Radical Right Populism in Germany

AfD, Pegida, and the Identitarian Movement

RALF HAVERTZ

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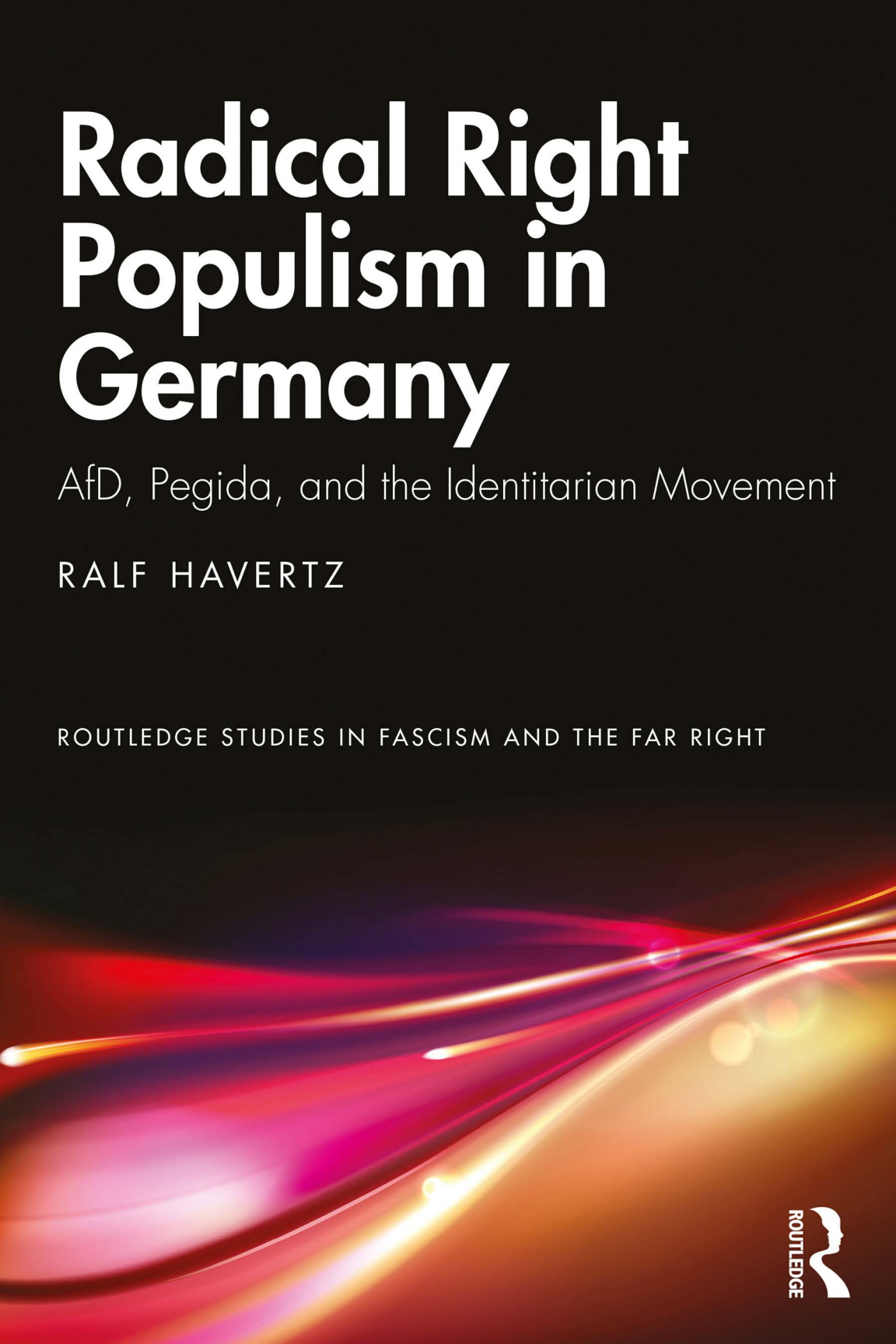

RADICAL RIGHT POPULISM IN GERMANY

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of radical right populism in Germany. It gives an overview of historical developments of the phenomenon and its current appearance. It examines three of the main far-right organizations in Germany: the radical right populist party AfD (Alternative for Germany), Pegida (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamification of the Occident), and the Identitarian Movement.

The book investigates the positions of these groups as expressed in programmes, publications, and statements of party leaders and movement activists. It explores their history, ideologies, strategies, and their main activists and representatives, as well as the overlap between the groups. The ideological positions examined include populism, nativism, authoritarianism, volkish nationalism, ethnopluralism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism, antifeminism, and Euroscepticism. The analysis shows that these ideological features are sometimes strategically interlinked for effect and used to justify specific political demands such as the stronger regulation of immigration and the exclusion of Muslims.

This much-needed volume will be of particular interest to students and researchers of German politics, populism, social movements, party politics, and right-wing extremism.

Ralf Havertz is Associate Professor of International Relations at Keimyung University in South Korea. He has published a study about the intellectual New Right in Germany and several articles on the rise of radical right populism in Germany.

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1

INTRODUCTION

When *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany, AfD) was established in 2013, Germany "finally" got its own radical right populist party, as some observers remarked (Arzheimer, 2015; Berbuir et al., 2015). The comment referred to Germany's status as a latecomer in this political field. At the time of AfD's founding, almost all of Germany's European neighbours already had their radical right populist parties. Some of them, for instance, the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) and the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP), were rather successful, as their present or past participation in government showed. Meanwhile, AfD has managed to gain larger shares of the votes in elections on subnational, national, and European levels and has placed members in all parliaments of the 16 states which Germany is comprised of, in the Bundestag (the federal parliament) and the European Parliament. After the 2017 federal election, AfD became the largest opposition party in the Bundestag.

The remark about a radical right populist party "finally" appearing on the political stage in Germany implies some form of normalization in German politics compared with the politics of other European countries. Voting for a radical right or extreme right party has indeed not been perceived as normal in Germany for some time. This is an especially sensitive issue in Germany, because of its devastating history with right-wing extremism during the Nazi period (1933–1945). After the Second World War, a stigma was attached to voting for parties of the far right (Decker, 2015), which is why they had only little electoral success. With the exception of the German Party (Deutsche Partei), which gained few seats in the Bundestag in the 1950s, this success was restricted to the regional and local level. The stints of the radical right populist party Die Republikaner (The Republicans, REP) and of right-wing extremist parties such as the National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) and the German People's Union (Deutsche Volksunion, DVU) in state legislatures were

only brief and lasted mostly just for one term or – in exceptional cases – two consecutive terms.

This post-war period is clearly over now: History has lost its restraining effect on many voters who sympathize with radical right populist parties. Citizens who feel attracted by movements such as Pegida (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident) show no inhibition when they voice their anger and resentment at rallies organized by the movement. A number of changes have happened in the socio-economic, cultural, and media environment of the political system in Germany, which all converged at roughly the same time and produced a situation that opened up a few opportunity structures for the radical right.

First, there was the transformation of Fordist capitalism into a neoliberal system, which brought higher levels of competitive pressure as well as increasing insecurities and uncertainties for workers (Ptak, 2018). This development was accompanied by a significant degradation of the social welfare state with the Hartz IV reforms in the early 2000s, which curtailed social benefits and exerted increasing pressure on welfare recipients. Then came the global financial crisis of 2008 and the euro crisis which started in 2009 with all their bail outs and transfers of public funds that never seemed to find their way into the pockets of the average citizen. Many citizens responded to this situation with frustration, anger, and fear. It also resulted in a general change of the public atmosphere, with increasing suspicion toward other citizens and reduced levels of solidarity (Detje & Sauer, 2018; Lorenzen et al., 2018). This is where a window of opportunity opened for populist entrepreneurs who were keen to exploit the anger and resentment by channeling it against "the elite" or optionally "the establishment."

Second, since the student movement of 1968, German society has gone through a phase of modernization and liberalization; it has become more open and more accepting of differences, which involves differences in culture and lifestyle and the protection of minorities such as refugees, immigrants, and LGBTQ people. The position of women in German society has improved considerably. Women are now more strongly participating in the economy and in politics than they did ten or 20 years ago. Even though much has been achieved, Germany is still far from reaching gender equality (Quent, 2019). Not everyone is happy with these cultural changes and the need to adapt to them. Some actually see this modernization as a menace to their identity and their traditional ways of life that is based on patriarchal ideals and clear social hierarchies. Populist entrepreneurs can use the dissatisfaction with these changes (and the need to adapt to them) to organize a *cultural backlash*, which may again be directed against "the elite" – with a particular focus on its cosmopolitan character – but also against all those minorities that are the beneficiaries of these changes.

Lastly, changes in the media landscape, with the emergence of the internet and social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Twitter, have altered the way citizens communicate with each other. This new media environment also led to modifications in political communication, which can now be

more direct and unfiltered. Radical and extreme messages can reach a targeted audience more easily, because the algorithms that are at the heart of social media connect users with similar interests, opinions, and prejudices. In their online groups people get confirmation of their views from like-minded users and rarely if ever encounter critique of their worldviews. As Jan-Werner Müller (2016a, p. 36) observed, "everything that might contradict what we are already thinking is silenced in the echo chamber of the Internet." This has opened plenty of opportunities for radical right populists with an internet connection. It has also resulted in the increasing political polarization of society in Germany. With these changes in the media environment it has become easier to spread conspiracy theories, fake news, and fear, which populists may want to do to generate outrage and mobilize people. These trends in the socio-economic, cultural, and media environment have converged and opened up opportunity structures for the radical right populists of AfD that were closed or at least not as wide open for its precursors.

It is important to note that these developments are also connected to what political scientists have termed the *crisis of representation*. Citizens turn to populist parties because they do not feel properly represented by the mainstream parties in the political system of Germany anymore (sometimes also in order to send a message of protest to these mainstream parties). This especially concerns the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD), which has largely abdicated its role as defender of the "little people" and joined the neoliberal mainstream. Most social-democratic parties in Europe failed to realize the opportunities that were created by the neoliberal transformations of society. Hence, "the neo-liberal turn in recent decades left the field open to other parties" (Brubaker, 2019, p. 35), and many of these parties were populist parties on the left and the right, in Europe primarily on the right.

Social-democratic parties recently experienced severe electoral losses in countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. But citizens were also disappointed with other established parties. This resulted in a marked disengagement of citizens from politics. Peter Mair (2013, pp. 21–22) found a consistent pattern of "citizen disengagement" throughout Europe, which could be traced back several decades. The main features of this disengagement process are a decline in electoral participation, party loyalty, and party membership and an increase in electoral volatility. This pattern is connected to the phenomenon which Colin Crouch (2004, pp. 3–4) called "post-democracy." According to Crouch (2004), with the turn of the century, liberal democracy has become a system where capitalism is generally accepted as the economic model. Mass participation of the citizenry in the political process is mostly restricted to elections, while there is increasing influence of lobbying groups on the outcome of policy considerations by government. In this situation, "public electoral debate" has become a "tightly controlled spectacle" (Crouch, 2004, p. 4). The majority of the citizens play a "passive, quiescent, even apathetic part, responding only to the signals given to them" (Crouch, 2004, p. 4).

A feature of this crisis of representation is that many citizens have lost trust in representative democracy and its institutions. AfD in Germany (like radical right populist parties elsewhere) takes advantage of this lack of trust. In its rhetoric, the party confirms the grievances of the citizens about their lack of influence and tells them that this is all the result of a ploy by "the political class" who is trying in all sorts of ways to betray "the people." This opposition of "the people" versus "the elite" is at the centre of Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser's (2017) "minimal definition" of populism. In their *ideational approach* of populism, they understand populism as an ideology and/or discourse. They define populism as an ideology with a thin centre; that is, an ideology which includes only few concepts. The fact that populism has a thin centre does not mean that it is an ideology of low complexity. On the contrary, as my analysis of populism as an "essentially contested concept" in Chapter 2 shows, which relies on Walter Bryce Gallie (1956) and Jürgen Mackert (2019a), the continuous contestation of populism with its many different understandings makes it a highly complex concept.

The second important element of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's (2017) definition is, as mentioned earlier, the opposition of "the people," who are imagined as "pure, innocent, and always hard-working" (Müller, 2014, p. 485), and "the elite," who are depicted as corrupt, incompetent, and only interested in their own personal gain. In radical right accounts of populism, "the elite" betrays "the people" and favours undeserving outsiders or minority groups – refugees, immigrants, Muslims, Jews, women, LGBTQ people – over "the people" – at "the people's" expense. "The elite" may be described as "political class" or "oligarchy" that undermines popular sovereignty by giving away decision-making power to supranational or international institutions which are not democratically controlled, and in doing so prevent the implementation of the "general will." The assumption that the people are capable of forming a general will is the third important element of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's (2017) definition.

"The people" and "the elite" who are assumed to be in opposition to each other are both conceived as homogenous groups. The presumed "purity" of "the people" has a moral side to it, because "the people" are always perceived as good; but it may, especially in the radical right populist's mind, also refer to certain collectivities such as the nation, ethnie, or race, which are imagined as homogenous and to which the community of "the people" is thought to be intrinsically connected. The assumption of purity and homogeneity creates opportunities for the connection of populism with other ideologies, especially those which have a similar structure due to their own focus on homogeneity. In fact, some populism researchers have found that populism cannot exist as an ideology on its own. Populism necessarily needs to connect with other ideologies; only in this way can it exist (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Stanley, 2008). In the case of radical right populism in Germany, the ideologies that are connected with populism are particularly those which insist on cultural, ethnic, or national homogeneity. In volkish nationalism, which is, as I will show in this book, of primary importance for radical right populism in Germany, all these idealized homogeneities are linked together. Because such homogeneous

collectives do not occur in the real world and, in the sense of Benedict Anderson (2016), can only be understood as imagined communities, certain cognitive and imaginative operations must be performed through which homogeneity is established – at least in the populist's mind. As will be shown in this book, two such operations are the ethnicization and the subsequent essentialization of the assumed characteristics of certain groups in society.

In this book, I will devote myself both to the analysis of populism as ideology and discourse and to the study of the many ideological facets which populism in Germany is combined with to form a specific type of radical right populism. In doing so, I will rely on some works in the German language that have been published in recent years on the subject of radical right populism. The works of Frank Decker, Alexander Häusler, Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Helmut Kellershohn, Armin Pfahl-Traughber, and Samuel Salzborn (and some others who I cannot all mention here) were of particular value for the understanding of recent developments of this phenomenon in Germany. The *Authoritarianism Studies* of Leipzig University and the *Mitte-Studies* of Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation were also very helpful, because they provided a sound empirical foundation for the more theoretically oriented research that I conduct in this book. Some English articles have been published on radical right populism in Germany, primarily focusing on phenomena such as AfD and the anti-Islam movement Pegida, many of which are referenced in this book. So far there are only very few monographies on radical right populism in Germany in the international literature (Klikauer, 2020; Langenbacher, 2019; von Beyme, 2019; Vorländer et al., 2018).[1] Although all of these works provide some valuable insights into the phenomenon, they do not give an exhaustive overview and analysis of the main ideological facets of radical right populism in Germany. This book tries to fill this gap in the international literature.

Alexander Häusler (2018a) stressed that to gain a deep understanding of AfD's radical right populism, it is not sufficient to focus on ideological facets only, but it is indispensable to also scrutinize their discourse strategies in the various political dispositifs they are engaged in. In order to grasp the essence of radical right populism in Germany, one has to look into the rhetorical maneuvers of their protagonists and make them more transparent (Niehr & Reissen-Kosch, 2018). Hence, the discourse analysis in this book will concentrate on the analysis of their arguments, their use of metaphors, and on the "symbolism of collectivity" in their utterances (Jäger, 2004, p. 15). This will allow me to determine how a speaker connects disparate issues in seemingly plausible ways, veils contradictions, and evokes certain effects (Jäger, 2004).

The investigation of radical right populism in Germany starts in Chapter 2 with an examination of the concepts of populism and radical right populism. Populism is understood as ideology and/or discourse. It follows the ideational approach of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) and their "minimal definition" of populism. It is argued that populism can be understood as an "essentially contested concept" (Gallie, 1956), shown why the concept populism is opposed to *pluralism* and *elitism*, and explained why sovereignty and the "general will" are at the centre of

the populist view of democracy. It will be demonstrated that the populist notion that "politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 6) is very much in keeping with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's understanding of sovereignty. The chapter also includes a conceptualization of radical right populism. It introduces Mudde's (2007) "maximum definition" for radical right populism, Rogers Brubaker's (2019) distinction of *vertical* and *horizontal* oppositions in populism, John Judis's (2016) distinction between *dyadic* and *triadic* populism, and Jürgen Mackert's (2019b) understanding of populism as a strategy of *social closure*, and integrates these approaches in a theory of radical right populism. Finally, it is explained why the term "radical right populism" is preferable to the terms "populist radical right" and "right-wing populism."

There have been a number of radical right populist precursors of the party AfD. Chapter 3 describes five such parties: The Republicans (Die Republikaner, REP), the Association of Free Citizens (Bund Freier Bürger, BFB), The Freedom (Die Freiheit), the PRO parties, and the Schill Party. REP, PRO Cologne, and the Schill Party had some, if short-lived, electoral success on the subnational state level and on the local level. All of these parties have failed, and most of them have been dissolved, except for REP, which still exists today but plays a marginal role in German politics. The chapter offers a number of explanations for the failure of these parties.

Despite the short history of AfD, we can already say that AfD is the most successful radical right populist party in Germany since the Second World War. Chapter 4 looks at the preconditions for the launch of this party. This involves a brief examination of the 2010 Sarrazin debate, which set the stage for the successful establishment of a radical right populist party in Germany. It reflects on the differences in the conditions for the establishment of earlier radical right populist parties compared to this new party. The chapter also gives a short history of AfD, introduces the key figures in leadership positions, and analyzes internal debates within the party.

Mudde (2007) defined radical right populism as a combination of populism with nativism and authoritarianism. The task in Chapter 5 is to find out if and how far AfD's ideology includes these features. AfD's national level programmes of 2016, 2017, and 2019 as well as statements of party representatives are examined to look for evidence that could confirm the assumption that AfD is a radical right populist party.

Volkish nationalism is the core ideology of the radical right populist movement in Germany with AfD as its main protagonist. Chapter 6 introduces the concepts of volkish nationalism and ethnic nationalism and explains why it is crucial to distinguish between these two types of nationalism. The chapter also investigates the relation between volkish nationalism and xenophobia in AfD's ideology.

When AfD was founded, the salience of Euroscepticism was rather strong for the party. Initially, the party was perceived as a one-issue party that solely focused on the critique of the EU. Chapter 7 gives a brief account of the theory of Euroscepticism, an important part of which is the distinction between soft and hard Euroscepticism.

It examines the positions of AfD on the EU, especially its programme for the European election of 2019, which includes a resolution on Dexit (a German exit from the EU). The chapter also looks at the cooperation of AfD with other radical right populist parties of Europe in the European Parliament and beyond.

One of the main ideological positions of radical right populism in Germany is Islamophobia. The 2016 basic programme of AfD actually states that "Islam does not belong to Germany." Chapter 8 pays particular attention to the Islamophobia of AfD, Pegida, and the Identitarian Movement Germany (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, IBD). It analyzes the positions of the party on Muslims and Islam, gives a brief history of Pegida and IBD, and examines their activities and ideological positions. It also provides a brief account of IBD's strategic orientation.

Several representatives of AfD on all levels of the party went on record with antisemitic or historical revisionist statements. Chapter 9 focuses on antisemitism in the party and discusses the relationship between antisemitism and historical revisionism. Different types of antisemitism are introduced with a particular focus on the distinction between primary and secondary antisemitism. It will be investigated which type of antisemitism has the strongest presence in AfD.

Chapter 10 is concerned with the positions and policy proposals of AfD on gender and sexuality. The focus is on the ideological positions and discursive strategies of the party on these issues. The chapter gives an overview of the international literature on the relationship between radical right populism and gender. This is followed by a content analysis of the three national level programmes of AfD and of statements of party representatives on gender and sexuality. It also investigates if there is a gender gap in the vote for this party.

In the 2017 German election, AfD did exceptionally well among workers and unionized workers. AfD's electoral success can be attributed to their new focus on social policy, which is inconsistent with the neoliberal programme of the party. They combine social issues with nationalism and advocate privileges for Germans in the distribution of social benefits. Chapter 11 investigates AfD's new interest in social issues and the programmatic contradictions which accrue from it.

In the conclusion, I will give an overall assessment of the radical right populist movement in Germany with a particular focus on AfD. Since its foundation, the party has gone continuously further to the right on the political spectrum (Häusler, 2018b). The question is how far this shift went and where the party is standing today. Recently, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungschutz, BfV) announced that it suspects the AfD of right-wing extremism (Pfahl-Traughber, 2019), which brings some ramifications for the party in its wake. It may constitute a critical juncture for AfD and have an impact on its further trajectory. The book ends with some thoughts on this issue.

Note

1 There is also the work of Jay Julian Rosellini (2019), who takes a rather uncritical and very understanding look at the New Right in Germany.

2

POPULISM AND RADICAL RIGHT POPULISM

No definition of the concept of populism exists that all or most scholars would agree on. There are many different and competing understandings of populism which – following Walter Bryce Gallie (1956) – makes it an "essentially contested concept." Which is why, in this chapter, I will, first, analyze populism as an essentially contested concept; second, provide a minimal definition of populism as advanced by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017), which I rely on in this book; and, third, examine the specific characteristics of radical right populism that allow us to distinguish this subtype of populism from others such as left-wing populism or regional populism.

Populism as an essentially contested concept

All major concepts in the social sciences are contested to some extent. The debate about the sense and meaning of these concepts is driving scientific progress. Populism certainly is contested as a concept. But the controversiality of the concept of populism goes far beyond what can be found in the literature regarding most social science concepts. This is why some scholars consider it as an "essentially contested concept" and in doing so rely on Gallie's (1956) theory of such concepts (Mackert, 2019a; Mudde, 2017a; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Taggart, 2000; Woods, 2014). For Mudde, there can be no doubt that populism is essentially contested, given that scholars of populism are not only hotly debating the meaning of populism but sometimes even contesting "the essence and usefulness of the concept" (Mudde, 2017a, p. 27). Cathérine Colliot-Thélène (2019, p. 19), for instance, rejects the concept of populism completely, because of its widespread use as a pejorative term for "movements and parties that challenge the present 'political normality.'" She criticizes "the pseudo-explanation inherent in the use of the term" and claims that it "blocks any differentiated analysis of the phenomenon

concerned" and of its causes (Colliot-Thélène, 2019, p. 19). Margaret Canovan in her now classical analysis of populism identifies seven different types of populism, finds that they have little in common, and comes to the conclusion that there "is no use trying to identify a definite ideology or a specific socioeconomic situation as characteristic of populism in all its forms" (Canovan, 1981, p. 294). Klaus von Beyme (2019, p. 4) laments the "chaotic terminology" which complicates the distinction between populism and right-wing extremism, a problem which he attributes to the "lack of clear definitions." These examples show that scholars, including those who approvingly use the concept "populism" in their theories, are aware of the problems and shortcomings that it involves. Scholars who develop a particular understanding of the concept have to expect to be challenged and even principally called into question. Gallie (1956, p. 172) explained that using an essentially contested concept "means to use it against other uses and to recognize that one's own use of it has to be maintained against these other uses."

He defined "essentially contested concept" as concepts the "proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users" (Gallie, 1956, p. 169). A conclusive definition of such concepts, which would end their contestation, is unlikely ever to be reached. Gallie (1956) listed seven criteria for such concepts which Jürgen Mackert (2019a) applied to the concept of populism to see if it matches these criteria. He found that populism meets most of these criteria. (1) It is an *appraisive* concept because it involves value judgements. (2) *Internal complexity* is provided because there are many conflicting definitions for populism. (3) Populism meets the criterion of *diverse describability* partly, since there are rival understandings of the concept which acknowledge each other's contribution but disagree about the significance of specific elements and features of the concept and thus result in an "order of importance" (Gallie, 1956, p. 172) that distinguishes between component parts that are ranked higher and component parts that are ranked lower in that order. However, this seems not to be possible for all approaches to populism. The criterion of diverse describability is met only partly because an approach that understands populism as ideology or discourse may accept "political style" as a secondary feature. But it will be more difficult for an approach that views populism primarily as style to accept ideology or discourse as a secondary feature. (4) The concept of populism has an *open character*. From the changing circumstances of populism around the world stems a "plurality of usages, applications, and meanings of populism" which engendered a "contest for coming to terms with a concept that remains in flux and that needs to be continually revised given rapidly changing social conditions" (Mackert, 2019a, p. 3). (5) *Competition* is evidently provided since populism has alternatively been analyzed as ideology, discourse, political logic, strategy, syndrome, movement, or political style (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014, p. 383; Mudde, 2004, p. 543). (6) *Exemplar* as a criterion assumes that there is an original concept which all varieties of the concept derive from. There is no such thing as an "original exemplar" (Gallie, 1956, p. 180) for the concept of populism (Mackert, 2019a, p. 4). (7) *Progressive competition* appears to be somewhat redundant as criterion for an essentially contested concept. However,

the attribution of competition as "progressive" expresses the hope that through the continuous debate about the concept "the level of quality of arguments in the disputes" can be raised (Gallie, 1956, p. 193) and "greater coherence of conceptual usage can be achieved" (Collier et al., 2006, p. 212). This appears to be the case for the concept of populism because a *minimal definition* of populism as it has first been advanced by Mudde (2004) is now widely accepted in the literature, though, certainly not generally agreed upon. We will soon turn our attention to this minimal definition. Even among those who accept this minimal definition, there is no broad-based agreement about the additional features of populism, which leaves the concept essentially contested.

Populism meets most of the criteria of an essentially contested concept as defined by Gallie, with the exception of the criteria of *diverse describability*, which it conforms with only partly, and *exemplar*, which it does not conform with at all. We can certainly trace the concept of populism back to its origins as a denotation for the late 19th-century peasant movements in the United States and in Russia, the Farmers Alliances and People's Party in the United States, and the *narodniki* in Russia (Campani & Pajnik, 2019; Goodwyn, 1976; Postel, 2016). But most contemporary appearances of populist movements and parties, and therefore most uses of the concept of populism today, are very different from these early accounts of populism. Populist movements today are certainly not peasant movements; they are born by urban populations in modern societies. The difference between the early usage of the concept and the contemporaneous one is so strong that one may consider any understandings of populism in our time as alternative conceptualization to this earlier one.

A minimal definition of populism

In the literature, there are different views on the core characteristics and the very nature of populism. It has been defined as "a type of political discourse, ideology, leadership, movement, phenomenon, strategy, style, syndrome, et cetera" (Mudde, 2017a, p. 27). All these approaches have their merits; and it is certainly possible to integrate some of them in a specific understanding of populism. This study assumes that populism is best understood as ideology and/or discourse. It focuses on the *ideational approach* of Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, pp. 5–6) who conceive of populism "as a discourse, ideology, or a worldview" and define it as

> A thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people.[1]

When Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser conceptualize populism as "thin-centered ideology," they rely on Michael Freeden (2003, p. 98), who defined a "thin ideology" as one with a restricted morphology, which means that it includes only

very few major concepts. Their thin centre makes it necessary for ideologies such as populism to look out for other ideologies which they can attach themselves to (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). This view is supported by Ben Stanley (2008, p. 95), who emphasized that the thin nature of populism means that "it is unable to stand alone as a practical political ideology: it lacks the capacity to put forward a wide-ranging and coherent programme for the solution to crucial political questions."

The minimal definition of populism as "a cosmic struggle between a reified 'will of the people' and a conspiring elite" establishes populism "as part of a larger typology of discursive frameworks" (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 514). In this typology, populism is seen as a clear opposite to pluralism and elitism (Mudde, 2017a). A pluralist society is internally divided among different groups that compete for the access to resources. Pluralism has been defined as a system with unequal but dispersed access to resources that can be used to influence public officials and their decisions (Dahl, 1961). Internal divisions of society into a variety of groups and competition for resources among these groups are defining features of liberal democracy. But in the populist idea of a functioning political community there is no place for such divisions: "Populism sees the people as essentially homogenous" (Mudde, 2017a, p. 34). There is only one interest, and that is the interest of "the people." Therefore, there is no need for a diversity of representatives of these interests. "Populists claim that they, *and only they*, represent the people" (Müller, 2016a, p. 20). All those who represent deviating ideas are cast as illegitimate. Its principal rejection of pluralism means that populism can be seen as an illiberal ideology, which is something it has in common with fascism (Manucci, 2020). Although populists reject pluralism, they hold on to the idea of democracy – at the core of which is the strict observance and implementation of the "will of the people" – which turns this idea into one of illiberal democracy.

Populists idealize the direct execution of the popular will, which is why they are in favour of people's initiatives and referenda. They often promote elements of direct democracy in their political programmes. Since most contemporary political systems are systems of representative democracy, populists, especially those who are organized in political parties, need to get involved in political representation and the competition for parliamentary seats. Paul Taggart (2000, p. 99) described this ambiguous relation to political institutions as a "fundamental institutional dilemma" of populism. Based on their ideology, they are very sceptical of all institutions of representation, especially intermediate institutions such as political parties. But to become effective as a political force in a system of representative democracy, they have to pretend that they accept the principles which guide that system even if only provisionally. Even as representatives, their acceptance of the principle of representation usually remains limited. In their view, politicians who are elected into office as representatives of "the people" are provided with an imperative mandate. Their freedom of discretionary decision making is restricted by the dictates of the "general will," which means that parliamentary representatives have no such freedom at all. Populists reject pluralism because they think that in a pluralist system the "will

of the people" is concealed and distorted by the diversity of competing interests which try to make themselves heard. This would have to be rectified by giving free rein to the "will of the people."

The populist notion of democracy is closely tied to the concept of popular sovereignty. In some Western countries with populism on the rise, the "pure, innocent, always hard-working people" (Müller, 2014, p. 485) are imagined as having been stripped of their sovereignty by elites who make decisions for their own benefit or that of undeserving outsiders. Elites may also be perceived as having given up on the idea of sovereignty and yielding their power to international and supranational institutions which increasingly make decisions for the nation as a whole based on transnational interests and against the interests of "the people." The goal of the populists is therefore the restoration of popular sovereignty as the only legitimate source of political power (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). The Brexit campaign, for instance, strongly argued with the need to restore popular sovereignty for the United Kingdom which was expressed in campaign slogans such as "Restore U.K. sovereignty" and "Take Back Control."

The concept of popular sovereignty derives from the sovereignty of the individual. Individual sovereignty is constitutive for popular sovereignty. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1968, p. 69), who introduced the concept of the volonté générale (general will), defined sovereignty as the "exercise of the general will." The general will is understood as a *unified will* that is embodied by the state and as such is perceived as "an active synthesis of individual sovereignties and power" (Donzelot, 1991, p. 171). This will is construed as the source of legitimacy for all political decisions that are made by the state. Following the general will is expected to be simultaneously in the interest of all as a community and of each of the individuals who together make up this community. The populist notion that "politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 6) is very much in keeping with Rousseau's understanding of sovereignty: The general will

> tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is the source of the laws, constitutes for all the members of the State, in their relations to one another and to it, the rule of what is just or unjust.
>
> *(Rousseau, 1973, pp. 120–121)*

In Rousseau's conception as well as in the populist mind, sovereignty is *infallible*, because the general will always tends "to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part"; and it is *indivisible*, because it is "the source of the laws" for all and determines for everybody "the rule of what is just or unjust." The ideal of unity in the populist conception of the general will is the main reason for the populist opposition to pluralism. In a pluralist society, the general will is prevented from forming properly; the individual wills are focused not on unification but on division; and popular sovereignty is severely undermined. The assumption of infallibility explains the moral outrage of the populists at anybody who opposes the

ideas they bring forward and the claims they make in the name of "the people." Any critique aimed at them is interpreted as an attempt to harm "the people"; and those who voice this critique are cast as "enemies of the people." Therefore, populism must be seen as a "moralized form of antipluralism" (Müller, 2016a, p. 20). In Jan-Werner Müller's assessment, the anti-pluralism of populists together with their claim of exclusive representation of "the people" also makes them "a danger inherent in modern representative democracy" (Müller, 2016b, p. 28).

Elitism is the other element within the "larger typology of discursive frameworks" (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 514) that is opposed to populism. Like populism, elitism "reject(s) essential aspects of liberal democracy, particularly the politics of compromise" (Mudde, 2017a, p. 34). But otherwise it can be seen as a "true mirror-image of populism," because it "considers the elite to be pure and virtuous, and the people to be impure and corrupt" (Mudde, 2017a, p. 34). Populists obviously need to be strictly opposed to anything elitist, which does not prevent them from seeking occasional cooperation with select members of the elite when it helps their cause.

This study agrees with the view that populism cannot stand alone and holds that it is the connection with or assimilation into other ideologies that gives populism its specific political direction.

At first glance, populism in itself as an ideology at the heart of which is the Manichean opposition of "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite" does not seem to have a particular political direction. With its focus on "the people" as a group that is opposed to "the elite" and able to form and express a common will, it describes a setting that appears to be principally open to any political actor, regardless of their political position. The opposition of "the people" and "the elite" can be connected with any other ideology and it indeed has been combined with a wide range of ideologies from the left to the right on the political spectrum.

Conceptualizing radical right populism

To analyze radical right populism in Germany properly, I first need to expound the theoretical foundations of this analysis, that is, my particular understanding of radical right populism and my specific reasons for preferably naming the phenomenon that way. My conceptualization of radical right populism relies on several theories on this topic and integrates them into an approach that provides the foundation for the research undertaken here. This especially concerns the *minimal definition* of populism by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017), which is combined with John B. Judis's (2016) distinction between *dyadic* and *triadic* versions of populism, Rogers Brubaker's (2019, 2017; see also Taguieff, 1995) distinction between *vertical* and *horizontal* oppositions of social groups in populism, Mudde's (2007, pp. 20–23) "maximum definition" of radical right populism, and Jürgen Mackert's (2019b) analysis of populism as strategy of *social closure*. It is assumed here that the integration of these approaches is particularly helpful for advancing the understanding of radical right populism.

The "thin-centered ideology" of populism is determined by the antagonism between "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite," which are both conceived as homogenous groups (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). This opposition between "the people" and "the elite" is vertical in nature and as such a structural element of both radical right populism and left-wing populism. But for radical right populists, a *third group* comes into play against which "the people" form an opposition. It is a group which is seen by radical right populists as "others," outsiders who do not really belong to "the people," a group who receives favourable treatment by "the elite" at the expense and the detriment of "the people" (Judis, 2016, p. 15). These outsiders could be immigrants or refugees or any other minority group. They are constructed as a group of "others" based on their real or presumed identity. It is the elements of their identity which are different from the identity of "the people" which make them outsiders. From the perspective of radical right populists, their nationality, race, ethnicity, culture, or religion could be reasons to cast them as "others" who do not belong to "the people." In this sense, left-wing populism is *dyadic*, because in left-wing populism there only is the opposition of "the people" and "the elite"; but radical right populism is *triadic*, because in radical right populism the dyadic division that also exists in left-wing populism is joined by the antagonistic relationship of "the people" with a third group who are perceived as outsiders (Judis, 2016).

The analysis of radical right populism can further be refined by including the distinction between *vertical* and *horizontal* oppositions in the definition of populism. According to Brubaker (2019, p. 30), "populism is based not only on the *vertical* opposition between 'the people' and 'the elite,' but also on the *horizontal* opposition between inside and outside." With the addition of the horizontal opposition to the vertical one, the concept becomes triadic, as outlined by Judis. In each of these antagonisms it is "the people" who are opposed to another group; in the vertical opposition they are opposed to "the elite"; and in the horizontal opposition they occupy the space on the inside and are opposed to those on the outside. In this "two-dimensional vision of social space" (Brubaker, 2019, p. 30) we have three groups. The collective subject of "the people" is one of them which is pitted against two other groups – "the elite" and the outsiders – in adversarial relationships.

The position of "the people" in these relationships with other groups deserves further attention. In the vertical opposition of "the people" to "the elite" there is a clear hierarchy, with "the elite" on the top and "the people" below them, but "the people" are not necessarily located on the bottom. There may be another layer in society which, from the populist point of view, has its place below "the people." As Brubaker (2019, p. 30) points out, in the vertical dimension, "the people" can be "defined not only in relation to those on the *top* but also [. . .] to those on the *bottom*." Hence, the vertical dimension may extend further below, which means that there is a group above and a group below the people. What is it then that put those on the bottom in their lowly position?

> Those on the bottom may be represented as parasites or spongers, as addicts or deviants, as disorderly or dangerous, as undeserving of benefits and unworthy

> of respect, and thus as not belonging to the so-called decent, respectable, "normal," hard-working "people."
>
> *(Brubaker, 2019, p. 30)*

Those at the top and on the bottom are part of the same society as "the people," and could in sociological terms therefore be considered on the inside. But for populists, society is a non-existent entity. In the populist thinking, "the people" are primarily defined by their virtue and decency, which neither the elite nor those on the bottom possess. Here social differences are based on moral distinctions. They are not defined by class as a concept of social stratification. Both "the elite" and those on the bottom are groups that do not belong to the people because of their moral deficiencies. "The elite" is imagined as "corrupt, self-serving, paralysed by political correctness and, above all, out of touch with or indifferent to the concerns and problems of ordinary people" (Brubaker, 2017, p. 1192). Those who are part of the elite rose into this position because they are corrupt; and the few who got there without deception will eventually be corrupted due to the corrupting effect of power. Those on the bottom are in their position because of their lack of virtue and decency.

As Brubaker observed (2019, p. 30), there is an "*intersection*" of the vertical opposition of groups on the inside and the horizontal opposition of groups on the inside and outside. This interweaving of oppositions may result in what he calls "internal outsiders," who are "those living in our midst who, even when they are citizens of the state, are not seen as belonging to the nation" (Brubaker, 2017, p. 1192). In the German context, there is one outstanding example for this intersection of horizontal and vertical oppositions in the writings of Thilo Sarrazin. In his book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (*Germany Does Away with Itself*) (Sarrazin, 2010), which inspired many right-wing radicals in Germany, he uses pseudo-scientific methods to prove that those with an immigrant background from Turkey and Arab countries – that includes descendants of immigrants in the second or third generation with a German passport – are in many ways less capable than the average German citizen and a financial liability for the German state. He hints at a biological determination for the disparities in outcome that exist between ordinary Germans, on the one side, and those with an immigrant background from these countries, on the other side, which can in reality be explained by the differences in opportunity for these different social groups. Whether or not they have German citizenship, in Sarrazin's account they are generally seen as a group who does not belong to "the people" and who actually pose a threat because they bring about the decay of Germany. Hence, the title of Sarrazin's book. He suggests that there is a wrong sense of tolerance in German society which is encouraged by an establishment that is out of touch with reality and "the people." In this example, we can clearly see the intersection of the vertical opposition with the horizontal opposition: Those on the bottom of the inside are conceived as also being partly on the outside. Thus, they are opposed by "the people" in two different ways – as a group at the bottom and as a group of outsiders.

In radical right populism, populism is in most cases combined with ideologies which provide for the distinction between insiders and outsiders *along the lines of identity* such as ethnic nationalism, racism, culturalism, ethnopluralism, and so on. Depending on the ideology which radical right populism is combined with, "the people" are associated with positive attributes ascribed to the identitarian entities that are constructed by these ideologies such as nation, race, culture, and ethnie; and negative characteristics are projected onto those who are not included in the nation, race, culture, and ethnie to which "the people" belong. The ascription of positive and negative characteristics to different social groups involves moral judgements about these groups; and "the people" always emerge as winners from the comparison of their identitarian group with other groups. The ascription of positive or negative characteristics to different identity groups actually has a function in the social construction of these groups. They are constructed through narratives about these different groups, that is, "via identity work and strategic framing" (Snow & Bernatzky, 2019, p. 137). Radical right populism tends to do this "by engaging in exclusionary identity work entailing the identification of the collective, antagonistic other"; and this other may be "framed as" the undeserving "beneficiary of governmental programs and resources" (Snow & Bernatzky, 2019, p. 137). Hence, the outsiders may at times be considered to be in collusion with the elite to take advantage of "the people" (Judis, 2016). The decision about who is included in "the people" and who is excluded wilfully ignores any social fragmentation of society (Pelinka, 2013). "The people" are conceived as monolithic and homogenous. Radical right populism constructs "the people" as ethnos, not as demos. They are conceived not as "political people" but as ethnic community (Colliot-Thélène, 2019).

"The people" may be naïve and unsuspecting, but they are always good; whereas every imaginable negative attribute is ascribed to "the others." The opposition of good and bad in this horizontal opposition may not be as categorical at all times as it is in the Manichean opposition between "the people" and "the elite," but it certainly has the potential to reach this antagonistic level, and when it does, may resort to anti-democratic measures as tools which help in the exclusion of "others" and thus turn their radical right populism into a form of extremism. It this context, Mudde's (2017a, p. 33) observation is interesting that "nativist populists" tend to "distinguish different groups on the basis of their nativism and their populism." However, he also stresses that the exclusion of "ethnic minorities and immigrants" from the people takes place "on the basis of *ethnic* rather than moral criteria – a consequence of nativism rather than populism" (Mudde, 2017a, p. 33). This again suggests that it is the ideological facets which populism is combined with that give it its actual political direction. In the situation described by Mudde, the combination of populism with nativism and the exclusion of ethnic minorities and immigrants based on nativist grounds clearly give populism a thrust toward the right.

In his "maximum definition" of radical right populist parties Mudde (2007, p. 22) defines these parties as those which employ a particular combination of ideological features: "nativism, authoritarianism, and populism." In doing so he relies

on Adam Pzeworski and Henry Teune's (1970) "most similar systems" design for research in comparative politics, which focuses on the greatest common denominator among such parties. All three ideological features must be present to constitute radical right populism. One of these features alone or a combination of two of them is not sufficient as a precondition for radical right populism. In this approach, Mudde combines the minimal definition for populism (defined earlier) with two other ideologies. Mudde (2007, p. 22) understands nativism as "the key ideological feature" of radical right populism. It is a "combination of xenophobia and nationalism" (Mudde, 2007, p. 19). He defines it as "*an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state*"[2] (Mudde, 2007, p. 19). The basis of what radical right populists deem native or non-native is diverse; it could include "ethnic, racial or religious" components, "but will always have a cultural component" (Mudde, 2007, p. 19). The second feature which populism is combined with in this theory of radical right populism is authoritarianism. Authoritarianism may refer to an undemocratic political system, but Mudde (2007) uses the term primarily in a social psychological sense and refers to the study by Adorno et al. (2019) on the *Authoritarian Personality* which examined a number of particular features of such personalities and their relation to authority (which they called "F-scale").[3]

The analysis of populism as *strategy of social closure*, as conducted by Mackert (2019b), is especially helpful for the understanding of the horizontal opposition in radical right populism, because it focuses on the creation of the symbolic boundaries that separate those on the inside from those on the outside. It is the very process of drawing these boundaries that plays an important role in constructing the identities of the group on the inside and the identities of the opposed group(s) on the outside as well. Symbolic boundaries can be very effective tools in the populists' attempt to determine the adversarial groups that need to be excluded, especially when these symbolic boundaries are combined with real geographic boundaries. According to Mackert (2019b, p. 100), populism as a strategy of social closure

> aims at creating a national community by defining and excluding those who by definition do not belong to it. It develops in contexts of asymmetric opportunity structures advantageous for those who intentionally – and therefore strategically – deploy them in order to push exclusionary politics.

These "asymmetric opportunity structures" can be classified as institutional opportunity structures. They are generated by public institutions and their discriminatory treatment of certain groups in society based on legal grounds. Social closure takes up a "group's legal subordination that has already been enacted by the state" (Mackert, 2019b, p. 101; see also Parkin as cited in Mackert, 2019b). When radical right populists claim the exclusion of non-natives, they make use of this already existing subordination which is arranged in a way that puts those "others" in a legally inferior position and the members of majority society in a legally superior one. These

asymmetric opportunity structures are not only opportunistically used by those on the supply side of radical right populism but also by those on the demand side, who are very much aware of their legally superior position. This is a position they are eager to preserve when they gather to demonstrate against the Islamification of Europe, the admission of more refugees, or the construction of a home for asylum seekers in their neighbourhood.

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, asymmetric institutional opportunity structures are not the only opportunity structures which political entrepreneurs rely on when they mobilize their populist radical right movement. *Political* opportunity structures emerged with the demise of social democracy in many European countries; and *socio-economic* opportunity structures were provided with the depravations and insecurities brought about by neoliberalism and widened with the global financial crisis of 2008 and the euro crisis which started a year later.

The analysis of opportunity structures can help to explain the dynamics of populism, that is, its appearance (or resurgence) in some European countries, such as France, Germany, Austria, or the Netherlands. There are similarities in the political opportunity structures with the demise of social democracy in these countries and also in the socio-economic opportunity structures with recent financial and economic crises affecting these countries in a similar fashion. However, these similarities cannot entirely explain the differences that exist across these countries regarding the *social acceptability of populism*, especially, of radical right populism. Luca Manucci (2020) has found that *cultural opportunity structures* are especially important in explaining the social acceptability of populism (or lack of it) in a particular country. Some conditions favourable to the rise of radical right populism must be understood as linked to the political culture of the country concerned and the way history is processed in that country. This particularly pertains to the manner in which it comes to terms with the role it played during the fascist period in Europe, that is, how the fascist past is reprocessed and the collective memory of that period established and ritualized. "The way a society collectively remembers the fascist past and its role vis-à-vis fascist regimes determines to what extent the fascist idea of power is legitimized or stigmatized" (Manucci, 2020, p. 42). In countries where the "fascist idea of power" is highly stigmatized, "the cultural opportunity structures for the social acceptability of populism" are closed down (Manucci, 2020, p. 42). But in countries where the fascist idea is less stigmatized, it is more likely that populism is socially accepted.

There can be no doubt that the analysis of opportunity structures is helpful for the understanding of the dynamics of populism and the circumstances that either facilitate or hamper its appearance. However, the fact that populists make strategic use of opportunity structures does not mean that populism mainly is a strategy, as some authors suggested (González & Young, 2017; Mackert, 2019b). Certainly, some of the strategies which populists use to gain public appeal are different from those employed by mainstream political agents and parties, and need to be investigated. But this difference is inherent in the opposition of "the people" and "the establishment," which is an ideological feature. Therefore, strategy should not be

included as a primary feature in a definition of populism and rather should be considered a secondary feature. As a secondary feature of populism, it may be included in further elaborations of populism, for instance, in radical right populism.

Another problem with the interpretation of populism as strategy is the diversity of strategies used by populists. Which strategy they use is largely dependent on the form of their political organization. Kurt Weyland (2017, p. 56), in his theory of populism as strategy, assumes that "populism is a political strategy that revolves around an individual politician" and that it "rests on personalistic leadership." Francisco E. González and Clifford Young (2017), in their theory of populism as strategy, concentrate in a similar fashion on "political leaders" as the central agents of populist movements. While personalistic leadership often plays a crucial role for populist movements, it must be stressed that there have also been leaderless populist movements, such as the *Tea Party* in the United States (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019); the *Occupy Movement*, which started in the United States and spread as a transnational movement to other countries; and the *indignados* in Spain (Aslanidis, 2015), and their strategies to influence politics are different from the strategies personalistic populist leaders employ. Organization can be considered a contingent aspect of populism (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017), the same holds true for strategy. This view is supported by the fact that organization and strategy of populist movements are deeply connected.

