

Austria's Institutionalized Discriminatory Policies: A Historical Study on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Muslim Phenomena

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Abstract

Racism constitutes a serious social issue in Austria. This phenomenon has garnered significant attention from activists, leading to discussions and the formation of numerous organizations dedicated to combating and addressing racism. However, despite decades of anti-racist discourse and efforts in Austria, the issue persists. Reports from anti-racist organizations indicate that incidents of racism remain prevalent to this day. Therefore, it is intriguing to investigate why racism has endured as a dynamic phenomenon in Austria. This article seeks to discuss how politics in Austria institutionalized racism, rooted in a lengthy historical context specifically, racism against the Jewish community (antisemitism) and racism against Muslims. The data were obtained through reviewing previous research findings and reports from anti-racism organizations. Descriptive analysis was employed to provide a detailed explanation of the context within a framework of power relations theory. The study reveals that the ideology inherited from Nazism, which encompasses concepts such as Lebensraum (living space) and the marginalization of specific groups, continues to influence Austrian politics, albeit narrated differently through political campaigns and discriminatory policies.

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This ideological influence permeates the public sphere, serving as a crucial factor in the unresolved nature of racism in contemporary Austria. Furthermore, the research identifies a shift in political tendencies over time, transitioning from an emphasis on anti-Semitism to Government policies and political campaigns in Austria constitute significant supporting factors influencing racist actions against Muslims in the daily life of Austrian society. wards anti-Muslim racism. Through the perspective of power relations government policies and political campaigns in Austria constitute significant supporting factors influencing racist actions in the daily life of Austrian society. For example, Dokustelle (the Center for Documentation and Counseling on Anti-Muslim Racism in Austria) identified over a thousand cases of racism against Muslims in 2022.

Keywords: History of racism, discrimination, politics, stereotypes, anti-Semitism, and anti-Muslim racism

Abstrak

Rasisme merupakan permasalahan sosial serius di Austria. Fenomena ini banyak menarik kepedulian para aktivis untuk mendiskusikan isu ini dan membentuk sejumlah organisasi-organisasi yang memiliki misi melawan dan menuntaskan permasalahan rasisme. Akan tetapi adanya diskusi dan kerja anti-rasis di Austria sejak beberapa dekade terakhir tidak serta merta menyelesaikan permasalahan ini. Laporan organisasi-organisasi anti-rasis menunjukkan bahwa angka insiden rasis hingga hari ini masih banyak terjadi. Karena itu, menjadi sesuatu yang menarik untuk ditelisik mengapa rasisme menjadi fenomena yang mengalami dinamika panjang di Austria. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk membahas bagaimana politik di Austria melembagakan rasisme, yang berakar pada konteks historis yang panjang, khususnya rasisme terhadap komunitas Yahudi (antisemitisme) dan rasisme terhadap Muslim. Data diperoleh melalui pembacaan terhadap hasil penelitian sebelumnya dan laporan dari organisasi anti-rasis. Analisis deskriptif digunakan untuk menjelaskan konteks secara detail dalam kerangka teori relasi kuasa. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa ideologi yang diwariskan dari Nazisme, yang mencakup konsep-konsep seperti Lebensraum (ruang hidup) dan marginalisasi kelompok tertentu, terus mempengaruhi politik Austria meskipun dinarasikan

dengan cara berbeda melalui kampanye politik dan kebijakan diskriminatif. Pengaruh ideologi ini meresap ke dalam ruang publik, menjadi faktor krusial dalam sifat rasisme yang tidak terselesaikan di Austria kontemporer. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi pergeseran dalam kecenderungan politik dari waktu ke waktu, dari penekanan pada antisemitisme menuju rasisme terhadap Muslim. Melalui perspektif relasi kuasa, kebijakan pemerintah dan kampanye politik di Austria merupakan faktor pendukung penting yang mempengaruhi tindakan rasis dalam kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Austria. Sebagai contoh, Dokustelle (Pusat Dokumentasi dan Konseling tentang Rasisme Anti-Muslim di Austria) mengidentifikasi lebih dari seribu kasus rasisme terhadap Muslim pada tahun 2022.

