The AfD and its Sympathisers: Finally a Right-Wing Populist Movement in Germany?

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Is the Alternative für Deutschland *(AfD) the exponent of a successful right-wing populist movement in Germany? By analysing the positions, the discursive links and the sympathisers of the AfD, this article aims to draw a comprehensive picture of the new party and its environment. The link to populism research offers a conceptual framework for a mixed-method study which focuses on important aspects of the party's history, self-description and position in Germany's public discourse as well as its supporters by analysing two sets of quantitative and qualitative data. We argue that the AfD follows a nuanced and diverse communication strategy and can be regarded as a functional equivalent for a right-wing populist party in a country where right-wing politics are strongly stigmatised.*

INTRODUCTION: FACING A NEW RIGHT-WING POPULIST MOVEMENT?

Since its foundation in February 2013, the character and the electoral success of the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) have been widely discussed throughout the German public and media. For one, some interpret the newcomer as some kind of 'missing link' between the extreme right and established conservatism, namely a (right-wing) populist party[1] (especially the SPD and the Greens).[2] On the other hand, there are some aspects to the party and even its electorate that, to a crucial extent, distinguish the AfD from other actors such as the *Front National* or even more moderate examples like the *Dansk Folkeparti* (DF) or the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV). Nevertheless, 4.7 per cent of the vote in the general election in 2013 and 7.1 per cent in the European election in May 2014 certainly provide an indication of a new stable party in the German party system.

Within little more than a year, the AfD has become one of the most successful newly founded parties in Germany since the 1950s.[3] To understand this upsurge we shall have a closer look on the way from its foundation in February and the first party congress in April up to the general election in September 2013. However, the group of conservative economists surrounding the later party leader Bernd Lucke was no party organisation to begin with. In 2011, Lucke, who holds a chair in economics at the University of Hamburg and other prominent critics, such as Hans-Olaf Henkel, the former president of the Federation of German Industries (BDI), began to attack the European monetary union. Right from the beginning, they linked their scepticism towards the Euro with a fundamental critique on the political elites and

parties in Germany and the EU.[4] In February 2013, the 'Wahlalternative 2013' cooperated with the *Freie Wähler* (Free Voters) in the regional election in Lower Saxony but did not manage to gain seats in parliament. After the election, the cooperation ended due to different strategic and organisational objectives.[5] On 6 February 2013, Bernd Lucke, Konrad Adam, Alexander Gauland and Beatrix von Storch led the founding party conference of the *Alternative für Deutschland*. Neverthe-less, the convention was more a formal necessity as the founding member had already started to found and establish regional organisations.[6] Retrospectively, the leading persons' focus on the establishment of sub-national structures might be one crucial element of its success. By the end of May 2013, the AfD held regional branches in all 16 Bundesländer. Compared to other small parties which fail in their attempt to establish branches in more than a handful of Länder,[7] the AfD was, apart from internal tensions (e.g. on appointed officeholders or thematic priorities),[8] able to stabilise a nation-wide organisation. Particularly important were all the well-known and con-nected founding members and their networks. This leads to the second element of the AfD's rapid success, that is, the huge media response related to Lucke.[9]

Since that time and accelerated by the party's electoral successes, there is an ongoing debate about its ideological character. During their first election campaign in autumn 2013, the AfD gave itself a rebellious appearance with demonstrations such as the 'blue' demonstration in front of the Federal Ministry of Finance which were all intensively promoted through online tools like Twitter and the party's website.[10] In addition, Lucke appeared as a guest in many talk shows on German tele-vision where he carried out a double role as an expert in financial politics and, at the same time, as a newcomer to the political stage. In all appearances, the campaign focus is on the party's anti-establishment and anti-Euro position.[11] It is thus not surprising that from its foundation onwards, the AfD has been accused of being a populist or even right-wing populist party.[12]

The goal of this study is to understand both the character of the AfD in terms of its programme, its appeal towards the system and its elites and, at the same time, the pol-itical positions of its supporters. In order to do so, we will use a mixed-method approach which consists of qualitative and quantitative research methods.[13] In the fol-lowing we will first outline a minimal definition of right-wing populism. Second, we will briefly summarise the history of right-wing populism in Germany. Using examples of a qualitative content analysis about the AfD's self-description and party platform we will then focus on the party's political positions, campaign materials and discursive links. Third, we shall give a brief empirical inquiry of its sympathisers by using survey data from the *Bundeswahlkompass*, a Voting Advice Application (VAA) that came into effect six weeks before the German general election in 2013.[14]

POPULISM AND RIGHT-WING POPULISM: TOWARDS A MINIMAL DEFINITION

Although there is not much work on the AfD yet, some scholars argue that the new party embraces populist or even right-wing populist tendencies.[15] At the same time, Franzmann's conclusion that the AfD embraces national-liberal as well as right-wing populist characteristics illustrates that it is not easy to relate the party to a specific label.[16] Nevertheless, there are good reasons to analyse the AfD with the aid of the

concept of populism. First, the AfD exhibits a strong anti-establishment attitude which marks the core of populism (see later). Second, the party is not cagey about its protest character; its public communication and campaigns claim its demand for truth ('*Mut zur Wahrheit*') and include a grassroots appeal.[17]

In his overall view of the discourse on populism in political science, Cas Mudde identifies no less than 22 different terms to describe one and the same family of parties.[18] In empirical reality, however, there is hardly such *one* thing as 'populism'.[19] The phenomenon itself is often referred to as being 'chameleon-like',[20] which means that populism changes its face and agenda over time and according to the specific national context – politicians, parties, the media – a populist actor operates in. Although most scholars' research interest has been into right-wing populism, which is due to the rise of right-wing protest parties in the 1980s and 1990s,[21] it is useful to draw a conceptual differentiation between populism and its ideological variations. One can therefore draw an analytical distinction between a minimal definition of populism and its various ideological variations, be they more right-wing, left-wing or otherwise.

All populist phenomena, whichever ideological direction they might take, resort to 'the people' as a homogenous body[22] which is addressed by several codes, such as 'the man in the street' or 'the common man'. The people are portrayed as 'a corporate body with a continuous existence over time, capable of having common interests and a common will'.[23] Based on this understanding, populism aims at the fulfilment of the people's political sovereignty. According to Mudde, the core of populism therefore lies in an antagonistic understanding of power distribution between the people and the political elites.[24] Populism claims that the people are sovereign but are restricted in the execution of their political power whereas the political elites execute political power to their own benefit. While the people are perceived as being morally pure and reasonable, the political elites in a representative democracy are portrayed as self-interested, incompetent and corrupt.[25] Populism aims at what Margaret Canovan describes as the 'democratic paradox' which consists of the contradiction between the sovereignty of the people on the one hand and the constitutional enclosure of the sovereignty on the other.[26] Populists prefer the execution of the majority rule over the inclusion of minorities; populism thus includes a great deal of anti-pluralism.[27] Modern democracies tend to incorporate more interest groups, lobbies and pressure groups. At the same time, political decisions are more and more shifted to supranational institutions. This leads to lower levels of transparency. Populism responds to this problem by reducing the complexity of modern democratic systems to malicious damage by the political elites.[28] The populist appeal to 'the people' and its opposition to the political elites is hence 'foremost moral [. . .], not situational [. . .], socio-cultural [. . .], or socio-economic [. . .]'.[29]

Whereas the dichotomy between 'the people' and 'the elites' defines the analytical minimal definition of populism as much as the core programme of populist parties,[30] these parties embrace ideological attributes that do not only define who they fraternise with but who they segregate from. In most cases, 'the people' are not only threatened by the political establishment but also by cultural outsiders. It is therefore not surprising that the greatest deal of populist parties can be found at the right side of the political spectrum.[31] Mudde refers to this variation by the term *nativism*, which postulates the

prerogatives of the 'indigenes' of a society over 'aliens'.[32] Although nativism divides a society into one in-group and out-groups, it does not necessarily embrace a fixed racist ideology. As much as the 'the people' are rather a moral than an ideological category, those groups that are defined as external enemies vary over time and between different countries and right-wing populist parties.[33] In the 1980s and 1990s, right-wing populists seized classical racist ideas,[34] whereas after the terrorist attack of 9/11 in New York and Washington, they cumulatively went for the fear towards Islam as a danger to the public. During the first decade after the millennium, western European right-wing populists, beginning with the *Dansk Folkeparti*, the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* and the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, identified the apparent Islamisation of Europe as a threat. In Germany, splinter parties such as the *Bürgerbewegung pro Deutschland* or *Die Freiheit* imitated campaigns of like-minded parties in the western European neighbouring countries.

In order to understand the relative success of the AfD and to classify the party, we shall elaborate on the opportunities and limits of populism in the Federal Republic first. Subsequently, we will show that the AfD's political performance absorbs specific German political constellations that, among other things, explain the dropping of anti-Islamism as a major campaign issue. Whereas in western Europe, right-wing populists agitate against Islam, immigrants and refugees, they mainly position themselves against national minorities, such as Sinti and Roma, in central and eastern Europe.[35] In 2013, Daniele Albertazzi and Sean Mueller pointed out that during the European financial crisis, right-wing populist parties spread even in those countries which were expected to be 'immune' against this 'virus'.[36] The success of these parties, in many countries based on election results over 10 or even 20 per cent of the vote, cannot be reduced to 'typical' right-wing voters only.

