

Research Article

The AfD's Election Campaigns on Euroscepticism: A Comparative Analysis of the 2019 and 2024 EP Elections

Avrupa Şüpheciliği Üzerine AfD'nin Seçim Kampanyaları: 2019 ve 2024 AP Seçimlerinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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Abstract

In the European Parliamentary Elections held in 2019, the Alternative for Germany Party (AfD), which embraces European skepticism, succeeded in being the fourth party in terms of voting rate and became the second party to increase its vote rate the most after the Union 90/Green Party when compared to the previous European Parliamentary Elections (EPE). The AfD sharply criticized the EU administrative structure and advocated that radical changes should be made within the EU in the election campaign, in which European scepticism was felt intensely. In the study, it was aimed to reveal how the AfD reflected the EU administrative structure, what messages it gave against EU policies by examining the election campaign of the AfD on European scepticism in the 2019 and 2024 EPE. For this purpose, the election video prepared by the AfD for the election campaign was analyzed semiotically using the Organon Model of linguist Bühler. In the findings obtained, it was revealed that there was an attempt to form perceptions that the EU policies are to the detriment of Germany through video. In this way, it was concluded that the AfD tried to convince the German people that Germany should act more independently within the EU.

Keywords: Political Communication, AfD, Electoral Campaign, Euroscepticism, European Parliament.

Öz

Avrupa şüpheciliğini benimseyen Almanya için Alternatif Partisi (AfD) 2019 yılında yapılan Avrupa Parlamentosu Seçimlerinde oy oranı bakımından dördüncü parti olmayı başarmış ve bir önceki Avrupa Parlamentosu Seçimlerine (APS) göre Birlik 90/Yeşiller Partisinden sonra oy oranını en çok artıran ikinci parti olmuştur. AfD, Avrupa şüpheciliğinin yoğun olarak hissedildiği seçim kampanyasında AB idari yapısını sert bir dille eleştirmiş ve AB içerisinde köklü değişiklikler yapılması gerektiğini savunmuştur. Çalışmada AfD'nin 2019 ve 2024 APS'de Avrupa şüpheciliği üzerine yürüttüğü seçim kampanyası incelenerek, AfD'nin AB idari yapısını nasıl yansıttığı, AB politikalarına karşı hangi mesajları verdiği ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu amaçla AfD'nin seçim kampanyası için hazırladığı seçim videosu, dilbilimci Bühler'in Organon Modeli kullanılarak göstergebilimsel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara, video aracılığıyla AB politikalarının Almanya'nın aleyhine olduğu yönünde algılar oluşturulmaya çalışıldığı savunulmaktadır. Bu şekilde AfD'nin Alman halkını Almanya'nın AB içerisinde daha bağımsız hareket etmesi gerektiğine ikna etmeye çalıştığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal İletişim, AfD, Seçim Kampanyası, Avrupa Şüpheciliği, Avrupa Parlamentosu.

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1. Introduction

The term Eurosceptic can be traced back to the mid-1980s in the UK and, in its simplest form, refers to someone who is opposed to the powers of the European Union (EU). Prior to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty it was largely confined to the margins (Brack, Startin, 2015, p.239). Euroscepticism, in its simplest definition, refers to opposition to the European Union (EU). On the other hand, it is narrowly defined as opposition to a particular policy or integration effort (Boomgaarden, Schuck, Elenbaas, & De Vreese, 2011, p. 242). With the emergence of the Eurozone crisis, Euroscepticism has become increasingly widespread. This process can be noticed at the level of public opinion across Europe, among political parties and civil society groups, within the EU institutions themselves and in media discourse (Brack & Startin, 2015, p. 240). Apart from the euro crisis, the accelerated process of European integration has led to an increase in direct opposition to the EU in party systems in Western Europe. In this respect, increasing Euroscepticism has been the natural consequence of increased integration (Taggart, 1998, p. 363). AfD which was founded in Germany in 2013, also adopted Euroscepticism and came to the forefront with anti-EU rhetoric. In the 2017 GFE, AfD managed to become the third party with 12.6% of the vote. The AfD achieved a similar success in the 2019 EPE and participated in the elections with an election campaign that harshly criticized the EU. In the 2021 and 2024 General Elections in Germany (GEG) various academic studies have been conducted on the AfD, which attracted attention with its anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic discourse.

Hansen and Olsen argue in their study that the AfD has maintained its stance on the EU and, in contrast, has prioritized anti-immigrant themes in its campaigns, manifestos and press releases. The study found that anti-EU sentiment was not a dominant factor in the AfD's choice in the 2017 GEG, certainly when compared to anti-immigrant attitudes. As a result of the study, it was revealed that anti-immigrant sentiment was the dominant factor that largely influenced the vote choice for the AfD in 2017 year (Hansen & Olsen, 2019, p. 15). Its repeat again, Novotný and Maškarinec found in their study that attitudes towards migration were a very strong, dominant and important determinant of voting for the AfD (Novotný & Maškarinec, 2018, p. 17).

In his study, Fang argued that in the 2017 GEG, the AfD was seen as a right-wing populist party that prioritized ethno-nationalism. The study presented that the AfD attracted voters from a variety of political and socioeconomic groups and that its nationalist rhetoric and criticism of the German political elite appealed to a public fed up with problems stemming from structural features (Fang, 2020, p. 15).

In the 2019 EPE campaign, the main problem of the study is to reveal the relationality between the AfD's Eurosceptic discourses and its anti-immigrant discourses. The study aims to explain how the AfD justifies its Eurosceptic discourses with its anti-immigrant discourses through the video prepared by the AfD and presented in the areas included in the EPE region. In addition, the study aims to reveal which arguments AfD uses in its Eurosceptic policy and what kind of criticisms, with more structural proposals it has for the institutional commissions and superstructure of the EU.

This study examines the AfD's campaign rhetoric on Euroscepticism in the 2019 EPE. Thus, the study aims to reveal how the AfD tries to legitimize its criticisms against the EU structure in the eyes of the German public. In the study, the AfD's discourses on Euroscepticism were analyzed through the election video prepared by the AfD during the election period and broadcasted in open and closed spaces within the borders of the EU, which is the electoral region. The main limitation of the study is that the AfD's Eurosceptic discourses in the 2019 EPE were analyzed only through a single campaign video in a large-scale election. On the contrary, the election campaign video conveyed the AfD's election program in a clear and simple language. Since the AfD's basic policy towards Euroscepticism is conveyed with the same clarity through this prepared video and special attention was paid to the fact that people from all educational groups can easily understand to this, it was thought that it would directly reflect the AfD's election policy and therefore it was decided to conduct the study on the current video.

In the light of the findings obtained in the study, the research questions that this study seeks to answer are i) On which issues did the AfD emphasize its anti-EU rhetoric in the 2019 EPE?; ii) How did the AfD associate Euroscepticism with migrants in the 2019 and 2024 EPE?; iii) How did the AfD present the German people in its discourse on Euroscepticism in the 2019 and 2024 EPE?