The populist radical right that sprang up in Germany over the last years has not experienced the personalistic leadership that we have seen at the top of radical right populist parties in other countries, for instance, with Jörg Haider in Austria, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Matteo Salvini in Italy, or Donald Trump in the United States. In Germany, the politician who came closest to the position of a personalistic leader is Bernd Lucke, one of the founders of AfD, who was seen as the voice of the party in the first two years after its establishment. But Lucke lacked the populist style which one would expect from a personalistic leader; and he was soon confronted with internal strife and party factions who were battling each other, which further takes into question if he ever was a personalistic leader and developed the charisma which Max Weber (2019, pp. 341–342) described in his theory of the "three pure types of rule." Another member of the party noteworthy in this context is Björn Höcke, the chairman of AfD in the state of Thuringia; his style comes closer to that of a personalistic leader. But there are factions in AfD which do not support him and appear to tolerate him only because he is drawing voters to the party. I will come back to the topic of charismatic leadership (and the lack thereof) in Chapter 3 in discussing the radical right populist precursors of AfD and in Chapter 10, which is about AfD as an "anti-gender" party and discusses women as leaders of that party.

Finally, I need to (1) distinguish between right-wing radicalism and right-wing extremism and (2) explain why I prefer the term "radical right populism" over that of "populist radical right" or "right-wing populism" as denotation for the ideology which this book is focused on. (1) The major difference between right-wing radicals and right-wing extremists can be found in their attitude toward democracy

(Mudde, 2007). Right-wing extremists are strictly anti-democratic; right-wing radicals, on the other hand, do not principally oppose democracy, but they may have an understanding of democracy that is very different from liberal democracy and "they are typically hostile to the way existing democratic institutions actually work" (Rydgren, 2018, p. 2). The attitude of right-wing radicals described here matches the type of populists we are dealing with in this study, which is why we need to combine the terms "radical right" and "populism." (2) However, the question remains whether my research object here is a populist form of the radical right or a radical right form of populism. I assume that it is right-wing radicalism that gives populism its specific ideological direction in the case examined here and therefore prefer the term "radical right populism." This is where I disagree with Mudde who suggested the use of the term "populist radical right," because the subject of investigation is "a populist version of the radical right" (Mudde, 2007, p. 24). He defended this terminological emphasis with the argument that "nativism, not populism, is the ultimate core feature of the ideology" of the party family that he was investigating (Mudde, 2007, p. 26). Nativism is certainly central to radical right populism, but I hold that the triadic relationship of groups in radical right populism (Judis, 2016), the vertical and horizontal oppositions of these relationships (Brubaker, 2019, 2017) and the measures of *social closure* (Mackert, 2019b) involved in them, are the more crucial features of the phenomenon. Specific utterances of nativism may overlap and move along with them on a structural level (that is, in the triadic relationship, the horizontal opposition, and in measures of social closure), but nativism appears more like a description of the content for the antagonisms inherent in populism.

The term "radical right populism" is preferable to "right-wing populism" (which I have used in previous works) because the latter one is not specific enough. It could include any kind of right-wing ideologies starting from conservatism over right-wing radicalism to right-wing extremism. Although it is not without difficulties to delineate and separate the radical right from conservatism and the extreme right, the concept has the advantage to provide focus to my research effort. The use of the term "radical right populism" also has the advantage that the ending "ism" clearly indicates that we are talking about an ideology.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have first provided evidence that populism is indeed an essentially contested concept, but also included Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's (2017) "minimal definition" for populism, which is a promising candidate for the formation of a consensus in the field on the basic characteristics of the concept. I have then tried to conceptualize radical right populism which was based on this minimal definition, on Judis's (2016) distinction between *dyadic* and *triadic* versions of populism, Brubaker's (2019, 2017) distinction between *vertical* and *horizontal* oppositions of social groups in populism, Mudde's (2007) "maximum definition" of radical right populism, and Mackert's (2019b) analysis of populism as a strategy

of "social closure." Based on these theoretical approaches, I was able to present a clear understanding of radical right populism which forms the basis for the further research on the emerging populism of the radical right in Germany in this book.

Notes

1 This definition is almost identical with the one which Mudde (2004) had already advanced earlier.
2 The emphasis was adopted from the original text.
3 It included several personality traits: "conventionalism," "authoritarian submission," "anti-intraception," "superstition and stereotypy," "destructiveness and cynicism," "power and 'toughness,'" "projectivity," and "sex" in the sense of an "exaggerated concern with sexual 'goings-on'" (Adorno et al., 2019, p. 228). Adorno and colleagues interviewed a number of individuals and tried to detect pre-fascist tendencies in their personality and certain character traits that made it more likely for an individual to vote for far-right parties.

3

RADICAL RIGHT POPULIST PRECURSORS OF AfD

AfD did not come out of nowhere. There were other radical right populist parties before AfD was established. They prepared the ground especially for AfD, which could draw on former members of these parties and benefit from their experience. This section especially focuses on five important precursors of AfD: The Republicans (Die Republikaner, REP), the Association of Free Citizens (Bund Freier Bürger, BFB), The Freedom (Die Freiheit), the PRO parties, and the Schill Party, which was named after its founder Ronald Barnabas Schill. The emergence of these parties, their main positions, electoral performance, and eventual decline will be described. This chapter concludes with an attempt to explain the failure of these radical right populist precursors to AfD which focuses on the lack of charismatic leadership at the top of these parties.

Before we come to the exposition of these parties, it is necessary to explain the distinction between radical right populism and right-wing extremism, what it means for a political party in Germany to be officially classified as a right-wing extremist party by internal security agencies, and how this may affect the behaviour of such parties and their representatives. The analysis of radical right populist parties in Germany will exclude parties such as the National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) and the German People's Union (Deutsche Volksunion, DVU), which can both be considered right-wing extremist parties. Nor will it cover neo-Nazi groups such as the Free Comradeships (Freie Kameradschaften). Right-wing extremists want to destroy the democratic system and eliminate liberal freedoms. In Germany, organizations whose stated goal it is to destroy the democratic system can be banned by the government; and many such bans occurred in the past (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018). Some parties who are suspected of being extremist are under surveillance of the inland security services of Germany, the *Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution* (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV), and the *State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution*

(Landesämter für Verfassungsschutz). Being officially under observation by these agencies will very likely have an impact on the membership, citizens' readiness to vote for these parties, and to participate in their activities. It is disreputable for a party to be suspected of extremist aspirations.

This is why some right-wing parties and organizations tread carefully and go out of their way in order not to be designated "extremist." They strategically position themselves in the grey area between right-wing extremism and national-conservatism and try to immunize themselves against accusations of extremism by speaking in codes that transport extremist messages in a way that is not apparently extremist on the surface. Individual members of these parties may sometimes wander into extremist territory with openly racist, xenophobic, nativist, antisemitic, or historical revisionist statements, which cause outrage and critical responses in the media among representatives of democratic parties, civil society activists, and intellectuals. Such statements will then be explained as a wrong choice of words, misunderstandings, being quoted out of context, and so on. They rarely have serious consequences for those making them. But these "slippings" into extremist territory often are not accidental; they are used strategically to signal to potential voters on the far right where these parties are actually standing ideologically.

In 2019, the BfV announced that it assessed AfD as a party suspected of extremist tendencies. This gives the agency the right to put the party under surveillance, which will probably harm the standing of the party in the eyes of the voters in Germany (Pfahl-Traughber, 2019). In the following I will introduce radical right populist parties which can be understood as predecessor organizations of AfD. The first one of these is REP, which was designated "extremist" by BfV in 1992. This was roughly the time when the demise of the party began – a clear indication that the official label "extremist" has an impact on the performance of political parties at the ballot box.

The Republicans (Die Republikaner, REP)

When REP was established in 1983, it was the first radical right populist party in Germany after the Second World War. Compared to most other European countries, Germany was a latecomer in this particular political field (Decker & Hartleb, 2006). The Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) had already existed since 1956, the French Front National was founded in 1972, the Vlaams Blok in 1978, and the Danish and Norwegian Progress parties were launched in the early 1970s (Betz, 1993). REP was founded by the former journalist Franz Schönhuber together with former members of the Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union, CSU) (Betz, 1994), the Bavarian sister party of the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union, CDU), which has been the leading centre-right force in German politics after 1945 up until today. This group of people were disappointed in the lack of radical change they had expected from the Christian-democratic government of Helmut Kohl, which had come into office in 1982 in a coalition with the Free Democratic Party (Freie

Demokratische Partei, FDP). Kohl had promised a "spiritual-moral turnaround" for the country, and this turn was not happening to the extent they had hoped for. So, they felt that they had to go outside of the Christian-democratic parties and start their own political project in some distance of the centre-right (Betz, 1994). Another reason for them to be disappointed was a loan which the governor of Bavaria and leader of CSU, Franz Josef Strauß, had secured for the German Democratic Republic. In their view, this was a betrayal of the party's commitment to German reunification.

Schönhuber was the leader of the party between 1983 and 1994. He could look back at a long career at Bavarian Broadcasting (Bayerischer Rundfunk, BR), the public broadcasting service of Bavaria, where he worked in several leading positions, among others as deputy chief editor. But in 1982, he was dismissed by BR after he published a memoir of his time in the Waffen-SS during the Second World War. In this book he "presented the Nazi period, and particularly the Waffen-SS, in a rather favorable light" (Betz, 1994, p. 18). At the end of the 1980s, beginning of the 1990s, REP was the most successful party of the radical right in Germany. In 1989, they moved over the 5 per cent threshold for parliamentary representation, with 7.5 per cent of the votes in the state elections of Berlin, and gained six seats in the European Parliament with 7.1 per cent of the votes (Bauernschmidt et al., 1996a). Many new members joined REP due to these electoral successes. In terms of membership, the party reached its peak at the end of 1989 with about 25,000 members of which they quickly lost one-third within the following two years due to the poor performance of the party in several elections, especially the federal election of 1990 where REP only got 2.1 per cent of the vote (Kailitz, 2018).

There were two other noteworthy elections where REP performed above expectations: In 1992, they gained 10.9 per cent of the votes in the state elections of Baden-Wuerttemberg. In the same year, they got 8.2 per cent of the votes in the municipal elections of Berlin (Bauernschmidt et al., 1996a). There were two main motives for voters to cast their ballots for REP: First, the support for the ideological positions of the party, and, second, protest against the incumbent government and its policies and against the system of liberal democracy (Winkler & Schumann, 1998). Despite their isolated electoral successes, the party soon disintegrated due to the many internal disputes among the leadership, which eventually resulted in the replacement of Schönhuber as chairman of the party in 1994 and his resignation from REP in 1995.

Today, REP still exists, but it plays a negligible role in German politics. There are many reasons for the demise of the party beyond the internal struggle between ideological and personal factions: The party lost an important campaign topic when Germany was reunified in 1990. A firm commitment to German reunification was at the top of the party's agenda. They also faced difficulties in establishing themselves in the East of Germany (in this part of Germany, the right-wing extremist parties DVU and NPD were more successful). Another problem was that they attracted right-wing extremists, which resulted in the listing of the party as

right-wing extremist in the 1992 annual report of BfV, which damaged the reputation of the party severely (Jaschke, 2016; Mudde, 2000).

For a long time, there has been uncertainty among scholars about where to place REP on the political spectrum (Borstel & Luzar, 2016). The personal background of Schönhuber as leader of REP certainly contributed to the difficulties in categorizing this party. Initially, Mudde (2000, p. 7) treated REP as a party of the "extreme right," so did Samuel Salzborn (2015, p. 38), Geoffrey K. Roberts (1997, p. 99), and Michael Bauernschmidt et al. (1996a, p. 300). Wolfgang Gessenharter (1998, p. 38) classified REP as a party of the "new radical right" and grouped them together with NPD and DVU, two parties which have often been described as right-wing extremist. Mudde later referred to REP as a "populist radical right party" (Mudde, 2017b, p. 528), and many authors agreed with him by describing them as some form of radical right populist party, for instance, as a "radical right-wing populist" party (Betz, 1994), a "national-populist party" (Backes, 2018, p. 453), a "nationalist" and a "populist" party (Jaschke, 1994, p. 10), a party of "right-wing populism" (Ptak, 2017, p. 106), or simply as a "right-wing populist" party (Art, 2017, pp. 575–576). It appears that, recently, most scholars have settled on treating REP as radical right populist or right-wing populist.

The main positions of REP show that the programme of this party early on displayed many characteristics of radical right populism. They combined populism with specific features of radical right ideology. As Mudde (2000, p. 53) noted, the party reflected a "wide variety of anti-party sentiments." They criticized the political parties of all colours "extremely harshly" and portrayed parties and politicians in general as "egocentric, corrupt and anti-nationalist" (Mudde, 2000, p. 53). Despite their reservations against political representation, they presented themselves as an alternative to these parties. REP also took a fierce anti-immigrant position which was grounded in "the party's folkish and ethnopluralist conception of identity and the importance it attributed to the ethnic homogeneity of German society" (Betz, 1994, p. 134). In accordance with these ideological characteristics, they claimed that foreigners should largely be excluded from German society (Bauernschmidt et al., 1996a). The cultural influence of immigrants was perceived as damaging for the cultural heritage of Germany. Hence, they campaigned against multiculturalism and the "progressive 'foreignization' of its language and culture" (Betz, 1994, p. 134). In this context, Mudde (2000) points out that their insistence on homogeneity primarily pertained to the culture of Germany. The assimilation of immigrants into that culture was accepted. But they insisted that those who were not capable of assimilation should be kept out, which in their view primarily concerned Muslims. They "were most alarmist when it came to the growing presence and assertiveness of Muslims in Western Europe" (Betz, 1994, p. 135), and in their anti-Islam positions had much in common with the French Front National. Another ideological feature of the party involved historical revisionism regarding the role of Germany in the Second World War. REP campaigned for the "decriminalization" of this period in German history and the "re-education of Germans" on this time (Betz, 1994, p. 133; Kailitz, 2009, p. 119). Today, AfD represents some

of the ideological features which REP was standing for. Hence, it is not surprising that AfD took in some former members of REP (Häusler & Roeser, 2016).

Association of Free Citizens (Bund Freier Bürger, BFB)

BFB was founded in 1994 in Wiesbaden as a reaction to the Treaty of Maastricht, which included a provision for the creation of a single currency, the European Currency Unit (ECU), and the European Central Bank. The ECU was used as a unit of account and was later replaced by the common European currency, the euro. The party BFB was initiated by Manfred Brunner, the former chairman of the Bavarian FDP and a former high-ranking civil servant of the European Communities, who was dismissed from his position as chief of staff for the European single market due to his opposition against the Maastricht Treaty (Decker & Hartleb, 2018). In 1992, Brunner had brought a case against the treaty before the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany. In his lawsuit he claimed that the treaty violated the German constitution in several ways. But the court, in its decision of 2 October 1993, largely dismissed Brunner's legal arguments and allowed the Maastricht Treaty to come into force and with it the creation of the EU (Makowski, 1994–1995).

The party was established to organize further resistance against the Maastricht Treaty and the euro. They wanted to keep the German mark as the currency of Germany. BFB strongly opposed the shift of competences from the level of the nation-states to the supranational level of the EU that came with the Maastricht Treaty. They were deeply concerned about the redistribution of financial means from the stronger to the structurally weaker member states. Their idea of Europe was that of a "Europe of peoples" where the nations would be the main source of solidarity among citizens. In their thinking, the nation was conceptualized as a "community of fate" (Schui et al., 1997, pp. 182–183). Beyond their Eurosceptical agenda they campaigned for the strengthening of law and order, the abolition of the right to asylum, family-friendly policies, and an SME-oriented tax policy (Dietzsch & Maegerle, 1995). They rejected the system of the Federal Republic of Germany as that of a "party state" which was ruled by a "party oligarchy" (Schui et al., 1997, p. 180), which led to their claim of the direct election of the federal president and of the governors in the individual states (Decker & Hartleb, 2018).

Their anti-establishment attitude and the focus on popular sovereignty of their anti-euro campaign are clearly discernible populist elements. Schui et al. (1997, p. 174) described their programme as a combination of "radical neoliberal" positions with right-wing extremist elements. This tendency toward the far right was underscored by Brunner's cooperation with Jörg Haider, the leader of the Austrian FPÖ, with whom he appeared together at some campaign events. Brunner actually tried to keep his distance from the right-wing extremist parties of Germany. However, he failed to reach this goal for his party because others in BFB were seeking those connections which led to a gradual drift of the party to the far right. In 1999, Brunner eventually realized that the party had moved far away from his initial

positions, decided to resign from the party, and rejoined FDP (Decker & Hartleb, 2018). The party did not survive the resignation of its most prominent member and was dissolved in 2000. Between the years 1998 and 2000, the number of members fluctuated between 1,300 and 2,000 (Decker & Hartleb, 2018).

BFB never was particularly successful in elections. The best result they achieved was in the 1997 elections to the state legislature of Hamburg, where they gained 1.3 per cent of the votes. In the 1994 elections to the European Parliament, which they tried to turn into a referendum on Maastricht, they only gained 1.1 per cent of the votes, despite the fact that this election was related to the key issue they were concentrating on (Decker & Hartleb, 2018). According to Martin Dietzsch and Anton Maegerle (1995), Bayern was the home country of the party BFB. Most of the staff members came from the West of Germany; and the West is also where their activities were concentrated. Hence, BFB primarily was a West German affair.

Today, some of the national-liberal positions of BFB can be found in the programme of AfD. Many important supporters of BFB later were among the early supporters of AfD, including Wilhelm Hankel, Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider, and Joachim Starbatty. In 2014, the economics professor Starbatty[1] gained a seat for AfD in the European Parliament. AfD even adopted its main campaign slogan for the federal elections of 2013 from BFB: "Courage for Truth" (Mut zur Wahrheit) (Häusler & Roeser, 2015, pp. 30–32). The combination of neoliberal with radical right populist positions, which can be found in AfD today, was to a large extent already present in BFB. Which is why Frank Decker and Florian Hartleb (2018, p. 240) are right when they refer to BFB as a "predecessor organization of AfD."

The Freedom (Die Freiheit)

Another noteworthy precursor of AfD is the party The Freedom (Die Freiheit, DF), which has been designated as "anti-Muslim and right-wing populist" (Häusler & Roeser, 2015, p. 33). It was Sarrazin's book *Germany Does Away with Itself*, with its critique of the alleged unwillingness and inability of Muslim immigrants to integrate themselves into the German society, that inspired the establishment of the party in 2010 (Hartleb, 2018a). The founder of the party, René Stadtkewitz, was a member of CDU, which he represented in the state parliament of Berlin, when he invited the Dutch radical right populist and anti-Islam agitator Geert Wilders, the leader of the *Party for Freedom* (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV), to come to Berlin and give a speech on "Islam as an obstacle to integration" (Hartleb, 2018a, p. 349). This move resulted in the unanimous decision of the CDU faction in the state legislature of Berlin to expel Stadtkewitz, who reacted with his resignation from the party and the foundation of DF (Hartleb, 2018a). In 2013, Stadtkewitz welcomed the foundation of AfD enthusiastically. He compared the programmes of AfD and DF and came to the conclusion that both overlapped to at least 90 per cent (Häusler & Roeser, 2015). There indeed are many positions which the programmes of the two parties had in common. Aside from their anti-Islam attitude, they also shared other key positions such as the support for elements of direct democracy, a preference for

national sovereignty, and the advocacy of a new immigration law modelled after the Canadian practice of immigrant admission (Häusler & Roeser, 2015).

The electoral results of DF were exceedingly modest. The first election they participated in was the 2011 election to the state legislature of Berlin. In this election they received just 1.0 per cent of the vote (Returning Officer of Berlin, 2011). Hartleb (2018a) explained this failure with the strong competition among the parties of the far right. Other right-wing radical parties on the ballot were Pro Germany (Pro Deutschland), which Hartleb (2018a) described as a party with a programmatic orientation very similar that of DF, the then newly founded German Konservative Party (Deutsche Konservative Partei), and NPD. DF did not participate in the 2013 federal election so as not to take away any votes from AfD and give them a chance to get more than the 5 per cent threshold for parliamentary representation. AfD missed this goal by a small margin – they gained 4.7 per cent of the votes and were therefore denied any seats in the Bundestag. Stadtkewitz reacted by complaining that other "liberal-conservative" parties, as he described DF himself, should have followed the example of DF in order to make AfD's electoral success possible (Häusler & Roeser, 2015). One month later he resigned from the party, and Michael Stürzenberger, a former spokesman of CSU in Munich, became the new chairperson of DF. With Stürzenberger's leadership, the spatial centre of DF's activities shifted from Berlin to Munich and remained largely on the local level (Häusler & Roeser, 2015). In 2016, a federal party congress decided on the dissolution of DF and recommended AfD as a proper replacement for the party. At its peak in 2011, the party had 2,200 members (Hartleb, 2018a). Several hundred former members of DF joined AfD in 2013 (Häusler & Roeser, 2015), which led Bernd Lucke, then chairperson of AfD, to declare a ban on admissions of former DF members (Hartleb, 2018a). He was concerned about the radical right orientation of some of these new members.

The PRO parties

The PRO groups formed a right-wing extremist movement that primarily focused on campaigning against Islam (Stöss, 2010). In 1996, the first PRO group was established in Cologne as an association, not as a party. However, the group morphed into a party in the beginning of the 2000s when "it was taken over by partisan, right-wing activists" (Schellenberg, 2013, p. 43). *Pro Cologne* fought against the construction of mosques and drew attention by engaging in anti-Muslim provocations such as "displaying caricatures of Mohammed in front of Muslim places of worship" (Schellenberg, 2013, p. 42). According to Britta Schellenberg (2013, p. 43), the PRO parties did not only reject Muslims, they were also hostile toward Roma and immigrants in general, whom they often portrayed in a "stereotyped, demeaning manner." But their main objective was to protect Germany and its Western culture against the perceived threat of Islam.

They had some electoral success on the local level in 2004 when they gained five seats in the city council of Cologne, a success they were able to repeat in the

2009 municipal election (Häusler, 2010). *PRO Cologne* was an offshoot of the *German League for People and Homeland* (Deutsche Liga für Volk und Heimat, DLVH), a right-wing extremist organization that strongly focuses on volkish nationalism. Manfred Rouhs, a functionary of DLVH and notorious right-wing extremist activist, publisher, and organizer in the Cologne area (Bauernschmidt et al., 1996b), was the moving spirit behind the creation of the PRO movement (Häusler, 2018c, p. 221). The establishment of *PRO Cologne* was followed by the foundation of PRO groups in other cities and, eventually, a party organization on the subnational state level – first in North Rhine Westphalia (PRO NRW) and subsequently in other states – and on the national level (PRO Deutschland) (Häusler, 2010). The main objective of the PRO parties was the new formation of the far right in Germany – a goal which they clearly missed because of their electoral failure on substate and national levels. However, it is noteworthy that many right-wing extremists such as the *Free Comradeships* (Freie Kameradschaften), a loose network of neo-Nazi organizations in Germany, as well as members of NPD, participated in events that were organized by PRO Cologne (Häusler, 2018c, p. 221). They were interested in seeing PRO Cologne succeed with their anti-Islam activities. Members of PRO NRW have actively sought contacts with *Kögida* and *Dügida*, offshoots of the anti-Islam movement Pegida in Köln (*Kögida*) and Düsseldorf (*Dügida*)[2] (Häusler, 2018c, p. 221). There have clearly been some commonalities between Pegida and the PRO parties; the main difference – aside from the fact that the former is a movement and the latter a group of parties – is that the PRO parties were actively collaborating with known neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists, while Pegida tried to maintain an image of itself as a movement of ordinary concerned citizens with no connection to the extreme right, which (as will be shown in Chapter 8) had little to do with reality.

The PRO parties have sometimes been described as right-wing extremist *and* radical right populist at the same time (Häusler, 2018c, p. 220). They referred to themselves as "citizen movements" and as "populist" (Schellenberg, 2013, p. 42). The characterization of the PRO parties as "populist" appears to be primarily based on their style and rhetoric (Häusler, 2018c, p. 223). In this context, an observation by Mackert is interesting. He found that the designation of a movement or party as "populist" may not just be used to denigrate the respective group – the pejorative use of the concept is broadly described and criticized in the literature – sometimes the label "populist" may also function as a "euphemism for (neo-)fascism" (Mackert, 2019a, p. 7); and this appears to be the case when right-wing extremist organizations such as the PRO parties claim this label for themselves.

At the end of 2014, PRO NRW had 1,134 members and PRO Deutschland 1,122 members. But the success of AfD in recent elections weakened the PRO movement. In 2017, it resulted in the dissolution of PRO Deutschland with a recommendation by the party chair committee for its members to join AfD (SpiegelOnline, 2017). PRO Cologne dissolved in March 2018 over internal disputes about the direction of the movement. There are still some PRO groups active throughout the country on local and subnational state levels; one of them is PRO Chemnitz,

which was founded in 2009. PRO Chemnitz played an important role as organizer of the infamous demonstrations of late August and the beginning of September 2018 in the East German city of Chemnitz. The demonstrations were joined by various far-right groups and movements – radical right populists, right-wing extremists, neo-Nazis – as well as by ordinary citizens – and resulted in the hunt of immigrants in the streets of the city. Thuringia's AfD chairman Höcke marched there, too, side by side with Lutz Bachmann, the founder and leader of Pegida (Klikauer, 2020).

The Schill Party

The Schill Party, which was founded in 2000, is a clear outlier among the radical right populist precursors of AfD, because it is so far the only such party in Germany which participated in government. The official name of the Schill Party was *Party for a Rule of Law Offensive*[3] (Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive, PRO) but was customary referred to as Schill Party, named after its chairman Ronald Barnabas Schill. Schill was a criminal judge at a district court in Hamburg and well-known to the public for his penchant to hand out severe punishment to delinquents. The yellow press called him by his nickname "judge merciless" (Richter Gnadenlos) (Häusler & Roeser, 2015, p. 39). In the 2011 elections to the state legislature of Hamburg – the first election on a subnational level which the party participated in – the Schill Party surprised the German public when they gained 19.4 per cent of the votes. They got 25 seats in the state parliament and formed a government coalition with CDU as senior partner, effectively ending 40 years of uninterrupted leadership of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD) in this Northern German city state (Häusler & Roeser, 2015). Schill joined the city government of mayor Ole von Beust (CDU), became deputy mayor, and headed the department of the interior.[4]

It was not surprising that Schill wanted to lead the department of the interior in Hamburg. Long before he started his political career, he gave many interviews in which he advocated getting tougher on crime (Hartleb, 2018b). Internal security was the single most important item on the party's agenda in its electoral campaign. Among other things, they claimed a need for an expansion of the city's video surveillance programme of public places, a considerable "increase of the police presence" in the streets of Hamburg, the "use of emetics on suspected drug dealers," as well as "the lowering of the age of criminal accountability to 12 years" (Hartleb, 2018b, pp. 465–466). The Schill Party can be seen as a classical one-issue party. They missed an opportunity to extend their portfolio beyond these law and order issues except for their advocation of a more restrictive asylum policy and their occasional railing against the "EU bureaucracy" (Häusler & Roeser, 2015, pp. 39–40). These programmatic shortcomings contributed to the eventual decline of the Schill Party (Decker & Hartleb, 2006). The political career of Schill was short-lived. At the end of 2003, the coalition between CDU and the Schill Party broke apart, and was officially terminated when new elections were held in

February 2004, where the Schill Party only got 3.5 per cent of the votes and did not gain any seats in parliament (Hartleb, 2018b). The breakup was triggered by a scandal involving Schill and mayor von Beust. Schill had threatened the mayor with outing him as gay, which led von Beust to fire Schill as senator of the interior (Decker & Hartleb, 2006).

When this scandal broke, the Schill Party was already in turmoil due to internal strife and electoral failures in states other than Hamburg and on federal level. In the 2002 federal election, the party only gained 0.8 per cent of the votes and clearly missed its ambitious goal to get to at least 8 per cent and become a coalition partner in the federal government (Decker & Hartleb, 2006). After Schill's dismissal the party felt that they had to distance themselves from their former front man and crowd puller. Without the charismatic leadership of Schill, the party did not really have a future. According to Decker and Hartleb's (2006) analysis, several other problems contributed to the demise of the party: They moved much too quickly with the establishment of a nationwide party organization, attracted several right-wing extremists into their ranks, and lacked professionality in their political work. After the 2004 election in Hamburg, the party soon sank into insignificance. At its peak, at the end of 2001, the party had about 5,000 members nationwide (Hartleb, 2018b), who now had to look for a new political home.

Following Hartleb's (2018b, p. 465) analysis, the Schill Party can be categorized as a radical right populist party, because they presented themselves as advocates of the ordinary people who were "threatened by criminality, terrorism, drugs and uncontrolled immigration" which the incumbent government was not able to address properly. The charisma of the party leader played a crucial role in the ascent of the Schill Party. Schill was very skillful in cultivating his image as a law and order activist. His colourful personality attracted media attention, especially by the conservative Springer media, which, at the time, were very influential in the city of Hamburg. His good reputation among many middle-class citizens allowed him to voice radical positions without having to fear the accusation of being a right-wing extremist. In retrospect, Decker and Hartleb (2006) concluded that much of the rise of Schill was a media construct.

The failure of early radical right populist parties in Germany

Until recently, all radical right populist parties that were established in Germany after the Second World War have been failures. There are some possible explanations for these failures. First, it may have to do with the opportunity structures that were not aligned in a way that these parties were able to take advantage of them. Another possible explanation is the reluctance of the voters in Germany to vote for a party of the far-right fringe due to the experience of the country with the Nazi regime and the resulting stigmatization of right-wing extremism. The third explanation has to do with the leadership style of those parties. Decker and Hartleb (2006) discuss why it was so difficult for radical right populist parties

in Germany to produce any lasting electoral successes. According to their analysis, one of the main factors is the lack of charismatic leadership in these parties. Among the leaders of the early radical right populist parties in Germany, only Franz Schönhuber came close to being a charismatic figure. Of course, Schill had charisma, too. But his popularity declined almost as quickly as it rose. There seems to be a clear difference between Germany and other European countries where radical right populist parties had and still have this type of personality at their top. The list of such actors is long: Jörg Haider, Geert Wilders, Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen, Silvio Berlusconi, Umberto Bossi, Matteo Salvini, Beppe Grillo, Viktor Orbán, and so on.

As discussed in Chapter 2, AfD, Germany's most successful radical right populist party so far, does not have a charismatic leader at its top. Which means that this earlier trend of a lack of charismatic personalities in radical right populism continues in this country. This phenomenon certainly deserves more scholarly attention. Two possible reasons come to mind, which both have to do with German history and the experience which Germans made with charismatic leadership when Adolf Hitler led the country during the Nazi period. The first of these reasons concerns the demand side: The devastations of the Nazi regime and the lessons learned from this period may have immunized larger portions of the citizenry against the temptations of charismatic leadership, if not necessarily against right-wing extremism as representative surveys about the attitudes of Germans have demonstrated. The *Leipzig Authoritarianism Study* of 2018, for instance, found that only 3.6 per cent of the respondents to their survey espoused the notion that Germany needs the strong leadership of an authoritarian dictator; while almost one out of four (24.1 per cent) of the respondents displayed manifest xenophobic views (Decker, Kriess, Schuler et al., 2018). There seems to be strong support for certain features of radical right ideology such as nativism among larger portions of the German populace. The second reason pertains to the supply side: The awareness of the widespread suspicion toward and low support for authoritarian leadership may discourage politicians from projecting the image of a certain type of leader. Rovira Kaltwasser (2019, p. 65) stressed that "the emergence and electoral fortune of populist forces is not necessarily related to the rise of the strong and charismatic leader." What separates AfD from its European radical right populist siblings is its lack of charismatic leadership. There are other differences, for example, the adoption of ordoliberal ideas about the economy, which are specific to this German populist party and will be treated in more detail later. These differences raise questions about the notion of a "family resemblance" which connects populist phenomena across countries and allows scholars to categorize them accordingly (Arditi, 2005, p. 80; Brubaker, 2019, p. 29; Howarth, 2005, p. 203; Judis, 2016, p. 14). Does AfD, despite these differences, display enough similarities to justify its classification as a member of the radical right populist party family? I will try to find an answer to this question in the following chapters.

Notes

1 Starbatty left AfD in 2015 because the party had moved into a direction which he no longer wanted to support.
2 They also had contacts with the violent right-wing extremist HogeSa-Szene (*Hooligans gegen Salafisten* – Hooligans against Salafists) (Häusler, 2018c, p. 221).
3 Any attempt at an exact translation of the party name will prove illusive.
4 The job title actually is "senator of the interior" (Innensenator). In this context it is important to note that the governments of the German city states Hamburg, Berlin, and Bremen are referred to as *senate*. Hence, unlike senators in the United States or France, a senator in a German city state fulfils an executive function not a legislative function.

4

A SHORT HISTORY OF AfD

AfD is a rather young political party, but it can already be said that AfD, despite its short time of existence, is the most successful radical right populist party in the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 2014, the party has gotten over the 5 per cent threshold for parliamentary presentation and gained seats in every election on the regional, national, and European level; and it is quite possible that they will repeat or even exceed these results in future elections. The electoral fortune of this party is clearly very different from that of its radical right populist precursors. What makes the difference between AfD and these other radical right populist parties? Is it its personnel or its programme? Or has the German electorate changed in specific ways that make voters more susceptible to radical right populist messages? Something has changed and the task falls to scholars to investigate whether the changes occurred on the demand side or the supply side of radical right populism. Another possibility would be that the environment in which AfD is making its way is different from the environment of these earlier parties. This could involve an altered media environment; it may also be about specific opportunity structures that opened up for AfD but were closed for its precursors. In this chapter and in the following chapters, I will try to get to the bottom of these issues.

AfD, with its special character, clearly deserves particular attention. This is why this book primarily focuses on AfD and on the Pegida and IBD movements, which are connected with AfD. Before we turn to the in-depth analysis of the political party AfD, the first section of this chapter will give an account of the Sarrazin debate, which is an important event in the German discourse about immigration and inequality that prepared the rise of radical right populism in Germany. It then gives a brief history of the party AfD and introduces the main figures, who played a role in the foundation of the party, its electoral successes, and internal disputes. This will be followed by an account of the programmatic orientation and the ideological features of AfD. To get a full picture of where AfD is standing ideologically,

it is not enough to just look at the programmes which the party has adopted; I will also examine speeches which party members held, interviews they gave, and articles they published. This especially concerns high-ranking functionaries of AfD, who got an electoral mandate and represented the party publicly. In this analysis, I have to be aware that parties in the radical right spectrum may want to avoid coming across as too extreme, because it could make them unelectable in the eyes of many middle-class citizens (Pfahl-Traughber, 2019). This is why right-wing radical parties may try to project a more moderate image of themselves and disguise their more extreme views. The analysis of AfD's ideology which is carried out in this and in the next chapter will allow us to provide evidence for the assumption that the party indeed is radical right populist. It displays the major features of radical right populism that were described in Chapter 2.

The Sarrazin debate and radical right populism in Germany

Germany had its "populist moment" (Goodwyn, 1976) in the year 2010, when Sarrazin (2010) published his book *Germany Does Away with Itself* (Deutschland schafft sich ab). In this book, the author painted a dark picture of Germany's future. He invoked a national "we" collective which is threatened by demographic, economic, and cultural decline, and connected his apocalyptic scenario with a critique of the alleged unwillingness and inability of certain groups in society to perform. He especially targeted immigrants with a Turkish or Arabic background, and those from former Yugoslavia (Sarrazin, 2010). He compared the educational performance of immigrants from these countries with the one of immigrants from other regions – from Eastern Europe and East Asia among others – and found that those coming from Turkey, from Arabic countries, and from former Yugoslavia were doing much worse than these reference groups. Because there were groups of immigrants who were performing well in Germany, he concluded, one could not blame German society for the problems of those who were on average not as successful: "Their problems in the school system, on the labour market and generally in society result from these groups themselves, not from the society surrounding them" (Sarrazin, 2010, p. 59). He connected these observations with a social-biologist – at closer inspection: social-Darwinist – argument about the "heritability of intelligence" (Sarrazin, 2010, p. 83), indicating that those at the bottom of society were there because of their predetermined inability. He also argued with the "differences in the mentality of peoples and societies" (Sarrazin, 2010, p. 32), which he depicted as almost unchangeable. While he acknowledged the historicity of traditions and mentalities, he claimed that these could only change in the space of centuries not years or decades, which makes it a quasi-essentialist understanding of culture.

With a focus on Berlin, Sarrazin observed that migrants in the city (many of whom are of Turkish, Arabic, or Yugoslavian descent) would predominantly belong to the underclass (Sarrazin, 2010). According to Sarrazin, the success of

other groups of immigrants showed that the permeability of German society was very high. Hence, he concluded that the few in the weaker immigrant groups who had the potential to advance in society must have already experienced some form of upward social mobility – they were not part of the underclass anymore. For the rest who were left on the bottom there was no hope that they could ever improve their situation by their own efforts. He criticized the social welfare state for reproducing and even increasing this layer of society by providing them the opportunity to live their lives in security based on social welfare benefits. In a circular, social Darwinist argument, Sarrazin (2010, p. 84) assumed that with growing upward social mobility, the need for a higher degree of "negative selection" becomes necessary, which would eventually result in a larger underclass:

> As a result of negative selection, on the one hand, which becomes more inevitable the more permeable a society is, and the decreasing need for simple, less qualified work, on the other hand, the proportion of the population that is to be classified as lower class is growing in relative and absolute terms.[1]

In this narrative, social inequality becomes a question of genetic predetermination and natural selection. Increasing social inequality is primarily treated as a biological issue, not so much as a social phenomenon.

Sarrazin sounded the alarm that those at the bottom were about to outbreed the native German population, which, as Sarrazin suggested, would inevitably result in the decline of innovation and productivity in Germany. He presented demographic arguments in support of his thesis of the coming demise of Germany. As a remedy he suggested that more smart children should be born; these, of course, would have to come from the groups in society with a higher predisposition to perform at a high level and a higher average intelligence quotient (Sarrazin, 2010). The book sold more than a million copies and sparked a debate which kept the media in Germany busy for almost a year. Sarrazin's theses were taken seriously because they were brought forward by a person who had served as a board member of the German central bank (Deutsche Bundesbank) and as senator of finance in the city government of Berlin. He was a member of SPD until he was expelled from the party in July 2020 after a long battle between SPD and Sarrazin about his membership. Sarrazin announced legal action against this measure (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2020).

The debate fundamentally changed the discourse about immigration and multiculturalism in Germany. It is no exaggeration to state that it brought about a paradigm shift. Critique of immigration and its negative consequences all of a sudden became socially acceptable. Sarrazin's arguments, including his "biologist, culturalist, and hybrid racism" (Butterwegge, 2013, p. 207), were now discussed in the late-night talk shows of all television channels; and he found many supporters who were well-established as public figures and who repeated his theses over and over again. Sarrazin's effect was so profound that some observers started to speculate about the establishment of a "party of the dissatisfied" (Geis & Ulrich, 2010, p. 199). The polling institute Emnid conducted an opinion poll for the German

tabloid *Bild am Sonntag* which showed that 18 per cent of the population would vote for a "Sarrazin party." The debate helped prepare the ground for a radical right populist party in Germany; and it showed that there was a potential for a populist party on the right which certainly served as encouragement for those who founded AfD in February 2013.

Sarrazin's statements in his book *Germany Does Away with Itself* clearly display two elements of the triadic opposition (Judis, 2016) of social groups in radical right populism, which was analyzed in Chapter 2. There is the vertical opposition between ordinary Germans and those on the bottom of society. There also is the horizontal antagonism of insiders and outsiders. Which in the case of Turkish, Arab, and Yugoslavian immigrants and their descendants means that there is a hybrid group of "internal outsiders" (Brubaker, 2017, p. 1192), who are partly located on the bottom of the inside and partly on the outside. What is missing in Sarrazin's book is an explicitly stated opposition against the elite, which is, of course, the central piece of any populist ideology. But a critique of those in charge is implicit in every page of this book. After all, how could Germany get to this point where the country as a whole is looking into the abyss; and who is responsible for it? Sarrazin left the answer to the reader. However, in the last chapter of his book he gave a (supposedly ironic) outlook into a future where "established parties and governments in the whole of Europe are worried about the growing successes of right-wing populist parties"[2] (Sarrazin, 2010, p. 404). He presented this future scenario as a preferable "alternative" to the "nightmare" of German decay (Sarrazin, 2010, p. 396).

A brief history of AfD

The founders of the AfD party were a group of economic liberal, conservative, and national-conservative people who were dissatisfied with the approach of the established centre-right parties in Germany toward European integration. This especially concerned the handling of the euro crisis with the Greek fiscal crisis at its centre. Some of them had been fighting the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) of the EU since before the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993. They strongly opposed the treaty, with its provision for the creation of a common currency. This group was in a minority position within the economic establishment of Germany, where support for the EMU is rather strong. It was a resounding defeat for them when German chancellor Angela Merkel agreed on the "rescue package" for Greece at the summit of the European Council on 25 March 2010 (Häusler & Roeser, 2015). From their perspective, it constituted a violation of the no-bail out clause in the treaty of the EU and jeopardized monetary stability in the whole of the union. In 2012, they gathered forces in preparation for the 2013 federal election and established the party *Electoral Alternative 2013* (*Wahlalternative 2013*) which was eventually replaced by AfD.

When AfD was founded on 6 February 2013, Euroscepticism was the single most important programmatic item on the party's agenda. Which is why many

observers described AfD as a one-issue party (Niedermayer, 2014). In the first two years of its existence, economic liberal matters dominated the political positions of the party. This orientation was driven by the largely ordoliberal leadership of the party at the time. Aside from this group there were many conservative members; and the party very soon also drew people from the *New Right* (Lewandowsky, 2018), a lose network of activists and writers in the grey spectrum between national-conservatism and right-wing extremism (Kellershohn, 1994).

At the party convention of AfD in April 2013, three speakers of the executive board were elected: Bernd Lucke, Frauke Petry, and Konrad Adam (F. Decker, 2018). In AfD, the position of a speaker of the board is equivalent to that of a chairperson. Lucke was and still is an economics professor at the University of Hamburg, Petry was a chemist and pharmacist and worked in pharmacological research. Adam was a journalist and for more than 20 years chief editor of the culture and arts pages of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Among those who founded and supported AfD early on, Lucke was not the only economics professor. In fact, there were so many of them that the party was sometimes called "party of professors" – the same moniker which was already used for BFB, one of the precursors of AfD (Häusler & Roeser, 2015, p. 30). There, for instance, were Joachim Starbatty and Hans-Olaf Henkel, who both ran for the party in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament and gained a seat there. According to David Bebnowski and Lisa Julika Förster (2014), among the 64 persons who supported the party initially there were 18 economics professors, some of them well-known to the German public, which is especially true for Hans-Olaf Henkel, the former president of the *Federation of German Industry* (1995–2000), who was a regular guest in many television talk shows in this function. This high concentration of economists gave the party the nimbus of economic expertise. Most of these economists were ordoliberals. They favoured a particular type of neoliberalism in which the state provides a framework for the economy and governs society in a way that is conducive to the workings of the free market. Michel Foucault (2008) in his analysis of ordoliberalism found that it involves a reversal in the power relation between the state and the economy with the state subordinate to the economy.

The majority of the founders of AfD were former members of centre-right parties such as CDU and FDP. They were disappointed by these parties because of their perceived ideological move toward the centre of German politics. In the years of Merkel as chairperson of CDU, the party modernized its policies on women, family, and immigration, which resulted in discontent among those on the right wing of her party (Friedrich, 2017). Lucke, Adam, and Alexander Gauland had been members of CDU. Starbatty was a member of CDU and then BFB before he joined AfD. Henkel once supported FDP.

Lucke was the public face of AfD during the first two years of the party's existence. He often appeared in television talk shows and gave many interviews to well-established magazines and newspapers. He also gladly talked to media of the New Right such as *Junge Freiheit* (Young Freedom, JF), the flagship of this right-wing radical network (Lucke, 2014), and to Jürgen Elsässer (Lucke, 2013), the editor of

Compact, a monthly magazine that has specialized in antisemitic conspiracy theories (Culina & Fedders, 2017). Giving interviews to these right-wing media has for a long time been taboo for representatives of mainstream parties. The few times this has happened, it was regularly scandalized. Lucke (2014) and Petry (2015, 2014) had no such reservations and talked to journalists of JF as if this was the most natural thing in the world. Alexander Gauland (2015, 2014), who became co-chair of AfD in 2017, was even eager to make his own contributions to JF as a writer.

It is noteworthy that Lucke's style was different from the *populist style* described by Moffitt (2016, pp. 43–45), which particularly concerns the "bad manners" which can be observed in the behaviour of most populists. What was missing in his appearance and statements was "the antagonistic mobilizational flaunting of the 'low,'" as Pierre Ostiguy (2017, p. 84) calls it. Bebnowski and Förster (2014) pointed to the differences in the public appearance of Lucke compared with the radical right populist leaders from other European countries: "As to his personality and overall appearance he is neither a stirring rhetorician, nor does he possess the simmering eccentricity of the dyed-blonde Wilders or the personable quality of the always smiling and deeply tanned Haider" (Bebnowski & Förster, 2014, p. 1). They described him as "serious, almost tame, unflashy" (Bebnowski & Förster, 2014, p. 1). Lucke was not a charismatic leader, nor were his co-chairs Petry and Adam or those who followed them in the office as party leaders. To date, none of the chairpersons of AfD had the qualities of a charismatic leader. Since charismatic leadership was also absent in almost all other attempts to establish a radical right populist party in Germany, it is fair to assume that this is a specificity of radical right populism in this country.

It soon became apparent that a second – national-conservative – wing was forming in AfD which increasingly challenged the dominant economic liberal one. After the federal election in September 2013, in which AfD got 4.7 per cent of the votes and missed the threshold for parliamentary representation by the small margin of 0.3 per cent, the influence of this new party wing increased and heralded a new phase in the development of AfD (Friedrich, 2017). The party soon experienced a gradual shift to the right and a mounting internal polarization. AfD finally had its breakthrough with the state elections of August 2014 in Saxony, where it gained 9.7 per cent and in the state elections of September 2014 in Brandenburg and Thuringia where AfD got 12.2 per cent and 10.6 per cent of the votes respectively (Havertz, 2016). These states have in common that they are all located in the East of Germany, where AfD's national-conservatives and national populists have their strongest base. According to Alexander Häusler (2018b), in Eastern Germany, AfD was a right-wing radical affair right from the beginning. In all three states the party was led by representatives from this spectrum in the party. The electoral successes of August and September 2014 gave the radical right wing of the party a strong boost and the impetus for a confrontation with the economic liberal wing, from which they eventually emerged as winners. These state elections of 2014 marked a clear turning point for AfD. They paved the way for the radicalization of the party and its strong shift to the right.

The behaviour of the national-conservatives toward the economic liberal wing became increasingly confrontational. Ostensibly, the conflict was (at least initially) waged not so much against the political positions of the latter but against the leadership style of Lucke, that is, as a personnel dispute. Lucke was accused of a domineering leadership style (Lewandowsky, 2018). But with time the programmatic differences between both wings became apparent, too. In the East, the national-conservative faction increasingly merged with the national populist one which was close to the New Right; with this fusion, a volkish-nationalist wing started to appear centred around the group which adopted the name *Patriotic Platform* (Patriotische Plattform) for itself (Häusler, 2018b). Gauland, who was the chairman of AfD in the state of Brandenburg between 2014 and 2017, was the dominant figure in the dispute between the predominantly Eastern national-conservative and national populist wing, on the one side, and the economic liberal and national-liberal wing, which was primarily located in the West of Germany, on the other side (Häusler, 2018b). Gauland is to a large part responsible for the radicalization of the party. The ideological shift of AfD can be attested by many statements of leading party members; and it can be demonstrated by positions and policy proposals in the basic programme of 2016 and the party platform of 2017.