Figure 1 gives an illustration of the concept of populism and its right-wing variation in a nutshell. We shall adapt the minimal definition of populism – 'the people' versus the political elites and distinguish it from its right-wing variation, which is based on a cultural dichotomy between 'the people' as a homogenous body versus cultural or ethnic outsiders. On this conceptual basis, we shall now, in order

FIGURE 1
THE POPULIST TRIANGLE
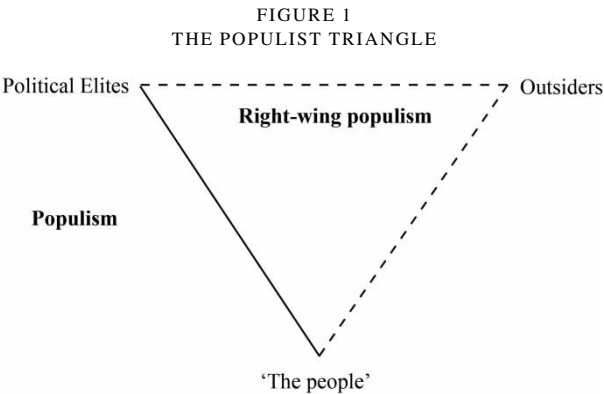
Source: Own illustration.

to understand the context the AfD operates in, give a brief overview of the situation and the relative lack of success of right-wing populist parties of the Federal Republic of Germany.

RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN GERMANY: A HISTORY OF FAILING

In contrast to other western European countries such as France, Denmark, the Netherlands or Austria, it seems like right-wing populism in Germany was ill-fated.[37] Whereas the adoption of the people-versus-elite dichotomy turns out to be a successful electoral strategy for the Left Party (*Die Linke*),[38] populist parties of the political right have a hard time on the electoral market. Since the short-term rise of the National-Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) in the 1960s, when the party gained 4.3 per cent of the electoral vote, no challenger from the right of the political spectrum has succeeded on the national level. In the 1980s, the *Republikaner* (REP), who basically arose by the reason of protest against the Bavarian premier Franz Josef Strauss' financial aid for the GDR, generated unease within the political establishment. But for all that, although they gained some seats in regional elections for the Landtag in the provinces of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, the REP never made it to the Bundestag. The same applies for the *Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive* (Party of the Offensive for Law and Order), mostly tagged as 'Schill-Partei' as a reference to their founder and most popular member Ronald Schill. The party was founded in 2000 and won 19.4 per cent of the vote in the Hamburg election of 2001. But although their figurehead Schill, a former local court judge with a reputation for harsh verdicts against delinquents, gained some popularity throughout the German public, the party's attempt to enter the German parliament in the 2002 election failed. One year after their success in Hamburg, the *Schill-Partei* won 0.8 per cent of the vote for the Bundestag. Not only did internal conflicts shatter the party; Ronald Schill, who was then Senator of the Interior in Hamburg, was dismissed by mayor Ole von Beust in 2003 after an internal scandal, in which Schill threatened the mayor to publish details about the former's private life.[39] Not long after this event, the party vanished entirely.[40]

There are on the other hand several right-wing populist parties in Germany which are successful on the local and the Länder level. None of them however has managed to gain seats in the Bundestag. Why is there no successful right-wing populist party on the national level in the Federal Republic? Indeed, this phenomenon remains a puzzle. Studies show that, just as in other countries, many conditions of electoral success of right-wing parties apply for Germany as well. Significant parts of the German electorate are just as sympathetic to various racist appeals as electorates in other countries. Islamophobia and anti-immigrant attitudes are on the rise, an increase that is by no means limited to the right of the political spectrum but rather throughout what can be described as the 'mainstream'.[41] The widespread support for the ethno-racist ideas of former state finance minister of Berlin, Thilo Sarrazin, in 2010 illustrates that authoritarian and xenophobic sentiments exist within the German society.[42] Sarrazin, a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who had attracted attention through attempts against immigrants and welfare recipients on several occasions before, became the talk of the country once more as he promoted his book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (*Germany Abolishes Itself*) by bringing the idea of ethnic genetics back

into the immigration discourse. In short, Sarrazin stated a causal connection between individual intelligence and a person's cultural or 'genetic' background. Consequently, he assumed for example a lower level of intelligence for immigrants from Arab countries.[43] The widespread public support for Sarrazin, for example by the most widely read newspaper, *BILD*, and several splinter parties,[44] not to mention the best-selling status of his book, gives an impression that anti-immigrant attempts are not foreign to the German public.[45] In an experimental study, Thorsten Faas measured about 26 per cent approval rate for a hypothetical party led by Thilo Sarrazin.[46] Empirical findings support the thesis that the Sarrazin debate highlighted an existing discourse against 'outsiders': a quarter of the German population exhibits xenophobic attitudes, depending on age, level of education and migration background, whereupon education works as a 'shield' against these attributes.[47] At the same time, approval of pluralist values has risen within the last years.[48] These findings are not contrary to one another; they all the more illustrate that xenophobic or authoritarian attributes on the one hand do not necessarily lead to a consistent conviction. This, again, mirrors the situation in other countries where high outcomes of populist parties do not refer to the spread of consistent conservative attributes but to a 'patchwork' of, for instance, attributes against Muslims that coexist with the support of same-sex marriage.[49] In Germany, the societal potential for populist parties appears to be up to equally as high as it is in other west European countries, but it has translated, at most, into only negligible electoral success for right-wing parties, whereas in other states, the populist support in terms of votes is substantial.[50] Besides situational factors, such as political trends or policies that might determine election outcomes, three crucial handicaps for populist parties in Germany can be identified.[51]

Federal Structure of Party Competition

Germany's specific institutional setting contributes to limiting the success of new and smaller parties. First, to a certain extent, the electoral system mirrors the federal structure of the country as a whole. As a consequence, new parties (including populists) that succeed in regional elections do not necessarily repeat their results at the national level:[52] at the sub-national level, especially the city states like Hamburg or Bremen, small parties operate on a manageable terrain in terms of institutional hurdles and media coverage. A new party that manages to enter a Landtag attracts media attention throughout the Federal Republic, as illustrated by the *Schill-Partei* or more recently the Pirate Party, which gained seats in several sub-national elections between 2011 and 2012. But this in no way guarantees their success on the national level. In fact, every party needs 16 tickets on the sub-national level to pass the election threshold, whereas small parties often operate only in some German states. Many populist parties hardly manage to arrange party tickets or electoral campaigns in all states.

Organisational Weakness[53]

Not only do the institutional settings impose limits on populist parties' attempts to gain seats in the Bundestag. In addition, right-wing populist parties in Germany traditionally suffer from their organisational weakness. As stated above, many populist parties emerge and succeed at the sub-national level first. Their organisational structure is therefore focused on one Bundesland. Moreover, parties in Germany are restricted

by party law (*Parteiengesetz*), which requires, among others, a democratic structure and a minimum number of members. For example, an organisation like the Dutch *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV), whose only member is their leader Geert Wilders himself, would not be permissible in the Federal Republic. In addition, the political right in Germany is fragmented and fraught with quarrelling. It is characterised by rivalries between different parties and groups as well as the ongoing division over the question of how to distance the radical from the moderate segments of the right spectrum. As a result, the so-called *Bürgerbewegung pro Deutschland*'s attempt to embrace middle-class voters is viewed with suspicion by more radical actors. *Pro Deutschland*, on the other hand, denies any official connection to the neo-Nazi *Freie Kameradschaften*, although the party itself originates from an extremist movement in the Rhineland.[54] Another consequence is that, with regard to Islam, the Pro-movement and the NPD compete for dominance on the same topic.[55]

Generally, right-wing populist parties benefit from their leaders. Not only are their internal structures and processes often predominantly to even totally focused on these actors, as in the PVV's case, since the charismatic leader guarantees the party's media appearance and is more attractive to the electorate than the party itself, the leader is able to distract from internal conflicts and structural weaknesses.[56] Once the leader disappears, as a rule, centrifugal forces come into effect and in many cases the party ends up collapsing, such as the *Schill-Partei* in Germany or the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* in the Netherlands. Older parties which possess established organisational structures and elite recruitment, like the FPÖ in Austria or the *Front National* in France, manage to adapt to the loss of their leader and to find a replacement (as with Marine Le Pen for her father Jean-Marie Le Pen in the case of the *Front National* or Heinz-Christian Strache after Jörg Haider for the FPÖ).

