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Turkish EU Accession: The Influence of the Far Right

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**Abstract**

Samuel Huntington's concept of 'a clash of civilizations' is used more frequently by some in the EU to explain the question of why the EU is seemingly stalling Turkey from becoming a full member state of the EU. Scholars offer many other possible reasons to explain the attempts from the EU to delay or even prevent Turkish accession based around arguments of identity, economics, or human rights, among others. This paper takes a different approach from other scholarly works by examining the domestic politics in the countries that have delayed Turkey from progressing with the accession negotiations. I argue that center right parties in various European countries who have faced electoral competition have chosen to delay the accession negotiations to attract the base supporters of the far right within their own countries. The research will use two different countries as case studies: Germany and France. This concept that domestic politics are delaying or preventing EU enlargement raises the question of if the EU enlargement process must be reformed so that it is not used to score political points in domestic politics.

## **Introduction**

The European Union (EU) is a beacon of hope that humanity can set aside our differences and desire for war in order to come together for the betterment of everyone. For nonmember states of the EU in Europe, the EU is not only a beacon of hope but it also offers tangible economic rewards. Turkey has been attempting to join the EU and its predecessor organizations for decades. For nonmember states of the EU in Europe, the EU is not only a beacon of hope but it also offers tangible economic rewards. Yet even with the start of the accession process in 2005 that would transition Turkey into becoming a full member of the EU, Turkish progression in the process has proceeded extremely slowly. It seems puzzling that the integration process is taking so long for Turkey as other countries have started and finished the accession process within the time that Turkey has been progressing through its accession process. The puzzle is even more difficult once one realizes that the EU has allowed other countries to become member states even though those countries are not as economically prepared or integrated with the EU economy, do not have strong democracies, or do not have a good record of human rights. In exploring this puzzle, I found that Turkish accession process has been halted or delayed between the start of the process in 2005 and now. Given this information, I wanted to explore why it appears that the EU is attempting to delay Turkish accession into the EU. Specifically, how do domestic politics factor into the delay?

I argue that when facing electoral competition within their home countries, center right European political parties delay the Turkish accession process and use it as one of several policy positions in the hopes of preventing the loss of votes to the far right parties, and maintaining their own domestic political power. This approach to this EU problem is unique as other scholarly works investigate the cultural differences, the economics, or geostrategic factors themselves; however, the works do not investigate whether there may be another cause for delay at the level of domestic politics.

In this paper, I introduce a comparative case study of domestic politics in two EU member states: France and Germany. In this comparative analysis I investigate if/how the German Christian Democratic Union and the French Union Pour Un Mouvement Populaire have adjusted their policies in regards to Turkish accession because of the rise of the German Alternative für Deutschland and the French Front National in the two case studies.

## **Literature Review**

While Turkey officially began the accession process to join the EU in 2005, the country has been attempting to join the EU or the predecessors for decades. Since 2005, some progress has been made within the process; however, a number of requirements that Turkey would need to satisfy before it became a full member state have been blocked for a variety of official reasons by both individual member states and on the recommendation of the European Commission. Political and International Relations scholars have attempted to address the question that arises from this extremely prolonged process, why the EU appears to be delaying Turkey from becoming a full member state of the EU. Scholars have broadly defined five schools of thought to explain the delay.

The first argument follows the logic that the European and Turkish religious and cultural differences are too great for Turkish integration into the EU (Koenig with Mihelj and Bek 2006, MacMillan 2013, Scherpereel 2010). The question of identity in the case of Turkish accession, references the religious and cultural differences and how these insurmountable differences will prevent successful Turkish integration into the EU. These differences include religious differences of Turkey being a majority Muslim country while Europe is largely majority Christian with a history of division between church and state, and cultural differences such as differing amounts of multi-lingual people or popular culture differences. Scholars such as Elizabeth Shakman Hurd and John A. Scherpereel argue that the cultural and religious differences show marked differences not only in the personal lives of everyday citizens, but also in the politics of both the EU and Turkey. Hurd focuses her research on the impact of religion in politics, which allows Hurd to acknowledge not only the obvious religious and cultural differences but also some of the underlying differences such as the different forms of secularism present in both societies. These differences, Hurd asserts, will be present as an aspect of European opposition to Turkish accession even if Turkey is able to complete all of the economic and political requirements. Using public polls, Hurd provides evidence that even if Judeo-Christian religion is not a public factor of life in Europe, the undertones and effects in European secularism are still present and vastly different from a majority Islamic country like Turkey (Hurd 2006).

While Hurd concentrates on the religious aspects of the identity school of thought, John A. Scherpereel focuses his article on cultural differences between Turkey and the different member states, arguing that the culture present in everyday Turkish life is centered around a

culture that could be described as “Turkish”. This Turkish culture is not European culture and is not compatible with European culture. These distinctions between the two cultures causes the differences that Scherpereel notes are too large for Turkey to be able to successfully integrate into the EU. Scherpereel draws this conclusion after investigating the role and perception that religion should have in life and in politics, popular culture in Turkey as compared to European culture, and the linguistic repertoires present in the population. The role of religion in politics is important to Scherpereel’s argument because Turkish acceptance of religion and its significant role in politics is one of the most commonly cited ways of delineating Turks as a people who are not European. The author used these indicators to draw parallels to a similar study done examining Eastern Europe as another comparison before its accession (Scherpereel 2010).

The religious and cultural differences that Hurd and Scherpereel emphasize also appear to be one of the driving factors for the European citizens who oppose Turkish accession after using Eurobarometer surveys. These differences are feared not just for different ideations, but the fear that those differences would be a threat if Turkish people migrated to other parts of Europe after the accession is completed and the different cultures are not able to coexist peacefully (Gerhards with Hans 2011).

The second school of thought places less of an emphasis on the cultural or religious differences and instead focuses on EU requirements, or chapters, for integration that Turkey has had difficulty in addressing such as human rights, weak democratic values, or minority rights (Arikan 2003, Cengiz with Hoffmann 2013). Within this school of thought, there are wide varieties of topics to be examined, such as: minority rights in the Kurdish context, democratic reforms, judicial reforms, security reforms, and foreign policy. The issue of a lack of sufficient minority rights, for the Kurds in particular, is a problem because Turkish Kurds have been marginalized. In addition, the Turkish government has historically attempted to assimilate the Kurds without regards to the different language and culture that makes up the minority, and instead is attempting to create a single, unified ethnic identity. The scholars Kerim Yildiz, Mark Muller, and Noam Chomsky explore this issue and other obstacles within this school of thought in their book, *The European Union and Turkish Accession: Human Rights and the Kurds*. In this book, the authors argue although Turkey’s concessions to granting more human rights is occurring slowly, the EU accession process had enabled the necessary reforms to proceed (Yildiz with Muller and Chomsky 2008).