Kata Kunci: Sejarah rasisme, diskriminasi, politik, stereotip, anti-Semitisme, dan rasisme anti-Muslim

Introduction

Racism is one form of oppression resulting from the existence of "privileged" rights that are dialectically opposed, based on a series of social characteristics such as gender (sexism), sexuality (heterosexism), physical and mental ability (ableism), age (ageism), class (classism), nationality, body size/shape, religion, and language/accent, among others. Racism occurs due to the existence of a societal system in which actors are divided based on socially constructed dimensions with power that is not evenly distributed.¹

'Race' can be considered a social construct encompassing notions of inherent differences based on phenotype, descent, and/or culture, which intersect complexly with other forms of privilege/oppression. Popular and lay conceptions of 'race' often revolve around essential concepts of 'culture' and/or 'religion' as markers of inherent differences between social groups. Thus, 'race' extends beyond merely skin color or phenotype and is an intrinsic and protean concept that may not necessarily be immutable or inherited.²

¹ Yin Paradies, "Racism," in *Social Determinants of Indigenous Health* (Routledge, 2007), 144.

² Paradies, 144.

Racism is a phenomenon that maintains and exacerbates inequalities in power, resources, or opportunities among racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious groups within society. Racism can be expressed through beliefs (inaccurate negative stereotypes), emotions (hatred, fear), and unfair behaviors.³

Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia can be categorized as forms of racism. Anti-Semitism is a strong hatred or dislike towards Jewish people, expressed through expressions, prejudices, hostile attitudes, or discriminatory actions based on hatred. Islamophobia has a similar definition, but the object of hatred is Muslims. The difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism also lies in the development of these terminologies, where anti-Semitism is a phenomenon that has been long-standing, while the emergence of Islamophobia is considered relatively recent.⁴

An important marker of anti-Semitism is the Holocaust and the genocide experienced by Jewish people throughout the 20th century. The terminology of anti-Semitism emerged as a claim for the rights of Jewish people since the late 19th and early 20th centuries to justify equal rights for Jewish minorities. As for the significant event that led to a major increase in the phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism, it was the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, in New York.⁵

The phenomenon of racism in Europe as a whole has attracted many social scientists to study it. Some opinions suggest that racism in Europe is on the rise.⁶ Racism also has a long history and is related to major events that have occurred worldwide. Social scientists also face difficulties in distinguishing racism from other

³ Jacqueline K. Nelson, Kevin M. Dunn, and Yin Paradies, "Bystander Anti-Racism: A Review of the Literature," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 11, no. 1 (2011): 263, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-2415.2011.01274.x>.

⁴ Maria Gisbert López, "Racism And Anti-Racism In West And East Germany After 1945: Anti-Semitism And Islamophobia In Europe," n.d., academia.edu.

⁵ López.

⁶ Umut Erel, "Racism and Anti-Racism in Europe: A Critical Analysis of Concepts and Frameworks," *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 13, no. 3 (August 1, 2007): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/102425890701300304>.

terms including anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim because when explored, they all have conceptual and historical connections.⁷

In Austria, both of these phenomena have become separate issues that are extensively studied and also draw the attention of activists advocating for equality and the elimination of hostility towards Jewish and Muslim communities. Although anti-Semitism remains a traumatic issue for Austria, which was once under Nazi leadership, the problem of anti-Semitism has not been completely resolved.⁸

Similarly, negative sentiments towards Austrian Muslims of various ages can experience racist encounters in everyday life in various settings (educational environments, workplaces, public spaces, etc.). Concern and advocacy for equality for minorities in Austria emerged in the 1990s. Protest mobilization in Austria focuses on anti-racism, and several NGOs have been established to provide legal, social, and psychosocial assistance to vulnerable groups who are victims of racist incidents.⁹

Efforts against racism that have been ongoing for approximately the last three decades to this day are still unfinished. Anti-racism organizations continue to document many cases of racism not only in real life but also racism is also prevalent on internet media. For example, Dokustelle, an organization documenting cases of racism against Muslims in the year 2022, still found 1342 incidents of racism against Muslims in Austria.¹⁰ Besides Dokustelle, in Austria, many NGOs are found advocating for the resolution of racism issues.

Considering the deeply ingrained social issues in Austrian society, one cannot overlook the historical context to understand why these social issues persist and are difficult to resolve. Therefore, this

⁷ Glynis Cousin and Robert Fine, "A Common Cause: Reconnecting the Study of Racism and Antisemitism.," *European Societies* 14, no. 2 (2012): 166.