One of the most controversial figures in AfD is Höcke, the chairman of the party in the East German state of Thuringia. Höcke distinguished himself by his historical revisionist and volkish-nationalist remarks. His interventions were pivotal for AfD's move to the far right. In March 2015, he (together with André Poggenburg, the then chairman of the party in the Eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt) launched the *Erfurt Resolution* (Erfurter Resolution) in an attempt to mobilize the party against its dominant economic liberal wing. This document declares that the party should first and foremost position itself as "movement of the people against the social experiments of the last decades" and "as a resistance movement against the further hollowing-out of Germany's sovereignty and identity" (Kopke & Lorenz, 2016, p. 19). It agitates against "gender mainstreaming, multiculturalism and indifference in education" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 62). Höcke (again, together with Poggenburg) also was a founding member of "Der Flügel"[3] (the wing), an informal grouping of right-wing extremist AfD party members that were crucial in driving the party further to the right.[4] (In March 2020, "Der Flügel" declared its dissolution after it was officially classified as right-wing extremist.) Höcke has often provoked controversies with his speeches which centred around national identity, people's sovereignty, and the memorial culture of Germany. He, for instance, is a staunch supporter of the anti-Islam movement Pegida (Die Zeit, 2016), to which AfD kept a strategic distance for some time. This distance was deemed necessary because of the right-wing extremist factions of the movement that the leaders of the party did not want to be associated with. Höcke called for an alliance with Pegida and stressed the importance which it had for AfD. After all, the support for Pegida among AfD voters is disproportionately high, as is the support for AfD among Pegida activists and sympathizers (Lewandowsky, 2018).

The *Erfurt Resolution* was soon countered by the economic liberal wing with the foundation of the association *Wake-up Call 2015* (*Weckruf 2015*). Lucke initiated this intra-party group in May 2015. It soon gathered 4,000 of the then about 21,000 members of AfD (Lewandowsky, 2018). Many observers saw the formation of *Wake-up Call 2015* as a threat with a party split on the part of Lucke. The dispute between the party wings came to a culminating point on the party congress of 4 June 2015 in the West German city of Essen, where Lucke was defeated by his challenger Petry in the election of the party chairpersons. This defeat induced Lucke to turn his back on AfD and to form a new party, the *Alliance for Progress and Renewal* (Allianz für Fortschritt and Aufbruch, ALFA), which later took on the name *Liberal-Conservative Reformers* (Liberal-konservative Reformer, LKR) (Häusler, 2018b). Neither of these new party formations had any noteworthy electoral success. When Lucke left the party, he was followed by many of its economic liberal members, Henkel and Starbatty among others. For AfD, this party split meant a considerable move to the right, as exemplified by a statement of the then chairman of the party in North Rhine-Westphalia, Markus Pretzell, who said that AfD had now become a "Pegida-party" (Häusler, 2018b, p. 11). From here on AfD was dominated by the national-conservatives and national populists who were primarily located in the East of Germany. There still was a sizable group of national-liberals but they had lost their influence on the political course of AfD.

After the party convention of June 2015, the failure of AfD seemed possible for a short while. After all, the party had lost its most prominent personae; and it seemed questionable if they were replaceable. However, the refugee movement and the ensuing crisis of 2015 came to the rescue. Immigration soon became the main issue on the agenda of AfD, which morphed into an anti-immigration party. They aggressively attacked the immigration policy of the Merkel administration, which had opened the borders of Germany to hundreds of thousands of refugees, most of whom were fleeing conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan. They stoked fears of immigration and responded to already existing concerns and prejudices about refugees and asylum seekers among German citizens. Sebastian Friedrich (2017, p. 67) observed that "the political debate on asylum and refugees was an almost custom-made opportunity for AfD." With the refugee crisis (which must primarily be understood as a crisis of European refugee policy) an opportunity structure opened up for AfD. It re-energized the party considerably. Gauland, at the time vice-chairmen of AfD, cynically welcomed the crisis as a boon for his party (Geis, 2016).

The arguments advanced by representatives of AfD against the immigration policy of the German government frequently took on a populist quality. Merkel was often depicted as a traitor to the German people. Gauland (2016) talked about a "policy of human inundation" that is part of an attempt to "gradually replace the German people" with a new population that is coming together from all corners of the world. In the right-wing radical milieu of AfD and associated organizations such as Pegida and the IBD, a conspiracy theory is very popular which portents a scheme of the "political class" to replace the native people of Germany with a new

one by letting large numbers of immigrants into the country. In this context, they sometimes talk about a "population exchange" (Bevölkerungsaustausch) or alternatively about the *Umvolkung* of the German people (the neologism "Umvolkung" is synonymous with "population exchange") (Heitmeyer, 2018a, p. 107). With these ideas they rely on a right-wing conspiracy theory that was first put forth by the French author Renaud Camus (2017) in his book *The Great Replacement*. Camus claims that elites in France and Europe at large conspire in a deliberate scheme to replace white Europeans with immigrants from Africa and the Middle East, primarily Muslims. The goal of the alleged operation is the creation of a "replaceable human, without any national, ethnic or cultural specificity" (Joignot, 2014).

Ironically, the conspiracy theory about the elite's scheme of a population exchange mirrors the desire of the radical right populists to expel immigrants or other segments of the population they regard as weak, incapable, low performing, and harmful. It was revealing when Sarrazin (2009), the spiritus rector of radical right populism in Germany, said in an interview with the monthly magazine *Lettre Internationale* that a change in tone of the communication with certain groups in German society would be advisable. "This includes conveying to the non-performers that they just as well could do nothing elsewhere. [. . .] Anyone who can and strives to do something here is welcome: the rest should go somewhere else" (Sarrazin, 2009, p. 201). In the same interview he singled out Berlin's citizens of Turkish and Arabic decent as non-performers who have nothing better to do than "continuously produce new little headscarf girls. This applies to seventy per cent of the Turkish and ninety per cent of the Arabic population in Berlin" (Sarrazin, 2009, p. 199). In his scenario for the future of Berlin he advocated the replacement of these segments of society by more capable and higher-performing people. What shines through in the conspiracy theory of the great replacement is the social Darwinist desire for the expulsion of immigrants, especially Muslims, and their replacement with a different type of human capital.

Since summer 2015, under the new leadership with Petry and the economist Jörg Meuthen as co-chairs of the party, AfD focused on the further polarization of politics in Germany, which was a deviation from the course which the more moderate group around Lucke had charted. The latter wanted to position the party in a way which would allow AfD to connect with the parties of the centre-right and leave the possibility of a coalition with CDU/CSU and FDP open (Decker, 2016a). But the strategy of the national-conservatives and national populists now focused more on binding the far-right fringe to the party. In March 2016, the concentration of the party on issues of immigration and asylum paid off at the ballot box. They gained votes in double-digit numbers in three states on the subnational level, two of which – Baden Wuerttemberg (15.1 per cent) and Rhineland-Palatinate (12.6 per cent) – are larger states (in terms of territory and population) of West Germany. In Saxony-Anhalt, which is an Eastern state, they even managed to become the second strongest party in the state legislature, with 24.3 per cent of the votes, second only to CDU, which gained 29.6 per cent (Havertz, 2016). This result clearly showed that AfD was not a phenomenon that was restricted to

the German East, where the support for the party is without doubt stronger than in the West.

The electoral success of AfD had a significant effect on the party system of Germany – first in the individual states of the Federal Republic, and then, in 2017, in the Bundestag – and made it increasingly difficult to form governments in the states. Mainstream parties such as CDU, FDP, SPD, the Greens (Die Grünen), and to some extent even the Left (Die Linke) now had to look at each other as potential coalition partners and not so much as political adversaries. In Saxony-Anhalt the so-called Kenya-coalition of three parties was formed, CDU, SPD, and the Greens (Meisner, 2016). It was named after the colours of the parties who worked together in this coalition: Black (CDU), red (SPD), and the Greens – the colours of the Kenyan flag. In Baden-Wuerttemberg two unlikely partners came together, with the Greens as senior partner and CDU as junior partner in a government coalition (Von der Mark, 2016). In Rhineland-Palatinate the so-called traffic light coalition was established, again named after the colours of the parties: Red (SPD), yellow (FDP), and the Greens (K. Hagen, 2016). (Traffic lights on German streets are red, yellow, and green.) Until then it was rare for a state coalition to be formed by more than two parties. But with the increasing fragmentation of the party systems in the states due to the appearance of AfD, more three-party coalitions were established.

After the electoral successes of March 2016, AfD shifted further toward the far-right fringe. This shift involved cranking up the anti-immigrant rhetoric; for instance, at the party convention of April 2016, when co-chair Meuthen claimed that one could not feel safe on German streets anymore because of all the immigrants (Häusler, 2018b). The ideology behind these anti-immigrant positions is nativism, which is composed of a combination of ethnic nationalism, Islamophobia, or generally xenophobia, depending on the group of immigrants that is targeted in the particular case of a rhetorical attack on immigrants by an AfD representative. At the same time AfD intensified its attempts to extend the range of the public discourse (that is, what can be said publicly) further to the right. This involved the reanimation of a language that was contaminated by the Nazi regime, for example, when Petry suggested it should be normalized again to use the term "volkish" in an affirmative manner; and Höcke claimed that Germany would need an about-turn in its commemorative culture regarding the Nazi period (Häusler, 2018b, p. 12).

At the party convention of April 2016, AfD adopted its first party programme which is meant to be its basic programme. It contains several radical right populist elements which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 on AfD's ideology. In terms of economic policy, the programme indicates a continuation of the neoliberal orientation which was already adopted by the group around Lucke. The programme includes a commitment toward ordoliberal economic principles and references some of the main theorists of ordoliberalism – Walter Eucken, Alfred Müller-Armack, and Wilhelm Röpke – as theoretical foundation for the positions of AfD on economic matters (AfD, 2016). Regarding social policy, the substance of the programme is rather sparse. The main position on social policy appears to be the strengthening of families and the material recognition of the educational work

that is performed by families (AfD, 2016). A position which is in line with the conservative view of the role of families promoted by the Christian-fundamentalist wing of AfD, which is led by Beatrix von Storch.[5] Other noteworthy positions on social policy are the continuation of the minimum wage laws of Germany and the dissolution of the federal employment agency and its replacement by local agencies (AfD, 2016).

In the run-up to the 2017 federal election, these positions on the economy and social welfare were increasingly challenged by a group which was led by Höcke and Andreas Kalbitz, the then chairman of the party in Brandenburg. This happened against the backdrop of a rising income gap and wealth gap in Germany and the increasing pressure of the neoliberal system on salaried workers to enhance their productivity and be more flexible at work. With the lasting impacts of the global financial crisis of 2008/2009 and the euro crisis, a window of opportunity opened up for AfD to position itself as advocate of the "little man" and present itself as a party that cares about labour issues. Höcke and Kalbitz tried to redefine the social question in Germany. As Höcke (2016) put it in a speech which he gave in 2016 at a demonstration in Schweinfurt:

> The social question of the present is not primarily [concerning, R. H.] the distribution of national wealth from top to bottom, bottom to top, young to old or old to young. The new German social question of the 21st century is the question of the distribution of national wealth from the inside to the outside.

Höcke connected the social question with the issue of immigration. He tried to redefine solidarity among workers as solidarity among fellow nationals, which would leave certain portions of the citizenry out of the distribution of resources based on their nationality. With his appeal to national solidarity among workers, Höcke was addressing those who were increasingly dissatisfied with their social and financial situation and who had lost hope that they could catch up with the more prosperous segments of society. It is an attempt to instigate and stir up conflict between productive residents of Germany and foreigners who are depicted as inept, low performing, and unable to integrate for cultural reasons, which, according to Klaus Dörre (2018) constitutes a form of differentialist racism. The combination of national and social issues induced some observers to describe AfD as a national-social party (Hank, 2018), which obviously involved an allusion to National Socialism.

A measure which illustrates what the replacement of labour solidarity by national solidarity means is the retirement scheme which was proposed by AfD in Thuringia, which is Höcke's party base on the subnational level. The so-called pension concept included the proposal to pay certain retirement benefits only to German citizens. Foreigners would generally be excluded from a significant part of these benefits, even though they regularly paid their insurance premiums (AfD, 2018). Many of those positions were included in the party's national level pension scheme

which the party leadership adopted in March 2020 (Balser, 2020). The retirement scheme proposed by Höcke can be seen as a case of *exclusive solidarity*. If it were ever implemented it would result in the redistribution of income from foreigners to Germans; and it would constitute a clear case of discrimination and a blatant violation of the rights of foreign workers.

Höcke and Kalbitz's appeal to (German) workers attracted much attention in the German media. The question was raised if AfD was morphing into a right-wing labour party (Becker et al., 2018; Häusler & Kellershohn, 2018; Sauer et al., 2018). The social populist turn of factions in the party resulted in an increasing popularity of the party among workers, which their strong support for the party in the 2017 federal election showed. In fact, in relative terms, AfD was the most successful of all parties among workers in this election (Neu & Pokorny, 2017). The share of workers among those who voted for AfD was much higher than the share of workers who voted for other parties who won seats in the Bundestag. This sudden shift of focus by factions in the party toward labour issues was running contrary to the ordoliberal positions which AfD was standing for until then. But this does not mean that AfD had abandoned ordoliberalism; on the contrary, it officially stayed its course on economic policy. Hence, the party was now standing for two contradictory positions: It was ordoliberal and social populist at the same time. This adoption of contrary programmatic positions by AfD can be described as a strategy of ambivalence. In Ralph Ptak's (2018) view, programmatic ambivalence has become an essential feature of radical right populism in Germany. The tensions between AfD's programmatic neoliberal and social populist positions will be discussed more deeply in Chapter 11.

In the federal elections of 24 September 2017, AfD gained 12.6 per cent of the votes and got 94 seats in the Bundestag. AfD's entry into the federal parliament clearly marks a political caesura in German history (Häusler, 2018a). For 60 years no radical right party had been represented in that chamber. The last time a party of the far right had won seats in parliament was when the *German Party* (Deutsche Partei) got 17 seats with just 3.4 per cent of the votes.[6] After the formation of the "grand coalition" between CDU and SPD, the two parties with the largest number of seats in the Bundestag, AfD became the strongest opposition party in this parliament.

The electoral success of September 2017 rang in a new phase in the development of AfD. It first resulted in Petry's stepping down as party chairperson and in her resignation from AfD within a week after the election. At the party congress of April 2017, she had already forgone the position as frontrunner in the federal election, a move which was, according to Eckhard Jesse (2019), based on a realistic assessment of her chances to be picked. Her position as party leader had come into question after she had advocated the projection of a more moderate public image of AfD. She had, for instance, supported the expulsion of Höcke from AfD after he had given a speech in Dresden in January 2017 at an event of AfD's youth organization *Young Alternative* (Junge Alternative) which included some obvious right-wing extremist positions. In the following month, the party board decided – under the

direction of Petry – to initiate party expulsion proceedings against Höcke because of the "similarity in character" (Wesensverwandtschaft) of his speech with National Socialism. A review of Höcke's speeches and writings by the board of the party found that some of the statements made by Höcke were also used by Hitler in his electoral speeches in 1932. Höcke was later exonerated by a party panel in his home state of Thuringia (Pfahl-Traughber, 2019). In causa Höcke Petry was at odds with Gauland, who strictly opposed the exclusion of Höcke from the party. As Jesse (2019) notes, Gauland has never shown any interest in dissociating the party from the far-right fringe; on the contrary, he was keen on including it firmly.

Frictions in the leadership of the party became apparent in the months before the 2017 election. They paved the way for Gauland to take over as party co-chair after the election. From then on, he led the party, together with Meuthen, who had held this position since 2015. The practice of AfD of appointing two or more chairpersons at the same time is owed to the different party wings. It is part of the electoral strategy of AfD to give all factions a voice in the leadership of the party or at least a figure at the top which potential voters with different worldviews can identify with. The economics professor Meuthen was "assumed to be appealing to the market-radical supporters of AfD" (Havertz, 2019, p. 390), whereas Gauland represented the national-conservative and national populist faction. A similar division of roles can be observed in the Bundestag, where Gauland as one of the two floor leaders appealed to the latter group, while Alice Weidel, a former business consultant and member of the Frederik A. von Hayek Society represented the economic liberal wing (Havertz, 2019; Riedel & Pittelkow, 2017). According to Decker (2016a, pp. 10–11), the presence of so many different wings in one party is only seemingly contradictory; it actually has to be seen as the "winning formula" of AfD. As Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony J. McGann (1995) observed, radical right entrepreneurs need to come up with the right strategy to assemble a larger voter constituency. This may involve an array of ideological features as different as economic liberalism, on the one side, and authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and racism, on the other side (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). In AfD's ideology, there certainly are contradictory elements. But there are also ideological features which all wings of the party have in common. What binds them together is their Euroscepticism, nationalism, Islamophobia, and their populist anti-establishment attitude.

On the evening of 24 September 2017, the day of the federal election, Gauland (as cited in Neff, 2017) gave a celebration speech in which he announced in the direction of chancellor Merkel: "We will hunt you." His choice of bellicose language showed that AfD had finally got a leader who was ready to flaunt the "low" (Ostiguy, 2017, p. 84). An affinity to the "low" is what he also demonstrated a few months later when he stated that the Nazi period meant nothing more than "bird droppings" in a thousand years of successful German history (Sauerbrey, 2018). During Gauland's time as party chairman the national-conservative and national populist wing remained the dominant faction in AfD. This can be demonstrated by the connections of the representatives of that wing to the New Right and to the

IBD. A close relationship of several leading figures of AfD with the New Right is well-documented (Havertz, 2017; Pfahl-Traughber, 2019). Some representatives of AfD also collaborated with the right-wing extremist IBD, even though the party had officially decided against any cooperation with the movement. In an interview with *Compact*, Gauland had explained that the distance to IBD would be a strategic one, since this organization was under surveillance by BfV, but he stressed the commonalities of AfD with IBD and invited members of IBD to join his party: "We are the AfD, we are the original. Those who pursue similar goals can come to us" (Gauland as cited in Pfahl-Traughber, 2016a). But AfD's incompatibility decision concerning IBD has frequently been circumvented by individual representatives of the party. Hans-Thomas Tillschneider, who represents AfD in the state legislature of Saxony-Anhalt and was speaker of the *Patriotic Platform*, for instance, has criticized this decision (Friedrich, 2017) and subverted it by maintaining an office in the *House of the Identitarians* (Haus Flamberg) in the city of Halle (Saale), where the IBD established a centre and provided office space for organizations such as the *Institute for State Policy* (Institut für Staatspolitik, IfS), which is one of the central nodes in the network of the New Right, and the right-wing extremist network *One Percent for Our Country* (Fuchs & Middelhoff, 2019).

The party got deeply entrenched on the far-right fringe of the political spectrum. It went so far to the right that it attracted the increasing attention of BfV as well as of the respective state agencies. On 12 March 2020, the head of the BfV Thomas Haldenwang declared that the "Flügel," the strongest group within AfD, was evidently an "extremist endeavour" and that the BfV saw sufficient cause for the official observation of this faction which was led by Höcke and Kalbitz (Koch & Neuerer, 2020). The party now had to fear that this assessment could at some point in time be extended to the whole party. Action had to be taken to prevent that from happening. This is, for instance, what Charlotte Knobloch, the former president of the *Central Council of the Jews in Germany* had claimed. According to Knobloch, AfD is inspiring right-wing terrorists and undermines the peaceful coexistence of the citizens in German society (Koch & Neuerer, 2020). With her remark about terrorism she referred to right-wing terrorist acts which had most recently been carried out and cost lives among citizens in Halle (Saale) where a synagogue had been attacked by a gunman on the Jewish holiday of *Jom Kippur* (9 October 2019). After he found the synagogue locked and failed to force entry, he randomly killed two people in the streets. In Hanau in the state of Hesse, another gunman had shot and killed nine people, who had an immigrant background, in two shisha bars on 20 February 2020. AfD has frequently been accused of serving as inspiration for the acts of right-wing terrorists (Neuerer, 2019).

The first reaction of the federal party executive of AfD to the announcement by Haldenwang was to tell the "Flügel" on 20 March 2020 that they expected them to self-dissolve their intra-party group until 30 April 2020 (AfD, 2020). Höcke, the founder of the group, declared on the following day that the Flügel would comply with this request (Die Zeit, 2020a). Meuthen, who sensed an opportunity to strengthen his position in AfD, suggested that the "Flügel," which has several

thousand members,[7] should split and commonly resign from the party (Balser et al., 2020). What he had in mind was the creation of two parties with a focus on different constituencies. In his calculation, an AfD without the "Flügel" would become much more attractive and electable for middle-class conservatives who had previously voted for the centre-right parties CDU/CSU and FDP. On the other hand, the milieu of the "Flügel" could act more uninhibited without the impediments by the national-liberal wing of AfD and appeal more freely to the potential voters on the far right (he called this milieu "state paternalist" in a euphemistic effort to avoid terms such as neofascist or right-wing extremist as attributes for the "Flügel") (Roeser, 2020a). This contradicted a statement of his then co-chair Gauland who had strongly supported Höcke after his electoral success in the 2019 state elections of Thuringia and declared that Höcke was "at the centre of the party" (Gauland as cited in FAZ, 2019). Two years earlier, when Petry wanted to expel Höcke, he had also defended him, saying that he was "the soul of the party" (Gauland as cited in Lau, 2017). The new party co-chair Tino Chrupalla, who had replaced Gauland in this position on 30 November 2019, also saw reason to stress that "the Flügel is part of AfD" (Chrupalla as cited in Tagesschau, 2019).

Meuthen finally saw himself forced to backtrack on his proposal for a party split. Several high-ranking party functionaries such as Gauland, Chrupalla, von Storch, Höcke, and others had criticized his idea in strongly worded statements (Roeser, 2020a). Meuthen (as cited in Roeser, 2020b) even saw the need to officially admit to the executive board of AfD that he had made a "grave mistake" with his proposal.

Meuthen did not leave it at this first attempt to take action against the "Flügel." He initiated a party expulsion procedure against Kalbitz, the number two behind Höcke in this right-wing extremist intra-party group. It had come to light that Kalbitz was a member of REP between 1993 and 1994 (Pfahl-Traughber, 2020). He was also seen and photographed at a camp of the neo-Nazi group *Homeland-Faithful German Youth* (Heimattreue Deutsche Jugend, HDJ) and appeared in other right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi contexts (Roeser, 2020c). When the executive board of AfD expelled Kalbitz from the party on 15 May 2020 they did so not for reasons of the incompatibility of Kalbitz's worldviews with the programme of AfD, instead they chose to justify the exclusion with a violation of the party statutes by Kalbitz. They said that he had not declared his former membership in right-wing extremist parties and organizations when he applied for membership in AfD, which would have been his duty according to the rules of the party (Pfahl-Traughber, 2020). These contacts of Kalbitz into the right-wing extremist milieu had long been known publicly. Therefore, the timing of the attempted exclusion is interesting. It happened at a time when AfD came under pressure due to the observation of the party by BfV and the looming threat that not just the "Flügel" but the party as a whole could be categorized as right-wing extremist by BfV. So, expelling Kalbitz could be interpreted as a message of AfD to BfV, providing proof that they were trying to keep their ranks clear from any neo-Nazis. But it can also be seen as an opportunistic move by Meuthen, who had for many years had no problems

with being supported by Kalbitz and his milieu (Pfahl-Traughber, 2020), and who now saw a chance to consolidate his position at the top of AfD.

It can be taken for granted that Gauland, Kalbitz's long-term mentor, was very unhappy with the decision of the executive board to exclude Kalbitz from the party. Indeed, he voted against this measure, so did Chrupalla and Weidel (Pfahl-Traughber, 2020). Which means that several high-ranking representatives of the party were content with the fact that someone who had concealed his neo-Nazi past when joining the party was now holding top positions in that party. When the executive board of AfD rendered its verdict, Kalbitz was chairman of the party in the state of Brandenburg and floor leader for his party group in the legislature of that state – two positions which he had inherited from his mentor Gauland, who – after the 2017 federal election – made his ultimate move from the subnational state level to the federal level. Kalbitz also was a member of the executive board of AfD. He often appeared publicly at the side of Höcke with whom he had teamed up in the social populist effort to make AfD more appealing to workers.

Some observers have likened Meuthen's current position in AfD to that of Lucke and Petry at the end of their careers at the top of the party, and emphasized the shaky ground which he seems to be on now, considering that all the high-profile players of AfD are opposed to his moves against the "Flügel" (Roeser, 2020c). However, the situation of the party has changed considerably since the years of Lucke and Petry. The party has moved to the far-right corner of the political spectrum and now has to deal with the stigma of being labelled right-wing extremist by BfV. Against this backdrop, Meuthen's role as representative of the national-liberal wing is vital for the party, because his is the most likely position from which an attempt could come to rein in the right-wing extremists in the party. On the other hand, it may well be that Meuthen has overestimated the leeway he has in the party; and it certainly is possible that he has already made some enemies with the measures that he proposed and actually took against the "Flügel."

Höcke released a video in which he announced that the "Flügel" would follow the request of the executive board of AfD and dissolve itself (Roeser, 2020b). In the video, he praised the great achievements of the "Flügel" in the impassionate style which he has become known for. It is mostly due to his histrionics that he regularly attracts larger crowds of followers to his rallies and other public appearances. There is no issue whatsoever which he cannot somehow imbue with elevated historical importance (he is a former history teacher). The nationalist pathos in his speeches is often reminiscent of the performances of leading figures of the Nazi regime.

However, strong doubt is warranted regarding the sincerity of Höcke's announcement (Kemper, 2020; Roeser, 2020b). The organizational structures of the "Flügel" within AfD have been dissolved – each state had its own leading "Flügel" representative ("Obmann") and organizational substructure – and the online media presence of the group, such as their homepage, Facebook page, and YouTube channel, was shut down, but all those who were part of the "Flügel" are still well integrated in AfD. They see themselves as vanguard of the radical right populist movement in Germany and have their firm place in AfD. In his farewell

speech to the "Flügel," Höcke hinted at the afterlife of the organization within the party: "The Flügel is a unique success story – and a success story that may now be formally completed, but which is being continued in a certain way because the spirit of the Flügel will of course remain in the party" (Höcke as cited in Roeser, 2020b).

For a long time, all major parties in the party system of Germany have consistently and categorically rejected any cooperation with AfD. This common position seemingly confirmed the claims of AfD that these parties are colluding in their work against "the people" – AfD represents itself as the only true representative of "the people." In their logic, working against AfD is tantamount to working against "the people." Recently, this general self-commitment of non-cooperation with AfD by the mainstream parties of Germany has suffered some cracks. First, the floor leader of CDU in the state legislature of Saxony Christian Hartmann was not ready to rule out the possibility of a coalition of his party with AfD after the 2019 election in his state – a statement which he later retracted, saying that AfD would be the main adversary of CDU in the upcoming elections (Tagesspiegel, 2018). Then one of the deputy floor leaders of CDU in the parliament of Saxony-Anhalt, Ulrich Thomas, raised the possibility of a coalition between CDU and AfD in that state (Die Zeit, 2019a).

Finally, in February 2020, it became clear that the front of the centre-right parties CDU and FDP against AfD was crumbling when Thomas Kemmerich, a member of FDP, was elected state governor in Thuringia with the votes of CDU, FDP, and AfD (that is, with the votes of Höcke and his party group in the state legislature of Thuringia). The election of the head of one of the German federal states with the votes of AfD caused a public firestorm which forced Kemmerich to resign after being in office for just one month (FAZ, 2020). The election of Kemmerich was orchestrated in a way that it could be portrayed as an accident that he was elected with the support of AfD. But such accidents rarely happen in politics; it soon became quite clear that some backroom talks must have taken place and respective arrangements agreed to in the run-up to that election (Quent, 2020).

The development of the political positions of AfD since its foundation can be described as a permanent movement to the right. With each internal conflict among the leadership of the party AfD moved further to the right "from Lucke to Petry to Gauland" (Jesse, 2019, p. 114). AfD can today clearly be classified as in large parts right-wing extremist. This does not mean that the party is not radical right populist. On the contrary, it points to the difficulties that sometimes exist with distinguishing radical right populism from right-wing extremism (Virchow, 2016a; Von Beyme, 2019) This permanent shift of AfD to the right, interestingly, did not hurt the party at the ballot box. They only recently lost support in opinion polls. In a poll published by the *Allensbach Institute* in June 2020, AfD for the first time since 2017 fell below the mark of 10 per cent, when they reached only 9.5 per cent among those who were asked about their vote in the next federal election (Handelsblatt, 2020). There are two possible explanations for this loss of support among voters. It could be an effect of the classification of vital parts of the

party as right-wing extremist by BfV; it could also have to do with the coronavirus crisis and the decreasing demand for political disruption among voters. It probably is a combination of both.

Conclusion

Compared to other radical right populist parties in Germany, AfD had exceptional success among voters. The party started out as an economic liberal party with the focus on Euroscepticism but soon shifted toward the right and adopted a nativist ideology. The party went through several development phases and with each phase moved a step further to the right. Today the national-conservative and national populist wing is dominating the party. It went so far to the right that it attracted the attention of the BfV and other inland security agencies, which are now observing the party and individual members of the party due to the suspicion of right-wing extremism. This could be a turning point for the party, because the observation by BfV certainly brings a stigmatization with it.

Notes

1 Translated from the German by the author.
2 Translated from the German by the author.
3 In the following, I will use the German name of this wing, which became quite important in the further development of the party.
4 The membership of "Der Flügel" was to a large part identical with that of the Patriotic Platform.
5 It is difficult to place this wing, which is smaller than the two other – dominant – wings, within the party. It appears that there is some overlap with positions of both the national-liberal as well as the national-conservative/national populist wing. My tentative assessment is that the Christian-fundamentalist wing is more on the national-liberal side.
6 A special regulation made it possible for DP to enter the Bundestag despite the fact that they missed getting over the 5-per cent threshold for parliamentary representation. A party that gets at least three direct mandates (according to the element of the plurality system in the electoral system of Germany) is also allocated seats according to proportional representation, even in cases where the party concerned does not get over the 5 per cent hurdle. In 1957, DP won six direct mandates.
7 Andreas Kemper (2020) estimates that 40 per cent of the members of AfD belonged to the "Flügel."

5

AfD'S RADICAL RIGHT POPULISM

In the previous chapters I have frequently referred to AfD as a populist party. I will now attempt to provide evidence for the assumption that AfD is in fact such a party. The analysis of AfD's populism is based on a content analysis of the party's programmes and the examination of statements that were made by representatives of AfD. According to Mudde's (2007, p. 22) "maximum definition" for radical right populism, populism becomes radical right populism when it is combined with at least two other ideological features: nativism and authoritarianism. The presence of these two necessary features of radical right populism will also be examined in this chapter. There are other features in AfD's ideology, such as Islamophobia, antisemitism, antifeminism, which partly overlap with these necessary additional features of radical right populism. These ideological elements will be investigated more deeply in the individual chapters that follow.

AfD's populism

One of the main features of populism is the strong opposition of the populists against "the elite" or "the establishment." Populists often depict mainstream parties as representatives or part of "the elite." Hence, these parties are essentially seen as *enemies* of "the people," who have to be destroyed. For populists, politics is war, which is not over until the enemy is defeated; the only thing that counts is "complete defeat" (Taggart, 2019, p. 82). Höcke (2017), in his infamous speech to the *Young Alternative* in Dresden in January 2017, displayed exactly this mentality when he proclaimed that what Germany needs is the "complete victory of AfD." The ideal of "complete victory" involves the populist's denial of any legitimacy of their political adversaries and their political goals. This denial of legitimacy especially concerns the elected representatives of mainstream parties, who are morally

defamed as corrupt and incompetent by the populists, and – with them – the procedures that brought them into power (Müller, 2016b).

"Complete victory" either means the establishment of a majoritarian form of democracy or an all-out authoritarian system. As Taggart (2019, p. 82) points out, this war-like enmity may even go as far as "the suspension of rights, just as might be expected in the situation of states going to war." This is especially true for populists in power, who have the means to suspend such rights. The evidence is mounting now that modern populists, once they are in power, tend to make use of that power to undermine democratic institutions and the system of checks-and-balances which keeps the authoritarian instincts of the executive in check. They may also try to restrict or eliminate the opportunities of the press to scrutinize those in power and make it difficult for any remaining opposition to challenge the incumbent government. Nothing less can be expected from AfD should they ever come into a position of government power.

AfD has displayed a *strong hostility* toward the established mainstream parties in German politics. This hostility goes far beyond the customary adversary of political parties which are competing in a democratic system for the support of the voters. AfD is not simply opposed to these parties, they see these parties as enemies, who have to be destroyed. For Höcke, politics works in the sense of Carl Schmitt's (2007, pp. 26–27) concept of the political with its distinction between "friend" and "enemy": "Who is friend, who is enemy? Friend is, who serves the interests of the nation, enemy is who is opposed to these" (Höcke, 2018, p. 274). He leaves no doubt that in his view the established parties are working against the interests of the nation.

Representatives of AfD often refer to the mainstream parties as "old parties" (Altparteien), implying their obsolescence. "Old parties" is a fighting word which AfD adopted from the FPÖ (Müller, 2002). This Austrian radical right populist party serves as a model for AfD in many ways. "AfD argues that these parties form a 'cartel,' insufficiently controlled by [the] media" (Backes, 2018, p. 457). In their programme for the federal election 2017, AfD (2017, p. 8) claims that the established parties in Germany are forming an "oligarchy" which tries to bring the state under its control. "This oligarchy has the levers of state power [. . .] in its hands" (AfD, 2017, p. 8). According to that programme, this "oligarchy" also controls political education and has the power to influence the population through information campaigns and via the media. The media are depicted as just another part of the system that caters to the needs of this "oligarchy." From their perspective, the German state has essentially become a "party state" (Parteienstaat) – a state that is controlled by parties as opposed to "the people." Representatives of AfD frequently complain about the abuse of power by the "party state." Dirk Nockemann, chairman of AfD in the city state of Hamburg, for instance, said that it was a "victory of the party state" and "a sad day for our democracy," when Kemmerich, the FDP politician who, in February 2020, was elected as governor of Thuringia with the votes of AfD, had to resign from his position soon after he was elected

(AfD Hamburg, 2020). Nockemann attributed this to the pressure that was exerted on CDU and FDP in Thuringia by the federal leadership of these parties in Berlin.

What manifests itself in this enmity toward the mainstream political parties is the strong reservations which populists generally have regarding intermediate institutions (Müller, 2016a). They question the legitimacy of these parties and their hold on power because they are a crucial element in the system of democratic representation, a system which, from a populist point of view, serves "the elite" in distorting the "will of the people," which makes these parties elitist themselves.[1] In their basic programme of 2016, AfD (2016, p. 8) makes this elite responsible for all those developments in German society which they think are going wrong:

> The secret Sovereign is a small, powerful political leadership group within the parties. It is responsible for the misdirected developments of the past decades. A political class of professional politicians has emerged whose primary concern is their power, status and material well-being.

In this passage of the party programme, AfD describes an elite that is out to exploit the political system for personal gain. The elite is depicted as a "political class" which empowered itself to take away sovereignty from "the people" and instate itself as the actual sovereign.

In an article published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Gauland (2018a) described another form of elite to which AfD is opposed. In this piece he talked about a "new urban elite," a new "globalist class" that consists of people who work in business, politics, as well as in culture and entertainment. Gauland portrayed this elite as a cosmopolitan class that is neither connected to nor interested in the plight of the ordinary people in their home countries. According to Gauland (2018a), they live in a "sophisticated parallel society,"[2] where they can feel as "citizens of the world." He stated explicitly that it is this "globalist class" which AfD is working against, adding that AfD, in its opposition to this new elite, is representing two heterogenous groups: "the economic middle class" whose businesses are less involved in globalization and "the so-called ordinary people" (Gauland, 2018a). The latter group he described as those who still see some value in their homeland (as opposed to the elite) and who are "the first to lose their homeland, because it is their milieu which the immigrants flow into" (Gauland, 2018a). In this account, Gauland combines the vertical opposition of "the people" against "the elite" with the horizontal opposition of insiders versus outsiders, two of the main elements of radical right populism, as analyzed in Chapter 2.

AfD did not stop at questioning the legitimacy of the established parties in Germany, representatives of the party such as Gauland also frequently questioned the legitimacy of the elected government, likening it to a dictatorship. His anger was especially directed at chancellor Merkel who he referred to as "chancellor-dictator" (Gauland as cited in Pfahl-Traughber, 2019, p. 12). Such accusations have the function to justify the claim that a "system change" is necessary; and that this change can only be brought about and go in the right direction if it is led by AfD

(Pfahl-Traughber, 2019, pp. 14–15). Höcke (2018, p. 257) gave an outlook to this change, and stated that it would be conducted with "German absoluteness." He ensured his audience that "once the time of change has come, we Germans will take no half-measures" (Höcke, 2018, p. 258). Many observers of German politics have interpreted this announcement as a threat toward all those which AfD perceives as the enemy.

Aside from its opposition against "the elite," AfD claims that it is representing "the simple, that is, 'actual' people or its silent majority" (Decker, 2016a, p. 11). With its strong people-centredness AfD includes another important element of populism. From AfD's point of view, "the people" have been wilfully neglected, ignored, and betrayed by the elite, who actually pursue the destruction of "the people" and their replacement by a multi-ethnic entity, a process which Höcke (2018, p. 203) calls an " 'ethnic cleansing' of a very special kind." They conceive of "the people" as an ethnic community whose existence is threatened by the mixture with other ethnic groups. This combination of ethnic nationalism (or, more precisely: volkish nationalism, which can be understood as subtype of ethnic nationalism) and ethnopluralism is a central element of AfD's ideology and one of the main reasons why its populism can be considered as radical right populism. It is a combination of ideological features that has also been described as nativism (Mudde, 2007). Nativism involves nationalism and xenophobia. The nationalist element is represented by volkish nationalism, whereas the xenophobic part is present in the party's ethnopluralism. Xenophobia may sometimes appear in statements of AfD representatives without being embedded in the more complex ideological construct of ethnopluralism. But ethnopluralism often forms the backdrop of their xenophobic remarks or statements. These ideological features will be treated in more detail later.

According to Höcke (2018, pp. 235–236), "the people" are capable of forming a general will; and it is the task of politicians to recognize this will even "against current public sentiments." In AfD's view, the currently prevalent opinions can be ignored because public opinion is suppressed and manipulated by a media machine that is serving the elite, especially concerning issues such as criminality and immigration. They often claim that there is the same level of censorship and regimentation of the press in the Federal Republic of Germany as has been in the former German Democratic Republic (Begrich, 2018).

For AfD "the people" are supposed to be at the centre of any political activity, because they are the sovereign. Which is why "the people" are supposed to "get more direct political influence" (Gauland, 2018a). The party sees an "unmistakable gap between the people" and "the political class" (AfD, 2016, p. 13), a gap which in their view can only be closed if "the people" get involved in political decision making via instruments of direct democracy such as referenda and citizen's initiatives (AfD, 2016). The basic programme of 2016 mentions Switzerland as a model for stronger participation of "the people" in the decision-making process (AfD, 2016). But there are indications that AfD is not really interested in what the citizens actually think; they are rather seeking confirmation for what they have anyway determined to be the "real will" of "the people" (Funke & Mudra, 2018,

p. 13). As Müller (2016c, p. 188) found, populists who call for a referendum are not interested in triggering an open discussion among the citizens about a political issue, they do it "because the citizens should please confirm what the populists have already recognized as the true will of the people."

The idea of the *volonté générale* is connected with the assumption that "the people" are the sovereign, and that, therefore – at least in theory – their will should be guiding all political decisions. Only those politicians who fully commit themselves to the implementation of the general will can be truly representative of "the people." This focus on popular sovereignty involves the ideal of the direct implementation of the general will by those in power. Hence, it is not surprising that the programmes of AfD mention sovereignty quite frequently. The basic programme of 2016, includes the terms "sovereign" or "sovereignty" 17 times altogether (AfD, 2016). The programme for the federal election of 2017 mentions these terms 15 times (AfD, 2017), and the programme for the 2019 European election 24 times (AfD, 2019). These programmes frequently insist in the necessity to protect and restore German sovereignty, which they portray as heavily undermined by European integration and the shift of national sovereignty to the supranational level of the European Union (EU). The 2016 programme declares that with the European treaties of Schengen, Maastricht, and Lisbon the "sacrosanct sovereignty of the people as fundament of our state has become a fiction" (AfD, 2016, p. 8). Ostensibly, AfD's understanding of "the people" is one of "the people" as *demos*, that is, a polity concerned with the organization of its public policies – and undermined in its ability of doing so by a corrupt elite. However, on closer inspection, it turns out that "the people" are primarily conceived as *ethnos*, which also reflects on AfD's conception of popular sovereignty. In their electoral programme of 2017, the party relates the "people's sovereignty" with "cultures, languages and national identities" that have "arisen through centuries of historical developments" (AfD, 2017, p. 7). In this account, "the people" are conceived as an entity that is determined by its common identity. It presents culture, language, and the nation as the major sources of this identity. Only those who have these in common are recognized as part of "the people." In a further step, these sources of identity are – in a twofold way – connected to territory: AfD (2017, p. 7), first, states that each of these sources of identity constitutes an "indispensable space of identification" for those belonging to them, and then adds that these could only be "effectively shaped in nation-states with a democratic constitution." These references to territory indicate AfD's preference for the separation of ethnic communities as the only way to maintain them. The role which they assign to the nation-state, furthermore, shows that they see it as an important task of government to secure this separation.

What reveals itself in these statements is AfD's ethnopluralism, an ideology that supports the idea of cultural difference; however, as opposed to multiculturalism which supports difference too, it holds that different cultural identities cannot exist within the boundaries of one nation-state and should, instead, be separated, with the boundaries of those nation-states as separating lines. What also shines through in these statements is AfD's volkish nationalism. Via the link to territory, "the

people" are not only connected to culture but potentially also to blood, soil, and race. AfD's variant of "the people" is ethnicist. As Mény and Surel (2002, p. 7) point out "in most cases, an ethnicity-based conception of the people leads to exclusion, racism and xenophobia." This clearly is the case with AfD, as Höcke's (2018, p. 254) call for a "large-scale remigration project" for Muslims from Germany shows. The ethnopluralism and volkish nationalism of AfD reveals itself even more clearly in statements of individual representatives of the party. The combination of populism with these ideological features is one of the main reasons why their populism can be considered radical right populism.

AfD's nativism as combination of volkish nationalism and ethnopluralism

There are several ideological features in the positions of AfD which justify the classification of the party as radical right populist. Their ideology is a combination of populism with several ideological facets of right-wing radicalism. The core ideology of AfD, aside from populism, is their nativism, which in the case of AfD is a combination of volkish nationalism with ethnopluralism. This is why this type of nationalism needs to be examined in more detail.

Volkish nationalism is a subtype of ethnic nationalism which is focused on the formation of the so-called people's community (Volksgemeinschaft). The construction of the "people's community" was "a fundamental political goal of the National Socialists" (Wildt, 2014, p. 3). During the Nazi regime its creation was attempted through aggressive policies of inclusion and exclusion. It involved a fierce racism and antisemitism which resulted in the almost complete elimination of the Jews in Europe. AfD aims to realize this community through a process of ethnicization that strengthens the belief in an ethnicity-based collective identity (Salzborn, 2018). Ethnos, not demos, is the foundation of their political conception of "the people." Compared to the Nazis, their idea of "the people" is not so much determined by race (at least not openly in most cases) and more focused on culture. But their idea of creating a "pure people" or protecting "the people" as an entity which is imagined to be already in existence is nonetheless based on processes of inclusion-exclusion. They claim the need to exclude those who they perceive as incapable of assimilating to German culture, which is conceptualized as "guiding culture" (Leitkultur). The idea of "guiding culture" privileges German culture over other cultures (while it is ill-defined what constitutes German culture). The party programme of 2016 rejects multiculturalism with its acceptance of different cultures as a "history-blind" way of relativizing German indigenous culture and its values, and depicts it as a "serious threat for social peace and for the continued existence of the nation as a cultural entity" (AfD, 2016, p. 47). They describe it as an important task of the state and of civil society to "confidently defend German cultural identity as the guiding culture" of Germany (AfD, 2016, p. 47).

For Höcke, "the people" is an empirical reality. He described "the people" as a community which is determined by ethnicity and whose existence is under threat

due to its mixture with other ethnic groups (Höcke, 2018). In an alarmist manner he talked about the "violent transformation of the traditional nation-state into a multicultural immigration society" which – if not stopped – would inevitably result in a "cultural meltdown" (Höcke, 2018, p. 185). According to Höcke (2018, p. 201), this meltdown is wanted by those in power and orchestrated by a "transatlantic elite" which pursues "the de-nationalization of the European peoples and the transformation of the nation-states into a multi-ethnic entity." As is often the case in radical right populist statements, a conspiracy theory is used to increase the perception of the threat level. Gauland (2016) argued in a similar fashion when he accused the German government in the context of the refugee movement of 2015/2016 of "a policy of human inundation."

Höcke (2018, p. 187) warned that multiculturalism in the Western world would eventually lead to "the minorization and marginalization of the autochthonous peoples." What is particularly troublesome for Höcke is that many of the immigrants coming to Germany are Muslims. He claims that the scheme to replace the German people with another nondescript one would be especially focused on bringing as many Muslims into the country as possible (Höcke, 2018). In a certain way, Höcke (2018) equated the immigration of people from non-European countries with the Islamization of Germany. He suggested that it was necessary to "make unmistakably clear to Muslims that their religious way of life does not fit to our occidental-European culture" (Höcke, 2018, p. 197). His solution is "to reduce the number of Muslims living here" (Höcke, 2018, p. 197). To secure the privileged position of German culture as "guiding culture" in its relation to other cultures, he suggests that a "settlement monopoly" (Ansiedlungsmonopol) should be established for the indigenous people of Germany (Höcke, 2018, p. 266). This claim of privileged settlement rights for ethnic Germans connects ethnicity with territory and thus combines ethnic nationalism with ethnopluralism, and in this particular case also with Islamophobia. What also shines through in his call for the spatial separation of ethnically defined entities is the idea of the "living space," which had a long career in the Nazi period; though, back then it was primarily defined by race.

The ethnicity-based conception of "the people" in its combination with the idea of an exclusive territory for "the people" by AfD is not only aimed at the exclusion of those who are perceived as not belonging but also actively involved in the very construction of "the people." It is a process of identitarian construction that strives to transform society into community "so that the plurality of interests is replaced by the monolith of identity" (Salzborn, 2018, p. 77). The ethnicization of society has an identity-generating, that is, inclusive function. It not only makes it possible to determine who is part of the idealized community but also who does not belong. What emerges, once the transformation from society to community is completed, is "the people" in its pure form. In the volkish vision of AfD, this process of transformation would result in the elimination of "Germany's current political and civil institutions," which, according to Thomas Klikauer (2018, p. 79), is "what makes the AfD's politics no longer conservative, but reactionary."

In the following sections and throughout this book it will be demonstrated that many of the other ideological positions of AfD are entwined with this core ideology of volkish nationalism. Due to the centrality of volkish nationalism for the populist movement in Germany, Chapter 6 will look more deeply into this ideology and its connection to populism.

AfD's authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is the other necessary ideological feature which populism is combined with in radical right populism (Mudde, 2007, pp. 22–23). Nativism and authoritarianism can be seen as two distinct classes of ideological features with different functions. Nativism is at the centre of the first class which involves ideologies that concentrate on the construction of identity which always involves the nation and culture, and could additionally include ethnie, race, and religion (most likely a combination of all or some of these). These identitarian constructions form the basis for the inclusion-exclusion of individuals who are identified as native or non-native. The second class of features includes authoritarianism, the support for strong leadership, a strong state, strong borders, and law and order policies. The features in this second class are to some extent all related to the ability of the state to wield power and to make use of its means of force and coercion. In the populist radical right thinking, the two classes of features are interlinked, because the second class of features is instrumental for implementing measures of social closure, that is, drawing the lines which separate those on the inside from those on the outside effectively and authoritatively.