Among other issues that are explored by Yildiz, Muller, and Chomsky, the authors emphasize the need for democratic reform of government, explaining that the main obstacle Turkey faces when dealing with democratic reform is the role of the military in politics. The authors proceed to also explain the issues surrounding aspects of the need for judicial reform as Turkey still has a predisposition in its police and security forces for the use of torture during interrogations and detention of peoples. After exploring these issues, the authors claim to be optimistic about the reform process in Turkey; however, they also realize the reform process is only occurring because of the accession process, and if the process halts, there are worries that the reform processes will also stop or be reversed (Yildiz with Muller and Chomsky 2008).

Turkey's difficulty in addressing issues such as those already listed has been exacerbated by the failed coup attempt in 2016, as the ruling government has launched a crackdown and purge on dissidents in Turkey (BBC 2017).<sup>1</sup> Murat Metin Hakki is one of the scholars in the second school of thought who touches upon many of the different topics in his article. Hakki after reviewing EU informal and formal demands on the Armenian question, the Kurdish issue, Cyprus, Turkey-Greek relations and territorial claims, and security reform, claims that Turkey will be able to become a full member state of the EU (Metin Hakki 2006). Hakki is an outlier in the EU conditionality school of thought as the scholar is optimistic about Turkey's future in the EU. Many of the other scholars, such as Kivanc Ulusoy, Tarik Oguzlu with Mustafa Kibaroglu, and Amanda Paul, are not as optimistic, and instead contend that demands and the implementation of the demands are slowing the process because Turkey has a different governing structure and civil-military relationship than other countries in the EU (Ulusoy 2008, Paul 2012). Scholarship for this school of thought, however, is lacking in explaining Turkey's EU prospects after the coup attempt, subsequent purge, and government system change to a presidential system.

A third school of thought concentrates on the economic factors which may cause the EU or specific member states to delay Turkish accession. The focus of the economic argument is on the economic burden that Turkish accession will cause through transfers during the accession process and after (Özgüzer with Pensieroso 2013, Hobolt 2014). Sara B. Hobolt is one of the scholars of the economic theory who explains that specific countries in the EU, and those citizens in EU countries who pay more to the EU than what they receive from the EU, are not as

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40612056>

likely to support EU enlargement as those EU countries who are not part of the Euro (Hobolt 2014). While it is not known if Turkey would receive more or less than what would be given to the EU, this economic factor of transfers is still important to the larger question of Turkish accession. These economic factors are also important because the perceptions of the EU citizens in countries who pay more to the EU will not want to see even more money go to another country, which will negatively affect the citizens perceptions of Turkish accession, even if the perceptions are not accurate.

The fourth school of thought concentrates on the possible economic effects that would be associated with the accession process itself. Gul Ertan Özgüzer and Luca Pensieroso explain that the accession process itself will have economic effects on the EU. The two scholars argue that overall the accession of Turkey would economically benefit the EU provided Turkish total factor productivity increases, and they provide a model to validate their argument. In making this argument, the scholars admit that Turkey will receive benefits from different EU funds during the process, which, without Turkish accession, could be spent on other member states (Özgüzer with Pensieroso 2013). Özgüzer and Pensieroso also admit that the model they constructed to validate their argument was contingent on the increase in the Turkish total factor productivity. Without such an increase, Turkey could harm the EU economically, which the economic school of thought argues is the reason for the EU delay.

The fifth school of thought argues that one issue specifically is stalling Turkish accession, namely the Cyprus issue. The Cyprus issue began after the island gained independence from the British, when the tensions between the Greek majority and Turkish minority grew on the island. By 1974, Turkey became worried that Cyprus would unify with Greece despite previous agreements and the vocal dissension of the Turkish minority on the island. These worries caused Turkey to invade Cyprus in the name of protecting the Turks on Cyprus. After the invasion, the island became separated with the Greek Cypriots creating the Republic of Cyprus in the South of the island, and which received international recognition as being the governing body for the entire island. The Turkish Cypriots also created a state in the North; however, this state was only recognized by Turkey, and faced embargoes from most other countries. After the separation, peace talks have been attempted but none of the attempts have been successful to date. The most notable effort was in 2005, when the EU promised that if the Republic of Cyprus would put a peace deal and reunification plan to vote through a referendum, the nation would become a full



member of the EU. The outcome of the referendum was a defeat of the peace deal, but because the Republic of Cyprus participated, it was still granted membership in the EU. The Cyprus issue, which pertains to this school of thought, is the need for a resolution of the conflict through a peace deal and reunification of the island (Chan 2016).<sup>2</sup>

This school of thought focuses on the Cyprus issue since it has been one of the official reasons for stalling negotiations on several EU requirements (Gorvett 2005). The scholars are not entirely pessimistic that Turkey will never become a member in the EU; however, they do acknowledge that addressing the Cyprus issue will be difficult with some calling it a Gordian knot. Nathalie Tocci is one scholar who argues that the Cyprus issue is the most obvious reason for the delay, especially after the Greek Cypriot government was granted accession into the EU. Tocci further explains that by allowing Greek Cypriots to become a part of the EU, the Greek Cypriots have been able to use their veto power in the EU to leverage concessions from Turkey and delay Turkish accession into the EU. Specifically Cyprus is hoping that by leveraging the accession process over Turkey, Turkey will pressure the breakaway Turkish Cypriot government to reunify with the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus under the terms provided by the Republic of Cyprus. The evidence supporting this argument is easy to observe in the votes or positions in the EU where the Greek Cypriots have blocked five chapters as a member state during the Turkish accession process. A further six chapters have been blocked by the EU because Turkey is not abiding by one of the agreements made during the accession process where Turkey would open its ports and airports to all member states of the EU, including Cyprus, which Turkey has not done (Tocci 2010).