This study is important in terms of comprehensively explaining the AfD's discourses on the bureaucratic structure of the EU, the Euro crisis, the migrant crisis and border security in the 2019 EPE in terms of Euroscepticism. In this respect, the findings and analysis of this study would be a contribution to as a source

for researchers in the field of politics, political communication and academic researches focused on Euroscepticism, migration and right-wing populism.

2. The AfD'S Background and Discourse On Euroscepticism

The AfD was founded in 2013 and achieved 4.7% of the vote in the 2013 German Federal Elections (GFE), which took place shortly after its foundation. However, it failed to pass the 5% electoral threshold required for representation in parliament. The AfD's main campaign issue was the Euro crisis. The AfD rejected bailout measures and proposed reforms in the Eurozone (Jäger, 2019, p. 479). The AfD campaigned for an end to all efforts to save the Euro and advocated a restructuring of Germany's foreign policy. This process has developed in line with the rise of the far right in Western Europe in recent years. On the other hand, the AfD has been characterized as right-wing populist and Europhobic (Arzheimer, 2015, p. 535). The AfD's attitude towards the Euro has been one of the most important reflections of the AfD's Euroscepticism in German politics. AfD's unprecedented reaction is interesting also that criticized various policies of the EU apart from the Euro and argued that radical reforms should be carried out within the EU.

Initially dubbed the 'party of professors' in the media due to the large number of conservative economists in its ranks, the AfD managed to achieve remarkable results in state elections, especially in East Germany. Across the EU members of right-wing parties as the Front National (Rassemblement National, RN) in France, the Northern League (Lega Nord, LN) in Italy, and the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) in Austria, AfD has avoided associating with other European right-wing parties such as the Flemish Interest Party (Vlaams Belang, VB) in Belgium or the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV) in the Netherlands (Puschmann, Ausserhofer, & Šlerka, 2020, p. 233). In contrast, the AfD has emerged as a right-wing populist political party that embraces the rising Euroscepticism within the EU.

The party's core claim of "orderly dismantling/distribution" of the Eurozone has raised concerns about its populist and nationalist character (Dudasova, 2015, p. 84). The AfD has argued that European countries should use their national currencies instead of the Euro, which has led the AfD to be considered as a nationalist party in addition to Euroscepticism. In the 2017 GFE, the AfD not only entered the parliament but also became the third largest political force in Germany (Siri, 2018, p. 141). This success of the AfD was the best result of any new party entering the Bundestag since 1949 (Goerres, Spies, & Kumlin, 2018, p. 246). This process led to the AfD's rise to prominence in the German political arena. While it is clear that the euro crisis provided the initial mobilization momentum for the AfD's development, it was the migrant crisis in 2015 that led to its radicalization (Lees, 2018, p. 307). The AfD was not only a nationalist party embracing Euroscepticism, but also an anti-immigrant party. Especially in the 2017 GFE, one of the most important emphases of the AfD's election campaign was anti-immigrant sentiments.

2.1. The EPE in 2019 and 2024 in Germany

The 2019 EPE in Germany were marked by the electoral success of the AfD and the Union 90/Greens Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), with both political parties significantly increasing their votes compared to the previous elections. On the other hand, the two largest political parties in Germany, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD), experienced a significant decline in their votes compared to the previous election (Table 1). At this stage, the role of the discourse of political parties in their election campaigns in the change in their vote rates has been an important issue of debate. The CDU entered the election in alliance with the Christian Social Union (CSU) and both parties received 28.9% of the votes. With this rate, the CDU/CSU alliance managed to come first in the election. On the other hand, the vote share of the alliance decreased by 6.5% compared to the previous election.

Bündnis 90/Die Grünen came second in the election after the CDU/CSU alliance with 20.5% of the vote. The Greens managed to increase their vote share by 9.8% compared to the previous election. Thus, compared to the previous election, the Greens were the party that increased its vote share the most.

The SPD came third with 15.8% of the vote. As a consequence, the SPD's share of the vote decreased by 11.5% compared to the previous election. Thus, the SPD was the party with the largest decline in its share of the vote compared to the previous election.

The Left Party (Die Linke) came fifth with 5.5% of the vote. DL's vote share decreased by 1.9 % compared to the previous election. DL's election campaign focused on raising the minimum wage across Europe, banning arms exports and allocating more budget for health, housing and education (Die Linke, 2019).

The AfD came fourth in the election with 11.0% of the vote. Thus, the AfD became the second party after the Greens to increase its vote share the most compared to the previous election. The AfD used the slogan “Aus Liebe zu Deutschland Freiheit statt Brüssel (For the love of Germany, freedom instead of Brussels)”. The AfD prepared three main visuals for its election campaign. One of the visuals emphasized the transfer of Brussels' powers to the control of European states, another visual supposedly emphasized the inadequacy of the EU's border security, and another visual supposedly emphasized the sacrifice of the German economy for the EU (AfD, 2021). The June 2024 EPE in Germany underscored the increasing prominence of AfD. Securing 15.9% of the vote, the far-right party, established in 2013, placed second and obtained 15 seats, achieving its highest performance to date. The AfD's ongoing expansion was further demonstrated in the regional elections of September 2024 in Saxony, Thuringia, and Brandenburg, where it captured around 30% of the vote (Moreau, 2024).

Table 1: AfD's results in national, regional and European elections (2019 – 2024)

ELECTION	DATE	%	GAINS (+) OR LOSSES (-) IN POINTS
European	May 16, 2019	11	3.9
Brandenburg	Sept, 1 2019	23,5	11.4
Saxony	Sept, 1 2019	27,5	17.7
Thuringia	Oct 27, 2019	23,4	12.8
Hamburg	Feb 23, 2020	5,3	-0,8
Baden-Württemberg	March 14, 2021	9,7	-5,4
Rhineland-Palatinate	March 14, 2021	8,3	-4,3
Saxony, Anhalt	June 6, 2021	20,8	-3,4
Bundestag	Sept 26, 2021	10,3	-2,3
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Sept 26, 2021	16,7	-4,1
Saarland	March 27,2022	5,7	-0,5
Schleswig-Holstein	May 8, 2022	5,4	-2,0
Rhineland-Palatinate	May 27, 2022	8,3	-4,3
Saxony-Anhalt	Oct 9, 2022	20,8	-3,4
Bundestag	Sept 26, 2021	10,3	-2,3
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Sept 26, 2021	16,7	-4,1
Saarland	March 7, 2022	5,7	-0,5
Schleswig-Holstein	May 8, 2022	4,4	-1,5
Rhineland-Westphalia	May 15, 2022	5,4	-2,0
Lower Saxony	Oct 9, 2022	11	4,8
Berlin	Feb 12, 2023	9,1	1,1
Bavaria	Oct 8, 2023	14,6	4,4
Hesse	Oct 8, 2023	18,4	5,3
European	June 9, 2024	15,9	4,9
Thuringia	Sept 1, 2024	32,8	9,4
Saxony	Sept 1, 2024	30,6	3,1
Brandenburg	Sept 22, 2024	29,2	5,7

3. Methodological Background

In this study, the election campaign of the AfD in the 2019 EPE was analyzed through the election video titled “Das AfD-Programm zur Europawahl in 99 Sekunden!” (The AfD program for European elections in 99 seconds!). The basis for conducting the study on this video is that the AfD reflects its election program comprehensively over 22 sequences in the video, and at the same time, the video directly includes the AfD's election discourses on Euroscepticism over nine sequences (Das AfD-Programm, 2019; Europawahl, 2019).