Political Culture and Media Discourse[57]

Due to Germany's history of the 'Third Reich', all new parties on the political right are automatically stigmatised as heirs of National Socialism.[58] This has consequences for their media image and coverage. In contrast to right-wing parties in a number of countries, leaders of the NPD, for example, are not treated as 'normal' politicians. When the NPD gained 9.2 per cent of the Saxon vote in 2004 and their leader was about to be interviewed on TV, all other parties' politicians left the studio.[59] Right-wing populists, on the other hand, respond to these stigmata by provocation through using offensive language that originates from or alludes to National Socialism, such as '*Judenrepublik*'[60] or '*Bombenholocaust*'.[61] Right-wing populists in Germany must face the problem of referring to an ideology which has brought death and horror to millions of Europeans. Moreover, the ongoing scandal of the exposure of a right-wing terror-group which called itself 'National Socialist Underground' (NSU) that killed nine businessmen with a migration background and a policewoman between 2000 and 2006 has led to a growing interest in the activities of right-wing extremists since 2011. The public's and the media's awareness increased all the more so once right-wing activists and members of conservative student fraternities started to get accused of having helped the terrorists.[62]

We have already addressed the fact that there still is a significant reservoir of racism and anti-Semitism in Germany. However, opinion leaders, the media and a

strong anti-racist movement are fighting to uphold the taboo against the representation of right-wing politics inside the parliament. Accordingly, what might promote the success of right-wing parties in other countries prevents them from being treated as political equals in Germany's political discourse. Despite these restrictions, Germany faced a near-success of a new challenger on the political right. In the general election in September 2013, the AfD gained 4.7 per cent of the vote. In other words, this new party that had been founded only in February 2013, one half-year prior to the election, was almost as popular among the electorate as the FDP, who lost over 9 percentage points compared to the 2009 election. We will show in the following that this is the reason why the AfD – as a functional equivalent for a right-wing-populist party in Germany – follows a different and more nuanced communication strategy than other European parties of the right.

A FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENT? A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMMATIC SELF-DESCRIPTION AND DISCURSIVE POSITION OF THE AFD

In consideration of the newness of the party *Alternative für Deutschland* the following presents the party's programmatic objectives and its self-description in campaigns and media appearances.

Qualitative Content Analysis of Party-Related Data

Methodologically, we will hereby refer to a party-sociological reading of qualitative content analysis.[63] Hence, the objective of this section lies not in the production of representative results but in a deeper interpretation of the new party's performances and communication. We chose this access since qualitative content analysis is a method that allows for both an interpretative approach and the combination with quantitative research methods since it strives for the reproducibility of the analysis.[64] Even more, it allows for the analysis of different media forms:

> Content analysis analyses not only the manifest content of the material – as its name may suggest. Becker and Lissmann (1973) have differentiated two levels of content: themes and main ideas of the text as primary content; context information as latent content. The analysis of formal aspects of the material belongs to its aims as well.[65]

Content analysis is also especially convenient for analysing large amounts of data.[66] Here, we gathered data from German newspapers and social media, especially Facebook, over six months.[67] We have also analysed posters from the 2013 general election campaign and observed the AfD's official website. The motivation of this research of web material originates from the fact that for the AfD as a new party whose representation in the mass media is less pronounced than for an established party, web campaigning plays a crucial role for the party's self-description. We searched the data pool of party officials' statements, campaign material and web communication with a structuring content analysis[68] that focuses on unique and meaningful party-communications, communications that make a difference between the party and its competitors. Those statements had to be redundant and repeated many times in order to be included.[69] The idea of this form of qualitative content analysis of party

communications is to ask for the unique programmatic, ideological and media features of a political party or movement:

> The main idea of the procedure is, to formulate a criterion of definition, derived from theoretical background and research question, which determines the aspects of the textual material taken into account. Following this criterion the material is worked through and categories are tentative and step by step deduced. Within a feedback loop those categories are revised, eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability.[70]

We have selected several unique discursive patterns that seemed to have a dominant position in the programmatic self-description of the party which we shall present in the following.

Party Manifesto for the Federal German Elections 2013

The AfD's party platform for the 2013 general election is rather short and is not the outcome of a broad discussion process. Founded on 6 February 2013, the party was under time pressure. The policy content of the programme is divided into the following parts: monetary policy; European policy; law and order and democracy; financial policy and taxes; education; energy policy; and integration policy (in this order). In the area of monetary policy, the party demands a debt cut for over-indebted states like Greece, an 'orderly dissolution of the Eurozone', the re-establishment of national sovereignty through the cancellation of European treaties and the charging of banks and hedge funds. In the section 'law and order', the party opts for the introduction of plebiscitary procedures, modelled on the Swiss example and the reflection and change of the role of parties ('Parties should be instrumental in the political system but not dominate it.'). Members of Parliament should not take secondary employment for their time in office; furthermore 'unconventional opinions' should be 'discussed openly in the public discourse, as long as these opinions do not contravene the constitution'.[71] This statement is open both for right-wing conservative activism as well as anarchic-liberal positions. Further contents are, for example, debt reduction and an 'Immigration Act modelled on the Canadian example' instead of an 'unsystematic immigration into our welfare systems'. 'It is part of a humane treatment that people who are entitled to be granted asylum are allowed to work here', says the party in its programme and therefore separates itself from European right-wing populism.

European Politics and Critique of Europe as a Programmatic Gateway

The European financial crisis was a shock for the liberals in politics and science throughout Europe. To ordoliberal ideals and the myth of the self-sufficient nation state, it sent tremors. 'For the conservative–liberal clientele, the politics of the Euro rescue fund is what the Agenda 2010 was for social democracy: a break with pretended programmatic certainties. Whether this policy will have a disastrous impact on the parties of the bourgeois camp comparable to the consequences of the Agenda for the SPD remains to be seen',[72] as Richard Gebhardt analysed with regard to the ascent of the AfD. The concussion of conservative–liberal certainties, the phrase 'There is no alternative' in Angela Merkel's policy of financial bailouts which remained almost uncontested in the CDU and the FDP led to a further alienation of

parts of the middle-class parties on the ground from their parties in central office. The Alternativlosigkeit (lit. 'alternative-less-ness') of pro-European politics is now used as the gateway for resistance: 'The AfD is an indicator for the disorientation and the lack of representation of those middle-class and academic environments that define themselves through their status as "achievers".'[73]

Apart from the question of whether there are really no alternative European politics in the established parties of the Federal Republic, the AfD profits from the fact that there is obviously no major distance between the position of the SPD, the CDU/CSU, the Greens and the FDP in European politics. This could be related to the fact that, given the marginal ability of mobilisation of the Euro-topic, only strongly contrasting policy positions get the attention of the electorate. Therefore, it seems that there is a demand for opposing positions. At the same time, the potential of mobilisation of the Euro issue in Germany is currently so small that even the AfD is threatened by thematic exclusion.

A glance at the party's website (12 January 2014) reveals several interesting points that add to the image of the new party. First, the AfD maintains a scientific advisory board which consists of five economists. This homogeneity is noteworthy since it accentuates the economic focus.

Furthermore, before the party conference on the European election, candidates could register and present themselves online. Speeches and 'important questions' (including answers) complement the presentation of the short party platform. Interestingly, the AfD does not rely on presenting itself as a conventional protest party. Moreover, letters addressed to different voting blocs (the SPD, the CDU, the Pirate Party, protest voters and non-voters) and groups within the party, such as a letter from Alexander Gauland to 'conservative fellow party members' are displayed on the website. The content of the website illustrates that the AfD seeks to address different environments and groups of the electorate. As the party speaker puts it, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very serious about this: all voters are welcome to us, no matter if they voted left or right before.'[74] Here, the AfD describes itself as a 'catch-all-protest-party' with links to almost every ideology on the election market.

Populist Communication and Party Critique

Also available on the party's website and prominently distributed via diverse channels of social media in our inquiry period are the speeches of the party speaker Bernd Lucke. Lucke's speeches in Güstrow (21 July 2013) and Weinheim (22 July 2013) can be observed as examples of populist party critique. This critique is compatible with a long-existing mainstream discourse of '*Politikverdrossenheit*' (political apathy) and a critique of parliamentarism in Germany.[75] In the Güstrow-speech Lucke paints a picture of ignorant established parties that ignore the real problems of the country. Moreover, they are keen to spread favours and jobs among their members. Furthermore, Lucke argues that there is need for an alternative as the 'big questions' of the society are not being addressed by the political class.[76] These semantics and arguments refer to a discourse of party crisis in the German public that is of course not entirely new, but rather extends back as far as the late founding of the first political parties before the failed 1848 revolution.[77] They refer to a specific German tradition of general party critique whose historical genesis lies in the failed

revolution of the nineteenth century, political apathy and the contempt of political parties.[78] In the following passage of a keynote address Lucke gave in Weinheim during a party conference we can observe just how the AfD presents itself as an alternative to a rotten system in which the code of government and opposition as the established standard of parliamentarian democracy[79] does not work anymore.

> None [of the other parties] has the courage to name the reasons. Let's see what they have to say about the Euro crisis. Let us first have a look at the opposition: their essential task is to formulate alternative proposals to the politics of the government. Far from it, ladies and gentlemen! The federal government has failed as a government, but the opposition has failed as an opposition more than an opposition could possibly fail. The SPD and the Greens obediently support what Ms Merkel orders. [. . .] It does not occur to them that it is unfair when the Greek people suffer for what the Greek government and the banks botched. Ladies and gentlemen, when things go on like this, then there is something rotten about the opposition, not to say, the opposition is rotten![80]

This passage of the speech also shows that the AfD does not directly portray countries like Greece as the opponent. The party constructs a dichotomy between the elites (German/Greek politicians) and the (Greek) people, the latter suffering through the deeds of the first. They avoid playing one people off against the other by arguing that there is an antagonism between 'the government' and 'the people'. By using this figure, the party spokesman dissociates himself from the classical ethnic dichotomy of right-wing populism.