Another scholar in the Cyprus issue school of thought, Jon Gorvett, follows a similar line of reasoning regarding the Cyprus issue by arguing that one of the issues that could potentially derail Turkish accession negotiations is the difficult positions that the EU and Turkey have taken in regards to the Cyprus issue. Gorvett highlights a number of retaliatory policies that Turkey and the EU have taken that have only served to prevent more meaningful and successful accession negotiations to occur. Turkey does not recognize the Greek Cypriot internationally recognized government, but rather the Turkish Cypriot state in the north of the island. In addition to withholding recognition of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey has also refused to open ports or airports to any Greek Cypriot registered vessel. In response to these actions, and in

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/08/world/europe/cyprus-reunification-talks.html>

addition to blocking chapters in the accession process, Gorvett clarifies the other policies that the EU has taken such as placing a reciprocal embargo on vessels and goods from Turkish Cyprus and withholding money that was allotted to the Turkish Cypriots for participating in the UN referendum on reunification (Gorvett 2005). The issues involved in the Cyprus issue school of thought are significant but could potentially be resolved and do not account for all of the reasons that Turkish accession has been delayed.

The final school of thought contends that the accession process is being delayed because of a lack of consensus within the EU concerning Turkish accession (Lagendijk 2014, Müftüler-Baç 2017). Müftüler-Baç does not believe that Turkey will become a full member and instead argues that Turkey will not be able to become a full member state because of a lack of internal consensus on the issue. The scholar highlights specific countries, such as France and Germany, as certain governments opposed to Turkish accession. As the most recent crises have occurred such as the crackdown on dissent in Turkey after the coup attempt, Turkey's relationship with these countries and its prospects have evolved into one in which Turkey could become a "privileged partner" to the EU, but not a member state. A privileged partnership in this context, between Turkey and the EU, would see integration between economies, and security apparatuses. A privileged partnership would not give Turkey all of the benefits of EU membership, Turkey would not be able to join the Euro, and Turkish citizens would not be within the Schengen zone. Müftüler-Baç makes this argument by using the statements of public officials from the EU and its member states and the works of other scholars who are also a part of this school of thought (Müftüler-Baç 2017).

While all of the other schools of thought revolve around a problem that exists at the supra-national EU level, the EU consensus school of thought instead contends that a lack of internal cohesion is causing the delay in Turkish accession because progression in the accession process requires unanimity. Joost Lagendijk is one of the scholars who argue that the EU needs to carry out internal reforms before Turkey will have a viable chance at successfully completing the accession process to join the EU. Lagendijk describes one scenario where Turkey would be able to eventually complete the accession process, but it would require substantial EU reform and the correct electoral outcomes in countries such as Germany. Specifically, Lagendijk argues that the EU would need to address the problems that arose from the 2008 Euro crisis such as the high public debts, creation of a banking union, and the creation of sustainable economic growth.

Nor is the economic reform the only reform Lagendijk claims would be needed before Turkish accession could be achieved, as the EU among other challenges must also address the fundamental question of how the EU should shape itself after the numerous crises that it has faced (Lagendijk 2013).

The different schools of thought provide an adequate understanding of the subject and various reasons that explain why people or parties may be against Turkish accession into the EU. However, the schools of thought lack an incorporation of more recent events, especially with regards to the failed coup attempt in Turkey in 2016. The extant literature on Turkish accession does not explain how the current—and rapidly changing—political climate in Europe stops or delays the accession process, as recent scholarship has been written while the accession process is ongoing for Turkey. In the next section, I develop a theory that explains how the extant literature on Turkish accession, such as the religious and cultural difference, is used within domestic politics of various EU member states to delay or halt the Turkish accession process.

## **Theory**

European Union (EU) enlargement is the process by which the EU, as an organization, expands its membership to candidate countries in Europe who have adopted certain criteria set by the EU. The enlargement process culminates in negotiations between the EU and the candidate countries wherein the candidate countries will make the necessary reforms delineated in “chapters” for each section of the necessary reform. To start or “open” a chapter, the EU must allow the country to start the reform process for that chapter. To signify that a country has completed the necessary reforms, or “provisionally close” a chapter, the EU must also agree the reforms have been sufficiently carried out. Unanimity within the EU by each member state is required for every part of the process, which gives each member state the power to stop the entire process unilaterally. Some member states are more willing to use this power, such as France or the Republic of Cyprus have done within the Turkish accession process, but each country has this right and power. This veto power that each EU member state has, allows the domestic politics of the member states to influence the enlargement process at the EU level (Schimmelfennig 2009). The EU, acting as a singular body, has prevented six chapters from being opened within the Turkish process because of Turkey’s policies concerning the Republic of Cyprus, a member state of the EU. In 2005, Turkey started the enlargement process; however, compared to other candidate countries that have become member states in the EU, Turkey’s

process to become a member state in the EU has taken significantly longer. Some of the responsibility for this delay in the Turkish process can be attributed to the EU, as certain member states have unilaterally prevented EU acceptance of Turkey opening other chapters in the process or provisionally closing those chapters that have already been opened. In trying to understand why the delay by the EU has occurred, I argue that when facing electoral competition within their home countries, center right European political parties delay the Turkish accession process and use it as one of several policy positions in the hopes of preventing the loss of votes to the far right parties, and maintaining their own domestic political power.

The position of the different far right political parties (FRP) within the EU, are consistent in their opposition to Turkish integration into the EU because of both the change that Turkish integration would represent (and the corresponding fears) and because the parties are opposed to any deepening or widening of the European Union. Parties like the Danish *Dansk Folkeparti*, or Sweden's *Sverigedemokraterna* epitomize the far right in European politics. These parties are all characterized as nationalistic, anti-multiculturalist, and to some extent xenophobic, while also campaigning on slogans of law and order (Kopeček 2007). The nationalism within the FRPs influence the EU enlargement process because the FRPs want to return all sovereignty, which the EU was given in various treaties, back to the individual nations. By advocating for a reversion of powers and sovereignty to the individual countries, the FRPs oppose any action that would give the EU more power at the expense of the member state or any enlargement of the EU (Lubbers with Coenders 2017). Euroscepticism, for the use of this paper, is the term that is used to define this policy of opposition to the EU as an organization and any actions that would strengthen it. The FRPs most likely adopted the Eurosceptic policies because the policies are representative of the views of the far right's base supporters. Thus solely based on the Euroscepticism that characterizes the policies of European far right parties, the parties would not be willing to accept the EU expanding its membership to include Turkey since the very expansion would represent the widening of the EU and its institutions.