The nine sequences on Euroscepticism in the video were analyzed using the semiotics method in the light of German linguist Karl Bühler's (1879-1963) Organon Model (Figure 1).

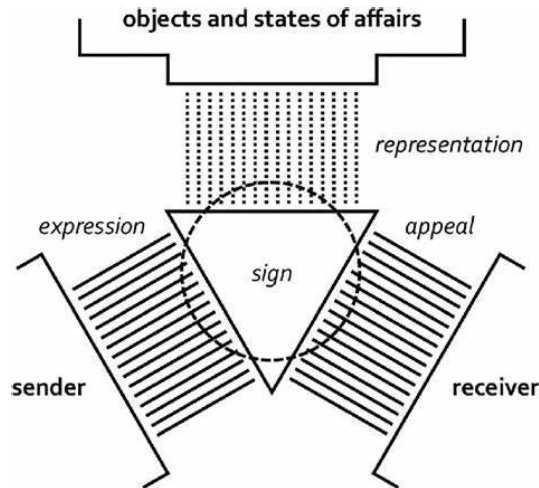


Figure 1: Karl Bühler's Organon Model (Stöckl, 2024, p.477)

Semiotics is defined as the branch of science that studies the meanings created through signs (Fiske, 2017, p. 122). A sign, on the other hand, explains the meaning that people attribute to a certain concept. The first studies in the field of semiotics were carried out by linguists F. de Saussure and C.S. Peirce, and with the contributions of different experts, semiotics has become one of the leading research methods in the field of social sciences. In the first studies in the field of semiotics, semiotics was considered as a part of linguistics, whereas over time it was accepted that linguistics was a part of semiotics. At this stage, the field of semiotics goes beyond linguistics. Semiotics also examines signs such as music, emblems and logos (Rifat, 2013, p. 99).

Bühler contributed to the field of semiotics with his Organon Model. The model is based on three basic dimensions: expressive function, representational function and appeal function. The expressive function examines which signs and how the sender uses them through the message to the receiver. The representation function explains the meaning that the sender creates through the signs. The appeal function refers to the state/change that the sender wants to bring about in the receiver through the signs. The expressive function is attributed to the sender, the representational function is attributed to the sign(s) used by the sender and the conative/appeal function is attributed to the receiver. According to the Organon Model, these three stages play a fundamental role in the analysis of signs.

4. Findings

4.1. Designated sequences through Bühler's Communication Model

The AfD election video analyzed in the study lasts 127 seconds in total. In 22 sequences within 99 seconds of the video, there are AfD's evaluations and promises regarding the EU. Since 9 of the 22 sequences directly include Euroscepticism, 9 sequences of the video on Euroscepticism were analyzed.

4.1.1 First Sequence

When the first sequence is analyzed in terms of the narrative function, the video shows 44 white human shapes and a blond man holding a large calculator. On the calculator is the inscription €8,000,000,000,000. The man holding the calculator is reflected as sad (Image 2). In the next stage, four of the 44 white human shapes are red. This time a girl is holding the calculator and the words “€290,000/Jahr (€290,000 per year)” are written above the calculator. The girl in the video is projected as bewildered (Image 3).

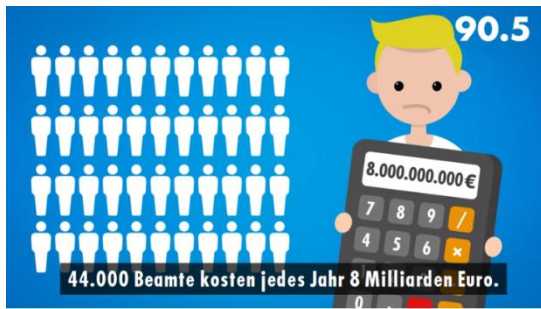


Image 1: First sequence first image



Image 2: First sequence second image

Table 2: First Sequence

Expressive Function	Human shapes and calculator
Representation Function	The idea that the EU is an economic burden for European states
Appeal Function	Convincing the German public that the EU is a burden for Germany

In the first sequence of the video, "44,000 civil servants cost 8 billion euros every year. One in 11 earns more than the German chancellor!"

In terms of its representational function, the video argues that the EU is an economic burden for the German people. The images of men and women in the video are used as metonyms for the German people. The human shapes symbolize those who work for the EU. The man and the girl hold calculators in their hands to show the expenses of EU employees. The video emphasizes the size of the EU's expenses by stating that the income of some EU employees is higher than that of the German Chancellor. By presenting the boy in the video as sad and the girl as confused, the perception that the German people are not satisfied with the expenses caused by the EU is tried to be created.

When analyzed in terms of the prompt function, the video emphasizes the EU's expenses and creates a negative perception of the EU among the German public. At this stage, AfD tries to convince the German people that the EU is a big burden for Germany.

4.1.2. Second Sequence

When the second sequence is analyzed through its narrative function, the video shows a scale with the US flag on one side and a map of Europe on the other. The side of the scale with the EU flag is dominant. There is a surprise emoji on the scale (Image 4). At the next stage, the arms of the scale are equalized and the emoji of surprise is replaced by an emoji of happiness (Image 5). In the second sequence of the video, the statement "AfD wants to bring Europe and the EU back into balance" appears.



Image 3: Second sequence first image



Image 4: Second sequence second image

Table 3: Second Sequence

Expressive Function	EU flag, map of Europe and scales
Representation Function	The idea that the EU is more important than the European continent
Appeal Function	Convincing the German public to equalize the power of the EU executive over the European states

When analyzed in terms of representation function, the video conveys the message that the EU is given more importance than the European continent. At this stage, the EU flag represents the EU administration and the map of Europe represents the European states. In the first image, the EU flag weighs heavier on the scales than the map of Europe, trying to create the perception that the EU administration has moved to a higher level than the European countries. The emoji of surprise on the scale suggests that this situation does not cause satisfaction. In the second image, the perception is created that a balance will be achieved between the EU administration and European states with the AfD. In this process, it is suggested through the happiness emoji that the equal level of the EU administration and European states will create satisfaction.

When considered through the prompt function, the message is given that the EU administration, which was created for the benefit of European states, has become a power over European states. AfD tries to convince the German people to reduce the power of the EU administration over European states to an equal level.