It would not be appropriate to imagine the AfD as a monolithic bloc. Within the organisation exist antagonistic ideological positions and contradictory cultural traditions. Considering the membership structure of the party, this is not surprising: The AfD indeed consists of former Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, national leftists, conservatives and liberals. In this case, the struggles of the young AfD[81] seem to mirror the fate of many 'classical' populist parties that, without a strong leadership, often implode within a short period of time.

In a letter to his 'dearest conservative fellow members', dated 29 December 2013, Alexander Gauland addresses the cultural differences that have now become visible within the party. He appeals for tolerance and for considering these different positions. Gauland emphasises the common ground of fighting against feminism, alternative family politics and liberal values:

> It is true that within the AfD, people found each other whose different ideas of good and right, of an intact society are not represented in public opinion. People who are convinced that a family consists of father, mother and child and that they, not the preschool, are responsible for the child's education. People who do not automatically see immigration, especially into our welfare system, as a benefit and who find the colourfulness of some lifestyles too colourful for a country that is lacking children. [. . .] Finally, especially among elders, there are many who believe that the whole gender mainstreaming (whatever that is) is a big folly and that [politically] correct fairy tales, a feminist Bible or female written forms are the products of people who don't have anything else

to worry about. It is mostly the elders among us who are relieved by the words of an Australian professor who claims that Germany is no more responsible for World War I than the others.[82]

Gauland, a conservative member of his party, addresses fights within the organisation that in his opinion have led to negative media coverage. What is supposed to be a disadvantage is turned into a virtue: it meets the party's performative self-placement 'beyond' the left and the right, a party everyone may join.

The Struggle against 'Re-Education': Multiculturalism and Gender-Mainstreaming

While the ideal of a 'catch-all-protest-party' is displayed in many party communications and the openness to everyone is emphasised, we can find other campaign materials that are contradictory to this presented image. As described, one crucial part of the party's communication concentrates on the economic critique of European politics. The EU position is one of critique and anti-establishment rhetoric but at the same time still refers to mainstream economic positions that do not fully coincide with either leftist or right-wing politics. In addition to issues of European politics, we find party communications that are phrased in the vocabulary of right-wing-politics, such as the denial of multiculturalism, the condemnation of non-heteronormative lifestyles such as same-sex unions or 'political correctness'. Beforehand, we have defined the differentiation of friend and foe and the self-concept of being spokesmen of 'the people' as a sign of a populist agenda. We shall now consult several campaign posters to illustrate the anti-establishment strategy of the AfD.

Although at first glance, both posters broach different issues, they refer to one and the same dichotomy which we have observed in other data before: the AfD portrays itself as the only bearer of 'truth' and (common) sense whereas 'others' are implicitly addressed as a threat to common sense. Therefore '*Mut zur Wahrheit*' ('Courage for Truth') and '*Gender-Wahn stoppen*' ('Stop Gender Madness') are expression of one and the same pattern. In contrast to other campaign media and party statements (see above), those who are depicted as a threat to 'truth' – the established parties, the public opinion, the leftish elites who promote gender diversity – are not even mentioned here explicitly. Their presence is semantically embedded within the words used: in the first poster, they are excluded by the reference to 'truth'; in the second – vice versa – they are addressed as the driving power behind 'gender madness'.

In the two posters shown in Figure 2 – both taken from AfD Facebook accounts – we can see references to nationalist and conservative positions. While the first poster criticises the extinction of 'the' German family, the second demands classical education instead of 'multicultural re-education'. Both posters show an interesting amalgamation of topics which we find characteristic for the AfD's social media communication. The first poster combines economic expertise and the critique of family politics in Germany with the folkish idea of the German as a threatened species. Whereas in the second poster the matter of classical education is interwoven with the matter of a nation that is threatened by multiculturalism. All posters use populist communication strategies. Poster 1 refers to the critique of the established parties by claiming 'the truth'. Poster 2 addresses the threat of gender-delusion, a theme that is broadly discussed in both nationalist contexts and the Christian right. The third and

FIGURE 2
AFD CAMPAIGN POSTERS (ONLINE AND OFFLINE) IN THE 2013 GENERAL ELECTION
CAMPAIGN 'COURAGE FOR TRUTH' AND 'STOP GENDER MADNESS'

Official Campaign poster of the AfD   Online poster (posted by AfD-members in social
                                                                networks)

fourth posters (Figure 3) link the survival of the German nation to failing economic
programmes (poster 3) and failing multicultural ideals (poster 4). Coinciding with
Decker's delineation of basic populist attributes, poster 2, 3 and 4 can be characterised
as examples for populist communication since they tend to create an atmosphere of fear
and threat,[83] for example by referring to societal changes as 'insane' or as in posters 3
and 4, to the threat of re-education and the loss of the German Family.

FIGURE 3
FACEBOOK POSTERS OF THE AFD

AfD Magdeburg[a]   AfD, 10 April 2013[b]

[a]Translation: '200 billion Euros. All the same, the German family is dying out.'
[b]Translation: 'Until the founding party conference: classical education over multicultural re-education.'

In contrast to the mainstream of European right-wing populist parties and to the posters shown here, the AfD party platform does not refer to migration in a strictly negative way. The AfD platform promotes migration of those people who are fit for work but opposes 'migration into our welfare systems'. By addressing the 'gender trouble' (Judith Butler)[84] of modern societies and the loss of the traditional (German) family as a major problem, the AfD refers to a Christian-conservative, anti-equality discourse that we find not only in Germany but also in France (*manif de tous*) or in eastern European countries.[85]

So how may we interpret the variety of differing self-descriptions we find in our data? In its public appearance, the AfD on the one hand avoids any impression of blatant racism. Nevertheless, by emphasising the ideal of the heterosexual German family that is threatened both by 'multiculturalist re-education' and 'pro-homo gender-re-education', they are on the other hand compatible with racist and heteronormative anti-homo morals. In addition, the repeated use of the term 're-education' – a term reminiscent of the re-education of Nazi Germany by the Allies' education programmes – as something negative and unnatural (un-German) clearly emphasises the populist recourse on the 'innocence' and the 'nativity' of 'the people' that must be protected from hostile foreign influences.[86]

While right-wing extremist parties define these hostile forces by their descent and genetics and therefore directly link to the arguments of historical National Socialism, the AfD, similar to other more moderate right-wing populists throughout Europe, refers to the supposed incompatibility of different cultures. This difference in emphasis does not object to the finding that the AfD is highly compatible with right-wing-voters' attitudes. That may explain the positive feedback in neo-conservative and right-wing journals and groups such as *Junge Freiheit*, *Compact* or *Politically Incorrect*. Moreover, the AfD builds a link to a discourse of threatened national identity and '*Überfremdung*' (lit. 'over-alienation', likewise with multiple connotations) that has broken into the mainstream of the German society, as we have shown above.

In the following, we shall elaborate on the party's different communication strategies and the links they generate in a diversified political public. We argue that particularly in its ambiguity, the AfD represents a challenge to the European policy of the established parties.

THE AFD SYMPATHISERS: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BUNDESWAHLKOMPASS VOTING ADVICE APPLICATION DATASET

In the 2013 general election in Germany, the AfD gained 4.7 per cent of the vote. The FDP, which failed to enter the parliament, won only 0.1 percentage points more. This outcome was more than most observers would have imagined possible. Before the European election, polls predicted an outcome of 3 to more than 7 per cent for the AfD. Obviously, the new party embraces a relevant segment of the electorate. With this in mind, two questions arise: (1) Who are the AfD sympathisers in terms of their party affiliation and their socio-economic background? (2) Which issue positions do these sympathisers take and where can they be placed in the political spectrum of the Federal Republic?[87] These questions are especially crucial when we consider the 'fluid' state of the party in terms of ideology and membership.

On the basis of the dataset from the *Bundeswahlkompass* 2013, this section provides a closer look at the group of the AfD sympathisers with a quantitative approach. The *Bundeswahlkompass* was a Voting Advice Application (VAA) that aimed to give users a better understanding of their own position in the political landscape and compared it with party positions. With the aid of 30 issues which were taken from major topics like the economy, the welfare state, ethical values or immigration, voters could place themselves through a five point Likert scale from 'totally agree' to 'totally disagree'. In addition to the issue section, some extra questions aimed at gathering background information, especially in the socio-economic field. Apart from that, the survey inquired about voting behaviour in previous elections and asked for the individual voting probability for each party. Based on this categorisation, we could identify the groups of party sympathisers and link them to the background information.