Mackert (2019b) has emphasized the role which populists reserve for the state in struggles of social closure. It is not so much populists in general but more likely radical right populists who make use of the "asymmetric opportunity structures" which emerge with the discriminatory treatment of weaker groups in society by the state. That may even happen in societies that are politically organized as liberal democracies. As Mackert (2019b, p. 10) points out, it is important in this context that

> the modern liberal-democratic state cannot be conceptualised simply as the counterpart to populism. Quite the contrary, democratic politics and state activities are part of emerging populist strategies as they both prepare the ground for it to flourish.

Indeed, the political system does not have to be turned into a fully-fledged authoritarian one for the state to be able to make use of its power against weaker groups in society. The state in a liberal democratic system may do that just as well; and radical right populists can rely on it in their campaigns. Once they are in control of government, they tend to intensify the use of the means of force and coercion against those weaker groups. This is what could be observed in the United States after Donald Trump became president, with the treatment of undocumented immigrants

who crossed the border into the United States, when thousands of children were separated from their parents and put into cages for many weeks (Domonoske & Gonzalez, 2018). Another example is Hungary, where the Orbán government took drastic measures to prevent the influx of refugees and made it illegal for citizens of Hungary to assist refugees in their country in any way (Vonberg & Clarke, 2018). As Ruth Wodak (2015, p. 26) has noted, "the appeal of authoritarian politics and a dislike of foreigners . . . appear to be ideologically connected for many voters of right-wing populist parties."

Radical right populists claim privileges for "the people" over outsiders and new arrivals and they expect government to protect these privileges. But from a radical right populist point of view, governments in the liberal democracies of the West have been severely compromised by "elites" who were all too ready to give up national sovereignty to the advantage of transnational institutions and who colluded with all kinds of outsiders to weaken "the people." The alleged threat to the privileges which ordinary people enjoy over outsiders provides radical right populists with opportunities to claim the need for a strong state and to offer potential voters the implementation of measures that would protect these privileges and reinstate "the people" in their rightful privileged position. In doing so they can rely on authoritarian attitudes that are already present within a certain portion of the citizenry (Heitmeyer, 2018a). Hence, the authoritarian shift which radical right populists propose corresponds to a demand by those citizens for a strong state and for law and order policies.

In this context, Stuart Hall's concept of "authoritarian populism" comes to mind, which he coined to describe a law and order campaign that was launched by the Thatcher government in the 1980s to "win the people" for "policies and philosophies designed to transform the democratic content of the state in its actual mode of operation" (Hall, 1990, p. 126). In this process, the *collective subject* of "the people" was deliberately constructed as a *non-class subject* which processed social conflicts outside of any class logic (Hall, 1990, p. 139), and "the people" were pitted against immigrants or citizens with an immigrant background who were cast as potentially criminal and deviant. But on closer inspection, doubt might be raised whether this case actually constitutes populism, because it does not meet all the criteria of the minimal definition of populism as advanced by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) – a definition which, of course, did not exist yet at the time when Hall developed his concept of authoritarian populism. Although Hall's concept potentially includes the horizontal opposition between "the people" on the inside and the "others" on the outside, or internal outsiders as explained by Brubaker (2019, 2017), it lacks the crucial element of a vertical opposition of "the people" and "the elite." The Thatcher campaign was a chauvinist national-conservative law and order campaign which used racism and xenophobia in its attempt to appeal to "the people," but it was only partially populist. Hall's concept of authoritarian populism is therefore not really helpful in explaining the current tendency of radical right populists to resort to authoritarianism.

It has to be noted here that Mudde (2007), when he included authoritarianism in his definition of radical right populism, did not so much use the term to denote non-democratic regimes but the general disposition of individuals toward authority as described in the study by Adorno et al. (2019) on the *Authoritarian Personality*. Adorno and his team gathered a number of variables (the "F-scale") which together were thought to "form a single syndrome, a more or less enduring structure in a person that renders him receptive to antidemocratic propaganda" (Adorno et al., 2019, p. 228). Some of the character traits listed in that study appear to have specific importance in the context of radical right populism. This is particularly true for "conventionalism," "authoritarian submission," "authoritarian aggression," "stereotypy," and "projectivity" (Adorno et al., 2019, p. 228). Authoritarian submission and authoritarian aggression are two sides of the same coin. The authoritarian personality is submissive and has an "uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the ingroup," at the same time an individual with this type of personality can be expected to have the "tendency to be on the lookout for, and to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values" (Adorno et al., 2019, p. 228). There can be no doubt that there is a connection between the authoritarian personality and authoritarian politics. Those who support, pursue, and implement authoritarian programmes can be expected to have the corresponding character traits as a precondition for that pursuit.

Elements of AfD's party programmes and individual statements of party representatives point to the presence of authoritarianism in AfD in both senses of the term discussed previously: as support for the strong state, strong men, and law and order, and as personality trait. As personality trait it can be found on the supply side and on the demand side of radical right populism as well. The existence of it as a personality trait on the supply side can be shown in statements of individual party representatives; but there is also empirical evidence for its existence on the demand side.

In its 2016 programme, AfD stressed the importance of internal security for the party. The document states that security is the top priority for AfD and that all other issues are of secondary nature. Literally translated it says that "other issues have to subordinate themselves to this" (AfD, 2016, p. 24). These words are the expression of a strong law and order attitude. From AfD's perspective, law and order is compromised in Germany and must therefore be restored. The programme claims that "the organs and institutions of the state must again abide by the law" (AfD, 2016, p. 24). The adverb "again" points to the future and indicates that this is presently not the case, that "the organs and institutions of the state" violate the law on a regular basis. AfD claims that internal security is rapidly declining and that it must be counteracted by an "unleashing" of internal security policy (AfD, 2016, p. 24). This unleashing of the security state involves the strengthening of the police by "adjusting their possibilities of intervention" to the existing challenges (AfD, 2016, p. 24) as well as by tightening measures of criminal justice such as treating juvenile offenders who are of age principally according to adult criminal law and reduce the age of criminal accountability to twelve years (AfD, 2016).

AfD claims that the criminal justice system in Germany primarily works to protect perpetrators not their victims. In this context, they point to the "the considerable proportion of foreigners, particularly in the field of violence and drug crimes" (AfD, 2016, p. 25). According to AfD, such offenses are currently only met with "half-hearted measures under the laws concerning aliens" (AfD, 2016, p. 26), and they suggest that far more could be done regarding the deportation of foreigners who committed crimes in Germany. For foreigners who are suspected to be connected to organized crime, the mere *suspicion* should be reason enough for their deportation (AfD, 2016). If this would become law in Germany, no foreigner could feel safe from arbitrary persecution by state authorities. AfD also wants to make it more difficult for those who were convicted of a crime to appeal a verdict. The programme explicitly claims that "reversals of verdicts," as well as "case dismissals" and rejections of a verdict involving the direction of a retrial by an appeals court should be abolished (AfD, 2016, p. 25). The stated aim of these changes is to speed up judicial decision making. What it would essentially do is remove legal remedies from the criminal justice system and make successful appeals impossible.

AfD also advocates the relaxation of data protection laws to make it easier for law enforcement agencies to hunt down and prosecute criminals. The programme states that "the right of citizens to security is to be rated higher than that of a criminal to informational self-determination" (AfD, 2016, p. 27). This is the classical argument of those in favour of a strong state which involves the claim that the average law-abiding citizen has nothing to fear from the expansion of the surveillance state and that it is only directed against those who are breaking the law. These passages from the basic programme of AfD show clearly that the party is trying to create an image of a law and order party of itself that is tough on crime.

The attempt of the party to create an impression of crime generally running rampant in Germany does not correspond to reality. A look into the criminal statistics of the last years shows that there indeed was an increase of crime in the years 2014 to 2016, but this can mostly be attributed to the refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016, which brought many people to Germany who committed crimes such as the unauthorized crossing of the border into Germany and other offences against the laws of residency. In 2019, crime (not counting offences against immigration laws) was at its lowest since 2005 (Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, 2019). Contrary to the claim of AfD, the overall trend in Germany is a reduction of crime, not its increase.

Some of AfD's representatives made statements that show a clear propensity toward authoritarian solutions for perceived problems. Höcke (2018, p. 254) claimed the necessity of a "large-scale remigration project" of migrants who are incapable of assimilating to the guiding culture of Germany. He stated that a policy of "well-tempered cruelty" toward these immigrants would be inevitable, citing Peter Sloterdijk (2015), who had used this phrase in reference to possible reforms of

the German asylum regime. Höcke (2018, p. 254) said that he wanted law enforcement agencies to act resolutely when implementing this remigration project which would inevitably result in "human hardship and unsightly scenes." Which is acceptable to Höcke (2018, p. 254) as long as it is "in the interest of the autochthonous population."

Höcke left no doubt that, when AfD comes to power, swift and relentless action will be taken. This would result in some unfortunate but acceptable losses: "We will lose a few people who are too weak or unwilling to oppose the progressive Africanization, Orientalization and Islamization" (Höcke, 2018, p. 257). Höcke got involved in a discourse of cultural decay, decadence, degeneration, and the descend of humanity into the existence of a shallow mass society – developments which he blames on modernity (Höcke, 2018). This lamentation culminates in a diatribe that is clearly driven by the fear to lose control. According to Höcke (2018, pp. 261–262) the world is experiencing "the final dissolution of all things," and this dissolution ranges "from the identities of the sexes and ethnic groups, the families, the religious ties over the cultural traditions, the sense of form and measure [. . .] to the protective and forming borders of states and cultures." He criticizes modernity for pursuing the "goal of continuous fluidity" and bringing about a "relapse into the shapeless and desolate mass of pre-worldly chaos" (Höcke, 2018, p. 263). What's necessary to avert this chaos, in Höcke's eyes (2018, p. 266), is the "rediscovery of one's own," a formula for the identitarian formation of "the people," whom he wants to forge a "symbiosis" with the state in order to strengthen the nation (Höcke, 2018, pp. 269–270). This would require a "reconstruction of the state" (Höcke, 2018, p. 269) and a replacement of the old elites by "a new political elite," which would have to fulfil the main task of sorting out who is a friend and who is an enemy to "the people" and then take the necessary measures to fend off these enemies (Höcke, 2018, pp. 273–274).

Here Höcke explicitly refers to Schmitt's *Concept of the Political*, who was one of the main authors of the *Conservative Revolution* – a heterogenous group of reactionaries of the interwar period, who wanted to replace the Weimar Republic with an authoritarian system. Today, Schmitt is strongly revered by the intellectual *New Right* in Germany. There is no author among this group who would receive more adoration (Lenk et al., 1997; Woods, 2007). It is not by chance that Höcke's antimodern deliberations about loss and decay sound very much like the doomsayers of the *Conservative Revolution*, Oswald Spengler, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and Edgar Julius Jung. Höcke has long-standing contacts to figures of the *New Right* and appeared as speaker at an event hosted by the IfS (Kellershohn, 2016a), a radical right think tank which was founded in 2000 by, among others, Götz Kubitschek and Karlheinz Weißmann, and is today led by Eric Lehnert,[3] and considered a central node in the network of the radical right in Germany (Kellershohn, 2016a). The *New Right* strongly relies on the authors of the *Conservative Revolution*. They see themselves as intellectual heirs and successors to these reactionaries of Weimar (Woods, 2007). Like their intellectual idols, they are cultural pessimists who expect

the apocalypse to happen any day. But, as I pointed out in an earlier work, their apocalyptic talk is self-contradictory:

> In addition to the hope it wants to yield by its elitist imagination, it is eager to attest to the futility of any hope by pointing to the impending demise of culture, which is causally linked to the decline of the *elite*.
>
> *(Havertz, 2008a, p. 527)*

There can be no doubt that the Conservative Revolution was an elitist intellectual formation; the same is true for the intellectual New Right in Germany today. Hence, it appears rather odd that a radical right populist party like AfD would take its cues from an elitist grouping such as the New Right. AfD's commitment to "the people" and the implementation of the general will is what distinguishes them from these elitist right-wing extremists. A populist radical right party "cannot be elitist, as this is the antithesis of populism" (Mudde, 2007, p. 24). So, what was Höcke actually doing when he advocated the installation of "a new political elite"; and is there an elitist element to AfD's agenda? These are interesting questions for further research on this topic.

The cultural pessimism of the populist radical right provides the backdrop for the authoritarian backlash which has the aim to reverse all those emancipations which modernity has brought for the German society. This pertains particularly to the liberalization of German society and culture in the wake of the student movement of 1968. The "68ers" have become an enemy stereotype for the radical right in Germany. "68" stands for "political projects and actors who, particularly in the 1960s, campaigned for the breaking up of authoritarian structures in society, the state, and the family" (Virchow, 2016b, p. 22). Those active in this movement also tried to come to terms with National Socialism and its crimes. What emerged in the 1960s was the New Left and the new social movements which had some success in the (neo)liberal transformation of German society. But from a radical right point of view, these emancipations and liberations are all signs of the demise of Germany, which they hold the generation of 68 responsible for.

What helped the authoritarian backlash to gain traction was the global financial crisis of 2008 and the euro crisis which started in 2009. With these crises the apocalyptic warnings of demise and decline by the radical right gained plausibility for some citizens who were susceptible to these messages. Certainly, with these crises the world looked more perilous to many of them, especially those who were directly affected by the economic turmoil. But these crises only brought developments into sharper relief that were already under way with the neoliberal restructuring of the German economy which had accelerated after German reunification. For many citizens the loss of control over their lives and occupational futures became reality. This loss of control is real and multifaceted and especially affects those who are dependent on wage labour for their livelihoods. It involves the "material reproduction, political participation and social inclusion" of these citizens (Heitmeyer, 2018b, p. 120). Hence, an increasing proportion of the population

sees itself confronted with social disintegration and the loss of power. It results in a general sense of uncertainty and insecurity, and opens opportunity structures for radical right populists to "offer orientation through authoritarian, xenophobic, and nationalist-social Darwinist interpretations" of the challenges which these citizens are facing and for the changes that are going on in their social environment (Urban, 2018, p. 188).

A certain portion of the population answers positively to these offers. An empirical study by Jule-Marie Lorenzen et al. (2018, p. 150) found that AfD sympathizers showed "more illiberal or authoritarian tendencies" than the average respondent to their survey. They are highly dissatisfied with the economic and social conditions in Germany and tend to see themselves as losers of modernization, especially in the East of Germany (Lorenzen et al., 2018). But these citizens do not simply respond positively to the offers which radical right populists make. These offers partly correspond to a demand that does already exist within the population. Some of the reasons for this demand have been explained earlier. They have to do with a general sense of a loss of control and the uncertainties and insecurities resulting from it. As Oliver Decker (2018) pointed out correctly, conceptions of populism on their own will not be able to fully grasp this phenomenon. They need to be complemented by social-psychological research which explains the re-emergence of the authoritarian personality in Germany. There is much to suggest that authoritarian characters hope to overcome their own weakness and insecurity by turning to authority.

Conclusion

There is plenty of evidence that AfD indeed is a radical right populist party. In their official documents as well as in individual statements of party representatives, AfD stressed its commitment toward "the people" and their strong opposition against "the elite," which they portrayed as corrupt and primarily pursuing their own gain. According to AfD, the mainstream parties have morphed into a "political class," an "oligarchy" that has betrayed "the people" and sold them out to supranational institutions and transnational corporations. AfD also poses as representative of "the people's" will and claims to be the only political force capable of restoring the position of "the people" as sovereign and political decision maker in all matters of national concern, insofar AfD fully meets Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's (2017, p. 6) minimal definition for populism.

The presence of nativism and authoritarianism as elements of AfD's ideological foundation could also be demonstrated. AfD's nativism can be described as a combination of volkish nationalism and ethnopluralism, which both focus on the creation of identitarian in- and out-groups that are based on ethnocultural differences and provide the pretext for decisions about the inclusion of the groups in or their exclusion them from society. The presence of authoritarianism could be attested in both senses, as support for the use of force and coercion by the state against minorities and those who behave in a way that is taken to undermine social conventions and dissolve social structures, and as increased incidence of personalities

with authoritarian character traits who respond positively to the populist radical right propaganda of AfD. Hence, we can conclude that AfD also meets the "maximum definition" by Mudde (2007, pp. 20–23) for radical right populism and can be properly addressed as a radical right populist party.

Notes

1 The strong doubts of populists about intermediate institutions do not only concern institutions of democratic representation but also the courts, the media, and NGOs, which from a populist perspective all tend to interfere with the direct implementation of the will of "the people" (Harel, 2020).
2 In this context, it is interesting that the term "parallel society" has often been used by right-wing radicals to describe the districts in German cities that are inhabited by larger shares of immigrants.
3 In this context it is noteworthy that Lehnert has also taken on a second job as a research assistant for Harald Weyel, a member of the Bundestag for AfD (Wiegel, 2019).

6

VOLKISH NATIONALISM AS CORE IDEOLOGY

Volkish thought has a long history in Germany. It can be traced back to the end of the 18th century and was radicalized by the second half of the 19th century, when antisemitism became a core element of this ideology. During the Nazi period, volkish thought was synonymous with National Socialism. Its main goal was the creation of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community), the homogenous national community of "the people." After the Second World War, volkish nationalism was discredited but survived as part of the collective consciousness of right-wing extremist circles.

Today, radical right populists in Germany want to revive volkish thinking and rehabilitate its vocabulary. As will be shown in this chapter, volkish nationalism is present in many statements of leading party representatives of AfD and in the programmes of the party. Its main objective is, again, the formation of the homogenous community of "the people." Radical right populists in Germany focus on volkish nationalism because they want to use its logic of inclusion-exclusion for the identitarian construction of the nation as well as against the presence of immigrants, especially Muslims. Several recent studies came to the conclusion that volkish nationalism is the core ideology of the radical right populists of AfD (Kellershohn, 2016b, 2016c, 2018; Häusler, 2018a, 2018b; Havertz, 2019; Salzborn, 2018; Wildt, 2017).

The combination of volkish nationalism and populism has the potential to increase the aggression directed against immigrants exponentially, because both focus on the creation of the "pure people" as homogenous community. Volkish nationalism and populism have in common the idea of the pure homogenous people, which is a social construct in both cases. Since the purity of "the people," which they try to achieve is not provided (and can never be reached) (Balibar, 1991a), its proponents are permanently engaged in an attempt to create it.

Hence, the interminable effort of populism and volkish nationalism to sort out who belongs to "the people" and who doesn't.

On closer inspection it turns out that volkish nationalism already has a xenophobic component: Its concentration on purity does necessarily result in the assertion of a need for an exclusion of those who do not belong to "the people." The combination of nationalism and xenophobia is what Mudde (2007) dubbed nativism, which is a term that until recently was primarily used in American and Australian contexts. Nativism "holds that states should be inhabited only by members of the native group," and all others must be excluded because they are seen as "fundamentally threatening the homogenous nation-state" (Mudde, 2007, p. 22). The ethnic element in ethnic nationalism amplifies the exclusionary tendency of nativism. Ethnicity is the decisive factor based on which ethnic nationalists make the decision about who belongs to the nation and who does not. Tamir Bar-On (2018) consequently uses the terms "ethnic nationalism" and "nativism" interchangeably.

As will be shown in this chapter, there can be no doubt that for many in AfD volkish nationalism, this subtype of ethnic nationalism is an important basis for their claims to restrict immigration to Germany. The chapter starts with some important distinctions regarding the concept of nationalism. This is followed by an analysis of the nuanced differences between volkish nationalism and ethnic nationalism. I will show that it is primarily the position which volkish nationalism gives "the people" that distinguishes it from other types of nationalism; and it will become clear why it is sometimes more precise (and useful) to speak about volkish nationalism than of ethnic nationalism when referring to the nationalism of radical right populists in Germany. I will then turn to AfD's volkish nationalism and to the xenophobia of the party.

Volkish nationalism and ethnic nationalism

In the international literature, volkish nationalism is rarely treated as a separate type of nationalism. The term "volkish" is almost never mentioned and the term "ethnic nationalism" is sometimes used to denote volkish nationalism. This is problematic, because, as I will show in this and the next section, there are slight but significant differences between both terms.

The dominant view in the literature is that the idea of the nation is a modern phenomenon. Many authors who represent different schools of thought and disciplines such as historians and social scientists agree on the modern character of the nation (Anderson, 2016; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992; Kohn, 1965). This modernist approach has to be distinguished from perennialist and primordial understandings of the phenomenon, which assume that nations have existed for a long time – since prehistoric times or from all eternity respectively (Smith, 2010). Ethnic nationalism and volkish nationalism both often are perennialist. However, it is important to note that not all perennialist approaches to nationalism constitute ethnic nationalism.[1]

Another important distinction is between voluntarist and organicist types of nationalism. In the voluntarist approach, individual citizens have the freedom to decide whether they want to identify with the nation which they were born into. The organic type of nationalism does not provide this choice. Here one is part of the nation from birth and will always be so. Salzborn (2017a) describes volkish ideology as an organic approach where the volkish community is conceived as an organic whole. The individual has no independent place in this community, it is seen as an organ that has to make its contribution to the whole, for this whole to function well.

In our context, the most important distinction is between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism. While civic nationalism is synonymous with "state" or "political" nationalism, ethnic nationalism is alternatively sometimes called "cultural" or "racial" nationalism (Mudde, 2007, p. 17). Civic nationalism has the potential to be inclusive by conceiving minorities and outsiders as part of the nation, but ethnic nationalism is an "exclusive form of nationalism" which draws firm boundaries along the lines of ethnicity to shut out minorities and outsiders (Bar-On, 2018, p. 28). As Benjamin De Cleen (2017, p. 344) pointed out "nationalist discourse is structured around an in/out relation, with the 'in' consisting of the members of the nation and the 'out' of different types of non-members." When nationalism is combined with an ethnic component, ethnicity becomes the main criterion for the decision about who belongs and who does not belong to the nation.

As pointed out earlier, volkish nationalism is a subtype of ethnic nationalism. The term "ethnic" "suggests a gestalt of interrelated primordial bonds, kinship, affinity, attachment, and grounds for self-esteem" (Snyder, 1990, p. 94). The ethnic component in ethnic nationalism strengthens the demarcations along which membership in the nation is decided and exclusion from the nation is eased. In this operation, ethnicity may adopt the meaning of race; and nationalist movements may invent an ethnic consciousness "in the form of racism" (Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 65). Although there may be a biological or socio-biological component in ethnic nationalism, "the crucial base of an ethnic group as a form of social organization is cultural rather than biological" (Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 63). Hence, rather than biological racism we may find a form of differentialist culturalism at the heart of ethnic nationalism. Pierre-André Taguieff (2001) described differentialist culturalism as another form of racism where biology is replaced with culture and cultural differences function as the basis of exclusion. The need to maintain cultural differences is emphasized as a precondition for the persistence of cultural identities. "The value of difference is exalted in that it is a condition of the *conservation of collective identities*" (Taguieff, 2001, p. 212). Taguieff termed this type of racism "differentialist racism" (Taguieff, 2001, p. 212).

The fact that the primary focus of ethnic nationalism is on culture does not mean that biologist understandings do not occur in this type of nationalism. Due to its strong focus on descent and kinship relations, ethnic nationalism may sometimes have biologist components. Visible differences in appearance have "often been used to mark or reinforce distinctions between 'us' and 'them,' including national ones"

(Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 65). Accordingly, ethnic nationalism may be as much about genetics as it is about genealogy. With its reliance on culture or race (or race in the form of culture), ethnic nationalism attempts to naturalize the boundaries of the nation. Ethnic nationalists view it as imperative for the survival of their nation to protect its boundaries through measures of exclusion. The paradox of ethnic nationalism is that, while it is claiming to protect the nation through acts of exclusion, it is this very act of inclusion-exclusion that constitutes the nation.

For ethnic nationalists, the purity of the nation is an important value. Purity implies that the ethnic in-group is homogenous. According to Tom Nairn (1997, p. 96), such purity is illusive, since "ethnic boundaries are for the most part both murky and alterable." But the thrust of nationalism toward homogeneity can also be connected with capitalist rationality. Ernest Gellner (1983) portrayed the nationalist tendency toward homogeneity as inevitable in high or late capitalism because the specific kind of labour division in this economic system necessitates a specific type of flexible and readily exploitable worker who enjoyed the basic standard education that everybody in the system received in order to make them employable in different jobs at different places within the system. The striving for homogeneity in combination with ethnocultural purity is a specific characteristic of volkish nationalism, as will be shown in the case of the radical right populist party AfD.

Volkish nationalism and "the people"

In the following, I will point out why it is crucial to develop a specific understanding of volkish nationalism. It will be shown that it is primarily the position of "the people" in volkish nationalism that distinguishes it from other types of nationalism. "Völkisch" is an adjective that derives from "Volk" (people). Even though the term "Volk" would be correctly translated as "people," for adherents of volkish thought it means much more than the word "people" denotes in the English language. "Volk" may involve few transcendental layers of meaning, because the people's community, the formation of which is an ideal of volkish thought, is considered much more than the sum of all the individuals that constitute "the people." With the formation of the people's community, proponents of that community expect a transformation of "the people" into a physically and spiritually elevated state. George L. Mosse (1964, p. 4) stressed that since "the late eighteenth century 'Volk' signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental 'essence.'" From the volkish-nationalist perspective, it is "the people" who are the bearers of a cultural and racial essence that is exclusive to them and can therefore not be attained by anyone who was not part of the volkish community from birth. Here "Volk" signifies the physical and spiritual essence of the nation.

Even though the word "volkish" may – just as the term "ethnic" in ethnic nationalism – reference history, culture, ethnie, race, or religion, what distinguishes the word "volkish" from "ethnic" is that the former does so always mediated by "the people," that is, understood as a specific trait of "the people." Although "the people" certainly have a presence in ethnic nationalism, the connection between the

components of ethnicity – history, culture, ethnie, race, or religion – and the nation can be more direct in cases of ethnic nationalism that are not volkish nationalism. But what distinguishes volkish nationalism from other forms of ethnic nationalism is that it always views "the people" as the epitome of the nation. Ethnic nationalism does not focus on "the people" to the same extent and with the same regularity as volkish nationalism.

The German nationalist tradition can be traced to the Romanticism of the late 18th century when it had a strong focus on culture and ethnolinguistic elements, that is, ethnos. Its first protagonist was Johann Gottfried Herder (1803), who in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (first published in 1784) and in other works put forth the idea that every nation and people express their unique spirit in their language and poetry. "Singular and wonderful are what we term the genetic spirit and character of a people. It is inexplicable, it is ineradicable: ancient as the nation, ancient as the country it inhabits" (Herder, 1803, p. 46). According to Herder, it is the elements of their culture that bind nations together as spiritual collectivities. It was his aim to distinguish the German nation from that of France: "Herder countered the individualist-universalist rationalism of Enlightenment France by asserting the importance of a collective identity given by cultural endowments" (Hann, 2006, p. 400). Authors of German Romantics such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Ernst Moritz Arndt, and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn followed the tradition of thought founded by Herder. But their anti-French and anti-revolutionary leanings led them to a concept of "the people" that was both reductionist and hyperbolic at the same time, since it painted "the people" increasingly as a collectivity based on culture and common descent (Kellershohn, 2018). Fichte (2015), for instance, in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (published in 1808) charged the term "Volk" strongly with nationalist sentiments.

Völkish ideology was influential in Germany throughout the whole 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, with the emergence of the *volkish movement*, *volkish* thought became more extreme. It was increasingly imbued with racist and antisemitic ideas. In fact, antisemitism became a significant element of *volkish* thought. The formation of a people's community was an important objective of many political actors[2] in Germany during the First World War and the Weimar Republic (Wildt, 2017). The main feature of this idealized community was homogeneity. Volkish ideology revealed its destructiveness when the Nazis came to power in 1933; the Nazis used it to justify and implement their exclusionary and eliminatory agenda. It was their goal to establish a racially pure ethnic community that was conceived as a "community of bodies," with the aggregate of all the bodies that belonged to the volkish community forming the *people's body* (Volkskörper), a "unified racial corpus" (Havertz, 2019, p. 390).

In the first decades after 1945, volkish thought was totally discredited in Germany. In public conversations any positive reference to "the people" was seen as inappropriate. In the 1970s, there was a revival of volkish ideology among newly established right-wing extremist parties and the intellectual New Right. But these parties and networks only attracted few people and remained marginal until the

turn of the century, when parties such as DVU and NPD had some success in elections on the subnational level, especially in the new states of Eastern Germany: Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Pomerania, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt. It is to be seen against this backdrop that Stöss (2010) deemed the term "volkish nationalism" a formula that substantially characterizes *right-wing extremism*.

The centrality of "the people" in volkish nationalism is of interest here, because this social entity (real or imagined) is also critical for the ideology of contemporary radical right populism in Germany. The notion of homogeneity, which, according to Weber (1994), was included in the idea of the nation all along, is certainly strengthened when volkish ideology is fused with nationalism; and the mechanisms of inclusion into and exclusion from German society will further be amplified when volkish nationalism is combined with populism. Both volkish nationalism and populism promote the formation of a homogenous in-group. Another commonality of nationalism and populism is that both focus on the assertion and maintenance of sovereignty. But there is an important difference between nationalism and populism: Nationalism includes all those who are deemed citizens in its construction of the nation, whereas the understanding of "the people" in populism is narrower. "The elite" is part of the nation, but as antipode to "the people" it cannot be considered part of "the people." Other populist exclusions may concern those on the bottom of society. These are exclusions on moral grounds. With volkish ideology joining in, exclusions from "the people" may also be carried out based on biological and particularly on ethnocultural grounds.

As the case of AfD demonstrates, radical right populists in Germany want to revive volkish nationalism and rehabilitate terms such as "Volk," "volkish," and "Volksgemeinschaft," which are tainted by National Socialism. As self-proclaimed representatives of "the people," radical right populists in Germany want to decide along volkish lines who belongs to the *Volksgemeinschaft* and who is to be excluded from that group. But they see themselves inhibited by the historical fact that volkish nationalism was the ideological foundation for the atrocities committed by Germans in the name of their nation during the Second World War. Therefore, contemporary radical right populists resorted to historical revisionism and the relativization of the crimes committed during the Nazi period. I will reflect more deeply on AfD's historical revisionism in Chapter 9.

AfD and volkish nationalism

Within the short period of its existence, AfD went through a process of radicalization which took the party continuously further to the right. According to Salzborn (2018, p. 74), "AfD has now adopted large parts of the far-right tradition, including racism and völkisch nationalism (a form of ethnonationalism)." In the view of some observers, with the adoption of these ideological elements, the party has become a political home not only for radical right populists but also for right-wing extremists (Pfahl-Traughber, 2019; Siri, 2018).

Early on, national populists and national-conservatives were active in the party (Lewandowsky, 2018; Häusler, 2018b, pp. 9–10). Right from the beginning, "the people" and their sovereignty were central elements of AfD's political propaganda. They stressed the importance of national sovereignty and "the people's" right to self-determination as an alternative to what they saw as being ruled by an overly powerful EU-bureaucracy (Wildt, 2017). But back then their positions did not attract as much attention as those of the economic liberal and national-liberal wing of the party which dominated its public perception in the first two years of their existence. Within only a few years the party changed its ideological position significantly and moved gradually but rapidly further to the far-right fringe, with a combination of populism, authoritarianism, volkish nationalism, and xenophobia as the central elements of their ideology. The shift of AfD to the far right, involving volkish nationalism, can be attested by many statements of leading party members; and it can be demonstrated by positions and policy proposals in the basic programme of 2016 and the party platform of 2017.

In a speech that Höcke gave in January 2017 in Dresden at an event of *Young Alternative*, he lamented that the Germans are "the only people in the world, who have planted a monument of shame in the heart of their capital" (Höcke as cited in Meisner & Hofmann, 2017). He advocated an about-turn in the memorial culture of Germany away from its focus on the Second World War and the Shoah toward more positive elements of German history, and this change was supposed to be achieved by a replacement of the way history is taught in German schools today with a more nationalist type of history education. Höcke (2017) complained that students are not brought in contact with a positive history and that German history, instead, "is denigrated and ridiculed." According to Höcke (2017), Germans are in the mental state of a "totally defeated people." Due to the low birth rate and mass immigration, "our dear people" would be facing an existential threat for the first time in their history, Höcke (2017) claimed. Scenarios of the extinction of the German people have become common place in the rhetoric of the radical right populist movement in Germany. They exaggerate and misrepresent demographic trends to cause fear of doom among their audience.

In 2018, the AfD representative Thorsten Weiß, a member of the state legislature of Berlin, posted an alarmist statement on his Facebook page that predicted the "death of the people" in case the federal government were to continue its immigration policy (Häusler, 2018b, p. 15). This is again related to the right-wing conspiracy theory about the alleged scheme of the "political class" to replace the native population with another one of immigrants, which in the milieu of AfD, Pegida, and IBD is known as "Umvolkung." The historical roots of this term go back to the 1920s when "people theorists" such as Carl C. von Loesch and Max Hildebert Böhm were concerned with the position of individuals of German nationality living outside the boundaries of Germany (Kellershohn, 2016d). Today the radical right is using this term very much in the sense of volkish nationalism. In this view, "Umvolkung" is the result of all the machinations of "the elite" (and those it is colluding with) which are directed against the integrity and the very existence of

"the people": "The 'disintegration' of the 'body of the people' [Volkskörper, R.H.], its ethnic and spatial dissolution and the loss of the ability to assert itself as a nation in the competition of nations are the consequences" (Kellershohn, 2016d, p. 289).

The cited statements by Höcke and Weiß clearly propagate volkish ideas. With the volkish notion comes an interest in rehabilitating volkish vocabulary: Petry, for instance, suggested that the term "volkish" should again be seen in a more positive light (Biermann, 2016). Höcke disagreed with Petry, stating that he would prefer terms such as "close to the people" (volksverbunden) or "friendly to the people" (volksfreundlich), only to call the German constitution "volkish" in the same interview in which he promoted those alternative terms (Höcke, 2018, pp. 133–134). This is a willful misrepresentation of the German constitution, which talks about "the people" as sovereign but does so in the sense of "the people" as demos, not ethnos. There is no passage in the Basic Law of Germany that would support Höcke's interpretation.

Another case is that of André Poggenburg, who in 2015, when he was chair of AfD in the state of Saxony-Anhalt, sent Christmas greetings to all the party members in his state and suggested that they think about "the responsibility of the Volksgemeinschaft," and he added the regretful observation that "wholly unproblematic and even very positive terms" would not be used anymore (Poggenburg as cited in Wildt, 2017, p. 115). This statement involves an implicit complaint about "political correctness" – a standard element of radical right rhetoric in Germany – that is, about politically motivated speech regulations which allegedly prohibit the use of a certain vocabulary. According to the historian Wolfgang Benz (2006, p. 28), the term "volkish" "always included antisemitic connotations." During the Nazi period, it was charged racially and was often used synonymously for the word "National Socialist." The same is true for the term "Volksgemeinschaft." "AfD is effectively trying to ignore the fact that the Volksgemeinschaft term is historically and inextricably tied to Nazism" (Salzborn, 2018, p. 76). The attempts of AfD representatives to whitewash and normalize these terms are connected to their historical revisionism, which we will turn to later.

"The people" as homogenous community

The volkish nationalism of AfD includes the idealization of "the people" and pursues the goal of establishing "the people" as a homogenous collective entity (Häusler, 2018b). "The people," as the term is used by AfD, can be understood as "community of procreation" (Kellershohn, 2016b, p. 21), where each member of the community not only has the responsibility of maintaining it by shutting out any intruder who could upset or disturb it but also by contributing to its persistence through reproduction. The party platform accentuates the importance of the traditional family with its explicit promotion of this family model and the respective roles of male and female in such a family (AfD, 2016, p. 41). This approach to family and gender has obvious bio-political implications.[3]

Biologist notions can be considered an "integral element of volkish ideologies" (Decker, Kriess, Schuler et al., 2018, p. 79). Biologism involves the naturalization of social differences and of the personality traits that drive individuals either to success or failure. These traits are seen as unchangeable because of their causation by nature. Thus, the "people's community" is understood as a "community of fate" (Decker, Kriess, Schuler et al., 2018, p. 74). Which also means that decisions about inclusion-exclusion are not based on the free will of individual subjects. For any individual, belonging or not belonging to the "people's community" is determined at birth. "The people" are imagined as a biological unit and as a cultural community as well.

Kellershohn (2016b) interprets the culturalist component in the AfD's conception of ethnic homogeneity as more salient than the biological one. The 2016 basic programme emphasizes ethnocultural identity by several delimitations and exclusions. They are centred around the idea of a German "Leitkultur," which could be translated as "guiding culture" or "dominant culture." It stresses the need for the cultural assimilation of individuals of non-German descent and their adaption to that guiding culture, while the supposed substance of that culture is rather ill-defined.

The concept of a German guiding culture was introduced into the political debate by Friedrich Merz (2000), who once served as floor leader of CDU in the Bundestag, but retreated from the spotlight in 2002 after some internal clashes with party leader Merkel. He triggered a fierce public debate about the meaning of and need for such a concept. Many observers saw it in opposition to the idea of multiculturalism. Initially the concept was rejected by the majority in German mainstream politics, but in 2007, it was eventually included in the party platforms of CDU (2007) and its Bavarian sister party CSU (2007). In its party programme of 2016, AfD (2016, p. 47) put the concept of "guiding culture" at the centre of its identity policy:

> The AfD regards the ideology of multiculturalism, which imported cultural trends in a history-blind manner and treated them equal to the indigenous culture and thus deeply relativized its values, as a serious threat to social peace and to the survival of the nation as cultural unit. In opposition to this, the state and civil society must self-assertively defend German cultural identity as "guiding culture."

Accordingly, the imagined purity of the "nation as cultural unit" can only be maintained if any mixture with elements from the outside is avoided. Any new arrival to the country is expected to adapt to the native culture and its values. Those who are not willing or capable of assimilation must be kept out or be sent back to where they came from. This has obvious implications for the immigration policy of AfD: Only those individuals should be let into the country that have the ability to adapt to the mainstream culture and do not pose any threat to the (imagined) homogenous community of "the people." For those who adhere to Islam this means

they have to stay out, because the AfD assumes that Muslims are not capable of becoming part of the German nation. Their party programme of 2016 says explicitly: "Islam does not belong to Germany" (AfD, 2016, p. 49). We will return to this Islamophobic stance of the party later.

The connection between AfD's xenophobia and volkish nationalism

After the split of AfD in 2015, when many economic liberal members left the party, the anti-immigrant positions of the party became more pronounced. The increase of xenophobic rhetoric by the party corresponds to the growing fears of foreign domination among the German population, as recent representative polls have demonstrated. For many, these fears result in the rejection of immigration and in a xenophobic attitude. More than one-third of the German population have a manifestly chauvinistic and xenophobic attitude. About another 30 per cent of the population share these attitudes latently (Decker, Kriess, Schuler et al., 2018). There is a large electoral potential for a party that concentrates on xenophobia. To fully exhaust these potentials, AfD pursues the strategy to increase the salience of issues surrounding immigration in the perception of the public.

The party deliberately stokes fears of immigration. Their rhetoric suggests that with the increasing influx of immigrants, public safety and order are in danger: no one can feel safe in Germany anymore. AfD exploits fears of real or imagined threats, and amplifies already existing prejudices. These "politics of fear" (Wodak, 2015, p. 2) have an important function in the attempt to form "the people" as a homogenous entity, because they legitimize policies that allow the exclusion of those who are depicted as a menace to "the people" and their interests based on their ethnicity. The exclusion of those who are seen as not belonging to "the people" for ethnic, cultural, racial, or religious reasons is presented as an inevitable measure in the interest of "the people."

In its 2016 programme, the party, for instance, stated that immigration to Germany would "almost exclusively" happen as immigration into the welfare system of Germany (AfD, 2016, p. 58). This statement implies that immigrants come to Germany only to exploit the German welfare state, which pays out generous welfare benefits to them; and while they are doing so, they don't make any contribution to German society which could be measured in economic terms. These assertions have nothing to do with the reality of the German society, where immigrants and their labour play a crucial role in all sectors of the economy. Xenophobic remarks have also been uttered by individual party representatives. Nicolaus Fest, for example, who became interim chairman of AfD in the state of Berlin in January 2020, took the famous expression by Max Frisch "We asked for workers, and human beings came instead" and rephrased it – "We asked for workers, and we got rabble" (Fest, 2017) – to show his contempt for immigrants with a Turkish, Arabic, and African background.

In its rhetoric, AfD paints the picture of a people's community under threat by immigration. Its 2016 programme (AfD, 2016) exaggerated the challenges of the refugee movement which Germany experienced in fall 2015 and presented it as an existential threat to the persistence of the German people. For AfD, the protection of "the people" requires a change of the asylum and immigration laws, involving a reduction of the number of immigrants and – from their point of view – an improvement in the quality of immigration by installing a migration regime that selects immigrants according to their expected utility for German society. This would potentially leave out some of those who are in urgent need of assistance because they had to flee their countries for political reasons – war, violence, persecution, discrimination – or because of their economic and environmental plight.

Representatives of AfD have also called for a change of the citizenship laws in Germany. They advocate a move back to *jus sanguinis*, where nationality and, with it, citizenship are based on descent, that is, the nationality of the parents of an individual (Wildt, 2017). In 2000, the principle of jus sanguinis was replaced by a more liberal and less restrictive law that confers citizenship to second generation immigrants based on the principle of *jus soli* (the place of birth). It also eased the naturalization of foreigners who want to become German citizens. Now, all non-German individuals living in Germany for at least eight years with no criminal record and the proven ability to sustain themselves can apply for German citizenship (Storz & Wilmes, 2007). AfD wants to turn back the clock on these developments. In its 2017 electoral platform, the party demanded that the principle of *jus soli* be removed from the citizenship law (AfD, 2017). In the section on citizenship law, which is only three sentences long, the party tellingly connects immigration to terrorism and suggests that members of a foreign terrorist organization should be stripped of German citizenship. AfD's conception of citizenship is tied to the volkish interpretation of the nation. Its substance is defined biologically *and* ethnoculturally. Which means that only those who meet specific racial, ethnic, and cultural criteria can be German citizens. AfD made it clear on several occasions that Muslims can under no circumstances meet these criteria.

Conclusion

I have explained volkish nationalism as a subtype of ethnic nationalism. "The people" have an important place in both ideologies. However, it is not as central in ethnic nationalism as in volkish nationalism. Volkish nationalism involves a mystification of "the people" that is not present to the same extent in ethnic nationalism. The volkish element in volkish nationalism increases the potential aggressiveness of this nationalism in its attempts to exclude those who were identified as not belonging to the volkish community, the Volksgemeinschaft. AfD with its permanent shift to the far right since its foundation in 2013 has adopted more and more elements of volkish nationalism. These can be attested in the rhetoric of AfD representatives and found in the programmes of the party.

Some observers equate volkish nationalism, which is inextricably tied to National Socialism, with right-wing extremism (Stöss, 2010). Which raises the question of where AfD is to be place on the political spectrum. The party appears to represent a mixture of radical right populism and right-wing extremism. The question remains whether it is closer to the former or the latter.

Notes

1 Some scholars rely on ethnicity as a foundation of their conceptions of nationalism without conceiving of their approaches as theories of ethnic nationalism. This, especially, applies to the ethno-symbolist understanding of nationalism, "which links modern nations to premodern *ethnies* through myth, symbol, memory, value and tradition" (Smith, 2010, p. 4). What distinguishes it from ethnic nationalism is its openness to change. "These changes may be gradual and cumulative, or sudden and discontinuous" (Smith, 2010, p. 22). While the ethno-symbolic conception of the nation relies on "previously existing values, symbols, memories" and so on, it also involves the reinterpretation of these older elements as well as the "addition of new cultural elements by each generation." Such types of nationalism have to be distinguished from the "ethnic blood-and-soil forms of nationalism" (Smith, 2010, p. 44) of which ethnic nationalism is the main representative.
2 The only exceptions were the communists and left-wing social democrats.
3 AfD strictly rejects the concept of gender and the pursuit of gender equality by the state through measures such as gender mainstreaming. They also want the subject of gender studies to be banned from all universities in Germany, because they see it as an instrument of "gender indoctrination." This topic of AfD as an anti-gender party is treated more deeply in Chapter 11.

7

AfD'S RELUCTANT HARD EUROSCEPTICISM

Almost all populist parties in Europe employ the "opposition to the EU as part of their ideological weaponry" (Taggart, 2017, p. 256). Euroscepticism in itself is neither an exclusively right-wing nor a solely left-wing position. Throughout Europe it has been adopted by both radical right and left-wing populist parties – sometimes simultaneously by both a radical right populist and a left-wing populist party in the same country, as with Syriza and the Independent Greeks (ANEL) in Greece, the PVV and the Socialist Party (SP) in the Netherlands (Pirro et al., 2018), and Jean-Luc Melénchon's party La France Insoumise and Marine Le Pen's National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN) in France (Colliot-Thélène, 2019). Although most populist parties in Europe are Eurosceptical, Euroscepticism is not a necessary feature of populism in Europe; moreover, Euroscepticism "is not necessarily the prerogative of populist parties only" (Pirro et al., 2018, p. 379). Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (2004) conducted a study of Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe. They analyzed a large number of political parties in candidate countries for accession to the EU which were just about to become members of the EU in 2004. In their study, they included parties of the whole political spectrum from the left to the right and came to the conclusion that "Eurosceptic parties come from all parts of the left-right spectrum" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, p. 12). Theoretically, parties of all political creeds could be Eurosceptical without necessarily being populist.

The EU is the perfect target for anti-establishment parties, because "it can be interpreted as the ultimate elitist project" (Pirro & van Kessel, 2018, p. 328). The neo-functionalist approach – one of the main schools of thought on European integration – indeed views European integration as an elite-driven process (Haas, 2004). Moreover, the EU certainly has a "democratic deficit," which has been comprehensively studied, debated, and documented in the literature (Moravscik, 2002). Hence, as Taggart (2017) noted, the EU is an easy and attractive target for parties who made criticizing "the elite" within their countries for being

corrupt and undemocratic their main programme point. Critique of the EU by populist parties has been a common phenomenon throughout the whole union, especially after the euro crisis which started in 2009. The unemployment rates, which had risen to exceptional levels in the most affected countries of the European South, had been blamed on the EU and its handling of the euro crisis (Hobolt & De Vries, 2016).

There certainly are different degrees of critique which the EU has to face from radical right populists. Some scholars on Euroscepticism distinguished between soft and hard Euroscepticism (Pirro et al., 2018; Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004; Vasilopoulou, 2018). Soft Eurosceptics want a reform of particular aspects of the EU and are discontent with specific policies of the union. Sofia Vasilopoulou (2018, p. 123) observed that "soft Euroscepticism relates to concerns over one or more EU policy areas, which lead to contingent or qualified opposition to the EU." Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004, p. 4) subsumed what they called "national-interest Euroscepticism" under this category, which may sometimes include parties that are actually "sympathetic towards deepening European integration, but which also feel the need to employ 'national-interest Eurosceptic' rhetoric to shore up their domestic political support base." Political parties which adopt a hard Eurosceptic stance, on the other hand, are generally opposed to the EU and the process of European integration. Hard Euroscepticism "tends to be associated with support for a country's withdrawal from the EU" (Vasilopoulou, 2018, p. 123).