⁸ Birgit Sauer and Birte Siim, "Inclusive Political Intersections of Migration, Race, Gender and Sexuality – The Cases of Austria and Denmark," *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 28, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2019.1681510>.

⁹ Sauer and Siim, 58.

¹⁰ Kwieder, "Dokustelle Österreich," Dokustelle Österreich, February 10, 2024, <https://dokustelle.at/>.

study aims to explore the historical context shaping the phenomenon of racism in Austria, especially racism against Jewish and Muslim groups. Additionally, this study also seeks to investigate the extent to which political narratives exert a strong influence in institutionalizing racism.

The History of Institutionalized Anti-Semitism in German-Speaking Countries and Beyond

Racism and anti-Semitism are rooted in the history of the formation of modernity in Europe. On one hand, this cannot be separated from the formation of Christian states in Europe, which in the process marginalized Jewish and Moorish groups. On the other hand, the colonial agenda that targeted non-European nations for colonization placed Christian people in new territories, institutionalizing expulsion, religious conversion, and periodic killings of Jewish and Muslim groups, leading to similar conquest practices in other areas. The colonial era increased vulnerability for both colonized societies outside Europe and those considered foreigners in Europe.¹¹

When discussing racism in Europe, the Nazi regime also becomes an important part of the discussion because it made significant contributions to the discourse on racism, especially in German-speaking countries, including Austria, which was once under Nazi rule. Du Bois's academic visit to Berlin in the 1930s, during the Nazi regime, left an impression that racism was not just a black and white binary issue. There, he witnessed the violence perpetrated by the Nazis against German Jews. Since then, he believed that racial prejudice could be more than just color prejudice. His experiences in Europe prompted him to deepen his understanding of racism as a form of hatred towards humans that could encompass all kinds of people of all skin colors.¹²

The history of racist behavior shows that any form of racism has caused much suffering and injustice. The Holocaust or Sho'ah (in Hebrew), the mass murder of Jews by the Nazi regime, mostly

¹¹ Cousin and Fine, "A Common Cause: Reconnecting the Study of Racism and Antisemitism.," 166.

¹² Cousin and Fine, 180–81.

carried out within four years from the summer of 1941, resulting in the deaths of approximately six million people, has become a familiar and constitutive component of public memory. The victims consisted of German Jews and Jews from neighboring countries. Racial views in the Holocaust led to absurd views of white and Christian superiority, causing immense suffering for German Jews at the time. Anti-Semitism encompasses a range of hatred, fear, and humiliation, starting from mild social hatred, racial discrimination, denial of citizenship, expulsion from professions and educational institutions, religious persecution, periodic violence, forced expulsion, to the culmination of the Holocaust. Herf mentions three aspects of Nazi ideology: first, anti-Semitism seen through persecution, hatred, and phobia, which were clearly expressed in the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 regarding "The Protection of German Blood and German Honor." Second, Nazi racism directed towards non-Jewish Europeans as part of the regime's efforts to achieve *Lebensraum* or living space in Eastern Europe, which involved extreme ethnic cleansing. Third is radical anti-Semitism, a typical ancient hatred of the 20th century, legitimizing, supporting, and accompanying the Holocaust.¹³

The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 encompassed detailed and bizarre reflections on the danger of mixing German and Jewish blood and intricate regulations determining who was Jewish and who was not. The laws prohibited Germans from marrying or having sexual relations with Jews and with people of foreign blood, such as Gypsies and Negroes. The laws also defined Jews as those who had three Jewish grandparents, or who had two Jewish grandparents and married a Jewish partner, or were practitioners of the Jewish religion when the laws were issued. The consequences of the Nuremberg racial laws could be directly felt, as German Jews lost their civil and political rights. In December 1935, an additional decree ordered the dismissal of Jewish professors, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and notaries who were civil servants and had been exempted. The establishment of *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe called for a

¹³ Jeffrey Herf, "Comparative Perspectives on Anti-Semitism, Radical Anti-Semitism in the Holocaust and American White Racism," *Journal of Genocide Research* 9, no. 4 (December 1, 2007): 576-77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520701644416>.

combination of expulsion and killing of native inhabitants and the reduction of the number of uneducated laborers.¹⁴