This study thus focuses on the AfD sympathisers. Here, we define a 'sympathiser' as a person who ranked the possibility of voting for the AfD with 8, 9 or 10 and therefore had shown a high party preference in that direction. For all issues, we have a sample of N = 5932. For comparison matters, we construct a group of non-sympathisers which is defined by persons who ranked the voting possibility for the AfD between 1 and 3 (N = 44,590). Of course the ranking does not imply that a sympathiser has voted for the AfD in the election. It shall function here as an indicator for a high amount of agreement or compatibility of the electorate with the campaign and the party.

Background Questions – Who Prefers the AfD?

As described, the *Bundeswahlkompass* provided numerous additional questions which were not part of the tool itself and could be filled in voluntarily. The additional questions focused on socio-economic background facts as well as preferences in previous elections.

Most of the AfD sympathisers in the sample are male (80 per cent). The group with the largest impact is those aged 25 to 35 years old, closely followed by those between 45 and 54 years. Geographically, the Länder of North Rhine-Westphalia (23 per cent), Baden-Württemberg (13 per cent), Berlin and Bavaria (12 per cent) are highly represented within this group. With 77 per cent, the political interest is notably high in this group. This might not be surprising as a VAA tool is frequented mostly by persons who are interested in politics. Furthermore, it confirms the finding that nearly half of the AfD sympathisers hold a university degree. In contrast, only 5 per cent have a certificate of secondary education or no degree at all. Keeping this in mind, it is not surprising that the bigger part of sympathisers (47 per cent) has a monthly net income between 2500 and 5000 Euros. For the most part, AfD sympathisers voted for the CDU and the CSU in the previous general election (30 per cent), followed by the FDP (26 per cent). Fifteen per cent voted for the Social Democrats.

So far, we have sketched the socio-economic background of the AfD sympathisers. But what are their political positions? We have confronted all users with several questions concerning political issues and values. The first statement we shall examine here refers to the acceptance of authoritarian structures. The proposal in the *Bundeswahlkompass* was as follows: 'Germany needs a strong leader that can quickly decide on everything.'[88] Forty-five per cent of the AfD sympathisers agreed completely or tended to agree, so that one can assume a notable desire for authoritarian politics.

FIGURE 4
SELF-PLACEMENT IN THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE
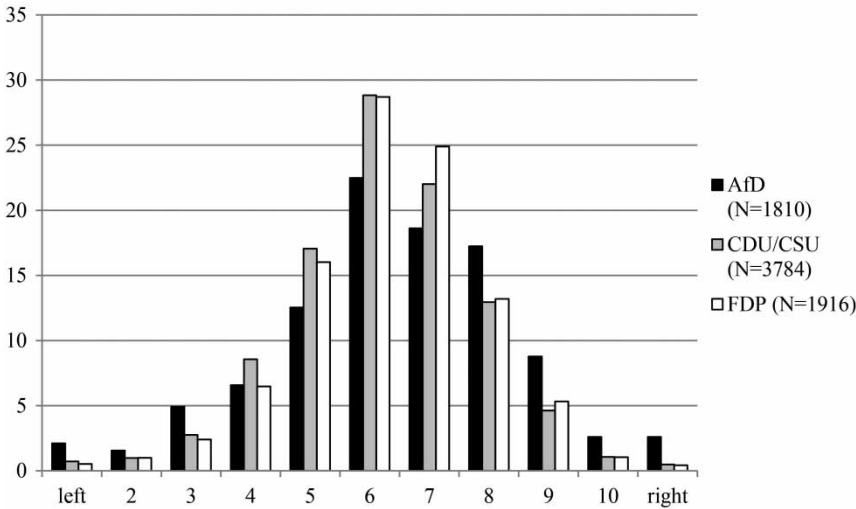
Note: N refers to the group which ranked the probability of voting for a particular party between 8 and 10.

Likewise, they tend to be displeased with democracy in Germany. Forty-seven per cent characterised themselves as 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'. Another quarter was only 'partly satisfied'. In comparison, the CDU/CSU and the FDP sympathisers are more content with the status quo of democracy: in both cases, 70 per cent opt for 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'.

Being asked for a self-placement in the political spectrum, AfD sympathisers most interestingly turn out as exponents of the political centre. To some extent, they mirror the distribution in the groups of CDU/CSU and FDP sympathisers, although they spread further in the political landscape. This supports the idea that the AfD might be an alternative for those who describe themselves as moderate but are disappointed by the current state of politics.

Distribution among Major Issues

The *Bundeswahlkompass* provided 30 issues that gave the user the possibility to compare their personal opinion with party statements. We shall here focus on those areas that link to the party's thematic profile, namely the EU and the common currency, immigration and social policy.

Front-runner Bernd Lucke considered the Euro as a fundamental mistake and portrayed it as the main reason why Germany got roped into the financial crisis. The proposal 'Germany should abolish the Euro and relaunch the *D-Mark*' relates to that negative attitude towards the Euro and shows a gap between the groups of party sympathisers (Figure 5). Forty-six per cent of the AfD sympathisers are in favour of a German exit. Among those who do not sympathise with the AfD, only 4 per cent

FIGURE 5
'GERMANY SHOULD ABOLISH THE EURO AND RELAUNCH THE *D-MARK*'[a]
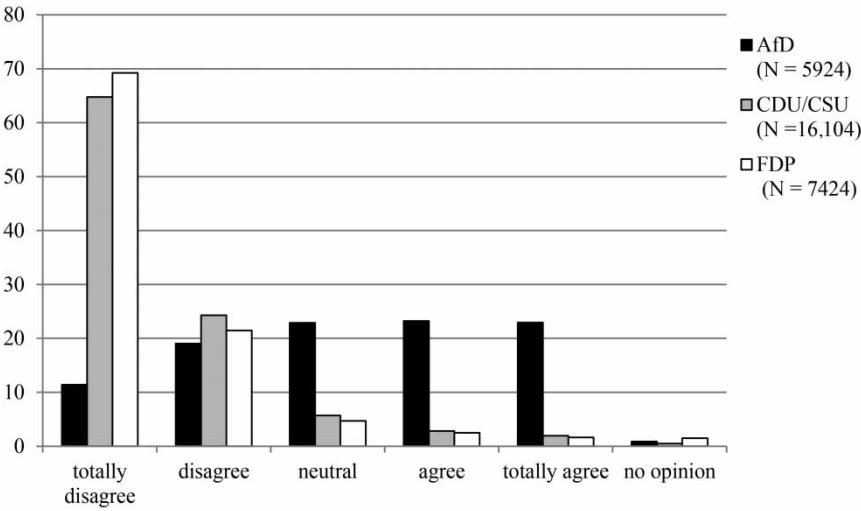
Note: N refers to the group which ranked the probability of voting for a particular party between 8 and 10.
[a]Original statement: 'Deutschland soll den Euro abschaffen und die D-Mark wieder einführen.'

show the same level of agreement. Sympathisers of the CDU/CSU as well as those of the FDP are also sceptical: less than 5 per cent of both groups tend to agree.

Not only does the AfD reject the Euro. They criticise the EU itself for being centralistic and elitist. Instead of forcing Europeanisation in ever more areas, they opt for the re-nationalisation of decision structures. The issue 'Germany should withdraw from the European Union' represents the most radical outcome of this policy and works as a trigger for Eurosceptics among the electorate (Figure 6).

The findings here almost mirror the distribution for the Euro statement. Whereas by far the most CDU/CSU and FDP sympathisers (totally) disagree with the statement, about half of the AfD group disagrees or totally disagrees with opting out of the EU. On the other hand, whereas not even a total of 5 per cent of CDU/CSU and FDP sympathisers is in favour of leaving the EU, a third of the AfD sympathisers agrees or totally agrees. But although this group is remarkably bigger than among the other party supporters, AfD supporters are obviously not as anti-European as one could have expected concerning the public image of the party.

Nevertheless, the refusal of financial aid programmes for indebted states is remarkably strong. The statement 'In order to secure the Euro, it is reasonable that Germany supports financially weaker countries' provokes a strong negative answer. A total of 78 per cent in this group disagrees or strongly disagrees, which is true for less than a fourth of CDU/CSU and FDP supporters. One could conclude here that those who favour the *Alternative für Deutschland* are not constantly against the EU as an institution but against mechanisms of financial solidarity between the European states.