4.1.3. Third Sequence

When the third sequence is analyzed in terms of narrativity function, the video shows a building with the EU flag on it. Around the building there are crosses and forbidden signs, a manual stop sign and a sign reading “VERBOT” (Image 6). In the next sequence, six green arms, resembling the arms of an octopus, extend from the building with the EU flag, one of them wrapping around a boy and one around a girl (Image 7). In the third sequence of the video, the statement “We need a Europe of the motherland, not an unruly EU Parliament or a superstate with its own army”.

**Image 5:** Third sequence first image**Image 6:** Third sequence second image**Table 4: Third Sequence**

Expressive Function	EU building, prohibition signs
Representation Function	The idea that the EU emphasizes a prohibitionist stance
Appeal Function	Convincing the German people that Germany should abolish the influence of the EU and act on its own

When considered through its representational function, the video criticizes the structure of the EU administration. In the video, the building with the EU flag represents the EU administration, while the people surrounded by the arms are used as a metonymy of the German people. In the first image, the signs next to the EU building give the message that the EU has taken on a structure that enacts prohibitions. In the second image, the EU's practices are likened to a monster by utilizing a metalepsis narrative. In this way, the EU administration is projected as a metaphor of fear to the German public.

When analyzed in terms of the prompt function, the message is given that European states have created the EU administration as a power above them. It is argued that this power held by the EU negatively affects the European states. At this stage, the AfD is trying to convince the German people that Germany should get out from under the influence of this power and act on its own.

4.1.4. Fourth Sequence

When the fourth sequence is analyzed through the function of narrativity, the video shows a blond man with papers and another man with glasses sending him papers. It is reflected that the man in the papers is angry. There are Euro, cross and forbidden signs on the papers (Image 8). In the next stage, a blonde man is shown happily voting. Opposite the blonde man, there is an equal sign and an emoji winking and smiling (Image 9). In the fourth sequence of the video, “It should not be anonymous bureaucrats but citizens who have to live with the decision. Otherwise, the “EU experiment” should be considered a failure”.

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Image 7: Fourth sequence first image



Image 8: Fourth sequence second image

Table 5: Fourth sequence

Expressive Function	Papers and the German citizen The idea that EU decisions negatively affect the German people
Representational Function	Convincing the German public that Germany should act independently of EU
Appeal Function	Leadership

The papers emphasise the costs and prohibitions of the EU. In the second image, the blonde man voting, happy and using the winking and smiling emoji, conveys the message that the German people will be happy when they make their own decisions.

When analysed using the prompt function, the video suggests that the EU will fail if the EU administration continues to make decisions for the German people. At this stage, the AfD is trying to convince the German people that Germany should act independently of the EU administration by presenting the decisions of the EU administration in a negative way.

Analysed in terms of its representational function, the video criticises the decisions taken by the EU administration. In the first image, the man with glasses is used as a metonymy for the EU and the blond man in the newspaper as a metonymy for the German people. The perception that the German people have difficulties within the bureaucracy of the EU administration is created by the presence of the blond man in the papers and his anger. The signs on

4.1.5. Fifth Sequence

When the fifth sequence is analysed in terms of narrativity function, the video shows a man with a large magnet in his hand and another man whose money is drawn from him with the magnet. The man who withdraws the money is reflected as happy, while the man whose money is withdrawn is reflected as restless. There is a big no sign in the centre of both men (Image 9). In the fifth sequence of the video, ‘A return to national currencies could solve half of all EU problems in one go. Hence: the end of the transfer union and no German liability for EU banks’.



Image 9: Sequence five

Table 6: Fifth Sequence

Expressive Function	Magnet and coins
Representational Function	The idea that the EU economically exploits the German people
Appeal Function	Convincing the German people that Germany should use its own currency

When considered through the representation function, it is claimed that the EU economically exploits the German people. In the visual, the person holding the magnet is used as a metonymy of the EU and the person receiving the money is used as a metonymy of the German people. By taking the money with a magnet, the support of the EU from Germany is emphasised. The uneasy reflection of the man whose money is taken suggests that the German people are not satisfied with the money given to the EU.

When analysed in terms of the demand function, the video calls for European states to act independently of the EU administration with their own currencies. At this stage, AfD is trying to convince the German people that Germany should use its own currency.

4.1.6. Sixth Sequence

When the sixth sequence is analysed through the function of narrativity, a blonde man and three black men are shared in the video. The blonde man is reflected in an agitated manner with both hands raised in the air. The black men are in front of the barbed wire and one of them carries a placard reading ‘OPEN BORDER!’ (Image 10). In the next stage, a blonde man and three black men are shown standing by a well. The blond man gestures ‘OK’ with his hand and the blond man and the black men are shown as happy (Image 11). In the sixth sequence of the video, it is stated that ‘We are in favour of realism in asylum policy instead of unrealistic ideologies. No mass migration, no entry quotas, but continuous return and on-site assistance’.



Image 10: Sixth sequence first image



Image 11: Sixth sequence second image

Table 7: Sixth Sequence

Expressive Function	German citizens and immigrants
Representational Function	The idea of preventing immigrants from coming to Germany
Appeal Function	Convincing the German public to help migrants in their home country

When analysed in terms of representation function, the video criticises the EU's immigration policy. The blonde male in the video is used as a metonymy of the German people, while black men are used as a metonymy of immigrants who come or want to come to Germany. The barbed wire in the first image is brought to the forefront as the flyspeck of the migration of immigrants to Germany. At this stage, by presenting the blonde man in an uneasy manner, it is tried to create a perception that the arrival of immigrants to Germany creates uneasiness in the German people. The well in the second image is used as a synecdoche for Germany's aid to immigrants. In the visual, the message is given that both German people and immigrants will be happy with Germany's help to immigrants in their country.

In terms of the prompt function, the video calls for preventing migrants from coming to Germany and instead helping them in their home countries. The AfD tries to convince the German people that the arrival of migrants in Germany is not in the interest of both the German people and the migrants. The AfD sends the message that the migration problem in the EU can be solved by helping migrants in their home countries.

4.1.7. Seventh Sequence

When the seventh sequence is analysed in terms of its narrative function, the video shows two blonde men wearing police hats blindfolded at an open entrance gate and a black man wearing a mask with a bomb in his hand. The picture of the black man is shared above the hut at the entrance gate and the text 'GESUCHT (WANTED)' is written below the picture (Image 13). In the next sequence, the blindfold of the blonde men is removed and the entrance door is closed (Image 14). In the seventh sequence of the video, it is stated that 'Each country should be able to control its borders and decide who to let in'.