Propaganda against the Jewish community during Hitler's regime was carried out through various means such as speeches, essays, posters, books, and newspapers. Posters were printed weekly and distributed to attention-grabbing locations in Germany and other Nazi-occupied European countries between 1937 and 1943. In "The Jewish Enemy," Nazi leaders crafted a narrative that portrayed World War II as a conflict initiated and launched by international Jewry with the aim of annihilating the German people. This narrative depicted Jews as a political force, no less real than the governments of the Allied countries. To the Nazis, Jews were the unseen force behind London, Moscow, and Washington, uniting a Jewish Bolshevik coalition and plutocratic elites. On many occasions, Hitler and his associates openly stated that the Nazi regime would respond to alleged Jewish aggression and attempts at mass murder by annihilating the Jewish race in Europe. According to the Nazis, the war against the Jews was not only the Holocaust but also a war against Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, and their allies. Throughout World War II and the Holocaust, paranoia and projection remained the driving forces behind Nazi aggression and mass murder. As a result of this narrative, it can be assumed that even as the tide of war turned against Germany, hatred towards Jews persisted in Germany until the end of the war. Hitler and his associates repeatedly stated, both publicly and privately, that they were exterminating European Jews because international Jewry planned to exterminate Germans. Therefore, they would kill the Jews before the Jews could kill them. In simple terms, the Nazis justified mass murder as a defensive policy that could be justified.¹⁵

The years 1899-1939 are generally accepted as the peak of anti-Semitism in Western Christian society, although hatred and persecution of Jews had occurred for at least two millennia.¹⁶ Social

¹⁴ Herf, 579.

¹⁵ Herf, 584.

¹⁶ William I Brustein and D. King Ryan, "Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust," *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 1 (2004): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512104038166>.

mobility among Jews and Jewish competition instilled fear among non-Jews, thereby reinforcing anti-Semitic attitudes. By the late 19th century, European countries became less dependent on wealthy Jewish financiers, and Jews experienced a new status marked by real power while remaining significant holders of wealth. The scapegoat theory suggests that Jews, as a dispersed minority group in many countries, became easy targets for the majority's problems. Supporters of this theory argue that during times of national crisis, societies instinctively look for groups to blame for their misfortunes.¹⁷

Popular anti-Semitism incorporates religious, economic, racial, and political prejudices, leading to dislike and fear of Jews due to their religious beliefs and practices, perceived economic behavior and power, as well as their leadership and support for subversive social and political movements. Other explanations cite significant factors contributing to anti-Semitism, including economic collapses in a country and increased immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe.¹⁸

The influx of Jews into Eastern Europe triggered negative racial stereotypes existing in Western European culture. Many new Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had few resources and little formal education, often competing with many Jewish immigrants in the host countries for low-wage jobs. This competition often led to hostility, thus increasing levels of anti-Semitism. Given that many of these Jewish immigrants appeared impoverished, fleeing persecution, and originated from the former Russian Empire, they were seen as supportive of leftist political parties. What exacerbated the situation for Jews was the abundance of Western press reports claiming that Jews were overrepresented in Bolshevik leadership and the Communist Party. For many Europeans, Bolshevism posed a significant threat to existing social, economic, and religious orders. Anti-Bolshevik tendencies also fueled anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic groups often accused Jews of retaliating against non-Jews by plotting to seize power. Many anti-Semites labeled Jews as the founders of revolutionary socialism and anarchism and saw Jewish hands in

¹⁷ Brustein and Ryan, 36.

¹⁸ Brustein and Ryan, 38.

periodic labor riots. An increase in anti-Semitism can be observed in societies where leftist political groups demonstrate increasing strength and prominent left-wing leaders are identified as Jews.¹⁹

The above explanation illustrates how racism has been a longstanding issue, constructed and perpetuated structurally. Additionally, race is defined not solely by biological and genetic characteristics but also by differing religious beliefs. To this day, racism remains an existing problem in Austria, with many studies revealing politics to be a significant factor in perpetuating this issue. The party often associated with this is the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), a right-wing party. Right-wing extremists in Austria consistently echo the idea of one nation and one culture, fostering nationalism based on "biological" and racist premises.²⁰

