 1995; Blumler et al. 1996; Adams et al. 2006; Kriesi et al. 2009; Williams 2009). To answer these questions, the study compares programmatic communication as provided by election manifestos with the day-to-day campaigning shown in parties' press releases.

These three conceptual considerations are examined empirically by means of a longitudinal country study (George/Bennet 2004; Gerring 2004) of Austrian general elections from 1971 to 2013. The case of Austria was selected on the basis of several theoretical considerations. Firstly, since 1945 the Austrian party system has developed in a characteristic way for democracies in Europe, turning from a narrow, party-centric system characterized by high party loyalty and partisanship into a more heterogeneous party spectrum competing on increasingly diverse issues (Plasser/Ulram 2006; Müller 2006). Secondly, Austria has a long history of cultural diversity reaching back to the Habsburg era, and furthermore, due to its geopolitical situation, it experienced characteristic immigration and asylum inflows following 1945 (Fassmann/Münz 1995). Thirdly, the prominent role of the radical right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) since the mid-1980s has made the Austrian case a standard example for research on anti-immigrant parties (Luther 2000; Pelinka 2002). Fourthly, the comparatively high rates of attentiveness and skepticism of the Austrian population regarding the questions of migration and ethnic relations have further fuelled political controversy (Rosenberger/Seeber 2011).[1] All of these factors together make Austria an informative case for the analysis and evaluation of party strategies in electoral competition on migration and ethnic relations.

The longitudinal analysis presented in this book traces the development of these contentious political issues under changing socio-structural conditions while examining the adaptations of parties' strategies to changing competitive contexts; thus it integrates these strands into a single reciprocal model explaining patterns of party politicization in Austria. By focusing on the electoral arena, it aims to reveal the dynamics of competition in contemporary party politicization on migration and ethnic relations and thus seeks to illustrate the role of these issues for parties' strategic considerations.

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[1] Each of these considerations will be illustrated more thoroughly in the discussion of the case in Chapter 3.