**Image 12:** Seventh sequence first image**Image 13:** Seventh sequence second image**Table 8: Seventh Sequence**

Expressive Function	Border crossing, German police and criminal
Representation Function	The perception that the EU's border security is inadequate
Appeal Function	Convincing the German public that Germany should ensure its own border security

When expressed through the narrativity function in the seventh sequence, the video depicts two blond men wearing police hats with blindfolds standing at an open entry gate, alongside a Black man with a masked face holding a bomb. Above the entry gate booth, an image of the Black man is displayed with the word "GESUCHT (WANTED)" written below it (Image 13). In the next scene, the blindfolds on the blond men are removed, and the entry gate is closed (Image 14). The seventh sequence of the video includes the statement: "Every country should be able to control its borders and decide who to let in." When analyzed through the representational function, it is revealed that the video criticizes the EU's border security policy. The blond man in the video is

used as a metonym for German border security. In the first visual, the depiction of a person carrying a bomb along with a notice stating that the person is wanted, yet still passing through the border with ease, is criticized. This incident conveys the message that the EU's border security policy poses a threat to Germany. At this point, the blindfolded eyes of the blond man create the perception that German police are rendered helpless in ensuring border security due to EU governance.

When analyzed through the conative function, the video creates the perception that the EU's border security is inadequate and calls for European countries to secure their own borders with their own policies. At this point, AfD seeks to persuade the German public that Germany should take responsibility for securing its own borders independently.

4.1.8. Eighth Sequence

When analyzed through the narrativity function in the eighth sequence, the video depicts a worried girl carrying a box containing money, with the words “UNSER GELD (OUR MONEY)” written on it. Surrounding the girl are eight hands reaching out to her (Image 15). In the next scene, a man holding a sign that says “STOP” is shown standing next to the girl (Image 16).

This time, the girl carrying the box is portrayed as happy rather than worried. The eighth sequence of the video includes the statement: “Even within the EU. We show a red card to welfare and child benefit fraud.” Analysing the eighth sequence in terms of its narrative function, the video shows an excited girl carrying a box of money with the words 'UNSER GELD (OUR MONEY)' written on it. There are eight hands around the girl (image 15). In the next scene, next to the girl carrying the box, there is a man holding a 'STOP' sign (picture 16). This time the girl carrying the box is reflected as happy rather than upset. In the eighth sequence of the video 'Even within the EU. We show a red card to welfare and child benefit fraud'.



Figure 14: Eighth Sequence First Frame



Figure 15: Eighth Sequence Second Frame

Table 9: Eighth sequence

Expressive Function	Money, hands, German citizens
Representational Function	The idea that aid in Germany should be distributed in the right way for the benefit of the German people
Appeal Function	Raising awareness among the German public of the need to prevent unjustified spending of aid money in Germany on others

When considered through the function of representation, it is revealed that the EU's policy towards border security is criticised in the video. The blonde man in the video is used as a metonym for German border security. In the first visual, although there is a picture of a person carrying a bomb at the entrance gate and there is a statement that he is being searched, his easy crossing of the border is criticised. Through this incident, a message is given that the EU's border security policy poses a threat to Germany. At this stage, the blindfold on the blonde man creates the perception that the German police is helpless in border security due to the EU administration. Analysed in terms of the prompt function, the video creates the idea that the EU's border security is inadequate and calls for European countries to provide their own border security with their own policies. At this process, the AfD is trying to convince the German people that Germany should take care of its own border security.

In terms of its representational function, the video conveys the message that aid in Germany should be distributed in the right way for the benefit of the German people. The images of the woman and the man in the video are used as metonyms for the German people, and the hands reaching out to the woman and the man are used as metonyms for those who unfairly benefit or want to benefit from the aid in Germany. The inscription 'Our money' on the box the woman is holding emphasises that the aid money in Germany belongs to the German people. When the man arrives with a stop sign in his hand, the message is that Germany's aid money is being prevented from reaching others unfairly.

In terms of the prompt function, the video highlights possible abuses in the distribution of aid money in Germany and calls for aid money to be distributed as it is deserved. At this stage, the AfD is trying to make the German people aware of the need to prevent aid money in Germany from being spent unfairly on others.

When analyzed through the representational function, the video conveys the message that aid in Germany should be distributed properly to benefit the German people. The images of the man and woman represent the German population, while the hands reaching out to the man and woman serve as a metonym for those who unjustly benefit from or seek to benefit from aid in Germany. The phrase "Our money" on the box held by the woman emphasizes that the aid money in Germany belongs to the German people. The man's gesture of a stop sign conveys the idea of preventing aid money from unjustly reaching others.

When examined through the conative function, the video highlights potential abuses in the distribution of aid funds in Germany, calling for the funds to be distributed fairly and deservedly. At this point, AfD seeks to raise awareness among the German public about preventing the misuse of aid money for the benefit of others.

4.1.9. Ninth Sequence

When analyzed in terms of the narrativity function in the ninth sequence, the video includes images of people in two distinct sections. In the first section, a light-skinned man and woman wearing white T-shirts are depicted, surrounded by Black men and women in black veils. In the second section, only images of the light-skinned man and woman wearing white T-shirts are shown. The ninth sequence of the video includes the statement: "The demographic crisis cannot be solved with migration; it will only worsen."

In the first part, a light-skinned woman and a man wearing a white T-shirt are reflected, surrounded by black men and women in black chadors. In the second section, only images of light-skinned men and women wearing white T-shirts are shown. In the ninth sequence of the video, the statement "The demographic crisis is not solved by migration, it is exacerbated" is shown.



Image 16: Ninth sequence

Table 9: Ninth Sequence

Expressive Function	Immigrants and German citizen
Representational Function	Opposition to the increase in the immigrant population in Germany
Appeal Function	Convincing the German public that immigration is not the solution to the demographic crisis

In terms of its representational function, the video criticises the demographic change in Europe supposedly caused by the EU. The light-skinned people on the left of the image are used as metonyms for the German

people, while black men and women in black chadors are used as metonyms for immigrants in Germany. In this way, immigrants in Germany are uniformised through the video as black men and women wearing black chador. In the video, it is tried to create the perception that the immigrant population in Germany will be more than the German people with the immigration of Germany. At this stage, the idea that immigrants' own cultures may be dominant in Germany emerges.

When analysed in terms of the prompt function, the video gives the message that the demographic structure in Germany can change significantly in favour of immigrants with immigration. In this way, AfD tries to convince the German people that immigration is not the solution to the demographic crisis.

When analyzed through the representational function, the video criticizes the demographic changes in Europe allegedly caused by the EU. The light-skinned individuals on the left side of the visual are used as a metonym for the German population, while the Black men and women in black veils represent migrants in Germany. In this way, migrants in Germany are stereotyped as Black men and women in black veils through the video. The video attempts to create the perception that, with immigration, the migrant population in Germany could outnumber the German population. At this point, the idea emerges that migrants' own cultures could become dominant in Germany.

When examined in terms of the conative function, the video conveys the message that migration could significantly alter Germany's demographic structure in favor of migrants. In this way, AfD seeks to persuade the German public that migration is not a solution to the demographic crisis.