The FPÖ harbors Nazi anti-Semitic ideology due to its origins from former members of the Nazi party (NSDAP). Initially named the Union of Independents (Verband der Unabhängigen/VdU), it changed its name to FPÖ in 1955 when Austria gained independence from the occupation of the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union.²¹

Right-wing extremists in Austria have a characteristic where Austrian nationalism is not the reference but rather German nationalism, usually expressed in declarations of allegiance. "The German cultural and (one) people community" is the main programmatic principle embraced not only by right-wing extremists but also by the FPÖ. However, there is an opinion that the sense of belonging to "German culture" is rapidly diminishing in Austria, especially among the younger generation. In August 1995, Haider announced that the FPÖ had abandoned *Deutschtümelei*, or racist German jingoism. The FPÖ shifted Austrian patriotism in the slogan

¹⁹ Brustein and Ryan, 39.

²⁰ Andrew Orton, "Interfaith Dialogue: Seven Key Questions for Theory, Policy and Practice," *Religion, State and Society* 44, no. 4 (October 1, 2016): 349–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2016.1242886>.

²¹ Birgit Sauer and Edma Ajanovic, "Hegemonic Discourses of Difference and Inequality: Right-Wing Organisations in Austria," in *The Rise of the Far Right in Europe Populist Shifts and "Othering"* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 85.

"Austria first!" which essentially has the same goal of suppressing and discriminating against foreigners.²²

All right-wing parties in Europe that have achieved some electoral success in recent years have primarily focused their propaganda on topics that have the potential to incite hatred against foreigners, thereby attracting the prejudices and fears of voters. For the past twenty years, rejection of foreign workers and refugees has been the primary ammunition of Austria's right-wing press. These themes reached a wider audience in the early 1990s when the FPÖ made them the main platform of their election campaigns. Similar to the Nazis in the past who condemned Jews as the cause of all evils, now "foreigners" are forced to become the "scapegoats," responsible for societal ills such as crime and unemployment. Neo-Nazi groups openly spread racist ideas in this context, with the majority of right-wing extremist groups and parts of the FPÖ hiding their racist prejudices behind seemingly harmless expressions, preserving Austrian national identity, cultural heritage, etc.²³

The explanation above demonstrates a clear linkage between racism and power relations. The superiority of certain groups legitimizes oppressive actions against others who are marginalized. The implications are dire when the exaltation of one race over another becomes institutionalized, dictating who is deemed worthy of life and who is not, who has the right to govern and who must submit and suffer injustice. In this context, individuals of German descent and Christian faith, particularly those aligned with the Nazi party, held power. Conversely, those with different ethnic and religious backgrounds were subordinated, devoid of any power. Ana María López-Narbona reveals that systemic racism shows how racism and power play a crucial role in the functioning of social systems. In this regard, the law plays a fundamental role due to its instrumental function in executing coordination and control.²⁴

²² Brigitte Bailer-Galanda and Wolfgang Neugebauer, "Right-Wing Extremism: History, Organisations, Ideology," in *Incorrigibly Right. Right-Wing Extremists, "Revisionists" and Anti-Semites in Austrian Politics Today*, Vienna (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1996), 11.

²³ Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer, 10.

²⁴ Ana Lopez, "Systemic Racism as Power Relations. The United States of America," *Revista Doctrinal DOCRIM*, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 25.

Institutionalized Anti-Muslim Racism in Austria

Islam and Muslims in Europe have long been part of an extensive debate on the concepts of national and supra-national identity. These debates have become a significant aspect of identity politics in Europe, encompassing both exclusive and inclusive narratives. "Muslim" and "Europe" are often presented dichotomously and are seen as requiring reconciliation.²⁵ Compared to several other European countries, the arrival of Islam in Austria has a longer history. When the Ottoman dynasty attempted to conquer the Austrian Empire in 1525, many Austrians converted to Islam. Islam subsequently influenced the culture and converted portions of the Austrian population. Another wave of Muslim arrivals occurred in the 1960s when Austria brought in many migrant workers from Yugoslavia and Turkey. Muslims began arriving again in 1986 after migration policies had been halted in 1947.²⁶

Since 1912, Islam has received constitutional recognition. Austria has also adopted an inclusive approach towards the Muslim community, for example, by funding religious education, implementing Islamic studies curricula, and allowing the wearing of the hijab in schools.²⁷ Nevertheless, in recent years, Muslims in Austria have often been the focus of public discourse as triggers for non-integration in Austria, although Islam has been recognized as an official religion in Austria.²⁸ There are many influencing factors, such as mass media coverage exacerbating societal perceptions of immigrant groups and religious minorities, which greatly affect Western society's perception of Muslims as a security threat and

²⁵ Göran Larsson and Riem Spielhaus, "Narratives of Inclusion and Exclusion: Islam and Muslims as a Subject of European Studies," *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 2, no. 2 (2013): 106, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-12341272>.