In addition to the Eurosceptic policies of the European FRPs, many of the parties are also xenophobic and anti-multiculturalist. The FRPs exhibit xenophobia, a dislike or fear of people from a different country, by taking anti-immigration stances that emphasize a specific view that describes what a specific nationality is or is not. The xenophobia present in the FRPs is often based on religion or culture because many of the migrants who are travelling to Europe in the

hopes of a better life are coming from majority Muslim countries. The xenophobic tendencies are also present in the far right rhetoric about a Christian country or a Christian Europe. In the case of France, Le Front National has publically made the connection between immigration and militant Islam in the hopes of decreasing the government's acceptance of immigrants. Echoing these sentiments, other European far right parties have made similar statements where some, like the leader of the Dutch far right, Geert Wilders, want to ban the Koran (Nowak with Branford 2017, Nossiter 2015). Similar to xenophobia, anti-multiculturalism will be used in this paper to describe the desire to have the state's culture as the predominant culture within a country as opposed to being accepting or supportive of different cultures being in one country. While the tendencies are easily seen in the anti-immigration stances taken by the FRPs, the tendencies would also be present in any far right policy about Turkish integration into the EU. Xenophobia and anti-multiculturalism would be factors in any opposition to Turkish integration because Turkey is a majority Muslim country where the citizens are more accepting of religion as a political force in politics, and the people have a different culture from the predominant European cultures (Scherpereel 2010). Turkish inclusion into the EU would challenge any ideas about a European identity, but it could also challenge individual nationalistic ideas if Turks use their new right to travel and live anywhere within the EU (Lubbers with Coenders 2017). The fear of a migration of Muslims into their individual nations and the challenges to the idea of European and national identities would induce FRPs, in addition to Euroscepticism, to oppose or delay the enlargement process for Turkey within the domestic politics of the EU member states.

The political power of the FRPs is on the rise with examples ranging from Sweden to France to the United Kingdom. Sweden, as one example, now has a far right party that is the third largest political party in the legislature and with support for the party still on the rise after the party was able to cross Sweden's electoral threshold (Brown 2018).<sup>3</sup> France has seen a rise in support for the far right as the French far right party, Front National, was able to garner over 10 million votes in the run-off for the presidential elections in May 2017 (Aisch with Bloch, Lai, and Morenne 2017).<sup>4</sup> In the United Kingdom, the (far right) United Kingdom Independence

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/jimmie-akesson-stefan-lofven-swedish-democrats-far-right-at-record-high-in-pre-election-poll/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/07/world/europe/france-election-results-maps.html>

Party was able to successfully campaign for the UK to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum on the future of the UK being either in or out of the EU (Parfitt 2016).<sup>5</sup>

While the FRPs may be opposed to Turkish accession into the EU, these parties are not in power within most EU member states even though some FRPs appear to be gaining power. Instead, the far right is able to exert pressure on the center right political parties within the EU to adopt or use similar policy platforms to those of the far right in the hopes of gaining or remaining in power. This pressure that the far right exerts on the center right takes the form of public opinion data or previous electoral outcomes which could cause center right parties to fear that the party would not gain power or lose power at the expense of the far right (Han 2015, Abou-Chadi with Krause 2018). The center right parties adopt some of the policies of the far right in the hopes of attracting the votes of the far right supporters both to exclude the far right party from being itself an influential part of the government and to have more votes comparatively than the competition from the left (Abou-Chadi with Krause 2018, Han 2015). Specifically, the center right will be influenced by the far rights policies on immigration and EU integration because those are the core policy issues of the far right (Downes with Loveless 2018). The center right parties are more likely to adapt their positions from the far right than center left parties in Europe because center left parties in Europe are more likely to have a history of backing multiculturalism and EU integration, and thus risk their political identity while trying to garner the votes of the far right. Whereas the center right parties do not have as strong a commitment to these policies and need to be able to differentiate themselves from the center left on these policies (Han 2015). In the case of Turkish integration into the EU, the center left parties may be more willing to accept Turkey into the EU. The center right in contrast, will be forced to decide which is more politically expedient, to parrot the policy platforms of the center left or the far right and risk losing voters to the party whose policy is not shifted to the right. Given this choice, center right parties could decide to adapt the platform of the far right if the center right party is already adapting some of the other policies of the far right in regards to Euro-skepticism or multiculturalism.

Center right parties in Europe adopt similar policies on multiculturalism and immigration from the far right platform in an effort to exclude the far right party from becoming a political power within the national legislature. Center right parties may follow an exclusionary strategy

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/682942/Nigel-Farage-Brexit-EU-referendum-result>

not only for the overall goal of minimizing the power of the far right in government, but also for the center right parties to maintain power. The strategy is self-serving as the far right gains votes and power at the expense of the center right parties because the issues raised and addressed by the far right parties could persuade the voters for the center right parties (Han 2015). The center right parties can attempt to exclude the far right by preventing the far right from surpassing the electoral thresholds that some European nations like Germany have for political parties. This strategy would require the center right to both attract voters from the far right as well as preventing defections from the voter base of the center right. To attract the supporters of the far right, the center right could adopt the policies of the far right and use the center right's credentials as an established party who has governing experience and with which the populace has familiarity (van Spanje with de Graaf 2018). For the countries which do not have electoral thresholds, the center right can still try to attract the votes of FRPs with a similar strategy. Through the exclusion strategy, the far right influences the center right parties by necessitating that the center right copies certain far right policies in the hopes of preventing the far right from gaining power due to those adapted policies.

In addition to the influence exerted on the center right by the far right through the exclusion strategy, if they are applied, the far right also influences the center right through larger electoral competitions where the largest rival for the center right is the political left. The other exclusive option for the center right is again to shift their policies to the right, not to attract the votes of the far right, but so that a coalition government could be formed with the far right after the electoral competition (Downes with Loveless 2018). The coalition option shows how the far right is able to influence the center right parties in Europe. Both the coalition option and the exclusion strategy would only be taken before or during electoral competitions so that the center right could gain or keep power.

Therefore, given that the far right European parties will take a negative stance towards Turkish accession into the EU and that the center right parties are adapting policies from the far right regarding European integration and immigration, I expect center right parties will take action to delay Turkish integration into the EU. Center right European governments could delay Turkish accession into the EU by preventing Turkey from opening or provisionally closing chapters in the accession process. Other indirect options could also be taken that would highlight

a privileged partnership between the EU and Turkey, but not an acceptance of Turkey becoming a full member in the EU.

## **Research Design**

As elaborated above, I argue that when facing electoral competition within their home countries, center right European political parties delay the Turkish accession process and use the delay as one of several policy positions in the hopes of preventing the loss of domestic votes to the far right parties, and maintaining their own domestic political power. To establish the links between far right party policies, center right party policies, and the delay of Turkish accession in the EU, I have used a qualitative method. The data I collected includes secondary scholarship as well as primary documents, including party manifestos, newspapers and other recorded statements from party leaders and members. I then used the data to complete a comparative case study using different EU countries and the domestic politics within the case studies to assess the influence that the far right parties have exerted on center right parties regarding the policy issue of Turkish accession into the EU.