However, the relatively high support for anti-Euro statements and the moderate support for anti-EU statements illustrate a great deal of correspondence between the

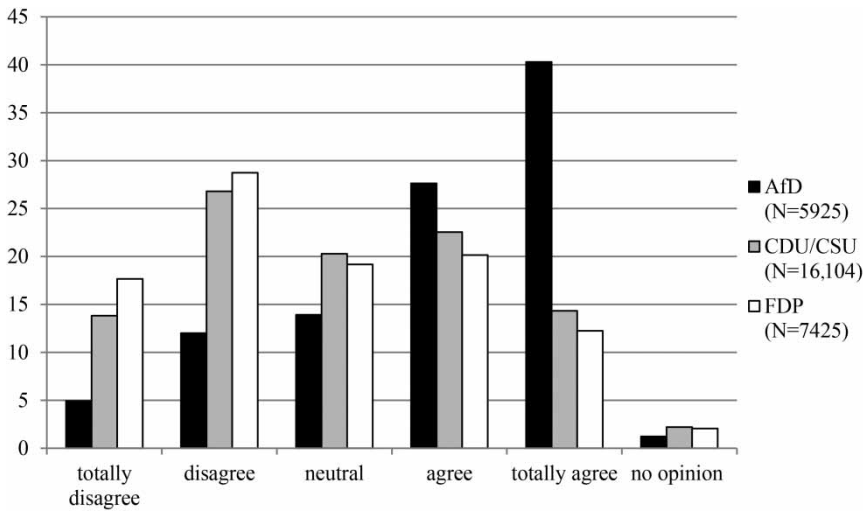FIGURE 6
'GERMANY SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION'[a]
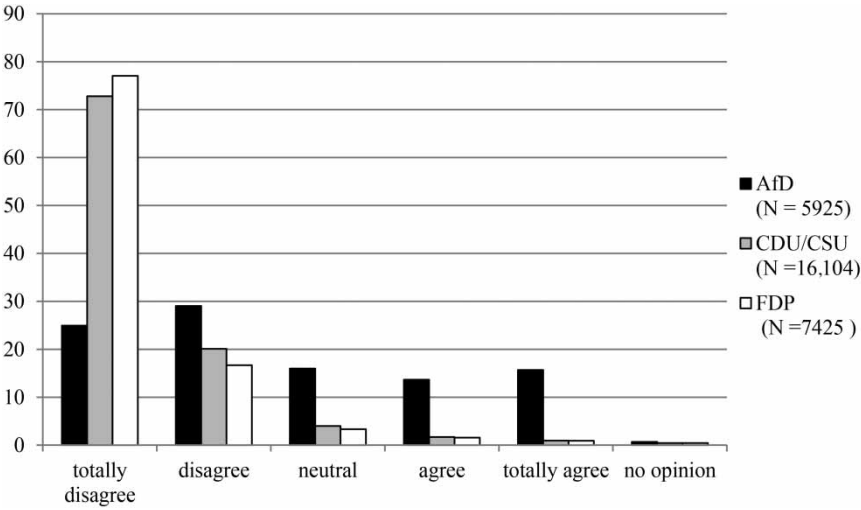
Note: N refers to the group which ranked the probability of voting for a particular party between 8 and 10.
[a]Original statement: 'Deutschland sollte aus der EU austreten.'

party and its supporters. Considerations on the positions of the AfD in social policies like integration, gender equality or family values have additionally revealed linkages to right-wing populism. It is hence useful to take a look at the levels of agreement in these topics. Indeed, AfD sympathisers tend to embrace much more authoritarian views than those who do not lean towards this party. The statement 'Immigration to Germany should be more restricted, even for qualified employees' met an agreement/total agreement level of 60 per cent among AfD supporters, whereas those who stated a sympathy level of 3 or less agreed or totally agreed by 19 per cent. Only 6 per cent of the AfD sympathisers totally disagreed with this statement. This tendency is mirrored by the results of the statement 'It should be easier for asylum seekers to be granted the right of abode'. Nearly three-fourths of the AfD sympathisers disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas non-supporters (totally) disagreed by 28 per cent. Keeping in mind that Islam is a highly relevant topic in the populist right discourse in Europe, it is all the more remarkable that a total of 68 per cent of the AfD sympathisers agreed with the statement that 'Islam is not compatible with the values of the Federal Republic of Germany', whereof 40 per cent even totally agreed (Figure 7). Particularly striking here is the disparity of more than 25 per cent in comparison with CDU/CSU supporters within the highest level of agreement.

Another social policy issue refers to the rights of homosexuals: 'The right to adoption should only be granted to heterosexual couples' (Figure 8). While FDP supporters show the most liberal attitude in this case and the levels of agreement are similar in all three groups and the CDU/CSU group agrees/disagrees by a total of 45 per cent, the agreement/total agreement rate is highest in the AfD group. In total, more than half of the AfD sympathisers are in favour of limiting adoption rights to heterosexual couples, with more than 33 per cent of total agreement.

FIGURE 7
'ISLAM IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE VALUES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC' [a]

Note: N refers to the group which ranked the probability of voting for a particular party between 8 and 10.
[a]Original statement: 'Der Islam ist nicht vereinbar mit der Werteordnung der Bundesrepublik.'

FIGURE 8
'THE RIGHT TO ADOPTION SHOULD ONLY BE GRANTED TO HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES' [a]
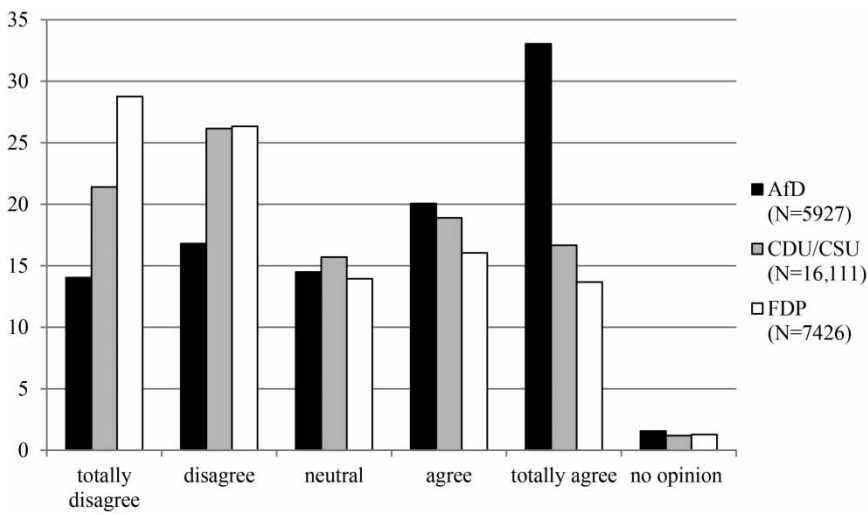
Note: N refers to the group which ranked the probability of voting for a particular party between 8 and 10.
[a]Original statement: 'Das Adoptionsrecht soll heterosexuellen Paaren vorbehalten sein.'

In a nutshell, it becomes clear that AfD sympathisers lean more towards identity-based policies. Although they place themselves firmly in the political centre, they are the most conservative group in immigration and social policies. At this point, the AfD appears as an alternative for voters of almost all political parties who are demanding a clear anti-establishment position in the form of scepticism against the political class and their promotion of Europeanisation. As the level of refusal against the EU is lower than expected, one can assume that support for the AfD derives not only from the Euro question but, at the same time, from the cultural dichotomy that characterises those addressed by the populist agenda.

CONCLUSION

With this article we wanted to discuss the programmatic position of the AfD, its self-description and the social and ideological position of its potential voters. We have looked into the case with different datasets and methodological approaches to draw a diverse and broad image of the young party in its founding phase. We found that the AfD is neither 'just another right-wing populist party' nor an ordoliberal bourgeois party free from populist and nationalist ideas. Up to now, we would rather like to describe the AfD as a 'projection screen' for different concerns and purposes and as a functional equivalent for right-wing parties in a country where open right-wing extremism and right-wing populism is tabooed. The *Alternative für Deutschland* rather generates linkages and potentials for mobilisation from different sources. The parties' potential voters fit in this image: on the one hand they describe themselves as part of the political centre, on the other hand they show anti-diversity and anti-immigrant attitudes.

Does the AfD represent a new right-wing populist movement in Germany? The programmatic core of the AfD is neither clearly racist nor do its anti-Euro positions necessarily lead to a right-wing-populist appeal. If we only take the rudimentary programme of the founding phase into account, it places the party firmly in the conservative–liberal area of the political spectrum. However, in attacking the political elite and the established parties and holding them liable for the financial crisis in Europe, the AfD clearly embraces populist patterns of political communication which cannot be separated from references to the vocabulary of the right beyond conservatism. By using an anti-elite appeal, the party targets right-wing audiences as this appeal is embedded into a discourse which embraces, to some extent, the habitus, the *topoi* and the semantics of the political right. The political establishment is not only held liable for the Euro crisis but for the decline of traditional social values. By strengthening 'family' against 'gender madness'; by warning of 'multicultural re-education', the AfD adopts images and language from the spectrum beyond conservatism, specifically by the Christian right and nationalist groups.

The AfD is not monolithic but under constant stress and tensions as several wings and groups are struggling within the organisation. Since the sympathisers of the AfD match with the party's positions and media self-staging by placing themselves in the political centre but clearly adopting positions that are located in the right part of the spectrum, we may argue that the AfD is not a right-wing populist party in itself but may be a right-wing populist movement in the making. If this should happen, it is

likely that the movement would have to deal with stigmatisation and tabooisation of right-wing politics in contemporary Germany. Up to now the party in its ambiguity with links to both the self-declared 'centre of society' and the far right is a functional equivalent for right-wing populism in Germany.