²⁶ Muhammad Wildan and Fatimah Husein, "Islamophobia and the Challenges of Muslims in Contemporary European Union Countries: Case Studies from Austria, Belgium, and Germany," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 1 (July 8, 2021): 61, <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v17i1.10557>.

²⁷ Wildan and Husein, 61.

²⁸ Julia Mourão Permoser, Sieglinde Rosenberger, and Kristina Stoeckl, "Religious Organisations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria," in *Religious Actors in the Public Sphere*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2011), 77–95.

associate Muslims with terrorism-related attacks motivated by religion, playing a role in various geopolitical instabilities. To this day, issues involving Muslims in global conflicts put European Muslims in increasingly marginalized positions. For example, since the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, Western media has shown its bias towards Israel, further exacerbating prejudice against Muslims in general and increasing anti-Muslim sentiments.²⁹

Such anti-Muslim attitudes are often exploited by populist parties, politicians, and religious leaders.³⁰ Muslims are often portrayed as unwilling to integrate into Austrian society.³¹ On the other hand, integration policies did not become a political agenda in Austria until the late 1990s. Immigration policies were only seen as a labor market, hence immigrant arrivals were also considered temporary. The policies in place at that time made the unemployed, petty criminals, and deviants highly vulnerable and subject to having their residence permits revoked or even being expelled. The integration of new foreign residents was only made a political agenda in 1997 through the "integration package," which included reforms to the Foreign Nationals Act. Through this Act, for the first time, gradual stabilization of residence was attempted for foreign residents in the long term, so that foreign citizens who had been residing for more than 5 years were protected from expulsion. However, in 2000, the FPÖ influenced integration policies, which were understood as an individual's responsibility to adapt to Austria's value system.³²

Muslim integration is heavily influenced by the acceptance context in Austria. There is public discourse that positions immigrants and their descendants as "the other". Similarly, exclusion in various institutional spaces makes it difficult for Muslim

²⁹ Orton, "Interfaith Dialogue," 349–365.

³⁰ Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Renáta Katalin Smith, "Interreligious and Intercultural Education for Dialogue, Peace and Social Cohesion," *International Review of Education* 62, no. 4 (August 1, 2016): 393–409, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-016-9583-4>.

³¹ Ilker Atac, Wiebke Sievers, and Philipp Schnell, "Turkish Migrants and Their Descendants in Austria Patterns of Exclusion and Individual and Political Responses," *Migration Letters* 11, no. 3 (2014): 263–74.

³² Atac, Sievers, and Schnell.

immigrants to integrate into Austrian society. Political climate, discourse on daily communication and interaction, as well as media discourse, produce stereotypes as well as a hierarchy of immigrant groups in Austrian society, both implicitly and explicitly.³³ Austria's attitude towards immigration and crime is tied to statements regarding 'immigrant crime'.³⁴

The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) expresses anti-immigrant and anti-Islam sentiments by promoting the slogan "Home not Islam" (*Daham statt Islam*). In 2009, the FPÖ party leader also participated in protests rejecting the expansion of Islamic cultural centers in the 20th district of Vienna led by the Turkish association ATIB. Many other FPÖ actions marginalize, discriminate against, and discredit Muslim immigrants in Austria. From these cases, it can be seen that anti-Islam sentiments in Austria have also been politicized.³⁵

Women wearing hijabs are more vulnerable because many issues regarding the hijab are raised, especially by right-wing political parties, which further exacerbates racism towards them.³⁶ Since 2018, the Austrian Parliament has passed laws banning the hijab in public places. Since the turn of the century, European countries have included veiled women as part of their agenda, especially since France enacted a ban on conspicuous religious symbols in schools. Initially, Austria avoided setting such regulations when European countries generally prohibited the hijab. However, the tolerant approach to veiled women changed in recent years. Anti-immigrant mobilization increasingly focused on veiled Muslim women. The government coalition led by the SPÖ and ÖVP passed a

³³ Atac, Sievers, and Schnell.