Andrea L. P. Pirro et al. (2018) found that in this divide most left-wing populist parties took a soft approach. Examples for this position are Syriza, Podemos, and the Dutch SP. They were dissatisfied with the way the euro crisis was handled by the EU and advocated a reform of EU institutions, but were essentially looking for solutions within the union. On the other hand, many radical right populist parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Dutch PVV adopted a hard Eurosceptical approach which involved an "all out opposition to their country's EU membership" (Pirro et al., 2018, p. 381).

For radical right populists, both popular and national sovereignty are of utmost importance. Restoring and upholding sovereignty is the quintessence of their ideology. AfD is no exception in this regard. The party platform of 2017 made a point of explicitly connecting sovereignty with "the people." It states that *Volkssouveränität* (people's sovereignty) is the "centerpiece of democracy" (AfD, 2017, p. 7). Hence, it is not surprising that populist radical right actors see the EU with its supranational structure as a threat to popular and national sovereignty. It is well-known that today many political decisions that are made on a national level by the governments of individual member states of the EU are pre-decided on EU level. However, the scope of the Europeanization of national law has often been vastly exaggerated. The number of 80 per cent often circulates in the media. It has its origins in a prediction which Jacques Delors, the president of the European Commission, made in 1988 in a speech which he gave to the European Parliament (Toeller, 2012). But that prediction actually never came true. In 2012, the rate of Europeanized national law in Germany was as high as 39.1 per cent. In most other

member states of the EU the rate was considerably lower (Toeller, 2012). Radical right populists see the Europeanization of national law as an affront against the principle of popular sovereignty. Vasilopoulou (2018, p. 124) emphasized that "the multinational nature and multilevel institutional structure of the EU go against the very premise of radical right ideology, nationalism, which is tightly entwined with the principle of sovereignty." Most of the positions of radical right populist parties toward the EU are strongly influenced by fears about a loss of sovereignty.

Although populist radical right parties mostly reject a deep political integration of Europe, they are open to some level of economic integration. In the field of culture, they see some commonalities of European countries. Most of these parties actually agree on a "common identity of European peoples" which is "defined as the feeling of cultural, religious and historical bonds among the European nation-states" (Vasilopoulou, 2016, p. 127). In their arguments against the "Islamization" of Europe, radical right populist parties or movements such as Pegida often resort to claims of a common cultural heritage of European nations that needs to be protected against an invasion of Muslims. On the surface, the cultural definition of Europe appears to contradict the insistence of the radical right on homogenous national cultures. But this cultural definition of Europe "does not imply that Europe is considered to be above the nation" (Vasilopoulou, 2016, p. 127). There are some common cultural "elements that bind European peoples together" (Vasilopoulou, 2016, p. 127), and then there are other – national and regional – elements that separate them.

In this chapter, I will examine the position of AfD on European integration and the EU. It is already clear at this point that AfD is a Eurosceptical party. But what has not been determined yet is the degree of the party's Euroscepticism, that is, whether the party is soft or hard Eurosceptical. In this context, it will also be of interest to look at the behaviour of AfD on the European level and its European connections with other radical right populist parties. At the centre of AfD's opposition to European integration are two issues: the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) of the EU, which involves the euro, and the common European refugee and asylum regime. In the next section I will focus on AfD's rejection of the common European currency.

AfD's opposition to the euro

AfD started out as a Eurosceptical party. Right from the beginning, the opposition to the EU and the process of European integration was strong in all factions of the party. It is one of the ideological features that binds the national-liberal, Christian-fundamentalist, national populist wings of the party together. The primary target of their Eurosceptic stance is the common currency, the euro, which they see as a "purely political project" that makes little sense economically and reduces Germany's economic opportunities (AfD, 2016, p. 8). Which is why AfD demands a referendum on the continuance of the euro. They portray the EU as "an undemocratic construct, the politics of which are shaped by democratically uncontrolled

bureaucracies" (AfD, 2016, p. 16). In statements and speeches of AfD politicians, the EU is often demonized as a realm of evil, as a dictatorship akin to that of the USSR. Henkel (as cited in Häusler & Roeser, 2016, p. 106), for instance, one of the early national-liberal leaders of AfD, referred to the EU as "EUSSR." Some of the founders and early supporters of AfD had extensively published on the dangers which the euro posed for the well-being of ordinary German citizens.[1]

Their opposition was especially directed against the rescue policy of the EU as a response to the euro crisis. German chancellor Merkel had declared that there would be "no alternative" to the course which the German government had steered during this crisis with the large rescue packages that were agreed to support Greece (Die Zeit, 2011). Indeed, none of the mainstream parties in Germany offered any alternative proposals for the management of the Greek fiscal crisis (Korte et al., 2015). This can be attributed to the fact that European integration generally enjoys strong support among the established parties of Germany (Arzheimer, 2015). Although there has been "unease about aspects of European integration among the German electorate," Euroscepticism was for a long time "effectively invisible at the level of party politics" (Lees, 2018, p. 299).

The political entrepreneurs around Lucke recognized the existence of this void in the political landscape of Germany and decided to fill it first with the establishment of the "Electoral Alternative 2013," and later with AfD, which replaced the Electoral Alternative. The word "Alternative" in the name of the party echoes Merkel's "no alternative" statement and was meant as a defiant rebuke of her position. They insisted on the adherence to the EU Treaty and its "no-bail out clause" (Article 125, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU), which prescribes that there is no common debt responsibility in the EU and prohibits any member state from taking on the debt of another member country. The basic programme of 2016 explicitly refers to Article 125 TFEU and laments that the rescue policy of the European Central Bank (ECB) would "permanently violate" this provision of the treaty (AfD, 2016, p. 19).

With its opposition against the crisis management of the EU, AfD found a way to distinguish itself from the mainstream parties and use this unique programmatic characteristic as a selling point in the first elections which the party participated in. Decker and Lewandowsky (2017) pointed out that the foundation of AfD was not based on an ad hoc initiative. Rather, with the euro crisis an opportunity structure opened up for a number of Eurosceptics who had for a long time been fiercely opposed to Germany's membership in the eurozone. The authors also stressed that the Euroscepticism of AfD was well-suited to combine it with other ideological features, especially with an opposition toward immigration (Decker & Lewandowsky, 2017).

Support for a "Europe of Nations"

In fall 2015, Germany opened its borders for hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants who had fled their home countries because of the dire situation

they faced due to war and persecution. This induced AfD to shift their "political message from a technical critique of the Euro crisis to a more aggressive attack on immigration" (Lees, 2018, p. 301). Petry, who had just strengthened her position as co-chair of AfD by pushing out Lucke from the party, and with him large parts of the economic liberal wing – a move for which she had the support of the national-conservative and national populist wing – seized the opportunity and "advocated the closing of the EU's borders" and "more intrusive identity checks at the German border" (Lees, 2018, p. 306). In doing so, she questioned the principle of free movement within the territory of the EU which is regulated by the Schengen Agreement (an agreement which also includes some non-EU countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland). Petry even suggested that border guards should be permitted to shoot any refugees who tried to cross the border into Germany in an unauthorized manner (Denkler, 2016). Her hostility toward refugees was especially aimed at Muslims who might come to the country and disrupt the "guiding culture" of Germany. "The party's original Euroscepticism was increasingly nested in the wider discourse of right-wing populism" (Lees, 2018, p. 306).

As Taggart (2017, p. 257) pointed out, it actually is surprising that a Eurosceptical party such as AfD could become as strong as it did in a country which is at large relatively "un-Eurosceptical." Indeed, 83 per cent of all Germans feel as citizens of the EU as a recent survey by the European Commission (2019) has found. To be sure, AfD wants Germany to leave the eurozone. They for some time stopped short of advocating a complete withdrawal from the EU. A party congress has only recently, in 2019, decided to include the threat of a German exit from the EU in its electoral programme. The party wants this exit to happen, in case its demands for a reform of the EU are not met. I will return to this issue later.

They promote a reversal of European integration toward a simpler level of economic integration without any large-scale political integration (Meuthen, 2018). This position, of course, involves a reduction of the complexities of European integration, where deep economic integration is not feasible without some level of harmonization and policy coordination across the member states. What they have in mind as a replacement of the EU in its current state is a "Europe of Nations" (Europa der Vaterländer) (AfD, 2019, p. 7), where sovereignty primarily rests with the nation-states – and with it, at least to some extent, the competence for decisions about immigration. The party's programme for the 2019 European elections demands a "paradigm shift" in European migration policy and claims that migration would have to be restricted and controlled in a way that ensures the preservation of the "identity of European cultural nations" (AfD, 2019, p. 37).

They also want to restrict the freedom of movement for EU citizens within the EU. According to AfD, much of this movement only happens because the immigrants intend to defraud the social welfare system of Germany: "The free movement of people in Europe has led to massive migration within the EU from poorer to richer countries, especially to Germany, for the sole purpose of receiving social assistance" (AfD, 2019, p. 41). They promote the idea that individual member states should have the right to admit only those immigrants from the EU who can prove

that they are able to sustain themselves. AfD's ire is directed rather fiercely against Muslim immigrants. The party's 2019 programme generally accuses Muslims of pursuing an "imperialist" project that can be traced back to the Middle Ages. As the main means of this imperialism they make out the immigration of Muslims to the EU and their high birth rate (AfD, 2019). They generally doubt Muslim's capacity to integrate fully into society: "Only a minority of Muslims are secular and fully integrated in society. The integration of most Muslims in Europe is currently failing and will fail the more their number grows" (AfD, 2019, p. 51). The party clearly feels threatened by the mere presence of Muslims in Germany.

Between hard and soft Euroscepticism

The official course of AfD on German membership in the EU is that remaining in the EU is an option only if this association of states is comprehensively reformed. The party does not make exactly clear how far it wants this reform to go regarding the external trade relations of the EU. The party appears to support a European free trade area. But what remains unclear is whether this area is also supposed to be a customs union. The section on trade policy in the 2019 programme for the European election does not mention the term "customs union" (AfD, 2019, p. 21). But the proposals for the role of the EU in foreign trade suggest that a customs union is intended. They clearly provide a role for the EU in foreign trade with third countries. European integration today is so complicated and multifaceted that a reduction of the EU to a customs union would be tantamount to a dissolution of the EU. The EU, with its high level of economic and political integration, would simply become unrecognizable. In its 2019 programme, AfD (2019) makes German membership in the EU dependent on the swift implementation of these reforms, otherwise the only viable option for the party would be a "Dexit" which involves a reference to Brexit and is a combination of "De" for "Deutschland" (Germany) and "exit" (AfD, 2019, p. 12). The party did not specify a particular deadline for the reforms which they expect. The 2019 programme just talks about their implementation within a "reasonable time" (AfD, 2019, p. 12). At a party conference in January 2019 where the decision about the electoral programme was made, Gauland had advocated not to burden the programme with a specific deadline (Handelsblatt, 2019). What influenced the reasoning behind that decision were the uncertainties around Brexit and the potential economic problems caused by the British withdrawal from the EU. Gauland warned that a maximalist claim regarding an exit date by AfD could deter voters. Hence, he recommended to leave the date open (Handelsblatt, 2019).

There are some AfD representatives who are more enthusiastic than Gauland about leaving the EU. When a majority of British citizens decided to leave the EU in the Brexit referendum on 23 June 2016, Höcke and von Storch celebrated this event (Merkur, 2020). The fact that a party convention decided to include Dexit in a party programme for the 2019 European election – and this after all the turmoil around Brexit – also shows that the idea of a German exit from the EU

enjoys some support in AfD. If the main standard for the categorization of a party as soft or hard Eurosceptic is its position on EU membership, it is rather difficult to classify AfD. They threaten with leaving the EU if certain conditions are not met whose implementation would come close to the actual destruction of the union. But their desire for reaching this goal is not strong enough to set a date until which they want the disentanglement of political and economic integration in Europe to be implemented. They appear as *reluctant hard Eurosceptics*. At the party convention in January 2019, Gauland had already warned not to be overzealous regarding the claim for a Dexit and he had asked "isn't this a utopia, shouldn't we be more realistic?" (Merkur, 2020). When AfD reached 11 per cent of the vote in the 2019 European election, it was disappointing for AfD which had hoped for a much better result. On the evening of the election day Gauland attributed the electoral performance below the party's expectations to the Dexit debate within the party (Merkur, 2020).

On the other hand, the reluctance of the party to support the exit of Germany from the EU more vigorously may indicate that AfD sees the need to project the image of a party which is committed to a strong Euroscepticism, while its actual position on the issue is somewhat softer than this projection. If the EU is the "ultimate elitist project" (Pirro & van Kessel, 2018, p. 328), then what one could expect from a self-proclaimed anti-elitist party such as AfD is an ultimate anti-EU position. The lack of the latter allows conclusions regarding the strength of the anti-elite position of the party. This is also true for the vague manner in which AfD describes the role which it wants the EU to play in international trade, which appears to be that of a customs union, without actually mentioning the term. This supports the impression that AfD is more sympathetic to the EU as a trade bloc than they care to admit.

AfD in the European Parliament

AfD participated in two European elections, in 2014 and 2019, and each time got more than the 5 per cent that are required for parliamentary representation. In 2014, AfD gained 7.1 per cent of the vote and seven of the 96 seats which are allocated to Germany in the European Parliament. In 2019, the party got 11 per cent and eleven of the 96 seats (see Table 10.3 in Chapter 10). Much of the work in the European Parliament is organized around political groups that are made up of representatives from different parties and countries. Participating in such a group is beneficial for individual members of the European Parliament (MEP), because they can share in organizational and monetary benefits which they would be denied if they were not members of such a group. The main unifying factor for the cooperation in such groups across national and party lines is ideological identity.

When AfD gained its first seats in the European Parliament in 2014 all members joined the group of the *European Conservatives and Reformists* (ECR), which included some radical right populist parties such as the Dansk Folkeparti, the Finns, and the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA). Despite the presence of these radical right

parties in ECR, the membership of AfD in this group signalled that it was one of the more moderate parties of the radical right, because with *Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy* and *Europe of Nations and Freedom* there were two other party groups in the European Parliament which were placed even further to the right on the political spectrum. By April 2016 there was no AfD member left in the ECR group. Five of the initial seven AfD members had joined another party (Alliance for Progress and Renewal, ALFA, which was later renamed into Liberal-Conservative Reformers, LKR). The other two were ousted by the leadership of the group because of their connections to the Austrian FPÖ and remarks of von Storch, one of these two MEPs, during the refugee crisis of 2015 that it would be in order to shoot refugees, including women and children, who cross the border into Germany without authorization (Crisp, 2016). As a consequence, von Storch joined the group *Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy* which at the time included UKIP, the Five Star Movement from Italy, and the Sweden Democrats (Weiland et al., 2016). Markus Pretzell, the other AfD member who was expelled from ECR, joined the *Europe of Nations and Freedom* group which back then was comprised of members of National Front, PVV, FPÖ, the Lega Nord, the VB, and others (Bender, 2016a). After their expulsion from ECR, the two remaining representatives of AfD in the European Parliament were formally connected to those political groups where the more radical populist parties of the right had gathered.

After the 2019 election, all representatives of AfD joined the group *Identity and Democracy*, which is composed of members of ten parties from ten different countries. All of these parties can be classified as radical right populist. The group is 76 members strong and AfD, with its eleven members, is the third largest party in this group after the Italian *Lega* (29 seats) and the French *National Rally* (23 seats) (European Parliament, 2020). The group *Identity and Democracy* can be seen as a successor of *Europe of Nations and Freedom*. Many of the parties which the latter was composed of between 2014 and 2019 are now members of the former.

Cross-border communication and cooperation between radical right parties and their siblings in other European countries have been important for the development of these parties throughout their recent history. These parties have influenced each other ideologically and strategically. The Austrian FPÖ, for instance, has served as a model for many in AfD (Grigat, 2017). As I have explained in Chapter 3 on the radical right populist precursors of AfD, their connections with parties in other European countries played a significant role in their development, which is especially true for Die Freiheit, BFB, and the PRO parties. However, it is important to note that today there is not much cooperation going on between the radical right populist parties of Europe aside from their collaboration in the European Parliament. "The European Parliament is one of the few arenas in which the populist radical right has been able to establish some structured cooperation" (Mudde, 2007, p. 177).

Unlike the conservative, liberal, socialist, and green parties of Europe, the radical right does not have a common European party. Recent attempts to forge a

European alliance of the radical right have failed. In the run-up to the 2019 European election, Steve Bannon, the former chief strategist and advisor to Donald Trump, was unsuccessful in his attempt to bring the European radical right together; and the efforts of Matteo Salvini, then deputy prime minister of Italy and minister of the interior of the country, to create such an alliance in 2019 also did not bear fruit (Walker, 2019; Plucinska & Emmott, 2019). What connects these parties is their nationalism and Euroscepticism. But what connects them does in a certain sense also separate them and make cooperation and finding common ground more difficult. All these parties are concerned with restoring national sovereignty, which they see as dangerously curtailed and inhibited by European integration. The main point on their agenda therefore is shifting back sovereignty from the European level to the level of the nation-states. They are working under the assumption that national interests are more important than common European interests and believe that the pursuit of European interests potentially undermines attending to national interests. Trying to cooperate under these circumstances is full of pitfalls for these parties, and that does not even take into account the sometimes rather effusive personalities of those elected into office for radical right populist parties, which makes cooperation and compromise between them even more difficult.

Conclusion

After the foundation of AfD, the salience of the EU was rather strong for AfD. In fact, the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (2014) found that there was no other party in the German party system for which the EU had more importance at the time. However, in this context, salience has a negative connotation: It means opposition to the EU, that is, Euroscepticism. But over the years, the salience of Euroscepticism has somewhat decreased for AfD, which is partly due to changes in the international environment, with the mitigation of the euro crisis and the emergence of the refugee crisis, partly due to changes within the party itself and its continuous shift toward the far right which increased the salience of nativism for AfD.

While Euroscepticism is not *the* central ideological position of AfD anymore, it still is an important element of the party's programme. As I have shown in this chapter, Euroscepticism is often present in positions and statements of the party where Europe is not the primary issue, as is the case with AfD's xenophobic and Islamophobic positions, and their anti-establishment attitude. Euroscepticism is interlinked with these issues; and this interwovenness allows AfD to fall back on Euroscepticism and use it when it appears expedient for the mobilization of followers and voters.

Note

1 The titles of these Eurosceptical publications are telling: "Crime Scene Euro. Citizens Protect the Law, Democracy, and Your Wealth" (Tatort Euro. Bürger, schützt das Recht, die Demokratie und euer Vermögen) (Starbatty, 2013); "The Euro-adventure Comes to an End. How the Currency Union Destroys Our Livelihoods" (Das Euro-Abenteuer

geht zu Ende. Wie die Währungsunion unsere Lebensgrundlagen zerstört) (Hankel et al., 2011); "The Euro-liars. Senseless Rescue Packages, Hushed Up Risks – This Is How We Are Deluded" (Die Euro-Lügner. Unsinnige Rettungspakete, vertuschte Risiken – so werden wir getäuscht) (Henkel, 2013); "Rescue Our Money. How the Euro-fraud Jeopardizes Our Wealth" (Rettet unser Geld! Wie der Euro-Betrug unseren Wohlstand gefährdet) (Henkel, 2010).

8

RADICAL RIGHT POPULIST HOSTILITY TOWARD ISLAM

Recently, Muslims have increasingly seen themselves pressured into the position of the "stranger within," especially in countries of Western Europe. Islamophobia has been generally on the rise after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center in New York, which were committed by fundamentalist Islamists. In Europe, the perception of an Islamist threat increased further with the emergence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria and the terrorist attacks that were inspired by this group. The radical right in many European countries tends to depict Islam principally as a security threat and does not distinguish between the peaceful majority of Muslims living there and the fundamentalist Islamists in particular, who are a small minority among the adherents to Islam. Today, the main target of radical right populist xenophobia in Germany are Muslims, regardless of their nationality. Some radical right populists are convinced that Muslims can principally not be part of the German nation. They view Islam and German nationality as incompatible.

The larger the perceived differences between two cultures the more likely it will be that these differences play a role as an intensifying factor of xenophobia. Many radical right populists in Germany see Islam as a characteristic that is culturally foreign, even in cases where Muslims are German citizens with German passports. In doing so, these populists conflate religion and culture and treat religion as an ethnocultural feature. In this chapter I will pay particular attention to this process of the ethnicization of a religious group.

Since Islamophobia is a central ideological element of radical right populism in Germany, it deserves to be studied more deeply. The chapter starts with a reflection on the international literature about the Islamophobia of the radical right. This is followed by an account of Islamophobia in Germany and the anti-Muslim positions of AfD. It includes the examination of the national level party programmes and statements of high-level party representatives on Islam. The AfD party is closely

connected with the two anti-Islam movements Pegida and the IBD. This is why this chapter, in its last two sections, will also cover these movements.

The Islamophobia of the radical right

Islamophobia may signify "both unfounded hostility toward Islam and fear or dislike of all or most Muslims" (Kallis, 2018, p. 43). But Islamophobia is not just about the emotion of fear, it is also about prejudice. Which means that it has a cognitive element, where those who are Islamophobic produce particular reasons for being hostile toward Islam. Many Islamophobes are convinced that they have a certain level of knowledge about the common traits of Muslims and the characteristics of Islam in general; and they see these traits and characteristics in a very negative light. In the eyes of the Islamophobe, it is this knowledge which justifies the general rejection of Muslims. The cognitive element involved in this process makes Islamophobia not just a matter of xenophobia but also of racism. "The racist complex inextricably combines a crucial function of *misrecognition* . . . and a 'will to know,' a violent *desire for* immediate *knowledge* of social relations" (Balibar, 1991b, p. 19). In *biologist racism* this misrecognition is based on the presumed race of a person, which is, in this type of racism, primarily related to an individual's physical features. They make him or her recognizable as belonging to a racial group, which itself is an imagined construct in the racist's mind. The racist looks at a person and immediate knows who he is dealing with and what the social status of the particular person is, that is, why the status of that person in the social hierarchy is inferior.

Although there may be biologist elements in Islamophobia, the main racist component is one of *differentialist racism* or *cultural racism* (Taguieff, 2001). In this type of racism, the individuals are sorted according to their culture, which gives those doing so the opportunity to reject biologist racism and actually pose as anti-racists. Differentialist racism makes a differentialist argument: It not only accepts cultural differences, it praises them. But it also insists that cultures should be ethnically homogenous (Taguieff, 1990). It holds that ethnocultural differences can only be maintained when cultures are spatially separated and any mixing is prevented. Thus, this differentialism can be understood as "heterophobic ideology" which "uses ideas of collective identities" and hypostasizes them as "inalienable categories" (Taguieff, 1990, p. 110).

But, of course, Islam is a religion, not a culture or an ethnie. Adherents to Islam live in many different countries around the world and are part of many different cultures, sometimes even within individual countries. Differentialist culturalism ignores this fact and treats Muslims as one large ethnocultural group. This operation involves the ethnicization of Islam.

As Naime Çakir (2019) pointed out, the ethnicization of a religion or a religious group is not racist in itself, since the process of ethnicization can be combined with a positive or a negative attitude toward the group that has been constructed as an ethnic entity. Racism is present only if the ethnicization – which involves processes of homogenization and essentialization – was carried out with the intent

to establish a relation of inequality with that group which puts those (perceived as) belonging to this group in an inferior position within the social hierarchy of the respective society (Çakir, 2019). When this understanding of religion as ethnie is combined with ethnic nationalism, or, as is the case in Germany, with volkish nationalism, the characteristics ascribed to those who belong to this "ethnic" group become a quasi-natural trait, that is, they are seen as unchangeable.

Islamophobia has a long history in Europe and was traditionally based on religious and cultural beliefs. Recently, it has become "the main exclusionary project of the far right" (Hafez, 2014, p. 481). It has gone through a phase of modernization, and is now primarily focused on the defence of liberal Europe against the alleged attempt by Muslims to Islamize the West. In this context, Islamization is often depicted as a process which is far advanced and which threatens values such as democracy and human rights, which are depicted as exclusively Western (Kerst, 2016). A conspiracy theory has gained popularity among the radical and extreme right in Europe about an alleged Islamist scheme to invade and conquer the West. In this theory, the two main means of this conquest are the immigration of Muslims to the countries of the West and the relatively higher birth rate of Muslim women compared to the fertility rate of women who are part of the "native" population in the respective countries of Europe. Although the differences between these fertility rates and the resulting demographic trends are vastly exaggerated (Kaufmann, 2017), the idea behind this conspiracy theory is that Muslims intend to outbreed the native population and eventually impose their culture and laws on the societies of the West.

The modernization of Islamophobia was mainly initiated by the Dutch radical right populist Pim Fortuyn, who "criticized Islam's [in]ability to adapt to liberal freedoms" (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p. 68) and used religion as a "means to identify who did not belong to the 'heartland'" and should therefore be excluded (van Kessel, 2016, p. 63). This particular combination of populism with Islamophobia was later radicalized by Geert Wilders who followed in Fortuyn's footsteps (after the latter's assassination) as radical right populist defender of the liberal values of the Netherlands against Islamization. Western values such as gender equality, women's rights, and the freedom of expression also play a role in the rejection of Islam by some other leading radical right populists in Europe such as the Dansk Folkeparti and the Norwegian Fremskrittspartiet. They refuse Islam bluntly as a religion that is incompatible with these values (Betz & Meret, 2009).

But the rejection of Islam is not just about liberal freedoms and values, Islamophobia is also shaped by a discourse about security, that is, security from terrorism, as well as economic and cultural security. It is driven by "a 'zero-sum' mentality" which involves the "notion of fierce, almost existential, competition for material prosperity and cultural self-determination against perceived outsiders" (Kallis, 2013, pp. 59–60). In this zero-sum perspective, the Muslim as the "other" is seen as a threat to the well-being of the autochthonous group: The more he or she participates in the finite resources that are distributed in a society, the less will be left for the group of the native inhabitants. It therefore may happen in times of

economic hardship when income is stagnating or decreasing and unemployment is on the rise that "resentment that flows from unmet expectations can be redirected against minority groups" (Stanley, 2018, p. 73). Indeed, as Jason Stanley (2018, p. 73) stressed in his book *How Fascism Works*, sometimes the "goods that go to them are represented by demagogic politicians, in a zero-sum way, as taking goods away from the majority groups."

Many Muslims now live in Europe, often in second or third generations, and view their country of residence as their home country. They have become citizens of these countries with the same rights and duties as those citizens who belong to the majority societies of these countries (Çakir, 2019). The claims of these citizens to participation, recognition, and power are seen with suspicion by some of those who compete with them for limited resources. From a zero-sum perspective, if the share of some citizens in the distribution of these resources increases, then it's natural that the share of others will have to decrease. The conflict that results from this situation is not only about the distribution of material values, it is also about status and the negotiation of a new arrangement in the social hierarchies of these societies. Thus, Islamophobia can be interpreted as defensive struggle of those who do not want to see Muslims in the position of citizens with equal rights.

Islamophobia in Germany and AfD's anti-Muslim stance

The release of Sarrazin's (2010) book *Germany Does Away with Itself* clearly marks a turning point in the relation of the German majority society with Germany's Muslim population. A particular social group was singled out as inferior and not capable of adapting to the "guiding culture" of Germany. Many observers and scholars of German politics described the publication of this book and the ensuing debate as a critical juncture in the public discourse on immigration and see it as instrumental in "paving the way for the entry of right-wing populism into the discursive space" of Germany (Decker, 2016b, p. 2). The book and the debate also appear to have had some direct impacts on the attitudes among the German population toward Muslims. The 2011 GFE survey on "group-focused enmity" (gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit) of Bielefeld University showed that in 2010 Islamophobia had increased considerably compared to the year before (Heitmeyer, 2012).

In 2010, the role of Islam in German society, the alleged formation of a "parallel society" by Muslims, and the possibility of Islam to become hegemonic in Germany took centre stage in the public discourse; and it was not only the radical right which seized on this topic, there also were many who were considered moderate – centre-right and centre-left – who took the side of Sarrazin in this debate or at least defended his freedom of speech (which was never questioned in the first place) against his critics (Broder, 2010; Kelek, 2010; Giordano, 2010; Schwarz, 2010).

Several surveys have shown that Islamophobic prejudices are rather widespread among the German population. A 2016 study of the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation found that 44.5 per cent agreed with the view that "Islam has too much influence in Germany" (18.1 per cent agreed mostly, 26.4 per cent agreed fully); 40.1 per

cent supported the view that "German society is being infiltrated by Islam" (19 per cent agreed mostly, 21.1 per cent agreed fully) (Küpper et al., 2016, pp. 152–153). In 2019, another survey by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation showed that the suspicion toward Muslims was still rather strong in the German population, with 24.9 per cent of the respondents partly,[1] 11.8 per cent mostly, and 13.1 per cent fully agreeing with the statement that "German society is being infiltrated by Islam" (Häusler & Küpper, 2019, pp. 164–165). These widespread negative attitudes among the German population toward Islam point to the high electoral potential of an Islamophobic political party in Germany. AfD is the only party represented in the Bundestag who made enmity toward Islam one of their key positions. The party has "a strong ideological-political attachment to Islamophobia" (Kallis, 2018, p. 43). All other parties have, albeit to varying degrees, acknowledged that Germany is an immigration country which includes Muslims.

The 2016 basic programme of AfD explicitly states that "Islam does not belong to Germany" (AfD, 2016, p. 49). This categorical statement violates the principle of religious freedom included in the Basic Law (the German constitution). It echoes and reverses an inclusive statement by the former federal president, Christian Wulff, who had said that "Islam belongs to Germany," a phrase which was later adopted by chancellor Merkel (Hildebrandt, 2015). In its 2017 party platform, AfD (2017, p. 34) reiterated this rejection of Islam and explicitly stated that they perceive the mere presence of Muslims in Germany "as a great danger for our state, our society, and our system of values." The 2019 programme for the European election calls Islam a "threat to Europe," says that it is "incompatible with the basic European principles of law, freedom, and democracy" and that it "does not distinguish between state and religion and is therefore also a political ideology" (AfD, 2019, p. 51). The programme also states that "religious freedom is alien to Islam" (AfD, 2019, p. 51).

AfD rejects minarets as symbols of "religious imperialism," wants to prohibit the public wearing of Burka and Niqab, and generally disallow the wearing of headscarves for civil servants at their workplaces, especially for teachers (AfD, 2017, p. 35). The 2016 programme treats the Swiss approach to direct democracy as a model for Germany (AfD, 2016). In 2009, Switzerland held a referendum on the construction of minarets. The radical right populist Swiss People's Party (Schweizer Volkspartei, SVP) mobilized for this referendum, and won, when 57.5 per cent of the participants voted against the building of minarets (Kallis, 2018). It showed that radical right populists can use referenda effectively to pursue their Islamophobic agenda.

The anti-Islam position of AfD is another ideological feature which binds together the different wings of the party. They can all agree that Islam is a threat to the German "guiding culture." The programme of 2017 states: "Every migrant or immigrant to whom we grant a permanent right of residence has an obligation to adapt to their new homeland and to the German guiding culture, not the other way around" (AfD, 2017, p. 32). In the rhetoric of AfD, the term "immigrant" is often just another word for "Muslim." At the peak of the refugee crisis in the

beginning of 2016, when Petry suggested to shoot undocumented immigrants when they make an unauthorized attempt to cross the border into Germany (Steffen, 2016), she suggested to shoot Muslims. It was well-known at this moment that most of these refugees came from majority-Muslim countries such as Syria and Afghanistan.

Weidel (2019, p. 134) gave an example of the zero-sum mentality of Islamophobes, which I discussed previously, when she talked about millions of immigrants from other cultures who threaten the "foundations of our commonwealth" and connected this warning with a complaint about an indifferent elite who looks on impassively, "while others pay for it not only with the fruits of their work, but with the broken promise of security and striving for prosperity and success." What is of special interest in this case is the way she conflated the populist discourse of "the people" versus "the elite" with the issues of cultural and economic security. What Weidel overlooks in this statement is that the immigrants who she describes as a burden to the German society and economy made a strong contribution to the economic wealth of her country. In the early days of the "guest worker" programme, those immigrants who came to Germany mostly from Turkey, made up for the lack of a workforce for unskilled labour and "took on the unloved, mostly poorly paid, hard jobs with little social prestige" and thus "led to an improvement in the professional situation of German workers" (Çakir, 2014, p. 142). Naime Çakir (2014) observed that items of cloth such as the headscarf were problematized as Islamic symbols only from the point on when those wearing these scarves started to gain higher degrees and advance into the corresponding positions. No one cared as long as women wearing these scarves were working in lowly positions.

AfD, in its programmes and in many statements of its leaders, argues along the lines of the modernized version of Islamophobia. An important element of AfD's opposition to Islam is its general depiction as repressive, especially, against women. Weidel (2019, p. 117) portrays Islam as "religion of servitude and submission, of the oppression of 'infidels' and the disenfranchisement of women." She claims that those in favour of multiculturalism "put women at the mercy of 'parallel societies,'" which she depicts as governed by some form of "parallel justice" (Weidel, 2019, pp. 122–123). She adds that in these parallel societies "barbaric customs such as forced and child marriages, female genital mutilation or so-called 'honor killings'" would be the order of the day (Weidel, 2019, p. 123). She also warns about antisemitism which would inevitably rise in Germany with more Muslims coming into the country. This reference to the high prevalence of antisemitism among Muslims, which no doubt is a real problem (Uçar & Walker, 2019), has the function to immunize herself and her party against any accusations of antisemitism, despite the fact that there have been and still are some open antisemites in AfD. The logic implied is that someone opposing the antisemitism of others, here Muslims in particular, cannot be antisemitic. This is also the logic which the deputy chair of AfD Georg Pazderski (2018) was following when he talked about the "poison of Muslim antisemitism which increasingly affects elementary school students" and accused the mainstream parties of bringing mass antisemitism into the country by

allowing uncontrolled mass immigration. What is striking is that AfD representatives criticize antisemitism almost only in the context of Islam (Uçar & Walker, 2019). Their rejection of antisemitism is instrumental and more interested in the improvement of AfD's image than in the protection of Jews.

AfD's Islamophobia is grounded in their volkish nationalism, especially in the ideal of the purity of "the people" and their culture which is at the centre of this type of nationalism. Their conception of citizenship is tied to the volkish interpretation of the nation. Its substance is defined biologically and ethnoculturally. Which means that only those who meet specific racial, ethnocultural criteria can be German citizens. AfD made it clear on several occasions that from their perspective, Muslims do not qualify for German citizenship. The intended exclusion of Muslims is primarily based on ethnic criteria. It involves the "ethnicization of Islam: Individual human beings are associated with Islam because of their descend, language, personal names or lifestyle habits" (Çakir, 2016, p. 156), regardless of the actual relationship of those personal features to Islam. Ethnicization is used to construct the "other." What is invented is the "quasi-ethnie 'Muslims'" (Yilmaz-Günay, 2013, p. 258).

This image of Muslims as a homogenous group (who are actually very diverse) mirrors the volkish-nationalist ideal which AfD has of the homogenous community of the German "people." Imagining "them" as a unified entity makes it easier to emphasize the need of the formation of a homogenous "we" group as a counterweight. In this context, it is interesting that Gauland focuses on the spatial dimension of the divide between "us" and "them." In a dispute with Thomas Sternberg, he argued against the immigration of Muslims, claiming that they originate from an external spatial area (he called them "raumfremd") and would therefore not have a place in the German homeland. In this argument, Gauland connected culture and space and – in line with the tenets of ethnopluralism – suggested that a spatial mixture would threaten the cultural traditions of the West (Sternberg & Gauland, 2017).

The Islamophobia of the party can also be attested by the strong bond between AfD and the anti-Islam movement Pegida, which I will examine more deeply later. Höcke (2018, p. 219) described both the party and the movement as the two parts of a "people's opposition" which together form a "resistance," with a particular distribution of roles for each of these two actors. In this "resistance," Pegida would have to play its part on the street, whereas AfD represents the opposition in parliament: "The 'fortress of the established' must be taken from at least two sides: by the protesting citizen base and by us as the parliamentary spearhead of the citizen opposition" (Höcke, 2018, p. 233). Pegida had many strong supporters in AfD right from the beginning. Lucke early on referred to the demonstrations which were held by the movement as "right and good," and Gauland called Pegida the "natural allies" of AfD (Bielicki & Schneider, 2014). The relation of AfD and Pegida had some ups and downs, with AfD initially trying to keep its distance from the movement for some time, because of the extremists who frequently participated in Pegida demonstrations. But many members of the party expressed

sympathies for Pegida (Korsch, 2016a). The distancing effort included the prohibition for AfD members to speak at Pegida events. But this regulation was scrapped in 2018 (Çakir, 2019). Since then, members of AfD were frequently seen as speakers at Pegida rallies. The changes in the positions of AfD toward Pegida reflect the internal frictions within the party along ideological lines and the eventual prevailing of the national-conservatives and national populists. Before I go deeper into the relationship between AfD and Pegida I need to explain what Pegida is.

The anti-Islam movement Pegida

Pegida (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident) started out in 2014 as a Facebook group and has gained prominence through the organization of regular demonstrations in the East German city of Dresden, a city that is known for its strong right-wing extremist base (Salzborn, 2016). Dresden is the capital of the East German state of Saxony, where the right-wing share of the vote in elections has been very high since German reunification (Dostal, 2015). The right-wing extremist party NPD was very successful in Saxony, especially in the region of the Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge), which is located about 50 kilometres south of Dresden.

Soon after its foundation, the Pegida movement attracted thousands of participants to its rallies that were held every Monday, copying the Monday demonstrations that brought down the state socialist system of East Germany in 1989. One of the slogans chanted at Pegida rallies is "We are the people" (Wir sind das Volk). It is the same slogan which the demonstrators of 1989 used (Vorländer et al., 2018). Copying the Monday demonstrations implies that Pegida, just as those demonstrators of 1989, is protesting against an authoritarian regime, the leaders of which do not listen to "the people," and neither truly represent "the people."

The demonstrations are conceptualized as "walks" or "strolls" (Spaziergänge). Referencing a Pegida demonstration as "Spaziergang" has a euphemistical quality. A "Spaziergang" is a leisurely activity that does not necessarily have any particular purpose. It indicates contemplation and placidity. A Pegida event always follows the same pattern. First, the participants gather at a central place in the city, where a rally is held and some speeches are given. This is followed by a demonstration through the city (one of those "walks") to another central place where the closing rally is held. The historical city of Dresden, with its baroque architecture, provides the backdrop for this ritual (Richter, 2017).

The movement peaked for the first time when about 25,000 people attended a rally on 12 January 2015. After that the numbers of participants dropped quickly (Dostal, 2015). But the refugee movement in the second half of 2015 resulted in a revival of the movement and renewed its popularity among the citizens of Dresden and the nearby area of Saxony. At the end of 2015 and in the beginning of 2016, when the number of refugees arriving in Germany reached its largest number, again tens of thousands of people participated in demonstrations organized by

Pegida. By January 2016, the Facebook page of the group had 200,000 followers (Machtans, 2016).

Some affiliates were established in other German cities, for instance, in Bonn, Brunswick, Dusseldorf, Hanover, Kassel, Kiel, Leipzig, Munich, and Saarbrücken. Affiliates were also launched in other countries such as Australia, Austria, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Poland (Vorländer et al., 2018, p. 5).[2] But the demonstrations organized in these other cities never managed to attract as many people as those in Dresden. The Pegida activities that were organized elsewhere fizzled out very quickly. Pegida demonstrations were always accompanied by counter-demonstrations, which sometimes drew several thousand counter-protesters onto the streets of Dresden. However, in terms of participants, the size of these counter-protests was always somewhat smaller than the Pegida events throughout most of the years 2015 and 2016 (Vorländer et al., 2018).

The leader of the Pegida movement is Lutz Bachmann, a colourful personality, who thinks it is funny to pose as Adolf Hitler on his Facebook page (Geiges et al., 2015). Bachmann has a criminal record, because he was convicted of 16 counts of breaking and entering, and sentenced to three years of imprisonment, which he tried to avoid by fleeing to South Africa. When his visa expired, he had to come back to Germany and serve 14 months in prison. He founded Pegida together with eleven other middle-aged people, most of whom run small enterprises. One of them is Siegfried Däbritz, who also has a criminal record. He primarily takes care of the security for Pegida (Geiges et al., 2015). According to Olaf Sundermeyer (2018, p. 65), Däbritz is Bachmann's "right-hand man," a very talented organizer and as such important for the smooth running of Pegida events. This is a talent which Gauland recognized in Däbritz when he participated in a Pegida rally. Which led to Däbritz's hiring for the organization of AfD events in other mostly Eastern German cities, which looked very much like Pegida events. An important difference is that, unlike Pegida rallies, they are mostly one-off issues. Another important founding member is Kathrin Oertel, who gained prominence when she presented Pegida in a popular television talk show on 18 January 2015, the first time one of the organizers talked extensively to the mainstream media (Geiges et al., 2015). Oertel, who described herself as an avid reader of *New Right* publications such as *Junge Freiheit* and *blu-News*, was one of the more moderate voices among the founders. When she and a few others, who were also considered to be on the relatively moderate side, left the Pegida organization team, because they were opposed to the radicalization that occurred in the movement, Pegida clearly shifted further to the right, which could be seen in the content of the speeches that were held at rallies as well as in the speakers and their background (Geiges et al., 2015).

In its beginnings, Pegida was a "diffuse protest movement" (Vorländer et al., 2018, p. 13) which attracted many citizens who were looking for an outlet for their anger and dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Germany. But in the course of the summer 2015 the movement went through a transition period from which it emerged as an anti-immigrant movement, which "manifested itself with the

so-called '10 demands for German asylum policy'" (Vorländer et al., 2018, p. 13). The concurrency of the radicalization of Pegida and AfD is no accident. The radicalization of both occurred against the backdrop of the refugee crisis of 2015. This also was a time when both were weakened by internal crises. Both the party and the movement were re-energized by their opposition against the admission of larger numbers of refugees to Germany. As I will show later, another factor which connects these two is that there is much overlap and mutual sympathy between the followers of Pegida and the voters of AfD.

Empirical research has shown that many of the Pegida activists hold right-wing extremist and xenophobic views (Vorländer et al., 2016). The main ideologeme of Pegida is Islamophobia. Islamophobia has been characterized as ideology that holds certain closed views of Islam: "1. Islam as monolithic and static; 2. Islam as separate and other; 3. Islam as inferior; 4. Islam as the enemy; 5. Islam as manipulative" (Machtans, 2016, p. 91). By spring 2016, the views of Pegida demonstrators toward Islam had become very negative; 56 per cent of them agreed with the statement that "Muslims should be prohibited from immigrating to Germany" and 84 per cent saw Islam generally as a threat (Vorländer et al., 2018, p. 110). Most of the members of Pegida are "middle class, [. . .] well-educated, employed, and male" (Machtans, 2016, p. 92). They are not the downtrodden, but come from the very centre of German society. Karolin Machtans (2016, p. 92) concludes that "their aggressive, anti-Muslim and anti-refugee rhetoric clearly indicates a loss of solidarity (Entsolidarisierung) with weaker members of society among the middle class." This diagnosis corresponds to the empirical findings of the GFE surveys of Bielefeld University about the shift of the attitudes among the German middle class, which led Wilhelm Heitmeyer (2012, p. 35) to the conclusion that a "raw middle class" had emerged in Germany who pursued their goals with rather crude means, not least with the "denigration of weak groups" in society.

In the anti-Islam rhetoric of Pegida, the term "Muslim" is synonymous with "refugee" or "immigrant." Muslims are constructed as the "other," who must be kept in spatial distance. The rejection of Muslims by those following Pegida has ethnopluralist and identitarian motives. Identifying and marking "the other" is constitutive for the delineation of what is one's own. Muslims become the other of the civilized Westerner. "Muslims and Islam are not only enemy images, but also negative templates that serve to define oneself. Homogenization is carried out on both sides" (Teidelbaum, 2016, pp. 36–37). What is constructed in this process is not only "the other" but also the self that is imagined as homogenous collective subject. Which is why Dostal (2015, p. 526) is correct when he considers Pegida as a "prototypical völkisch (ethnic nationalist) movement."

Pegida failed to mobilize beyond the boundaries of Saxony, and it did not appeal to the wider public of Germany. However, it is noteworthy that among the voters of the AfD a large number have sympathies for Pegida. Voters of AfD by far outnumber the sympathizers that Pegida has among the voters of other parties. A survey by the University of Leipzig found that 70.4 per cent of the AfD voters fully support the goals of Pegida. The support for the objectives of the movement is

much lower among the voters of other parties: SPD – 18.4 per cent, CDU/CSU – 18.4 per cent, The Left – 17.4 per cent, The Greens – 11.5 per cent, FDP – 15.2 per cent (Brähler et al., 2016). These findings mirror the results of two different surveys on the voting behaviour of Pegida participants. In both surveys, AfD was the strongest party, with 33 per cent and 44.8 per cent of the votes respectively (Vorländer et al., 2018).

What is also noteworthy about the relationship between AfD and Pegida are some personal convergences. However, as Korsch (2016b) found, they do not go as deep as one may suspect. Among the speakers, organizers, and stewards at Pegida events there were only 11 per cent with a current or past AfD background. Interestingly, many of them had connections to other radical right populist or right-wing extremist parties and organizations such as NPD, the PRO-groups, The Freedom, and IBD.

In its official statements, of which there are only a few, Pegida was careful not to expose its Islamophobia too strongly (Dostal, 2015). However, in its rallies, the extremist leanings of the movement often revealed themselves in the behaviour of the speakers and of their audience. Lucius Teidelbaum (2016), for instance, observed that the numbers of participants increased significantly after Islamist terrorist attacks. This is also when the applause for anti-Islam statements was exceptionally strong. Some of the speakers obviously found it difficult to contain their hate when addressing a Pegida crowd. In 2016, Bachmann was sentenced for incitement to pay a fine of 9,600 euros. A court in Dresden found him guilty of inciting hate against refugees and denigrating them publicly (Handelsblatt, 2016). On 19 May 2015, Akif Pirinçci, an author with populist radical right leanings, gave a hateful speech at a Pegida rally in Dresden where he offended Muslims, gays, ecologists, and other minorities and movements (Spiegel-Online, 2015). Two years later, a court in Dresden found that his speech constituted incitement of hate and sentenced him to pay a monetary penalty (Die Welt, 2017).

Pegida is still actively organizing rallies in Dresden. Its Facebook page is crucial for the mobilization of its followers. Lutz M. Hagen (2016, p. 216), called it the "organizational spine" of the movement. Through Facebook Pegida can stabilize its movement and try to reach new followers. It can interpret news and react to the media coverage of its events, and coordinate activities of the group (Hagen, 2016). It may also advertise rallies of associated organizations and parties.

There are more things that Pegida has in common with the AfD. Both have an affinity for the intellectual New Right. In its beginnings, Pegida adopted a policy of not speaking to mainstream media, which they termed "Lügenpresse" (press of lies). Bachmann preferred to talk to the media of the New Right, when he gave interviews to two of their main publications, *Junge Freiheit* and *Sezession* (Salzborn, 2017a). Pegida is well-connected within the network of the New Right. Götz Kubitschek, co-founder of the IfS and editor of *Sezession*; Jürgen Elsässer, editor of *Compact*; and Martin Sellner, leading figure of the Identitarian Movement Austria (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich, IBÖ) have frequently been seen as speakers at Pegida rallies (Richter, 2017). These are central figures of the New Right who

have worked hard over the last years to provide the radical right populist movement in Germany with an ideological foundation and a strategic orientation.

IBD as anti-Islam movement

Most observers classify the *Identitarian Movement* as a right-wing extremist and/or neo-fascist phenomenon (Hentges, 2018a; Pfahl-Traughber, 2019; Roepke, 2019). As right-wing extremists, they actually fall outside the scope of the research object that I am focusing on in this book. But, as we have already learned, the lines between radical right populism and right-wing extremism in Germany are blurry. As I will show, there are some commonalities in the ideological positions of radical right populism and the Identitarian Movement Germany (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, IBD). This section starts with a brief history of IBD, which is followed by a description of the ideological positions and strategic orientation of IBD. In the last part of this section, I will attend to the connections and cooperation between IBD and AfD.