5. Analysis

5.1. The Marathon of 2024 Elections: State and EU Parliament

This research examines the 2024 European Parliament elections in relation to the rise of the AfD. European elections in Germany were closed with surprised results as the rise of AfD (Moreau, 2017, p.7).¹ The AfD continues to grow, as demonstrated by the September 2024 regional elections in Saxony, Thuringia and Brandenburg, where it achieved around 30% of the vote. It has seen an upward trend parallel to the elections of the past period, which are discussed and analysed in this study, has taken place. In the 2024 Thuringian state elections, the AfD became the first far-right party in Germany since the Nazi Party to win a majority of seats in a state election. The AfD also performed strongly in Brandenburg and Saxony (DW, 2024c).

The AfD also strengthened its representativeness in the results of the EP elections on 9 June 2024. On 9 June 2024, the AfD won 16% of the vote in the European Parliament elections, second only to the CDU/CSU and almost five percentage points more than in the 2019 elections, with the AfD winning in all five former East German states (Nöstlinger, 2024).

The party, which follows a method similar to the election campaigns of the past periods in its campaigns and promotions, reinforces its rise through different fractures. According to a survey conducted in Germany before the EPE, the fact that AfD has a 'far-right' content with a stable and smooth pattern of support since 2016, together with the fact that the German people approve of this situation against the Social Democrats, Greens and liberal FDP parties, confirms that the views in their campaigns that Europe's acting as a whole brings harm rather than benefit to Germany in areas such as economy, unemployment, immigrants, etc. are increasing (DW, 2024b). It is one of the findings of the study that the victory, which is behind the discourse of 'historic victory' since the Second World War and which has been reinforced with this power element in the EPE, carries a subliminal meaning that feeds European Scepticism, despite the criticisms of all leftist parties (Nöstlinger, 2024). According to the results of the poll, the Greens, the coalition partner in the state parliament, have the required 5 per cent of the vote to re-enter parliament (Pewresearch, 2024). The Brandenburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution also classifies the state organisation of the AfD as a 'suspected case of right-wing extremism' (DW, 2024d). The recent policy shifts in Germany, which can be considered as a governmental crisis, are 'sceptical' and will lead the EP to abandon its holistic policies on many issues (DW, 2024a).

Thus, the coalition of three, which set out with the claim that 'We can pave the way for the social, ecological, economic, digital and societal innovations of the next decade in Germany', is now faced with the necessity of abandoning many of its goals. The FDP has begun to force its partners, the SPD and the Greens, to abandon

¹ Moreau mentioned it on his writings as 'This far-right party, founded in 2013, came second and won 15 seats in the European Parliament, its best score to date. The AfD continues to grow, as demonstrated by the September 2024 regional elections in Saxony, Thuringia and Brandenburg, where it achieved around 30% of the vote.'

the transformation projects planned to strengthen the welfare state and combat climate change. It has also started to make demands in favour of the party's liberal economic policy that are not included in the coalition agreement (SPD, 2019). For the last year, the FDP has been making radical demands on the SPD's priority projects such as the minimum wage, the supply chain law and the citizens' allowance for the needy. While the Supply Chain Act, which aims to improve human rights, prevent child labour, ensure climate-friendly production and force German and European companies to take more responsibility for their global suppliers, has come into force in Germany, the FDP's resistance to its EU-wide regulation has increased the disagreements (DW, 2024e). The FDP's demands are also angering the Greens, the other coalition partner. However, the Greens, who lost a record number of votes in the 2021 elections and failed to even enter the parliament in some states in the last state elections, are ready to make concessions to avoid an early dissolution of the government. The FDP has also put the Greens and SPD in a difficult position with its radical demands on immigration. This has resulted in the strengthening of the Christian Union parties and the far-right AfD party, which have similar demands.

5. Concluding Remarks

Through the election video analysed in the study, it was revealed that AfD based its Eurosceptic discourse on the EU's governance structure, economy, migration and security issues. It directly criticised the EU's integration policies and the tools it uses. AfD argued that the EU's governance structure pursued a prohibitionist attitude within European states and put European states in a difficult situation. The message was that making the EU administration a power over the European states caused the European states to remain in the second place. At this stage, the EU was likened to a monster that harms European states, and an attempt was made to create a negative perception of the EU directly in the German public opinion. AfD opposed the budget allocated by European states to the EU in the economic dimension and created the idea that the EU economically exploits European states.

AfD argued that the migration policy implemented by the EU would not be successful in solving the migration crisis. At this stage, it suggested that rather than admitting migrants to EU countries, migrants should be assisted in their own countries. On the other hand, AfD argued that if migrants are admitted to EU countries, the demographic structure of the EU will increase in favour of migrants. AfD found the EU's policy on border security inadequate and stated that European states had problems in ensuring border security due to the EU administration. Finally, AfD drew attention to the irregularities that may occur in the distribution of social aid money and argued that the priority in social aid money should be given to the citizens of the country receiving the social aid money.

In the AfD's election video, the German people under EU rule are portrayed as people who are victimised, who are dissatisfied with the practices of the EU administration, who have to pay the so-called heavy economic bill of the EU, and who are forced under the heavy bureaucracy of the EU. At this stage, AfD tried to create a perception through the video that the German people are not happy under the EU administration. Through this perception, it was aimed to strengthen the anti-EU public opinion in Germany and to support AfD in the elections. In general, it can be argued that AfD's election video includes moderate statements towards Euroscepticism. As a matter of fact, in its anti-EU discourses, AfD criticised the functioning of the EU and, on the other hand, proposed solutions and defended the necessity of radical changes within the EU in which European states can act more freely. The solutions offered by the AfD in the video prevented the AfD's anti-EU rhetoric from remaining in the air and created a distinct alternative for the voters in its proposals for the EU. AfD refrained from using hate speech against immigrants in response to the immigration policy, which it criticised in the dimension of Euroscepticism, and offered an alternative solution to the immigration crisis. On the other hand, it emphasised that immigrants are different from the German society with its uniformisation of immigrants as black men and women wearing black burqas in the video.

The study revealed that AfD's Eurosceptic rhetoric, as examined through the election video, is based on the EU's governance structure, economy, migration, and security issues. AfD directly criticized the EU's integration policies and the tools it employs. The party argued that the EU's governance structure adopts a prohibitive attitude within European states and places these states in difficult situations. It conveyed the message that elevating the EU administration to a position of power over European states relegates the latter to a secondary role. At this stage, the EU was likened to a monster harming European states, attempting to create a negative perception of the EU directly among the German public.

Economically, AfD opposed the budget allocated by European states to the EU, suggesting that the EU economically exploits European states. AfD also claimed that the EU's migration policy is ineffective in

addressing the migration crisis. At this stage, it proposed providing aid to migrants in their home countries rather than accepting them into EU countries. Furthermore, AfD argued that if migrants were admitted to EU countries, the demographic structure of the EU would shift in favor of migrants. Regarding border security, AfD criticized the EU's policies as inadequate and stated that EU governance caused European states to face difficulties in ensuring border security. Lastly, AfD highlighted potential irregularities in the distribution of social aid funds, emphasizing that priority in social aid should be given to the citizens of the country providing the aid.