While all EU member states have the power to prevent a potential EU candidate from proceeding in the accession process, not all countries have used this power. How has domestic politics with EU member states effected their policy towards the Turkish accession process? The case studies that I have examined to answer this question are France and Germany, two different EU member states that have at one point expressed negative views regarding Turkish accession into the EU. France is a key case study in support of my argument because of a relatively powerful far right party in the Front National (FN), as well publicized negative views on the topic of Turkish accession from both the far right and the center right under President Nicolas Sarkozy in the Union Pour Un Movement Populaire (UMP) and during the 2016 presidential elections. During the presidency of Sarkozy, the French government and the UMP not only expressed the intent to use the veto power during the Turkish accession process but also actively prevented Turkey from opening several chapters in the accession process (Dogaru 2015). In addition, the UMP was also facing powerful opposition from the far right party where the run for the presidential election in 2007 was between the UMP candidate and the FN candidate.

Germany is an important case study because of the long history that Germany has with Turkey and recent political events, including the 2017 federal elections that demonstrated the influence of the AfD in German politics. Demographically, Germany is unique from other



possible case studies because Germany now has an estimated three million people who have Turkish origins, with the majority of them practicing Islam (BBC 2017).<sup>6</sup> Similar to France, Germany has seen a rise in the power of their far right through the German far right party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). The ruling party of Germany since 2005 is the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), along with its sister party in Bavaria the Christian Social Union (CSU). Both parties are center right parties, which allow this paper to use both parties in Germany as a part of the German case study. The CDU and their party leader, Angela Merkel, have expressed unease at Turkey becoming a full member of the EU, and instead the party has advocated for alternatives to full accession (Euronews 2017).<sup>7</sup> In addition, the CSU (and the CDU to some extent) have been changing their position on immigration because of what some claim to be an attempt to maintain votes in the party so that they do not defect to the AfD (Knight 2018).<sup>8</sup>

### **Case Studies: France**

Francois Duprat and Francois Brigneau founded the Front National (FN) in 1972. After the founding of the party, Jean-Marie Le Pen became its leader until his daughter Marine Le Pen succeeded him in 2011. The party was originally associated with the fringe far right because of certain neo-fascist comments made by Jean-Marie Le Pen; however, Marine Le Pen has more recently tried to expand and legitimize the party as a contender in French national politics. The FN has been gaining in popularity since Marine Le Pen sought to broaden support for the party by distancing the FN from previous extreme views, such as denying the holocaust happened, and recasting the issue of immigration as threatening France and French culture. In the 2012 presidential election, Marine Le Pen was able to come in third in the first round of the elections by gaining 18 percent of the vote, which was largest percentage the party had ever received in the first round. Support for the FN continued to grow over the years and subsequent local, national, and EU elections after 2012 reflected its growing support (Ray 2017).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37274201?intlink\\_from\\_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c1038wnxn57t/german-federal-elections-2017&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37274201?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c1038wnxn57t/german-federal-elections-2017&link_location=live-reporting-story)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2017/09/04/merkel-schulz-call-for-end-to-eu-turkey-accession-talks>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-csu-returns-to-far-right-political-battleground/a-42031195>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/National-Front-political-party-France>

The power and draw of the FN has noticeably increased under the leadership of Marine Le Pen. The situation for the party has improved to the point where the FN has been one of two parties to move onto the presidential run-off elections, which indicates that when the FN competes with all of the other political parties, it receives either the most or the second most votes nation-wide. The FN has been able to motivate the French populace to vote for the party partly because of their Eurosceptic, anti-multiculturalism, and law and order policies and stances. Examples of these policies are in the 2017 FN election manifesto that espouses the need to take back power and sovereignty from the EU and to reduce legal immigration to an annual limit of 10,000 immigrants. In addition to expressing the anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiments characteristic of far right parties, the FN also portrayed itself as the only true patriotic party which stood for French cohesion. In contrast, Le Pen claimed that none of the other parties stood for this cohesion because the opposing parties wanted more immigration and less French cohesion, which could also be construed as disregarding French culture in favor of a more threatening global culture (Le Pen *144 Engagements Pr sidentiels* 2017). The 2017 presidential elections again showed that support for the FN and their promises grew as Marine Le Pen advanced to the run-off elections where she gained 33.9 percent share of the vote, the highest ever for the FN (Aisch with Bloch, Lai, and Morenne 2017).<sup>10</sup>

These nationalist, anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism positions are evident in the FN's proposed policy regarding Turkish accession into the EU. Le Pen has taken a position in opposition to Turkey's accession by stating, "MEPs of the National Front have always voted against the opening of new chapters of accession talks with Turkey" (Ghazanchyan 2017)<sup>11</sup>. Le Pen has also remarked that "neither geographically, culturally, nor historically" is Turkey European (Mechai 2017).<sup>12</sup> These statements against Turkey and the Turkish accession process are in line with the characteristics of a far right European party as well as the Eurosceptic sector through their position against EU enlargement. The position is also against multi-culturalism as allowing Turkey to become a member of the EU could result in Turks migrating to France, which could threaten a "French only" culture. Moreover, Le Pen and the FN's position on Turkish accession has remained consistent since the start of the accession process for Turkey.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/07/world/europe/france-election-results-maps.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.armradio.am/en/2017/04/19/marine-le-pen-says-artsakhs-unification-with-armenia-desirable/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/splendid-isolation-world-according-marine-le-pen-490813158>

France did delay Turkish accession by preventing Turkey from opening certain accession chapters from 2007 to 2012, but the FN did not direct this policy as they were not in a position of power to effect this change, that responsibility fell to the French center right party, the UMP. The French center right party that participated in the 2007 and 2012 French presidential elections under President Nicolas Sarkozy, the UMP, was formed under French President Jacques Chirac by combining several different conservative movements into one overarching party. The party was based on the principles of Gaullism, the principles of French President de Gaulle who advocated for centralized power, conservatism, and nationalism (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2017).<sup>13</sup> Chirac arranged for Nicolas Sarkozy to become the head of the party in 2004. Sarkozy went on to succeed Chirac in the 2007 presidential elections.