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NOTES

1. E.g. Martin Schlak, 'Populisten unter sich', *der Freitag online*, 24 Jan. 2014, available from http://www.freitag.de/autoren/martin-schlak/populisten-unter-sich (accessed 21 Jul. 2014); Patrick Gensing, 'Populismus-Vorwurf gegen Anti-Euro-Partei', *tagesschau.de*, 10 Apr. 2013, available from http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/antieuro104.html (accessed 21 Jul. 2014).
2. 'SPD und Grüne werfen AfD Populismus vor', *Handelsblatt online*, 13 Apr. 2013, available from http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/alternative-fuer-deutschland-spd-und-gruene-werfen-afd-populismus-vor/8061482.html.
3. Simon T. Franzmann, 'Die Wahlprogramme der AfD in vergleichender Perspektive', *MIP* 20/1 (2014), p.115.
4. Hans-Olaf Henkel, 'Eine neue Heimat für die Liberalen', *Handelsblatt online*, 19 Dec. 2012, available from www.handelsblatt.com/meinung/kolumnen/kurz-und-schmerzhaft/henkel-trocken-eine-neue-heimat-fuer-die-liberalen-seite-all/5974142-all.html; Bernd Lucke, 'Euro-Retter auf der falschen Spur', *FAZ.net*, 11 Jun. 2011, available from www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/eurokrise/wirtschaftsordnung-euro-retter-auf-der-falschen-spur-1494362.html.
5. Alexander Häusler, Die 'Alternative für Deutschland' – eine neue rechtspopulistische Partei? Materialen und Deutungen zur vertiefenden Auseinandersetzung (Düsseldorf: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2013), p.38.
6. Ibid., p.39.
7. Marcel Lewandowsky, 'Rechtspopulismus als Herausforderung für die Demokratie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', in Tobias Moerschel and Christian Krell (eds), *Demokratie in Deutschland: Zustand – Herausforderungen – Perspektiven* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012), pp.400–2.
8. Günther Lachmann, 'Grabenkämpfe schwächen die Anti-Euro-Partei', *Welt Online*, 17 May 2013, available from www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article116310199/Grabenkaempfe-schwaechen-die-Anti-Euro-Partei.html.
9. Häusler, Die 'Alternative für Deutschland', p.46.

10. Patrick Gensing, 'Der lautstarke Aufstieg der AfD – Wahlkampf der Anti-Euro Partei', *Tagesschau online*, 12 Sep. 2013, available from http://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/afd130.html (accessed 21 July 2014).
11. Marcel Lewandowsky, 'Populismus in sozialen Netzwerken: Das Beispiel AfD und pro Deutschland', *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie* 84 (forthcoming).
12. Häusler, Die 'Alternative für Deutschland', p.9.
13. To heighten the readability of this text we decided to present our thoughts on methodology in both the section about the qualitative and the quantitative study right next to their results.
14. The *Bundeswahlkompass* was designed by political scientists at the University of Amsterdam, the University of Bamberg and the University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg. It was promoted by the Dutch company *Kieskompas*, which holds the rights to the dataset.
15. Alexander Häusler, Mut zur Wahrheit? Entstehungskontext, Entwicklung und gesellschaftspolitische Positionen der 'Alternative für Deutschland' (Düsseldorf: Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, 2014), pp.10–15; Häusler, Die 'Alternative für Deutschland', pp.92–3; Franzmann, 'Die Wahlprogrammatik der AfD', pp.116, 123.
16. Franzmann, 'Die Wahlprogrammatik der AfD', p.123.
17. See, for example, http://www.alternativefuer.de/europawahl/wahlkampf-archiv/tour-mobile/.
18. Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.11–12.
19. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 'Populism and (Liberal) Democracy: A Framework for Analysis', in Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (eds), *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.8.
20. Paul Taggart, *Populism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000).
21. Frank Decker, 'Die populistische Herausforderung: Theoretische und ländervergleichende Perspektiven', in Frank Decker (ed.), *Populismus: Gefahr für die Demokratie oder nützliches Korrektiv?* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2006), pp.9–10.
22. Margaret Canovan, 'Populism for Political Theorists?', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9/3 (2004), p.247.
23. Margaret Canovan, 'Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy', in Yves Mény and Yves Surel (eds), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p.34.
24. Cas Mudde, 'The Populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition* 39/4 (2004), p.543.
25. Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (London: Junction Books, 1981), p.294. For a comparison see Matthijs Rooduijn, 'The Nucleus of Populism: In Search of the Lowest Common Denomina', *Government and Opposition* (2013), online first, doi:10.1017/gov.2013.30, p.18.
26. Canovan, 'Taking Politics to the People', p.26; Daniele Albertazzi and Sean Mueller, 'Populism and Liberal Democracy: Populists in Government in Austria, Italy, Poland and Switzerland', *Government and Opposition* 48/3 (2013), p.345.
27. Darin David Barney and David Laycock, 'Right-Populists and Plebiscitarian Politics in Canada', *Party Politics* 5/3 (1999), p.321.
28. Robert R. Barr, 'Populists, Outsiders and Anti-Establishment-Politics', *Party Politics* 15/1 (2009), p.31.
29. Mudde and Kaltwasser, 'Populism and (Liberal) Democracy', pp.8–9.
30. Some scholars argue that some parties of the political left tend to adopt the populist appeal to the people and its anti-elitist approach. However, left parties hardly adopt xenophobic positions. See, for example, Florian Hartleb, *Rechts- und Linkspopulismus: Eine Fallstudie anhand von Schill-Partei und PDS* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2004); Luke March and Cas Mudde, 'What's Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left after 1989: Decline and Mutation', *Comparative European Politics* 3/1 (2005), pp.25–8.
31. Frank Decker, *Der neue Rechtspopulismus* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2004), p.29.
32. Ibid., p.31.
33. Nonetheless, this definition might describe a great number of populist parties but at the same time, his approach counts out some crucial representatives of what we can call an all-European populist movement. To some extent, different parties such as the *Front National* in France, the Jobbik in Hungary or the PVV in the Netherlands share a common core, which Mudde's ideological approach expresses insufficiently. For this critique see Frank Decker and Marcel Lewandowsky, 'Die rechtspopulistische Parteienfamilie', in Uwe Jun and Benjamin Höhne (eds), *Parteienfamilien. Identitätsbestimmend oder nur noch Etikett?* (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2012), p.276.
34. Angelos-Stylianos Chryssogelos, 'The Evolution of the "Populist Potential" in European Politics: From New Right Radicalism to Anti-System Populism', *European View* 12/1 (2013), pp.75–83.
35. Lewandowsky, 'Rechtspopulismus', p.392.
36. Albertazzi and Mueller, 'Populism and Liberal Democracy', p.344.

37. Frank Decker, 'Germany: Right-Wing Populist Failures and Left-Wing Successes', in Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (eds), *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p.119.

38. For the adoption of the populist strategy by the Left Party compared to other populist parties see Matthijs Rooduijn, Sarah Leah de Lange and Wouter van der Brug, 'A Populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic Contagion by Populist Parties in Western Europe', *Party Politics* 20/4 (2014), pp.541–63.

39. Florian Hartleb, 'Schill-Partei', in Frank Decker and Viola Neu (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Parteien*, 2nd edn (Wiesbaden: Springer VS), p.382.

40. Hartleb, *Rechts- und Linkspopulismus*, p.172. Frank Decker and Marcel Lewandowsky, 'Populismus: Erscheinungsformen, Entstehungshintergründe und Folgen, eines politischen Phänomens', in Olivier Agard, Christian Helmreich and Hélène Vinckel-Roisin (eds), *Das Populäre: Untersuchungen zu Interaktionen und Differenzierungsstrategien in Literatur, Kultur und Sprache* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011), p.341.

41. Oliver Decker, Johannes Kiess and Elmar Brähler, *Die Mitte im Umbruch: Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2012* (Bonn: Dietz, 2012).

42. Marcel Lewandowsky and Jasmin Siri, 'Warnschüsse aus der Mitte', *Berliner Republik* 3 (2011), pp.87–9.

43. Lewandowsky, 'Rechtspopulismus als Herausforderung für die Demokratie', p.406.

44. Ibid., pp.395–6.

45. As a matter of course, there were many critical publications and contributions to the public debate. But different from the expectations of many liberal observers a debate about western, native genes of superior quality and 'foreign' genes of inferior quality was possible in postwar Germany.

46. Thorsten Faas, 'Noch einmal: Über das (erhebliche) Protest-Potential einer (möglichen) Sarrazin-Partei', *Zeit online*, 26 Sep. 2010, available from http://blog.zeit.de/zweitstimme/2010/09/26/wie-gros-ist-das-protest-potenzial-fur-sarrazin-wirklich/. We will return to Sarrazin and his discursive link to the AfD later.

47. Decker *et al.*, *Die Mitte im Umbruch*.

48. Britta Schellenberg, 'Deutschland', in Ralf Melzer and Sebastian Serafin (eds), *Rechtsextremismus in Europa: Länderanalysen, Gegenstrategien und arbeitsmarktorientierte Ausstiegsarbeit* (Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2013), p.73.

49. Tjitske Akkerman, 'Anti-Immigration Parties and the Defence of Liberal Values: The Exceptional Case of the List Pim Fortuyn', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 10/3 (2005), pp.337–54.