³⁴ Kurt Richard Luther, "Austria: A Democracy under Threat from the Freedom Party? | Parliamentary Affairs | EBSCOhost," *Parliamentary Affairs* 53, no. 3 (July 1, 2000): 430, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/53.3.426>.

³⁵ Astrid Mattes and Sieglinde Rosenberger, "Islam and Muslims in Austria," in *After Integration: Islam, Conviviality and Contentious Politics in Europe* (Weisbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2014), 129–52.

³⁶ Nora Gresch et al., "Tu Felix Austria? The Headscarf and the Politics of 'Non-Issues,'" *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 15, no. 4 (November 16, 2008): 411–32, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxn019>.

law banning the hijab for children in kindergarten in 2017. In 2019, the hijab ban targeted elementary school children.³⁷

The ban on hijabs in Austria was initiated by Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who is known for his anti-Muslim stance. This policy prohibits elementary school children from wearing hijabs and also bans the use of veils. The parliament has approved and implemented this policy to date.³⁸ Additionally, the hijab issue is included in the sentiment of Islamophobia, which is used as a campaign tool by the FPÖ and BZÖ. In the context of social communities, women wearing Islamic clothing are still subjected to mockery and discrimination when they seek employment. This is inconsistent with Austria, which adopts a tolerant model encompassing anti-discrimination.³⁹

Government policies and political campaigns in Austria constitute significant supporting factors influencing racist actions against Muslims in the daily life of Austrian society. Dokustelle, non-governmental organizations in Austria that serve as documentation and advisory centers for cases of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim discrimination report the annual incidence of racism. These cases encompass racist actions in public spaces, the education sector, goods and services, employment, public transportation, Islamic institutions, the healthcare sector, law enforcement, media, politics, and other areas.⁴⁰ The statistics for these incidents of racism are presented in the table below:

³⁷ Birgit Sauer, "Radical Right Populist Debates on Female Muslim Body-Coverings in Austria. Between Biopolitics and Necropolitics," *Identities* 29, no. 4 (July 4, 2022): 447–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2022.2071515>.

³⁸ Katharina Stogmuller, "Kebijakan Kanselir Sebastian Kurz Terhadap Pengungsi Suriah Di Austria Tahun 2017-2019 Ditinjau Dari Hukum Pengungsi Internasional" (Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, 2019), <https://e-journal.uajy.ac.id/24029/>.

³⁹ Gresch et al., "Tu Felix Austria? The Headscarf and the Politics of 'Non-Issues;'"

⁴⁰ Ümmü Selime Türe et al., "Antimuslimischer Rassismus Report 2022" (Vienna: Dokustelle (Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle rassistischer Übergriffe)), 9, accessed May 21, 2024, https://dokustelle.at/fileadmin/Dokuments/Reports/Report_2022/Dokustelle-Report-2022.pdf.

ANTIMUSLIMISCHER RASSISMUS IN ÖSTERREICH

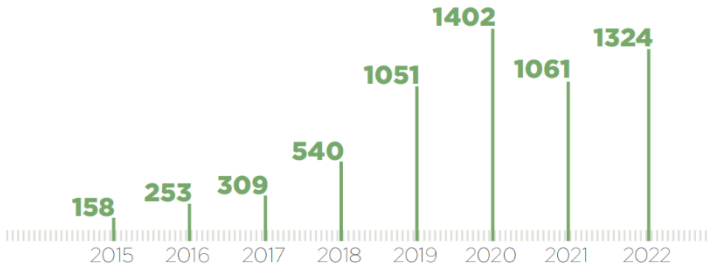


Figure 1: Number of Racism Cases in Austria⁴¹

Dokustelle plays a crucial role in documenting instances of racism, primarily relying on reported cases and media surveillance. Cases that escape Dokustelle's attention are consequently absent from its statistical records and analytical reports. Public awareness of Dokustelle's activities significantly influences the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the documented statistics on racism cases.⁴² Dokustelle does not assert that the documented figures of racism cases accurately reflect the actual incidence, as many individuals experiencing racist actions do not report them to Dokustelle. Nevertheless, these figures indicate prevailing trends within society.⁴³

Phenomenon of racism in Austria has a fairly long and complex history as it is tied to other issues and occurs at both individual and structural levels. The phenomenon of racism can be observed in every aspect of life, such as political, socio-economic

⁴¹ Türe et al., 8.