As Sarkozy was campaigning for the 2007 presidential election, one of the campaign promises he made was to end the Turkish accession process and instead focus on a privileged partnership, which could allow for some integration but not as much as what would be accompanied with EU accession. As French historian, Justin Vaisse noted of Sarkozy's promise in the 2007 campaign,

“There was certainly a dose of electoral calculations in Sarkozy's stance, given that a majority of voters from the right – and an overwhelming majority of voters from the extreme-right, a constituency he was trying to capture (and later succeeded, dealing a blow to Jean-Marie Le Pen) opposed Turkey membership” (Vaisse 2008). Sarkozy's opposition to Turkish accession was not just a personal opinion and conviction, but also a campaign and electoral calculation to target the supporters of the FN. After he was elected, Sarkozy did not stop the process entirely after winning the election, he was able to prevent accession chapters relating to economic and monetary policy from being opened without using a veto (Bilefsky 2007).<sup>14</sup> This delay on opening specific chapters remained in place throughout Sarkozy's presidency, which slowed the entire process because Turkey needs to complete all 35 chapters in order to become a member state of the EU (Yackley with Caglayan 2012).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jacques-Chirac#ref909733>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/25/world/europe/25iht-union.5.6325879.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-eu/turkey-sees-frances-hollande-lifting-eu-veto-idUSBRE85Q16820120627>

Mondon noted that Sarkozy took a rightward shift not only in the 2007 presidential election, but also in the 2012. As the 2012 presidential elections drew closer, Sarkozy was trailing in second position in opinion polls behind the socialist candidate, Francois Hollande. Sarkozy was able to come in second in the first round of elections which allowed him to continue to the second round of voting against Francois Hollande who won the most votes in the first round (Buchan 2018).<sup>16</sup> In the run-off election of 2012, Hollande won the election by taking 52 percent of the vote (Ray 2018).<sup>17</sup>

As has already been noted in this paper, the far right gains power and votes at the expense of other parties, and especially the center right parties (Han 2015). According to Aurelien Mondon, Sarkozy borrowed language from both Marine Le Pen and her father when campaigning on issues like immigration, culture, or religion in an attempt to steal votes from the FN and retain those who voted for Sarkozy in the 2007 election (2014). Specifically, Sarkozy willingly said that there were too many immigrants in France, and that France should withdraw from the border free Schengen zone (Sarkozy 2012).<sup>18</sup> Mondon credits the right shift of the UMP on the UMP's political campaign in the 2007 presidential election, which drew many supporters of the FN to vote for the UMP. Thus, Sarkozy needed to keep the votes of the people who supported the party in 2007 by again taking a rightward shift in the campaign and in policy, specifically concerning immigration and French identity (Mondon 2014). While the tactic to use FN positions and language did not help Sarkozy gain a second term as president of France, it does show how the threat of electoral opposition in France can motivate French center right parties to adopt more radical positions on subjects like the EU and EU enlargement.

As 2012 and the next presidential election approached, Sarkozy again reaffirmed his opposition to Turkey's EU membership wherein he reiterated his desire for a different agreement with Turkey which would not be full accession while still allowing for some Turkish integration (Euronews 2011).<sup>19</sup> The privileged partnership could involve inclusion in the common market, integration in trade, research, education, and inclusion in the EU common defense; however, the partnership would not include any reference to freedom of movement to allow Turks to migrate to other countries in the EU. Sarkozy also expressed that Turkey did not belong to Europe,

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nicolas-Sarkozy#ref925019>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francois-Hollande>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hX3tnRkEGvo>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2011/02/25/sarkozy-reaffirms-opposition-to-eu-membership>

which could be construed in different ways, including a cultural and religious argument used by the FN to explain why Turkish accession is not desired (Kuebler 2011, Vaisse 2008).<sup>20</sup> Sarkozy was also attributed with saying Turkey “was too big, too poor and too culturally different to join the EU,” which also touched on similar arguments of the FN regarding culture (Pineau 2014).<sup>21</sup>

Sarkozy’s choice of policy regarding Turkish accession not only allowed for the UMP to take votes from the FN in the 2007 presidential election, but it was also one of the promises which he was able to fulfill during his presidency. In the run up to the 2012 election, Sarkozy reiterated his stance against full Turkish accession and stated that he would be willing to have a compromise which would not see Turkey join the EU as a full member. This move not only targeted the FN through immigration and fanning the fears of Muslim migrants traveling to France in search of work, but it also targeted the FN’s stance on the EU as a whole because the stance was against EU enlargement regarding to Turkey. With the increasing power of the FN, Sarkozy tried to subordinate some of their policies on Turkish accession into his 2007 and 2012 presidential campaigns as well as delaying the accession during his presidency.

After Sarkozy lost the presidency to the socialist candidate, Francois Hollande, France changed its stance on Turkish accession by cautiously backing Turkey in the accession process (Pineau 2014).<sup>22</sup> Such a reversal reveals that domestic politics play a large role in EU enlargement, and because of this role, the far right can influence center right parties as seen in the case study of France to delay further expansion for Turkey.

## **Germany**

Similar to France, in recent years Germany has seen an increase in support for the far right, especially the far right political party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). However, the growth of the AfD has been relatively recent with the official founding of the party occurring in 2012 as an anti-euro party, but it gained traction on the immigration issue as Germany opened itself to migrants during the European migration crisis. Since its founding, the party has evolved from the single issue of being anti-euro, to also focus on immigration and Islam, and the party

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-not-fit-for-eu-accession-sarkozy/a-14875593>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-turkey/frances-hollande-cautiously-backs-turkey-eu-membership-bid-idUSBREA0Q1EV20140127>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-turkey/frances-hollande-cautiously-backs-turkey-eu-membership-bid-idUSBREA0Q1EV20140127>

has officially adopted policies against immigration and Islam. The AfD has been gaining power relative to other political parties in Germany as in the September 2017 elections, when the party won 12.6% of the vote. With these election results, the AfD was able to surpass the electoral thresholds in Germany for the first to gain more than 90 seats in the national German legislature. After the 2017 elections, the AfD leadership changed with one of the previous leaders, Frauke Petry, becoming an independent in the German legislature. The change in party leadership allowed Alexander Gauland to become AfD's new co-leader along with Jorg Meuthen who remained as the party's other co-leader (BBC 2017).<sup>23</sup> Although the latest electoral results do not show that the AfD has a large amount of political power, given its relative age as a political party and fears that the AfD will be able to challenge traditional parties like the CDU/CSU, it appears that the AfD will continue to grow as a political force and threat in Germany.

The results of the federal German elections in September 2017 clearly demonstrated that the message of the AfD was enticing to voters in Germany who had previously voted for parties like the CDU. The AfD attracted voters because of their anti-multiculturalism, anti-euro, anti-immigration, and anti-Islam messages. Within the AfD 2017 political manifesto, the party explicitly states their anti-euro stance which calls for first revoking of the euro in the German parliament, and if that is not successful a referendum on the issue. The manifesto also asserts that the party desires other reforms in the EU, and if the reforms do not occur or are not sufficient, the AfD would have Germany exit the EU (Petry with Meuthen *PROGRAMM für Deutschland* 2017).