A short history of IBD

The IBD has its roots in France where the *Bloc Identitaire* (BI) was formed in 2003 (Bruns et al., 2014). From there it spread to many European countries and cooperated with similar movements from other countries such *CasaPound* (CP) in Italy (Hentges, 2018a). BI was later complemented by the *Génération Identitaire* (GI), which functioned as the youth organization of BI. The activists of BI are frustrated with the inefficiency of the political strategies pursued by right-wing extremists. They regard them as inefficient in the sense that they have not produced a significant change of the political system. BI therefore decided to take a different approach and reach its goals through action and provocation.

In Germany, the first identitarian groups were established in 2012. They were inspired by a GI campaign in France. On 20 October 2012, GI members became active in the French city of Poitiers, where they occupied the roof of a mosque that was under construction and affixed banners with the number 732 and the Greek letter lambda on that roof. The number and the letter refer to two historical battles that have symbolic significance for BI (Speit, 2018a). The number 732 stands for the year in which Karl Martell, the Franconian commander, led his forces into battle against Arab troops which were commanded by Abd ar-Rahman, who was ruling Spain as governor on behalf of the caliph. The battle occurred between Poitiers and Tours, was won by Martell, and resulted in the death of Abd ar-Rahman. Some historiographic accounts exaggerated the meaning of this battle for the history of Europe by depicting it as an event that prevented the invasion of France by the Arabs and celebrated Martell as saviour of the occident. In reality, this battle was far less important, since the Arab troops were in France to conduct a raid and not as an invasion force (Nonn, 1990). But this is where the "Reconquista" started for BI as the "defensive battle of the occident against the orient" (Speit, 2018a,

p. 22). Reconquista historically refers to the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula by Christian rulers, who drove off the Arabs from that region, a process that lasted for several centuries during the Middle Ages. For BI, Reconquista is a contemporary political programme which focuses on the defence of the Christian occident against Muslim invaders from Northern Africa and the Middle East (Hentges, 2018a). The activists of GI recorded their campaign in Poitiers and posted it on YouTube where it caught the attention of likeminded people in Germany (Bruns et al., 2014).

The letter lambda refers to a battle which occurred in 480 BC at Thermopylae in Greece, where 300 Spartans fought to the death against a far larger Persian army. Allegedly, the letter lambda adorned the shields of these 300 fighters (Speit, 2018a). "The identitarians want to conjure up this myth of the heroic defensive struggle against foreign powers and hostile influences" (Speit, 2018a, p. 19). BI uses the letter lambda as its symbol, mostly as a black letter on yellow ground, but sometimes also appearing in other colour combinations.

The first activity of IBD in Germany occurred on 30 October 2012 in Frankfurt (Main) at the public library, where a group of three identitarians disturbed the opening ceremony of the *Intercultural Week* (Interkulturelle Woche). They wore Guy Fawkes and Scream masks, carried shields with the lambda symbol, played hard bass music from a recorder, and exclaimed "Multikulti wegbassen," which involves youth slang ("wegbassen") and can be interpreted as drowning out multicultural society with hard bass music (Bruns et al., 2014, p. 68). The whole action lasted only a few minutes. But it was recorded and then made available online by different Facebook groups. Until then the IBD was just a virtual phenomenon on the web. But this activity showed that the IBD existed and was ready to take action in real life.

Meanwhile, local groups have been established in most larger cities all over the country. IBD is not organized democratically; it has "a clear hierarchical structure of nationwide cadres, regional leaders, local group leaders, simple members and candidates" (Book, 2017, p. 118). They are connected via the internet and use social media, especially Facebook, blogs, and vlogs (video blogs) to spread their message. The movement got the attention of the media with the organization of flash mobs. These are short-term gatherings that are coordinated via the internet or per cell phone. A flash mob of the IBD draws a crowd of people for a short period of time, which meet at an appointed place, where demands are made and banners with the letter lambda are shown. The gathering then dissolves quickly with all participants moving on in different directions. At such events, IBD, for instance, criticized the German asylum policy for welcoming and supporting refugees while the autochthonous population is allegedly left out in the cold (Bruns et al., 2014). The activity which so far caught the most media attention was the occupation of the Brandenburg Gate on 27 August 2016, when 15 activists climbed the gate and unrolled banners which said "secure borders – secure future" (sichere Grenzen – sichere Zukunft) (Speit, 2018b, p. 19). This campaign has since then become a symbol for IBD. Another activity meant to galvanize attention was the "Defend Europe" campaign of 2017, which targeted ships of NGOs that

cruised the Mediterranean Sea in order to rescue refugee whose boats got in distress. Thousands of people drown every year on their way from Africa to Europe. The IBD chartered a vessel to obstruct the work of those NGOs that they defamed as people-smuggling networks (Hentges, 2018a).

Since May 2014, IBD is officially registered as an association. The registration took place at the district court of Paderborn. The declared goal of the association's registrants was "to maintain and promote the identity of the German people as an independent one among the identities of the other peoples of the world" (IBD as cited in Speit, 2018a, p. 27). According to BfV (2020), there have been 600 members of the movement by 2018. This may appear as a low number. But many of their media postings have thousands of likes and some of their videos had more than a hundred thousand viewers. Since its beginnings, IBD was strongly supported by the network of the New Right and by Martin Sellner, who is the speaker of IBÖ, the Austrian branch of the identitarians. The IBD is led by Daniel Fiß; however, it appears that Sellner's role in the German organization is at least as important as that of Fiß. Sellner himself has stated that much of what happened in Germany around the IBD has been controlled from Austria (Speit, 2018a).

Since 2017, IBD maintained a "cultural centre" in Halle (Saale) ("Haus Flamberg"), where several right-wing organizations had their offices. But in May 2020 the IBD announced that it would give up this project. Subsequently, those working in this house moved out one after the other. Torsten Hahnel, who works for a civil society organization that monitors right-wing extremism and promotes democracy in the state of Saxony-Anhalt, attributed this development to the strong pressure by civil society groups who organized protests against each and every event that was launched at the centre (Stapper, 2020).

Due to the right-wing extremist leanings of IBD, the federal internal security service BfS gained interest in the movement. In 2018, BfV announced that it classified IBD as a suspected case of right-wing extremism. One year later the agency classified the movement as a "certain case" of right-wing extremism (Die Zeit, 2019b). This classification means that the agency sees IBD as a potential threat to the constitutional order of Germany. It also means that IBD now is under observation of BfV.

The strategic orientation and ideological positions of IBD

IBD sees itself as a patriotic NGO, as kind of a "patriotic Greenpeace" (Roepke, 2017). The reference to this left-wing organization is no accident: The movement has copied the protest forms of the 1968 student movement which they accuse of having established a form of leftist "totalitarian 'cultural hegemony'" in Germany (Book, 2017, p. 114). The IBD wants to oppose this alleged left-wing hegemony with its own counter-hegemony. In doing so they copy the methods used by the student movement to draw attention to their cause. They follow a strategy which Kubitschek (2007) outlined in his book *Provokation* (*Provocation*). This book, which over long stretches reads as a leftist critique of consumerism and alienation turned

right, was written as an encouragement for a young radical right audience to wake up from their political lethargy. Kubitschek describes the situation of the German society as one of complete disorder and calls for action: "The time is ripe for the provocation, the deliberate violation of rules, the breaking of taboos, for the fight against institutions that have become intolerable" (Kubitschek, 2007, p. 46). He also states what he expects from a provocative action: "In the best-case scenario, it mobilizes imitators or original forces and awakens a milieu" (Kubitschek, 2007, p. 76). Kubitschek himself founded the group *Conservative-Subversive Action* (Konservativ-Subversive Aktion, KSA), which he used for provocative actions. But it appears that IBD is implementing his strategy with more determination and success.

Another strategic source of IBD is Alain de Benoist, the intellectual mentor of the Nouvelle Droite. His ideas strongly influenced the New Right in Germany. De Benoist (1985) relied strongly on the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci and his ideas about cultural hegemony. Gramsci emphasized that political rule would have to be prepared in the field of culture. De Benoist adopted Gramsci's theory and suggested that the radical right should try to establish a cultural hegemony in order to become politically more influential. He emphasized the role of the mass media in modern society and of opinion leadership as an aspect of power. De Benoist (1985, pp. 49–50) also sensed an increasing susceptibility of public opinion for a "metapolitical message" and suggested that the right should take advantage of this situation. At an event held by the IfS in 2017, Sellner stressed the importance of de Benoist's approach for the Identitarian Movement: "The real source of power and the real center of power in Western European societies is cultural hegemony" (Sellner as cited in Book, 2017, p. 115). The New Right has realized that it is necessary to transform the value system of a society before the political system can be changed; and this is what IBD is focusing on (Book, 2017).

Ideologically, IBD has much in common with the New Right. The most important value for the New Right and IBD is an ethnically defined nation (Bruns et al., 2014). The main enemy stereotype of IBD is Islam. They depict Islam as the antagonistic "other" which has to be fought to protect the Christian West (Bruns et al., 2016). Their rhetoric and their actions were directed against Islam and Muslims right from the beginning. However, with the refugee crisis of 2015, their anti-Islam propaganda took on an even more aggressive tone (Hentges, 2018a). An important ideological commonality of AfD, the New Right, and IBD is their focus on ethnopluralism. Identity is the central category for the Identitarian Movement (Sellner, 2017). In their thinking ethnicity and identity are interdependent. Identity is first and foremost conceived as a strong ethnocultural identity. They perceive this identity as being threatened by the process of a systematic replacement of the native population by an immigrant population which primarily comes from what they perceive as the Islamic cultural sphere. Hence, what has to be protected is the ethnic identity of the "youths with a non-immigrant background" as they like to refer to themselves (Mense, 2018, p. 231). On the webpage of *Defend Europe*, IBD claimed that the native population is gradually becoming "a minority

in our own European homestead" (Hentges, 2018a, pp. 91–92). They attribute this minoritization of their identity group to a scheme of the European elites to replace the autochthonous population with another one that is more supple and easier to exploit. Like many in AfD, the activists of IBD also believe in the conspiracy theory of Camus (2017) about a "great replacement." This conspiracy theory involves a reversal of the colonial relation between North and South, or Occident and Orient; with the Occident now being colonized by people coming from the Orient (Hentges, 2018a).

IBD and its relationship with AfD

There have been many personal connections between representatives of AfD and members of IBD. There is also some overlap in their ideological positions. On the part of AfD the connections primarily concern members of the party's youth organization *Young Alternative*. High-level functionaries of Young Alternative have attended demonstrations and events which were organized by IBD, and they cooperated closely with the movement (Book, 2017).

Officially, the party keeps its distance from IBD. In 2016, the AfD leadership and Young Alternative came to an agreement about the incompatibility of IBD with AfD. The distance is strategic. Since IBD is monitored by BfV, the movement's connections with AfD could have an impact on the reputation of the party and scare away conservative voters. It may also contribute to an increasing interest of BfV in AfD, which the party wants to avoid because of the many ramifications that would come with an observation by the agency (Baeck, 2018).

However, AfD representatives circumvented and subverted the incompatibility agreement several times. Many instances are known where AfD representatives participated in IBD events or organized events together with them. But more importantly, AfD is now functioning as an employer for some IBD cadres. The party is currently represented in all German parliaments on national, subnational state, and European levels. With these posts come positions that can be distributed, for instance, as aides for members of parliament. Members of IBD participated strongly in these opportunities. In 2018, it was found that ten employees of AfD representatives in the Bundestag had connections to IBD (Baeck, 2018). IBD activists also work for members of parliament in the state of Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania. Members of the movement support the party in many ways: "Identitarians help with the election campaign, protect events, and provide infrastructure for the party" (Baeck, 2018, p. 112).

Gauland made it very clear that the distance which AfD is keeping to IBD is strictly strategic. He invited members of IBD to participate in AfD and stressed that there would be no ideological dissent between the party and the movement. Hans-Thomas Tillschneider, member of parliament in the state of Saxony-Anhalt declared: "AfD wants the same as the Identitarian Movement" (Tillschneider as cited in Pfahl-Traughber, 2019, p. 25). The assurance that there is no ideological

difference between AfD and IBD by two important representatives of the party gives cause to think about the position of AfD on the political spectrum again.

Conclusion

Muslims in Germany find themselves increasingly in the position of the "stranger within." Radical right populists pressure them into this position because of their religion. But there is also a dimension of differentialist racism to the exclusion and denigration of Muslims. Muslims are ethnicized as a monolithic group that is suspected of conspiring to undermine Western culture and replace it with their own culture based on Islam. It could be shown that this conspiracy theory of "the great replacement" (Umvolkung) provides an important narrative for the justification of Islamophobic sentiments. Islamophobia is a crucial programmatic issue for AfD, and it is at the top of the agenda for the anti-Islam movements Pegida and IBD. But Islamophobia is not only about the rejection of the "other" or the "stranger within"; it is also about the generation of identity, a process that involves a homogenization and essentialization in the imagined group formation of "us" and "them." For the radical right populists in Germany, Muslims and Islam, beyond being enemy images, also serve as "negative templates" (Teidelbaum, 2016, p. 36) for the creation of what is the populists' own.

Notes

1 The survey had changed between 2016 and 2019 from a four-point scale for the response to this statement in 2016 to a five-point scale in 2019. The option to say that one partly agrees was newly introduced in 2019.
2 Some of the "-gida" groups in other German cities were established by known right-wing extremists, for instance, Bogida, the Pegida group in Bonn. Which resulted in the distancing of Pegida-Dresden from such groups (Geiges et al., 2015).

9

ANTISEMITISM AND HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

Antisemitism has a long and devastating history in Germany. During the Nazi period six million Jews were killed by ordinary Germans in the name of their nation. This is an element of German history which to date strongly affects the relationship of the German majority society to the Jews living in Germany, which have again reached a number of more than 100,000. This chapter gives a brief overview of the history of antisemitism and then focuses on the antisemitism of the AfD party and their advocation for a revision of German history.

Historical roots and current appearance of antisemitism in Germany

Antisemitism, "the rumour about the Jews" (Adorno, 1984, p. 141), the "social prejudice directed against Jews simply because they are Jewish" (Zick et al., 2011, p. 40) is still virulent in Europe and Germany; and the stereotypes of Jews are very much alive today. Antisemitism can appear in many different forms, because it has "many traditionally stereotypical and degrading facets as well as modern and subtle facets" (Zick et al., 2017, p. 83). Wodak (2018, p. 62) lists 20 different types of antisemitism: "racist, capitalist, cultural, religious, or syncretic; Muslim or Christian; left- or right-wing; 'old' or 'new'; traditional, structural, or secondary; hard-core or latent; explicit or coded; and soft or violent." In cases where antisemitic prejudices are uttered or hatred against Jews is acted out, one may find just one of these types of antisemitism or a combination of two or more of them.

In Germany, the enmity toward Jews can look back on a centuries-old tradition in the course of which certain prejudices against Jews have hardened (Benz, 2004). The roots of this enmity are religious; but since the second half of the 19th century a modern variety of enmity toward Jews has emerge with the attainment of legal equality by Jews and their subsequent emancipation (Lenk,

1994). This emancipation triggered an antisemitic backlash which, according to Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (1996), was all-pervasive in German society. Antisemitism in Germany became eliminatory after it was linked up with the racial teachings that emerged at the end of the 19th century and with Social Darwinism at the beginning of the 20th century. The antisemitism of the Nazis cannot be explained without the racial ideology that distinguished the superior "Aryan" race from the inferior one of the Jews. "With the Nazi persecution and extermination of Jews in Europe [. . .] hostility toward Jews in Germany has reached an eliminatory quality that is to this date still unknown in other countries" (Havertz, 2008b, p. 283). With its eliminatory character the Shoah constitutes a historical singularity.

After the Second World War, antisemitism in (West) Germany was primarily determined by an urge to ward off guilt for the crimes committed against Jews during the Nazi era. In this context, Peter Schönbach (1961, p. 80) coined the term "secondary antisemitism," which was later adopted by Adorno (1986).[1] The generation of the perpetrators found themselves in a situation where they had to explain to their children and to society at large what they had done to the Jews of Europe. They saw a need to justify their actions and in the course of that justification resorted to the "traditional reservoir of antisemitic prejudice" as well as to "several new *topoi*" of antisemitism (Wodak et al. as cited in Wodak, 2018, p. 64). Secondary antisemitism can generally be understood as a tendency to refuse to deal with the atrocities of the Nazi regime. "It manifests itself in rejecting guilt and refusing to assume responsibility" (Havertz, 2008b, p. 287). Traditional antisemitic stereotypes such as that of the "greedy Jew" (Decker et al., 2019, p. 7), of the "rootlessness" cosmopolitan anti-nationalism and disloyalty of Jews to Germany, as well as of a "Jewish world conspiracy" (Wodak, 2018, p. 65) are still widespread today. However, secondary antisemitism is the main contemporary form of antisemitism in Germany. It is more common than the traditional variety (Decker, Kriess, & Brähler, 2018).

In their empirical study of antisemitism in Germany, Decker, Kriess, and Brähler (2018) distinguish between a few categories of antisemitism: latent and manifest, primary and secondary. They also differentiate between a form of traditional antisemitism, where Jews are directly addressed as a threat and one that is expressed in a "detour communication" (Decker, Kriess, & Brähler, 2018, pp. 188–189). It works indirectly and may include the expression of a dislike for Jews because of the behaviour of Israel in the Middle East or involve accusations of a "Holocaust-industry" that takes advantage of the guilt which is felt by Germans due to the atrocities committed against Jews during the Nazi period. Which means that this "detour communication" could involve primary and secondary antisemitism. For antisemites in Germany (and elsewhere), the reference to Israel has become a code for Jew (Küpper & Zick, 2019); and in the claim of the existence of a Holocaust-industry a secondary antisemitism makes itself felt which rejects Jews because of the Shoah and in the same process reverses the offender-victim relationship by turning Jews into offenders and Germans into victims.

In the period between 2002 and 2018, manifest antisemitism has decreased, although this decrease was not continuous because of an increase between 2008 and 2012 when two economic crises, the global financial crisis and the euro crisis, were felt strongly in Germany. In 2018, manifest antisemitism was slightly lower in the East of Germany (8.7 per cent) than in the West (10.5 per cent). However, latent antisemitism was significantly stronger in the East, with 26.2 per cent of the population agreeing on statements that indicate this type of antisemitism and 19.3 per cent in the West (Decker, Kriess, & Brähler, 2018).

An important motive for secondary antisemitism, especially on the radical right, is the urge to rewrite history and normalize the Nazi period so as to treat it like any other period in German history. This operation necessarily involves the relativization and diminishment of the atrocities committed against Jews by ordinary Germans during the time of the Nazi regime. Sometimes it results in outright Holocaust denial (Wodak, 2015), which could be interpreted as an extreme form of secondary antisemitism, that is, antisemitism because of the Shoah (Wodak, 2018). It is important to note that "each and every" type of secondary antisemitism "appears to be embedded in a *discourse of justification*" (Wodak et al. as cited in Wodak, 2018, p. 64).

Antisemitism and historical revisionism in AfD

Enmity toward Jews is not an official position of AfD. In fact, some in the party, for instance, Petry when she was co-chair of AfD, expressed solidarity with Israel and suggested a similarity between the situation which Israel is facing at its borders and the situation which Germany was dealing with during the refugee crisis of 2015–2016 (Grimm & Kahmann, 2017). With her stated support for Israel, Petry wanted to improve the international image of AfD as a democratic party. In doing so, she followed the lead of FPÖ and other right-wing populist parties such as the Dutch PVV and the Belgian VB. However, such positions in support of Israel are scattered and not consistent in the party, and they are instrumental. The rapprochement to Israel has the function to disguise the antisemitism that exists in the party. It is also meant to assist the party in their denial of any historical or ideological relationships with fascism or National Socialism (Grimm & Kahmann, 2017).

The attempt of AfD to portray Israel as an ally in their rejection of Muslims also has the function to justify their anti-immigrant positions. The instrumentality of this stated solidarity with Israel becomes clear when looking at the three main party programmes of AfD. The only instances where Jews are mentioned in these programmes is in connection with AfD's anti-Islam positions. The party manifesto of 2016 states: "The AfD clearly opposes Islamic religious practice which is directed against the liberal-democratic basic order, our laws and against the Judeo-Christian and humanistic foundations of our culture" (AfD, 2016, p. 48). The electoral programmes of 2017 and 2019 try to co-opt Jews in a similar fashion against Islam (AfD, 2017, 2019).

Recently, there has been an increase of antisemitic hate crimes in Germany (Jansen, 2020). In 2019 there were more than 2,000 such crimes in Germany, which constitutes an increase of 13 per cent compared to 2018, the highest number of such incidences since 2001. It is likely that there is a connection between this surge and the volkish-nationalist rhetoric of AfD. Josef Schuster (as cited in Jansen, 2020), the president of the *Central Council of Jews in Germany*, was convinced that some of the blame for these crimes falls on AfD: "The breaking of taboos and the linguistic disinhibition that we are experiencing everywhere and that is largely fueled by AfD ultimately translate into action." On Yom Kippur, in 2019, an armed right-wing extremist tried to enter a synagogue in Halle (Saale). The obvious motive was to kill Jews. When he failed to get into the building, he randomly killed two passers-by on the street in front of that synagogue. This incident triggered a public debate about the responsibility of AfD for this and for other recent right-wing terrorist attacks (Brodkorb, 2019; Kaminski, 2019; Kurbjuweit, 2019). But representatives of AfD denied any connection to antisemitism and to the attacks. They used the debate to make themselves out to be the actual victims because of these accusations, which they portrayed as unfair and politically motivated.

In statements of individual representatives of AfD, antisemitism of all types has been expressed. This may sometimes involve claims of a Jewish world conspiracy, but is often less direct and voiced in a more roundabout way and through certain codes in an obvious attempt to avoid any accusation of being antisemitic. This substitute communication or detour communication may involve references to "interest-based capital" or the "international financial capital"; it may also include a strong anti-Americanism (Grimm & Kahmann, 2017, pp. 44–45). It often appears in an overzealous critique of Israel.

Most common in these statements are forms of secondary antisemitism. This involves AfD's claim for a need to revise German history. In their view, the Second World War and the Shoah have a too dominant position in German history, as it is taught in schools and at institutes of higher education. They want to change German commemorative culture, away from the concentration on the Shoah and the atrocities of the Second World War, and advocate a paradigm shift regarding the perception of German history. Höcke (2017), for instance, said that the need for "an about-turn" in the memorial policy of Germany was "more urgent than ever." Gauland (2018b, p. 8), on the other hand, got involved in a hypothetical discourse about German history. He rejected the idea that the Nazi period was the inevitable result of the preceding periods in German history, and that all these previous periods somehow culminated in the Nazi era. Although nobody had claimed this inevitability, its rejection serves to disconnect the antecedent historical phases from the Nazi period and clean them from any contamination with National Socialism. There is much evidence though that Prussian militarism, Bismarck's fierce nationalism, the volkish movement and the antisemitism of the 19th century, as well as the antidemocratic attitude of the reactionaries of Weimar had indeed a strong influence on the historical trajectory of Germany that led up to the Nazi regime. But Gauland would prefer to separate these previous periods from the Nazi era, so

they can be venerated as elements of the glorious past of Germany. This especially pertains to Prussia, which Gauland is infatuated with. His understanding of history appears to be influenced by the historism of the 19th century that was prevalent in Prussia – an outdated way of historical analysis, which emphasizes the need to look at each historical period as one in its own right that can only be understood through the lens of the values of the respective time and, thus, potentially results in a relativization of history and its revision. According to Salzborn (2017b, p. 33), "positive identification with the German nation" is the foundation of Gauland's view of history; anything that stands in the way of this positive identification is therefore ignored.

A notable example for this historical revisionism is Gauland's remark about the Nazi period that it would amount to nothing more than "bird droppings" in German history (FAZ, 2018). This metaphor deserves to be analyzed more deeply. In this statement, Gauland minimizes the genocide of the European Jews to a point where it does not count anymore. "Bird-droppings" – this is nothing at all, and – to stay with the metaphor – if it is anything, it can be wiped away easily. Denying the meaning of the Shoah for German history is not the same as claiming that it never happened, that is, not the same as Holocaust denial. But denying its meaning comes close to denying its reality. Moreover, there is a good chance that right-wing extremist followers of AfD read it as an approval and encouragement of Holocaust denial. What also resonates in this angry metaphor is a claim of victimhood. It says that history has been stolen from Germans due to the strong focus on the Shoah which blocks the way to the more important and essential periods of German history.

Gauland is not alone in this attempt to trivialize the grave nature of a war that cost more than 50 million lives, among them six million Jews, who were murdered in death camps such as Auschwitz by ordinary Germans, most of whom believed in the cause of the German nation. The indifference demonstrated by Gauland regarding the Nazi crimes is part of a complex of guilt deflection that is typical for representatives of the far right in Germany. Ever since the Second World War, a certain kind of "secondary guilt" is part of the identity of most Germans (Pfaff, 1993, p. 26). It is the guilt which contemporary Germans feel for the deeds of their parents and grandparents. For some on the right the only way to identify with the nation in an unencumbered manner is the rejection of that guilt, which often results in utterances of secondary antisemitism. Thus, "secondary guilt" and secondary antisemitism are entwined in a complex manner.

Should AfD ever come into power, it can be expected that one of their main projects will be the change of the memorial culture of Germany regarding National Socialism and the Shoah. Konrad Adam (2015), co-chair of AfD until 2015 and chairman of the board of the *Desiderius-Erasmus-Foundation* between 2015 and 2017, a think tank affiliated to AfD, advocated such a change. He suggested that this could be achieved by a revision of the school curricula for history and claimed that history lessons in schools were overly concerned with this historical period. The indisputable negativity of that period would prevent young Germans from

developing a positive national identity. Teaching history should therefore focus on the more positive aspects of German history.

Höcke is the most visible AfD representative to engage in historical revisionism. In Dresden, he told an audience of young members of AfD that it was time to put an end to this "silly" policy of reprocessing history (Höcke, 2017). He called the memorial site of the Shoah in Berlin a "monument of shame" which no other country in Europe would dare to put in the middle of its capital (Höcke, 2017). Höcke also lamented about the Open Society Foundation of George Soros and called it "völkerfeindlich" (hostile to peoples) (Höcke, 2018, p. 178). The term "völkerfeindlich" does not exist in standard German and can therefore be seen as a creation of Höcke. But the term involves a clear reference to the Nazi term "Volksfeind" (enemy to the people). As is well-known, for the Nazis the main "enemy to the people" were the Jews. Höcke's slight alteration of the term, replacing the plural "Völker" (peoples) for the singular "Volk" (people), can be understood as an ethnopluralist reinterpretation of the term. At the same time, it can be seen as another attempt by an AfD representative to reanimate the vocabulary of the Nazi period. It is noteworthy that there is almost no high-ranking AfD-representative who did not grab headlines by enunciating revisionist views at one point or another. Redefining history is a necessary exercise for them, because the Shoah is standing in the way of what they crave the most: re-establishing the "people's community."

Some right-wing extremists go so far as to entirely deny that the Shoah actually happened. Others (since Holocaust denial is still a criminal offense in Germany) content themselves with casting doubt on elements of the Shoah that are actually well researched, or raising questions about the role which specific groups in society had during the Nazi period. A telling example for this kind of behaviour is Martin Hohmann and his discussion of the Jews as "people of perpetrators" (Hohmann as cited in Havertz, 2019, p. 400, fn. 4). When Hohmann raised this issue in a speech in 2002, he was a member of the Bundestag for CDU. He had to resign from his post because of this provocation. In the aftermath, the radical right in Germany cast him a victim of political correctness and made him a martyr of their cause. In September 2017, he was rewarded for his long suffering, when he again won a seat in the federal parliament, now as representative of AfD.

There are currently 89 members of AfD in the Bundestag.[2] Every year, on 27 January, the house commemorates the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945. In 2018, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, an Auschwitz survivor, who played cello in the girl's orchestra of the death camp, addressed the assembled members of the Bundestag. In her speech she warned against a new rise of antisemitism in Germany. The members of AfD who were present at the event made a show of displaying their displeasure with what Lasker-Wallfisch had to tell them. They looked on with sullen faces; and when the representatives of the other parties applauded Lasker-Wallfisch they clapped ostentatiously slow (Klikauer, 2020). A similar scene could be observed in Bavaria in 2019, where AfD members of the state parliament showed their contempt by leaving the floor when a Shoah survivor addressed the house (Klikauer, 2020).

Another case of interest in this context is the one of Wolfgang Gedeon. In 2016, when he was elected to the state legislature of Baden-Wuerttemberg, he was already known for his antisemitic writings. He defended Holocaust deniers such as David Irving and neo-Nazis such as Horst Mahler as "dissidents" and claimed that Jews are working toward the "enslavement of humanity within a messianic empire of the Jews" with the goal of "Judaizing Christian religion and Zionizing the politics of the West" (Gedeon as cited in Salzborn, 2018, pp. 85–86). As Salzborn (2018) has shown in his analysis of the case, AfD's handling of Gedeon's antisemitism is even more revealing than the utterances of this individual antisemite: The leadership of the party had a hard time figuring out whether Gedeon's statements actually constitute antisemitism; they did not immediately find anything antisemitic in his words and considered seeking outside counsel to clarify the issue. Salzborn (2018, p. 86) comments that this was only possible if they found "at least parts of Gedeon's world view acceptable." Marc Jongen, who is a member of the executive board of AfD in Baden-Wuerttemberg, tried to explain the approach of the party to the case of Gedeon in a dialogue with Kubitschek from the journal *Sezession* (Kubitschek, 2016). In this conversation he said that it had "to be accepted that not every member of parliament was able to form an unbiased opinion about Gedeon's quite extensive writings in the short time and in the already heated situation" (Kubitschek, 2016). But, of course, what the members of the AfD group in that parliament would have had to know to form an "unbiased opinion" were the incriminated passages in their particular context, not the whole works of Gedeon.

The handling of Gedeon by the party in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg is a reflection on the character of the party. Meuthen who was the floor leader of AfD in that state in 2016 first reacted by outright dismissing any antisemitism on the part of Gedeon and called it an "attempt of the political adversary, who wants to damage AfD with the 'antisemitism club'" (Grimm & Kahmann, 2017, p. 41). He later changed his mind and called for the expulsion of Gedeon and actually made his remaining in the position as floor leader dependent on that act. Which is where he was not supported by Petry, who was co-chair of the party on the national level at the time and dragged her feet regarding a decision on Gedeon in an obvious attempt to weaken Meuthen (Bender, 2016b). Meuthen's talk about an "antisemitism club" involves a well-established metaphor, which is often used by those who claim they are unfairly muzzled and interfered in their freedom of speech by those reminding them of Auschwitz and the Shoah. It was famously used by the writer Martin Walser (1999, p. 119) in his Paulskirchen speech where he talked about Auschwitz as a "moral club" which hovers above the heads of all Germans as "permanent representation of our shame."

Gedeon soon left the party group of AfD in the state parliament of Baden-Wuerttemberg, which resulted in a split of that group because almost half of the members left it in solidarity with Gedeon. The party group was later reunited, and Gedeon stayed outside of the group. Grimm and Kahmann (2017, p. 42) note that this episode shows "how strong the support for antisemites in the party" is even if they have clearly shown an "ideological closeness to National Socialism."

In a book which Gedeon (2018) published on the affair, he accused the *Central Council of Jews in Germany* to have orchestrated a political campaign against him in an attempt to emasculate AfD. He also doubled down on his claim about a Jewish world conspiracy and referred to the *Protocols of Zion* as evidence for this conspiracy (Gedeon, 2018). In March 2020, after an excruciatingly slow procedure, a party panel eventually decided on the exclusion of Gedeon from AfD (Die Zeit, 2020b).

Salzborn (2017b) has shown that antisemitism can be attested on various levels of the party and listed many cases where representatives of the party on the local or state level got on record with antisemitic statements. He interprets the antisemitism of the party as closely connected to its volkish nationalism (Salzborn, 2018). They see Jews as a threat to the "people's community," which, in their view, can include only those who are part of the native population. According to their volkish-nationalist ideology, there is no place for Jews in that community due to their perceived ethnocultural otherness. They see the very presence of this "stranger within" as a potential threat to national identity; and in their view it is a threat that is more dangerous than one posed by a declared enemy from the outside. The stranger is seen as an anomaly who spawns ambiguity and ambivalence, as somebody who may threaten the cultural order and potentially bring about chaos (Bauman, 1991). What makes this "stranger" so dangerous in the eyes of those identifying as natives (and may eventually turn into a dangerous situation for the life and limb of the "stranger") is the perception of him or her as an anomaly. As Zygmunt Bauman (1991, p. 61) observed

> There is hardly an anomaly more anomalous than the stranger. He stands between friend and enemy, order and chaos, the inside and the outside. He stands for the treacherousness of friends, for the cunning disguise of the enemies, for fallibility of order, vulnerability of the inside.

This perception of the "stranger within" is what drives the antisemitism of many in AfD. While the official position of the party on Jews is not antisemitic, there were several individuals in AfD – on all functional levels of the party – who went on record with antisemitic statements. These incidents are so frequent and the response of the party leadership to manifestly antisemitic statements is so unwilling and half-hearted – the standard reaction to antisemitic incidents has been downplaying or the outright rejection of the existence of any antisemitism in the party (Salzborn, 2018) – that it stands to reason to assume a strong presence of antisemitism in AfD. Although it is obvious that antisemitism is widespread within the party, it is important to note that this is certainly not the case for the party as a whole: There now is a group of Jews within AfD (Kosova et al., 2019). Whether the presence of Jews in AfD will do anything to reduce antisemitism in AfD or the incitement of hate toward minorities by representatives of the party will have to be seen. For now, they are representing the party only on the local level, and their public visibility is limited. But it is certainly so that this party group can be instrumentalized by AfD to reject any accusations of antisemitism.

Conclusion

I could show in this chapter that antisemitism has a strong presence in AfD. However, as opposed to Islamophobia, it is not an official position of the party. Judging by the many openly voiced antisemitic statements of high-ranking AfD representatives, antisemitism has become kind of normalized in the party. This is a reflection of the relatively large share of individuals in the German population who hold antisemitic views, which led Beate Küpper and Andreas Zick (2019, p. 106) to ask "whether we can still speak of an official ban on antisemitism" in Germany. Antisemitism in AfD is interlinked with historical revisionism which involves the urge to rewrite history and diminish the importance which the Nazi period had for German history. If AfD would ever come into a position of political power, for instance, as junior partner of a government coalition, changing the memorial culture of Germany regarding the Nazi period and the Shoah and rewriting history books that are used in schools would be at the top of the party's political agenda.

Notes

1 The introduction of the concept "secondary antisemitism" has often been attributed to Adorno. However, Adorno (1986) himself explicitly credited Scheinbach for coining the term.
2 Eighty-nine is the official number as of 23 August 2020. Initially, immediately after the federal election in 2017, the number of AfD representatives was 94. But few of those who gained parliamentary seats for AfD left the party since then, one of them Petry.

10

AfD AS "ANTI-GENDER PARTY"

What are the positions and policy proposals of AfD on gender and sexuality? Where does the party stand on gender equality? These are the main questions which I will try to answer in this chapter. First, an overview of the literature on the relation between radical right populism, gender, and sexuality will be provided. This is followed by an analysis of the positions of AfD on gender, sexuality, and feminism, which involves the exploration of the question of how far issues of immigration and Islam are gendered by AfD. I already found some indications for the genderedness of these issues in the chapter on Islamophobia. We will then look into whether and, if so, how gender affects the representation of voters by AfD and the leadership of AfD. Lastly, the electorate of AfD will be examined with a focus on the question of whether there is a *gender gap* in this electorate and, if there is one, how it can be explained.

Radical right populism, gender, and sexuality

The available research on the relation between radical right populism and gender is limited. Over the last two decades a number of studies were published which focus on the ideological positions of radical right parties regarding the issues of gender and sexuality. Few authors concentrated on women as leaders of radical right parties. Other studies examined the *gender gap* which exists among the electorate of populist radical right parties, where women are clearly underrepresented as voters. It is a consistent finding in the literature that women make up between 30 to 40 per cent of the vote of radical right populist parties across Europe (Abi-Hassan, 2017; Coffé, 2018; Givens, 2004; Harteveld et al., 2015; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015; Sauer et al., 2019; Spierings & Zaslove, 2015). Some studies cover all of these issues summarily. Many take a comparative approach and look at a number of parties in different countries of Europe (and Latin America). Even though the number

of publications on the topic has grown over the last few years, it is still seen as an area that is understudied and needs more research (Abi-Hassan, 2017; Coffé, 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015).

The gender ideology of radical right parties

The first question we need to ask when studying the relationship of radical right populism with gender is whether there is something intrinsic to populism that determines the position of populists on gender. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2015, p. 17) found that "conceptually, populism has no specific relationship to gender" and that gender differences are "considered secondary, if not irrelevant, to populist politics." Populist actors see "the people" as monolithic and homogenous, which is why issues of gender, which are about internal divisions of "the people," are of relatively low salience for most populist parties (Coffé 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015). However, all populist parties, left and right, developed more or less elaborate positions on gender and sexuality. If positions on these issues are not inherent to populism itself, then there must be other factors that determine them. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser conducted a comparative study of two Northern European radical right populist parties, the Dutch PVV and the Dansk Folkeparti, and two Latin American left-wing populist parties, the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (United Socialist Party of Venezuela, PSUV) and the Bolivian Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement for Socialism, MAS), and found that "the gender politics of populist actors are influenced by a combination of the national culture" and "the broader ideology used by populists" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015, p. 17), that is, the other ideological elements which populism is combined with.

It first has to be noted that radical right populist parties in Europe do not form an "ideologically homogeneous bloc" (De Lange & Mügge, 2015, p. 62) or "monolithic block" (Harteveld et al., 2015, p. 126). While certain general patterns might be found when comparing these parties – after all we are talking about a party family that displays some family resemblance – their positions on gender and sexuality vary considerably. Sarah De Lange and Liza M. Mügge (2015) and Mudde (2007) suggest to distinguish between *modern*, *modern traditional*, and *traditional* or *neo-traditional*[1] positions of radical right populist parties on gender and sexuality.[2] For neo-traditionalist parties, the primary role of women is as "mothers and housewives." They "generally do not support policies that encourage women to work" and they "favour large families" (De Lange & Mügge, 2015, p. 71). Modern traditional parties, on the other hand, hold some traditional views and combine these with "modern elements such as promoting a combination of work and raising children, and advocating equal pay for equal work" (De Lange & Mügge, 2015, p. 71). Moreover, there are radical right populist parties which primarily hold modern views on these issues. They advocate "equal pay and the labor market participation of women without espousing neo-traditional views on the family or gender

issues" (De Lange & Mügge, 2015, p. 71). In their study of six radical right populist parties of the Netherlands and Belgium they found that national populist and neoliberal populist parties tend to take different positions on issues concerning gender and sexuality. "Whereas national populist parties tend to embrace neo-traditional or modern-traditional views, neoliberal populist parties espouse more modern-traditional or modern gender ideas" (De Lange & Mügge, 2015, p. 74). I will adopt this classification of radical right populist parties as either *modern*, *modern-traditional*, or *neo-traditional* in the analysis of AfD's gender ideology.

Discursive strategies of radical right parties on gender and sexuality

Birgit Sauer et al. (2019) investigated the construction of gender by radical right parties in nine different European countries (not including Germany) and concentrated on the discursive strategies which radical right populist parties or movements use with regard to gender and sexuality. They identified three such strategies. The first one focuses on a "biopolitical argumentation"; the second is centred on a process of "normation and the division of the public and the private"; and the third is concerned with the "normalisation" of the minoritarian sexual orientations of LGBTQ people and women's rights and the connection of these issues with discourses of nationalism and the nation (Sauer et al., 2019, p. 105). The authors were interested in how conceptions of gender and sexuality intersect with social constructs such as the nation and ethnicity, and how the particular ways in which they intersect provide justifications for the inclusion of those who are identified as belonging and the exclusion of those who are seen as not belonging to "the people" or the nation, that is, how "us" and "them" are constructed in discursive processes involving gender and sexuality and how the lines are drawn that determine who belongs to the national or ethnic in-group and who doesn't.

The positions of radical right parties on the role of women in society sometimes involve a bio-political argumentation. Parties such as the Greek Golden Dawn and the RN (formerly known as Front National) frame motherhood and the idea of reproduction generally as an issue vital for the survival of the nation (Sauer et al., 2019). This survival is depicted as being threatened by the increasing presence of immigrants and their tendency to give birth to more children than the women of the native population. In right-wing radical propaganda, this threat scenario is sometimes accompanied by a conspiracy theory according to which the elites in the countries of Western Europe are working on a "population exchange," where the native population gets replaced by immigrants, particularly by Muslims, in order to destroy any sense of a native culture that could somehow be an obstacle to globalization. This conspiracy theory was first advanced by Camus (2017). It is a conspiracy theory of a grand bio-political scheme. The radical right answers to this alleged scheme of the political class with its own bio-political programme

which is aimed at breeding as many white native people as possible. Some radical right parties also get involved in a bio-political discourse where they discuss homosexuality. This is, as Sauer et al. (2019) found, the case for members of the Golden Dawn who argued that the presence of homosexuals among "the people" is a defilement which has to be prevented through suppression and exclusion. For them, the desired purity of "the people" can only be achieved based on heterosexuality, which is "understood as a healthy and natural condition" (Sauer et al., 2019, p. 110). The Finnish Legal Party (FLP) takes a similarly essentialist position on sexuality and principally rejects homosexuality.

In the discourse of *normation*, radical right parties take a "more pragmatic position" by appealing to "good morals and liberal values" (Sauer et al., 2019, p. 112) which will induce women to become mothers. Some right-wing radical parties support the choice of women between work outside of the home, on one side, and motherhood and the life as housewives, on the other side. Members of the Austrian FPÖ were convinced that women, when given this choice, would mostly decide to become mothers. In the normation discourse, same-sex marriage and homosexuality are often seen as a private matter of sexuality which the state should not get involved in, which also means that government shall not take action to protect LGBTQ people and their equal rights. Sauer et al. (2019, p. 114) conclude that the normative argumentation on the role of women in society which involves assigning them to the private sphere has "the same function as the bio-political argumentation – namely, to keep the nation growing."

In the discourse of *normalization*, populist radical right actors express support for gender equality and the rights of LGBTQ people, including same-sex marriage. But, as Sauer et al. (2019, p. 115) noted, most of them "take a liberal position, only in order to define the 'external threat' or the ethnicised other." In this discourse, the "ethnicised others" are depicted as generally opposed to gender equality and homosexuality, and this opposition is linked to their culture or religion, especially Islam. The presence of these others is portrayed as principally contradictory to the upholding of liberal values and the very persistence of the West. In the normalization discourse, issues of gender and sexuality are linked with social constructs of the nation and ethnicity in a way that results in the construction of "ethnicised others" who can be excluded based on the "other's" presumed positions on sex and gender. Sauer et al (2019, p. 118) introduced the concept of "exclusive intersectionality," which describes how gender and sexuality are linked with social constructs of the nation and ethnicity and how these constructs are framed in processes of identity formation that are aimed at generating clearly separating lines between those who belong and those who are not belonging and thus also determine rights to social, political, and economic participation and the exclusion thereof.

It primarily is the discourse of normalisation which makes use of what Sauer et al. (2019, pp. 117–118) called "exclusive intersectionality," where these intersections are deliberately created for the very purpose of exclusion. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2015) stressed the importance of analyzing intersectionality in

the views of populists on gender, especially how gender is interlinked with their views on other identities. Spierings et al. (2015, p. 11) describe intersectionality as

> a tool for understanding the multiple ways in which ascribed identities such as gender, race and class interact, and how the specific combination of these identities (such as black, lower-class women) influences positions in society and politics.

In this chapter, I will conduct a critical discourse analysis of party platforms and utterances of representatives of AfD on issues of gender and sexuality and – following the conceptualization by Sauer et al. (2019) – try to determine the particular type of discourse these representatives got involved in, mainly distinguishing between bio-political, normation, and normalization discourses. Moreover, particular attention will be paid to "exclusive intersectionality" in the context of gender and sexuality where these topics appear in conjunction with other identities in order to separate "us" and "them" and to exclude those who are identified as not belonging. It will be of particular interest how gender and sexuality are interlinked with immigration and Islam. Several radical right populist parties in Europe are now linking issues of gender, family, and sexuality to their anti-Islam positions. These parties present "women's rights and gay and lesbian rights as core values of the West" and contrast them with "Islamic practices that discriminate against women and include risks to the security of women" (Coffé, 2018, p. 203).

In their analysis of the Dansk Folkeparti and PVV, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2015, p. 28) found that "gender issues have become almost exclusively tied to the overarching issue of immigration." Both parties "embraced gender equality most enthusiastically as a weapon against the alleged 'Islamization' of Europe." Both parties describe women as oppressed by Muslim men and their families. They seem to be content with the high level of gender equality that has been reached in the Netherlands and Denmark, which they consider as "a defining feature of the national culture, which has to be defended against 'foreign' influences, most notably Islam" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015, p. 29). In the discourse on Islam, Muslim men are often stereotyped as a threat to Muslimas. However, there have also been elements in the campaigns of both Dansk Folkeparti and PVV that depicted native women as potential victims of crimes committed by immigrants (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015). In the analysis of AfD's position on gender and sexuality, I will pay particular attention to the way these issues are connected with immigration and Islam.

The gender gap in the vote of radical right parties

Right-wing populist parties in Europe are dominated by men, which is why some scholars refer to them as *Männerparteien* (men's parties) (Mudde, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015; Sauer, 2020; Spierings et al., 2015). Most of their functionaries and representatives are male; and men also make up about two-thirds their electorate (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015), which means that in terms of

descriptive representation women are clearly underrepresented in populist radical right parties and their share among the electorate of these parties is also far on the low side. In the literature, several scholars refer to the difference in the vote of male and female for radical right parties as the "gender gap" of the radical right (Coffé, 2018, p. 200, Givens, 2004, p. 31; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015, p. 36). As Harteveld et al. (2015, p. 106) point out, this actually is a misnomer, since all studies which cover the gender gap actually refer to "biological categories of male and female," that is, sex, when they distinguish between the vote of men and women for radical right parties. But since the term "gender gap" is now firmly established in the literature, there is no way around it for anyone doing research on this topic. Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony J. McGann (1995), in their comparison of some European radical right parties, already found that the gender gap was a general trend in the vote for the radical right. This confirmed the findings of Betz (1994) on the gender gap in the vote for radical right parties in six European countries, with the widest gap in the vote for the German party REP (64 per cent male, 36 per cent female). More recent empirical studies have shown that the gender gap still is an ongoing trend for almost all radical right populist parties in Europe (Givens, 2004; Harteveld et al., 2015; Spierings & Zaslove, 2015).