50. Chryssogelos, 'The Evolution of the "Populist Potential"', p.80.

51. See also Lewandowsky, 'Rechtspopulismus als Herausforderung für die Demokratie', pp.400–3.

52. Ibid.; Decker, *Der neue Rechtspopulismus*, pp.147–8.

53. Decker, 'Germany', pp.128–9.

54. Alexander Häusler, 'Bürgerbewegung pro Nordrhein-Westfalen (proNRW)', in Frank Decker and Viola Neu, *Handbuch der deutschen Parteien*, p.181.

55. Alexander Häusler, 'Antiislamischer Populismus als rechtes Wahlkampf-Ticket', in Alexander Häusler (ed.), *Rechtspopulismus als 'Bürgerbewegung': Kampagnen gegen Islam und Moscheebau und kommunale Gegenstrategien* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), p.157.

56. Decker, Der neue Rechtspopulismus, p.34.

57. Decker, 'Germany', p.125.

58. Frank Decker and Lazaros Miliopoulos, 'Rechtsextremismus und Rechtspopulismus in der Bundesrepublik: Eine Bestandsaufnahme', in Martin H.W. Möllers and Robert C. van Ooyen (eds), *Politischer Extremismus 1. Formen und aktuelle Entwicklungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft, 2007), pp.182–233.

59. Frank Decker, 'In Hitlers Schatten', *Die Zeit*, 26 Feb. 2005, p.6.

60. Stefan Schölermann, '"Judenrepublik, Krummnase und türkische Samenkanonen": Ermittlungen gegen NPD-Funktionär Pastörs', *Publikative.org*, 4 Mar 2009, available from http://www.publikative.org/2009/03/04/judenrepublik-krummnase-und-turkische-samenkanonen-ermittlungen-gegen-npd-funktionar-pastors/.

61. Reiner Burger, 'NPD sorgt für Eklat: "Bomben-Holocaust"', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Online*, 21 May 2005, available from http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/sachsen-npd-sorgt-fuer-eklat-bomben-holocaust-1207076.html.

62. The discovery and exposure of this national-socialist terror cell was coincident and therefore a shock for the German public and the authorities. The German police, intelligence services and security services have not only failed to solve and stop the murders, but rather have missed and ignored the xenophobic motives behind them. Even more, since nine of the victims had a migration background, the perpetrators of the crimes were searched in a so-called organised criminal immigrant milieu. Despite two different profiler analyses; one of FBI and one of the Police of Bavaria, which pointed out the potential of radical

nationalist motives behind the murders, this possibility was not taken seriously and disregarded. For more information on the case see Imke Schminke and Jasmin Siri, *NSU-Terror: Ermittlungen am rechten Abgrund* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012).

63. The design follows the empirical study on campaigns and party platforms in Jasmin Siri, *Parteien: Zur Soziologie einer politischen Form* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012), pp.152–90.

64. Margrit Schreier, 'Varianten qualitativer Inhaltsanalyse: Ein Wegweiser im Dickicht der Begrifflichkeiten', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum Qualitative Social Research* 15/1 (2014), article 18, para.4.

65. Philipp Mayring, 'Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum Qualitative Social Research* 1/2 (2000), article 20, para.4.

66. Ibid.; Florian Kohlbacher, 'The Use of Qualitative Content Analysis in Case Study Research', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum Qualitative Social Research* 7/1, article 21.

67. Inquiry period of qualitative data (interpreted in this section) 19 Aug. 2013 until 30 Jan. 2014. Inquiry period of the *Bundeswahlkompass* (quantitative data presented in the following section) 19 Aug. 2013 until 23 Sep. 2013.

68. Schreier, 'Varianten qualitativer Inhaltsanalyse', paras 7–16.

69. Siri, *Parteien*, pp.176–90.

70. Mayring 'Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse', para.12.

71. See https://www.alternativefuer.de/partei/wahlprogramm/.

72. Richard Gebhardt, 'Eine "Partei neuen Typs"? Die "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD) vor den Bundestagswahlen', *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 26/3 (2013), p.90. Translation by the authors. Original quote: 'Die Politik der Rettungsschirme ist für die konservativ-liberale Klientel das, was die Agenda 2010 für die Sozialdemokratie war: ein Bruch mit vermeintlichen programmatischen Gewissheiten. Ob diese Politik für die Parteien des bürgerlichen Lagers eine ähnlich katastrophale Langzeitwirkung entfaltet wie die der Agenda für die SPD, bleibt abzuwarten.'

73. Gebhardt, 'Eine Partei "neuen Typs"', p.87. Translation by the authors. Original quote: 'Die AfD ist ein Indiz für die Desorientierung und fehlende politische Repräsentation jener mittelständischen bzw. akademischen Milieus, die sich über ihren Status als "Leistungsträger" definieren.'

74. Translation by the authors. Original quote: 'Meine Damen und Herren, das meine ich sehr ernst: Uns sind alle Wähler willkommen, egal, ob sie vorher links oder rechts gewählt haben.' Available from http://afd-nb.de/wp-afd-nb/2013/09/bernd-lucke-afd-grundsatzrede/.

75. Siri, Parteien, p.31 *et seq*.

76. Taken from Bernd Lucke's speech in Weinheim, 22 Jul. 2013, available from https://www.alternativefuer.de/2013/09/11/bernd-lucke-beim-sommerfest-der-afd-mv/ (accessed 12 Jan. 2014).

77. Siri, *Parteien*, esp. pp.99–147.

78. Louis Bergeron, Francois Furet and Reinhart Koselleck, *Fischer Weltgeschichte, Band 26, Das Zeitalter der europäischen Revolutionen 1780–1848* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1969), esp. p.106 *et seq*.

79. Niklas Luhmann, *Die Politik der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).

80. Translation by the authors. Original quote from Bernd Lucke's speech in Weinheim, 22 Jul. 2013: 'Keine (der anderen Parteien) hat den Mut die Ursachen zu benennen. Schauen wir uns an, was sie zur Eurokrise zu sagen haben: Schauen wir zunächst auf die Opposition: Deren ureigenste Aufgabe ist es doch, Gegenentwürfe zur Regierungspolitik zu formulieren. Aber weit gefehlt, meine Damen und Herren. Die Bundesregierung hat als Regierung versagt, aber die Opposition hat als Opposition versagt, wie eine Opposition schlimmer nicht versagen kann! SPD und Grüne tragen folgsam mit, was Frau Merkel vorgibt. (. . .) Sie kommen gar nicht auf die Idee, dass es ungerecht ist, wenn die griechische Bevölkerung jetzt leidet für das, was die griechische Regierung und die Banken verbockt haben. Meine Damen und Herren, wenn es so zugeht, dann ist etwas faul an der Opposition. Um nicht zu sagen: Die Opposition ist faul!' Available from http://afd-nb.de/wp-afd-nb/2013/09/bernd-lucke-afd-grundsatzrede/.

81. Günther Lachmann, 'Warum die AfD sich plötzlich selbst zerfleischt', *Welt Online*, 23 Oct. 2013, available from http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article121123113/Warum-die-AfD-sich-ploetzlich-selbst-zerfleischt.html (accessed 3 Mar. 2014).

82. Translation by the authors. Original quote: 'Es ist wahr, dass sich in der AfD auch Menschen zusammengefunden haben, deren Vorstellungen von gut und richtig, von einer intakten Gesellschaft kaum noch einen Widerhall in der veröffentlichten Meinung finden. Menschen, für die eine Familie aus Vater Mutter und Kind besteht, und die noch immer selbst erziehen und die Verantwortung dafür nicht an den Kindergarten delegieren wollen. Menschen, die Zuwanderung besonders in unsere Sozialsysteme nicht automatisch als einen Gewinn ansehen und denen die Buntheit mancher Lebensformen für ein Land, in dem die Kinder fehlen, zu bunt erscheint. [. . .] Schließlich gibt es gerade unter den Älteren viele, die das Ganze Gender Mainstreaming (Was ist das überhaupt?) für eine große Narretei halten und korrekte Märchen, eine feministische Bibel oder die weiblichen Schriftformen für die

Ausgeburt von Menschen, die sonst keine Sorgen haben und folglich gern aufs Eis tanzen gehen. Die Älteren unter unseren Mitgliedern sind es meist auch, die erleichtert und erlöst von einem australischen Professor hören, dass Deutschland am Ersten Weltkrieg nicht mehr und nicht weniger schuldig war als die anderen. [. . .].' Available from https://www.alternativefuer.de/2013/12/29/brief-an-konservative-parteifreunde/ (accessed 3 Feb. 2014).

83. Decker, Der neue Rechtspopulismus, p.36.
84. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
85. Mike Szymanski, '"Klassische Bildung statt Multikulti-Umerziehung"', *Sueddeutsche.de*, 17 Apr. 2013, available from http://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/afd-in-bayern-euro-skeptiker-im-anmarsch-1.1650692-2.
86. Mudde, Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe, pp.18–20.
87. So far research of populism concentrated on the supply-side in the form of new populist parties. For more information about how to measure the demand-side of populism on the individual level see Agnes Akkerman, Cas Mudde and Andrej Zaslove, 'How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters', *Comparative Political Studies* 47/9 (2014), pp.1328–30.
88. Original statement: 'Deutschland braucht eine starke Führungspersönlichkeit, die schnell über alles entscheiden kann.'