In addition, to the anti-euro and more general euro-sceptic stance, the party's message of anti-multiculturalism is also present in the manifesto with an entire section titled "German as a Predominant Culture instead of Multiculturalism" (Petry with Meuthen *PROGRAMM für Deutschland* 2017). The section details how German culture should be the predominant culture in Germany and that the government should focus on preserving German culture and identity instead of giving in to multiculturalism that would only serve to weaken or diminish German culture and identity (Petry with Meuthen *PROGRAMM für Deutschland* 2017).

Tied to the party's stance on multiculturalism are the dual messages of anti-Islam and anti-immigration. The anti-immigration and anti-Islam stances of the party are linked because of the recent migrant crisis that witnessed mostly Middle Eastern, Muslim, illegal migrants enter

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37274201>

Germany. The anti-immigration policies in the AfD manifesto focus on the need to decrease overall immigration from all sources and the need for a change in the demographics as the German population is set to decline in the future without immigrants. The AfD opposes immigration, especially from majority Muslim countries, because of fears that the immigrants will create “parallel communities” that would prevent integration and increase conflict where the parallel communities clash with German communities (Petry with Meuthen *PROGRAMM für Deutschland* 2017).

Some party leaders within the AfD, such as Alexander Gauland, have described the recent waves of immigration into Germany as “an invasion of foreigners” (BBC 2017).<sup>24</sup> The belief that the recent wave of migration is an invasion of foreigners stems from the AfD belief that “Islam does not belong to Germany,” which is also the title to a section related to culture in the AfD manifesto. The AfD asserts that Islam does not only not belong in Germany, but it is also a growing threat (due to recent migrations) to the German state, German society, and German values (Petry with Meuthen *PROGRAMM für Deutschland* 2017).

The rise of the AfD has affected German politics as the parties have had to readjust their stances on several issues, but the party that has the most to lose with the rise of the AfD is the CDU. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) has been the ruling party in Germany, with Angela Merkel as the party leader, since 2005 while in different coalitions with other parties. The CDU was founded in 1945 by different political groups who participated in the Weimar Republic, before Hitler’s rise to power. These groups included the Catholic Centre Party, Protestants who were both liberals and conservative, and segments of the middle class, among other groups. The CDU in West Germany later merged with the newly created CDU in East Germany after German reunification. The CDU supports policies of a free-market economy, social welfare programs, European integration, and conservative social issues. Angela Merkel became the leader of the CDU after a scandal emerged within the CDU in 1999 that involved former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and his deputies. The scandal forced Kohl’s successor, who was tainted by the scandal, to resign and the party elected a leader who was not touched by the scandal, Angela Merkel. Since becoming party leader, the CDU/CSU voting block has been

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-41384550>

the continuous ruling party in the national German legislature since the 2005 federal elections (Conradt 2018).<sup>25</sup>

The motivation for the German center right party, the CDU, in shifting policy to the right, is based on a desire to regain the supporters who defected to the far right in the 2017 election, as well as to retain the current supporters of the CDU. Chancellor Merkel, after the 2017 elections stated, “We have started to analyse the voters we lost, especially with regards to those who went on to vote for the AfD, we want to get them back by good politics and addressing some of the issues” (BBC 2017).<sup>26</sup> In addition to concentrating the CDU’s efforts on winning the voters back, Merkel could also be targeting the voters to eliminate the AfD from the national German legislature as the party needs to pass an electoral threshold in order to take seats in the legislature. Although the CDU has not appeared to make a large rightward shift in policy, it has changed its policies in certain areas such as immigration. Under the new coalition agreement after the 2017 elections, only 180,000 to 220,000 asylum seekers would be accepted into Germany, which is a change from Merkel’s 2015 policy of opening the doors to the migrants (Knight with Jones 2018).<sup>27</sup>

One specific rightward shift in policy is the CDU’s stance on Turkish accession. Prior to the 2017 elections, Merkel was supportive of speeding up the Turkish accession process as an aspect of the 2015 migrant deal between Turkey and the EU (Tattersall with Carrel 2015).<sup>28</sup> Even after the coup attempt and subsequent crackdown in Turkey, Merkel did not call for an end to the accession process as several other European politicians had done. Instead, she argued for a reduction in the amount of money Turkey would receive as a part of the accession process (Deutsche Welle 2017).<sup>29</sup> However, as the 2017 elections drew closer and closer, the CDU made its position on Turkish accession clear in the party manifesto where the party stated that it rejected the possibility of Turkey receiving full membership in the EU, and instead would prefer a privileged partnership (Merkel 2017). Chancellor Merkel echoed the CDU’s position in a debate between Merkel and her opponent from the Social Democratic Party of Germany, Martin

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-Democratic-Union-political-party-Germany>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-41384550>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-coalition-agreement-whats-in-it/a-42242741>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany-turkey/merkel-in-bind-on-migrants-ready-to-back-faster-turkish-eu-bid-idUSKCN0SC08B20151019>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-angela-merkel-calls-for-reduced-eu-funds/a-41038798>



Schulz, where Merkel explained that she desired common position with the other European nations to end the accession talks (Euronews 2017).<sup>30</sup>

Even though one could excuse the change in policy as a natural reaction given the crackdown that occurred in Turkey after the failed coup, the timing of the statements that shifted further right as compared to statements about Turkey before and after the coup attempt indicates that the statements against Turkish accession were meant to have an impact on voters. The statements which were firmly against Turkish accession, made before the federal elections, demonstrate that the CDU was making the statements not only to show their displeasure with Turkey, but also to retain voters which could have defected to the AfD who oppose any type of EU enlargement.

The CDU is not the only center right party in Germany that appears to be pressured by the rise of the far right, as the CSU is experiencing similar problems. The CSU was founded as a conservative political party centered in Bavaria, Germany that advocates federalism, free enterprise, and a united Europe based on Christian principles. The CSU has governed the German state of Bavaria since the party's founding, except for three years in the 1950's. In federal elections, the CSU works with the CDU to form a united caucus in the national legislature. While the CSU is an affiliate of the CDU, it is also more conservative than the CDU, especially on issues related to immigration, abortion, and the rights of foreign residents in Germany (Conradt 2013).<sup>31</sup> The party is represented in the national government by Horst Seehofer while in Bavaria; Markus Soder has been given the Bavarian state premiership (Knight 2018).