A number of possible explanations have been given for this gender gap. Betz (1994, p. 144) explicated this phenomenon by a combination of factors such as "the gender differences in work force participation, women's position in the labor market, and women's greater likelihood to be religiously active." Some empirical evidence has been provided which supports these assumptions. Men are more likely to work than women and they are more likely to work as blue-collar workers, that is, in industrial sectors which are threatened by globalization (Coffé, 2018; Givens, 2004). Right-wing populist parties in Europe have a history of connecting unemployment to immigration. Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider in Austria, and REP in Germany have done this consistently. "Although there may be no direct connection between unemployment and immigrants, voters may perceive that a relationship exists" (Givens, 2004, p. 39), and this perception may affect their vote for radical right parties. According to Eelco Harteveld et al. (2015), public employment of women is a strong predictor for not voting for such parties. The evidence is inconclusive on whether religiosity is a factor for the gap. Women generally go more frequently to church then men and are more religious. While Arzheimer and Carter (2009, p. 1003) found evidence which indicates that stronger religiosity reduces the likeliness of voting for radical right parties, Harteveld et al. (2015, p. 122) could not confirm this finding and concluded that churchgoing "provides no substantial explanation of the gender gap." There are some indications that socio-structural characteristics of male and female voters have an impact on the gender gap, but they cannot fully explain the phenomenon. Givens (2004, p. 48), for instance, found that the gender gap remains, even when "controlling for social, economic, and political variables." The empirical studies on the radical right gender gap were not capable of producing a comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon, which is why Coffé (2018, p. 209) concludes that "an encompassing theory

for the radical right gender gap is still missing." In my study on the role of sex for the vote of AfD, I will examine whether the gender gap exists in the electorate of this radical right populist party and, if it is confirmed, try to explain it based on recent empirical surveys of the vote for AfD.

Male and female leadership of radical right parties

The form of leadership mostly associated with populism is personalistic leadership, and this form of leadership is often equated with the charismatic leadership by men (Ostiguy, 2017). This type of leadership can be contrasted with leadership that is more legalistic and based on procedural authority. "The personalist pole generally claims to be much closer to 'the people' and to represent them better than those advocating a more impersonal, procedural, proper model of authority" (Ostiguy, 2017, p. 82). Many right- and left-wing populist parties have been led by male leaders who preferred a personalistic leadership style. There is a long list of Latin American leaders who adopted such a style, for instance, Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and Evo Morales in Bolivia. In Europe, this style was used by Silvio Berlusconi and Umberto Bossi in Italy, Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider in Austria, and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands. But recently there have been a number of female leaders of radical right populist parties in Europe, for instance, Pia Kjærsgaard, who co-founded the Dansk Folkeparti in 1995 and led the party until 2012; Siv Jensen, who has led the Norwegian Fremskrittspartiet since 2006; and Marine Le Pen who replaced her father Jean-Marie Le Pen as leader of the French Front National in 2011 (Meret, 2015). Meret (2015) analyzed the leadership style of female leaders at the top of European radical right populist parties and asked whether there are charismatic female leaders. Which is an interesting question, since this particular style has often been associated with male leaders and certain male attributes of strong leadership. As defining elements for a typology of the political charisma of male leaders, Meret (2015, p. 101) found "unmediated top-down control, authoritarian leadership traits and unconditional loyalty from followers," conditions which appear not "to apply in the same way to female populist leaders." In the Danish case of Kjærsgaard, who developed a "charismatic profile" as party leader, the party felt that this public image had to be counterbalanced by a private, more caring image where her "motherly, ordinary, over-emotional and straightforward nature" was presented (Meret, 2015, p. 101).

The analysis of AfD in this book has so far determined that there has been no leader at the top of this party who used a charismatic leadership style. To date, most chairpersons of the party have been male with the exception of Petry who was co-chair of the party between 2013 and 2017 and led the party through some difficult changes and internal turmoil. In the section on the leadership style of AfD's party chairs we will pay close attention to the style of the female leaders in the party; and we will in the following also investigate if their presence and their positions have an impact on the party's stance on gender, family, and sexuality.

AfD's positions on gender and sexuality

This section focuses on the exploration of AfD's gender ideology and of the party's discursive strategies on gender and sexuality. The methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis are used in this research effort. This involves the examination of party platforms and statements of individual representatives of the party. Secondary literature on the topic, which has been published in German, will also be consulted. No in-depth analysis of AfD's positions on gender and sexuality is available in the international literature yet, which is surprising, because – as we will see – these are issues that are central to the party's agenda.

The analysis starts with the examination of the three national-level programmes of the last years. This involves the 2016 basic programme, the 2017 programme for the federal election, and the 2019 programme for the European election. In addition, a few regional programmes for state elections will be included.

The results of the content analysis of AfD's three national-level programmes are represented in Table 10.1. A word count was carried out for terms related to gender and sexuality. (For detailed information on the set-up of the content analysis, see the Appendix.)

Opposition to gender mainstreaming

Numbers sometimes tell a story. This is certainly the case for the term "gender," which is mentioned with a rather high frequency in all three national-level programmes of AfD. As Table 10.1 shows, the basic programme of 2016 uses "gender" 23 times,[3] mainly in the chapters on "family and children" (AfD, 2016, pp. 39–44) and "school, university and research" (AfD, 2016, pp. 51–56). AfD consistently talks about "gender" very negatively. The party is worried about the increasing role of the state in the education of children and laments that "the implementation of the 'gender mainstreaming' project and the general emphasis

TABLE 10.1 Gender and sexuality in the programmes of AfD

Programme / *Issues Included*	*2016 Basic Programme*	*2017 Electoral Programme*	*2019 Electoral Programme*
Women	17	8	5
Men	7	7	4
Sex	10	10	6
Gender	23	15	10
Feminism	1		
LGBTQ issues	1	1	4
Family	70	75	38
Marriage	5	14	3
Abortion	5	2	11
Pregnancy	2	4	2

on individuality undermine the family as a fundamental, value-providing social unit" (AfD, 2016, p. 41). AfD is strongly opposed to *gender mainstreaming* and *gender studies*, which are both described as forces of evil, tools in the hands of the elite who use them to destroy the traditional family and the traditional roles of male and female in that type of family. These roles are understood as having a natural, that is, biological, basis. Gender mainstreaming is criticized for propagating the "stigmatization of traditional gender roles" (AfD, 2016, p. 41) and contradicting "the results of natural science, developmental psychology and life experience." AfD (2016, p. 55) attacks what they call "the gender ideology" for suppressing "natural differences between the sexes." In their eyes, gender studies is a "pseudo-science" (AfD, 2016, p. 55), which is "politically motivated" (AfD, 2016, p. 52). They charge gender studies for producing a "gender ideology" which is implemented in "state-sponsored re-education programmes in kindergartens and schools" with the goal of indoctrinating children and turning them against the traditional roles of male and female in society (AfD, 2016, p. 55).

The use of the word "re-education" reminds of the historical revisionism of the radical right in Germany which equates denazification after the Second World War with a grand "re-education" scheme. Caspar von Schrenck-Notzing (1993) introduced the term "Charakterwäsche" for this process, which can be translated as "character wash." In the literature of the radical right, "re-education" has regularly been blamed for undermining Germans' ability to develop a "normal" relation with their nation. "The polemics of re-education as well as the polemics against a certain form of coming to terms with the past are important rhetorical means with which volkish nationalism tries to integrate itself into the prevalent thinking" (Jäger & Jäger, 1999, p. 77). The revisionist talk of the radical right about re-education, as it has historically been applied to the treatment of the Nazi period in post-war Germany, certainly resonates in the minds of radical right populists even where the term "re-education" is used in a different context, as in the case of AfD's programme where it is connected with gender. On closer inspection, it becomes clear that both uses of the term "re-education" have the common goal of strengthening nationalism in Germany. The 2016 basic programme connects the idea of traditional gender roles of male and female as fathers and mothers in the traditional family to demographic trends, immigration, and the survival of the nation. Under the heading "more children instead of mass immigration" (AfD, 2016, p. 41), the party reflects on current demographic trends in Germany with a fertility rate of 1.4 children per German woman. This fertility rate is contrasted with that of immigrants in Germany which is considerably higher and interpreted as a threat to the ethnic composition of the country's population and the maintenance of its culture: "The fact that the birth rate among migrants with more than 1.8 children is significantly higher than among women of German descent increases the ethnic-cultural change in the population structure" (AfD, 2016, p. 42). AfD voices the fear that its ideal of an ethnically homogenous population is counteracted by the "current government parties" who are "relying on continued mass immigration, mainly from Islamic states" in order to balance the demographic trend (AfD, 2016, p. 42).

This argument is combined with references to the relatively lower educational performance of Muslim immigrants in Germany and their relatively higher unemployment levels (AfD, 2016).

At this point, AfD gets involved in what David Bebnowski (2016, p. 29) called *competitive populism*: "In competitive populist arguments, the superiority of economically more successful groups [. . .] is constructed on the basis of their economic performance and simultaneously conflated with cultural stereotypes." Such arguments generate a vertical opposition between different social groups, a hierarchy in which the superior native group is distinguished from the inferior foreign group; and the "supposedly objective measure of economic productivity" (Havertz, 2019, p. 397) serves to explain the hierarchical difference between these groups. This contemporary type of producerism neglects the actual social and historical reasons for differences in the productivity of distinct groups in society and tends to essentialize them. The essentialization works through the ascription of certain traits to a social group as a whole based on their presumed race or culture.

Support for German families

AfD warns that the government's alleged focus on facilitating the immigration of people from majority-Muslim countries would inevitably result in more "parallel societies," the "spread of conflicting multi-minority societies," and the erosion of "social cohesion, mutual trust and public security" (AfD, 2016, p. 42). Their solution is "more support for families," that is, for families whose members are apparently imagined as not affiliated to Islam. The 2016 programme, moreover, states that women with academic degrees should be encouraged to give birth to more children (AfD, 2016). The programme does not directly refer to the idealized family as "German family," or to these academic women as "German women," but this is clearly what it means. This section of the 2016 programme involves the tacit claim that Muslim immigrants to Germany are not really Germans, even if they have a German passport, as millions of Muslims do, or have lived in Germany for many years and become naturalized citizens. It also concerns the many descendants of Muslim immigrants who were born in Germany and have a German passport. AfD does not see them as part of "the people," who are defined as ethnic community. According to Helmut Kellershohn (2016c, p. 26), in the light of AfD's preference for "ethnic-cultural homogeneity" in Germany, their understanding of "the people" can be interpreted as that of a "breeding community," and their proposals for a family policy are meant to foster and strengthen "the people" as such a community.

At this point, we come to the provisional conclusion that AfD is involved in a discourse of exclusive intersectionality, as Sauer et al. (2019, p. 118) termed it. Like many other right-wing populist parties in Europe, AfD conflates the discourses of gender, family, immigration, and Islam, as discussed by De Lange and Mügge (2015) and Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2015), in order to generate arguments

for the preferential treatment of some groups and the exclusion of others. The party depicts immigration as benefitting what they call a "migration industry" (AfD, 2016, p. 64), which, according to the 2016 programme, is supported by the federal government and state governments with lavish funds without any proper controls in place for that spending. Here the populist argument against a corrupt political class is combined with complaints about expenditure in support for immigrants and refugees. This constitutes an intersection, as described by Brubaker (2019, 2017), of the vertical populist opposition of "the people" versus "the elite" with the horizontal opposition of the "the people" as in-group, on the one side, and migrants and refugees as out-group, on the other side.

AfD's basic programme contrasts the money that is spent on immigrants with the lack of funds in financial support of native women who want to become mothers. In AfD's perspective the money spent on immigrants would be better invested on providing German women with the means necessary to raise children. What would be necessary is a new "welcome culture" for newborns and a reduction of the many abortions that take place in Germany every year (AfD, 2016, p. 44). The phrase "welcome culture" was originally coined to denote the great effort of civil society in Germany, in the summer and fall of 2015, to receive newly arriving refugees and immigrants in a way that made them feel welcome and to assist them in overcoming the difficulties of their new lives in Germany. Using the phrase "welcome culture" instead in reference to the birth of children by native women can again be read as the deliberate creation of an intersection between issues of gender and sexuality (here, women and their readiness to give birth), on the one side, and immigration, on the other side, which has the purpose of rhetorically playing one of these issues against the other. AfD (2016, p. 42) states that they see it as *the* "central political task" for their party to close "the gap between the desire to have children, which 90 percent of young Germans still have, and the number of children born as far as possible."

Family policy as demographic policy

The encouragement of the foundation of families and state support for families are central issues for AfD in all three national level programmes. The 2016 programme mentions the term "family" 70 times, the 2017 programme 75 times, and the 2019 programme 38 times (see Table 10.1). The lower number of mentions in the 2019 programme can be attributed to the fact that this was a programme for European elections where family policy does not have the same significance as in national elections. No other issues were mentioned as frequently in these programmes as those concerning family. All other issues that appear with a high frequency – issues of gender, the position of women in society, and even sexuality – are mostly connected to family in a manner that prioritizes the family over that of the individual. The well-being of the family is understood as the core unit of the nation, which is why the state is seen has having a particular duty to support and protect families as far as possible.

The programme spells out very clearly what the ideal family looks like for AfD: "In the family, mother and father take permanent responsibility for their children" (AfD, 2016, p. 41). The 2016 programme indicates the preferred sexes of the parents in a family. A family is only a true family, if there are mother *and* father, that is, someone playing the traditional female role and someone playing the traditional male role as parent. The term "family" is exclusively claimed for this type of family:

> The AfD wants the family policy of the federal and state governments to be based on the image of the family of father, mother, and children. We reject all attempts to extend the meaning of the word "family" [. . .] to other communities.
>
> *(AfD, 2017, p. 40)*

From this point of view, same-sex couples who raise children are not real families and accordingly do not deserve the same legal status and the same financial support as the traditional model. AfD is concerned that providing legal recognition for alternative lifestyles could deprive the traditional heterosexual family of its privileged status (AfD, 2017). Family and the state are seen as institutions that are mutually reinforcing, that is, as interdependent institutions. The 2017 programme explicitly emphasized the importance of "marriage and family" as "state-supporting institutions" (AfD, 2017, p. 40). Hence, the family as an institution that stabilizes the nation-state and contributes to its persistence is considered worthy of the special attention and support by the state.

Family policy is primarily understood as a policy that controls demographic trends. The basic programme of 2016 states that "undesirable demographic developments in Germany must be counteracted" (AfD, 2016, p. 41). The party bemoans the relatively low birth rate in Germany, which they perceive as unsustainable. AfD, therefore, espouses an "activating family policy" as the only way to "achieve a higher birth rate for the native population" (AfD, 2016, p. 41). AfD has repeatedly stressed the importance to support families with larger numbers of children. The party made it one of its major priorities to encourage the establishment of as many "multi-child families" as possible (AfD, 2016, pp. 37, 42, 2019, p. 67). Petry, when she campaigned for her party in the state of Saxony, talked about an "activating family policy" as an alternative to immigration and said that the ideal family would at least have three children (Gesterkamp, 2018, p. 101). The programme of 2017 also states that it should be "possible for a family with young children to live on one salary, so that parents can choose freely between work or a break from work" (AfD, 2017, p. 39). This statement is phrased in gender-neutral language. It does not indicate who should stay home, mother or father. However, it is clear that in most cases this choice would mean that women stay at home while men fulfil their traditional role as breadwinners outside of the home.

The strong focus of AfD on demography and large families has to be seen against the backdrop of their concern about the decline of the native population. It is families from this population that are supposed to be supported. Their ideal

is the reproduction of the ethnic-cultural homogenous population: the "people's community." Large patriarchal families with many children are seen as key to the maintenance of that community. Everything that threatens the traditional family is also seen as a threat to that community. In the perception of the volkish-nationalist, the family is "the social foundation" of the people's community (Quent, 2019, p. 80), which is why the state has to provide it with special protection. The right-wing radical idea of this special protection is the rejection of gender diversity and of sexual relationships that do not lead to white children (Quent, 2019, pp. 79–80).

The place of women in society

The 2016 programme states that AfD emphasizes legal equality of men and women "in terms of equal opportunities" (AfD, 2016, p. 56). But the party rejects any measures by government to improve the position of women in society through affirmative action such as the establishment of quotas for university admissions or in the workplace. "The AfD, however, rejects an equality policy in the sense of equality of results" (AfD, 2016, p. 56). Despite its verbal commitment to equal opportunity, AfD opposes any state action with the goal of creating these equal opportunities because they are seen as undermining performance-based justice (AfD, 2016). The preference for performance-based justice can be seen as a neo-liberal element in the programme of AfD. The party's primary focus on this principle of justice means that they basically accept the differences that exist for men and women regarding the access to labour and education as well as regarding their payment. Any differences in outcome for male and female are interpreted as the result of differences in performance. Without state interference this performance is seen as just taking its natural course, and if it results in differences of outcome, the reason for these differences must be sought in the natural differences between male and female. A statement that embraces the principle of equal opportunity but, as in the 2016 programme of AfD, rejects public measures that would create the conditions for equal opportunity – in a situation where these conditions are clearly not provided due to a long history of discrimination – is logically inconsistent. Such an approach is designed to continue the existing gender differences and the inequality involved, or even deepen them.

AfD claims the change of the name of the federal ministry responsible for women's policy. The party suggests to convert the "Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth" into the "Federal Ministry for Family and Population Development" (AfD, 2017, p. 37). "Women" is supposed to be removed from the name of the ministry, while nothing is said about the establishment of an alternative, that is, a separate ministry for women. Hence, one has to assume that no such ministry is wanted. This change of the name is more than just symbolic. It shows exactly where the focus of AfD lies regarding issues of gender and sexuality. The inclusion of "population development" in the name of the ministry in combination with "family" again indicates that for AfD family policy is primarily about the governmental control of reproduction and of the population. Policies concerning

women are seen as subordinate to the control of reproduction and population growth.

AfD does not outright reject abortion. In the 2016 programme, they keep their position ambiguous on whether abortion should be allowed or not. However, the party strongly criticizes the practice of abortion and states that everything should be done to make it easier for women to decide for giving birth, including the easing of adoptions. In the counselling of pregnant women "the protection of the unborn life" is supposed to be the "primary objective" (AfD, 2016, p. 44). The party proclaims its strict opposition against any attempts "to trivialize abortions, to promote them on the part of the state, or even to declare them a human right" (AfD, 2016, p. 44). In the 2019 programme for the European election, AfD insists that weighing interests of women and the unborn life carefully, abortion must remain the absolute exception: "The unborn child's right to life is diametrically opposed to the desire to have an abortion" (AfD, 2019, p. 67).

AfD's homophobia

The AfD programmes of 2016 and 2017 both warn against what they call the "early sexualization" of children, which is their name for educational programmes that make children familiar with the concept of gender and with the diversity in sexual orientations. In their view, these programmes are all based on a "gender ideology" which is used to indoctrinate children with ideas about gender roles and sexual identity that are in contrast to both traditional gender roles and a heteronormative understanding of sexuality. They reject the "so-called sexual pedagogy of diversity" as "inadmissible interference in the natural development of our children and in the parents' right to education guaranteed by the Basic Law" (the German constitution) (AfD, 2017, p. 41). AfD (2017, p. 41) accuses sexual education programmes of a "one-sided emphasis on homosexuality and transsexuality in the classroom." They voice concern that such programmes could make children feel "overwhelmed" and cause painful "feelings of shame" and that "our children" could "become a toy for the sexual inclinations of a noisy minority" AfD (2017, p. 41). These statements are clearly homophobic. Educational programmes that have the potential to make children aware of a diversity in sexual orientations and that encourage gay, lesbian, or transsexual youths to have their coming out are portrayed as indoctrination programmes which turn children into deviants.

In this light, it is no surprise that AfD is opposed to treating gay and lesbian couples equal to heterosexual couples. In the programme for the 2016 election for the state of Saxony-Anhalt, AfD defends marriage as "a heterosexual privilege" and rejects the idea that gay or lesbian couples could be entrusted with the responsibility of child education (Lang, 2017, p. 65). The party programme for the state of Berlin from the same year states that "sexual orientation is the most personal matter of every human being" (AfD Berlin as cited in Lang, 2017, p. 65). Which, according to Juliane Lang (2017), can be interpreted as an attempt to place matters of sexual orientation under taboo and keep them out of any public debate or policy.

AfD as "anti-gender party"

AfD is principally hostile to the concept of gender as such. They do not only want the concept to be banned from school curricula but also intend to shut down all programmes of gender studies at universities – something that has already been achieved by the radical right populist and increasingly authoritarian government of Victor Orbán in Hungary (Quent, 2019). In their view, gender studies is not a serious scientific discipline: "Gender research does not meet the demands that serious research must make. Their methods do not meet the criteria of science because their objectives are primarily politically motivated" (AfD, 2016, p. 52). Which is why AfD claims that the funding for such programmes should be stopped. The 2016 programme says that neither federal nor state governments should be allowed to spend money on gender research, and professorships in the area of gender studies should not be re-staffed (AfD, 2016). The party also strictly opposes any gender-sensitive language reforms which they see as a defacement of the German language that must be stopped (AfD, 2016). Lang (2017, p. 68), consequently, comes to the conclusion that AfD has to be seen as an "anti-gender" party.

The hostility of the party toward anything related to gender becomes even more apparent when looking at campaign materials or the statements of individual representatives of the party. In one of their campaign posters, the party included the motto "Stop Gender Madness" (Gender-Wahn stoppen) (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 165). AfD shares its polemics against "gender madness" with the grassroots movement *Demo für Alle* (Demonstration for everybody) which mobilized against "genderism" and the "early sexualization" of children in school and was particularly successful in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg where several thousand citizens took to the streets against the gender-focused policies of the Green Party. Among the participants were many different groups from the far right, among other members of the Identitarian Movement (Florin, 2017). AfD was strongly involved in these protests, which were celebrated in the New Right weekly newspaper *Junge Freiheit* as symbolic victory of AfD (Havertz, 2017). Von Storch, deputy floor leader of AfD in the Bundestag and board member of the party, participated in the organization of some of these demonstrations in 2014 (Blech, 2015). Von Storch is the leader of the organization *Zivile Koalition* (Civil Coalition), which Andreas Kemper (2016a, p. 95) describes as the "most effective Christian-fundamentalist force in AfD." She can be seen as the head of the Christian-fundamentalist wing of the party. She campaigned against abortion and is involved in several organizations and networks that oppose same-sex marriage. According to Matthias Quent (2019, p. 77), von Storch is one of the most influential activists of the antifeminist backlash in Germany. The protests of *Demo für Alle* were also supported by a number of right-wing extremists, which resulted in an internal debate among activists about how far parties such as NPD should be accepted as allies in the fight against the programme for sexual education in Baden-Wuerttemberg (Maier, 2015). In 2015, Bernd Kölmel, the then chairman of AfD in Baden-Wuerttemberg, supported the

protests of *Demo für Alle* in Stuttgart, the capital of the state, and said that the goals of the organization and of AfD were the same (Kemper, 2016a).

Another ally in AfD's fight against "genderism" is the anti-Islam movement Pegida. The slogan "Stop Gender Madness" can regularly be heard at Pegida demonstrations in Dresden, where the speakers often agitate against what they perceive as an all-pervading gender ideology. One of the speakers there was the masculinist author Akif Pirinçci, who is known for combining topics of immigration with issues of gender and sexuality, which he often presents in a deliberately offensive language. Another actor who polemicized heavily against gender mainstreaming is Höcke. The chairman of AfD in Thuringia talked about gender mainstreaming as a "mental disease" which needs to be eradicated. He contrasted the gender concept with the "natural order of the sexes" (Höcke as cited in Gesterkamp, 2018, p. 101) and denied the existence of discrimination against women, saying that most claims of such discrimination were complete fabrications (Höcke, 2018). Höcke voiced his concern about an "atrophied male self-confidence" of men in Germany, which, as he said, would have to be seen in the context of what Pirinçci had called "*the great homosexualisation*,"[4] and claimed the need for a "restoration of masculinity" (Höcke 2018, pp. 113–114). At the centre of his ideal of masculinity is the ability of each man to defend himself ("Wehrhaftigkeit") (Höcke, 2018, p. 114). It is especially such soldierly virtues which Höcke appreciates in a man. Accordingly, he praised military service as "an opportunity for the personal development of young men – in the form of a 'male initiation'" (Höcke, 2018, p. 52). It would bring out the archetype of the "warrior" in a man – "to the benefit of the community" (Höcke, 2018, p. 52). He complains that "80 per cent" of the men in Germany have become "pansies" (Weicheier), which he attributes to the lack of male models for boys due to the many single-parent families, where the one parent is almost always the mother, and to the alleged dominance of women in day nurseries and schools (which is doubtful for schools) (Höcke, 2018, p. 114).

Cologne and the construction of the ethnicized "other"

The virtues of the "warrior" is what Höcke missed in German men, when massive sexual assaults happened "against German women" on New Year's Eve of 2015 in Cologne, committed by men most of whom were reported to be of Middle Eastern and Northern African appearance. Höcke (2018, p. 114) referred to them summarily as "Northern Africans." "Most of the afflicted would have liked protective men," he said, "but there were hardly any" (Höcke, 2018, p. 114). At this point Höcke got involved in a discourse of *hegemonial masculinity* which he connected with racist arguments to construct a racialized "other" with a particular ethnic background as someone who is generally prone to sexualized aggressiveness (Aigner et al., 2016). "This takes place, specifically, along the lines of the 'white,' 'German' and protective man, who has to protect 'German' women from 'other' foreign and uncivilized 'intruders'" (Aigner et al., 2016, p. 66).

AfD strengthened its focus on anti-Islam positions after the New Year's Eve incidents that occurred in Cologne and other German cities. The party tried to capitalize on the outcry that ran through the German public. In its campaign for the state elections of March 2016 it produced a poster, showing a crying young woman and the slogan "Cologne – Stuttgart – Hamburg . . . More security for our women and daughters!" This poster is another example of an attempt by AfD to "create an atmosphere of fear and threat" (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 166). It also presented women as possible victims of a particular group of potentially dangerous "others." These "others" were not explicitly named in the poster, but everybody who saw it knew who was meant. This perception was eased by the public reaction, which conflated the discourse of sexual violence with two other discursive threads. The first one of these discourses is the migration discourse which emerged as a reaction to the refugee crisis of 2015. The other one is the Islam discourse which had started with the Sarrazin debate and had at the time already lasted for some years (Aigner et al., 2016).

When the background of the perpetrators of Cologne was publicized, the media understood this as evidence for their religious affiliation to Islam. Subsequently, the crimes were discussed in connection to Islam and seen as a consequence of the admission of larger numbers of refugees from majority-Muslim countries to Germany in 2015. Sexualized violence was now assumed to be a trait of Islam, and it was taken for granted that gender equality is not a social value in Muslim contexts (Aigner et al., 2016, p. 65). Muslim men were stereotyped as prone to sexual violence, as a posting by von Storch on Twitter showed who talked in this context about "barbaric, Muslim, gang raping hordes of men" (AfD NRW, 2018, p. 1). Sexism was ethnicized, and with the ethnicization it was projected to the outside. Sexual violence was primarily seen as a problem of those "others," not of the German majority population (Aigner et al., 2016). Opponents to immigration could now "speak out against migration and the admission of refugees" because they could pose as advocates of "women's rights and the sexual self-determination of women" (Aigner et al., 2016, p. 68).

Sexual violence had become a topic for an electoral campaign of AfD because it was committed by immigrants. The party did not devote any particular attention to the sexual violence that occurred in the majority population of Germany, at least, not in any of the three national level programmes. In fact, the debate about Cologne had contributed to an externalization of sexual violence. The incidents of the 2015 New Year's Eve in Cologne – together with the refugee crisis of 2015 – can be seen as a critical juncture in the development of AfD and its emergence as an anti-Islam and anti-immigration party.

The ideological position and discursive strategy of AfD

The gender ideology of AfD can be characterized as a combination of modern-traditional and neo-traditional positions, with a clear predominance of the neo-traditional side (see De Lange & Mügge, 2015; Mudde, 2007). Although the party

says that it supports the principle of equal opportunity for male and female, it is opposed to measures that would improve the position of women in society. They basically believe that differences in outcome for men and women are a result of natural differences. Any effort to mitigate these differences is seen as a violation of the natural order of things. This view has its roots in the neoliberal ideology, which exerts a strong influence on these positions of the party, as well as in a biologist (that is, social Darwinist) and organicist understanding of social relations. To some extent they reflect the two main wings of the party, the national-liberal and the volkish-nationalist wing.

Much of AfD's position on gender and sexuality is informed by the volkish nationalism which forms the ideological core of the party. All issues related to gender and sexuality are subordinated to measures which facilitate the prospering of the traditional family, which is seen as a "social foundation" of the people's community (Quent, 2019, p. 80). This traditional family is conceived not only as a "nucleus of civil society" (AfD, 2016, p. 40) but also as a nucleus of the nation, the survival of which is perceived as threatened by immigration, especially of people from majority-Muslim countries. Which is why any lifestyle that diverts from the model of the traditional family is dismissed as a deviation that has to be suppressed. There is little understanding of LGBTQ issues in AfD, despite the fact that a gay group has formed in the party (Lang, 2017) and Weidel, as one of the more prominent leaders of the party, is openly lesbian.

In its three national-level programmes and in statements of party leaders, AfD often conflated discourses of gender and sexuality with discursive threads of immigration and Islam. Many such intersections were created in AfD's proposals for family policy. The support for German families and the birth of as many children as possible in these families is represented as vital for the survival of the nation, which is depicted as threatened by the increasing number of Muslim immigrants and the relatively high fertility rate of female immigrants. Another important intersection is created between the discourse of sexual violence and the discourses of immigration and Islam, which involves the stereotyping of Muslim men as sexually aggressive. All these intersections provide arguments for the exclusion of Muslims and immigrants, which is why they can be characterized as a matter of *exclusive intersectionality* (see Sauer et al., 2019).

AfD's discursive strategy on issues of gender and sexuality is mostly of a bio-political nature (see Sauer et al., 2019). Gender and sexuality are both linked and subordinated to issues concerning the traditional family. The family is understood as the preferential place for reproduction to take place – a process that is seen as being vital for the sustenance of the population. Family policy is *the* central functional element in the party's obsession with the control of demographic trends. This is where the discursive strategy of the party is linked to its core ideology of volkish nationalism, and the perceived threat posed by immigrants to the nation and to the ideal of "the people" as a homogenous ethnocultural community. The bio-political discourse is involved in the construction and fortification of identities that are incompatible with each other and must therefore result in the formation

of factions within the population that are pitted against each other as in-group and out-groups. The bio-political discourse is complemented by a discourse of normation (Sauer et al., 2019), which takes the pragmatic position that women, if they had the unfettered opportunity to become mothers and housewives, would choose to do so because it is the right thing to do.

The anti-gender and antifeminist position of AfD is part of a backlash that was in the making some time before the foundation of the party. Several organizations and networks are involved in this backlash, from the men's rights movement to the New Right. It is a reaction to the achievements of the women's movement in Germany, which – still far from reaching gender equality – has made progress in that direction over the last two decades (Quent, 2019). The considerable improvement of the position of women in the German society involves a stronger participation in the job market and a stronger political participation. These are developments which go much too far for the taste of some on the right, which is why they want to halt and reverse some of these achievements. With AfD, this backlash has now found a radical right populist representative in all parliaments of Germany.

Most scholars who are interested in the positions of radical right populist parties on issues of gender and sexuality have operated under the assumption that such parties "do not hold a strong position on gender issues" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015, p. 35). Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2015, p. 35) also stressed that such issues feature "relatively seldom in populist programmes and propaganda, irrespective of accompanying ideology and geographical region." Hilde Coffé (2018, p. 203) came to similar conclusions regarding the salience of gender issues for radical right parties. This means that AfD is a clear outlier in this regard. It could be shown that issues of gender and sexuality are central to the agenda of AfD.

AfD's gender gap

For most radical right parties there is a gender gap in the support for them among the electorate. In most European countries, men are more likely and women are less likely to vote for these parties (Abi-Hassan, 2017; Coffé, 2018; Givens, 2004, Harteveld et al., 2015; Mudde, 2007; Spierings & Zaslove, 2015). The gap varies between parties and in different countries, but the range of the gap can be roughly quantified as the difference between the 60 to 70 per cent of the votes which radical right parties receive from men and the 30 to 40 per cent which they receive from women. In this context, we have to ask if this gender gap also exists among the electorate of AfD and whether there have been any significant changes in the development of that gap over time. This especially concerns the question whether the radicalization of the party and the shift from neoliberal populism to national populism had an impact on the gender gap. According to the literature on the gender gap in the vote for radical right parties, women are less likely to vote for these parties. The gender gap can be expected to be larger in the vote for more radical parties than for less radical parties, which means that the gender gap for AfD can be expected to have increased in the course of the radicalization process of the

party. In the following I will explore the vote for AfD by sex and see whether this assumption can be confirmed.

To find out more about the gender gap in the vote for AfD and changes that may have occurred in it, I'm going to look at the 2013 and 2017 federal elections and the 2014 and 2019 European elections. These are the four elections on the national level which AfD participated in so far. Tables 10.2 and 10.3 give an overview of the party vote of women and men for AfD, which in the German electoral system is the secondary vote and results in the distribution of roughly half of the seats in parliament according to the principle of proportional representation. The rest of the seats are distributed among those candidates who got the highest number of votes in their voting districts, that is, according to the plurality system. Tables 10.2 and 10.3 provide an overview of the vote for AfD on the national level by gender as well as in each of the 16 states that comprise the Federal Republic of Germany. The tables also distinguish between the percentage of votes that were cast for AfD in the East and in the West of Germany ("new states" and "old states").

The examination of the electoral results of the federal elections in 2013 and 2017 and the European elections of 2014 and 2019 clearly shows that a gender gap existed in all of these elections. Men were more likely to vote for AfD than women

TABLE 10.2 The vote of male and female in the federal elections of 2013 and 2017

	Federal Election of 2013			*Federal Election of 2017*		
States	*All*	*Men*	*Women*	*All*	*Men*	*Women*
Schleswig-Holstein	4.6	5.8	3.5	8.2	10.9	5.6
Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania	5.6	7.0	4.4	18.6	24.1	13.4
Hamburg	4.7	5.5	4.0	7.8	10.4	5.6
Lower Saxony	3.8	4.7	2.8	9.1	12.0	6.4
Bremen	3.7	4.6	2.9	10.0	13.2	7.0
Brandenburg	6.0	7.4	4.7	20.2	25.9	14.7
Saxony-Anhalt	4.2	5.2	3.3	19.6	25.3	14.3
Berlin	4.9	6.1	3.8	12.0	15.6	8.8
North Rhine-Westphalia	3.9	5.0	2.9	9.4	12.3	6.7
Saxony	6.8	8.1	5.5	27.0	33.1	21.2
Hesse	5.6	6.9	4.3	11.9	15.4	8.6
Thuringia	6.2	7.3	5.1	22.7	28.5	17.2
Rhineland-Palatinate	4.8	6.0	3.7	11.2	14.4	8.2
Bavaria	4.3	5.5	3.2	12.4	16.1	8.9
Baden-Wuerttemberg	5.2	6.7	3.9	12.2	15.8	8.7
Saarland	5.2	6.3	4.2	10.1	13.2	7.1
Germany	4.7	5.9	3.6	12.6	16.3	9.2
Old states plus West Berlin	4.4	5.6	3.4	10.7	13.9	7.6
New states plus East Berlin	5.9	7.1	4.7	21.9	27.6	16.5

Source: Federal Returning Officer and Federal Office of Statistics (Bundeswahlleiter and Bundesamt für Statistik)

TABLE 10.3 The vote of male and female in the federal elections of 2014 and 2019

	European Election of 2014			*European Election of 2019*		
States	*All*	*Men*	*Women*	*All*	*Men*	*Women*
Schleswig-Holstein	7.1	8.9	5.1	7.5	10.4	4.7
Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania	7.0	9.3	4.9	17.7	23.5	12.2
Hamburg	6.0	7.9	4.3	6.5	8.4	4.8
Lower Saxony	5.4	7.3	3.6	7.9	10.8	5.2
Bremen	5.8	8.0	3.8	7.7	10.3	5.3
Brandenburg	8.5	11.0	6.1	19.9	25.9	14.2
Saxony-Anhalt	6.3	8.3	4.6	20.4	26.2	14.9
Berlin	7.9	10.0	5.9	9.9	13.1	7.0
North Rhine-Westphalia	5.4	7.2	3.7	8.5	11.5	5.7
Saxony	10.1	12.6	7.7	25.3	31.6	19.1
Hesse	9.1	11.5	6.8	9.9	13.4	6.5
Thuringia	7.4	9.3	5.7	22.5	28.9	16.4
Rhineland-Palatinate	6.7	8.7	4.7	9.8	13.2	6.6
Bavaria	8.1	9.9	6.2	8.5	11.6	5.5
Baden-Wuerttemberg	7.9	10.1	5.8	10.0	13.4	6.8
Saarland	6.8	8.9	4.8	9.6	13.2	6.3
Germany	7.1	9.1	5.1	11.0	14.6	7.6
Old states plus West Berlin	6.8	8.8	4.9	8.8	11.9	5.8
New states plus East Berlin	8.3	10.5	6.2	21.1	27.0	15.4

Source: Federal Returning Officer and Federal Office of Statistics (Bundeswahlleiter and Bundesamt für Statistik)

in each of these elections. The gender gap not only existed on the national level but also – without exception – in each of the 16 states of Germany. In the 2013 election, AfD got 4.7 per cent of the vote; 5.9 per cent of all male voters cast their ballot for AfD, whereas only 3.6 per cent of all female voters did so. With 4.7 per cent, AfD missed the 5 per cent threshold for parliamentary representation, which means that the party did not gain any seats. One may conclude that the lower popularity among women is an important factor that denied AfD the entry into the Bundestag. In that election, men made up 60.73 per cent of all votes for AfD, whereas women accounted for 39.27 per cent of that vote. (In order to ascertain the differences in electoral participation between male and female, the calculation of the percentages of the votes for AfD by male and female in the overall vote of AfD had to be based on absolute numbers.)[5] This results in a gender gap of 21.46 percentage points.

In the 2017 election, AfD gained 12.6 per cent of the votes, which allowed the party for the first time to gain seats in the Bundestag (initially 94 seats). The difference between the male and the female vote was again significant: 16.3 per cent of all male voters cast their ballot for AfD, whereas only 9.2 per cent of all female

voters did so. The share of men in the overall vote for AfD was 62.54 per cent, and the share of women 37.46 per cent. (This calculation was again based on absolute numbers.)[6] Compared to the 2013 federal election, the gap had widened by 3.62 per cent to 25.08 per cent.

In the 2014 election to the European Parliament, AfD got 7.1 per cent of the national vote; 9.1 per cent of all male participants and 5.1 per cent of all female participants voted for AfD. Men made up 63.07 per cent of all voters for AfD, whereas women accounted for 36.93 per cent of that vote (based on absolute numbers).[7] The gender gap in this election was 26.14 points wide. In the 2019 European election, the party gained 11 per cent of the overall vote. The share of AfD among all male voters was 14.6 per cent, whereas the share of all female voters was almost only half that large with 7.6 per cent. The share of men in the overall vote for AfD was as large as 64.76 per cent, whereas the share of women among all voters of AfD was just 35.24 percentage points large (again based on absolute numbers).[8] The gender gap in the 2019 election was 29.52 points wide. Compared to the European election of 2014 it increased by 3.38 per cent.

The data on the four national-level elections between 2013 and 2019 confirm the initial assumption of this research that the gender gap in the vote for AfD increased with the radicalization of the party. As the trend line in Figure 10.1 shows, the trend of the gender gap clearly goes up and has considerably widened in the last election of 2019. These findings also confirm the results of a study by Kai Arzheimer and Carl C. Berning (2019) on the effect of gender on the support

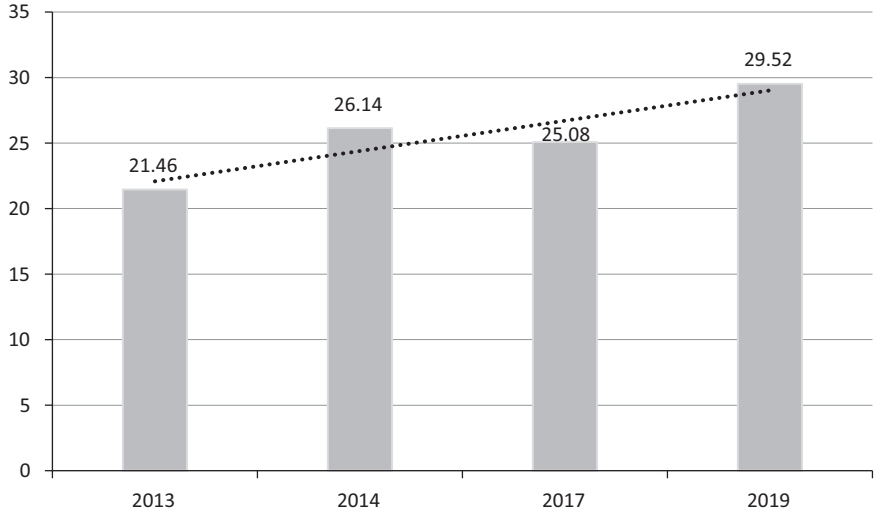

FIGURE 10.1 The gender gap in national-level elections between 2013 and 2019 (in per cent)

Source: Federal Returning Officer and Federal Office of Statistics (Bundeswahlleiter and Bundesamt für Statistik)

for AfD. They came to the conclusion that "one can be very certain that the AfD has disproportionate support amongst men" (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019, p. 7). At the centre of AfD's radicalization was a stronger focus on anti-immigrant and anti-Islam positions. Hence, it stands to reason that there is a relation between the shift in the positions of the party and the decreasing appeal which it has for women as voters relative to men as voters.

This assumption is supported by some empirical evidence. Men in Germany are more likely to have a coherent and manifest right-wing extremist worldview. In the 2018 authoritarianism survey of Leipzig University, men reached significantly higher results than women in all dimensions of right-wing extremism across the board (Decker, Kriess, Schuler et al., 2018). These findings correspond with some (but not all) of the results of the 2019 survey on group-focused enmity which found that men are significantly more likely than women to have a worldview that conforms with the ideological elements that are at the centre of AfD's agenda. For instance, 23.3 per cent of all men in Germany are Islamophobic, while the percentage of Islamophobic women is lower with 17.1 per cent of all women (Zick et al., 2019). A similar gap exists in the area of homophobia; 11.3 per cent of all men and 8 per cent of all women are prone to denigrate homosexuals.

However, the latter study also showed that there is almost no difference in the tendency of men (53 per cent) and women (52.7 per cent) to disparage asylum seekers. An earlier survey of the same research group had actually found that women (50.4 per cent) were slightly more prone to denigrate asylum seekers than men (48.6 per cent) (Zick et al., 2016). A study from 2014 even came to the result that "right-wing populist tendencies" were considerably stronger among women (45 per cent) than men (38 per cent) (Küpper et al., 2015, pp. 40–41). We would therefore be well-advised to be careful with drawing conclusions on the causal relations between the prejudicial attitudes of women and the relatively low probability of women to vote for right-wing radical parties.

One explanation for the gender gap could be that the dissatisfaction with mainstream politics is larger among men than women. However, there is evidence that women are often less satisfied with the state of affairs, they just appear to draw different conclusions from that dissatisfaction when it comes to voting (Immerzeel et al., 2013). There is evidence that the gender gap closes in some Eastern European countries when controlling for socio-structural factors, but that does not happen in Western European countries (Harteveld et al., 2015). A promising avenue for research on the gender gap is to look at the differences in the attitudes and characteristics of men and women that may explain differences in the vote ("mediation") as well as the reasons which men and women have for their vote ("moderation"). Harteveld et al. (2015) found that taking both in account results in the narrowing of the gap by 68 per cent.

Most of the empirical studies that were covered in this chapter worked under the assumption that issues of gender and sexuality are of low salience for right-wing populist parties and that they do not pay much attention to these matters in their programmes and propaganda. This is clearly not the case with AfD for which, as

has been shown, gender issues are central to the party's agenda and a mobilizing factor in their campaigns. It therefore stands to reason that the gender ideology of AfD and the social position it assigns to women have an impact on the vote of women for this party. Hilde Coffé (2018) lists such considerations by women as potential factors that influence women's votes for radical right parties. So far, there is no comprehensive explanation for the gender gap in the vote for AfD. More research must be conducted to explain the gender gap in the vote for this and other radical right populist parties in Europe.

A party by men for men?

Another possible factor for the gender gap in the vote for AfD is the low number of women among the members, representatives, and leaders of AfD. Women are generally underrepresented as members of political parties in Germany. There are more male than female members in all parties which are represented in the Bundestag. But this trend is especially strong for AfD, where the level of underrepresentation is higher than in every other major party. In April 2017, only 16 per cent in the members of AfD were female and 84 per cent of the members were male (Niedermayer, 2017). There had been no significant change in the composition of the membership by sex since 2013, when women made up 15.4 per cent of the members of AfD (Siri & Lewandowsky, 2015).

The picture is similar when looking at the shares of males and females among the representatives of the party in parliament. In July 2019, AfD had 91 members in the Bundestag. Of these 91 members, 81 were male and ten were female. The share of women in parliamentary seats held by AfD accounted for just 11 per cent. The share of female representatives was much higher in all other parties. On average, women held 31.2 per cent of all seats. Two parties – The Left and the Greens – actually had more women in parliament than men (Bundestag, 2019). In state parliaments the share of female representatives is similarly low. In 2018, the share of women who represented AfD in state parliaments ranged from zero per cent (in Bremen, Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania, and Saarland) to 25 per cent (in Thuringia). In most states, the share of women was considerably lower than 25 per cent (Glaser et al., 2018).

AfD is represented by eleven members in the European Parliament. The overall number of German representatives is 96. In that parliament AfD forms the group *Identity and Democracy* together with other radical right populist parties from all over Europe, which include the Austrian FPÖ, the Belgian VB, the Dansk Folkeparti, the Dutch PVV, the French RN, and the Italian Lega, among others. Of those eleven members, two are female and nine are male. The ratio of male to female representatives is 81.8 per cent to 18.2 per cent (European Parliament, 2020). The level of underrepresentation which AfD reaches for women in the European Parliament is similar to that in the Bundestag and in the parliaments of the German states. It also corresponds to the low number of female members of AfD.

There have been and still are some female leaders at the top of AfD on the national level. As of July 2020, the executive board of the party was composed of 14 members, three (21.4 per cent) of which were female. Petry was co-chair of the party for four years (between 2013 and 2017) and had a crucial role in leading the party from neoliberal populism to national populism. Weidel is one of the two floor leaders of AfD in the Bundestag, deputy chairperson, on the executive board of the party, and an important representative of the national-liberal wing of the party. Von Storch is deputy chairperson of AfD, on the executive board of the party, and at the top of the Christian-fundamentalist wing of AfD. It was especially Petry and von Storch who had a strong influence on the public perception of the party because they often appeared on talk shows and gave frequent interviews. It appears that the public visibility of women as representatives of AfD was somewhat stronger than indicated by the share of women in the membership and parliamentary representation of the party. The presence of these women in the media helped to conceal the actual dominance of men in leadership positions of AfD (Glaser et al., 2018). Regarding the leadership on the state level, the trend of underrepresentation is the same as for membership in the executive board, for party representation in parliament, and overall party membership of women. As of July 2020, three of the 16 party organizations of AfD in the individual states of Germany were led by women.[9] All other states were either led by men or had vacant leadership positions.

In the literature on political parties, the question is sometimes raised whether the leadership by a woman has any influence on her or her party's positions on matters of gender (Meret, 2015). Interestingly, the question, if the sex of a male leader affects his positions on issues of gender and sexuality is hardly ever raised. This is problematic in itself because it may indicate a bias regarding the sex of leaders in political parties, which looks at male leadership as the standard and female leadership as the exception. However, in the case of radical right populist parties, this question is justified due to the simple reality that women are in many ways strongly underrepresented in such parties, among others as leaders, and also because of the traditional positions which many of such parties take on issues of gender and sexuality. These are positions that assign women an inferior role in society, subordinate to men, and which potentially limit their opportunities in life. Hence, it is reasonable to ask if a woman as leader of a right-wing radical party – with her personal background as someone who has potentially been discriminated against in the past or could be discriminated in the future because of her gender – goes along with such positions or if she adopts and supports views that deviate from the party line.