⁴² Ümmü Selime Türe et al., "Antimuslimischer Rassismus Report 2015" (Vienna: Dokustelle (Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle rassistischer Übergriffe)), 8, accessed May 21, 2024, https://dokustelle.at/fileadmin/Dokuments/Reports/Report_2015/Report-2015.pdf.

⁴³ Ümmü Selime Türe et al., "Antimuslimischer Rassismus Report 2016" (Vienna: Dokustelle (Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle rassistischer Übergriffe)), 8, accessed May 21, 2024, https://dokustelle.at/fileadmin/Dokuments/Reports/Report_2016/Report-2016.pdf.

structures, and others that consolidate power relations at various levels and mechanisms of exclusion.⁴⁴ Racist attitudes always harm individuals or groups based on their biological, cultural, religious, and background characteristics. Indications of racism can be seen from mindsets, ways of speaking, attitudes, and actions. Examples of racist actions include restricting or denying access to educational resources, employment, healthcare systems, public services, and power. Furthermore, racism also hinders certain groups from having opportunities for political and social participation to racist attacks. Racism is ingrained and maintained in both public and private institutions as well as state regulations.⁴⁵ Various factors that drive the phenomenon of racism are intertwined and influence the public in adopting discriminatory attitudes towards certain groups.

Minority groups are the ones adversely affected by the phenomenon of racism. They receive discriminatory treatment from the individual level to the institutional level. At the individual level, minority groups are subjected to disrespectful treatment, physical violence, hate speech, and even murder. At the institutional level, policies that are implemented are also racist in nature and have adverse effects on minority communities, such as access to employment, immigration policies, etc. The significant social issues in Austria cannot be quickly and simply resolved. These issues require specific strategies to address them. However, those in power only have their own programs.⁴⁶ A democratic state should guarantee basic rights, including freedom of speech, association, and assembly, as well as guaranteeing human rights as something given autonomously, not as an eternal truth imposed.⁴⁷ However, the

⁴⁴ Barbara Liegl and Sonja Fercher, "Zehn Jahre Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit: Vergebene Chance Oder Zwei Schritte Vorwärts Und Einer Zurück?," *SWS-Rundschau* 50, no. 1 (2012): 130.

⁴⁵ "ZARA - Zivilcourage & Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit," ZARA - Zivilcourage & Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit, accessed April 28, 2024, https://zara.or.at/en/ueber_ZARA/was_wir_wollen/mission.

⁴⁶ Mark Baimbridge, Brian Burkitt, and Marie Macey, "The Maastricht Treaty: Exacerbating Racism in Europe?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no. 3 (July 1, 1994): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1994.9993834>.

⁴⁷ Ulrich Wagrandl, "Militant Democracy in Austria," *University of Vienna Law Review* 2, no. 1 (November 13, 2018): 95–128, <https://doi.org/10.25365/vlr-2018-2-1-95>.

parties existing in Austria are questioned as a threat to democracy because they adopt ideologies of excluding certain groups and foster an atmosphere of intolerance and xenophobia.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The phenomenon of racism against Jewish and Muslim groups in Austria tends to stem from the discrimination ingrained in the conception of Christianity as the European identity or the mechanism of othering for non-Christian groups. This mechanism is accompanied by various negative stereotypes that reinforce sentiments of hatred towards Jewish and Muslim groups, deeply rooted in society due to a long history. Narratives and political actions become significant factors in shaping and perpetuating the phenomenon of racism in Austria, whether through campaigns, policymaking, or the dissemination of hate propaganda. Both anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism are ideologically linked to right-wing parties. Anti-Semitism was propagated by the Nazi party, while anti-Muslim sentiment in Austria was spread by the FPÖ party, originally formed by former Nazi members and later adopting discriminatory ideologies. Historical factors and political power render racism not merely a spontaneous occurrence in society but rather a systematically created and reinforced phenomenon, requiring continuous efforts to eradicate it from society.

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⁴⁸ Luther, "Austria," 440.

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