As the CSU is further to the right than the CDU, the AfD's influence on the CSU adaption of far right policies will be different from the AfD's influence on the CDU. The CSU has adapted policies from the AfD with regards to immigration policy, as the AfD has accused the CSU of "copying tough line on migrants" (Martin 2018).<sup>32</sup> One AfD lawmaker, Gottfried Curio, explains,

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2017/09/04/merkel-schulz-call-for-end-to-eu-turkey-accession-talks>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-Social-Union>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany/german-afd-accuses-merkel-allies-of-copying-tough-line-on-migrants-idUSKBN1JF28A>

“Everyone in the room knows that the CSU wants to copy the AfD program via copy and paste to win over voters until the Sunday of the Bavarian election with a policy of mere announcements” (Martin 2018).<sup>33</sup>

They AfD program that Gotfried Curio was referring to was the platform to deport migrants who have first registered in another EU country or migrants who arrived in Germany via third countries (Martin 2018).<sup>34</sup>

AfD influence on the CSU is easier to comprehend and more powerful as compared to AfD influence on the CDU. The influence is more powerful and easier to comprehend because it is limited to one German state, Bavaria. The CSU is facing an upcoming election in October of 2018. Current surveys show that the CSU will lose their absolute majority in Bavaria as the AfD is gaining support in the state. The AfD is able to influence the CSU beyond being the strongest electoral competition for the CSU in Bavaria, because the AfD has a firm anti-immigration stance that could be enticing to voters in Bavaria based on the fact that migrants usually enter Germany through Bavaria (Martin 2018).<sup>35</sup>

Given the CSU’s placement in the political spectrum as further to the right than the CDU, the CSU is also another party that could influence the CDU to adapt policies with a shift to the right. The CSU has recently been able to influence the CDU to adapt a more stringent immigration policy because of the CSU’s own fears regarding the AfD. The CSU was able to influence the CDU because of the political situation at the national level of German politics. The CDU/CSU is in a coalition with the SPD, but even with the coalition, the majority is small. Given the fact that the CDU needs the CSU to govern as a majority government, the CSU was able to threaten Merkel with the CSU withdrawing from the government if Merkel did not agree to take a harder line on immigration (Reid 2018, McAuley with Beck 2018).<sup>36,37</sup> Since the CSU

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany/german-afd-accuses-merkel-allies-of-copying-tough-line-on-migrants-idUSKBN1JF28A>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany/german-afd-accuses-merkel-allies-of-copying-tough-line-on-migrants-idUSKBN1JF28A>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany/german-afd-accuses-merkel-allies-of-copying-tough-line-on-migrants-idUSKBN1JF28A>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/15/merkels-position-as-german-chancellor-under-threat-over-csu-cdu-immigration-split.html>

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/germanys-angela-merkel-may-have-won-fight-over-migration-but-her-coalition-is-in-doubt/2018/07/02/d4e02b60-7da2-11e8-a63f-7b5d2aba7ac5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.976c6ec97ff7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/germanys-angela-merkel-may-have-won-fight-over-migration-but-her-coalition-is-in-doubt/2018/07/02/d4e02b60-7da2-11e8-a63f-7b5d2aba7ac5_story.html?utm_term=.976c6ec97ff7)

has shown that it can influence the CDU given the proper motivation, the CSU could influence the CDU to adapt policies to the right, such as the Turkish accession policy.

CSU policy regarding Turkish accession, as already shown with other policies, is further to the right than CDU policy. CSU policy towards Turkish accession calls for an immediate end to the accession negotiations (Knight 2018). This policy demonstrates that immigration is an issue which is directly connected to the Turkish accession issue. Immigration is connected to the Turkish accession issue for the CSU because acceptance of Turkish integration in the EU could see Muslim Turks migrating through the border free Schengen zone passing through Bavaria as they enter Germany.

The center right government in the German case study adapted their policy towards Turkish accession from being open to Turkish accession to only desiring a privileged partnership in an attempt to retain their supporters as it appeared that the AfD was likely to gain votes from the CDU, among other parties. CSU Turkish accession policy had already been further right than the CDU, but the policy to immediately halt accession negotiations is another pressure on the CDU government.

## **Conclusion**

The similarities in the two case studies show that as the far right rises in power and popularity, they are able to increasingly influence center right governments to adapt rightward policies towards Turkish accession. These rightward shifts in policy or reiterations of policy were more likely to occur as elections came closer because of the desire among center right parties to retain their supporters while also trying to entice the supporters of the far right parties.

The scholarly implications for this research are that it gives the current discussion on Turkish accession nuance to previously cultural, economic, or geo-strategic problems related to Turkish accession. In addition, this research also reveals that there is more room for research to be completed, as not every European country would be able to conform to the two case studies. One possible avenue would be to research how shifts from right wing parties to far right parties effect the political situations in the EU. As the German case study has demonstrated, there is room for such a research question as the CSU's rightward shift has affected the CDU.

While the scholarly implications for this research have opened new areas for research to be completed, the policy implications are rather simple in comparison to the scholastic implications. This research again raises the question of whether the EU needs to reform the

accession process so that unanimity is no longer required. By taking away the unanimity aspect of the accession process, accession negotiations may progress more quickly as one country cannot stop the entire process. Turkey is not the only victim of this veto power either; the UK as it was trying to enter the EEC was subject to a French veto. In addition, removing the unanimity aspect will reduce the power of the far right as even if they gain control of the government of one country, EU enlargement could still continue regardless of the objections from one country.

While this paper has some possible policy implications, there are also limitations to the research in this paper. The most apparent limitation is that the research only uses two member states as case studies, which is insufficient as each EU member state has unique national politics. This issue can be corrected by conducting research regarding the influence of the far right in each and every EU member state. A second limitation is that the current research only concentrates on the center right and far right political groups, which disregards center left governments. The correction for this limitation is the same as the correction for the last limitation, to expand the case studies for the research. Finally, the current research is limited, as it does not sufficiently account for the large Turkish diaspora in the German case and the possible policy implications which could differ from other EU member states. This limitation could be corrected by completing further research regarding the presence of large immigrant groups and their effects on political parties. Even when taking into account the different limitations of the research, this research still advances the discussion on Turkish accession to the domestic level of politics in the EU, which the discussion had not reached before.

If the rising power of the far right can influence governments to shift their policies to the right on an issue such as EU enlargement, even in Angela Merkel's party who was at one point stated to be the last defender of the liberal west, then democracies should be wary of the rising populism.

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