In the literature on women in leadership positions of AfD there is no indication that their gender affected them in a way which led them to challenge or oppose any of the traditional positions of their party on issues of gender and sexuality. They have either towed the party line or actively shaped and supported that line. Petry has often voiced opinions on gender issues. She, for instance, claimed that it was necessary to make abortions more difficult in order to prevent the extinction of the German people (Siri, 2016). She also referred to same-sex marriage as an "ideological experiment" (Petry as cited in Glaser, 2018, p. 29). When she got a

divorce and left her former husband and her children to found a new family, she took the extraordinary step to send a letter to her colleagues in the party in order to explain herself. Lang (2017) interpreted this behaviour as an attempt by Petry to preserve her credibility as a responsible woman and mother in the eyes of her (mostly male) party colleagues. Patricia Casale, who was a member of the executive board of the party until April 2015, has published opinion pieces in which she naturalized the traditional gender roles of women (Siri, 2016). Von Storch had to calm her Christian-fundamentalist friends (Christen in der AfD/Pforzheimer Kreis), who had gained the impression that AfD's programmatic positions on gender and family had too many modern elements, and ensure them that all their radical neo-traditional views were represented in the basic programme of the party (Kemper, 2016b). Weidel, when outed as a lesbian, declared that she had tried to keep her sexual orientation a private matter, just as the party programme suggests (Leidinger & Radvan, 2018). The individual statements of these female leaders and their gender performances lead to the conclusion that they are in agreement with the positions of the party on gender and sexuality. Sometimes they have even been even more radical in their tendency toward neo-traditionalism than the party in its programmes.

Conclusion

AfD truly is an "anti-gender party" (Lang, 2017, p. 68). Issues of gender and sexuality are of great salience for the party, which makes it an outlier among the parties of radical right populism in Europe. The party is opposed to anything connected to gender. For AfD, "gender mainstreaming" is an attempt to re-educate "the people" and turn them against the natural order of things, which for them is built on the traditional family with male and female citizens in their traditional roles as fathers and mothers. Their views on issues of gender and sexuality can be classified as neo-traditional with few modern traditional elements. The party is strongly involved in a bio-political discourse which is focused on demographic trends in Germany. Due to the increasing number of immigrants and the decreasing number of native Germans in the German population they see these trends as a threat to the survival of the nation. AfD tends to conflate discourses of gender and sexuality with those of Islam and immigration. The party portrays Islam as generally repressive toward women and as opposed to liberal values – an argument which they use to justify the rejection of Muslims. Therefore, this conflation involves what Sauer et al. (2019, p. 118) call "exclusive intersectionality." As with all radical right populist parties in Western Europe, there is a gender gap in the vote for AfD. Men are more likely to vote for this party than women. There are a number of possible reasons for this gap, ranging from socio-economic factors such as the involvement of women in the labour force to political factors such as the neo-traditional positions of AfD on issues of gender and sexuality. No definitive explanation for this gender gap was found, which indicates a need for further research on this topic.

Notes

1 De Lange and Mügge (2015, p. 71) added the possibility of "modern" positions of radical right populist parties on issues of gender and sexuality to Mudde's (2007, p. 93) distinction between the "traditional" and "modern traditional" positions of such parties.
2 Niels Spierings (2020, p. 44) suggests an analytical division of these parties into "two large blocks: conservative, traditionalist or neo-traditionalist parties on the one hand, and modern conservative or modern traditional ones on the other." This is a distinction which is made largely along the lines of De Lange and Mügge (2015) and Mudde (2007). However, it does not include the modern category. As De Lange and Mügge (2015) have shown, there are some neoliberal populist parties which have adopted a decidedly modern approach regarding gender and sexuality, namely the Flemish Lijst Dedecker (LDD) and the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn.
3 Of these 23 times, it uses the English term "gender" 19 times and four times the term "Geschlechterquoten," which can be translated as "gender quotas."
4 The original text uses italic characters.
5 In 2013, the overall number of voters for AfD was 2,061,600; of these, 1,252,100 were male and 809,500 were female (Bundeswahlleiter, 2014a).
6 In 2017, 5,878,100 citizens voted for AfD; of these, 3,676,200 were male and 2,201,900 were female (Bundeswahlleiter, 2017).
7 The total number of votes for AfD was 2,070,000. This included 1,305,500 votes by men and 764,500 votes by women (Bundeswahlleiter, 2014b).
8 In the 2019 European election AfD got 4,104,500 votes altogether. Of these votes, 2,658,100 were cast by men and 1,446,400 votes were cast by women (Bundeswahlleiter, 2019).
9 This information was gathered on the different party homepages in the 16 states of Germany.

11

STRATEGY OF AMBIVALENCE

AfD between neoliberalism and social populism[1]

In the 2017 federal election in Germany AfD got 12.6 per cent of the votes, won 94 seats, and had unprecedented success among workers and unionized workers. These two groups voted at a disproportionately high rate for the party. Surveys on the social composition of voters showed that 18 per cent of all workers who participated in the election voted for AfD. The party also did very well among unionized workers, 15 per cent of which voted for AfD (Neu & Pokorny, 2017). In their electoral campaign, AfD focused on the "little man" as one of five primary target groups in German society (Buntenbach, 2018). This electoral strategy obviously paid off at the ballot box.

AfD, which was founded in 2013, started out as a party whose main economic positions can be described as neoliberal. They are strongly influenced by ordoliberalism, a specific type of neoliberalism. Market-radical positions form the core of AfD's economic programme (Havertz, 2019). But recently, especially after the split of 2015 which resulted in the resignation of many economic liberal members from the party, AfD has paid more attention to social policy. With this shift they made inroads into the traditional domain of the social-democratic party SPD, which has become much less attractive for workers due to the cuts to social benefits that were implemented by SPD-led governments as part of the *Agenda 2010*. Surveys of workers' political views, with a special focus on unionized workers, found that many of them do not feel represented by this party anymore (Dörre, 2018). The social composition of SPD-voters now looks very much like the social composition of those voters who cast their ballots for the Christian Democratic Union (Brenke & Kritikos, 2017). Trust in the mainstream political parties of Germany – not just in SPD – has declined among the German electorate. Dissatisfaction with the way the democratic system in Germany works has been identified as an important motive to vote for AfD (Hansen & Olsen, 2019). But the main issue affecting the vote for AfD was the immigration and refugee policy which the

Merkel government pursued in the two years before the election. Anti-immigrant sentiments were found to be the strongest predictor for an AfD vote (Daigle et al., 2019; Dostal, 2017). This is of interest in our context, because AfD is combining its newly found interest in social issues with nationalism and a specific anti-immigrant stance (Bose et al., 2018). The type of solidarity which they advocate is nationalist and exclusionary – measures of social policy are meant to benefit only those who have a German passport and exclude everybody else. The success of AfD among workers leads us to the first puzzle of this chapter: Why is a party that has an almost purely neoliberal programme so appealing to workers?

A strong faction in AfD is actively trying to replace SPD as the main workers' party in Germany. Their message is that it is they (and nobody else) who care about workers. This presumption is connected to their populist claim that AfD is the only legitimate representative of "the people." Currently, there is a discussion going on in Germany on whether AfD can be seen as a labour party (Becker et al., 2018; Häusler & Kellershohn, 2018; Sauer et al., 2018); and this study will reflect on whether there is any credibility to the claim that some kind of right-wing labour movement has emerged in Germany with AfD as its parliamentary representation.

Another puzzle is whether the social elements in AfD's rhetoric can be understood as a credible expression of their concern for the well-being of workers, or if we are dealing with a form of pseudo-radicalism that tries to be more appealing to *workers as voters* by covering issues that are of interest for them, but with no real intention to actually change the conditions under which they work and live. Luke March (2011, p. 19) defined social populist parties as parties with an "essentially incoherent ideology, fusing left-wing and right-wing themes behind an anti-establishment appeal." According to March, such parties cannot be regarded as left parties and also not be seen as genuinely social. It appears that AfD is now at least partly matching this definition of a social populist party.

This chapter first turns to the neoliberal positions that are at the centre of AfD's economic programme. The neoliberal programme of the party will only be covered briefly, because it is already well-established in the literature that their approach to economic matters is basically neoliberal (Butterwegge, 2018; Gebhardt, 2018; Havertz, 2019; Ptak, 2018). From there it moves to the social populist pronouncements of the party and its promises to protect workers against the social and economic depravations of neoliberal capitalism and the effects of globalization. This includes an examination of the contradictions between the neoliberal party programme and the claims of some party officials that the party is now the only legitimate representative of workers in Germany. The main focus of this study is on the question of whether and how far AfD can be considered as a social populist party – an issue which to date has not been treated in the international literature.

It will also be investigated whether the world of labour itself may contribute to workers' shift to the right. A survey by Sauer et al. (2018, p. 192) found that corporations, with their deteriorating turbo-capitalist working environments which are characterized by permanent restructuring, are a "fertile ground" for the agitators of the far right. According to Sauer et al. (2018, p. 192), these conditions result in

a "regime of uncertainty" where workers experience a permanent state of crisis. AfD's messages are resonating especially among those workers who are afraid of downward social mobility and who feel anxiety about their future (Lorenzen et al., 2018; Sauer et al., 2018). To date, populism research has not paid much attention to the world of labour. If its conditions really contribute to the rise of radical right populism, a huge task lies ahead for populism research to provide us with a deeper understanding of these issues.

AfD as neoliberal party

AfD started out as a party whose main economic positions can be described as neoliberal. In its beginnings, the primary agenda of the party was getting Germany out of the eurozone. Despite the public perception of AfD in its early days as a one-issue party, there have been connections into the milieu of the intellectual New Right since the phase of its foundation, which helped in preparing the more recent shift of the party to the far right (Häusler, 2018b).

Some of the leading figures of AfD explicitly committed to ordoliberalism, among others Jörg Meuthen, one of the two chairmen of the party; Alice Weidel, one of the two floor leaders of the party in the Bundestag; and Marc Jongen, a member of parliament and co-author of the 2016 programme of AfD (Havertz, 2019). Ordoliberalism, a specific type of neoliberalism, holds that government should design a framework for the market and thus define the boundaries for economic activity. Within these boundaries, agents in the market should be able to pursue their interests freely without any direct government intervention.

The 2016 basic programme of AfD can clearly be described as ordoliberal. It explicitly mentions the work of Walter Eucken, Wilhelm Röpke, and Alfred Müller-Armack, three of the main theorists of ordoliberalism, as theoretical foundation of their economic positions (AfD, 2016). It is nothing special for a mainstream political party in Germany to support ordoliberalism – all parties of the mainstream do so; and it is seen as a precondition to be successful in German politics, because ordoliberalism is the ideological foundation for the social market economy, the economic model for Germany's recovery after the Second World War. But there can be no doubt that it is special for a radical right party in Germany. Historically, the extreme right in Germany – the Nazi regime – focused on a form of closed corporatism, as the fascists in Italy did. After the Second World War the extreme right gave a mixed picture regarding their views on economic policy. Initially, neither NPD or DVU had elaborate economic programmes. This changed in the 1990s when NPD, which had until then generally committed itself to a support of middle-class entrepreneurs, altered its course and pursued decidedly anti-capitalist positions which representatives of the party described as "'German,' 'national,' or 'volkish socialism'" (Pfahl-Traughber, 2016b, p. 66). Neoliberal positions appeared on the far-right spectrum only more recently, with REP and BFB adopting such positions.

The programme of AfD contains several positions that are in line with basic ordoliberal principles; and it idealizes an "order framework"[2] for the economy which is established and overseen by the state (AfD, 2016, p. 9). The idea of this regulatory framework is the centre piece of the ordoliberal approach and the main element that distinguishes this type of neoliberalism from its Anglo-Saxon sibling. The framework order sets the rules that inform the conditions under which the market is expected to function without any direct interference of government. In this perspective, two conditions are deemed essential for the smooth functioning of the capitalist system: competition and price stability.

In accordance with its ordoliberal ideology, the basic programme of AfD is strongly focused on competition (AfD, 2016). The term "competition" is mentioned 20 times in this document. As Havertz (2019, p. 392) pointed out, the section of the programme on economic policy is "a collection of core ideas of ordoliberalism": The party makes a commitment

> to provide for as much competition in the market as possible and as less government involvement in economic activity as necessary, praises competition as a premise for the free enterprising activity of individuals, rejects the subsidisation of businesses and states the party's preference for a reduced public spending ratio.

The party also repeats the classical liberal claim that "individuals who pursue their interests in the market with success will simultaneously always serve the common good with their activity" (Havertz, 2019, p. 392). The programme describes the middle class and small- and medium-sized businesses as "the heart" of Germany's economic strength (AfD, 2016, p. 69). It advocates the removal of any wealth taxes and the scrapping of the inheritance tax. For Butterwegge (2018, p. 45), the proposal to remove these taxes clearly indicates that AfD is a "party of the privileged." According to Gebhardt (2018), the positions which AfD takes in its programme on social-economic issues bring the class interests of right-wing populism into focus. Ptak (2018) sees AfD as a party that shows unconditional support for free markets and competition as exclusive coordination mechanisms of the economy.

AfD's electoral success among workers

Surveys on the social composition of voters who participated in the 2017 federal election show that the share of workers who voted for AfD was disproportionately high with 18 per cent. AfD also did very well among unionized workers, 15 per cent of which voted for AfD (Neu & Pokorny, 2017). This is surprising, because these demographics have traditionally leaned toward SPD, which is now underrepresented among workers (Brenke & Kritikos, 2017).

The support for AfD is especially strong in the working class and lower middle class (Hilmer et al., 2017). But this does not mean that AfD has become a labour party, because there is also a significant portion of voters with a disproportionately

high income who vote for AfD (Lengfeld, 2017). In the 2017 elections, AfD was able to make considerable gains among the precarious milieu and the bourgeois centre (Vehrkamp & Wegschaider, 2017). Both of these groups are in support of the current system but are doubtful whether it will last and afraid that they will end up on the losing side if socio-economic circumstances worsen in the future (Vehrkamp & Wegschaider, 2017). Those in the precarious milieu are already facing increasing social disadvantages and experience exclusion. Those in the bourgeois centre are concerned about the excessive demands that are put on them at the workplace, which results in fears of downward social mobility within this social group. Several studies found that dissatisfaction is a strong predictor for people to vote for AfD. This dissatisfaction may, as already pointed out, concern the (perceived) personal situation of voters, but it often is also about the dissatisfaction with the democratic system in Germany in general, which they do not trust anymore (Hansen & Olsen, 2019).

Hilmer et al. (2017) stress that the main influence factor for people to give their vote to AfD is not their actual living conditions, that is, their *objective* social situation, but their *subjective* social situation. How people *feel* about the circumstance of their lives is a crucial factor in their decision to cast their ballot for this party. Most of the voters of AfD are actually not in a precarious financial situation. However, there is strong evidence that they do not feel well-protected against any future crises. Among AfD sympathizers the proportion of those who profess fear of a general increase in poverty in Germany is much larger than among sympathizers of other parties. AfD sympathizers are also significantly more fearful of personally descending into poverty (Lorenzen et al., 2018). It primarily is this fear which brings voters to cast their ballot for AfD; and it is this very fear which AfD connects to and amplifies with its nativist positions.

The survey of Sauer et al. (2018) about the relation between organized labour and radical right populism provides an explanation for the fact that AfD is disproportionately successful among workers and unionized workers. Workers' preference for AfD is resulting from a marked deterioration of labour conditions, which they do not see as a temporal phenomenon but as result of the continuity of a historic crisis: The permanent pressure exerted by the constant restructuring of their workplaces results in the perception of "crisis as a permanent condition" (Sauer et al., 2018, p. 145). What exacerbates the situation for many workers is the fear of losing control of their careers. The sense of a loss of control emerges because of the unclear consequences of those restructuring processes. It is not the restructuring itself that makes them worried, it is the lack of knowledge of what the process may bring for them personally (Sauer et al., 2018).

What adds to the frustration is that workers often get the feeling that their individual performance is no longer fairly recognized and appropriately compensated (Sauer et al., 2018). In this situation, radical right populists use refugees and also those dependent on social welfare benefits as scapegoats. These groups are blamed for the increasing pressure and insecurity which many workers feel (Sauer et al., 2018). According to Dörre (2018, p. 51), in times with little prospects of an

improvement in their socio-economic situation, wage earners are more susceptible to "interpretations of the social question which reinterpret top-down antagonisms as conflicts between inside and outside, between migrants and a perceived culturally homogeneous German people." For some of them, the refugee movement of 2015 functions as a mirror of the social fears within German society; refugees reflect the vulnerability of one's social position and the fragility of the prosperity which once seemed very secure (Sauer et al., 2018).

The social populist turn of AfD

Since the split of the party in 2015 and the resignation of some of its national-liberal members, AfD has increasingly focused on social issues. This *social populist turn* of the party goes so far that some observers of German politics are discussing whether a right-wing labour movement is emerging in Germany (Buntenbach, 2018; Dörre, 2018). Kubitschek (2018), one of the key figures of the radical right populist movement in Germany, explicitly stated that he deems it possible for AfD to challenge the left for its domination of social issues and thus take in possession its "crown jewel," the social question. AfD certainly is not anymore the purely neoliberal party that it was at its foundation in 2013. The party incrementally adopted positions on social policy that seem at odds with its neoliberal core – so much so that a powerful wing has emerged in the party, the members of which are advancing ideas on social issues that signal a social conscience of the party. This social populist wing has primarily grown in the East of the country, where it has taken root in the state associations of AfD. It is no accident that the same individuals who promoted the social turn of the party are also behind the course correction toward the far right, which the party has taken since 2015 (Becker et al., 2018). They have collaborated in many platforms, the most important of which until its dissolution in April 2020 was the so-called Flügel (which can literally be translated as "wing"). The name of this grouping is interesting, because a wing can never stand for the whole of a party; it can become a strong or even dominant part, but it would always leave room for other factions. The name of this influential party group reveals an important element of AfD's strategy: Different party wings which differ regarding their main ideological focus may appeal to distinct groups of voters with no regard for the incoherence which this factionalization means for the ideological position of the party.

According to Dörre (2018), the New Right gains in influence, because it manages to connect the social question with ethnopluralist and nationalist interpretations of the changing social conditions in Germany. The main protagonist of that shift is the aforementioned chairman of AfD in the state of Thuringia, Höcke. In his speeches and writings, Höcke (as cited in Gebhardt, 2018, p. 46) castigates "the destructive forces of predatory capitalism" and denigrates the left as a "socialist appendix of global financial capital." He combines this anti-capitalist rhetoric with calls for a "solidary patriotism" (Höcke, 2018, p. 246) which involves the integration of social and volkish-nationalist ideas. As Höcke said in an interview which he

published together with Sebastian Hennig, "only a nation-state with a defined solidary community can also be social" (Höcke, 2018, p. 246). For Höcke and his fellow campaigners, the national and the social belong together. Which is why some critics referred to this approach as "national-social" (Hank, 2018), a term reminiscent of National Socialism. When Höcke advocates combining the national with the social, it means that social welfare benefits should preferably go to those who he sees as part of the German people. A good example for this approach is the proposal for a reform of the national pension scheme by AfD's party association in the state of Thuringia. The so-called pension concept includes three main proposals for a reform of the pension system: (1) The paper stresses the need to raise the pension level to 50 per cent of previous earnings before taxes (AfD, 2018, pp. 28–29). (2) It introduces the idea of a "citizen's pension" (Staatsbürgerrente), which would include additional payments for those who worked for at least 35 years but still have a relatively low pension (AfD, 2018, p. 31). The citizen's pension is designed to provide benefits only for Germans. Those who do not have a German passport but worked for 35 years or more in Germany and regularly paid their pension contributions would simply be excluded. (3) Child-rearing is rewarded by this concept. When retiring, parents would get additional payments for every child. Moreover, the pension contribution of those with children is slightly reduced with each child (AfD, 2018). What is problematic about this retirement scheme is the exclusive payment of the "citizen's pension" only to Germans. This scheme would cover the majority of all pensioners in Germany and unjustly discriminate against those who do not have a German passport for that very reason.

Although the national-liberals and the social populists in the party disagree about the organization of the pension scheme, they agree that foreigners should be largely excluded from its benefits. Dörre (2018) points out that this would result in the factual devaluation of the work performance of foreigners. AfD adopts an approach of *exclusive solidarity*, where solidarity is only meant for the in-group and not for anyone who is perceived as not belonging. Inwardly, radical right populists "try to create a social coherence – based on the idea of ethnic homogeneity – outwardly, they distance themselves from immigrants, refugees, or Muslims, whom they consider not only as a threat to internal security but also social security" (Hentges, 2018b, p. 110). Exclusive solidarity involves the *ethnicization of the social*, where social relations and divisions are primarily interpreted along ethnic lines. This includes an alteration of the way social conflicts are interpreted. They are no longer seen as located "on a vertical axis of conflict between 'top' and 'bottom' – as in a class-analytical approach between capital and labour – but on a horizontal plane: 'We' against 'the others'" (Sauer et al., 2018, p. 185). Accordingly, the social programme of AfD (2017, p. 56) stresses the importance of borders for the stability of the social welfare state:

> The stabilization of social systems with a shrinking and aging population calls for special efforts. Our limited resources therefore are not available for an irresponsible immigration policy, as would not be expected in any other

> European country. [. . .] Our welfare state can be retained only if the required financial solidarity is provided within a clearly defined limited community.

The connection of the social question with questions of identity is part of a deliberate strategy of AfD (Häusler & Mescher, 2018). This strategy has also been adopted by the former party co-chairman Gauland. In a speech that he gave in the state parliament of Brandenburg, he promoted the provision of a "solidarity package" for socially weak Germans only to denigrate refugees in the same breath (Dietl, 2017, p. 60). Another protagonist of the social populist turn of AfD was Andreas Kalbitz, who until his ousting in May 2020 was chairman of AfD in the state of Brandenburg and member of the federal executive board of AfD. In an interview with Benedict Kaiser for *Sezession*, he stated that the left is losing its hegemony in the area of social policy, while AfD is gaining support among workers, and suggested that a connection of social issues with nationalism would allow AfD to emerge as a catch-all party (Kalbitz & Kaiser, 2018). He complained that the "principle of social market economy has been jimmied by the primacy of profit maximization and the growth ideology" and advocated the "return to a truly socially oriented market economy" (Kalbitz & Kaiser, 2018). In this statement, Kalbitz tried to seize the term "social market economy" for the radical right. The concept was introduced by Alfred Müller-Armack, who was one of the main theorists of ordoliberalism. He envisioned the "social market economy" as a "socially controlled market economy" (Müller-Armack, 1947, p. 88). The term has since been used to describe the economic system of West Germany after the Second World War with its economic success. Therefore, it has a strong connotation with economic prosperity and social stability. The term "social market economy" was adopted by the parties of the centre (CDU, SPD, and FDP) as a symbol for the socio-economic achievements of Germany after the war. Now the ownership of the concept social market economy is contested, and AfD is claiming to be its only true representative.

Kalbitz's words correspond to Kaiser's (2016, p. 30) anti-capitalist distinction between capitalism, understood as the contemporary neoliberal system, where society with everything in it becomes a subsystem of the economy, and hence a commodity, on the one side, and social market economy, on the other side, which is seen as an ideal system that takes in account the effects of market activity on humans and mitigates them through the establishment of a legal framework and an education of citizens in economic ethics. The ideas of an order framework for the economy and the need of an education in economic ethics are classical ordoliberal ideas. Kaiser presents the social market economy as a remedy for the shortcomings of a radical market system. Like other social populists of the far right, he connects the "social question" with the "national question." He claims that the "national question" already is a topic of great salience for voters, while the "social question" is just about to gain importance (Kaiser, 2016, pp. 30–31). In his eyes, these two problems pose a challenge which the left is not up to. He claims that what is needed is a party that can take on both issues; and he leaves no doubt that in his eyes this can only be AfD. He recommends that the party should seize the opportunity that

has presented itself with the large number of dissatisfied people in the working class and middle class of Germany and perform a radical turn away from neoliberalism toward a stronger coverage of social issues (Kaiser, 2016). It appears that some in AfD were listening to this radical right journalist. The social populist turn of the party has since then been initiated by some of its more influential members in the German East.

It is noteworthy that neither the 2016 basic programme nor the electoral platforms of 2017 and 2019 include an elaborate stance on social policy (AfD, 2016, 2017, 2019). An exception is labour market policy where the social populist faction of AfD had some influence. The 2016 programme includes a commitment to minimum wage laws, though, without specifying exactly how high the minimum wage should be.

The workplace as area of populist radical right agitation

Another crucial element of AfD's social populist turn is the attempt of the right-wing extremist network *One Percent for Our Country* (Ein Prozent für unser Land),[3] which is strongly supported by AfD, to develop radical right extremist structures in works councils and labour unions (Bose et al., 2018: Detje & Sauer, 2018; Hentges, 2018b; Sauer et al., 2018). Works councils are elected bodies of labour representation; and since 2018 radical right populists have increasingly tried to gain influence over works councils by placing their people in this influential office. *One Percent for Our Country* encouraged workers from the radical right and right-wing extremist spectrum to participate in the 2018 works council elections and to set up their own candidate lists (Hentges, 2018b). This already had some success in the Daimler works in Stuttgart-Untertürkheim (where Mercedes cars are built), where the right-wing extremist candidate list *Zentrum Automobil* (Center Automobile) gained several seats on the works council (Bose et al., 2018). According to Sauer et al. (2018), there is a strong possibility that elections of works councils are used to establish right-wing extremist organizational networks and advocacy structures within firms. Radical right populists are targeting certain companies and specific regions where employees are seen as susceptible to their radical right populist messages.

Sauer et al. (2018) interviewed many union officials, who expressed concerns that representatives of the New Right appear not only unrecognized on trade union lists but may also set up their own lists. There are strong indications for a changing atmosphere at the workplace. Union representatives are reporting a considerable polarization in corporations. There often is a noticeable tension in meetings of labour representatives with workers, especially when works councillors or labour union representatives talk about the necessity of the fight against the New Right (Sauer et al., 2018). There have been reports of works councils who opposed the hiring of refugees, because they feared that the new arrivals might threaten the position of the core workforce in their firms (Sauer et al., 2018). There also were incidents where workers resigned from their unions because they did not like their

support for immigrants and their critique of the New Right (Sauer et al., 2018). As a result, labour representatives have started to tread lightly around these issues in order not to scare away more members.

The world of labour has clearly come into the focus of radical right populist activists. They discovered the workplace as an area of interest for radical right populist agitation. Within corporations, radical right populists rarely present themselves as neoliberals or as volkish nationalists. Instead, they try to create an image of themselves as relentless advocates of the "little people" in the corporation (Sauer et al., 2018). In Hans-Jürgen Urban's (2018, p. 189) assessment, making the corporation the "central arena of right-wing populist agitation" is consequent, because the firm is the place where many of the social and cultural crisis dynamics of German society converge. Urban (2018) points out that, to date, research on populism was only marginally interested in the way labour-industry relations influence the emergence of radical right populist attitudes among workers.

Meanwhile, AfD and sympathizers of the party have established several organizations with the purpose of labour representation. Alexander Häusler et al. (2018) list five such organizations. One of them is the *Alternative Association of Workers* (Alternative Vereinigung der Arbeitnehmer), which was formed by members of the federal parliament and does not present itself as a labour union. Its self-defined purpose is "to win over workers, as largest social-political demographic group, to cooperate actively with AfD" (*AfD Kompakt* as cited in Häusler et al., 2018, p. 48). The other four organizations pose as "alternative" labour unions and encourage workers who are already members of established unions under the roof of the *German Federation of Trade Unions* (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB) to change over to them. The *Alternative Workers Association Middle Germany* (Alternativer Arbeitnehmerverband Mitteldeutschland) (as cited in Häusler et al., 2018, p. 50) blames established unions such as Ver.di, which represents workers in the services sector, for the "predatory exploitation" of workers in this sector. They accuse Ver.di of collaborating with the established parties of the German party system in a concerted effort to undermine the position of workers in their struggle with employers. Jürgen Pohl (as cited in Häusler et al., 2018), co-chair of the *Alternative Association of Workers* and of the *Alternative Workers Association Middle Germany*, claimed that Ver.di, in reality, is not representing workers' interest but capital interests. This is also a position which radical right populists increasingly take in corporations, where they voice their radical criticism in an escalating tone, while they portray and attack works councils as part of the establishment (Sauer et al., 2018).

These labour unions focus on "solidary patriotism," using a phrase which Höcke has frequently included in his writings and speeches (Bose et al., 2018, p. 211). It is a phrase that indicates a combination of social policy and nationalism. Höcke, who is a crucial figure in AfD's move to the far right, is also the main protagonist in the party's social populist turn. At a demonstration in Erfurt (Thuringia) against a plant closure of *Siemens*, Höcke gripped and waved a banner of the union of metal workers (IG Metall) which exists under the roof of DGB. It was a staged

move to symbolize AfD and its labour organizations' claim of being the only true representatives of workers in Germany (Buntenbach, 2018).

It is too early to say if these labour organizations will have a stronger influence on the way labour is represented in Germany. There are no publicly available figures regarding the membership in these "alternative" labour unions, and it is fair to assume that their influence, to date, is marginal.

Conclusion

The rise of radical right populism in Germany can be understood as a reaction to neoliberal capitalism which is deeply penetrating the fabric of German society. The permanent market-oriented restructuring of corporations has resulted in enormous pressures on individual workers. The effect of these developments on ordinary citizens is increasing fear, insecurity, and a sense of loss of control over their careers. AfD and its newly founded labour organizations are trying to exploit these insecurities. They portray traditional labour organizations as traitors to the average worker and pose as the only viable alternative to them. Höcke, the chairman of AfD in the state of Thuringia, together with right-wing extremist networks such as *One Percent for Our Country*, is leading the charge of this radical right populist attempt to seize the social question for the far right. AfD is aware of the vulnerability of workers and has started an attempt to reach them with its message of "exclusive solidarity" right at the workplace. This new focus of AfD on social issues is of course at odds with the neoliberal programme of the party, which shows little concern for workers and is very enterprise-friendly. It is very doubtful that these social populists really want to lead the party in a new direction away from their neoliberal programme. It can therefore not be considered as a right-wing labour party.

The ambivalence between its neoliberal or, more precisely, ordoliberal stance and its newly adopted social populist positions does not seem to faze the party. On the contrary, this ambivalence has become a central element of AfD's strategy; which is why Dörre (2018, p. 73) called them "masters of ambivalence." AfD is not necessarily facing a choice between neoliberalism and social populism. Even though both are logically opposed to each other, they can be seen as complementary elements of their strategy. AfD may keep a position that is *for* and *against* neoliberalism at the same time (Gebhardt, 2018). These very inconsistencies in the positions of AfD lead us to the conclusion that it conforms perfectly to March's (2011) definition of social populist parties. For the medium term, it is likely that they will stay their course of ambivalence, combining "exclusive solidarity" and neoliberalism.

Notes

1 This chapter is based on the article "Ambivalence as Strategy: AfD between Neoliberalism and Social Populism" by Ralf Havertz, which appeared in *Trames: Journal in Humanities*

and Social Sciences 24.4, December 2020. The author is grateful to the editor of the journal for the permission to reuse the material.

2 Emphasis added by the author.

3 *One Percent for Our Country* was initiated by the IBD, the IfS, the journal *Compact*, and with involvement of AfD officials, especially Hans Thomas Tillschneider, who is a member in the state parliament of Saxony-Anhalt (Hentges, 2018b).

12
CONCLUSION

It was my goal in this book to more deeply comprehend the phenomenon of radical right populism in Germany with its main protagonists AfD, Pegida, and IBD. The particular focus of my research was on the ideology of these populist actors and on their political and discursive strategies. In my investigation of AfD's ideology, I was able to find much evidence to confirm the populist nature of this party. One of the central positions of AfD is that the "political class" in Germany is corrupt, undermines the formation of the general will and of popular sovereignty, and that it only works for its own gain (and for that of undeserving outsiders). I could also show that this populism is complemented by nativism and authoritarianism, a combination which, according to Mudde (2007), constitutes radical right populism. The analysis of the party's nativism came to the conclusion that it can be described as a mélange of volkish nationalism and ethnopluralism. The authoritarianism of the party includes a preference for a strong state that is focused on securing law and order and it involves the re-emergence of certain authoritarian personality types in German politics.

I found that volkish nationalism is the core ideology of the radical right populists in Germany. Volkish nationalism can be seen as a subtype of ethnic nationalism that concentrates particularly strongly on "the people." Even though the word "volkish" may – just as the term "ethnic" in ethnic nationalism – reference history, culture, ethnie, race, or religion, what distinguishes the word "volkish" from "ethnic" is that the former does so always mediated by "the people," that is, understood as a specific trait of "the people." The goal of volkish ideology is the construction of "the people" as a homogenous collective subject. It constructs "the people" as *ethnos*, not as *demos*, that is, as an ethnic community, not as a political one. The analysis of the national-level programmes of AfD and statements of leading party representatives has shown that volkish nationalism has a strong presence in the party. The rehabilitation of volkish vocabulary that was tainted by National Socialism such as

Volksgemeinschaft (people's community) is of great salience for the party. Volkish nationalism provides the radical right populists of AfD with the justification to exclude anyone who is seen as not belonging to this community. Homogeneity is conceived as an essential feature of this community; it is understood as a precondition for its persistence. Hence, any outsider who is perceived as incapable to assimilate into this group is understood as a threat to its very existence. With its focus on homogeneity, the volkish-nationalist understanding of "the people" has some obvious commonalities with the populist conceptualization of "the people," which also perceives "the people" as a homogenous group. This is a feature of populism which makes it easier for volkish nationalism to connect with populism.

The radical right populists of AfD have dropped traditional racism, which includes the notion of a superior race, and replaced it with ethnopluralism, a specific type of differentialist racism which involves the idea that all people and cultures have the basic right to be different (Dörre, 2018). This insistence on differences has the consequence that any mixture of cultures is seen as potentially destructive. They reject multiculturalism and claim that the existence of German culture and identity is threatened by immigrants, especially if they are Muslims. Islam is seen as the "main enemy" of the radical right populist movement in Germany (Kellershohn, 2016b, p. 23). In fact, AfD's 2016 programme explicitly states "Islam does not belong to Germany" (AfD, 2016, p. 49), which makes Islamophobia officially a programmatic position of the party. The examination of the Islamophobia of the radical right populists of AfD, Pegida, and IBD in this book found that Muslims are cast as culturally different and principally not belonging to Germany. The demand of their exclusion is justified with their ethnocultural "otherness," which is seen as being incompatible with German "guiding culture." This othering involves processes of ethnicization, homogenization, and essentialization (Çakir, 2019). The Islamophobia of radical right populists in Germany is intricately entwined with their volkish nationalism and ethnopluralism.

Islamophobia has gone through a phase of modernization, and is now primarily focused on the defence of liberal Europe against the alleged attempt by Muslims to Islamize the West. In this context, a conspiracy theory has gained popularity among the radical and extreme right not only in Germany but throughout Europe which is about an alleged scheme of immigrants, primarily Muslims, to invade and conquer the West with the goal to replace the autochthonous population. Camus (2017) was the first to advance this conspiracy theory in his book *The Great Replacement*. The elites in Western countries are allegedly involved in this scheme of a "population exchange," which is in Germany also known as "Umvolkung," because they prefer a population that is more supple and easier to exploit in a globalized economy. The two main means of this conquest are the immigration of Muslims to the countries of the West and the relatively high fertility rate of Muslims in the respective countries of Europe. Which is one reason why AfD emphasizes the need for a strong support of German families and the birth of as many children as possible in these families. This is a central issue in all the national level programmes of the party.

In these programmes as well as in statements of party leaders, AfD often conflates discourses of gender and sexuality with discursive threads of immigration and Islam. The party portrays Islam as generally repressive toward women and as opposed to liberal values – an argument which they use to justify the rejection of Muslims. Another intersection of discourses is created between the discourse of sexual violence and the discourses of immigration and Islam, which involves the stereotyping of Muslim men as sexually aggressive. These intersections involve what Sauer et al. (2019, p. 118) call "exclusive intersectionality," because they provide arguments for the exclusion of Muslims.

A further discursive strategy of AfD conflates the discourses of antisemitism with their anti-Islam positions. This involves the condemnation of the antisemitism of Muslims and the pronouncement of solidarity with Israel by individual party representatives. But AfD does not appear to be genuinely interested in fighting antisemitism, because the party has reacted only very reluctantly against antisemitism in their own ranks. Antisemitism has a strong presence in AfD. It mostly appears in the form of secondary antisemitism and is related to the party's historical revisionism. Party representatives demand a change in the memorial culture of Germany, away from the concentration on the Second World War and the Shoah. For the radical right populists of AfD, the institutionalized commemoration of the genocide of the European Jews, which was committed in the name of the German nation, stands in the way of a more positive image of that nation. If AfD ever comes into power, for instance, as junior partner of a government coalition, changing the memorial culture of Germany regarding the Nazi period and rewriting history books that are used in schools would be at the top of the party's political agenda.

AfD truly is an "anti-gender party" (Lang, 2017, p. 68). Its opposition to anything related to gender is of great salience for the party. They have launched aggressive campaigns against gender mainstreaming and against "gender indoctrination." This means that AfD is an outlier in the party family of radical right populism in Europe. Most scholars in this field who analyzed the positions of radical right populist parties on issues of gender and sexuality came to the conclusion that they "do not hold a strong position on gender issues" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015, p. 35). Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2015, p. 35) also stressed that such issues feature "relatively seldom in populist programmes and propaganda, irrespective of accompanying ideology and geographical region." But this is clearly not the case with AfD. My content analysis of the three national-level programmes of the party has shown that issues of gender and sexuality are central to the agenda of AfD.

The economic programme of the party is decidedly neoliberal. The national-liberal wing of the party strongly relies on the theories of ordoliberalism. Accordingly, securing free market competition and monetary stability are important issues for the party. This appears to be in contrast with the social populist turn toward social policy which factions of the party performed in 2017 and yielded strong electoral support among workers and unionized workers. With this ideological incoherence AfD indeed conforms to Luke March's (2011) definition of social

populist parties. AfD turned to social populism because it makes them more attractive to workers, not because of their genuine interest in social issues. The party now has adopted a strategy of ambivalence, representing neoliberal and social populist positions at the same time; and it can be expected that they will play with this ambiguity as long as it yields results at the ballot box.

Labour issues and the workplace have clearly come into the focus of radical right populists in Germany. Any counter-strategy to radical right populism would have to acknowledge that the workplace has become an arena for radical right populist agitation; it would also have to recognize that the grievances of workers which drive them into the arms of these populists have a rational core due to the pressure which the neoliberal system is putting on them (Dörre, 2018). The radical right populist rebellion against neoliberalism ties in with real violations of workers' interests and with wounds that have already been inflicted on them (Urban, 2018).

When AfD was launched in 2013, Euroscepticism was the single most important issue for the party. This has changed meanwhile due to its shift to the right and the increasing importance of nativism for the party. AfD can be classified as a reluctant Eurosceptic party. While the party entertains a Dexit, there are indications that the party's position on the EU is softer than such demands suggest. Euroscepticism is often present in positions and statements of the party where Europe is not the primary issue, as is the case with AfD's Islamophobic positions and their claims to close the borders for refugees and strengthen border controls, which runs counter to the principle of the freedom of movement in the EU. Euroscepticism is interlinked with these issues; and this interwovenness allows AfD to fall back on Euroscepticism and use it when it appears expedient for the mobilization of followers and voters.

The AfD party sees itself as part of a movement that also comprises Pegida and IBD. This can be attested by statements of party leaders such as Gauland, who said that Pegida is the "natural ally" (Bielicki & Schneider, 2014) of AfD and that there is no dissent between AfD and IBD (Pfahl-Traughber, 2019). There is a strategic distribution of roles in this movement, which Höcke (2018, p. 233) represented as follows: "The 'fortress of the established' must be taken from at least two sides: by the protesting citizen base and by us as the parliamentary spearhead of the citizen opposition." What Höcke described here is a unified counter-hegemonic bloc whose task it is to topple "the elite" and replace it with a new one.

The openness to cooperation with Pegida and professions of sympathy toward IBD allow AfD to hold contact to the far-right fringe and signal to its voters a general agreement with the extreme positions which these movements hold. This extremism as well as the party's continuous shift to the far-right corner of the political spectrum raise the question of where the party is standing today. Recently, BfV announced that they are suspecting the party of right-wing extremism and that they have classified a faction of the party – "Der Flügel" – as a certain case of right-wing extremism, which led to the immediate dissolution of this intra-party group. This classification by BfV may constitute a critical juncture for AfD and

have an impact on its further trajectory. When BfV started to treat REP as a case of right-wing extremism in 1992, it rang in a period of continuous demise for this party. But REP was in a much weaker position back then than AfD is today; and the stigma of voting for the radical right has lost some of its deterring effect in Germany. Hence, I doubt that AfD will follow REP on its path into political insignificance.

APPENDIX

In the following a detailed account is provided of the content analysis which involves a word count of the three major party programmes of AfD regarding issues of gender and sexuality (see Table 10.1 in Chapter 10). The analysis focused on the national-level programmes of 2016, 2017, and 2019 and examined the frequency with which certain terms were mentioned in these programmes to indicate the salience which the related issues had for the party when the programmes were released. The analysis paid particular attention to a number of terms that are central to issues of gender and sexuality: women, men, sex, gender, feminism, LGBTQ issues (here: homosexuality and transsexuality), family, marriage, abortion, pregnancy. Each mention of these terms in their singular or plural form and in any derived form (for instance as an adjective, as in sex and sexual) was counted as one. The term "female" was included in the count for women; the term "male" was included in the count for "men." As often happens in the German language, terms may not appear alone but in combination with other terms in order to form new words. In cases where one of the words from our list was included to form such a new word this word was counted as one.

The basic programme of 2016 mentions the words "woman"/"women," combinations of "women" with other terms (Frauenanteil, Frauenstudiengänge), and "female" 17 times altogether. "Feminism" was included only once. "Man"/"men" and "male" are mentioned seven times. The English term "gender" occurs an astonishing 23 times (once in combination with another term: Genderprofessuren).[1] "Sex"[2] appears ten times altogether (once in the form of a derived adjective: sexuell; several times in combination with other terms, e.g. Geschlechter).[3] It was difficult to decide where to place the words "Geschlechterquoten" and "Geschlechterrollen." The German word "Geschlecht," the direct translation of which is "sex," can mean either "sex" or "gender," depending on the context in which it is used in the German language. The word "Geschlechterrollen," which

we would normally translate as "gender roles," was counted under "sex," not under "gender." The reason for this is that AfD rejects the concept of gender completely. When they use the term "Geschlechterrolle," they mean a role that is predetermined by the biological sex of a person. The word "Geschlechterquote," which can be translated as "gender quota," has implications of both sex and gender. Any policy that sets gender quotas does this based on the biological sex of those who are included in such a quota. This is a connotation which resonates in the German word "Geschlechterquote." However, gender quotas are the result of a recognition of an existing gender inequality and meant to increase gender equality. Which is why "Geschlechterquoten" was counted under gender.

In the 2016 basic programme, "homo- and transsexuality" occur just once. The word "family"/"families" and "family" in combination with other terms (most often Familienmitglieder, Familienpolitik, Familiensplitting) is mentioned 70 times.[4] Marriage was included five times altogether, once in combination with another term (Ehegattensplitting). "Abortion" (Abtreibung, Schwangerschaftsabbruch) appears five times, and "pregnancy" is mentioned twice.

In the 2017 electoral programme, the words "woman" and "women" are mentioned eight times. The terms "female" and "feminism" do not appear. "Man"/"men" and "male" are again mentioned seven times. The English term "gender" still has a strong presence in this programme, with 15 mentions. The word "sex" as a noun and in the form of a derived adjective (sexuell) as well as in combination with another term (Sexualpädagogik) appears ten times.[5] LGBTQ issues are again only included once: "Homo- and transsexuality." The word "family"/"families" and "family" in combination with other terms (most often Familienförderung, Familiennachzug, Familienpolitik) is mentioned 75 times.[6] The terms "family support" (Familienförderung) and "family image" (Familienbild) were used significantly more often in this programme than in the programme of 2016. "Marriage"/"marriages" was included 14 times,[7] which means that the attention on issues concerning this form of institutionalized partnership had considerably increased compared to the 2016 programme. "Abortion" appears twice in this programme, and "pregnancy" is mentioned four times.

In the programme for the 2019 European election "woman"/"women" are included four times. "Female" appears once, while "feminism" is not mentioned at all. "Man"/"men" are mentioned four times. The term "gender" occurs ten times, two times in combination with other words (Genderforschung, Genderwissenschaft). The term "sex" was used six times,[8] one time in the form of the derived adjective (sexuellen). The term "Sexualdelikte" (sexual offenses) was not counted under "sex," even though "sex" appears in combination with another word in this term. This term would have to be subsumed under the category of criminality, not under "sex" as opposed to "gender." "Homosexuality" was included three times, and "transsexuality" appears once. The word "family"/"families" and "family" in combination with other terms is mentioned 34 times.[9] In this programme, "family policy," which is mentioned 14 times altogether, has come into the focus of AfD. ("Family policy" was included in the count for "family.") "Marriage"/"Marriages"

appear three times in this programme. "Abortion" was mentioned an astonishing eleven times, while the term "pregnancy" was used two times.[10]

Notes

1 The four mentions of "Geschlechterquoten" (gender quotas) was included in this count. This is explained in more detail in the section on the count of the word "sex" in the 2016 programme of AfD.
2 This count involves the international term "sex" as well as the German word "Geschlecht" (mostly combinations of the plural form "Geschlechter" with other terms).
3 "Sex" also appears in "homo- and transsexuality," which in order to avoid double counts was counted as an LGBTQ issue (see Table 10.1 in Chapter 10).
4 Here is a detailed overview of the mentions of the term "family" in the 2016 programme: Einelternfamilien (1), familiären (1), Familie (16), Familien (26), Familienangehörige (2), Familienangehörigen (1), Familienarbeit (1), Familienarmut (1), familienbedingte (1), Familienbild (1), Familienförderung (1), familiengerechte (1), Familiengründung (1), Familienmitglieder (3), Familiennachzugs (1), familiennahe (1), Familienpolitik (5), Familiensplitting (3), Mehrkindfamilien (3).
5 This count involves the international term "sex" as well as the German word "Geschlecht."
6 In the following a detailed account of the mentions of the term "family" in the 2017 programme is provided: Einelternfamilien (1), Familie (13), Familien (23), Familienangehörige (1), Familienarbeit (1), Familienbild (3), Familienbegriff (1), Familienbetriebe (1), Familienbetrieben (1), Familieneinkommen (2), Familienförderung (7), Familienmitglied (1), Familienmitglieder (2), Familiennachzug (4), familiennahe (2), Familienpolitik (4), Familienplanung (1), Familienrecht (1), familienrechtliche (1), Familienrechts (1), Familiensplitting (2), Familiensplittings (1), Familienversicherung (1).
7 "Marriage" was once included as a derived adjective (eheliche) and one time in combination with other terms (Ehegattensplitting).
8 This count again involves the international term "sex" as well as the German word "Geschlecht."
9 In the 2019 programme the term "family" again appeared often in combination with other terms: Familie (4), Familien (13), Familienangehörigen (1), Familienbetriebe (1), Familienlasten (1), Familienpolitik (12), familienpolitische (1), familienpolitischen (1), Mehrkindfamilien (4).
10 In order to avoid double counts, the term "termination of pregnancy" (Schwangerschaftsabbruch) was counted as "abortion" not as pregnancy, even though the term "pregnancy" (Schwangerschaft) appears in this combination of terms.

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