In its election video, AfD portrayed the German people under EU governance as victims, dissatisfied with EU policies, burdened with the so-called heavy economic costs imposed by the EU, and struggling under the EU's heavy bureaucracy. Through this portrayal, AfD attempted to create the perception that the German public is unhappy under EU governance, aiming to strengthen anti-EU sentiment in Germany and garner support for AfD in the elections.

Overall, it can be argued that AfD included moderate statements regarding Euroscepticism in its election video. AfD criticized the functioning of the EU in its anti-EU rhetoric while proposing solutions, advocating for fundamental changes within the EU that would allow European states to act more freely. The solutions presented in the video prevented AfD's anti-EU rhetoric from seeming superficial and offered voters an alternative with its suggestions for the EU. In addressing its critique of migration policies within the framework of Euroscepticism, AfD avoided using hate speech against migrants and proposed an alternative solution to the migration crisis. However, the video stereotyped migrants as black men and women wearing black veils, emphasizing their difference from German society.

This study is significant in shedding light on AfD's campaign for the 2019 and 2024 EPE. Moreover, future studies could contribute to the field of Euroscepticism by comparatively analyzing the election campaigns of Eurosceptic political parties in different European countries during the 2019 European Parliament Elections with AfD's campaign. Based on the assumption that the analysis of this article will be reflected in the German Elections to be held in 2025, continuing with the comments of the parties reflected in the press and their effects on public opinion shows that polarisation will continue to harden in the German elections. This will lead Germany to move further away from the idea of an integrated Europe.

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Araştırma Makalesi

The AfD's Election Campaigns on Euroscepticism: A Comparative Analysis of the 2019 and 2024 EP Elections

Avrupa Şüpheciliği Üzerine AfD'nin Seçim Kampanyaları: 2019 ve 2024 AP Seçimlerinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Avrupa şüphecisi terimi Birleşik Krallık'ta 1980'lerin ortalarına kadar uzanmaktadır ve en basit haliyle Avrupa Birliği'nin (AB) yetkilerine karşı çıkan kişi anlamına gelmektedir. 1992 Maastricht Antlaşması'ndan önce bu kavram büyük ölçüde sınırlarda kalmıştır (Brack & Startin, 2015, s.239). Avrupa şüpheciliği en basit tanımıyla Avrupa Birliği (AB) karşıtlığı anlamına gelmektedir. Dar anlamda ise belirli bir politikaya veya entegrasyon çabasına muhalefet olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Boomgaarden, Schuck, Elenbaas ve De Vreese, 2011, s. 242). Avro Bölgesi krizinin ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte Avrupa şüpheciliği giderek yaygınlaşmıştır. Bu süreç Avrupa genelinde kamuoyu düzeyinde, siyasi partiler ve sivil toplum grupları arasında, AB kurumlarının kendi içinde ve medya söyleminde fark edilebilir (Brack & Startin, 2015, s. 240). Avro krizinin yanı sıra, hızlanan Avrupa entegrasyon süreci Batı Avrupa'daki parti sistemlerinde AB'ye karşı doğrudan muhalefetin artmasına neden olmuştur. Bu bakımdan artan Avrupa şüpheciliği, artan entegrasyonun doğal bir sonucu olmuştur (Taggart, 1998, s. 363). Almanya'da 2013 yılında kurulan AfD de Avrupa şüpheciliğini benimsemiş ve AB karşıtı söylemleriyle ön plana çıkmıştır. AfD, 2017 GFE'de %12,6 oy oranıyla üçüncü parti olmayı başarmıştır. AfD, 2019 EPE'de de benzer bir başarı elde etmiş ve AB'yi sert bir dille eleştiren bir seçim kampanyası ile seçimlere katılmıştır. 2021 ve 2024 Almanya Genel Seçimlerinde (GEG) göçmen karşıtı ve Avrupa şüpheci söylemi ile dikkat çeken AfD üzerine çeşitli akademik çalışmalar yapılmıştır.

Hansen ve Olsen çalışmalarında AfD'nin AB konusundaki duruşunu koruduğunu, buna karşın kampanyalarında, manifestolarında ve basın açıklamalarında göçmen karşıtı temalara öncelik verdiğini savunmaktadır. Çalışma, AB karşıtlığının AfD'nin 2017 GEG'deki seçiminde, özellikle de göçmen karşıtı tutumlarla kıyaslandığında, baskın bir faktör olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Çalışma sonucunda, göçmen karşıtlığının 2017 yılında AfD'nin oy tercihini büyük ölçüde etkileyen baskın faktör olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır (Hansen & Olsen, 2019, s. 15). Yine Novotný ve Maškarinec, çalışmalarında göçe yönelik tutumların AfD'ye oy verme konusunda çok güçlü, baskın ve önemli bir belirleyici olduğunu tespit etmiştir (Novotný & Maškarinec, 2018, s. 17).

Fang çalışmasında, 2017 GEG'de AfD'nin etno-milliyetçiliğe öncelik veren sağ popülist bir parti olarak görüldüğünü savunmuştur. Çalışma, AfD'nin çeşitli siyasi ve sosyoekonomik gruplardan seçmenleri cezbediğini ve milliyetçi söyleminin ve Alman siyasi elitine yönelik eleştirilerinin yapısal özelliklerden kaynaklanan sorunlardan bıkmış bir halka hitap ettiğini ortaya koymuştur (Fang, 2020, s. 15).

2019 EPE kampanyasında AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheci söylemleri ile göçmen karşıtı söylemleri arasındaki ilişkiselliği ortaya koymak çalışmanın temel sorunsalıdır. Çalışma, AfD tarafından hazırlanan ve EPE bölgesine dahil olan alanlarda sunulan video aracılığıyla AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheci söylemlerini göçmen karşıtı söylemleriyle nasıl meşrulaştırdığını açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca çalışma, AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheci

politikasında hangi argümanları kullandığını ve AB'nin kurumsal komisyonlarına ve üst yapısına yönelik daha yapısal önerilerle ne tür eleştirilerde bulunduğunu ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, AfD'nin 2019 EPE'deki Avrupa şüpheciliğine ilişkin kampanya söylemini incelemektedir. Böylece AfD'nin AB yapısına yönelik eleştirilerini Alman kamuoyunun gözünde nasıl meşrulaştırmaya çalıştığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheciliğine ilişkin söylemleri, seçim döneminde AfD tarafından hazırlanan ve seçim bölgesi olan AB sınırları içerisinde açık ve kapalı alanlarda yayınlanan seçim videosu üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın temel kısıtlılığı, AfD'nin 2019 EPE'deki Avrupa şüpheci söylemlerinin büyük ölçekli bir seçimde sadece tek bir kampanya videosu üzerinden analiz edilmiş olmasıdır. Aksine, seçim kampanyası videosu AfD'nin seçim programını açık ve basit bir dille aktarmıştır. AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheciliğine yönelik temel politikasının hazırlanan bu video aracılığıyla aynı netlikte aktarılması ve her eğitim grubundan insanın bunu rahatlıkla anlayabilmesine özellikle dikkat edilmesi nedeniyle AfD'nin seçim politikasını doğrudan yansıtacağı düşünülmüş ve bu nedenle çalışmanın mevcut video üzerinden yürütülmesine karar verilmiştir.

Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular ışığında, bu çalışmanın yanıt aradığı araştırma soruları şunlardır: i) AfD 2019 EPE'sinde AB karşıtı söylemini hangi konularda vurgulamıştır?; ii) AfD 2019 ve 2024 EPE'sinde Avrupa şüpheciliğini göçmenlerle nasıl ilişkilendirmiştir?; iii) AfD 2019 ve 2024 EPE'sinde Avrupa şüpheciliği söyleminde Alman halkını nasıl temsil etmiştir?

Bu bağlamda çalışmada 2019 EPE seçim kampanyası “Das AfD-Programm zur Europawahl in 99 Sekunden!” (99 saniyede Avrupa seçimleri için AfD programı!) başlıklı seçim videosu üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. (99 saniyede Avrupa seçimleri için AfD programı!). Çalışmanın bu video üzerinden yürütülmesinin temelinde, AfD'nin seçim programını videoda 22 sekans üzerinden kapsamlı bir şekilde yansıtmayı ve aynı zamanda videonun dokuz sekans üzerinden AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheciliğine ilişkin seçim söylemlerine doğrudan yer vermesi yatmaktadır (Das AfD-Programm, 2019; Europawahl, 2019).

Bu araştırma, 2024 Avrupa Parlamentosu seçimlerini AfD'nin yükselişiyle bağlantılı olarak incelemektedir. Almanya'daki Avrupa seçimleri AfD'nin yükselişi gibi sürpriz bir sonuçla kapanmıştır (Moreau, 2017, s.7). AfD, Eylül 2024'te Saksonya, Thüringen ve Brandenburg'da yapılan ve yaklaşık %30 oy oranına ulaştığı bölgesel seçimlerin de gösterdiği gibi büyümeye devam etmektedir. Bu çalışmada ele alınan ve analiz edilen geçmiş dönem seçimlerine paralel bir yükseliş trendi gerçekleşmiştir. 2024 Thüringen eyalet seçimlerinde AfD, Nazi Partisi'nden bu yana Almanya'da bir eyalet seçiminde sandalye çoğunluğunu kazanan ilk aşırı sağcı parti olmuştur, AfD Brandenburg ve Saksonya'da da güçlü bir performans sergilemiştir (DW, 2024c). AfD, 9 Haziran 2024 tarihinde yapılan AP seçimlerinin sonuçlarına göre de temsil kabiliyetini güçlendirmiştir. AfD, 9 Haziran 2024'te yapılan Avrupa Parlamentosu seçimlerinde oyların %16'sını alarak CDU/CSU'nun ardından ikinci sırada yer aldı ve 2019 seçimlerine kıyasla neredeyse beş puan daha fazla oy alarak beş eski Doğu Almanya eyaletinin tamamında kazandı (Nöstlinger, 2024).

Kampanya ve tanıtımlarında geçmiş dönemlerdeki seçim kampanyalarına benzer bir yöntem izleyen parti, farklı kırılmalar üzerinden yükselişini pekiştiriyor. APE öncesinde Almanya'da yapılan bir araştırmaya göre AfD'nin 2016'dan bu yana istikrarlı ve düzgün bir destek örüntüsüne sahip 'aşırı sağ' bir içeriğe sahip olması, bununla birlikte Alman halkının Sosyal Demokratlar, Yeşiller ve liberal FDP partileri karşısında bu durumu onaylaması, kampanyalarında Avrupa'nın bir bütün olarak hareket etmesinin Almanya'ya ekonomi, işsizlik, göçmenler vb. alanlarda faydadan ziyade zarar getirdiği yönündeki görüşlerin arttığını doğruluyor (DW,2024b). İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan bu yana 'tarihi zafer' söyleminin arkasında yer alan ve EPE'de bu güç unsuru ile pekiştirilen zaferin, tüm sol partilerin eleştirilerine rağmen, Avrupa Şüpheciliğini besleyen bilinçaltı bir anlam taşıdığı araştırmanın bulgularından biridir (Nöstlinger, 2024). Anket sonuçlarına göre, eyalet parlamentosundaki koalisyon ortağı Yeşiller, parlamentoya yeniden girmek için gerekli olan yüzde 5 oy oranına sahiptir (Pewresearch, 2024).

Çalışmada analiz edilen seçim videosu aracılığıyla AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheci söylemini AB'nin yönetim yapısı, ekonomi, göç ve güvenlik konularına dayandırdığı ortaya çıkmıştır. AB'nin entegrasyon politikalarını ve kullandığı araçları doğrudan eleştirmiştir. AfD, AB'nin yönetim yapısının Avrupa devletleri içinde yasakçı bir tutum izlediğini ve Avrupa devletlerini zor durumda bıraktığını savundu. AB yönetiminin Avrupa devletleri üzerinde bir güç haline getirilmesinin Avrupa devletlerinin ikinci planda kalmasına neden olduğu mesajı verildi. Bu aşamada AB, Avrupa devletlerine zarar veren bir canavara benzetilerek Alman kamuoyunda doğrudan AB'ye yönelik olumsuz bir algı yaratılmaya çalışıldı. AfD, ekonomik boyutta Avrupa devletlerinin AB'ye ayırdığı bütçeye karşı çıkmış ve AB'nin Avrupa devletlerini ekonomik olarak sömürdüğü fikrini yaratmıştır.

Çalışma, seçim videosu üzerinden incelendiğinde AfD'nin Avrupa şüpheci söyleminin AB'nin yönetim yapısı, ekonomi, göç ve güvenlik konularına dayandığını ortaya koymuştur. AfD, AB'nin entegrasyon politikalarını ve kullandığı araçları doğrudan eleştirmiştir. Parti, AB'nin yönetim yapısının Avrupa devletleri içinde yasakçı bir tutum benimsediğini ve bu devletleri zor durumda bıraktığını savunmuştur. AB yönetiminin Avrupa devletleri üzerinde bir güç konumuna yükseltilmesinin, Avrupa devletlerini ikincil bir role indirgediği mesajını verdi. Bu aşamada AB, Avrupa devletlerine zarar veren bir canavara benzetilerek, doğrudan Alman kamuoyunda AB'ye yönelik olumsuz bir algı yaratılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bu çalışma, AfD'nin 2019 EPE'sinde AB'nin bürokratik yapısı, Avro krizi, göçmen krizi ve sınır güvenliğine ilişkin söylemlerini Avrupa şüpheciliği açısından kapsamlı bir şekilde açıklaması bakımından önemlidir. Bu bakımdan, bu çalışmanın bulguları ve analizi siyaset, siyasal iletişim alanındaki araştırmacılara ve Avrupa şüpheciliği, göç ve sağ popülizm konularına odaklanan akademik araştırmalara kaynak olarak katkı sağlayacaktır.